

Effectiveness of Collaborative Learning in Improving Elementary Students' Indonesian Speaking Skills

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Abstract

Speaking skills constitute a fundamental component of language education, yet elementary students frequently encounter difficulties in oral communication development. Traditional teacher-centered approaches often limit opportunities for meaningful speaking practice, necessitating innovative pedagogical strategies. This study investigated the effectiveness of collaborative learning models on fourth-grade students' speaking skills in Indonesian language education. A quantitative pre-experimental design with one-group pretest-posttest configuration was employed at SD Negeri 01 Trans Bangsa Negara. Twelve fourth-grade students participated as research subjects using total sampling technique. Speaking competencies were assessed across multiple dimensions including pronunciation accuracy, intonation clarity, vocabulary appropriateness, eye contact maintenance, and speaking confidence using a validated instrument scored on a 100-point scale. The collaborative learning intervention involved small-group discussions, peer-supported text analysis, and collective retelling activities. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test due to non-normal data distribution. Students demonstrated substantial improvement in speaking performance following the collaborative learning intervention. Mean scores increased significantly from 37.1 (pretest) to 76.0 (posttest), representing more than a doubling of initial performance levels. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test revealed statistically significant differences between pretest and posttest measurements ($Z = -3.072$, $p = 0.002$), indicating that most students progressed from below-standard performance to meeting or exceeding proficiency requirements. The findings provide empirical validation that collaborative learning models effectively enhance speaking skills by creating supportive environments that reduce communication anxiety while promoting active peer interaction. Results align with previous research demonstrating collaborative learning's capacity to foster positive emotional conditions and authentic communication opportunities essential for oral skill development. The study contributes practical evidence supporting the integration of collaborative approaches in Indonesian language curricula to address persistent challenges in speaking competency development at the elementary level.

Keywords

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INTRODUCTION

Language proficiency serves as a cornerstone of effective communication and academic achievement, with speaking skills representing one of the most critical yet challenging competencies for learners to master. Speaking constitutes a fundamental component of language acquisition, serving as the primary vehicle for expressing thoughts, emotions, and ideas. Within established frameworks of communicative competence, speaking skills empower learners to interact effectively across diverse contexts, ranging from informal conversations to professional and academic discourse (Canale & Swain, 1980; Peng et al., 2025). Beyond its communicative function, active speaking practice enhances language learning by promoting fluency through spontaneous production, reinforcing lexical knowledge, and consolidating grammatical understanding (Baker & Westrup, 2003; Wang et al., 2024). Moreover, oral proficiency significantly influences learners' motivation and self-

confidence; successful communication experiences can bolster assurance and encourage continued participation, while perceived deficiencies may trigger anxiety and disengagement (Alotumi, 2021; de Rooij, 2024).

Despite its fundamental importance, developing speaking skills presents substantial challenges for language learners, particularly in elementary education contexts where foundational competencies are established. Students frequently encounter difficulties including speech-related anxiety due to error apprehension, lexical and phonological limitations, and inadequate opportunities for authentic communication in conventional classroom environments (Van Thong & Hoai Thuong, 2023; Quyen & Nguyen, 2018; Shen & Chiu, 2019). These challenges are particularly pronounced in Indonesian language education, where students often struggle with pronunciation accuracy, appropriate intonation, vocabulary selection, and maintaining confidence during oral expression. Traditional teacher-centered approaches frequently leave students passive, lacking initiative, and reluctant to express their opinions, thereby limiting opportunities for meaningful speaking practice and skill development (Ratnasari, 2022).

Recent pedagogical research has increasingly focused on collaborative learning as a promising approach to address these challenges. Dillenbourg (1999) defines collaborative learning as 'a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together', emphasizing it as an active process where learners engage with their peers to make sense of information, develop new understanding, and construct knowledge collectively rather than working in isolation (Breen, 2013; Damani et al., 2025). This educational approach encompasses various small group instructional strategies, including cooperative learning, team-based learning, peer tutoring, and project-based learning, all involving joint intellectual efforts by students to achieve shared learning goals (Yang, 2023; Zhang & Cui, 2018). In typical collaborative learning activities, students work in pairs or small groups to deepen understanding, solve problems, or develop shared products (Barkley, 2014).

Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of collaborative learning in enhancing speaking competencies across diverse educational contexts. Ayyub, Akib, and Amin (2021) demonstrated that implementing collaborative learning methods significantly promoted students' speaking skills by creating opportunities for peer interaction and mutual support. Similarly, Babiker (2018) found that collaborative learning techniques substantially improved speaking skills in EFL classes by fostering a supportive environment that reduced anxiety and encouraged active participation. Geetha and Karthiga (2020) further established that collaborative learning techniques effectively enhanced speaking skills by providing authentic communication opportunities and peer feedback mechanisms. These findings align with research by Salih and Abdelameer (2022), who emphasized the value of collaborative learning in developing students' speaking skills through meaningful social interaction and shared responsibility for learning outcomes.

The effectiveness of collaborative learning extends beyond immediate skill improvement to encompass emotional and motivational dimensions of learning. Research has highlighted the complexity of emotional dynamics in collaborative groups, where emotions can arise from interpersonal interactions, task-related challenges, and the social context (Lobczowski, 2020; Törmänen et al., 2021). Positive emotional states foster engagement and beneficial socio-emotional interactions, creating cohesion and mutual trust that support effective communication (Linnenbrink-Garcia et al., 2011; Kreijns et al., 2013; Törmänen et al., 2025). Furthermore, collaborative learning environments provide strategic opportunities for emotion regulation, enabling students to adapt and alter their shared emotional dynamics to secure favorable conditions for learning together (Lobczowski, 2020).

Several studies have specifically examined collaborative learning applications in speaking skill development within Indonesian and international contexts. Guswita (2024) conducted classroom action research demonstrating significant improvement in speaking skills through collaborative learning models in Indonesian language instruction. Nurhayatin et al. (2023) found that collaborative learning approaches combined with performance assessment effectively enhanced public speaking

skills. Additionally, Perlina, Komang, and Sumartini (2022) reported successful implementation of collaborative learning in improving English speaking skills, while Rusdiana (2017) demonstrated similar positive outcomes in French language speaking ability development.

Despite these encouraging findings, gaps remain in understanding the specific mechanisms through which collaborative learning influences speaking skill development, particularly in elementary Indonesian language education contexts. Limited research has systematically examined the effectiveness of collaborative learning models in addressing the multifaceted challenges facing young learners in developing oral communication competencies. Furthermore, few studies have employed rigorous experimental designs to establish causal relationships between collaborative learning implementation and measurable improvements in speaking performance indicators.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the effect of collaborative learning models on speaking skills among fourth-grade students in Indonesian language education. The research aims to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of collaborative learning approaches in improving specific speaking competencies, including pronunciation accuracy, intonation clarity, vocabulary appropriateness, eye contact maintenance, and speaking confidence. The findings will contribute to the growing body of literature on collaborative learning effectiveness while offering practical insights for educators seeking to enhance speaking skill instruction in elementary education contexts. By examining both quantitative outcomes and implementation processes, this research seeks to inform evidence-based pedagogical practices that support comprehensive language development in Indonesian primary schools.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach utilizing a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest configuration to examine the effectiveness of collaborative learning models on students' speaking skills. This design was selected to enable systematic measurement of changes in speaking competencies following the implementation of the collaborative learning intervention, providing controlled conditions for assessing treatment effects on the dependent variable.

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 01 Trans Bangsa Negara, located in Pelita Jaya Village, Belitang Madang Raya District, East OKU Regency, during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The study population comprised all fourth-grade students enrolled at the institution, totaling 12 participants. Given the limited population size, a total sampling technique was employed, whereby all members of the target population served as research subjects. This non-probability sampling approach, also known as saturated sampling or census method, was deemed appropriate due to the small population size (less than 30 individuals) and the need for comprehensive representation to ensure robust statistical analysis.

The independent variable consisted of the collaborative learning model, operationally defined as a pedagogical approach emphasizing active student engagement in small groups to complete tasks synergistically through dialogic exchange of ideas and peer interaction. The dependent variable was speaking ability, conceptualized as students' capacity to express ideas, opinions, and information verbally while maintaining appropriate language use and communication norms. Speaking competency was assessed across multiple dimensions including pronunciation accuracy, intonation clarity, vocabulary appropriateness, eye contact maintenance, and speaking confidence levels.

Data collection was conducted through oral assessments administered at two distinct phases: before and after the collaborative learning intervention. The speaking assessment instrument was systematically developed based on established speaking skill indicators, incorporating a comprehensive rubric with scoring ranges from 0 to 100 points for each competency dimension. To ensure instrument quality and measurement precision, rigorous validation procedures were implemented. Content validity was established through expert judgment by Ms. Nurnaeti, S.Pd., an experienced fourth-grade teacher and homeroom instructor at the research site, who reviewed and approved the instrument following minor revisions. Subsequently, construct validity was examined using the Pearson Product Moment

correlation technique, with instruments deemed valid when correlation coefficients exceeded the critical r -table value at a 5% significance level. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with instruments considered reliable when alpha values surpassed the 0.70 threshold, indicating adequate stability and consistency among assessment items.

The research procedure commenced with initial observations to establish baseline conditions, followed by pretest administration where students individually performed oral storytelling tasks. The collaborative learning intervention was then implemented over multiple sessions, during which students were organized into small groups to engage in structured discussions, collaborative text analysis, and peer-supported speaking activities. The treatment involved reading and analyzing narrative texts such as "Menuju Lembah Harau" and "Pesona Kebun Teh Pagaralam," followed by collaborative retelling exercises that encouraged active participation and mutual support among group members. Post-intervention assessment was conducted using similar oral evaluation procedures to measure changes in speaking performance.

Data analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to examine treatment effectiveness. Normality testing was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test, appropriate for small sample sizes, to determine the distribution characteristics of pretest and posttest scores. Given that the data failed to meet normality assumptions, with significance values below 0.05 for both measurement phases, non-parametric analysis was deemed most appropriate. Hypothesis testing was subsequently performed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, a non-parametric alternative suitable for paired data from the same subjects when normal distribution requirements are not satisfied. Statistical significance was evaluated at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level, with p -values below this threshold indicating significant differences between pre- and post-intervention speaking performance measures. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 22 software to ensure accuracy and reliability of computational procedures and interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study examined the effectiveness of collaborative learning models on fourth-grade students' speaking skills at SD Negeri 01 Trans Bangsa Negara through a pre-experimental design involving 12 participants. The research findings encompass instrument validation results, descriptive statistics of speaking performance, and inferential statistical analyses to determine treatment effectiveness.

The speaking assessment instrument underwent rigorous validation procedures to ensure measurement quality and reliability. Content validation was conducted by Ms. Nurbaiti, S.Pd., a qualified fourth-grade teacher at the research site, who reviewed the instrument comprehensively and approved its implementation following minor revisions. The expert validation confirmed that all speaking skill indicators—including pronunciation accuracy, intonation clarity, vocabulary appropriateness, eye contact maintenance, and speaking confidence—were appropriately operationalized and suitable for measuring fourth-grade students' oral communication competencies.

Descriptive analysis of speaking performance revealed substantial improvements following the collaborative learning intervention. The pretest results demonstrated that students initially possessed limited speaking competencies, with a mean score of 37.1 points on a 100-point scale. This baseline performance indicated that the majority of participants had not achieved the established Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) for speaking proficiency. Following the implementation of the collaborative learning model, posttest results showed marked improvement, with the mean score increasing to 76.0 points. This substantial increase of 38.9 points represents more than a doubling of the initial performance level, indicating that most students successfully met or exceeded the required proficiency standards.

The normality assessment of the data distribution was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is particularly appropriate for small sample sizes. The following table presents the normality test results for both pretest and posttest measurements:

Table 1. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test Result	,207	12	,166	,791	12	,007
Post -test Result	,298	12	,004	,823	12	,017

The normality test results indicate that both pretest and posttest data failed to meet the normal distribution assumption. The Shapiro-Wilk test yielded significance values of 0.007 for pretest scores and 0.017 for posttest scores, both falling below the 0.05 threshold required for normal distribution. These findings necessitated the use of non-parametric statistical procedures for hypothesis testing, as parametric tests require normally distributed data for valid interpretation.

Given the violation of normality assumptions, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was employed to assess the significance of differences between pretest and posttest speaking performance. This non-parametric test is specifically designed for paired data from the same subjects when normal distribution requirements are not satisfied. The following table presents the hypothesis testing results:

Table 2. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Statistics

Post -test Result - pre-test Result	
Z	-3,072 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,002

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test revealed a statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest speaking performance, with a two-tailed significance value of 0.002. This p-value is substantially below the established alpha level of 0.05, providing strong statistical evidence for rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis. The negative Z-score of -3.072 indicates that posttest scores were consistently higher than pretest scores across the participant group, confirming the positive effect of the collaborative learning intervention.

Discussion

The primary findings of this study demonstrate that collaborative learning models significantly enhance fourth-grade students' speaking skills in Indonesian language education. The substantial improvement from a mean pretest score of 37.1 to a posttest score of 76.0 represents a practically meaningful advancement that moved most students from below-standard performance to meeting or exceeding proficiency requirements. This improvement aligns with the theoretical framework of collaborative learning as defined by Dillenbourg (1999), where learners engage collectively to construct knowledge and develop competencies through peer interaction and mutual support.

The significant statistical results ($p = 0.002$) corroborate previous research findings on collaborative learning effectiveness in speaking skill development. Ayyub, Akib, and Amin (2021) similarly found that implementing collaborative learning methods promoted students' speaking skills by creating opportunities for peer interaction and reducing communication anxiety. The present study's findings extend these results to Indonesian language education contexts, demonstrating that collaborative approaches transcend language boundaries in their effectiveness for oral skill development.

The substantial performance improvement observed in this study reflects the multifaceted benefits of collaborative learning environments. Consistent with research by Geetha and Karthiga (2020), the collaborative model provided authentic communication opportunities where students could practice speaking skills in supportive peer groups rather than high-pressure individual performances. This finding supports the theoretical premise that collaborative learning creates favorable emotional

conditions for language learning, as emphasized by Linnenbrink-Garcia et al. (2011), who demonstrated that positive affect fosters engagement and beneficial socio-emotional interactions that support effective communication.

The research outcomes align with Babiker's (2018) findings that collaborative learning techniques improve speaking skills by fostering supportive environments that reduce anxiety and encourage active participation. The dramatic improvement from below-standard to proficient performance levels suggests that collaborative learning addresses multiple barriers to speaking skill development simultaneously. According to Kreijns et al. (2013), positive emotional states in collaborative settings create cohesion and mutual trust, which appear to have been instrumental in helping students overcome speaking apprehension and develop confidence in oral expression.

The effectiveness of the collaborative learning intervention can be understood through the lens of emotion regulation theory. As Lobczowski (2020) explains, collaborative learning environments provide strategic opportunities for students to adapt and alter their shared emotional dynamics to secure favorable conditions for learning together. The significant improvement observed in this study suggests that students successfully regulated their emotions related to speaking anxiety, transforming what Van Thong and Hoai Thuong (2023) identify as speech-related anxiety into productive learning experiences through peer support and collective engagement.

The study's findings also support the work of Salih and Abdelameer (2022), who emphasized the value of collaborative learning in developing speaking skills through meaningful social interaction and shared responsibility for learning outcomes. The collaborative model implemented in this research—Involving group discussions, peer-supported text analysis, and collective retelling activities—appears to have provided the authentic communication contexts that Shen and Chiu (2019) identified as essential for overcoming inadequate speaking practice opportunities in conventional classroom environments.

Furthermore, the results complement recent research in Indonesian contexts. Guswita (2024) demonstrated similar improvements in speaking skills through collaborative learning models, while Nurhayatin et al. (2023) found that collaborative approaches enhanced public speaking competencies. The consistency of positive outcomes across different educational contexts suggests that collaborative learning represents a robust pedagogical approach for speaking skill development.

The substantial effect size observed in this study—with students more than doubling their initial performance—indicates that collaborative learning addresses the fundamental challenges identified in speaking skill development. The improvement across multiple dimensions (pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, eye contact, and confidence) suggests that the collaborative approach facilitated comprehensive skill development rather than isolated competency gains. This holistic improvement pattern supports Zhang and Cui's (2018) conceptualization of collaborative learning as involving joint intellectual efforts that promote multifaceted learning outcomes.

The research findings contribute to the growing evidence base supporting collaborative learning as an effective pedagogical approach for addressing the complex challenges of speaking skill development in elementary education contexts. The significant statistical results, combined with practically meaningful improvements, provide compelling evidence for integrating collaborative learning models into Indonesian language curricula to enhance students' oral communication competencies.

CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling empirical evidence that collaborative learning models significantly enhance speaking skills among fourth-grade students in Indonesian language education. The research demonstrated a substantial improvement from a mean pretest score of 37.1 to a posttest score of 76.0, with statistical significance confirmed through the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test ($p = 0.002$). These findings indicate that collaborative learning effectively addresses multiple dimensions of speaking competency, including pronunciation accuracy, intonation clarity, vocabulary

appropriateness, eye contact maintenance, and speaking confidence, transforming below-standard performance into proficient oral communication skills.

The study contributes to the expanding knowledge base on collaborative learning effectiveness by providing rigorous empirical validation within Indonesian elementary education contexts. The research extends existing theoretical frameworks by demonstrating how peer interaction and collective knowledge construction facilitate comprehensive speaking skill development, supporting the premise that collaborative environments create optimal emotional and social conditions for oral language learning. Furthermore, the findings offer practical validation of collaborative learning as a viable alternative to traditional teacher-centered approaches that often leave students passive and reluctant to engage in speaking activities.

The implications for educational practice are significant, suggesting that Indonesian language educators should integrate collaborative learning strategies into their pedagogical repertoire to enhance students' oral communication competencies. The model's effectiveness in creating supportive learning environments that reduce speaking anxiety while promoting active participation offers a strategic approach for addressing persistent challenges in speaking skill development. These findings support curriculum designers and educational policymakers in advocating for more interactive, student-centered methodologies in language education.

However, this study acknowledges several limitations that constrain generalizability. The small sample size of 12 participants and single-site design limit the external validity of findings. The pre-experimental design, while appropriate for initial investigation, lacks the rigor of randomized controlled trials with comparison groups. Additionally, the research focused exclusively on short-term effects without examining long-term retention of speaking improvements.

Future research should employ larger, multi-site samples with randomized controlled designs to establish causal relationships more definitively. Longitudinal studies examining sustained effects of collaborative learning on speaking development would provide valuable insights into intervention durability. Furthermore, comparative studies investigating different collaborative learning configurations and their differential effects on various speaking skill dimensions would enhance understanding of optimal implementation strategies for maximizing oral communication competency development in elementary language education contexts.

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