

## THE USE OF WHISPERING GAME IN TEACHING LISTENING SKILL FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

The research results show that the use of whispering games can improve the English listening skills of fifth grade students at SDN 5 Palembang. Listening skill possessed by each student were different because it was determined by the habit of practicing the listening skill that they do. It means the listening skill was found by how often someone to practice as a recipient of a message and pass that message to others. In whispering game, the students must really pay attention to the message that convey by their friends, which was consisted of some words. Therefore, the students must focus to word by word that convey by their friends. Which one was conjunction, noun, or verb. Most of the students said that they listen clearer when it was whispered than spoken in loud voice. Because when in whisper, the students will concentrate and focus to what their friends said. Whispering game also can sharp the students' listening skill because when in a whisper, they will pay attention to the accuracy of the message that convey by their friends. While the researcher asked about how many words that they listened clearly, most students stated that the words are so clear enough but they do not know how to write. It means that they should more careful to listen.

### ABSTRAK

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan permainan berbisik dapat meningkatkan keterampilan mendengarkan bahasa Inggris siswa kelas V SDN 5 Palembang. Keterampilan menyimak yang dimiliki setiap siswa berbeda-beda karena ditentukan oleh kebiasaan mempraktikkan keterampilan menyimak yang dilakukannya. Artinya keterampilan mendengarkan ditentukan oleh seberapa sering seseorang berlatih sebagai penerima pesan dan menyampaikan pesan tersebut kepada orang lain. Dalam permainan berbisik, siswa harus benar-benar memperhatikan pesan yang disampaikan temannya yang terdiri dari beberapa kata. Oleh karena itu, siswa terdiam fokus terhadap kata demi kata yang disampaikan temannya. Yang mana konjungsi, kata benda, atau kata kerja. Sebagian besar siswa mengatakan bahwa mereka mendengarkan dengan lebih jelas ketika dibisikkan daripada diucapkan dengan suara keras. Sebab ketika berbisik, siswa akan konsentrasi dan fokus pada apa yang dikatakan temannya. Permainan berbisik juga dapat mengasah kemampuan menyimak siswa karena ketika berbisik mereka akan memperhatikan keakuratan pesan yang disampaikan temannya. Ketika peneliti menanyakan berapa banyak kata yang mereka dengarkan dengan jelas, sebagian besar siswa menyatakan bahwa kata-kata tersebut cukup jelas tetapi mereka tidak tahu bagaimana cara menuliskannya. Artinya, mereka harus lebih berhati-hati dalam mendengarkan.

## Introduction

English language skills are very important for Indonesia's young generation to master. In this sophisticated and modern era, the demands of globalization which in fact adhedhasar English cannot be avoided. Nduweni English plays an important role, considering that Minangkabau English is an international communication tool. Kajaba is also able to operate various communication media and understand the transformation of knowledge and skills, and is required to be able to speak English.

Students who are the young generation of Indonesia who will one day carry out the task of turning the wheels of the nation's progress, need to be equipped with English from an early age. If not, they will certainly lose the medium for interacting with a developing civilization. They will experience more lag in the fields of information and technology, as well as difficulty interacting internationally.

Considering the importance of mastering English by Indonesia's young generation, awareness of the importance of mastering English in several elementary schools is increasing. This can be seen from the fact that there is English learning at the school, even though it is still just casual. Even though it still has the status of a secondary lesson, learning English still gets the same attention as other subjects. Various approaches, strategies, methods and media were developed. All of this is none other than in order to improve the quality of English learning, especially in elementary schools.

English is a learning process that is still oriented towards mastering knowledge. Learning English is often equated with other lessons that are solely knowledge-oriented. In fact, language learning should be skill-oriented which is expected to be used in everyday life. The idea that learning English is no different from other knowledge-oriented learning is what makes the English learning process tend to become monotonous, only focused on presenting the material without thinking whether this knowledge will be well remembered and useful in the future or not. Moreover, nowadays there are many English language textbooks and English worksheets circulating. Teachers are indeed helped by the publication of English textbooks and worksheets, but whether they realize it or not, directly and indirectly, this has eroded teachers' creativity and innovativeness.

The existence of increasingly varied English language textbooks and worksheets turns out to have made a big contribution in making English classes a mere place to convey information or knowledge. Teachers tend to follow textbooks and worksheets, so that learning by doing which is characteristic of language learning changes to learning by the books. Because language understanding, which should be built through a process of habituation and continuous communication practice, has now shifted to being limited to studying knowledge without paying attention to the actual goals of language learning.

The real goal of language learning is that students can speak English well and correctly. It's not just about mastering knowledge. In order for students to be able to speak English

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well, students need to base it on listening skills. Because having listening skills means you have the main capital to learn a language.

Listening is the main foundation of language learning. Through listening, students can get to know various concepts, knowledge and information. However, the reality in the field is that the fifth-grade students at SDN 5 Palembang mastery of listening skills is still very lacking.

If left unfinished in listening skills, it will hinder the mastery of other language skills. For this reason, it is time for teachers and students to pay attention to this language skill. And in order to improve listening skills, researchers are trying to provide an alternative to using the whisper race game method in the teaching and learning process, in order to create a pleasant learning climate but still prioritize learning objectives.

Based on the assumption that a child's world is a world of play, researchers are trying to design a learning method that is familiar to students, namely the game method. Basically, games are used as a medium of entertainment, but later they were widely developed in the world of education. Games that can be used in learning are games that have been designed and adapted to learning objectives. And in this research the game designed by the researcher is the Whispering Game

The Whisper game is a game that is familiar to students. In playing this game students are divided into several teams. To play this game, students on one team must stand in a row. Students standing in the front and back rows are given a list of words. The student standing at the back is then given time to read the words on his list, then he whispers to the friend in front of him according to the vocabulary on the list. This whispering activity takes place sequentially until the last student is reached

Based on the background described above, the problem formulation in this research is: 1. What are the steps for using the Whispering Game to improve the English listening skills of class IV students at SDN 5 Palembang? 2. What are the benefits of using the Whispering game in improving the English listening skills of class IV students at SDN 5 Palembang?

## **Literature Review**

### **Teaching and Learning English in Primary Schools**

Teaching English to children, in this case is the primary school students, should be different from teaching English to adult. It is because young children do not have specific foreign language needs, although some may be under pressure, usually from their parents or the school system, to pass the English examinations (Brewster & Ellis, 2004: 27). Therefore, the aims of learning a foreign language to children should also be different from the aims of learning a foreign language to adults

According to Harmer (2008: 38), young learners especially those up to the ages of nine to ten, learn differently from older children, adolescents, and adults. Children learn a foreign language through playing and talking things with adults. It is supported by Foster-Cohen (1999: 95) who states that the children somehow ‘picked the language up’ from hearing it and from being spoken to. These issues are what a teacher should consider to maximize the learner-learning centered in the English classroom

The nature and concept of teaching a foreign language in the level of primary schools is new for Indonesian teachers. Therefore, an English teacher should encourage the students by providing developmentally appropriate instruction. In fulfilling the needs for children’s developmentally appropriate instruction, the teachers are required to provide comprehensible input that is based on the school-based curriculum. According to Krashen in Linse (2005: 13), comprehensible input is input which is a little bit above the learner’s language level but understandable. So, if the teachers want to focus on learning centered teaching, it is vital that they are well-informed about the learner’s physical, emotional, conceptual, educational, and linguistic characteristics (Brewster & Ellis, 2004: 28).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that in teaching English as a second or foreign language to children, teachers must consider not only the pedagogical principles in language teaching but also the characteristics of children because the way they learn depends on their developmental stage. Consequently, the teachers should create engaging and motivating English lessons in the classroom and providing fun and comfortable atmosphere which can make the students interact with others.

### **The Objectives of Teaching English in the Primary Schools**

There are some reasons of teaching English in the primary schools. Brewster & Ellis (2004: 3) give a reason of starting to learn a foreign language several years earlier. It was simply to increase the total number of years spent learning the language. This decision needed to take into account two important considerations; the time factor and the nature of primary methodology. For children, it was determined that regular slots during the week likely to be more effective than a longer more concentrated slot only once a week. Second, teachers should take account of the methods and the pace of primary school teaching, so that a year of teaching in primary school cannot be equated with a year in secondary school. The most common reason was the fact that young children seem to have a greater facility for understanding and imitating what they hear than secondary school pupils

Scovel in Brewster & Ellis (2004: 20) points out that language is best learned during the early years of childhood. This statement is in line with Curtain and Dahlberg in Ara (2007: 169) who state that the main factor in building foreign language proficiency is the amount of time spent for learning the language. They state, “When language learning begins earlier, it can go on longer and provide more practice and experience, leading ultimately to greater

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fluency and effectiveness”.

From the explanations above, it can be concluded that there are two considerations of teaching English since children; they are time factor and the nature of primary methodology. It is more effective when the children learn a language regularly in a short time, than they learn it once in a long time. The teachers also cannot compare the ability of primary school students with secondary school students when they are learning a language in the same period of time. The more important reason is the children have a greater opportunity and proficiency in mastering the language than adults.

Meanwhile BOEN (Bulletin Officiel de l'Éducation Nationale) in Brewster & Ellis (2004: 5) states that the aim of early foreign language learning was not the creation of bilingual children but more reasonably 'to prepare children linguistically, psychologically, and culturally for language learning'. The aims of primary language learning all over the world can generally be classified under these headings: psychological preparation, linguistic preparation, and cultural preparation. Based on the psychological preparation, Ministry of Education in Indonesia has the objective 'to motivate children to learn English in interesting and fun ways' (Brewster & Ellis, 2004: 6).

Thus, the aim of English teaching in the primary schools is different from that in secondary schools. As the aim of the Ministry of Education in Indonesia is to motivate the students in learning English through interesting and fun ways, therefore the English teachers in primary schools should find and create kinds of interesting and fun activities to motivate the students to learn English and make them involved actively in the English teaching and learning process.

### **Teaching Listening in Primary Schools**

To achieve successful English language learning, teachers must teach the students the four language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The teaching of listening as a separate skill is a recent innovation in language teaching. It is because listening comprehension is not simply considered as an adjunct of speaking, but listening precedes speaking and other language skills (Harmer, 2008: 17). So, as listening is the foundation for other language skills, starting foreign language learning from listening is important.

Listening is as active as speaking, and in some ways even more difficult, as what Brewster & Ellis (2004: 98) state that listening to a foreign language is hard work, especially for young children. It will require attention, thought, interpretation, and imagination. However, it is important for children to listen to as much English of an appropriate level as possible (Paul, 2003: 71). The level should either be easy for them, at their present level, or just beyond the level they can already understand. If the level is too difficult, the children may lose confidence and positivity.

The major problem is the actual way listening material is presented to the students. Since children have limited attention span, teachers sometimes find difficulties in teaching listening. If the listening activities are not challenging and interesting, they will get bored easily. To overcome this, Pinter (2006: 48) states

Teaching listening to young learners does not mean just giving them listening activities. Harmer (2008: 129) states that there is so much else going on, such as growing familiarity with social interaction, objects surrounding the child, the structures of stories and games, writing, real life situations involving the outside world, physical actions, and the child's relationship to nature. So, teachers should create creative and interesting learning which can wake the pupils up by giving interactive activities. Teachers should also interact with the children in English to improve their comprehension of language. Games can create movement, concentration, and interaction in the classroom (Hadfield, 2000: 4). Therefore through interactive games, an interactive teaching listening will occur without ignoring the children's characteristics.

### **Definition of Whispering Game**

Whispering comes from the word, whisper, which means whispering or whispering, so this whispering activity can be like a whispering competition. According to the Language Center of the Ministry of National Education, competition is "an activity of comparing speed (skill, dexterity, intelligence, etc.)" (2008: 839). Meanwhile, whispering is defined as "saying in a slow voice (as if only hissing and not loud)" (Ministry of National Education Language Center, 2008:199). In connection with this, Sriyono interprets it as a chain whisper, namely a message that is carried out in a chain (2009). Thus it can be concluded that the Whispering Game is a whispering competition which is an activity of comparing speed in speaking slowly in a series of voices.

Children are certainly no stranger to this type of game. Children often do whispering activities like this during scout training. In scout training, children usually carry out this whisper race in teams, so there will be a competition between teams. Apart from training speed, accuracy and memory, this game also provides quite a lot of entertainment (fun). And in this study, researchers tried to innovate the game so that it can support English learning activities, so that children become active and happy in learning.

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Whispering Game**

According to Wahyutianingsih (2012), the advantages of this Whispering Game are:

- a. Increasing student activity in the teaching and learning process.
- b. Practice four language skills.
- c. Attract students' interest in vocabulary learning.
- d. Creates a feeling of happiness without burden in the teaching and learning process.

e. Increasing socialist feelings such as cooperation.

Apart from that, according to Wahyutianingsih (2012), this Whispering Game also has weaknesses, namely:

- a. Creates a busy classroom situation.
- b. Requires quite a long time.
- c. Give rise to students who are too active.
- d. This makes the interaction between students and teachers less conducive.

Every game used in the teaching and learning process definitely has advantages and disadvantages, it's just a matter of how to minimize these disadvantages so that they can be used as a learning method

### **Steps for the Whispering Game**

According to Fandy (2011) in this game children are divided into several teams. One child from each team is given a list of words that they must memorize and then whisper these words to their friend behind them. Then the next child must do the same thing until the last child on the team. It's the last child who has to look at the original list and compare what's missing or changed.

Apart from that, Subana (2011) revealed that the steps for the chain whisper game include:

- a. Divide the class into groups
- b. The teacher whispers a short word or short sentence to one student from each group.
- c. He must whisper it again to the friend next to him or behind him.
- d. The last student must say it out loud to the teacher or write it on the blackboard.
- e. The group that writes the most vocabulary words correctly is the winner (Wahyutianingsih, 2012).

Based on this opinion, it can be seen that the whispering game steps can trigger students to be active and happy in learning, namely:

1. The teacher divides the students into several groups;
2. Students line up according to their groups guided by the teacher;
3. The teacher gives a list of vocabulary words to the students who are at the end of the list to memorize
4. Students who stand at the end are given time by the teacher to memorize vocabulary for 3 minutes
5. Students standing at the end begin to whisper words in the vocabulary list that have been memorized while being monitored by the teacher
6. The teacher guides the students standing at the front to write down the vocabulary according to what their friends whisper.

7. Students together with the teacher determine the vocabulary to be whispered
8. Students discuss the results of the whisper with the teacher
9. The group that plays the whisper game gets an award from the teacher.

## Method

This research was carried out at SDN 5 Palembang, South Sumatra. The time for carrying out this research is in the 1st semester of the 2024-2025 academic year in November 2024 for class V students, English subjects. The researcher conducted research in class V because the researcher considered that the listening skills of class V students in English lessons were still low so students needed learning innovations using appropriate learning methods.

The reasons for choosing this school as a research location were because: (a) looking at the results of the fourth grade students' daily practice scores in English which were still low, (b) the researcher wanted to prove that using the whisper race game method could improve English listening skills, and (c) this place has never been used as an object of similar research so as to avoid the possibility of repeated research.

To collect data during the implementation of this classroom action research, the researcher used various data collection techniques, both obtained directly and through sources. These techniques are observation, test, and interview

Based on the techniques used, the data collection tools used in this classroom action research can be determined, namely:

- a. Observation sheet

The data collection tool in the observation technique carried out by colleagues for researchers is using observation sheets. This observation sheet is used to individually measure student involvement, student interest, and student understanding. With this observation sheet, it is hoped that it can explain student activities and teacher abilities in learning using the whisper race game method.

- b. Test questions

The data collection tool used in this test technique is in the form of test questions that can measure students' listening skills. The form of the test can be a short form, matching questions or multiple choice.

- c. Interview sheet

The data collection tool using this interview technique is structured interviews conducted by researchers with colleagues. This interview sheet is a guide for conducting interviews to find out the interviewee's responses to the teaching and learning process using the whisper race game method.

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The data analysis technique used in this research is a descriptive technique supported by qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative descriptions are used to analyze changes in attitudes, behavior and improvements in listening skills, while quantitative descriptions are used to analyze data in the form of assessment results. The data analysis procedures carried out are based on the opinion of Miles and Huberman, namely, data reduction, data presentation (data display) and conclusion drawing/verification (Sugiyono, 2009)

## Results and Discussion

### The Process of Whispering Game in Students Listening Skill at V grade of SDN 5 Palembang

Learning media was one of factors that affect the achievement of learning objectives in teaching and learning process. The teacher should use the suitable media in order the students can enjoy the materials and can reach the objective of teaching and learning process. Fifth grader are elementary schools' member that consisted of young learners. Young learners really like to play. Furthermore, the teacher used interesting media that most of young learners very love, namely game. The game that used in teaching and learning process especially in English lesson in fifth grade was the whispering game.

- a) The teacher provided a brief introduction about whispering game.  
When the researcher interviewed the English teacher, he said that he gave the brief introduction first about whispering game. Whispering game is a game that the teacher whispered a message or information to the student, the student whispered the message or information to the next student whether it reaches the last student or not. The teacher prepared sentences about *in the kitchen* to use in the whispering game.
- b) The teacher divided the students into some groups  
The number of students in fifth grade at SDN 5 Palembang is 20 students. So, teacher divided it into four groups. Each group consisted of five people.
- c) The students in groups were arranged in a backward.  
The teacher called every two groups to come to the front of class. The teacher asked the groups to line up backwards facing the whiteboard.
- d) After the position of students was as expected, the teacher came to the first student and gave the message that has been made.  
In this case, the teacher came to the first student and showed a book containing the sentence about in the kitchen.
- e) The student received the message and whispered it to the second student until the last student.  
Each group consisted of five and six people. Furthermore, the first student whispered to the second student, the second student whispered to third student, and third student

whispered to the fourth student, the fourth student whispered to the fifth student, finally the fifth student whispered to the sixth student.

- f) The last student should deliver the message by writing in the white board.  
The last student wrote the sentence that got from the whisper in the whiteboard.
- g) The Teacher should correct the message who delivered by the last student whether true or false.  
After the last student wrote the sentence in whiteboard, the teacher corrected it. The teacher will be appreciated to the group who answered true.
- h) The teacher encourages the other student to correct the wrong message.  
For groups that have written wrong sentences, the teacher asked to another group whether the sentence was true or false. When some students said the sentence was wrong, the teacher asked to the students what the best answer was.
- i) Assessment can be done by counting several levels of errors made by the group.  
Young learners like to the person who appreciated to the things that they do. In order to get high motivation, the teacher appreciated the students in whispering game by giving score. The score can be done by counting several of errors answer that made by the groups.
- j) The group that gets the best score is given an award by the teacher  
Every child like a prize. Furthermore, the teacher gives a prize to the group that got the highest score.

### **The Benefits of Whispering Game in Students Listening Skill at V grade of SDN 5 Palembang**

Using whispering game in teaching and learning process give some benefits to the students. After doing interview in the fourth meeting, the researcher analysed the result that actually whispering game has some benefits, they are:

1. Make the students happy to be in the class

Most of the students will be bored if the teacher taught the monotonous teaching. It means the students sit neatly listening and understanding the teacher who explained in front. But when the teacher used game as media in teaching and learning process, the students will be excited and happy in the class because young learners very like to play. They will get the high motivation to learn English and easy to understand the materials. While the researcher asked about whether this whispering game challenging or not, the students told that this game is exciting and challenging since they whispered some words to the other students

2. Teach the students to be more careful in listening something

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Listening skill possessed by each student were different because it was determined by the habit of practicing the listening skill that they do. It means the listening skill was found by how often someone to practice as a recipient of a message and pass that message to others.

In whispering game, the students must really pay attention to the message that convey by their friends, which was consisted of some words. Therefore, the students mut focus to word by word that convey by their friends. Which one was conjunction, noun, or verb. Most of the students said that they listen clearer when it was whispered than spoken in loud voice. Because when in whisper, the students will concentrate and focus to what their friends said. Whispering game also can sharp the students' listening skill because when in a whisper, they will pay attention to the accuracy of the message that convey by their friends. While the researcher asked about how many words that they listened clearly, most students stated that the words are so clear enough but they do not know how to write. It means that they should more careful to listen

### 3. Teach the students to be responsive in listening something

Good communication was a combination of listening and responding, but in reality, each party often lacks the ability to listen, sometimes even daydreaming when someone was talking. Listening to the other person meant being completely focused on what was being said and not thinking about anything else. When the other person was expressing his thoughts, we must make it a habit not to cut him off but be silent and listen to the sentence being said. This not only allowed us to concentrate on listening to what the other person has to say, but also made him feel appreciated. In this case, supported by the result of interview the researcher found that the word that they have listened are familiar to what they heard in YouTube, Television, and Song. Therefore, they respond quickly.

In whispering game, actually the teacher gave a limited time to finish the game. Besides, he will give the best score to the group who has fast answer. Furthermore, when the sudents listen the message, they will concentrate and focus to what the first student whispered. After they got the point, they will directly whisper to the third person or the fourth person and so on. From this section, it can be seen that the students will respond quickly to what speaker said. After applying whispering game, the teacher stated that many students were not silent when he asked the materials in English. They directly respond what the teacher asked.

### 4. The students can learn to communicate orally and correctly

When using whispering game, the students should convey the message in good pronunciation in order his/her friend understand what he/she said. From this section, it can be seen whispering game sharpened the speaking skill of the students that in verbal communication by use good pronunciation. It is line with the result of interview and observation that the students should tell to the other students about the word that they have heard with good and correct pronunciation.

## 5. The students can memorize vocabulary easily

When using whispering game, the students should convey the message. The message was sentence that consisted several words. In this case the students can memorize vocabularies unconsciously because the sentence that convey by their friend will influence to our mind to always remember what we listen. Those cases were supported by the answer of students while doing interview, they are happy since the words wrote correctly by the last student and they can mention the words correctly and accurately. All these benefits is gotten from learners' experience in using whispering in the learning process

From the discussion above, the researcher believes that using whispering game in teaching and learning process is unavoidable phenomena that happens in some of English classroom. Therefore, the use of whispering game is helpful to make the students more understand about the English lesson.

## Conclusion

Based on the discussion and results of classroom action research entitled Using the Whispering Game Method in Improving the English Listening Skills of Class V Students at SDN 5 Palembang for the 2024/2025 Academic Year, it can be concluded as follows:

1. The use of the whisper race game method which can improve listening skills is in these steps: the teacher divides the students into several groups, the teacher guides the students to line up, the teacher gives the students a list of vocabulary to memorize, the last student whispers the vocabulary according to what is memorized, the student with the most In front, the results are written on the blackboard, the teacher and students determine the vocabulary to be whispered, the teacher and students discuss the whispering game, and the teacher gives rewards to the group that wins the game.
2. Using the whispering game method can improve the English listening skills of fifth grade students at SDN 5 Palembang. Apart from that, improving English listening skills can also be proven by increasing process assessments which are supported by the results of observations and interviews

## Declarations

I hereby declare that the disclosed information is correct and that no other situation of real, potential or apparent conflict of interest is known to us. I undertake to inform you of any

change in these circumstances, including if an issue arises during the course of the meeting or work it (2024).

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