

Effectiveness of Integrated Language Skills-Based Student Worksheets for Elementary School Students

Tiarnita Maria Sarjani Br. Siregar^{1*}, Christine Helena Natalia², Nanda Ramadani¹, Hesti Fibriasari³, Savitri Rahmadany⁴

¹Department of Preschool and Primary Education, Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

²Department of English and Literature, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

³Department of Foreign Language, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

⁴English Applied Linguistics, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: tiarnita@unimed.ac.id

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Abstract: Language learning during the formative years of elementary education serves as the foundation for students' academic, social, and cognitive growth. Mastery of language enables students not only to communicate effectively but also to think critically, collaborate with peers, and comprehend a wide range of academic content. This study investigates the effectiveness of integrated language skills-based student worksheets in improving the English proficiency of elementary school students. Conducted in two public schools in Medan, Indonesia, the quasi-experimental research involved 60 fourth-grade students divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group utilized worksheets designed to integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills based on thematic content, while the control group used conventional skill-separated materials. Data were collected through pre-tests, post-tests, observations, and student self-assessments. Findings revealed that students in the experimental group showed significantly greater improvements in all four language skills. They also demonstrated higher levels of engagement, confidence, and motivation. The study concludes that integrated worksheets provide a more holistic and effective approach to language learning, supporting communicative competence and student-centered learning. These results underscore the importance of designing instructional materials that reflect authentic language use and curricular goals. Integrated language skills-based student worksheets have been proven effective in improving the language competence of elementary school students.

Keywords: Communicative competence, elementary education, integrated language skills, language learning, student worksheets, thematic instruction.

INTRODUCTION

Language learning during the formative years of elementary education serves as the foundation for students' academic, social, and cognitive growth. Mastery of language enables students not only to communicate effectively but also to think critically, collaborate with peers, and comprehend a wide range of academic content. Traditionally, language instruction has often been segmented, with listening, speaking, reading, and writing taught as discrete skills. This approach, while methodical, tends to overlook the interconnectedness of these skills in authentic communication. For students to become proficient language users, it is essential that these

skills be integrated and taught as interdependent components of meaningful language use (Mubin & Aryanto, 2023; Elviya, 2024).

The integration of language skills aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which advocates for learning through real-life communication tasks. In an integrated approach, learners simultaneously engage with various language modalities—listening to a story, discussing it with peers, reading a related passage, and composing a written response—all of which reinforce one another and enhance retention. This model reflects the multifaceted nature of communication in the real world, where language is rarely used in isolation (Fawaid & Damayanti,

2024). Within the context of Indonesian education, the 2013 Curriculum (Kurikulum 2013) promotes a thematic and competency-based framework that encourages teachers to incorporate meaningful, contextual learning experiences. However, the implementation of such an approach has been inconsistent, largely due to the lack of adequate instructional materials that embody the curriculum's spirit. Many student worksheets, commonly referred to as Lembar Kerja Siswa (LKS), still emphasize rote learning, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and isolated grammar drills. These worksheets often fail to engage students or to foster deeper understanding and application of language.

To address this gap, the development of integrated language skills-based student worksheets represents a promising innovation. These worksheets are designed to provide students with holistic language experiences, encouraging them to use English in ways that are relevant to their lives and aligned with the competencies outlined in the national curriculum. For example, an integrated worksheet on the theme of “My Family” might include activities such as listening to a short audio recording about a family, discussing their roles, reading a paragraph about family traditions, and writing a personal narrative. This approach not only makes learning more engaging but also enables students to draw connections between the four skills, thereby reinforcing their overall language competence.

Research supports the notion that integrated instruction leads to greater student achievement in language learning. Studies by Nunan (2003) and Richards & Rodgers (2014) highlight the cognitive and motivational benefits of integrated tasks, noting that students are more likely to retain language and apply it meaningfully when it is learned in context. In addition, integrated instruction aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of interaction and social context in cognitive development. Through collaborative tasks embedded in integrated worksheets, students co-construct knowledge and scaffold each other's learning. Another advantage of integrated worksheets is their potential to foster higher-order thinking skills. Instead of merely identifying correct answers, students must analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information across different language domains. For instance, a task that requires students to listen

to a dialogue, summarize it, and express their opinion in writing promotes not only language acquisition but also critical thinking. This aligns with Bloom's revised taxonomy, which encourages educational activities that go beyond remembering and understanding to include applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Moreover, integrated worksheets cater to diverse learning styles and intelligences. Visual learners benefit from reading passages and graphic organizers, auditory learners from listening tasks, kinesthetic learners from role-playing activities, and interpersonal learners from group discussions. By offering multiple entry points into the learning process, integrated worksheets make language learning more inclusive and accessible. Despite these benefits, the successful implementation of integrated language instruction requires careful planning and teacher preparedness. Teachers must be equipped with the skills to design or adapt materials that align with thematic units and learning objectives. They must also be able to facilitate a classroom environment that encourages interaction, collaboration, and active engagement. Professional development programs, as well as supportive instructional resources, are essential in helping teachers transition from traditional methods to integrated approaches (Anggela et al., 2021; Anggraini et al., 2022; Muslimah et al., 2021).

In this study, we aim to examine the effectiveness of integrated language skills-based student worksheets for elementary school students. Specifically, the study investigates whether students who use these worksheets demonstrate greater improvement in their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills compared to those using conventional materials. Additionally, we explore the extent to which integrated worksheets influence students' motivation, engagement, and confidence in using the English language. The study is situated in two public elementary schools in Medan, Indonesia, where the need for innovative language teaching materials is particularly acute. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting integrated language instruction and to provide practical insights for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers seeking to enhance the quality of English language education in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group. Quasi-experiments arise from the difficulty of controlling other variables in social research, particularly in the classroom. Educational practices with students in classrooms, where interactions between students and the environment occur, make strict control difficult. Random subject selection is not always possible in research, as subjects naturally form intact groups, such as groups of students in a class (Abraham & Supriyati, 2022; Sumitro & Rizqi, 2024). The research was conducted in two elementary schools in Medan, Indonesia, involving fourth-grade students aged 9 to 10 years. A total of 30 students participated, divided into two groups: 15 in the experimental group and 15 in the control group. The experimental group used integrated language skills-based worksheets, while the control group used conventional worksheets focusing on separate language skills.

Worksheet Design

The integrated worksheets were developed based on thematic units from the 2013 Curriculum, emphasizing real-life contexts and tasks that require the simultaneous use of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each worksheet included activities such as storytelling,

dialog construction, reading comprehension with reflection questions, and short writing tasks based on listening to or reading texts. The worksheets were validated by three language education experts before implementation.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected using a combination of language proficiency tests, observation checklists, and student self-assessment forms. The language tests covered the four macro skills, scored using a rubric adapted from CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) (Yusoff et al., 2022; Bodrova et al., 2024). Observations focused on student participation, interaction, and task completion. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses (t-tests) were conducted to assess the effectiveness of the intervention.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are presented in terms of students' performance across the four language skills, as well as qualitative observations and self-assessment outcomes. The pre-test scores established a statistically comparable baseline for both the experimental and control groups. Following the eight-week intervention using integrated worksheets, post-test results revealed significant improvements in the experimental group.

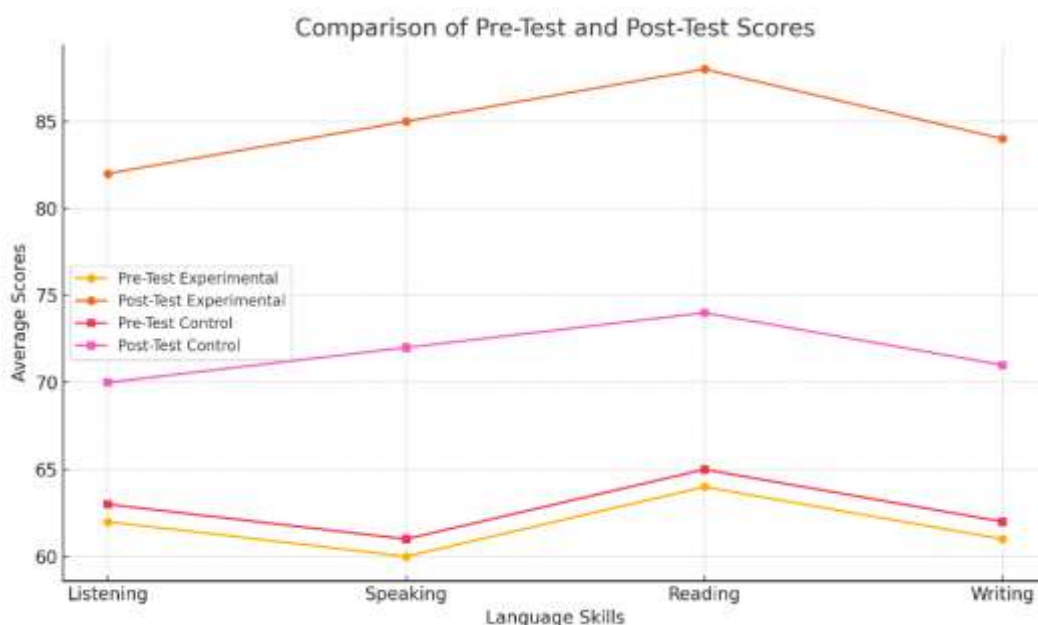


Figure 1. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Experimental and Control Groups

DISCUSSIONS

Listening Skills

Students in the experimental group demonstrated notable gains in listening comprehension. This improvement can be attributed to frequent exposure to audio segments embedded in the worksheets. For example, students listened to short conversations or narratives and completed follow-up tasks, such as answering comprehension questions or retelling the story in their own words. Compared to the control group, whose listening practice was minimal and lacked context, the experimental group showed greater accuracy in identifying main ideas and supporting details.

Speaking Skills

The development of speaking skills was evident through observed classroom interactions and oral assessments. The integrated worksheets included role-playing activities, paired dialogues, and group presentations. These activities created opportunities for authentic communication and peer feedback. Students became more articulate, confident, and expressive over time. In contrast, students in the control group were less inclined to participate in verbal tasks, often limiting their contributions to brief, rehearsed responses.

Reading Skills

The reading components of the integrated worksheets engaged students with short stories, informational texts, and dialogues related to thematic units. Tasks required students to identify key information, infer meaning from context, and connect the text to their personal experiences. Students in the experimental group outperformed their peers in the control group in both literal and inferential comprehension. The contextualization of reading tasks helped students stay engaged and facilitated deeper understanding.

Writing Skills

Writing tasks in the experimental group progressed from guided writing to independent composition. Students wrote descriptive paragraphs, personal narratives, and opinion essays, often based on prior listening or reading tasks. The integration of input skills (listening/reading) with output tasks (writing) enabled students to organize their thoughts coherently and use appropriate vocabulary and

grammar. The writing products of the experimental group displayed greater coherence, richer vocabulary, and clearer organization than those of the control group, whose writing was often formulaic and lacked detail.

Engagement and Motivation

Beyond academic performance, the integrated worksheets significantly influenced students' attitudes toward learning English. Observation checklists showed increased participation, enthusiasm, and collaboration during language lessons. Students frequently expressed excitement about the tasks and often took initiative in group work. Self-assessment forms revealed that students in the experimental group felt more confident using English and found the tasks enjoyable and relevant to their lives. This contrasts with the control group, where students reported boredom and confusion about the purpose of the activities.

Classroom Dynamics

Teachers reported that the use of integrated worksheets transformed the classroom atmosphere. The tasks promoted cooperative learning, with students helping one another and sharing ideas. This fostered a sense of community and encouraged risk-taking in language use. In classrooms using traditional worksheets, the teacher remained the primary source of input, and interaction was limited.

Challenges and Considerations

Despite the positive outcomes, some challenges emerged. Teachers needed additional time to prepare and facilitate integrated activities. In some cases, students initially struggled with multitasking across skills, particularly when tasks required complex instructions. However, with consistent exposure and scaffolding, most students adapted to the integrated format. Overall, the results underscore the value of integrated language skills-based worksheets in promoting comprehensive language development. These findings align with theoretical and empirical literature supporting integrated instruction (Brown, 2007; Nunan, 2003). The approach not only enhanced students' linguistic abilities but also fostered greater engagement and motivation, which are crucial for sustained language learning. In conclusion, integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing within a single learning unit creates a

synergistic effect that supports students' overall language growth. The effectiveness of the worksheets used in this study illustrates how carefully designed instructional materials can bridge the gap between policy and practice in language education.

CONCLUSION

Integrated language skills-based student worksheets have been proven effective in improving the language competence of elementary school students. The study demonstrated significant gains in listening, speaking, reading, and writing among students who used the integrated worksheets. Beyond academic improvement, students exhibited increased motivation and participation, suggesting broader developmental benefits. Educators and curriculum developers should consider adopting integrated approaches in worksheet design, ensuring that tasks mirror authentic language use. Such initiatives can bridge the gap between curriculum objectives and classroom practices, fostering a more engaging and effective language learning environment.

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