



Teaching Speaking Through Finding Missing Information (FMI) Technique at the First Grade of Senior High School

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of the Finding Missing Information (FMI) technique in enhancing Arabic speaking skills among first-grade students in Senior High School divided into an experimental group (Class X ATPH) and a control group (Class X BDP). Data were collected using pre-tests and post-tests to measure students' speaking proficiency. The results reveal a significant improvement in the experimental group's performance, with the mean score increasing from 50.9 to 72.8. A t-test analysis indicated a statistically significant difference ($t_o = 4.24 > t_t = 1.67$, $df = 48$, $p < 0.05$), confirming the positive impact of the FMI technique on students' Arabic speaking skills. These findings suggest that the FMI technique can serve as an effective instructional strategy for developing oral proficiency in Arabic.

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, language proficiency plays a vital role in facilitating cross-cultural communication, academic achievement, and personal development. Among the various languages studied in Indonesia, Arabic holds a distinct position, not merely as a foreign language but as a sacred and scholarly medium deeply rooted in Indonesia's religious, cultural, and educational traditions (Mahfud et al., 2022). In Islamic educational institutions, Arabic is not only a subject of study but also a gateway to understanding Islamic texts and teachings (Sahin, 2018). Therefore, mastering Arabic, particularly in its spoken form, is essential for meaningful engagement with both religious content and real-life communicative contexts.

Arabic holds a vital position in the Indonesian educational context, particularly in Islamic schools, due to its status as the liturgical language of Islam and its importance in religious scholarship (Azra, 2006). Although Arabic is included in the national curriculum, the development of students' language skills, especially speaking, remains a significant challenge. While instruction generally covers the four essential language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), speaking often receives the least emphasis in classroom practice (Hinkel, 20006; Richards, 2008; Palmer, 2014). As a result, many students struggle with pronunciation, limited vocabulary, low confidence, and a lack of opportunities for oral communication, which together hinder their speaking proficiency (Al-Sobhi & Preece, 2018).

Within the framework of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), speaking is regarded as a vital skill for real-life interaction and effective classroom engagement. According to Hasibuan (2012), speaking activities not only enhance fluency but also develop interactional competence. Nevertheless, in many Indonesian Islamic schools, Arabic speaking is frequently overshadowed by grammar-focused teaching approaches. This emphasis on structure over communication leads to limited student participation in oral activities and restricts their ability to use Arabic in meaningful ways (Abdou, 2022).

Several factors contribute to the lack of speaking practice in Arabic classrooms. Students often possess a limited vocabulary base, experience anxiety about making mistakes, struggle with pronunciation, and lack the confidence to speak (Szyszka, 2017). Teachers, on the other hand, may face difficulties in implementing engaging speaking activities due to large class sizes, time limitations, or insufficient training in communicative methods (Chen & Goh, 2011). These conditions highlight the need for more interactive, student-centered teaching strategies to support speaking development in Arabic.

One promising approach to address this issue is the Finding Missing Information (FMI) technique. This method, categorized as an information gap activity, requires students to work in pairs or small groups to identify missing or differing elements in texts, dialogues, or images. As Littlewood (1981) notes, information gap activities generate authentic communicative situations, motivating students to interact and speak. Through FMI, learners are encouraged to exchange information meaningfully, thereby improving fluency, vocabulary usage, and oral interaction skills.

This study examines the application of the FMI technique in Arabic-speaking classes at an Islamic senior high school in Banten. It examines whether this method can enhance students' speaking performance, boost their confidence, and create a more engaging classroom environment. The research was conducted using a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and posttest assessments to evaluate the technique's effectiveness in enhancing Arabic speaking skills.

Previous studies have indicated the positive impact of information gap activities, including FMI, on speaking ability. Harmer (2001) explains that in FMI activities, learners are missing certain information and must communicate with others to obtain it. Almira et al. (2018) found that such tasks increase students' willingness to express ideas and participate in speaking activities. Similarly, Rahimi (2020) reported significantly higher posttest scores in experimental classes using FMI compared to those taught with traditional methods (Kolari et al., 2005; Çelik, 2018).

Despite a growing body of research on information gap techniques in English or general second language instruction, there have been limited studies investigating their use in Arabic language classrooms, particularly in the Indonesian Islamic school context. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of FMI in improving Arabic speaking performance among high school students. The findings of this research are expected to contribute practically to Arabic language instruction. For teachers, the study may offer a useful reference for implementing interactive speaking activities. For students, it has the potential to enhance confidence and expand vocabulary acquisition. For future researchers, it adds to the growing literature on communicative approaches in second language acquisition.

This study aims to address the following research question: (1) What is the current level of Arabic speaking skills among first-grade students at an Islamic senior high school in Banten? (2) How is the FMI technique implemented in Arabic-speaking instruction at the school? (3) What is the effect of the FMI technique on students' Arabic speaking skills?

The objectives of this study are to examine students' Arabic speaking ability before and after implementing the FMI technique, to describe the instructional

process using the FMI technique, and to determine its effectiveness in improving Arabic speaking skills. The scope of the research is limited to the use of the FMI technique with first-grade students at the selected school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Skills in Language Learning

Speaking is widely recognized as a fundamental component of communicative competence. Pakula (2019) define speaking as the ability to produce verbal utterances that convey meaning in a given context. Harmer (2001) elaborates that speaking involves the integration of various sub-skills, including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and interactive strategies. In addition, Richards (2008) highlights that effective speaking requires not only linguistic competence but also sociolinguistic and strategic competencies, enabling learners to manage communication breakdowns and sustain interaction.

In the context of Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL), speaking is often regarded as the most challenging skill to master, largely due to limited exposure and practice opportunities outside the classroom. Therefore, language instruction should prioritize communicative activities that facilitate real-life interaction, increase student participation, and encourage the use of Arabic in meaningful contexts.

The Role of Interaction in Speaking Development

The Interaction Hypothesis, proposed by Long (1996), underscores the critical role of meaningful interaction in second language acquisition. Through the negotiation of meaning and collaborative dialogue, learners can modify their output, receive feedback, and internalize new language structures. This process is supported by Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which posits that learning occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) through social interaction with more capable peers or instructors.

Accordingly, interaction-based classroom activities can support the development of speaking skills by providing learners with opportunities for authentic language use, cooperative learning, and contextualized practice.

The Finding Missing Information (FMI) Technique

The Finding Missing Information (FMI) technique is an interactive teaching strategy rooted in the principles of information-gap activities (Setiawati et al., 2020). It requires students to obtain missing pieces of information from their peers through structured questioning and dialogue. Namaziandost et al. (2019) assert that information-gap tasks promote genuine communication and encourage purposeful language use. In FMI activities, each student is given

incomplete information, prompting them to engage in meaningful exchanges to fill the gaps. This interaction involves asking and answering questions, clarifying meaning, and providing explanations processes that stimulate spontaneous speaking. Richards (2008) notes that such activities enhance fluency, increase student motivation, and simulate real-life situations in which speakers must actively seek and share information.

Linking the FMI Technique and Speaking Skill Development

The FMI technique is aligned with the core principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes fluency, interaction, and learner-centered instruction (Chen, 2024). FMI promotes fluency by encouraging extended speech, supports accuracy through real-time peer feedback, and fosters confidence by creating a supportive environment where learners can take risks without fear of judgment.

Furthermore, FMI activities engage learners in active problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration, key elements of effective language learning (Cosgun & Atay, 2021). The structured yet flexible nature of FMI tasks enables differentiated instruction and reduces speaking anxiety, thereby creating an optimal environment for practicing oral skills. As such, the FMI technique offers a promising approach to improving students' Arabic speaking proficiency, particularly in settings where traditional, grammar-based methods dominate classroom practice.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design. This design was chosen because it allows for comparison between two groups –an experimental group and a control group –without the need for random assignment, which is often impractical in real classroom settings (Solomon, 1949). The aim was to measure the effect of the Finding Missing Information (FMI) technique on students' Arabic speaking skills. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate the students' speaking performance before and after implementing the technique.

The population of this study consisted of all first-grade students from one Islamic senior high school in Banten Province, with a total of 100 students divided into four parallel classes. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, taking into account class equivalency and teacher assignment. Two classes were chosen as samples: one as the experimental group, which received instruction using the FMI technique, and the other as the control group, which was taught using conventional methods.

Each class consisted of 25 students, resulting in a total sample of 50 students. The experimental group participated in FMI-based speaking activities, while the control group received standard classroom instruction without using the FMI technique. The primary research instrument was a speaking test, conducted in two stages: a pre-test and a posttest. The speaking task used in both tests was a "Spot the Difference" activity, which required students to work in pairs to identify and describe differences between two similar images. Their performances were evaluated using a standardized speaking rubric that assessed five components: fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, and interaction.

The data collection was conducted over several weeks. In the pre-test, all students in both groups performed the speaking task using a set of pictures. Their interactions were recorded and scored to establish a baseline of speaking ability. Following the pre-test, the experimental group received treatment by engaging in FMI-based tasks during regular Arabic classes. The activities focused on information-gap interactions designed to stimulate meaningful communication. Meanwhile, the control group continued with the school's standard Arabic-speaking instruction without any FMI integration.

After the treatment period, a posttest was administered using a new set of "Spot the Difference" pictures. Students were paired again, and their speaking interactions were recorded and assessed using the same rubric. The collected data from the pre-test and posttest were analyzed using statistical procedures, specifically the independent samples t-test, to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings derived from the pre-test and posttest scores of both the experimental and control groups. The purpose of the tests was to evaluate students' speaking skills before and after applying the Finding Missing Information (FMI) technique. A pre-test was administered to both groups to assess their initial speaking abilities.

Table 1. The Mean Scores of the Pre-Test

Experimental Group: $M_1 = X_1$	Control Group: $M_2 = X_2$
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Table 2. The Students' Pre-Test and Posttest Scores

No	Students	Pretest	Post-Test
1	BA	64	85
2	AO	52	71
3	TAR	52	69
4	ORI	64	85
5	CAG	50	67
6	DM	48	71
7	IMGG	48	69
8	KM	54	84
9	MPK	46	70
10	N	50	70
11	NOV	52	67
12	PAA	47	73
13	RKI	44	67
14	AN	60	84
15	AR	46	73
16	S	62	85
17	RA	54	77
18	SJA	52	73
19	LNA	54	73
20	SS	54	73
21	AS	46	67
22	POL	49	73
23	ARA	42	62
24	VAF	44	66
25	YH	40	66
	Average	50,96	72,8

The analysis of the pre-test results showed that the speaking performance of both groups was relatively similar prior to the intervention, indicating that both groups started from a comparable baseline. This provides a fair basis for comparison in assessing the impact of the treatment.

Following the intervention, a post-test was administered to assess the students' improvement in speaking. The findings revealed the following:

- The experimental group, which received instruction through the FMI technique, achieved a notably higher mean score in the posttest.
- The control group, which did not receive FMI-based instruction, showed only slight improvement.

After the treatment period, a posttest was administered to evaluate any improvement in students' speaking skills. The results showed that The experimental group, which received instruction through the FMI technique, showed a higher mean score in the posttest. The control group, which did not receive the FMI treatment, showed minimal improvement. This improvement in the experimental group suggests the potential effectiveness of the FMI technique in enhancing speaking performance.

The results Table 2. from the pre-test showed that the experimental group's average score was 50.96, indicating that students' speaking abilities were generally low prior to the implementation of the FMI technique. This finding reflects a common issue in foreign language classrooms, particularly Arabic, where learners often struggle with productive skills due to limited opportunities for real interaction and communication. Following the application of the FMI technique, the posttest results showed a substantial improvement in students' speaking performance, with an average score of 72.8. This improvement suggests that the FMI technique was effective in enhancing students' speaking abilities. The significant increase is likely attributed to the interactive nature of FMI tasks, which encouraged students to engage in active communication through question-and-answer exchanges and peer collaboration.

This finding aligns with Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis, which posits that meaningful interaction promotes language acquisition by providing opportunities for negotiation of meaning, feedback, and modified output. Furthermore, the improvement supports Vygotsky's (1978), which emphasizes the importance of social interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). By engaging with peers in problem-solving activities, learners were likely able to internalize new vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and develop fluency. In addition, the results confirm Almira et al. (2018) view that information-gap activities, such as FMI, promote authentic communication and reduce learners' anxiety.

Many students in the experimental class reported feeling more confident speaking in Arabic when they were focused on completing a task rather than being evaluated directly on their language use. This supports the idea that FMI not only improves linguistic competence but also reduces speaking apprehension. In contrast, the control group, which did not receive the FMI intervention, demonstrated minimal improvement in speaking scores. This

indicates that traditional teaching methods may not provide sufficient opportunities for students to develop their oral proficiency in Arabic.

Table 2. The Result of Post-Test in Experimental and Control Class After the Treatment Period, A Post-Test Was Administered to Both Groups. the Post-Test Results Were:

Group	Total Score	Mean	Sum of Squared Deviations
Experimental	1820	72.8	1105.16
Control	1296	51.84	1237.4

A t-test was conducted to determine whether the difference in posttest scores between the two groups was statistically significant. The calculated t-value (t_o) exceeded the critical t-value (t_t) at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the FMI technique had a statistically significant effect on students' speaking performance.

The findings of this study suggest several key benefits of using the *Finding Missing Information (FMI)* technique to enhance students' speaking skills.

1. Improved Interaction and Communication

The FMI technique encouraged students to engage in meaningful communication by requiring them to ask for and provide specific information during pair-work activities. This interaction promoted fluency and confidence in speaking. These findings support Ortiz Neira (2019) assertion that information-gap tasks foster authentic communication in language learning.

2. Increased Motivation and Engagement

The use of activity-based tasks, such as comparing pictures, created an enjoyable and purposeful context for speaking. This led to increased student motivation and active participation in the learning process, as noted by Buzarna-Tihenea and Nadrag (2017). Learner-centered and meaningful communicative tasks enhance student involvement.

3. Enhanced Speaking Aspects

Based on the rubric assessment, students in the experimental group demonstrated improvement in multiple aspects of speaking, including fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and interaction. This is consistent with Loschky (1994), which emphasizes the importance of meaningful and comprehensible language input in second language acquisition.

4. Support from Previous Studies

The present findings align with previous research highlighting the effectiveness of task-based learning in developing speaking skills. Leeser (2004) and Huang (2018) found that tasks involving information gaps and collaborative

dialogue make a significant contribution to learners' communicative competence. Thus, the improvement observed in the experimental group confirms the effectiveness of FMI as a task-based instructional strategy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results showed a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group's speaking skills. Students in this group outperformed those in the control group in terms of fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and interaction. This indicates that the FMI technique is an effective tool for enhancing speaking performance, as it promotes active participation, meaningful communication, and learner engagement through information-gap tasks. The study highlights the pedagogical benefits of integrating task-based learning strategies into speaking instruction. By encouraging students to exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, and solve communicative tasks, such techniques bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. For English Language Teachers

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate FMI-based tasks and other communicative activities into their classroom practices. These activities create a more interactive and student-centered learning environment, which can increase students' motivation and confidence in speaking.

2. For Curriculum Developers and School Administrators

Educational stakeholders should consider embedding structured information-gap tasks, such as FMI, into the school curriculum, especially for English-speaking courses. These activities support curriculum goals related to communication and learner autonomy.

3. For Teacher Training Programs

Training institutions and professional development providers should expose teachers to practical strategies for implementing communicative and task-based approaches to language learning. Equipping teachers with such methodologies can significantly improve classroom interaction and student speaking outcomes.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study still has several limitations. The sample size was small and limited to a single school, and the treatment duration was relatively short. Additionally, the focus was only on speaking skills. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger samples, more extended intervention periods, and exploration of the FMI technique's impact on other language skills.

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