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Article

A Physical Board-Game Speaking Task for Expressing Opinions in a Junior High School EFL Classroom: A Qualitative Descriptive Study

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A B S T R A C T

Opinion expression in English is challenging for lower-secondary EFL students. However, it is unclear how physical board-game speaking tasks supporting students' opinion expression are implemented and experienced. This qualitative descriptive study examined a researcher-developed physical board-game speaking task for expressing opinions in an Islamic junior high school in East Java, Indonesia. It focused on (1) classroom implementation, (2) students' oral interaction, and (3) students' initial perceptions. Thirty-two Grade 8 students, organized into eight groups of four, took part in one 25-minute session. The data were researcher field notes, audio recordings from five of the eight groups, supporting classroom video, and a 12-item, four-point questionnaire completed by 24 of the 32 students (eight did not submit). Transcripts and field notes were coded descriptively for role enactment, turn-taking, opinion-related functions, and procedural and linguistic difficulties; questionnaire frequencies, percentages, and means described students' perceptions. The main activity sequence was enacted, but role rotation and turn management required clarification. Students asked for, gave, agreed with, and disagreed with opinions as well as offered reasons, although some of the exchanges were hesitant or incomplete. Favorable initial impressions were reported (M = 3.25 of 4.00): clarity of rules was rated lowest (M = 2.71), and using QR-codes and a relaxed atmosphere were rated highest (M = 3.50). The findings point to clearer procedural guidance, a demonstration of one full game round, and continued linguistic support. The study did not assess effectiveness or changes in speaking proficiency.

Keywords: *Board Game, EFL Speaking, Opinion Expression, Oral Interaction, Classroom Implementation*

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INTRODUCTION

Expressing opinions is a core communicative function in English, yet it is demanding for lower-secondary learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Learners must formulate a stance, retrieve vocabulary, build grammatical structures, and justify the stance, usually in real time while a peer waits to respond (Bygate, 1987). Limited vocabulary, grammatical difficulties, hesitation, nervousness, and few opportunities to practice speaking can constrain participation (Fatahillah & Agustina, 2024; Horwitz et al., 1986). Speaking activities therefore need to give learners reasons to use English while structuring what they say, how they respond, and how turns are distributed.

Communicative language teaching treats meaningful interaction as both the means and the goal of learning (Richards, 2006), and task-based language teaching organizes instruction around tasks in which meaning is primary (Ellis, 2003). Opinion-exchange tasks, in which learners state views and respond to others, are a recognized task type (Pica et al., 1993). Research on interaction in second language learning suggests that interaction and output can draw learners' attention to form and meaning (Long, 1996; Swain, 1985), and cooperative learning structures that assign roles and regulate turns can distribute participation among group members (Kagan, 1994). These perspectives do not guarantee that an opinion task

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generates talk; they motivate examining how roles, turns, and language support operate when such a task is enacted in a classroom.

Instructional media can function not only as channels for presenting learning content but also as part of the instructional conditions through which learners engage with learning activities. From a media-and-method perspective, instructional media can be considered in relation to the teaching methods and interactional activities they enable for particular learning purposes and learners (Clark, 2001). In speaking instruction, therefore, media can provide stimuli, contexts, and structures that support learners' opportunities to produce and exchange spoken language. A meta-analysis by Diner et al. (2021), for example, examined research on instructional media in speaking learning and highlighted the use of media to support speaking-related learning activities. This perspective positions instructional media not merely as supplementary materials but as components that can help organize the conditions in which speaking practice takes place.

One instructional medium that can provide such structure is the board game. Board games combine physical components with rules that organize players' actions and interactions (Wong & Yunus, 2021), making them potentially suitable for communicative classroom activities. A systematic review by Wong & Yunus (2021) indicates that board games have been associated with speaking practice, motivation, and interpersonal interaction in language learning. In speaking instruction, their rule-based structure can organize turn-taking, peer responses, and opportunities to use language for communicative purposes. Board games can therefore function as instructional media through which oral language practice is organized within classroom interaction.

The physical format has features relevant to speaking, although these are conceptual affordances that remain to be examined empirically. In a physical board game, players are co-present around shared objects, and rules are enacted and monitored by the players themselves, so turn order, role assignment, and the next speaker must be settled through talk. Digital game-based language learning (Hung et al., 2018) commonly relies on software to manage rules and feedback, and interaction with the screen can compete with interaction among learners. A physical game therefore places the coordination of rules and turns in learners' hands, which may create both additional opportunities for spoken interaction and additional procedural demands.

In the present study, the instructional medium was a researcher-developed physical board game for practicing English speaking, particularly expressing opinions. The setup involved a game board, dice, playing pieces, and flashcards whose QR codes linked to short video prompts. Students participated through four speaking roles (questioner, opinion giver, agreeing respondent, and disagreeing respondent) supported by role rotation, turn-taking, sentence starters, and model expressions. The QR-linked videos served as contextual stimuli, while the board-game structure organized participation. The materials are shown in Fig. 1, and the Method section describes the components, rules, and procedure.



Figure 1. The QR-Opinion Board Game: Game Board, Dice, Pawns, and the Asking & Giving Opinion Flashcards with QR Codes

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Previous studies of board games in English speaking instruction differ in context, method, and focus. Experimental studies report speaking gains: Fung & Yeo (2016) compared experimental and control classes of polytechnic students, Pittayanantakul & Phusawisot (2024) reported higher post-test scores for Thai sixth-grade students after six weeks, and Ng et al. (2021) reported positive achievement among pupils. Because these designs compare test scores, they reveal little about what learners do during gameplay. Development studies such as Nuraini & Mubarok (2025) concentrate on the quality of the material, and perception studies report enjoyment, a relaxed atmosphere, engagement, and confidence (Hasby et al., 2025; Maranatha, 2023) but rely on self-report with university and senior high school students. Implementation studies are closest to the present one: Dewi (2021) examined a board game for teaching speaking to tenth graders, and Hadi & Darmawan (2022) examined a virtual board game in a university speaking course, reporting opportunities for oral communication and peer interaction. These studies involved senior high school and university learners, and one used a virtual game. Wong & Yunus (2021) similarly noted that qualitative designs mostly collected pupils' opinions, whereas quantitative designs mostly evaluated speaking improvement.

Three gaps follow. First, few of the reviewed studies involved lower-secondary learners, for whom structured support may be especially important. Second, apart from implementation studies, the literature reports outcomes, products, or perceptions rather than how learners enact the rules and roles of a game as the activity unfolds. Third, the reviewed studies give little attention to separating difficulties caused by unclear procedures from those caused by limited linguistic resources, although the two call for different instructional responses. The present study addresses this process-oriented gap.

The study distinguishes speaking practice, meaning opportunities to use English orally and interact with peers, from speaking improvement, meaning measurable proficiency gains that require pre- and post-measurement. It examines the former: it describes the opportunities for opinion expression the task created and students' initial perceptions. The QR-linked videos are treated as supporting stimuli rather than the primary object of investigation.

Accordingly, the study aims to describe how a structured physical board-game speaking task was enacted during classroom implementation, the oral interaction that emerged when students asked for, gave, agreed with, and disagreed with opinions, and students' initial perceptions of the activity. It addresses three research questions: (1) How is the structured board-game speaking task enacted during classroom implementation? (2) What patterns of oral interaction emerge during the board-game speaking activity? (3) How do students perceive the board game as a medium for English speaking practice?

METHOD

In this section, information on design, participants, instruments, and data analysis for the study are presented. Procedures for administering the board-game speaking task as well as analyses of qualitative and descriptive questionnaire responses are discussed in terms of the research questions.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design (Sandelowski, 2000; Villamin et al., 2025). The design fits the research questions, which ask what happened and how students experienced it, namely how a newly designed task was enacted, what interaction occurred, and how students perceived it, rather than whether the task caused a change. Qualitative description offers a data-near account of events in everyday terms (Sandelowski, 2000). Because the board game was used in the classroom for the first time and the study had no comparison condition or pre- and post-measures, it was not designed to evaluate

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effectiveness or changes in speaking proficiency. Questionnaire data were treated as descriptive evidence of initial perceptions, without inferential or psychometric analysis.

Participants and Setting

The participants were 32 Grade 8 students (aged 13–14 years) from class 8C at one Islamic junior high school in East Java, Indonesia. Class 8C was the class the researcher taught during the teaching-assistance placement (PLP II), so the sample is a convenience sample and the researcher acted as both teacher and researcher. Prior to the 25-minute board-game task, an introductory instructional phase was delivered within an 80-minute lesson block covering opinion-expression patterns aligned with the eighth-grade curriculum. The students formed eight groups of four to engage in the game. Audio recordings were available for five groups (20 students), and 24 students submitted the questionnaire. Ethical clearance and institutional permission were granted through the school administration in conjunction with the faculty's teaching-assistance program. Students were briefed on the purpose of the recordings and classroom documentation for educational research, with full assurances of confidentiality and participant anonymity.

The QR-Opinion Board Game

The instructional medium was the researcher-designed QR-Opinion Board Game, developed to give learners structured practice in seeking opinions, expressing opinions, as well as agreeing and disagreeing, with reasons introduced by because. Figure 1 shows the board game materials, and Table 1 presents a summary of components and rules of the board game. Students move game pieces (i.e. pawns) along a track with 68 squares; landing a pawn on a star-marked square means the group needs to engage in a speaking exchange. To do this, members of the group use a smart device to scan the QR code on a flashcard, watch a short video of a mundane or common activity, and speak in one of four roles, with roles rotating for each speaking exchange. In the board game, the winning rule is absent because the focus is on speaking practice.

Table 1. Components, Rules, and Progression of the QR-Opinion Board Game

Component	Description
Board and pawns	A track of 68 numbered squares leading to a finish area; star-marked squares trigger a speaking exchange. Dice determine how far a pawn moves.
Flashcards	Twelve "Asking & Giving Opinion" flashcards, each with a QR code linking to a short daily-life video prompt.
Speaking roles	Questioner (formulates an opinion question related to the video), opinion giver, agreeing respondent, and disagreeing respondent; roles rotate among group members.
Winning rule	None in the competitive sense; the emphasis is on speaking practice from the material.

Implementation Procedure

The procedure followed the flow shown in Figure 2. It comprised an orientation, group preparation, repeated gameplay cycles, and a post-activity questionnaire, described step by step below.

Step 1. Orientation. The rules, speaking roles, turn-taking, and role rotation were explained verbally and shown on PowerPoint slides with sentence frames and example utterances, including because for justifying a stance.

Step 2. Group formation and preparation. Students worked in assigned groups of four with the board, dice, pawns, and QR-linked flashcards; smartphones were used to scan the codes.

Step 3. Gameplay cycle. Students rolled the dice and moved their pawns; landing on a star-marked square triggered a flashcard scan and a video prompt, and otherwise play moved on.

Step 4. Speaking interaction. The questioner asked an opinion question, the opinion giver stated a view, and the agreeing and disagreeing respondents responded in turn, each justifying their stance with because.

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Step 5. Role rotation. Roles rotated among group members in a specified order until the activity ended.

Step 6. Post-activity stage. Students completed the questionnaire immediately after the activity.

Roles of the researcher and the teacher. The researcher was also the class's English teacher during PLP II. As the teacher, the researcher designed the game and role structure, delivered the orientation (without a complete demonstration round), and facilitated the session, monitoring groups and re-explaining the procedure when students asked; no one else intervened. The researcher recorded field notes and video, and student's audio-recorded their own groups. Because the researcher was both teacher and observer, this role may have influenced students' behavior and responses, which is acknowledged in the limitations.

Data Sources and Instruments

Three data sources were collected: field notes, audio recordings, and a questionnaire. Classroom video served as supporting documentation: the researcher video-recorded the classroom activity, which supported interpretation of the field notes and was not coded separately.

Field notes. The researcher took narrative field notes on role taking and rotation, turn-taking, clarification requests, negotiation of procedures, first-language use, participation, and difficulties. They were not recorded on a checklist, so the frequency of events was not counted.

Audio recordings. Students' audio-recorded their own group. Recordings from five of the eight groups (Groups 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7; 20 of 32 students) were clear enough to transcribe; those from Groups 4, 6, and 8 failed to submit their audio files at the end of the session.

Questionnaire. The 12-item questionnaire was researcher-developed based on the pedagogical design of the board game and target communicative functions. Content validation and item clarity were reviewed and confirmed by the academic supervisor prior to administration. The item used a four-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree), was written in Indonesian, and is reported here in English translation. Items were grouped a priori into pedagogical usefulness (Items 1–5), operational usability (Items 6–8), and affective reception (Items 9–12). Of the 32 students, 24 (75%) completed it and eight did not hand it in, so the findings represent these 24 respondents only. It was treated as a descriptive instrument and not validated as a psychometric scale.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data were collected during and immediately after the classroom implementation. During the activity, the researcher recorded field notes, and group interactions were audio-recorded. The classroom session was also video-recorded. Immediately after the activity, students completed the questionnaire.

Qualitative analysis. Five usable recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher, maintaining students' grammar and lexis, and indicating pauses with ellipses; students are only represented by role labels and groups are identified by numbers. Transcripts and field notes were analyzed using descriptive thematic approach (Kushnir, 2025) to read and code, group codes into descriptive categories related to the research questions, and formulate conclusive patterns. Table 2 describes the descriptive categories.

Table 2. Coding Categories for Oral Interaction

Category	Operational definition	Example from the data
Asking for an opinion	Elicits another student's view on the video topic	"What do you think about student Jun of food?" (Excerpt 2)
Expressing an opinion	States a stance on the topic	"I think hang out with my with friend is very exciting and fun." (Excerpt 2)

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Category	Operational definition	Example from the data
Agreeing / Disagreeing	Explicitly aligns with or opposes the previous stance	"I agree because it can entertain ourself by going up with friends." (Excerpt 2)
Giving a reason	A clause justifying a stance, usually with *because*; an elaboration adds a purpose clause, example, or counterargument	*so that friendship are not broken; sometimes we have homework* (Excerpt 1)
Hesitation	Pauses, restarts, or unfinished utterances, coded without assuming a cause	"I think… What? I don't know." (Excerpt 4)
Peer support	Prompting, repeating, or negotiating roles and turns with a peer	A peer repeating "It's not good" (Excerpt 4); Episode 1
Procedural difficulty	Uncertainty about turn order, roles, rotation, or rules	Students negotiating who asks and answers (Episode 1)
Linguistic difficulty	Form showing lexical or grammatical limits that restricted the intended function	"When greedy about food is not healthy." (Excerpt 3)

Because a pause could indicate a variety of issues such as limited vocabulary or grammar, planning time, comprehension of the prompt, or uncertainty about the rules, hesitation was coded as an observable feature and difficulties were classified as procedural or linguistic only when the data supported it. Opinion turns were described by quality (e.g., a stance only, a stance with a reason, or a stance with a reason and elaboration). The excerpts illustrate the processes and are not representative samples. To support qualitative credibility and dependability, the initial verbatim transcripts and thematic coding categories were subjected to peer debriefing and review by the second author (academic supervisor), ensuring consistent operational distinctions between procedural and linguistic difficulties.

Questionnaire responses were analyzed, percentages, item means, and category means (Chen & Liu, 2020), counting valid responses per item. With an unvalidated instrument and 24 respondents, no inferential tests were run; means were read against the scale midpoint (2.50), and interpretation focused on response distributions and relative ordering. Qualitative and questionnaire results were interpreted separately and then compared for convergence and divergence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The main findings for each of the three research questions are presented and discussed. These encompass students' enactment of the board game speaking task, patterns of oral interaction, and the initial perceptions of students during the activity.

Classroom Enactment of the Structured Board-Game Speaking Task (RQ1)

The focus of first research question was constructed based on how the structured task was enacted. Data included researcher' field notes and classroom video (used for visually observable aspects). Summaries of planned stages can be found in Figure 2. Episode 1 is a clarification episode, pulled from audio and field notes.

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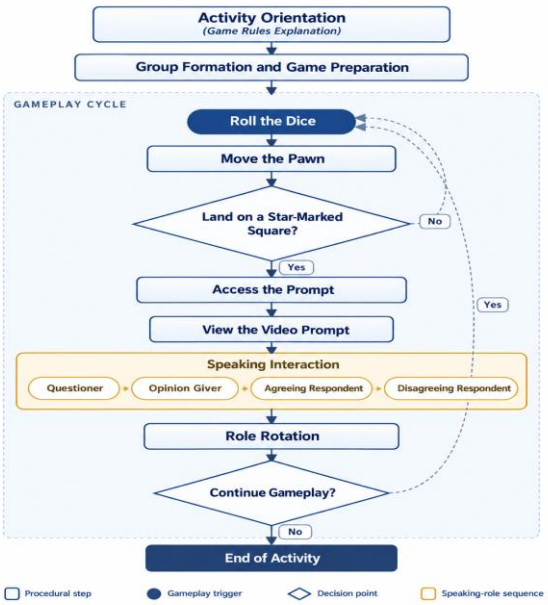


Figure 2. Implementation Flow of the Structured Board-Game Speaking Task

The procedure started off with students being oriented to the activity. The rules for the board game, speaking assignments, how turns would be taken, and the rotation of roles were explained verbally and shown on PowerPoint slides. Sentence frames and example utterances were presented in slides as well for students' oral contributions. After orientation, students worked in their assigned groups and commenced the board-game activity with the physical board, dice, game pieces, and QR-linked flashcards. The explanation served as the framework for the procedures and language used throughout the speaking activity that followed.

During gameplay, students would roll the dice and move their pawns based on the roll. After landing on a star-marked square, students would remove the associated flashcard with a QR code and scan the code using their smartphones. The video prompt accessed by scanning the QR code served as a stimulus for the speaking exchange. In each cycle, students navigated the board game, accessed a QR-linked flashcard, and completed a speaking exchange. Field notes taken during the lesson, together with the classroom video, indicated that the essential sequence was maintained throughout most of the observed class session, although some procedural elements required clarification during gameplay. The QR-linked prompts were accessed during gameplay without interrupting the overall progression of the activity. Therefore, in this implementation, the QR-linked prompts served as a supporting access mechanism incorporated into the board-game gameplay rather than as the main focus of the activity.

The researcher developed four roles designed to facilitate speaking interaction, with roles rotating among group members. No single published model served as the basis for this structure; it was designed for the present study and is consistent with principles of role-structured cooperative learning (Kagan, 1994) and opinion-exchange tasks (Pica et al., 1993). Within the available time, however, not all students were able to perform all four roles, which limited the equal participation that rotation was meant to achieve (Kagan, 1994).

Some procedural details needed further explanation as play went on. The field notes and video show that students at times needed help working out whose turn it was and how rotation should work, and the teacher re-explained the procedure when asked. Students had to attend at once to board movement, turn order, their role, and the speaking exchange, and because the orientation relied on explanation and slides without a complete demonstration round, previewing the procedure did not remove the need for clarification. Episode 1 illustrates one, in which the teacher only confirmed an order that the group's own rotation rules already determined.

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Table 3 Episode 1. Clarification of Roles and Turn-Taking in Group 7

Speaker	Utterance (as spoken)	English gloss
Student A	"Aku lagi yg asking, kasih tanggapanmu kan aku yang buat pertanyaan."	"I am the one asking; give your response, since I made the question."
Student B	"Lho berarti aku yang jawab."	"So I am the one who answers."
Student A	"Alasanmu opo dari tanggapanmu."	"What is the reason for your response?"
Student B	"Lho ini Bu (si Student A) yang dapat petak bintang."	"But, Ma'am, Student A is the one who landed on the star-marked square."
Teacher	(Field note) The teacher confirmed the turn order according to the rules.	—
Student A	"Iyakan, aku yang ngasih pertanyaan."	"Right, I am the one who asks the question."
Student B	"Kamu yang ngasih alasan itu."	"You are the one who gives that reason."
(Field note)	The students continued speaking.	—

Note. Students are anonymized by letters. The original Indonesian/Javanese is retained with an English gloss; bracketed lines are from the researcher's field notes.

In Episode 1 of Group 7, the student who asked the questions was unsure about the turn order, while the other student in the group knew that the student whose piece landed on the star-marked square got to start asking the questions and that the group members would then take turns. After the teacher confirmed the turn order, the students continued speaking. This is an example of a procedural problem as opposed to a linguistic problem. The students negotiated how to play the game in their first language, which is consistent with research on first-language use during collaborative tasks (Swain & Lapkin, 2000).

The findings support the relationship between board games and interpersonal interaction (Wong & Yunus, 2021). In a physical game, students must first understand the rules for turn-taking and then enact them during play. The present research also observed actual classroom use; however, unlike Dewi (2021), which involved senior high school students, the present research focused on how moves, roles, rotation, and turns were coordinated among lower-secondary learners. The feasibility of the task depended on the clarity of the procedures and communicative roles that students needed to perform when playing the game.

In general, the process of going from game orientation and prompt access to speaking interaction occurred during the session. However, role rotation and turn management were the two main procedural aspects that required further clarification. These findings demonstrate how the planned board-game structure was enacted in practice, as well as providing a foundation for examining the oral interactions that took place during the speaking exchanges in the next subsection.

Oral Interaction (RQ2)

The analysis drew mainly on the five usable audio recordings (Groups 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7), supplemented by field notes and video. Because coding was qualitative and segments were not counted, the excerpts illustrate processes rather than quantitative distribution. The four excerpts were purposefully selected from different groups to reflect the spectrum of observed interaction, ranging from extended rationales to hesitant and stalled exchanges. As the dataset represents five submitted group recordings (20 of the 32 students), these excerpts serve as contextual exemplars and cannot be generalized to the class. Students appear by role label only, grammar and lexis are reproduced as spoken, and ellipses mark pauses or omitted material. Excerpts 1 to 4 come from Groups 2, 5, 3, and 1, respectively.

Role structure was echoed in the oral interaction of the groups with usable recordings. In an exchange about spending time with friends (Group 2, Excerpt 1), the questioner opened with a prompt ("Think about hanging out with friend."), the opinion giver shared an opinion, and the agreeing and disagreeing respondents each responded with reasons introduced by because, so the turns mapped onto the intended sequence. All quotes are transcribed verbatim as spoken.

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Table 4 Excerpt 1. Exchange about Hanging out with Friends in Group 2

Role	Utterance	Function coded
Questioner	"Think about hanging out with friend."	Prompting for an opinion (statement form)
Opinion giver	"I think hang it out with friend is good because quality time with friends is also important especially if we have difficulty meeting because of our respective life."	Expressing an opinion with a reason and an elaboration
Agreeing respondent	"I agree because everyone has the right to play with friends so that friendship are not broken."	Agreeing with a reason and a purpose clause
Disagreeing respondent	"I disagree because sometimes we have homework and that gets in the way."	Disagreeing with a counter-reason

The "because" frame created an apparent relationship between each role and its associated communicative function. The opinion giver was able to justify his/her viewpoint by noting the importance of spending time with friends; the respondents were able to begin their responses with "I agree because" and "I disagree because"; the agreeing respondent was able to include a purpose clause ("so that friendship is not broken"); and the disagreeing respondent was able to provide an alternative explanation ("sometimes we have homework"). Even though the grammatical control exhibited by the students varied, at least some students were able to produce connected communicative functions instead of isolated answers.

Table 5 Excerpt 2. Exchange About Hanging Out with Friends in Group 5

Role	Utterance	Function coded
Questioner	"for hang out with friend."	Prompting for an opinion (not in question form)
Opinion giver	"I think hang out with my with friend is very exciting and fun."	Expressing an opinion without a reason
Disagreeing respondent	"I don't agree because of time and the time for something useful."	Disagreeing with a reason (before the agreeing turn)
Agreeing respondent	"I agree because it can entertain ourself by going up with friends."	Agreeing with a reason
Next questioner	"What do you think about student Jun of food?"	Asking for an opinion (new round)

In Excerpt 2 (Group 5), there was also an exchange where the opinion giver provided an opinion without providing any supporting evidence, and the other participants provided supporting evidence for their opinions using "because". In addition, the participants who disagreed responded before those who agreed, which was a variation from the intended sequence; however, it does not appear that this caused any disruption in the conversation. Additionally, the next question regarding food would indicate that a new round had begun and that the roles of each participant had changed. Although the participants were limited grammatically and lexically, the intended functions are still evident.

Assigned task roles have been shown to shape how learners collaborate in dyads (Dao & McDonough, 2017); that study involved mixed-proficiency dyads of Vietnamese EFL learners, so the comparison holds only for the general principle that task structure shapes interaction. Opinion-gap tasks have also been examined in relation to EFL speaking fluency (Namaziandost et al., 2019). The present data are not fluency data, but the four roles gave a concrete way of eliciting stances and reasons.

Oral participation was not limited to a single individual but was distributed among group members: students had to respond to whoever spoke previously while following the rotating role structure. At times, exchanges unfolded smoothly from the questioner to the opinion giver to the agreeing respondent to the disagreeing respondent. At other times, students needed help or negotiated briefly before moving forward, as in Episode 1 (Group 7), until the teacher confirmed the turn order.

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Such peer-assisted coordination is important for learners to be able to control the communicative part of the task as well as the ways in which they partake in it. In their study, Dao & McDonough (2017) showed the effect of task-role combinations on the peer interaction. In the present study, the setting of roles-controlled part of the speaking function. However, the combination of role-setting and role-rotation required students to monitor both the sequence of communicative acts and their position in the game. Therefore, the interactional support documented in the recordings helped students maintain participation in the task.

Although some recorded exchanges followed the intended sequence and included reasons to support students' responses, the recordings also showed variation in the continuity and completeness of students' oral production. Excerpt 3 (Group 3) concerns unhealthy eating habits.

Table 6 Excerpt 3. Exchange About Unhealthy Eating Habits in Group 3

Role	Utterance	Function coded
Questioner	"What do you think about people who are greedy about food?"	Asking for an opinion
Opinion giver	"When greedy about food is not healthy."	Expressing an opinion (limited grammatical form)
Agreeing respondent	"I agree because it was unhealthy for bodies."	Agreeing with a brief reason
Disagreeing respondent	"I disagree with it greedy because a bad habit."	Disagreeing with a brief reason

All four functions were attempted in Excerpt 3 by the participants. Each participant provided a reason; however, their reasons were expressed using single-clause sentences, and no examples or counterarguments were provided. The participant who disagrees with the opinion giver provides a reason (a "bad habit") that supports the opinion giver's position, therefore, although the disagreement is performed formally, it is unclear what the participant is actually disagreeing with. This may indicate limited language control, or it could be a feature of the activity itself: a task requiring disagreement can yield formulaic expressions of disagreement, even if the student does not hold a contrary opinion. The data do not allow us to determine which explanation is more appropriate. In Excerpt 4, we see a different kind of interaction. Here, the interaction stalled.

Table 7 Excerpt 4. Exchange With Hesitation and a Stance-Only Response in Group 1

Role	Utterance	Function coded
Questioner	"What do you think about that?"	Asking for an opinion (generic question)
Respondent	"I think… What? I don't know. What do you think?"	Hesitation; request for the other's view
Respondent	(pause and incomplete response) "I think it's not good."	Expressing an opinion without a reason
Peer	"It's not good."	Peer repetition; exchange ended

In Excerpt 4, the participant stopped talking, said "What?", stated "I don't know," then gave a position but no reasons for it, and another student repeated this before the conversation ended. It is impossible to determine why there was a difficulty; the general question ("What do you think about that?") was based on the video, so the student might not have remembered the question or understood it. There could also have been issues with word finding, taking time to plan a response, or being unsure of whose turn it was. This excerpt demonstrates that even though a set question was provided and a specific participant had a turn to answer, this did not always result in long answers. This excerpt does not show that hesitation was caused solely by language problems.

The preceding excerpts illustrate four different forms of expressing opinions. These include a position supported by a rationale, followed by additional explanation and a

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contrary rationale (Excerpt 1); positions supported by reasons given by the respondents (Excerpt 2); a very short position with a reason (Excerpt 3); and finally, a position stated only after the participant hesitated (Excerpt 4). Therefore, the occurrence of a speech function does not necessarily indicate its quality. In several observed turns, positions were explained using "because" statements, and only Excerpt 1 included an extended explanation and a counter-rationale. There were three types of difficulties identified: procedural (turn-taking), linguistic (grammar and vocabulary), and pauses of unclear origin, consistent with the demands of real-time production (Bygate, 1987; Lambert et al., 2021). Sentence starters were provided before the game; however, some interactions still showed pauses and incomplete responses. Thus, the language support provided a starting point for communication but did not remove the pressure of producing speech in real time. However, difficulties in understanding the video or a lack of planning time cannot be ruled out.

The students across all five groups accepted their assigned roles and spoke during parts of the activity, as evidenced by asking for opinions, taking stances, agreeing or disagreeing with each other, and explaining their reasons. Although assigning roles did not always lead to developed speech, the difficulties were related to sustaining the conversation and producing speech in the moment. Peer support, occasionally confirmed by the teacher, helped maintain participation. The excerpts illustrate what students produced when attempting the expected function.

Students' Initial Perceptions (RQ3)

The survey data yielded preliminary descriptive findings regarding students' initial perceptions. Out of the 32 students, 24 responded to the survey (75 percent). Each of the 24 respondents completed all 12 questions on the survey (n = 24 per question). The remaining eight students did not submit their surveys; therefore, the results reflect only those who responded. Responses were rated on a four-point scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (4). The survey items were grouped a priori into "Pedagogical Usefulness" (Items 1–5), "Operational Usability" (Items 6–8), and "Affective Reception" (Items 9–12). These categories are reporting categories, not validated constructs. Table 3 shows the item-level results, and Table 4 shows the summary for each category. An average score above the midpoint (2.50) indicates net agreement. Given the lack of validation of the instrument and the small sample size, interpretation focuses on score distributions and relative rankings.

Table 8. Item-Level Questionnaire Responses (n = 24)

No.	Statement	SA n (%)	A n (%)	D n (%)	SD n (%)	*M*	SA + A (%)
Pedagogical usefulness							
1	The explanation of opinion-expression language on the PPT slides before gameplay helped me practice asking for/giving opinions, agreeing, and disagreeing more effectively during the game.	11 (45.8)	13 (54.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.46	100.0
2	The daily-life-themed videos that appeared after scanning the QR code on the flashcards gave me concrete material and ideas to use when giving opinions during group discussion.	8 (33.3)	15 (62.5)	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	3.29	95.8

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No.	Statement	SA n (%)	A n (%)	D n (%)	SD n (%)	*M*	SA + A (%)
3	The division of speaking roles (Questioner, Opinion Giver, Agreeing Respondent, and Disagreeing Respondent) in the game helped me practice all of the opinion-expression functions, so my speaking ability improved.	9 (37.5)	14 (58.3)	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	3.33	95.8
4	The guidance on using the conjunction 'because' as part of this game helped me express opinions with more logical and structured reasons.	4 (16.7)	19 (79.2)	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	3.13	95.8
5	The opinion-expression material presented on the PPT slides before gameplay meant I did not need much extra effort to directly follow the flow of the board-game activity.	8 (33.3)	12 (50.0)	4 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	3.17	83.3
Operational usability							
6	The process of scanning the QR code on the flashcard with a smartphone until the video appeared on the screen was easy and did not require difficult technical effort.	13 (54.2)	10 (41.7)	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	3.50	95.8
7	The overall flow and rules of the QR-Opinion Board Game were easy for me to understand, so I could play directly without needing much additional explanation from the teacher.	3 (12.5)	11 (45.8)	10 (41.7)	0 (0.0)	2.71	58.3
8	The process of rotating speaking roles (Questioner, Opinion Giver, Agreeing Respondent, and Disagreeing Respondent) within the group felt easy and was not confusing to carry out independently.	4 (16.7)	16 (66.7)	3 (12.5)	1 (4.2)	2.96	83.3
Affective reception							
9	Using the QR-Opinion Board Game to learn English speaking felt more enjoyable and engaging than the usual way of learning.	10 (41.7)	11 (45.8)	3 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	3.29	87.5
10	My curiosity about which video topic would appear when scanning the QR code made me more enthusiastic and excited to take part in the game.	11 (45.8)	12 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.2)	3.38	95.8
11	Playing with role rotation within the group made me enjoy the process of learning to speak English because the atmosphere felt lively and not tense.	8 (33.3)	16 (66.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.33	100.0
12	The relaxed and non-judgmental atmosphere of the game made me enjoy the opportunity to speak English without fear or anxiety.	13 (54.2)	10 (41.7)	1 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	3.50	95.8

Note. *n = number of valid responses per item. SA = Strongly Agree (4); A = Agree (3); D = Disagree (2); SD = Strongly Disagree (1); SA + A = percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed. Item statements are English translations of the original Indonesian questionnaire items.*

Table 9. Category-Level Descriptive Summary

Category	Items	Number of Items	Mean
Pedagogical Usefulness	1-5	5	3.28
Operational Usability	6-8	3	3.06
Affective Reception	9-12	4	3.38
Overall	1-12	12	3.25

Note. *The categories are used for descriptive reporting only and do not represent validated constructs*

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As Table 4 shows, affective reception had the highest category mean (M = 3.38), followed by pedagogical usefulness (M = 3.28) and operational usability (M = 3.06). Across all items, responses averaged 3.25 out of 4.00, and 90.6% were Agree or Strongly Agree; operational usability had the lowest share of favorable responses (79.2%, versus 94.2% and 94.8%). The activity was thus perceived relatively positively in its affective experience and usefulness, while procedural aspects were rated lower.

Within pedagogical usefulness, the slide-based explanation of expressions was rated highest (Item 1, M = 3.46; all 24 respondents agreed or strongly agreed), followed by the division of speaking roles (Item 3, M = 3.33) and the daily-life videos (Item 2, M = 3.29). The *because* guidance (Item 4, M = 3.13) and the slides' help in following the game flow (Item 5, M = 3.17) were rated lowest, and Item 5 had the most Disagree responses in the category (16.7%, four students). Item 3 asks about perceived improvement (*so my speaking ability improved*) and combines two propositions; its responses reflect self-perception, not actual improvement.

Operational usability ratings were more varied. Scanning the QR code was rated easy (Item 6, M = 3.50; 95.8% agreement), corresponding to the observation that QR prompts did not interrupt play. In contrast, clarity of the flow and rules (Item 7) had the lowest mean of all items (M = 2.71) and the most Disagree responses (41.7%, ten students); only 58.3% agreed they could play without much additional explanation from the teacher. Role rotation (Item 8, M = 2.96) had the second-lowest mean and, with Item 10, was one of two items drawing a Strongly Disagree response (one student each).

The affective-reception items produced the highest category mean. The relaxed and non-judgmental atmosphere (Item 12, M = 3.50) and curiosity about which video would appear (Item 10, M = 3.38) were rated highest, followed by the lively, less tense atmosphere with role rotation (Item 11, M = 3.33) and enjoyment and engagement (Item 9, M = 3.29). Respondents generally perceived the format as engaging and comfortable. These descriptive responses should not be interpreted as a measured reduction in speaking anxiety or increase in motivation, because the study used no pre- and post-measures, and because the researcher who designed the game was present, responses may also reflect a tendency to answer favorably.

The positive affective reactions in this study were similar to those reported in previous research on how board games promote fewer formal environments for cooperating and communicating (Maranatha, 2023; Wong & Yunus, 2021) and on positive views of the learning environment (Pittayanantakul & Phusawisot, 2024). Those studies involved diverse groups of learners and different types of research designs. In contrast, this study's responses came from 24 junior high school students after only one session. Thus, the comparison of the two studies relates to the direction of reported experiences, and not to the degree of effects.

The survey results were consistent with observations of how students carried out and interacted with each other during gameplay. Students rated rule clarity and role rotation low (Items 7 and 8), which corresponded to the observed need for clarification about turn order and role rotation. On the other hand, the students rated QR prompts very highly (Item 6), consistent with observations that the prompts did not interrupt gameplay. Students appreciated being able to take turns (Item 11, M = 3.33), but an intriguing contrast was that they found role rotation harder to carry out on their own (Item 8, M = 2.96). In addition, while students seemed to appreciate the game's usefulness, certain dialogues came across as hesitant or incomplete. Students generally accepted the game; however, this acceptance did not always entail comprehension of every procedural element or the production of developed speech.

The students appreciated the affective experience and instructional support the activity provided. They were less appreciative of the activity's usability, as reflected in lower ratings indicating that the rules and role-switching instructions required further clarification. Most of the students' perceptions are based on the single 25-minute session with the activity.

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Therefore, these perceptions should not be generalized to long-term effects, such as ongoing motivation or future willingness to speak.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study have potential implications for educators who use role-based speaking games with lower-secondary students, as the findings are based on a single exploratory implementation. First, an educator can provide a complete demonstration of the game. Clarification regarding turn-taking and rotation was needed most, and rule clarity received the lowest rating (M = 2.71). Therefore, providing a live demonstration of a sequence before groups begin the game would illustrate how movement, prompts, and roles are related. Second, educators can provide each student with a role card containing a sentence starter specific to their role. Each role card would then be passed on in the predetermined order. Providing these role cards would allow students to identify whose turn it is and what role they are supposed to fulfill. Third, as reasons for opinions were limited in detail, educators can provide additional linguistic support by providing sentence starters for examples and explanations, pre-teaching video-related vocabulary, and providing students with a short period of planning time (Lambert et al., 2021). Fourth, as students developed their own questions, some were in the form of a statement (Excerpt 1), while others were generic questions (Excerpt 4). Developing question stems such as "What do you think about...?" that directly relate to the video may help reduce the variation among students' questions. Fifth, as the 25-minute session did not allow all students to participate in every role, educators could allocate sufficient time during future sessions to allow equitable participation (Kagan, 1994). Reporting on EFL teaching practice, this study describes a structured physical board-game task to facilitate opinion expression in junior high school accompanied by a process-level record of where procedural and linguistic support was required. The study concludes that board games are structured interaction tasks which necessitate explicit procedure design as well as language scaffolding, rather than intuitively operated motivational activities.

Limitations and Future Research

The study was limited to describing one class and one 25-minute session, and thus, the results cannot be generalized, nor can the study's impact be assessed. Transcribed audio was provided from five of eight groups and captured the speech of 20 of the 32 students. The questionnaire was completed by 24 of the 32 students, was self-report, and was not psychometrically validated. Item 3 combined perceived Speaking Support and role-related elements. Narrative field notes did not permit counting of procedural difficulties. Lastly, the researcher was the students' teacher, designed the game, and conducted the analysis. All of this may have biased students' responses and impacted the researcher's analysis. The initial coding was reviewed through peer debriefing with the second author, although formal statistical inter-coder reliability was not conducted. It may be advantageous for future studies to use a structured observation sheet to help count procedural difficulties. Future studies also may wish to explore the design and implementation of the task to evaluate potential impact on students' speaking proficiency.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the implementation and student experiences of a structured physical board-game speaking task for expressing opinions in one junior high school EFL class. For RQ1, the main task sequence was implemented, although unclear rotation procedures and limited time prevented some students from performing all four roles. For RQ2, recordings from five groups revealed students requesting, expressing, agreeing, and disagreeing with opinions and providing reasons. Responses varied in completeness and fluency, while procedural and linguistic difficulties were partly addressed through peer and

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teacher support. For RQ3, 24 respondents reported generally favorable perceptions (M = 3.25/4.00), particularly regarding QR-code access and classroom atmosphere (both M = 3.50). Rule clarity (M = 2.71) and role rotation (M = 2.96) received lower ratings. The findings provide a process-level account of students' participation and challenges. However, the single-session, single-class descriptive design cannot establish proficiency gains. Future research should refine task procedures and examine implementation across multiple sessions, ensuring communicative roles are as clearly defined as turn-taking procedures.

DECLARATION

Author Contributions: Lolita Fitra Herwanda initiated the study, established the research focus, developed the board-game speaking task, carried out the classroom-based investigation, examined the collected evidence, and prepared the original draft. Sigit Pramono Jati provided scholarly direction, assisted in strengthening the research approach, evaluated the interpretation of the results, and contributed to the improvement of the manuscript. Both authors were involved in the final discussion of the research outcomes and agreed on the submitted version.

Conflict of Interest: The authors affirm that this publication was prepared independently and that no competing financial or non-financial interests exist that might have compromised the impartiality of the study.

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Ethical Approval: The study was carried out in a school-based educational setting with due attention to the protection of student participants. Relevant institutional permission was obtained before the classroom activities took place. Confidentiality was maintained in handling students' responses, oral interaction records, and supporting documentation.

Informed Consent: Participation in the research was based on prior permission from the appropriate school representatives and consent from students and their parents or guardians, as applicable. Information concerning the research activities and data collection procedures was communicated before the study began.

Use of Generative AI: AI-based applications were employed as supplementary tools during manuscript preparation, mainly to improve linguistic expression, grammatical consistency, and the readability of academic writing. These applications did not replace the authors' role in designing the instructional activity, observing classroom practices, interpreting students' speaking interactions, or drawing conclusions from the research evidence. The authors independently verified the manuscript and remain accountable for all statements and findings presented.

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