

## Teachers' Communication in Shaping Students' Self-Esteem and Speaking Skills Through Indonesian Language Learning in Elementary Schools

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### Abstract

*Teachers' forms of communication have an important role in shaping students' self-esteem and speaking skills in elementary schools. This research aims to examine the form of teacher communication in learning in forming self-esteem and speaking skills in elementary schools. The research method uses descriptive qualitative research methods. Data collection techniques using observation and interviews. Effective communication between teachers and students is very important in the learning process, not only to transfer knowledge, but also skills and values. 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication, are needed so that students are ready to face the challenges of the future. This research found that effective verbal and nonverbal communication can increase students' self-confidence and understanding. However, field findings show that some students experience low self-esteem, which affects their active participation in learning. This study concludes that appropriate forms of communication can help improve students' self-esteem and speaking abilities, and suggests the need for a more structured communication model to support successful learning.*

**Keywords:** teacher communication, speaking skill, learning, self-esteem, elementary school

### Abstrak

Bentuk komunikasi guru memiliki peranan penting dalam membentuk *self-esteem* dan keterampilan berbicara peserta didik di sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bentuk komunikasi guru dalam pembelajaran dalam membentuk *self-esteem* dan keterampilan berbicara di sekolah dasar. Metode penelitian menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data dengan observasi dan wawancara. Komunikasi efektif antara guru dan peserta didik sangat penting dalam proses pembelajaran, tidak hanya untuk mentransfer pengetahuan, tetapi juga keterampilan dan nilai-nilai. Keterampilan abad ke-21, seperti berpikir kritis, kreativitas, kolaborasi, dan komunikasi, diperlukan agar peserta didik siap menghadapi tantangan masa depan. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa komunikasi verbal dan nonverbal yang efektif dapat meningkatkan rasa percaya diri dan pemahaman peserta didik. Namun, temuan lapangan menunjukkan bahwa beberapa peserta didik mengalami *self-esteem* rendah, yang mempengaruhi partisipasi aktif mereka dalam pembelajaran. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa bentuk komunikasi yang tepat dapat membantu meningkatkan *self-esteem* dan kemampuan berbicara peserta didik, serta menyarankan perlunya model komunikasi yang lebih terstruktur untuk mendukung keberhasilan pembelajaran.

**Kata kunci:** komunikasi guru, keterampilan berbicara, pembelajaran *self-esteem*, sekolah dasar



## INTRODUCTION

Learning is a continuously evolving process, not only aimed at increasing knowledge but also at shaping character and skills. In a rapidly changing world, learning becomes the key to adapting, innovating, and confidently facing challenges. Learning is an interactive process between students, teachers, and learning resources within a learning environment (Yestiani & Zahwa, 2020). Teacher-student interaction plays a crucial role in facilitating the optimal delivery of the transfer of knowledge, skills, and values (Karyaningsih, 2018). When these three processes are optimally executed, students can develop self-improvement capabilities, preparing them to face future challenges (Karyaningsih, 2018).

In the learning process, teachers not only transfer knowledge but also play a vital role as educators and communicators (Lase & Zega, 2022). As ideal educators, it is insufficient to merely provide knowledge to students; teachers must also cultivate and refine students' skills and instill moral values, ensuring that students are not only intellectually capable but also skilled in various areas and capable of continuously developing their character (Parlindungan et al., 2023).

21st-century skills are essential for students. These skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, collaboration, and communication (T. Brauer, 2010). Students must master these skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Communication, in particular, is a fundamental component for students (Myers & Eike, 2020). For messages to be effectively conveyed, good communication is required so that students can easily grasp the meaning of the information provided by their teachers (Theresia, 2018). Effective communication positively influences students' speaking abilities and self-esteem in life (Nurina & Ajeng, 2024).

During learning, teachers employ verbal communication in the form of statements, questions, commands, or exclamations, as well as non-verbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions, and variations in speech delivery (Taufina, 2015). The use of both verbal and non-verbal communication in tandem determines the effectiveness and efficiency of classroom learning, contributing to the overall success of the learning process (Kusumawati, 2015),

In addition to affecting learning success, communication also contributes to developing self-confidence, which is strongly influenced by students' speaking abilities and self-esteem (Mentari et al., 22 C.E.). Individuals with high self-confidence believe in their capacity to achieve their desired goals. This confidence reflects a strong belief in one's abilities and a mastery of personal competence (Lombu & Lase, 2023).

The need for self-esteem cannot be ignored in a child's development. Elementary school-aged children, who are in a critical developmental stage, require the fulfillment of their self-esteem needs (Aini et al., 2018). Meeting these needs helps children build a positive self-concept, which in turn positively influences their academic performance (Mentari et al., 22 C.E.)

Students with high self-esteem tend to be more confident in facing various classroom learning situations and challenges (Wang et al., 2021). They exhibit a strong curiosity and enthusiasm for new things. Conversely, students with low self-esteem often lack confidence in their abilities and tend to avoid situations they perceive as potentially embarrassing (Lawrence, 2006).

Initial observations conducted by the researcher involved analyzing educational reports at the school under study to identify issues related to students' communication abilities. The educational report from SD N 01 Pandean indicated a decline in the quality of learning, with psychological support being one of the sub-indicators. There is a need for evaluation and reflection to improve the educational report outcomes at SD N 01 Pandean.

Psychological support can be addressed by implementing learning practices that meet students' needs for fostering self-confidence and feelings of acceptance without discrimination, thus enhancing the quality of learning. This requires effective communication on the part of teachers (Jhoselle Tus, 2020).

A subsequent issue found by the researcher is that some students demonstrate low levels of self-esteem. In class 6B, where the researcher serves as the homeroom teacher, several students have been identified as having low self-esteem, with one male and one female student standing out. These students will be referred to as Student A (female) and Student B (male). Repeated observations show that Student A has exhibited low self-esteem since grade 5, characterized by isolation and feelings of being undervalued by classmates, due to her poor participation in learning activities. She also displays emotional instability and is often unresponsive when questioned. Student A avoids being in front of the class, frequently misses school due to incomplete assignments, and struggles with waking up on time. Student B shows signs of low self-esteem through his tendency to remain silent in class and exhibit sadness, primarily due to feeling neglected by the teacher and being ridiculed by other students for answering questions incorrectly.

Further observations in class 6A revealed other students showing signs of low self-esteem. These students, referred to as Student C and Student D, demonstrate low motivation to participate in class activities, often remaining quiet and lost in thought. Neither student displays active engagement during lessons.

These findings align with research by Ummah et al. (2020), which indicates that grade 4B students at SDN Keboansikep 01 Gedangan Sidoarjo exhibited low speaking abilities. Hazran's (2018) study also showed low speaking abilities among students, with an average score of 9.76 and an individual absorption rate of 61%. If left unaddressed, this condition can negatively impact students' learning in other subjects. Kurniasih (as cited in Zahra, 2022) noted that students who struggle with speaking fluency often face challenges in various learning activities. Padmawati et al. (2019) further emphasized that poor speaking abilities reduce students' confidence, contributing to passive behavior during the learning process. This passivity causes students to hesitate in expressing opinions, fear speaking, and feel embarrassed about their speaking abilities.

Interviews with the homeroom teachers of class 6A and 6B revealed concerns about the students' lack of understanding of the material presented and their speaking abilities. The teachers suspected that the students' low motivation, caused by their speaking difficulties when interacting with teachers, affected the development of their self-esteem.

Based on these observations and the teachers' assumptions, the researcher concluded that further investigation is needed to explore the forms of communication employed by teachers during the learning process. This study aims to identify communication models that can be applied by teachers to develop students' speaking skills and self-esteem. Therefore, the researcher has chosen the title of this study as "Forms of Teacher Communication and Students' Self-Esteem in Elementary School Learning."

## METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a method that develops concepts based on existing data. This type of research emphasizes flexibility and validity, which are closely tied to the researcher's ability to capture, analyze, and reflect on the data (Arikunto, 2010). The approach was chosen based on the discovery of a phenomenon that requires in-depth examination, specifically the decline in students' ability to understand teacher communication, which has resulted

in a decrease in students' comprehension of the learning material presented during the Teaching and Learning Activities.

This research uses descriptive qualitative methods. Research subjects were teachers and students of grade 6 elementary schools in Madiun City. Data collection techniques use observation and interviews. According to Miles and Huberman, the data analysis technique of interactive model data analysis has 3 components, namely (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) drawing conclusions/verification. The three main components contained in qualitative data analysis must be present in qualitative data analysis. Because the relationship between these three must continue to be compared to determine the direction of the content of the conclusion as the final result of the research (Zulfirman, 2022)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of interviews with class teachers who teach students in classes 6A and 6B complained about the lack of students' level of understanding of the material presented by the teacher and students' speaking skills. Based on the teacher's suspicions, the lack of students' level of understanding is caused by students' motivation which is caused by students' lack of speaking skills when interacting with teachers, which has an impact on building students' self-esteem.

These findings are in line with research by Ummah et al. (2020) which shows the low speaking skills of class IV B students at SDN Keboansikep 01 Gedangan Sidoarjo. Apart from that, Rosidah and Wahyono Hazran's research also shows that students' speaking skills are still low, with an average score of 9.76 and an individual absorption percentage of 61%. This condition, if not handled, can have a negative impact on student learning and other subjects (Rosidah & Wahyono, 2024). Insufficient speaking skills will reduce students' self-confidence in speaking, which then has an impact on students being passive in the learning process. This passivity also makes students reluctant to express opinions, afraid to speak, and feel embarrassed if their speaking skills have not been fully mastered (Handayani, 2023)

Communication is a basic human activity. The need for communication is one of the most important aspects of a person's life (Nkrumah, 2021). Through communication, humans can connect with each other, whether in daily life at home, in the workplace, at the market, in society, at school, or anywhere humans exist (Yalap & Polat, 2020). Communication is essential to human life; the development of human knowledge from day to day is due to communication. Through communication, children are able to reflect on the past, understand the present, and anticipate the future (Sandeep Talluri, 2023). Communication is something that builds relationships—these relationships are formed between one person and another or between groups of people, resulting in the exchange of more than one message at a time (Dimpleby & Burton, 2020). Communication can also be understood as 'communicare,' which means to share something with someone through exchanging, conversing, making friends, sharing ideas, informing someone, relating, participating, or notifying (Kusumawati, 2015). Communication is an interactive and participatory process at all levels (Ruler, 2020). The development of communication skills in elementary school children is a pressing issue, as the level of skill formation not only affects the effectiveness of the child's abilities but also their overall socialization process and personal development (Karasheva et al., 2021).

Self-esteem is related to evaluations that emphasize the role of an individual's cognition, as well as affection, which prioritizes the role of feelings, as both are connected to self-worth (Mruk, 2006). According to Branden (2001), the terms cognition and affection can be equated. Every individual has their own way of viewing and valuing themselves, whether they see themselves positively or negatively. A person's view of

themselves can motivate them toward self-improvement in order to become the ideal self they envision. The development of motivation within an individual to become better is influenced by several needs that must be met, including basic or physiological needs and developmental needs. One aspect of developmental needs is the need for self-worth, also known as self-esteem (Aini & Nur, 2018). In general, self-esteem can be viewed from the aspects of a person's cognition and affection. The cognitive aspect refers to an individual's confidence in facing various life challenges based on their existing competencies. Meanwhile, the affective aspect involves the feeling that one is valuable, deserving, and entitled to receive happiness from those around them.

Language develops from every human's ability to speak (produce sounds) and the complexity of vocabulary and grammar that humans possess (Sidabutar et al., 2022). The importance of speaking skills not only impacts communication but also influences thinking, reading, writing, and listening skills (Theresia, 2018).. Speaking skills involve the ability to express ideas and thoughts to achieve intentions and goals (Hayati & Deni Setiawan, 2022). A child's speaking ability is also preceded by listening activities. Speaking is a component of language that encompasses three integrated processes: learning to pronounce words, forming vocabulary, and constructing complete sentences (I Ketut Suparya, 2021). Speaking is also the ability to articulate, express, state, and convey ideas and thoughts.

Based on the definition of speaking skills above, it can be concluded that speaking skills are the ability to express, state, and convey ideas, thoughts, or feelings to others using oral language that can be understood by others. Activities that children can engage in include interacting and communicating with people around them, which helps train them to speak (Rayhan et al., 2023). Speaking skills need to be practiced from an early age so that children can articulate sounds or words, enabling them to express, state, and convey ideas, thoughts, or feelings to others. Learning to speak can be done with the help of adults through conversation. Through conversation, children gain experience, increase their knowledge, and develop their language (Wu & Hung, 2022). Children need reinforcement, rewards (gifts, praise), stimulation, and good role models from adults in order to fully develop their language skills (Anjelina & Wini Tarmini, 2022).

Speaking skills are not only an essential component of language learning, but they are also often used as a primary indicator of success in mastering a language (Suriani et al., 2021). This aligns with the nature of language as a tool for communication, especially in oral form, where success in mastering speaking skills is often used as a key measure of achievement in language learning (Delvia et al., 2019). Speaking skills are the result of the interaction between brain function, language, and human thought. Speaking skills involve the ability to articulate or express ideas, and there are several aspects to consider: (1) accuracy of pronunciation, (2) proper placement of stress, tone, joints, and duration, (3) word choice (diction), and (4) precision of the target or purpose of the conversation (Arsjad et al., 1991). Speaking skills provide a platform for students to actively participate in learning, develop critical thinking, and enrich their understanding of social realities (Erik Palmer, 2023). Thus, speaking skills are not only beneficial for cognitive development but also for the formation of important social skills."

## CONCLUSION

Communication as a basic human activity that builds relationships and facilitates the development of knowledge and social interaction. Communication, in both cognitive and affective aspects, plays a crucial role in shaping self-esteem and influencing a person's motivation to grow.

Speaking skills are an essential component of language learning, significantly impacting thinking, reading, writing, and listening abilities. The development of speaking skills in

children should be nurtured from an early age through interaction with adults. This process not only enhances their language abilities but also fosters the formation of important social and critical thinking skills.

Success in mastering speaking skills is often seen as a key indicator of achievement in language learning, as it reflects a person's ability to communicate effectively. Speaking involves accurate pronunciation, appropriate word choice, and the ability to clearly express ideas, all of which contribute to a child's cognitive and social development.

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