

THE EFFECT OF AN INTERACTIVE BOARD GAME-BASED DRILL METHOD ON THE EARLY READING ABILITY OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS AT SDN 1 BANDORASAKULON

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the effect of applying the drill method based on interactive board games on the early reading ability of first-grade students at SDN 1 Bandorasakulon, Cilimus District, Kuningan Regency. The research method used was an experimental design with a pretest-posttest model. The subjects of the study were 20 students. The research instruments consisted of an early reading ability test and observation sheets for teacher and student activities. The results showed that the implementation of the drill method based on interactive board games was carried out effectively, as evidenced by the observation results of teacher and student activities which reached 93% in the "very good" category. Students' early reading ability improved significantly, with an average pretest score of 54.38 (3 students achieved mastery and 17 did not) increasing to 82.19 in the posttest (19 students achieved mastery and 1 did not). The Paired Sample T-Test revealed a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that the drill method based on interactive board games had a significant effect on early reading ability. The N-Gain analysis result of 0.6428 fell into the medium category with an effectiveness of 64.28%. Therefore, this method is effective in improving the early reading ability of elementary school students.

Keywords: Drill method; Interactive board game; Early reading; Indonesian language learning; Elementary school.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh penerapan metode *drill* berbasis *boardgame* interaktif terhadap kemampuan membaca permulaan peserta didik kelas I SDN 1 Bandorasakulon, Kecamatan Cilimus, Kabupaten Kuningan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah eksperimen dengan desain *pretest-posttest*. Subjek penelitian berjumlah 20 peserta didik. Instrumen penelitian berupa tes kemampuan membaca permulaan serta lembar observasi aktivitas guru dan peserta didik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan metode *drill* berbasis *boardgame* interaktif terlaksana dengan baik, dibuktikan dengan hasil observasi kegiatan guru dan peserta didik yang mencapai persentase 93% dalam kategori "sangat baik". Kemampuan membaca permulaan peserta didik mengalami peningkatan signifikan, dengan rata-rata nilai *pretest* sebesar 54,38 (3 peserta didik tuntas dan 17 belum tuntas) meningkat menjadi 82,19 pada *posttest* (19 peserta didik tuntas dan 1 belum tuntas). Uji *Paired Sample T-Test* menunjukkan nilai signifikansi $0,000 < 0,05$ yang berarti metode *drill* berbasis *boardgame* interaktif berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kemampuan membaca permulaan. Hasil analisis *N-Gain* sebesar 0,6428 termasuk kategori sedang dengan efektivitas 64,28%. Dengan demikian, metode ini efektif digunakan dalam meningkatkan kemampuan membaca permulaan peserta didik sekolah dasar.

Kata Kunci: Metode *drill*; *Boardgame* interaktif; Membaca permulaan; Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia; Sekolah Dasar.

Received : 2025-08-28

Approved : 2025-10-20

Revised : 2025-10-10

Published : 2025-10-31



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Introduction

Reading is a fundamental skill that serves as the foundation for mastering knowledge and developing critical thinking abilities. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that reading literacy is one of the key indicators of human resource development, as it enables individuals to acquire, process, and utilize information in everyday life. At the elementary school level, early reading skills function as the gateway for children to master various other academic competencies. Without adequate reading skills, children will face difficulties in understanding learning materials at higher levels (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Reading is not only considered a cognitive activity but also a spiritual one in Islamic tradition. This is affirmed in the first revelation, namely the command to read in Q.S. Al-'Alaq verses 1–5, which highlights the importance of reading as a path to beneficial knowledge and worship. Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated that seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim (HR. Ibn Majah), strengthening the urgency of literacy from an early age.

Conceptually, reading skills consist of two main stages: early reading and advanced reading. Early reading emphasizes the recognition of letters, syllable construction, and the arrangement of words into simple sentences, whereas advanced reading includes speed reading, extensive reading, and deeper comprehension (Mulyati, 2014). Early reading instruction in lower elementary grades aims to establish a strong literacy foundation before progressing to advanced reading skills (Hoerudin, 2021). However, field evidence shows that students' early reading ability remains low. According to the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Indonesian students' reading literacy ranked 74th out of 79 countries (OECD, 2019). This finding reveals a serious challenge in improving children's literacy from the primary education stage.

Low early reading skills may stem from both internal and external factors. Internal factors include children's cognitive development, learning motivation, and reading interest, while external factors involve family support, teacher quality, availability of learning media, and literacy-rich environments at school and home (Masykuri, 2020). Previous studies revealed that many first graders still struggle to recognize vowels, consonants, and diphthongs, making it difficult for them to form words and simple sentences (Mulyono, 2020). Preliminary observations at SDN 1 Bandorasakulon confirmed similar issues, where students often read hesitantly, paused mid-word, or guessed words despite recognizing letters correctly. These problems are compounded by monotonous teaching methods, lack of variation, and minimal use of interactive media. In fact, constructivist learning theory emphasizes that children learn more effectively when actively engaged in enjoyable and relevant learning processes (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, an instructional approach is needed that not only provides systematic practice but also sustains children's motivation and concentration.

The drill method is one instructional strategy that can be employed to enhance students' basic skills. Drill involves repetitive and systematic practice designed to strengthen memory, increase speed, and reduce errors in specific skills (Lindrawati, 2022). In early reading, drills can help students recognize letters, spell syllables, and read simple sentences more fluently. However, if applied without variation, drills may become monotonous and boring. Thus, integration with engaging learning media such as board games is necessary.

Board games are structured games played in groups according to certain rules. They function not only as entertainment but also as effective educational tools, as they involve social interaction, communication, and strategy (Maulana & Asmarani, 2021). Previous research has shown that board games can improve students' concentration, motivation, and engagement in learning (Ratih & Ningsih, 2017; Mufida & Abidin, 2021). Additionally, board games promote

sportsmanship, collaboration, and strategic thinking (Ningtyas, 2023). These qualities align with the characteristics of elementary school children, who enjoy learning through play.

Although numerous studies have explored the effectiveness of the drill method in improving reading skills (Hidayati, 2018; Sumanty, 2020; Ubaidillah, 2021) and the use of board games in fostering student engagement and motivation (Maulana & Asmarani, 2021; Ningtyas, 2023), most of them treat these approaches separately. The majority of research on early reading still focuses on conventional drill exercises or individual literacy games, while studies that combine systematic practice (drill) with interactive, play-based media (board games) remain limited. Moreover, prior works often highlight reading comprehension at later stages rather than addressing the foundational challenge of early reading in first-grade students, particularly in rural or semi-urban Indonesian contexts where literacy outcomes remain low (OECD, 2019). This creates a research gap in investigating how an integrated approach—drill reinforced by board games—can simultaneously enhance accuracy, fluency, and student motivation in early reading instruction.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating the drill method with interactive board game media as a dual strategy for improving early reading skills. While previous research has established the individual benefits of drill and board games, this study uniquely combines the systematic repetition of drill with the engaging, interactive, and social dimensions of board games. This approach not only targets cognitive mastery of basic reading skills but also sustains children's motivation, concentration, and enjoyment in the learning process. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, this is one of the first empirical studies in Indonesia that applies an interactive board game-based drill method specifically to enhance first graders' early reading ability.

The integration of the drill method with interactive board games is believed to offer an innovative solution for improving students' early reading ability. Drill provides systematic practice, while board games create an enjoyable, interactive learning environment suited to children's needs. This study was conducted to examine the effect of the interactive board game-based drill method on the early reading skills of first-grade students at SDN 1 Bandorasakulon. The results are expected to contribute theoretically to literacy teaching strategies and provide practical benefits for teachers and schools in improving the quality of reading instruction in primary education.

Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design, specifically the one-group pretest–posttest design. This design was chosen because it is suitable for measuring differences in early reading ability before and after treatment using the interactive board game-based drill method (Hamsir, 2017). The research subjects were all first-grade students at SDN 1 Bandorasakulon, Kuningan Regency, West Java, in the 2024/2025 academic year, totaling 20 students. The sampling technique used was saturated sampling, in which the entire population was included as the research sample (Sugiyono, 2019).

The variables in this study consisted of the independent variable, namely the application of the interactive board game-based drill method, and the dependent variable, namely the early reading ability of first-grade students. The instruments used to collect data included an early reading ability test and observation sheets. The test was administered in the form of pretest and posttest, covering four indicators: recognizing letters, spelling syllables, reading words, and

reading simple sentences (Safetyani et al., 2019). The observation sheets were used to monitor the implementation of learning activities using the interactive board game-based drill method.

Table 1. Early Reading Indicators

No	Indicator	Description
1	Recognizing letter sounds	The individual's ability to correctly and accurately pronounce letter sounds.
2	Spelling syllables	The individual's ability to correctly spell letters into syllables.
3	Reading words	The individual's ability to read words correctly.
4	Reading sentences	The individual's ability to correctly read short sentences.

The research procedure was carried out in three stages: pretest, treatment, and posttest. The pretest was conducted to determine the students' initial early reading ability, followed by the treatment, which involved learning through the interactive board game-based drill method over several sessions. The process concluded with a posttest to assess the development of early reading ability after the treatment was given. The research data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe the pretest and posttest results, as well as inferential statistics with a paired sample t-test to examine the significance of differences before and after the treatment. In addition, the N-Gain calculation was used to determine the effectiveness level of improvement in students' early reading ability.

Results and Discussion

The implementation of the interactive board game-based drill method on early reading ability in Indonesian language subjects can be seen from the observation sheets of teacher and student activities. This implementation used the Contextual Learning model, in which the learning process was directly observed by an observer. The observation sheet for the implementation of the interactive board game-based drill method in relation to early reading ability in Indonesian language subjects was aligned with the learning activities and syntax of the Contextual Learning model. The observation results are presented in the following table:

Table 2. Observation Results of Teacher and Student Activities

Observation Results	Maximum Score	Score Obtained	Percentage
Teacher	28	26	93%
Students	28	26	93%

Based on Table 2, the observation results of teacher and student activities show a score of 26 out of a maximum of 28, with an average percentage of 93%, which falls into the "very high" category. This percentage indicates that the learning activities were implemented in accordance with the syntax of Contextual Learning, although not reaching 100% due to negligence in two points: singing the national anthem before the lesson and stimulating students when answering. This occurred because of insufficient classroom conditioning after attendance, leading the teacher to directly provide prompting questions, as well as the teacher's focus being diverted to word identification activities. These oversights could potentially reduce the instillation of patriotism and make students more rigid in thinking or expressing opinions. Nevertheless, the teacher can address this by being more thorough, conditioning the class after attendance, and ensuring that each step of the syntax is carried out comprehensively. Overall, the implementation of the interactive board game-based drill method in early reading ran smoothly and was enthusiastically followed by the students. Although a few points were missed, the observation results with a percentage of 93% still fall into the "very good" category, as the drill method allows students to practice repeatedly, thereby improving their early reading ability.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Results of Early Reading Ability

		Pretest Reading Skills	
		Pretest Reading Skills	Pretest Reading Skills
Students	Valid	20	20
	Missing	0	0
Mean		54.38	82.19
Median		53.13	81.25
Std. Deviation		16.108	10.394
Range		63	38
Minimum		31	63
Maximum		94	100

Based on Table 3, the analysis using SPSS 26 shows that before treatment (pretest), out of 20 students participating in the study, the average score was 54.38 with a median of 53.13, standard deviation of 16.108, minimum score 31 and maximum 94, with only 3 students achieving mastery while 17 had not. After the treatment (posttest), the results increased significantly: the mean score rose to 82.19 with a median of 81.25, standard deviation of 10.394, minimum 63 and maximum 100, with 19 students achieving mastery and only 1 student not reaching it. These results indicate a clear difference between the initial ability and the ability after treatment, demonstrating the effectiveness of the intervention in improving students' early reading skills.

Table 4. Normality Test Results of Pretest and Posttest Early Reading Ability

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PRE	.157	20	.200*	.919	20	.095
POST	.155	20	.200*	.956	20	.472

Based on Table 4, the normality test results for the pretest show a significance value of 0.095, and for the posttest a significance value of 0.472. This means the normality test results are normally distributed since the significance value > 0.05.

Table 5. Homogeneity Test Results of Early Reading Ability

	Levene Statistic				
	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.	
Results	Based on Mean	1.570	1	38	.218
	Based on Median	1.611	1	38	.212
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.611	1	29.517	.214
	Based on trimmed mean	1.553	1	38	.220

Based on Table 5, the homogeneity test shows a significance value of 0.220. Therefore, students' early reading abilities are considered to come from the same population, fulfilling the homogeneity criteria.

Table 6. Hypothesis Test Results of Early Reading Ability

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
PRE - POST	-27.812	11.009	2.462	-32.965	-22.66	-11.298	19	0

Based on Table 6, the hypothesis test results on students' early reading ability show a significance value of 0.000. This indicates that the hypothesis test result is significant (< 0.05),

meaning the Null Hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, with a significant difference or relationship between the observed variables.

Table 7. N-Gain Test Results of Early Reading Ability

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ngain_Score	20	0.29	1.00	0.6428	0.18856
Ngain_Persen	20	28.57	100.00	64.2817	18.85601
Valid N (listwise)	20				

Based on Table 7 above, the N-Gain test results show a value of 0.6428, which falls into the medium category, with a percentage value of 64.2817%, classified as effective. Thus, it can be stated that the interactive board game-based drill method is effective in improving early reading skills.

The implementation of the interactive board game-based drill method in the Indonesian language subject to enhance early reading ability shows an evident improvement. Observations of teacher activities and student activities during the learning process using this method yielded a score of 26 out of a maximum score of 28, which equals 93% and falls into the "very good" category. The implementation was carried out in accordance with the learning activities and the syntax of Contextual Learning; however, the percentage did not reach 100%. This was due to some missed activity points during implementation, caused by insufficient classroom management after attendance checking, and the teacher's diverted focus when guiding students to the next activity point. A solution to address this issue is to improve classroom conditioning after attendance and maintain focus on each step of the learning process. Nevertheless, the application of the interactive board game-based drill method in the Indonesian language subject was successfully implemented, and it proved effective in enhancing students' early reading ability.

In line with the study by Erita Suryati et al. (2024) entitled "The Effect of the Drill Learning Method on Learning Interest and Early Reading Ability of Elementary School Students", it was found that students who applied learning using the drill method demonstrated higher self-confidence due to repeated practice, and their reading ability also showed improvement.

Based on the test results conducted with 20 students, the pretest score totaled 9522 with an average score of 54.38, in which 3 students achieved mastery while 17 did not. Meanwhile, the posttest score totaled 11,259 with an average score of 82.19, with 19 students achieving mastery and only 1 student not achieving mastery. The increase is evident from the higher average posttest score of 82.19 compared to the pretest average of 54.38.

The data analysis results of the normality test showed that students' early reading ability in the pretest obtained a significance value of 0.095, and in the posttest a significance value of 0.472. These results indicate that the early reading ability in the Indonesian language subject was normally distributed, as the significance value was greater than 0.05. Therefore, the test proceeded to a homogeneity test. According to the SPSS 26 analysis, the homogeneity test results obtained a significance value of 0.220. This proves that the homogeneity test for early reading ability in the Indonesian language subject demonstrated the same population, as the significance value was greater than 0.05.

This is consistent with the research of Putri, M.S. (2023) entitled "The Effect of the Drill Method on the Early Reading Ability of First Grade Students at MI Muhammadiyah Sragen in the 2022/2023 Academic Year", which concluded that the drill method is more active in improving students' reading ability and has a positive effect on its application. The

implementation of the drill method, which involves repeated practice, makes learning more permanent because students become accustomed to it.

Furthermore, the hypothesis testing results using the paired sample t-test and the N-Gain test to determine the difference between pretest and posttest scores showed that the t-test obtained a significance value of .000, which means that H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. The N-Gain test result was 6428, which falls into the medium category, with a percentage value of 64.2817%, classified as effective. Thus, it can be concluded that the application of the drill method has an influence and can improve students' reading ability, as during the learning process students were focused on practicing repeatedly and actively.

This finding is also consistent with the study of Hidayati, M.N. (2018) entitled "The Effect of Applying the Drill Method in Qur'anic Reading and Writing (BTQ) Learning on the Ability to Read the Qur'an among Students of the Islamic Education Department at IAIN Metro in the 2017/2018 Academic Year", which demonstrated the effectiveness of implementing the drill method and the activeness of students in the learning process. It can also be observed that one of the advantages of the drill method is the formation of habits through frequent repeated practice.

Conclusion

Based on the research conducted at SDN 1 Bandorasakulon, Cilimus District, Kuningan Regency, it can be concluded that the implementation of the drill method based on interactive board games on early reading skills in the Indonesian language subject was carried out successfully and effectively. This is evident from the observation results of teacher and student activities, which reached a percentage of 93% with a score of 26 out of a maximum of 28, thereby falling into the "very good" category. The drill method, which provides opportunities for repeated practice, has been proven to enhance student engagement, strengthen self-confidence, and support the development of early reading skills, in line with findings from previous studies. Furthermore, the pretest and posttest results showed a significant improvement in the early reading ability of first-grade students. The average score increased from 54.38 in the pretest to 82.19 in the posttest, with the number of students achieving mastery rising from 3 to 19. The normality test results indicated that the data were normally distributed, and the Paired Sample T-Test yielded a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, thus rejecting H_0 and accepting H_a . Therefore, the drill method based on interactive board games was proven to have a significant effect on early reading skills. The N-Gain analysis also supports this result with a score of 0.6428 (medium category) and an effectiveness percentage of 64.28% (effective category).

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