

Upgrading Senior High School Students' Skills in Spoken Expository Text through the Step and Speak Game

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Abstract: This study investigates the effectiveness of the Step and Speak Game in improving senior high school students' spoken expository performance. A quantitative pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test model was applied to 33 tenth-grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat. Data were collected through a speaking test assessed by a rubric covering fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. The treatment involved group practice using a footprint pathway, where students articulated the thesis, arguments, and reiteration while engaging in kinesthetic movement. Results showed significant improvement in pronunciation and vocabulary, while grammar demonstrated modest progress and fluency remained limited. These findings confirm that kinesthetic practice through structured movement activities can enhance oral competence and reduce anxiety. The Step and Speak Game also transformed classroom dynamics by fostering confidence, motivation, and collaborative interaction. In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence and pedagogical insights, offering teachers a practical and engaging medium to strengthen multidimensional speaking competence in expository contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking skill is widely recognized as one of the most demanding aspects of English learning for Indonesian EFL learners. Senior high school students often struggle with fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, which hinder their ability to deliver spoken expository texts systematically. Classroom observations reveal hesitation, fragmented sentences, and limited lexical range, reducing communicative competence (Rini et al., 2026). Anxiety and fear of mistakes further discourage participation, resulting in poor oral performance (Halim et al., 2025). These challenges highlight the urgent need for innovative strategies that can strengthen oral competence and provide meaningful opportunities for structured speaking practice.

Traditional teaching approaches in Indonesian classrooms frequently emphasize grammar drills, translation, and memorization of vocabulary lists. While these methods may improve immediate recognition, they provide limited opportunities for oral rehearsal and meaningful processing. Large class sizes and exam-oriented curricula further restrict speaking practice, leaving students unable to deliver the thesis, arguments, and reiterations coherently (Afrizal et al., 2025).

Previous studies confirm that teacher-centered instruction often fails to provide sufficient scaffolding for oral performance, resulting in minimal improvement in fluency and confidence (Rini et al., 2026). This gap underscores the importance of exploring alternative pedagogical approaches that integrate linguistic accuracy with engaging practice.

Kinesthetic learning integrates physical movement into language instruction, stimulating memory and reducing anxiety. Movement-based activities encourage students to engage more freely in oral practice, while game-based strategies create enjoyable contexts that foster motivation and participation (Tuso et al., 2026; Usuluddin et al., 2024). International studies confirm that structured games improve fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary by embedding language tasks within playful environments (He et al., 2026). In Indonesia, footprint media has been applied successfully to vocabulary learning (Ilham, 2024), but its potential for expository speaking remains underexplored.

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of footprint media in language learning. For instance, (Ilham, 2024) investigated the Follow the Footprints Game to improve vocabulary mastery among junior high school students and reported significant improvement after treatment. Similarly, (Hamdan & Aziz, 2026) reviewed kinesthetic strategies such as Total Physical Response, gesture-based learning, and movement games, confirming their effectiveness for vocabulary acquisition and motivation. However, these studies focused primarily on vocabulary learning and did not address expository speaking. None has utilized footprint media as a rhetorical scaffold to guide students through thesis, arguments, and reiteration in spoken expository text. This absence highlights a clear research gap that the present study seeks to address by introducing the Step and Speak Game as a kinesthetic medium specifically designed to enhance oral performance in structured expository speaking tasks.

Building on this rationale, the present study introduces the Step and Speak Game as a kinesthetic medium designed to scaffold expository speaking. Unlike conventional games, this model integrates physical movement with rhetorical stages, requiring students to articulate ideas while advancing along footprints. The novelty of this research lies in applying footprint-based kinesthetic strategies to spoken expository text, filling a gap in previous studies that focused primarily on vocabulary. Accordingly, this study investigates whether the Step and Speak Game can improve senior high school students' speaking skills, particularly in fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, while reducing anxiety and fostering engagement.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Speaking Skills

Speaking is a fundamental aspect of language learning because oral communication allows learners to express ideas clearly and systematically. (Brown, 2012) defines speaking as an interactive process of constructing meaning through producing, receiving, and processing information simultaneously. (Goh & Burns, 2012) emphasize that speaking involves both cognitive and social dimensions, requiring learners to manage linguistic forms while negotiating meaning in real time. In spoken expository text, these elements become crucial since students must deliver the thesis, arguments, and reiteration coherently. Problems in fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary often weaken oral performance, making speaking one of the most challenging skills for Indonesian EFL learners (Afrizal et al., 2025; Halim et al., 2025; Rini et al., 2026).

Kinesthetic Learning

Kinesthetic learning integrates physical movement into language instruction, stimulating memory and reducing anxiety. (Usuluddin et al., 2024) explain that kinesthetic strategies encourage

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students to engage more freely in oral practice because movement lowers affective barriers. (Hamdan & Aziz, 2026) Confirm that interactive methods such as gesture rehearsal and footprint media improve vocabulary acquisition and retention, showing that embodied learning transforms abstract rhetorical structures into tangible experiences. (Simamora et al., 2025) Further reports that movement-based learning improved fluency, pronunciation, and grammar among vocational students, demonstrating the effectiveness of embodied rehearsal. By combining movement with oral rehearsal, kinesthetic learning provides a dynamic environment that fosters active participation and reduces hesitation, making speaking practice more effective and enjoyable.

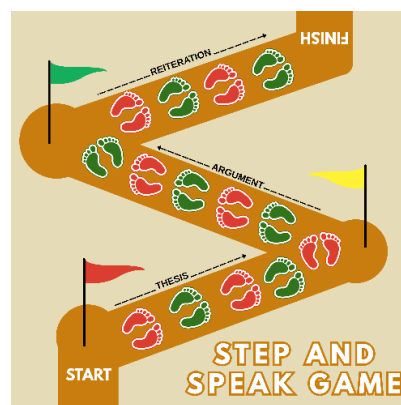
Game-Based Learning

Game-based learning applies interactive play to language instruction, embedding challenge, feedback, and collaboration into structured activities. (Jansone, 2021) highlights that games are not only motivational tools but also pedagogical strategies that integrate enjoyment with systematic practice. (Chen, 2020) found that digital language games improve pronunciation and fluency by providing immediate feedback. (He et al., 2026) Note that fluency gains are consistent across studies, while pronunciation and accuracy improve when structured feedback is integrated into game design. (Tuso et al., 2026) emphasize that collaborative games increase motivation and participation, while (Khodjiakbarovna, 2024) confirms that game-based strategies foster communicative competence by encouraging learners to use language actively in meaningful contexts. (Ilham, 2024) demonstrated that footprint games strengthen vocabulary mastery and support sentence construction in oral tasks, showing how kinesthetic-game media can directly enhance speaking performance.

Spoken Expository Text

Spoken expository text is oral discourse that aims to explain, inform, or clarify ideas logically and systematically. It is characterized by rhetorical stages such as thesis, supporting arguments, and reiteration, which provide coherence and logical sequencing (Oteda et al., 2021). Delivering expository texts orally demands fluency, accurate pronunciation, grammatical correctness, and sufficient vocabulary. Classroom studies in Indonesia reveal that students often fail to organize these stages coherently due to anxiety and limited practice (Halim et al., 2025; Rini et al., 2026). Therefore, integrating kinesthetic and game-based strategies into expository speaking tasks provides both linguistic scaffolding and affective support. The Step and Speak Game builds on these theoretical foundations by combining movement with structured oral rehearsal, offering a novel approach to improving students' spoken expository performance.

Step and Speak Game



The Step and Speak Game is a kinesthetic medium that integrates physical movement with structured oral practice. Games create meaningful learning environments by combining challenge, feedback, and motivation (Jansone, 2021), while oral rehearsal embedded in structured tasks strengthens expository organization (Ukrainetz, 2018). Genre-based pedagogy further supports scaffolding of thesis, arguments, and reiteration (Arisandi et al., 2023). These perspectives establish the theoretical basis for adapting game-based principles into expository speaking practice.

In classroom implementation, students are divided into groups and guided along a footprint pathway, each stage representing thesis, arguments, and reiteration. Digital and collaborative games have been shown to improve fluency, pronunciation, and motivation ((Chen, 2020; Khodjiakbarovna, 2024; Tuso et al., 2026), supporting the design of the Step and Speak Game as an interactive classroom activity.

Linguistic development is reinforced through repeated practice of sentence patterns, lexical expansion, and pronunciation refinement. Studies confirm that fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary mastery improve when structured feedback and kinesthetic scaffolds are integrated (He et al., 2026; Ilham, 2024; Marginingsih et al., 2025).

The novelty of the Step and Speak Game lies in its adaptation of game-based principles into expository speaking pedagogy. Expository structures benefit from visual and interactive representation (Oteda et al., 2021), while contextualized oral rehearsal strengthens pragmatic aspects of discourse (Ayyub & Tyas, 2022). By scaffolding thesis, arguments, and reiteration in a structured sequence, the Step and Speak Game distinguishes itself from general language games and offers a unique contribution to senior high school speaking practice.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test model to examine the effectiveness of the Step and Speak Game in improving students' spoken expository performance. (Creswell, 2012) explains that quantitative research design provides a systematic plan for collecting and analyzing data to evaluate instructional innovation. Pre-experimental design is frequently applied in educational contexts to examine the initial effectiveness of new strategies, and (Ary et al., 2010) emphasize that the one-group pretest–posttest model generates baseline and outcome data for evaluating treatment impact. The participants were tenth-grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat, consisting of 33 learners selected purposively from one intact class. The instrument used was a speaking test in the form of spoken expository text, assessed through a rubric covering fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, adapted from (Brown, 2012) to ensure validity and reliability.

The procedure of the research consisted of three stages. First, students delivered spoken expository texts before treatment as the pre-test. Second, they practiced using the Step and Speak Game during the treatment. In this stage, the class was divided into six groups, each group represented by a marker placed on the footprint pathway. A representative from each group drew a roll containing instructions such as “step forward,” “stay but clap once,” or “step backward.” Movement across the pathway corresponded to rhetorical stages of exposition: thesis, arguments, and reiteration. When a student stopped at a footprint, they were required to produce one spoken sentence according to the color code: green footprints indicated pro statements, while red footprints indicated contra statements. This procedure ensured that oral rehearsal was systematically integrated with physical movement and group interaction. Third, students delivered spoken expository texts after treatment as the post-test.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation, while inferential statistics were applied through the Wilcoxon Signed Rank

Test to determine whether there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. Reliability analysis was also conducted to ensure consistency of the rubric and accuracy of the measurement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Pre-Test Total Scores

Statistic	Value
N	33
Missing	0
Mean	7.42
Median	8
Standard deviation	2.41
Minimum	4
Maximum	13
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.919
Shapiro-Wilk p	.017

Table 1 presents the baseline performance of students before treatment. The mean score of 7.42 with a wide range (minimum 4, maximum 13) indicates varied initial speaking ability. The Shapiro-Wilk test ($p = .017$) confirmed that the data were not normally distributed, requiring non-parametric analysis.

Table 2. Descriptive Comparison of Overall Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Assessment Phase	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Pre-Test Total Score	33	7.42	8	2.41	0.420
Post-Test Total Score	33	8.48	8	2.66	0.463

Table 2 shows a moderate increase in the overall mean score from 7.42 to 8.48 after the implementation of the Step and Speak Game. This improvement suggests that the treatment had a positive effect on students' speaking performance, although the gain was not dramatic.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results (Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test)

Paired Comparison	Test Type	Statistic (W)	p-value	Mean Difference	SE Difference	Effect Size (Rank-Biserial r)
Fluency_Pre-Fluency_Post	Wilcoxon W	0.00	1.000	-1.00	0.0303	1.00
Pronunciation_Pre-Pronunciation_Post	Wilcoxon W	0.00	<.001	-1.00	0.0850	1.00
Grammar_Pre-Grammar_Post	Wilcoxon W	0.00	.072	-1.00	0.0577	1.00
Vocabulary_Pre-Vocabulary_Post	Wilcoxon W	0.00	.008	-1.00	0.0900	1.00

Table 3 presents the results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test. Pronunciation ($p < .001$) and vocabulary ($p = .008$) improved significantly, while fluency ($p = 1.000$) and grammar ($p = .072$) did not show significant differences. These findings partially support the research hypothesis, confirming that the Step and Speak Game effectively enhanced pronunciation and vocabulary but had a limited impact on fluency and grammar.

Discussion

The Step and Speak Game provided measurable improvements in students' speaking performance. Previous studies have emphasized that kinesthetic and game-based strategies can enhance oral communication by reducing anxiety and fostering engagement (Chen, 2020; Tuso et al., 2026). The descriptive results in this study confirmed that overall scores increased after treatment, showing that movement-based activities can positively influence speaking practice.

Pronunciation emerged as the most significantly improved aspect. Interactive and collaborative games are known to provide immediate feedback and encourage active participation, which directly supports clearer articulation (Chen, 2020; Khodjiakbarovna, 2024). The footprint pathway guided students to rehearse pronunciation in a structured sequence, and this kinesthetic design aligns with (Ilham, 2024), who demonstrated that footprint games strengthen vocabulary and pronunciation mastery.

Vocabulary also showed notable gains after treatment. Kinesthetic scaffolds expose learners repeatedly to target words, making lexical acquisition more engaging and memorable (Ilham, 2024; Marginingsih et al., 2025). The vocabulary improvement is consistent with findings that schema-based strategies combined with visual prompts enhance comprehension and oral production. These results confirm that the Step and Speak Game effectively supports lexical development in expository speaking tasks.

Fluency and grammar, however, did not improve significantly. Sustained fluency requires continuous practice in extended speech, while grammar accuracy often depends on explicit instruction and corrective feedback (Afrizal et al., 2025; Qizi, 2023). This suggests that kinesthetic games alone may not be sufficient to strengthen these aspects. Future applications should integrate complementary strategies such as shadowing or contextualized grammar drills to achieve more comprehensive improvements across all dimensions of speaking competence.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Step and Speak Game effectively improved students' speaking performance in Indonesian senior high school classrooms. Kinesthetic practice through structured movement activities enhanced oral competence in expository contexts by reducing hesitation and encouraging clearer articulation. The integration of physical activity supported speaking as a multidimensional competence that combines linguistic accuracy with affective engagement.

The results confirmed that pronunciation and vocabulary improved significantly, while grammar showed modest progress, and fluency remained limited. This selective effectiveness highlights the complexity of speaking competence and indicates that complementary pedagogical approaches are needed to strengthen all aspects of oral performance.

The Step and Speak Game also transformed classroom dynamics by reducing anxiety, fostering confidence, and motivating learners to participate actively. Movement and play shifted the atmosphere from tense and exam-oriented to supportive and enjoyable, encouraging repeated oral rehearsal. In conclusion, this research provides empirical evidence and pedagogical insights, offering teachers a practical and engaging medium to foster multidimensional speaking competence in expository contexts.

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