# Students' Perception on Learning Speaking English by Using English Domino Games: The Case of a Private University

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#### **Abstract**

This research aimed to see the students' perception in practicing speaking English using the English Domino game. It was conducted using qualitative research with a case study approach. Fifteen students of the English Department at a private university in Muara Bungo were chosen by using purposive sampling. Furthermore, this research used interviews related to their experience and motivation in speaking English with the domino games to collect the data. The results indicated that the students' motivation in practicing speaking in English increased by using the English domino games. Most of the students felt relaxed and confident to speak while playing English Domino. They were also excited and motivated to take their turns in telling the connected story. This kind of game can be an alternative for teaching English, particularly speaking in a non-English speaking country.

### **Keywords**

EFL students; games; language skills

#### **Article History**

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#### Introduction

As one of the non-English speaking countries, Indonesia provides English as a compulsory subject available in high schools, universities, and private elementary schools. It shows that Indonesian students have started to learn English since their school age. The primary purpose of Learning English as a foreign language is to be able to speak that language. Speaking is considered one of the essential skills in mastering English as a foreign language. Moreover, speaking ability can be used as a measurement to prove that an English language learner has mastered English very well. It is a key to determining communication between two or more people to be fluent and good. It is also the key to conveying and giving messages to the interlocutor. This ability has a crucial role in foreign languages development and mastery, including English. As stated by Richard (2008), mastering speaking skills is a top priority in mastering a second or foreign language since it is closely related to a person's performance that shows he masters a language. This ability is considered a benchmark for a person's success in mastering a second or foreign language. However, even though it is one important skill, most English learners feel anxious and timid to speak English. These cases make the learners demotivated to use and practice English. Most students tend to be passive learners, learning English without using the language in speaking.

This problem is also found in English Department at STKIP Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo. As foreign language learners, most of the students of the English Department at STKIP Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo have experienced many difficulties in mastering speaking skills. They consider that speaking is complicated. They do not have the confidence to speak, especially in front of lecturers and classmates. In this department, there are three levels of speaking classes offered in each semester (semester I, II, and III). They are conditional compulsory subjects for the students. However, many students have the lower speaking ability. The students have difficulties in speaking English due to the lack of vocabulary and lack of ability to pronounce the words (pronunciation).

Moreover, most of the students have low motivation in learning and practicing speaking. This lack of motivation is affected by the lack of media that encourages students to practice speaking. So far, they had only practiced speaking using dialogue or monologue. It makes the students feel bored and feel monotonous. Therefore, they are less motivated to practice speaking English. Rusman (2013) stated that learning media is used to transfer messages that can stimulate thoughts, feelings, concentration, and willingness to learn. Meanwhile, to have good English-speaking skills, the students need to practice a lot to get used to speaking in English, get familiar with many vocabularies, and know how to use and pronounce them. Therefore, by practicing, the students can convey what they want fluently. This problem happened continuously in the academic atmosphere in the English Department at STKIP Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo. The students get stuck in a society where almost every student has a low motivation in speaking English. They cannot encourage each other to speak English. It makes no English atmosphere created in this English Department. Meanwhile, in learning English as a foreign language, they need a good

society and atmosphere in practice without any anxiety. As stated by Oktavia (2020), some factors influence students in learning and acquiring language, and one of them is society.

To overcome this, a new medium of teaching started to be used in Basic Spoken English class as the first level of speaking class. This teaching and learning medium is a developed game, English Domino. This game is designed similar to the real Domino and legalized by the Minister of Law and Human Rights. It is trusted to be very effective in stimulating students to convey the information or messages in learning and practicing English. It can also be assured to foster students' enthusiasm in learning and practicing speaking in English and create a small society where the students get used to speaking English without any shame. Furthermore, this media can help students to be able to enrich themselves with vocabulary to speak English in various contexts and practice pronunciation. It helps students to gain more knowledge by practicing speaking in various context, changing from one context to another context (Nasrun 2014 as cited in Indrayadi, Yandri, & Kamil, 2020). In addition, games are also competitive and can encourage students to compete in enriching English vocabulary and pronouncing sentences. By playing unconsciously, students will look for new words that will increase their knowledge and understanding of many English words and practice their speaking skills in a fun way and not feel burdened. Therefore, to figure out how the students' perception towards practicing speaking skills using English Domino in Basic Spoken English, this current research was conducted by involving 15 students as the participants. It was to answer the question 1) How does students' perception of speaking skills? 2) How does students' perception of using English Domino in practicing speaking?

#### Literature Review

According to Annisa (2015), speaking skill is categorized as productive skill, like writing skill. In speaking, people produce speech; while in writing people produce a text. Speaking is used as a medium to communicate, share information, and build relationships in society (Fulcher, 2014). Moreover, speaking is often considered a measurement in learning a language. Language learners are categorized as good at the language when they can use the target language. As stated by Glover (2011), speaking proficiency is evidence that the learners have achieved the language.

However, as an essential skill, speaking is very complex. To master this skill, the learners need to have many vocabularies, know how to pronounce the words, understand the grammar, etc. Most English learners find it difficult, so they keep themselves not using it. Shabani (2013) stated that this skill is considered the most challenging in mastering the language. Its difficulty makes many English learners have a negative perception of speaking skills. Moreover, It requires a high motivation for learners to master the speaking, especially English speaking. That motivation can come from many aspects. Harmer (2007) stated that motivation is categorized as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from the person itself, or it is a willingness of a person to do something without any influence from outside. The extrinsic motivation appears because of outside factors such as people, environment, things, etc. In the teaching and learning process, extrinsic motivation can be appeared using a game as the learning media, especially in learning English. Game is one of the most popular

learning media for students of various ages, children to adults. It is also a medium that can help students recognize, learn, and practice English language skills. As Ellis (2005) states, games in language learning are fun activities, and they provide opportunities for students to practice the language in fun situations. Furthermore, Ersoz (2000) also has the same opinion. He stated that games are a fun medium that can build high motivation for students in learning.

Several previous studies have proven the effectiveness of using games in language learning. Saine, Lerkkanen, Ahonen, Tolvanen, and Lyytinen (2011) have proven the effectiveness of the use of GraphoGameTM games in improving students' ability to read Finnish texts. Then, the same thing happened in Zambian that the use of GraphoGameTM games proved to be very effective in improving the literacy skills of grade 1 students at Zambian Public School (Jere-Folotiya, Chansa-Kabali, Munachaka, Sampa, Yalukanda, Westerholm, & Lyytinen, 2014).

Not only that, previous research on the use of a game to improve students' speaking skills has been conducted in one of the junior high schools in Yogyakarta. The results showed a significant increase in students' speaking skills using the board game learning media (Nirmawati, 2015). Students can be encouraged to have more practice when they get relaxed in the class. Playing the game while learning will give this relaxed and relieved feeling, so the students can learn like they are playing.

### Methodology

## Research design, site, and participants

This research was conducted in qualitative with a case study approach. In collecting the data, it used interviews that involved 15 students as the interviewee. These students were the first-semester students at English Department STKIP Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo. They were studying basic spoken English as the first level of English class. Most of them acquired English as their second language and started to learn English at 12 years old. Furthermore, they learned English for the first time in Junior high school as a compulsory subject.

Before conducting this research, a letter of request was sent to the vice chairman for Academic Affair of STKIP Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo and the head of the English Department. After having permission to conduct the research, the students were given invitations and asked their willingness to participate in this research. Afterward, the participants were interviewed face to face individually. The interviews were conducted for two months and asked about their experience in playing the English Domino game and motivation in speaking English.

This case study research was conducted in a qualitative method through interviews. The location of this research was the English Department of STKIP Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo. To obtain detailed information, the researchers chose 15 students using purposive sampling as the participants. Those students were the first-semester students of the English Department. They were studying Basic Spoken English which is the first level of speaking class in the English Department, before Academic speaking and Public speaking. Based on their language background, they speak Indonesian and regional languages for their daily communication. Most of those students gained English after *Bahasa Indonesia* and the

regional language. They started learning English in junior high school. It means they have learned it for more than five years. However, their English speaking skill is still low. In this current research, these participants were asked questions about their experience in practicing speaking by using the English Domino.

### Data collection and analysis

This research used semi-structured interviews to obtain the required data. This interview consisted of some questions related to students' motivation in speaking before learning using the English Domino game, students' perception of speaking skills, students' perception of using English Domino to practice speaking, and students' experience in practicing while playing the game. The interviews consisted of some questions, such as 1) What do you think about speaking? 2) What do you feel when you play an English Domino game? 3) How can this game motivate you to practice speaking? 4) How do you feel when you get the turn to tell the story in this game? Were you afraid to speak? Or were you shy? 5) What do you think about practicing speaking using the Domino game? 6) Why do you think this game can help you improve your speaking skill? and some other questions.

The interviews were conducted face to face and recorded during the process. After that, the recording was transcribed and analyzed using qualitative descriptive. To fulfill the required data in this research, the interviews were conducted two times for two months. There were some steps in the data analysis containing data management, generating and development codes, themes, or categories, within-case, and cross-case displays, and interpretation and presentation of data analysis (Mukminin, 2012). After analyzing the data, the researcher checked whether it had fulfilled the required data or not. The results of this interview were described and connected to the related theories and previous studies.

#### Ethical considerations

To keep all the confidentiality of the research location and all participants' information, we concealed our participants under pseudonym names.

### **Findings**

As explained before, the interview involved 15 participants. Based on the answers, the finding of this interview can be categorized into two general groups, the students' perception of speaking skills and the student's perception of using English Domino games toward their motivation in practicing speaking.

### Students' perception of speaking skill

Based on the interview, some students showed their negative perception of speaking skills, but some students showed their positive perception because they have good ability in speaking. Most of the students explained the following data.

"I think... speaking is very creepy." [MA]

## IRJE | Indonesian Research Journal in Education |

| Vol. 6 | No. 1 | June | Year 2022 |

"Hmm... I cannot speak English good." [EL]

"I think, speaking is very difficult. You need many vocabularies, you need confidence, you have good grammar. yes, it is complicated.. I think." [DD]

"I don't know many vocabularies. so, I am afraid to speak in front of my friends." [RL]

"Well, yes, for me, speaking is very difficult. I am not confident to speak English in front of the class." [RJ]

Based on the results, most students felt afraid to practice speaking because they did not have many vocabularies. They were worried about making mistakes. Since they were not active in the class, the class was boring for some students. However, in contradiction, some students reported that they liked learning to speak English from the beginning. It was a fun class for them because they could speak English and became active.

"Yes, I like speaking. Hmmm... it is my favorite class." [YN]

"E..... for me.... hmmm... speaking is ver fun class, we are active in this class, because we can speak." [WP]

"Yes... yes.... I like speaking. Although I am not good, but... hmmm... I like to try speaking English." [IT]

"I think... speaking is very enjoyful. I like practicing speaking in the class. Because only in the class, I can speak English. outside, I don't have any friend to speak English." [MT]

In the interview, the students explained about their perception of speaking skills. Some students thought that speaking was hard. They also assumed it as the most challenging skill since they must memorize a lot. This finding was in line with the statement stated by Shahbani (2013) that speaking is the most challenging skill in mastering the new language, and it is spontaneous.

## Students' perception of using English Domino towards their motivation in practicing speaking

Moreover, to have deeper information about the students' perception of the English Domino game, the interview was continued to find the students' experience before using English Domino and the students' experience after using English Domino in Basic Spoken English class.

The Students experience in practicing speaking before using English Domino, most students told that they did not have a high motivation in practicing speaking before having an English Domino as one of the media. It happened because of the following:

## Lack of vocabulary

Based on the interview, it was found some students uttered some factors that they did not feel confident to speak English because they had a lack of vocabulary. This case led them to consider speaking English as a creepy activity. The following statements reflect the data:

"Speaking is very creepy. Eeee.... because I don't have many vocabularies and we should speak in English." [MA]

"I did not like speaking that much. Because before, we... we... only speak... and at the time, I did not have many vocabularies. I was afraid." [DD]

"I don't feel confident, I have little vocabulary, so... I did not want to speak in front of my classmates." [RL]

Based on their statements, it can be seen that in the beginning, most of the students had a lack of vocabulary, so they were afraid to speak up in the class. They preferred keeping silent rather than trying to speak.

### Afraid of making mistake

Some of the students told the researcher that they felt afraid to speak because they worried about making mistakes when they were talking. The following statements told more about the students' worries about speaking.

"I like speaking, but I was shy to speak. I was afraid to do mistake." [EL]"

"I was afraid to speak English... hmm.... because my friends did not speak English. So, I did not want to speak using English alone." [WY]

"Because the lecturer asked us to speak in front of the class, so I was shy.. and... and.. I was afraid to make mistake and my friend will laugh at me" [MT]

"Speaking was frightened." [DE]

## Speaking class was boring

In the interview, the students also stated that before learning using the game, the speaking class was boring. Therefore, they did not enjoy and practice actively. Some students joined the class and watched other students practice, and not everyone was involved.

"I don't like speaking class before. It was boring." [RJ]

"For me... it was just like... we speak, and then...done.. hmmm... it was bored..." [WY]

"I come, but.... eeee. I only silent, so I am bored" [DE]

"Well... I like to come, but.... because I'm shy, I keep silent, eee... and... I am bored in the class, yes..ee... little bit" [EL]

The Students' experience in practicing speaking using English Domino, besides the information about the students' experiences learning and practicing speaking without the English Domino game, the participants also gave information about their experiences in practicing speaking using the English Domino. They explained how they felt enthusiastic practice while playing the game.

## The English Domino change the atmosphere of speaking class

The students explained that having the English Domino created the speaking class to become more relaxed. Therefore, they could enjoy it. The following statements explained more about it.

"Studying by using the game can make the process of teaching and learning activities becomes better and more effective, students can be more active, communicative and not shy in doing when they want to do something, can help students understand the subject matter, can Improve students' abilities in terms of coordination, communication and cooperation, Can apply mutual respect, intimacy and honesty between students.'[MA]

"The learning process using the play while learning method will make students feel more relaxed in the learning process and will be easy to understand and will unconsciously improve skills in certain subject areas related to the game." [DD]

"Therefore, game-based learning can be an attractive solution for students." [EL]

"Playing game can motivate students to practice without our awareness" [MT]

"Learning while playing can remove the stress, and boredom that we feel. Sometimes, for some people, learning while playing is also a center of inspiration to do various activities." [RJ]

"My feeling when playing this game is very relaxed and also fun. I don't feel bored in class and this really helps to refresh the monotonous way of learning the previous day." [DE]

"I feel very happy in joining the game." [MT]

"When I play this game I really enjoy it, it's not too exhausting, I also have fun with friends, we sometimes laugh because of the stories we compile" [IT]

Based on the explanation, the students explained that they could enjoy the class without feeling anxiety. They felt happy to speak English because it became colorful and not monotone. They also thought that they were playing, but they were practicing speaking. Unconsciously, they practiced without being shy. Moreover, the students gave more specific information on the usage of English Domino games in Basic spoken class. The students explained that having the English Domino created the speaking class to become more relaxed. Therefore, they could enjoy it. The following statements explained more about it.

"It is a very fun educational game, I as one of the students who participated in the learning process was very comfortable and happy with the educational game method." [MA]

"In this game I feel that the interaction in one class is good and it trains teamwork, I also feel that this game makes us not bored in following lessons, we play while learning." [DD]

"Usually learning will be boring because it is too serious and fixated on the lesson. But in this lesson we feel not too bored with lesson, we defend jar while playing." [DD]

## Increasing the Students' Confidence

Some students explained that they become more confident to talk, as the following explanations.

"Because we all speak, so I am confident, yes.... confident to say something." [DD]

"I can practice speaking English without feeling afraid. Because everyone has turn to talk, so it was like okay for me, it makes me confident." [RJ]

"With the Domino, I can speak with my friends. I am more confident." [DE]

## Leading students to become more active and creative

Not only felt relaxed in the class, but some students also reported that practicing speaking using the English Domino game encouraged them to be more active and creative.

"It is very cool to practice in learning with a game, because learning while playing can also make students more interactive, active, motivated, creative, and even smarter. Because this method also does not make students bored and is too focused on material whose learning methods are usually very standard so that it often makes students bored easily." [WY]

## IRJE | Indonesian Research Journal in Education |

| Vol. 6 | No. 1 | June | Year 2022 |

"It can help students not to be bored in class because the games obtained by educators are very creative, and it is also one of the learning media so that students are not fixated on the material, but are also active and creative in class." [RN]

"This game is very excited and it challenges me to think the story and speak up." [RF]

"My feeling playing this game is certainly very happy and challenges me to think fast and this game is not only fun, of course it also provides knowledge." [WP]

## Increasing the students' motivation in practice

The students explained that they were more motivated to speak because it was like playing a game. Furthermore, every student got turns to speak, so no one could roast them when they made mistakes. Telling the chain story in a group killed their anxiety because they did not feel alone. The following statements explained their feeling.

"Well.... hmmmm.... I feel excited to wait my turn and I feel I have motivation to speak." [MT]

"I always feel excited to wait my turn." [IT]

"I think this game is very exciting because in addition to adding knowledge it also adds vocabulary that I don't know, this game is really very useful because it can make us know what we didn't know before, we are also made nervous and tense due to this game, vocabulary very exciting words and sentence making makes the game not bored." [RN]

"Yes, It motivates me to practice... and... I enjoy the game.... eee... makes me not bored in learning." [DE]

"This game is very excited. It makes me motivated to speak....... Motivates me to be more active and enthusiastic in learning more creatively and also makes me know more things....." [RN]

Based on these data, the students had a positive attitude toward practicing speaking through the game. Seven students explained that they felt the Domino game gave a new atmosphere for them in the class. They enjoyed the practice because it became more colorful. Related to the student's motivation in speaking. The following reports gave deeper data about it.

"We become more enthusiastic in carrying out learning activities." [DD]

"Eeeee..... the usual learning process must be very boring, using the learning method by playing Domino games, the learning process becomes more exciting and relaxed." [DE]

"In this game, we are encouraged to practice. Ee...... no one in this game can skip hmmm... their turn to practice Speaking, because in the game we can practice directly about speaking in English." [EL]

"The game makes us feel happy and.... and.... motivated to practice speaking. We feel very encouraged to speak in English." [MT]

"This Domino is different with common Domino. It has vocabularies on it instead of numbers. I..... I am personally very excited to do this vocabulary Domino game. Here we will connect the words into a good story or essay. Yes, It motivated me to practice speaking." [IT]

"English Domino game that contains these words makes students more enthusiastic in learning and thinking. Students are also more active in interacting with their fellow students and with lecturers." [RJ]

"Not only that, during this game I became interactive, active, creative, thought of strategies in completing missions, had high imaginations, improved the ability to speak spontaneously in stringing words in English, practiced teamwork, understood the intent and purpose from the implementation of the learning." [WY]

## Giving new experience and challenge

The students got encouraged to practice speaking English by using the Domino game as a talking medium. They found this a great experience to create a connected story spontaneously challenged them to think creatively and quickly. Some of the students explained how they felt about this challenge.

"during the game process there were some difficulties that I found between the difficulty of integrating stories.... eee...... into stories that my friends had made and finding some vocabulary whose meanings were not yet known." [MA]

"Yes, it does, because in this game... emmm.... we have to reflect and think hard about what words are connected and can be continued because the words are very many and must be connected with the words we previously made." [RN]

"It challenges me to think quickly and this game is not only fun,of course it also provides knowledge." [MT]

"Well... yes, it does..because.. connecting words into a story is not easy, especially when the words are issued differently, so that's where we are required to think about how this can be a good story, and quickly finish the game." [IT]

Those challenges made them more excited to find the meaning of vocabularies on Domino cards and then create a story based on the word related to the previous story. The students found that practicing speaking while playing the English Domino game was a great experience that increased their motivation and confidence in speaking. However, on another side, some students also reported that they felt shy at the beginning of the first meeting. They did not know and understand how to play. Furthermore, after having the explanation about the game and the rules, their confidence was built because of the practice, and they got some turns to talk.

"Firstly, I was shy..... but, gradually I do practice and practice and makes me more understand and I feel confident to speak." [RF]

"First, I was forced to speak. And then, I enjoy the game to tell the connected story and practice." [MA]

Based on the results, it showed that most students had a positive perception of using the English Domino game in practicing speaking. This game created a new atmosphere for the students. It helped the students to increase their motivation and confidence in speaking English and remove their anxiety. Besides, because this game provides many kinds of vocabulary, it encourages students to be more active and creative.

#### Discussion

Teaching English as a foreign language is not easy because it needs a great effort to make the students comprehend and require the language. One of the complicated problems in teaching English is to increase their motivation, especially in learning speaking. Many students are demotivated to speak English because they feel afraid of making mistakes and not confident to use it in front of people. Furthermore, speaking is considered a challenging skill to master because of its spontaneous nature and the implementation of conventional teaching approaches that emphasize memorization and students' passive role (Shabani, 2013). This lack of motivation and anxiety make the students tend to be silent in the class. As stated by Harmer (2001), teachers are the ones who have many roles in the teaching and learning stage. For being good and professional teachers, they do not only need to be the model in the classroom, but they should also be the controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, resource, observer, and tutor in their class.

Therefore, the teacher's essential role is to build the students' motivation in learning. As a good educator, the teacher should be able to organize and manage the classroom to encourage and motivate students. They should be able to create an attractive class. One of the strategies to create a comfortable atmosphere for students to learn is using good strategy and media. As it has been implemented in STKIP Muhammadiyah Muara Bungo, English domino game is used as one of media to support the Basic Spoken English teaching and learning process.

This research focused on the students' perception in practicing to speak English using Domino games as the media. The findings showed that students had positive perception toward using English domino game in practicing speaking. The implementation

of this game got the same results with several initial researches which have proven the effectiveness of using games in language learning. Such as, the same thing happened in Zambian that the use of GraphoGameTM games proved to be very effective in improving the literacy skills of grade 1 students at Zambian Public School (Jere-Folotiya, Chansa-Kabali, Munachaka, Sampa, Yalukanda, Westerholm, & Lyytinen, 2014). And then, another initial research on the use of a game to improve students' speaking skills has been conducted in one of the junior high schools in Yogyakarta. The results showed a significant increase in students' speaking skills using the board game learning media, Nirmawati (2015).

However, Ersoz (2000) stated that when deciding to use game in the classroom, it is very important to find the suitable game that can fit the learning objectives. This statement refer that not every game can be used in any class, it requires many consideration, whether the level of game, the objective of subjects, the students' characteristics, etc. The results of this current research, using this game could remove the students' anxiety in practicing speaking. They became more motivated to practice speaking using the English Domino games as the media. Using this game made them happy and enjoy to practice. It created a different atmosphere in the class and gave a relaxed feeling for the students. Therefore, the students could practice without any anxiety. They enjoyed the practice and the game. Through playing the game, they gained more vocabulary and more knowledge. Moreover, they were trained to become more creative and more active. As stated by Dorney (2019 cited in Anggraini, Hayati, & Pitaloka 2020), the learning environment and conditions also affect Students' achievement.

Furthermore, the interview results also showed that the students gave a positive perception of using the English Domino in the Basic Spoken English class. Besides creating a positive atmosphere in learning, this game could increase their motivation to practice speaking. These findings prove the theory of students that can get extrinsic motivation in learning English. According to Harmer (2007), there are two types of motivation. They are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Media is one of the extrinsic motivations which can encourage students to learn and practice more actively.

In this research, the students played English Domino by connecting the words and creating a story in turn. The students were involved in a group where the first student started the story, and the following students continued the story using the words on Domino cards. In this game, every student had a chance to explore the vocabulary and create a chain story. As found in the initial study, using media in teaching and learning is essential to increase the students' motivation and give a huge opportunity to explore their idea (Ihsan, 2016). Not only that, creating a connected story in a small group encouraged them to think cooperatively. This cooperative learning supports the students to learn working cooperatively with the groupmates (Hawkins 2017 as cited in Indrayadi, Yandri, & Kamil, 2020).

#### Conclusion and Recommendations/Implications

Based on the data, it could be concluded by the two general terms, including 1) Students perception of speaking skills, and 2) students' perception of using English domino in practicing speaking. Eventhough some students like speaking class, but most of them

showed the dislike of this class. They felt the speaking class is creepy and they felt afraid to speak in front of the class, becuase they worried to make mistakes. However, using English domino game switched the classroom's atmosphere, it made them enjoy and relaxed in practicing speaking. This game removed the students' anxiety in speaking, the students felt more comfortable speaking while uttering the stories. They got more enthusiastic in waiting for their turn to speak, the English Domino game could increase the students' motivation in learning speaking. The students got confident to speak English because everyone should use English at the game. Through this game, they could improve their vocabulary because they got some new words from the Domino. Furthermore, they also got trained to be more creative in thinking as when they thought about the sentences they would utter directly and spontaneously.

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## IRJE | Indonesian Research Journal in Education |

| Vol. 6 | No. 1 | June | Year 2022 |

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