



Enhancing Elementary Students' Speaking Skills through Sociodrama Method: A Classroom Action Research at Elementary School of Latansa, Wonosalam, Demak, Central Java

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ABSTRACT

This classroom action research explores how the sociodrama method impacts the development of speaking skills in Indonesian language learning among 27 fifth-grade students (13 females and 14 males) at Elementary School of Latansa, Wonosalam, Demak Regency, Central Java. The study addresses the problems observed in traditional classrooms, where students frequently indicate passivity and limited verbal engagement. The eight variables used to rate speaking skill were pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, content coherence, comprehensibility, confidence and voice projection, and interaction skills. Data were collected by observation, interviews, documentation, and oral performance assessments. Students were divided into three performance levels based on their speaking test results: High (8 students or 29.6%), Medium (15 students or 55.6%), and Less (4 students or 14.8%). The results show that most students showed considerable improvements, particularly in pronunciation and confidence. Those in the High category demonstrated strong and consistent performance across all variables. Meanwhile, children in the medium group exhibited increasing skills, though some continued to struggle with grammar and subject development. A small portion of students remained in the Less group, requiring additional support. The results demonstrate no significant gender disparities in performance, indicating that the method benefits all students, regardless of gender. Overall, the study shows that the sociodrama method increases student engagement, encourages expressive language use, and helps the overall development of speaking skills. It is recommended as an alternative pedagogical method to complement or replace traditional, worksheet-focused instruction in Indonesian language learning at the elementary level.

Keywords: Sociodrama; Speaking Skills; Indonesian Language Learning; Classroom Action Research; Student Engagement

▪Introduction

The value of education as a means of holistic human development is increasingly recognized in modern society. Education not only promotes academic growth, but it also fosters cultural and social values that are necessary for a well-rounded and functional community. In this context, communication skills particularly speaking are critical for students' academic and social success. Speaking is not only an important aspect of everyday interaction, but it is also a fundamental pillar of language instruction. Students with effective speaking abilities may convey ideas, participate in discussions, and interact effectively with fellow students and educators.

The development of students' speaking skills in Indonesian elementary schools, particularly in rural or underserved locations such as Elementary School of Latansa, Wonosalam, Demak Regency, Central Java, is frequently stagnant due to the continuous dependence on conventional teaching methods. These include rote memorization, passive note-taking, and one-way communication, commonly referred to as the DDCH model — *Datang, Duduk, Catat, Hafal* (Come, Sit, Write, Memorize) (Badruttamam, 2019). These methods reduce student participation, especially in expressive activities like storytelling, opinion sharing, and classroom discussions. During classroom observations at Elementary School of Latansa, it was apparent that students struggled to explain their thoughts and ideas, lacked confidence in public speaking, and demonstrated low levels of participation in verbal classroom exercises.

In order to improve students' speaking abilities and overall language skills, innovative teaching methods are needed (Rofii & Syarifah, 2024). The sociodrama method, for instance, emphasizes experiential learning through role play, dramatization, and active social interaction. Sociodrama allows students to engage with real-life social problems in a safe, imaginative context, helping them to think critically, empathize with others, and express their opinions. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is most successful when it is mediated through social contact. This method aligns with constructivist learning concepts, supporting student-centered methodologies.

The objective of this study is to delve into how the sociodrama method can help fifth-grade students improve their speaking skills at Elementary School of Latansa, Wonosalam, Demak Regency, Central Java. It attempts to find out how this interactive and complete strategy improves students' speaking skills in Indonesian language learning. In addition, the study seeks to explore the challenges that both teachers and students face when implementing the sociodrama method. The study aims to put light on the benefits of sociodrama as a teaching method designed to encourage student participation and vocal expression. It also explores how this strategy might be used as a practical solution to deal with the passivity that is prevalent in traditional classroom situations, particularly in remote learning settings.

The significance of this study derives from its capacity to address frequently challenges with primary school language teaching. including low speaking proficiency among students in rural Indonesian schools. Introducing the sociodrama approach as an alternative to traditional instruction, this study attempts to establish a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment designed to enable students to confidently express

themselves. On a theoretical level, the study contributes to the expanding body of studies on student-centered learning and active language training models. Practically, the findings are intended to be useful for educators, school administrators, and curriculum developers seeking to improve the quality of Indonesian language teaching. Furthermore, it provides tangible standards for using innovative methods such as sociodrama into daily classroom activities to more efficiently develop students' speaking skills.

Methods

This study uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, which is ideal for addressing practical teaching concerns in a real classroom setting while also aiming for continuous advancement in instructional strategies. The study was carried out in a fifth-grade classroom at Elementary School of Latansa, Wonosalam, Demak Regency, Central Java, for two months, from March to April 2025. The classroom comprised 27 students, 13 females and 14 males, which is typical for a rural Indonesian school. The CAR model used in this study has a cyclical structure of planning, action, observation, and reflection, which allows the researcher to track changes and modify methods as the study develops (Davison et al., 2004).

The main objective of this study was to delve into the implementation of the sociodrama method for Indonesian language teaching and how it impacted students' speaking skills. The students at the research site demonstrated minimal vocal participation in class, with a preference for passive learning habits molded by traditional methods like memorization, repetition, and low speech interaction. These circumstances demonstrated the need for a more interactive and expressive teaching style, such as sociodrama, which allows students to engage in role-playing and real-life simulations that promote verbal communication, self-expression, and collaborative learning.

Several methods have been used to collect comprehensive data. Observations were made all through classroom activities to track student participation, engagement, and speaking behavior while the sociodrama method was used. Interviews with the classroom teacher and chosen students revealed their experiences, obstacles, and perspectives on speaking exercises and the entire learning process. Furthermore, documentation such as lesson plans, student worksheets, and instructor journals were collected to enhance and triangulate the findings. Speaking tests were also administered before and after the intervention to objectively determine improvements in students' oral performance.

In this study, speaking skills were assessed using ten core assessment factors that were adapted to the developmental stage of elementary school students and closely linked with the communicative competencies addressed in the Indonesian language curriculum (Başak, 2019). These variables included pronunciation, which focused on the accuracy and clarity of spoken words; fluency, which assessed the smoothness and natural flow of speech; vocabulary mastery, which refers to the richness and appropriateness of word choice; and grammar and sentence structure, which assessed syntactic accuracy and sentence formation.

Additional variables included content and coherence, which examined the logical organization and relevance of students' remarks; comprehensibility, which examined how

▪ easily the audience understood the speaker; and confidence and voice projection, which evaluated the student's presence, vocal clarity, and willingness to speak in front of others. Given the nature of sociodrama, two additional performance-specific factors were added: role performance, which assessed how convincingly the student performed a character, and emotional expression, which measured how successfully they transmitted emotions through tone, gesture, and verbal delivery. Finally, interaction skills were tested to identify students' ability to participate in dialogues, respond to peers, and take conversational turns.

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{(\text{Number of students in category})}{\text{Total number of students}} \times 100$$

Each student's speaking performance was evaluated using a rubric based on these ten characteristics and scored on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (Very Poor) to 4 (Excellent). The score was reinforced with qualitative observations made during classroom activities and group discussions. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data allowed the researcher to observe not only measurable advancements, but also behavioral and attitudinal changes among the students. The final data analysis comprised descriptive statistics to compare pre-test and post-test results, as well as thematic analysis of observation notes and interview transcripts to understand students' learning experiences and the sociodrama method's practical impact.

Findings

Table 1. Indicators for Evaluating Speaking Proficiency Using the Sociodrama Method

No	Variables	Description	Indicators/Criteria
1	Pronunciation (<i>Pelafalan</i>)	Clarity and accuracy in pronouncing Indonesian words.	- Words pronounced clearly and correctly - Appropriate stress and intonation - Minimal mispronunciation
2	Fluency (<i>Kefasihan</i>)	Smoothness and continuity in speaking.	- Few unnatural pauses - Speaks at a natural pace - Uses complete sentences without hesitation
3	Vocabulary Mastery (<i>Kosakata</i>)	Range and appropriateness of words used.	- Uses topic-appropriate vocabulary - Can express ideas using various words - Avoids repetitive vocabulary
4.	Grammar and Sentence Structure (<i>Tata Bahasa dan Struktur Kalimat</i>)	Correct use of basic grammar and sentence formation.	- Correct subject-verb agreement - Uses simple and compound sentences - Minimal grammatical errors
5.	Content and Coherence (<i>Isi dan Koherensi</i>)	Relevance and logical flow of ideas.	- Ideas are structured logically - Stays on topic - Clear beginning, middle, and end

6.	Comprehensibility (<i>Keterpahaman oleh Pendengar</i>)	Degree to which the speech is understandable to listeners.	- Listener can follow easily - Meaning is clear despite minor errors - Uses gestures or context to clarify
7.	Confidence and Voice Projection (<i>Kepercayaan Diri dan Intonasi Suara</i>)	Speaker's self-assurance and clarity in delivery.	- Speaks confidently and clearly - Appropriate volume and tone - Maintains eye contact when applicable
8	Interaction Skills (<i>Kemampuan Interaksi</i>)	Ability to engage in conversation or dialogue.	- Responds appropriately to questions - Can initiate or maintain a dialogue - Takes turns effectively

Table 2. Student performance across speaking skill indicators

Student	Gender	Pron	Flue	Vcab	Grm	Con	comp	Cnf&V	Inte	category
AFD	Male	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
AF	Male	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	High
AV	Female	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	Less
ANP	Female	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	High
AS	Female	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	Medium
CQ	Female	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	High
FF	Male	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
HS	Male	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
KM	Female	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	High
MAF	Male	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	Less
MEY	Male	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
MY	Male	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
MN	Male	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	High
MI	Male	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
RH	Male	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	Medium
RK	Male	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
NN	Female	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	High
RH	Female	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	High
RR	Male	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
RA	Female	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	Less
SN	Female	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	Less
SA	Female	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
SW	Male	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
SVA	Female	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	High
SAZ	Female	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium
TP	Female	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	High
TK	Female	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Medium

High: 10 students (30.3%)

Medium: 18 students (54.5%)

Less: 5 students (15.2%)

Analysis and Interpretation of Speaking Skill Assessment Using the Sociodrama Method

- This study assessed the speaking abilities of 27 fifth-grade students at Elementary School of Latansa, Wonosalam after the implementation of the sociodrama method in Indonesian language learning. The participants consisted of 13 female and 14 male students. The assessment was based on eight core speaking indicators: pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary mastery, grammar accuracy, content coherence, comprehensibility, confidence and voice projection, and interaction skills. Based on overall performance across these variables, students were categorized as *High*, *Medium*, or *Less*.

The results revealed that 8 students (29.6%) demonstrated *High* speaking ability, 15 students (55.6%) fell into the *medium* category, and 4 students (14.8%) were categorized as *Less*. Students in the *High* category exhibited strong pronunciation, fluent speech, wide vocabulary, and confident delivery. They also showed the ability to maintain interactive dialogue and express their thoughts coherently. These students consistently excelled across all eight variables.

The *medium* group, which made up the majority, showed adequate skill in pronunciation and confidence but moderate ability in fluency, vocabulary, and content organization. Some hesitancy, occasional grammatical errors, and underdeveloped ideas were observed in their speech. Nonetheless, these students were generally able to communicate clearly and participate in speaking tasks. In the *less* category, students had notable challenges in vocabulary usage, grammar, and content delivery. Their speech was often hesitant, with limited expression and lower confidence levels. However, even in this group, the structured exposure to speaking through sociodrama appeared to contribute to incremental improvements, especially in student participation and voice projection.

Across gender lines, performance was relatively balanced. Both male and female students were represented in all categories, suggesting that sociodrama promotes equal opportunities for speaking practice and oral development. Pronunciation and confidence emerged as the strongest variables among most students, while grammar accuracy and content coherence were the most challenging. Overall, the data indicate that sociodrama is a powerful strategy for enhancing speaking abilities by providing interactive, expressive, and emotionally engaging learning experiences. The varied student responses emphasize the importance of differentiated support to ensure that all learners benefit equally and make measurable progress in their speaking competencies.

Interview Results

The interview data offered valuable insights into students' experiences with the sociodrama method, highlighting both its strengths and limitations in enhancing speaking skills. Overall, students responded positively, frequently mentioning increased confidence and enthusiasm during speaking activities. One fifth-grade student shared, "I feel more confident speaking in front of my friends after drama practice. I can also memorize new words more easily." This student perspective supports the quantitative findings, which showed that pronunciation and confidence were among the most developed speaking indicators. Many students expressed particular enjoyment in role-playing tasks, especially those that encouraged emotional expression and improvisation. For instance, one student remarked, "My favorite part was playing the role of a teacher

▪because I could speak in a funny way and everyone laughed.” These emotionally engaging experiences appear to create a supportive and motivating classroom environment. This observation is consistent with Belanger’s study (2022) which found that drama-based methods enhance student motivation and promote expressive language use. Together, the interviews and supporting literature underscore the value of sociodrama in building both technical speaking skills and emotional engagement in language learning.

Teachers supported these findings, noting significant improvements in students’ fluency and participation during speaking activities. One teacher observed, “Students who were usually quiet are now starting to speak fluently, especially when playing roles they like. They are also more confident.” This observation aligns with Nuryanto, et al.’s (2025) study, which reported that drama-based instruction enhances verbal expression and reduces speaking anxiety. Despite these positive developments, teachers also pointed out persistent challenges, particularly in grammar accuracy and the ability to develop coherent ideas. These issues were most apparent among students in the medium and lower proficiency categories. As one teacher explained, “Some students still often make mistakes in sentence structure and have difficulty conveying ideas coherently, even though they are already confident speaking.” This insight reinforces the study’s conclusion that while sociodrama effectively builds confidence and fluency, it must be accompanied by targeted support in grammar and content development. This aligns with Islam’s (2023) findings, which emphasized the importance of integrating explicit language instruction with expressive methods like sociodrama to achieve comprehensive speaking proficiency.

An interesting finding from the interviews was that gender did not significantly influence students’ speaking abilities. Teachers consistently reported that both boys and girls were actively engaged in the sociodrama activities and were equally represented across the High, Medium, and Less performance categories. One teacher remarked, “Boys and girls are equally active. There is no significant difference in terms of courage or speaking ability.” This observation suggests that the sociodrama method fosters an inclusive and equitable learning environment, where students of all genders feel empowered to participate. These findings align with Ademi and Loshkovska’s study (2025), which highlights that collaborative and performance-based learning contexts tend to minimize gender-based differences in classroom engagement. The equal level of participation observed in this study reinforces the potential of sociodrama to support diverse learners by promoting fairness and balanced opportunities in developing speaking competence.

From the parental perspective, several parents observed noticeable improvements in their children’s communication at home following the implementation of the sociodrama method. One mother shared, “My child now likes to tell stories about drama activities at school. He also prefers reading aloud at home.” Similarly, another parent remarked, “My child used to be shy, but now he’s more open and willing to express his opinions.” These accounts suggest that the speaking skills developed in the classroom through sociodrama are being transferred to everyday interactions beyond the school environment. This extension of learning highlights the method’s broader impact, not only on academic performance but also on personal growth. These findings are in line with the

▪ study by Frydman and Mayor (2024), which concluded that drama-based learning enhances not only linguistic competence but also socio-emotional development and interpersonal communication skills. Such outcomes reinforce the value of integrating expressive, student-centered approaches like sociodrama into language instruction.

Overall, the interview findings complement and strengthen the study's quantitative results by providing rich context and deeper understanding of the students' learning experiences. The data affirm that the sociodrama method is an effective pedagogical approach for developing key aspects of speaking skills, particularly in pronunciation, confidence, and student interaction. At the same time, the interviews reveal persistent challenges in grammatical accuracy and the organization of ideas, suggesting the need for ongoing, targeted support in these areas. When viewed alongside previous research, the current findings reaffirm the benefits of expressive and interactive learning environments while emphasizing the importance of integrating structured language instruction and scaffolding to ensure balanced skill development. This holistic approach can better support learners across varying proficiency levels and maximize the potential of sociodrama as a tool for meaningful language learning.

Discussion

The assessment data of 5th-grade students at Elementary School of Latansa, Wonosalam illustrates a diverse range of speaking abilities as evaluated through eight comprehensive indicators: pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary mastery, grammar accuracy, content coherence, comprehensibility, confidence and voice projection, and interaction skills. Based on the compiled results, students were categorized into three performance levels: *High*, *Medium*, and *Less*. Out of 33 students, 10 students (30.3%) fell into the *High* category, 18 students (54.5%) were assessed as *Medium*, while only 5 students (15.2%) were categorized as *less*. These results indicate that the majority of students demonstrated at least moderate proficiency in speaking skills, with a significant proportion excelling, suggesting that the sociodrama method offers substantial benefits in supporting students' oral language development.

In terms of specific speaking variables, the data showed that students who performed in the *High* category, such as AF, CQ, and TP, consistently demonstrated excellent pronunciation, fluency, and confidence when speaking. These findings are consistent with Suparsa and Mantra's (2024) study, which highlighted that sociodrama allows students to repeatedly practice verbal expressions in natural, dramatized contexts, thereby enhancing their articulation and spontaneity. Trisiantari (2017) found that role-playing scenarios embedded in sociodrama exposed students to contextual and varied language input, supporting their acquisition of appropriate vocabulary and syntax. Additionally, students with high scores showed stronger mastery of vocabulary and grammar.

Meanwhile, the majority of students, those in the *medium* category, showed reasonable competence in comprehensibility and interaction skills, though some still lacked depth in content development and cohesion of ideas. This partial improvement corresponds to the findings of Jupon and Hamid (2022), who found that despite the fact

that sociodrama improves performance and engagement, the level of lesson comprehension is primarily determined by how well the teacher supports and scaffolds the activity. In this study, it appears that although the students were more actively involved in speaking tasks, a number of them were still developing higher-order thinking skills, such as structuring arguments or retelling content with full coherence.

Confidence and voice projection, two crucial affective features improved across most students, particularly among female students such as ANP, RH, and SAZ. The observed trend confirms the hypothesis put forward by Pecaski McLennan (2008) that sociodrama develops emotionally secure learning environments in where students are more at ease expressing themselves. The students' greater involvement and enhanced communication skills imply that sociodrama fosters the growth of social-emotional learning, which is crucial in early education settings, in addition to improving language outcomes.

In comparison with related literature, this study demonstrates greater percentages of students reaching higher speaking skill levels. For instance, Hoeriyah et al. (2020) observed that only 23% of their participants attained a high proficiency in speaking prior to sociodrama intervention. In contrast, this study recorded 30.3% of students as high-performing, implying that the implementation of sociodrama at Elementary School of Latansa, Wonosalam was relatively successful. The slight difference may be attributed to the specific manner in which sociodrama was adapted into the learning context, the level of teacher involvement, and classroom management strategies used during the process.

However, not all outcomes were uniformly positive. Students in the *Less* category, including AV, RA, and SN, struggled across multiple variables, particularly vocabulary, grammar, and content development. This underperformance may stem from residual effects of passive learning habits prior to intervention, or possibly from limited participation during sociodrama sessions. Trisiantari (2017) emphasizes that the success of sociodrama depends heavily on the teacher's ability to motivate and involve all students equally, an element that might have been inconsistent in this case. These findings indicate a need for differentiated instruction and the provision of more structured support for students who are slower to adapt to interactive, performative methods.

Overall, the implementation of the sociodrama method has proven to be an effective pedagogical tool in developing students' speaking competencies. The multidimensional benefits observed, ranging from improved fluency and interaction to increased confidence, highlight sociodrama's alignment with both language and character education goals. The distribution of results across gender lines shows a balanced performance, reinforcing the idea that sociodrama is inclusive and adaptable to varying learner profiles. In light of the consistent findings from previous studies, the results of this study reinforce the efficacy of sociodrama as an innovative strategy for enhancing speaking skills in Indonesian language learning at the elementary level.

▪ Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the sociodrama method is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing speaking skills among elementary school students. Through performance-based activities such as role-play, dialogue, and collaborative interaction, students showed marked improvement in key speaking indicators including pronunciation, fluency, confidence, and comprehensibility. Notably, over 85% of participants achieved Medium to High proficiency levels, with only a small portion falling into the Less category. This suggests that even students with initially weaker language foundations responded positively to the method. While challenges remain particularly in grammar accuracy and content organization the overall trend indicates growing student engagement and expressive ability in oral language tasks. The relatively balanced distribution of achievement between male and female students further highlights the method's inclusivity and equal effectiveness across genders. These findings support the integration of creative, communicative approaches like sociodrama into the language curriculum, particularly as a means of shifting away from passive, memorization-based instruction. To ensure more equitable progress across all proficiency levels, future applications of the method should incorporate personalized feedback, structured scaffolding, and targeted support for lower-performing students.

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