

***SNAKE AND LADDER GAME INTEGRATION IN EFL SPEAKING INSTRUCTION:
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY AT SMAN 1 PAPAR KEDIRI***

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe how the Snake and Ladder Game was included into speaking training for eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Papar Kediri during the academic year 2025–2026 and to look at how involved the students were in the process. For this study, a qualitative descriptive design was used. Field notes, instructional documentation, and speaking evaluations utilising a grading rubric were used to gather data. The results showed that the Snake and Ladder Game was integrated using a planned process with phases for planning, carrying out, and evaluating. Speaking challenge cards based on Analytical Exposition books were added to the game board to encourage students to make a thesis statement, provide evidence, and address opposing ideas. Students' participation during the implementation demonstrated positive growth in social, emotional, and behavioural domains. Through small-group exercises, the turn-taking system fostered peer connection and scaffolding, encouraged oral participation from all students, and made the classroom more lively and communicative. Students' speaking orientation, however, continued to be primarily focused on the instructor rather than their classmates. This study offers a contextual knowledge of how a classic board game might be effectively included as a senior high school speaking teaching tool.

Keywords: Snake and Ladder Game, speaking instruction, student's involvement

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INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, being able to speak English fluently has become crucial, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments where social, professional, and academic communication skills are becoming more and more important. Speaking is one of the four language skills that allows students to communicate, share knowledge, and engage in meaningful relationships (Richards, 2008; Brown & Lee, 2015). As a result, one of the main learning goals of English language instruction is now speaking. The Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia places a strong emphasis on students' ability to communicate and promotes active engagement in class. Speaking is still one of the most difficult abilities for Indonesian EFL learners, despite the increased focus on communicative language instruction.

According to earlier research, low vocabulary, pronunciation issues, grammatical errors, and communication anxiety are common reasons why Indonesian students struggle to speak English (Farhani et al., 2020; Abrar et al., 2024; Nazri, 2025). These difficulties frequently cause students to become less self-assured and eager to talk, which lowers their involvement in speaking exercises. Because of this, speaking classes might not always offer enough chances for meaningful oral communication. As a result, English teachers must use teaching techniques that not only enhance students' speaking abilities but also motivate them to participate actively in the learning process.

Game-based learning is one teaching strategy that has received a lot of attention. Through engaging and interactive activities, this method encourages learning and can boost students' motivation, engagement, and communication willingness (Gunawan, 2025). According to earlier research, language games provide encouraging learning environments where students can practise speaking more fluently and naturally (Marzuki & Kuliáhana, 2021). Game-based learning gives students the chance to participate actively in classroom communication while also honing their speaking abilities by lowering anxiety and promoting teamwork.

The Snake and Ladder Game has gained popularity among game-based learning resources because of its ease of use, adaptability to diverse learning goals, and versatility. Speaking prompts, conversation themes, and communicative activities that call for students to give oral answers while playing the game can all be included to the game (Sofyan et al., 2019). The game's turn-taking system allows students to share their thoughts, make arguments, answer questions, and engage with their peers. Consequently, the Snake and Ladder Game can foster a more communicative and student-centered learning environment.

Numerous earlier research have demonstrated the Snake and Ladder Game's efficacy in teaching speaking. According to Taka (2019), using the Snake and Ladder Game enhanced students' participation in class and their speaking abilities. In a similar vein, Rismasari and Al Hakim (2025) discovered that the game improved students' speaking abilities while fostering a more pleasurable learning environment. Additionally, Sholikatin and Sofiana (2025) found that through interactive oral practice, the game greatly increased students' speaking achievement. Additionally, Nuraini and Mubarok (2025) emphasised that learning materials based on board games offer significant spoken communication opportunities and promote active student participation. These results suggest that the Snake and Ladder Game is a useful teaching tool for enhancing speaking training in EFL courses. When combined, these results show that the Snake and Ladder Game has continuously shown its ability to enhance speaking education by raising student interest, speaking performance, and classroom participation. Additionally, through interactive and cooperative learning exercises, the game offers valuable oral communication chances. However, the majority of the research that has been done so far has focused on learning outcomes, leaving instructional procedures and students' experiences during implementation largely unexplored.

Despite these encouraging results, the majority of earlier research has only examined the Snake and Ladder Game's efficacy using quantitative metrics like speaking achievement and score improvement. The way the game is incorporated into speaking lessons and how students participate in the learning process have received little attention. Furthermore, student involvement is a multifaceted notion that encompasses social, emotional, and behavioural engagement, all of which support effective language acquisition. As a result, comprehending how students engage and react when the game is implemented continues to be a crucial topic for additional research.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the instructional integration of the Snake and Ladder Game and students' involvement during its implementation. This research investigates the manner in which the game is embedded in speaking activities within the classroom and the various ways students engage—behaviorally, emotionally, and socially—during their learning journey, unlike previous studies that mainly focused on the results of learning. By exploring these aspects, the research provides deeper insights into the educational benefits of game-related learning in EFL speaking development.

This study tackles two research issues based on the gap found in earlier research: (1) how the Snake and Ladder Game is incorporated into speaking instruction for eleventh-grade students at SMAN

1 Papar Kediri; and (2) how students participate in the game's implementation in speaking activities. Examining these concerns is crucial to comprehending the learning processes that take place throughout the game's deployment as well as the game's efficacy as a teaching tool.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe how the Snake and Ladder Game was included into speaking instruction for eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Papar Kediri and to assess how involved the students were in its implementation over the 2025–2026 school year.

METHOD

This research utilized a descriptive qualitative framework to examine how the Snake and Ladder Game was incorporated into speaking lessons and to assess students' engagement during its use. A qualitative method was deemed suitable since the focus of the study was on detailing classroom activities, interaction dynamics, and student involvement within a natural learning environment, rather than conducting statistical measurements of learning results.

The research took place at SMAN 1 Papar Kediri throughout the 2025–2026 school year. The subjects of the study were students in the eleventh grade who engaged in English speaking classes that incorporated a revised version of the Snake and Ladder Game. This game was tailored to enhance the instruction of Analytical Exposition texts by using speaking challenge cards that prompted students to articulate their views, present arguments, and answer questions verbally while playing.

Data were gathered via field notes, documents, and outcomes from speaking assessments. Field notes served to capture what happened in the classroom, the methods of instruction, how students engaged, and the dynamics of their interactions while the game was played. The documents comprised lesson outlines, educational resources, game boards, speaking task cards, evaluation criteria, and images of classroom activities. Results from the speaking assessments were utilized as supplementary data to give further proof of students' speaking abilities during their learning journey.

To guarantee the reliability of the results, support from documentation and discussions with peers were utilized. Documentation served to confirm what occurred in the classroom and the methods of teaching, while conversations with academic supervisors were held to improve the trustworthiness of data analysis.

The information was examined through the interactive framework suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and making conclusions along with verification. Essential information concerning the combination of the Snake and Ladder Game with student participation was chosen, sorted, and classified into various themes. The results were subsequently shared in a descriptive manner and were repeatedly checked by contrasting details gathered from field notes, documents, and speaking assessment outcomes to maintain trustworthiness and alignment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Integration of the Snake and Ladder Game in Speaking Instruction

The results showed that the Snake and Ladder Game was incorporated into speaking lessons through an organized process that included preparation, execution, and evaluation phases. Instead of functioning as an isolated task, the game was woven into the Analytical Exposition unit, serving as a tool for communication that linked students' comprehension with their ability to speak.

Table 1. Integration Process of the Snake and Ladder Game

Stage	Description
Preparation	Creating lesson outlines, informational sheets, activity sheets, oral task cards, game boards, and assessment criteria for speaking activities.
Implementation	Learners engaged in group Snake and Ladder games that included speaking assignments connected to Analytical Exposition writings.
Assessment	Students showcased posters on Analytical Exposition and were evaluated on their pronunciation, word choice, grammar, speaking fluidity, and understanding.

During the initial phase, educational resources were created following the guidelines of the Merdeka Curriculum and the speaking competencies outlined in Phase F. The revamped Snake and Ladder game included speaking challenge cards that prompted students to pinpoint theses, construct supporting arguments, counter opposing views, and generate reiteration statements. Before engaging in the game, students participated in structured learning tasks using worksheets and materials designed to enhance their comprehension of Analytical Exposition texts.

The entire integration procedure was finalized with an evaluation phase that took place after the gaming activity. Learners needed to showcase Analytical Exposition texts that they had changed into digital posters and verbally communicate their concepts to the class. The evaluation concentrated on five aspects of speaking: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and understanding. This activity allowed students to utilize the knowledge and speaking skills they had built in the earlier stages of their learning.

The evaluation task acted as the concluding part of the teaching process and allowed the teacher to evaluate the students' speaking skills within a context of communication. As a result, the inclusion of the Snake and Ladder Game extended beyond just the gameplay, being incorporated into a full teaching cycle that included stages of planning, executing, and evaluating.

In the execution phase, students collaborated in groups of four to five, providing verbal responses each time their piece moved onto a challenge square. The rotating speaking system guaranteed that every participant had a chance to share their thoughts, while group discussions fostered collective problem-solving prior to individual verbal contributions. As a result, the game served as a link between knowledge application and verbal expression.

The evaluation phase involved a poster presentation task. Students showcased Analytical Exposition texts, which they had converted into digital posters, and articulated their ideas to the class. This task demonstrated the students' capability to utilize the linguistic features and structural components of Analytical Exposition texts in real-life speaking contexts.

These results show that a methodical instructional sequence comprising stages of preparation, implementation, and assessment was used to integrate the Snake and Ladder Game. The game served as a communication link between students' spoken language production and their comprehension of Analytical Exposition texts. In addition to the game itself, the structured learning activities that assisted students prior to, during, and following the implementation also had an impact on the integration's efficacy.

B. Student's Involvement During the Implementation

The results indicated that learners were actively engaged during the use of the Snake and Ladder Game. This engagement was evident in their behavioral, emotional, and social aspects.

Table 2. Dimension of Students' Involvement

Dimension	Findings
Behavioral Involvement	Learners engaged in the process by taking turns and responding verbally.
Emotional Involvement	Students showed increased self-assurance and readiness to engage in conversation.
Social Involvement	Learners worked together by engaging in group talks and supporting each other.

Behaviorally, students showed greater involvement during the game session compared to traditional classroom settings. The setup of the game compelled every participant to speak up, which minimized the likelihood that only a few confident students would dominate the conversation. Those students who typically did not engage were seen participating in discussions and reacting to challenge prompts.

Emotionally, students seemed to feel more at ease when speaking English in the game context. The fun aspect of the activity alleviated the stress usually linked to speaking tasks and motivated students to give responses even if they were unsure. This indicates that the game fostered a welcoming environment that decreased students' anxiety about speaking and enhanced their readiness to communicate.

Socially, the collaborative nature of the format facilitated interaction among the students. Members of each group regularly shared ideas, debated potential answers, and provided support to each other prior to giving oral replies. More skilled students would often help their less confident classmates by suggesting vocabulary and assisting in organizing their thoughts. Nonetheless, students primarily directed their spoken responses towards the teacher instead of their classmates, showing that teacher-centered interaction patterns were still prevalent in classroom discussions.

These results align with the work of Liu et al. (2021), who noted that game-based learning can boost students' willingness to communicate by establishing a nurturing atmosphere for language practice.

Likewise, Gunawan (2025) and Sholikatin and Sofiana (2025) observed that speaking activities involving games enhance engagement and participation among Indonesian EFL learners. The current study builds on these observations by illustrating how students' engagement can be assessed through behavioral, emotional, and social aspects during the execution of these activities.

C. Classroom Learning Atmosphere

Another significant observation was the transformation in the learning environment after introducing the Snake and Ladder Game. In contrast to the initial meeting, which focused mainly on the teacher leading the session and students working on worksheets, the game led to a more engaging, communicative, and learner-focused setting.

During the session, students were seen exchanging answers, responding excitedly to the results of the game, and engaging in verbal interactions. Arranging students into smaller groups fostered closer connections among them and lessened the usual formality linked to speaking activities in the classroom. The various components of the game, such as the board, dice, tokens, and challenge cards, helped create a comfortable atmosphere that motivated students to embrace communication opportunities.

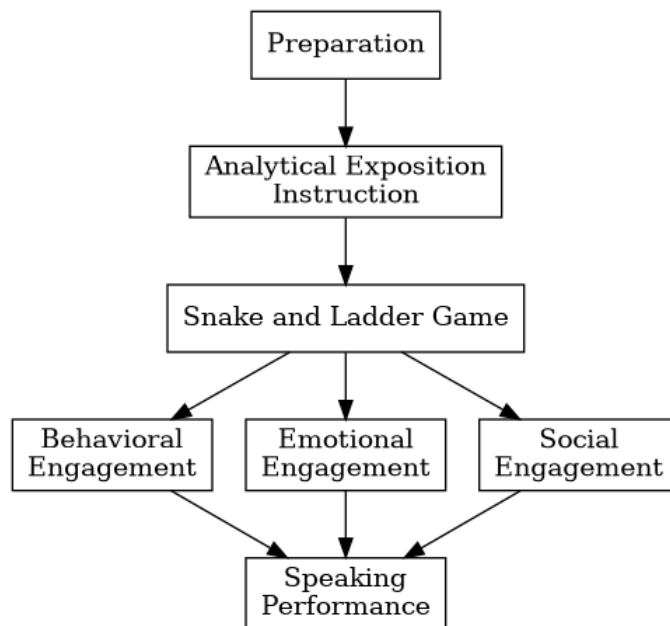


Figure 1. Framework of the Integration of the Snake and Ladder Game in Speaking Instruction

The results back the idea of affective filter theory, indicating that students are more inclined to use language when their anxiety levels are lower and their emotional comfort is higher. The favorable classroom environment noted in this research corresponds with what Rismasari and Al Hakim (2025) found, which stated that the Snake and Ladder Game fosters a more enjoyable and collaborative learning space. Similarly, Wong and Yunus (2021) determined that learning through board games enhances active participation and interaction among language students.

In summary, the results indicate that the Snake and Ladder Game not only serves as a tool for teaching speaking skills but also plays a role in boosting student engagement and changing the dynamics of classroom interaction. The game provided numerous chances for speaking, promoted teamwork,

alleviated speaking-related anxiety, and helped create a more communicative learning environment, thus benefiting English speaking instruction in the EFL setting.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

According to this study, the Snake and Ladder Game was effectively incorporated into speaking teaching using a planned process that included phases for preparation, execution, and evaluation. Speaking challenge cards based on Analytical Exposition texts were added to the game, enabling students to use their comprehension of language elements and text structure in relevant oral communication exercises. The results show that the game served as an educational tool that promoted communicative speaking practice in the classroom in addition to being a learning help.

Additionally, the study discovered that using the Snake and Ladder Game improved students' participation in speaking lessons. Students engaged in cooperative engagement through peer discussion and encouragement, exhibited increased readiness and confidence to communicate in English, and actively participated through the turn-taking method. Additionally, the game helped create a more engaging and student-centered learning environment that promoted oral involvement and decreased reluctance in speaking exercises.

The following suggestions are proposed based on the results of this study. In order to create a more interesting and communicative learning environment, English teachers might think about including game-based learning activities, like the Snake and Ladder Game, into speaking training. Future scholars are urged to look into the application of comparable game-based learning techniques in other educational settings or language proficiency levels and to examine their long-term effects on students' speaking growth and communicative competence.

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