

Analysis of Teacher's Perspective on Students' Social Communication Skills

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the teacher's perception of students' social communication skills in IPAS (Natural and Social Sciences) learning. The research subject is a fifth-grade teacher who teaches IPAS at a public elementary school in the Bandung city area. Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews, observations, and document studies. The data analysis technique used in this study follows the method by Miles & Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification. The results of the study show that the teacher pays attention to students' social communication skills during the learning process, although some indicators have not yet been fully met. The conclusion drawn is that students' social communication skills are influenced by various factors, both from the students' backgrounds and from the learning process implemented by the teacher. In this context, the teacher's role during learning is crucial in developing students' social communication skills.

Keywords: 21st century skills, Social Communication, IPAS learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Human beings are inherently social creatures who need the help of others, as no one can live entirely on their own. In life, there is an ongoing interaction, which serves to support daily activities. For this reason, certain skills are essential for sustaining life, such as effective communication and the ability to understand others' characteristics. The current global situation has led to shifts in various aspects of life, including forms of communication. Globalization has spurred numerous changes, both positive and negative. With the rapid advancement of time, educators must play a role in facilitating students to meet their communication needs. In 21st-century learning, the current skills that should guide student learning are referred to as the 4C's of 21st Century Skills (Muhammad et al., 2021; Romero, 2016). These skills include critical and creative thinking, collaboration, and communication abilities (Alismail & McGuire, 2015; Amran et al., 2019; Muhammad et al., 2021; Zabit, 2010).

This situation places a significant role and responsibility on teachers to educate individuals with the necessary competencies (Hark Soylemez, 2023). The critical role of teachers in 21st-century learning must be accompanied by direct application to students. One of the key skills within the Communication competency is social communication, which students must develop, especially as it closely relates to social studies. Students' social maturity is positively influenced by effective communication with others during discussions (Brownell et al., 2013). As the forefront of education, teachers must serve as a means to achieve learning goals that meet students' educational needs, one of which is through communication activities. In

education, communication can take the form of understanding the material presented to students, with communication activities contributing to meaningful learning. Public issues can be addressed in various ways, one of which is through communication (Sarwoprasodjo, 2022). Conflict can be resolved through mediation between conflicting parties; in simple terms, communication aimed at resolving social issues is known as social communication.

Social communication is a dynamic exchange of specific information patterns aimed at achieving understanding between two or more individuals, allowing each individual to adjust their behavior in a given context (Jack & Schyns, 2015). According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (Raharjo & Kartika, 2019), social communication is the synergistic interaction of social interaction, social cognition, pragmatics (both verbal and nonverbal), and receptive and expressive language processing. Social communication refers to language used in various social situations. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that social communication is an activity commonly performed in daily life by exchanging messages verbally or in writing. Social communication is essential to apply because it serves to: (1) convey ideas; (2) be conducted in everyday life; (3) teach certain topics; and (4) increase knowledge, thereby influencing attitudes and habits.

However, the current state of students' social communication is quite limited, partly due to factors like smartphone use. Excessive smartphone use can lead to diminished social communication skills. Advances in technology have introduced various devices, including smartphones, with new features that simplify daily life. This technological influence clearly affects children's development, especially in terms of students' social communication. With reduced face-to-face interaction, students are likely to experience a greater lack of self-confidence. Technological advancements can make children quickly satisfied with the knowledge they gain, leading them to perceive information obtained from the internet or other technology as complete knowledge (Ghofurrohman et al., 2023). In addition, research shows that the use of gadgets can affect students' tendency to be lazy in engaging in activities, which in turn leads to communication disruptions and a decrease in concentration levels (Syahyudin, 2019).

Social communication is crucial for adapting to life and plays a pivotal role in students' ability to engage in interactions that support their learning. Research by Azeharie & Khotimah (2015) highlights that social communication skills among elementary school students are relatively low, as evidenced by the lack of effective communication and interaction. One major factor contributing to this is students' low self-confidence when responding to what teachers present during the learning process. Many students exhibit shyness and a tendency to close themselves off, making it challenging for them to communicate and adjust to new

environments. As a result, these students often struggle to form friendships and find themselves limited in their ability to share and exchange information. This lack of social communication skills can hinder their academic and personal development, making it essential to address and improve these abilities early on in their education.

Research by Setiawan & Huda (2022) found that five students were able to understand the lesson well due to their strong social communication skills, while twelve students demonstrated a moderate understanding of the material, paired with average social skills. In contrast, eighteen students struggled to grasp the lesson due to low social communication skills. One significant factor influencing these outcomes is online learning, which has presented several challenges to effective communication. These challenges include distractions, poor internet connections, and a lack of participation in learning activities by some students. As a result, the absence of face-to-face interactions and the technological barriers present in online learning environments can significantly hinder the development and application of essential social communication skills among students, ultimately affecting their comprehension and engagement with the lesson.

Social communication skills play a crucial role in schools as they contribute significantly to making the learning process more effective and enjoyable Rafida & Astuti (2024). These skills are not only essential for students to engage meaningfully in classroom discussions but also help in building a more interactive and dynamic learning environment. To foster these skills, it is important to create opportunities where students can engage in stimulating activities that encourage communication, and where they are offered praise and recognition for their contributions, regardless of whether their responses are correct or incorrect. By allowing students to express their opinions freely and without interruption, teachers create an atmosphere where students feel valued and confident in their ability to communicate. This approach not only enhances students' ability to communicate socially but also has a broader impact on their overall development, particularly in promoting the 4C skills (Critical thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Communication). Developing strong social communication skills is therefore a fundamental aspect of preparing students for future success, both academically and in their personal lives.

Research indicates that social communication skills are considered important to study, as they help individuals understand differences and foster effective communication (Kaswadi et al., 2018). In another study, effective communication has been shown to convey essential messages and useful information to the public, enabling them to better understand social issues (Kurnia et al., 2023). Social communication also significantly influences students'

commitment, as openness and clarity in communication lead to stronger engagement (Rahayu et al., 2019).

Based on the explanation above, which highlights the importance of social communication as a support for learning and as an essential skill for students in the 21st century, the purpose of this research is to describe the condition of students' social communication skills during the learning process, based on the perceptions of elementary school science and social studies (IPAS) teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach, using a case study method that focuses on an in-depth understanding of the social environment through thorough and detailed explanations from the perspective of the research subjects. The subjects of this study are fifth-grade teachers who teach science and social studies (IPAS) at a public elementary school in Bandung. The subject was selected for its unique characteristics: the teacher is currently participating in the "*Guru Penggerak*" (Teacher Leader) program and has implemented the "Merdeka Curriculum" (Freedom to Learn Curriculum) in their classroom. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. This research focuses on analyzing students' social communication skills from the teacher's perspective. The aspects and indicators of social communication skills that form the basis of the research instrument are as follows.

Table 1. Social Communication Indicators, adapted from (Somantri, 2014).

Social Communication Aspect	Indicator
Reflecting	Students can explain the conclusions they have drawn.
	Students can use tables, images, models, etc., to support their explanations.
	Students can pose problems (questions).
	Students can present solutions to a problem.
Giving	Students can choose the most appropriate way to convey their explanations.
	Students can respond to statements or issues from the audience with convincing arguments.
	Students can interpret and evaluate ideas, symbols, terms, and social information they have obtained.
Discussing	Students can express opinions on the issue being discussed.
	Students actively participate in responding to the opinions of other students.
	Students are willing to ask questions when they do not understand something.
	Students listen attentively when other students express opinions, enabling them to understand those viewpoints.

Transforming	Students can describe a problem situation and state the solution using images, charts, and tables.
	Students can present results in written form.
	Students can use comprehensive representations to explain social studies concepts and their solutions.
	Students can create models by providing ideas and explanations in writing.
	Students use social language and symbols appropriately.

After the data is collected, it is then analyzed using data analysis techniques according to (Miles & Huberman, 1992). The stages consist of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the research that has been conducted, the results are presented in the following points.

Reflecting

Students typically present their conclusions at the end of the lesson. According to the teacher, most students are able to express their conclusions well when the lesson is conducted using engaging learning media and enjoyable methods. Students present their conclusions in various ways, depending on the context and the instructional guidance given by the teacher. This could involve using tables, images, or other tools. During the lesson, students can raise questions or problems related to the material being discussed. This is a result of the teacher's efforts to stimulate students to actively participate in class. According to the teacher, at the beginning of the lesson, students still appear shy and hesitant to ask questions or express their opinions. The teacher's stimuli are also provided continuously and must be contextual to the students' lives. In addition, another finding is that students can answer questions or problems in class, but each student is given a different context based on their life background. For example, if the teacher introduces a problem related to the topic of economic activities, the teacher considers the student's social background and place of residence by linking it to the industry near the student's neighborhood.

Giving

When students present their explanations, they often struggle to express themselves precisely in terms of context, word choice, and sentence structure. This lack of clarity is a common challenge, as they have not yet fully developed the ability to convey their thoughts in a coherent and accurate manner. However, teachers still appreciate these efforts because

students have shown the courage to share their arguments in class, which is an important step in the learning process. Not all students are able to respond or provide answers confidently to the problems raised by the teacher or their peers. For instance, when presented with information that involves specific ideas, symbols, or terms, students often appear confused or uncertain, unless the terms are familiar to them from their everyday environment. This shows that while students may have a general understanding of certain concepts, they lack the depth needed to grasp more complex or abstract ideas.

In such cases, the role of the teacher becomes crucial. The teacher must pay close attention to how explanations are delivered, ensuring that they are clear, accessible, and tailored to the students' level of understanding. By using effective teaching strategies and providing appropriate context, teachers can help students comprehend new ideas, symbols, and terms. This not only helps them to interpret these concepts accurately but also enables them to evaluate and apply them according to their own perceptions. Teachers must foster an environment where students feel comfortable exploring new information and where they are given the tools to make sense of it in a way that connects with their prior knowledge and experiences. Through consistent guidance and support, students will gradually improve their ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas more effectively, allowing them to engage in deeper and more meaningful discussions.

Discussing

According to the teacher, students have not yet developed the ability to independently respond to ideas or opinions shared by their peers in a discussion. This is an area where they still require guidance and support. However, when prompted with specific questions by the teacher, students are more likely to engage and contribute their thoughts. They tend to feel more confident and capable of responding when there is a clear structure or prompt in place to guide their participation. When students encounter something they do not fully understand, they typically wait until the reflection phase at the end of the lesson to ask their questions. This allows them time to process the information and gather their thoughts before seeking clarification. Interestingly, when they listen to the opinions or perspectives of other students, they tend to listen attentively and respectfully. This behavior can be attributed to the classroom environment, where mutual respect is a core principle.

Classroom rules have been established to ensure that all students understand the importance of listening carefully when someone else is speaking. By fostering an atmosphere of respect and consideration, students are encouraged to actively engage in listening without interrupting, which helps create a positive and supportive learning environment. This structured approach, where listening and speaking are guided by clear rules, helps students feel more secure in

their ability to participate in class discussions and build their communication skills over time. Through this gradual process, students can learn to not only listen attentively but also to contribute more independently and confidently to discussions with their peers.

Transforming

During the lesson, students are able to transform the data or information they obtain into images or tables. However, the teacher must organize this within clear learning instructions, one of which is through the LKPD (Student Worksheet). According to the teacher, when answering a question or problem, students tend to find it easier to respond in writing because they have more time to work on it. However, this also depends on the individual student, as their responses vary. Some provide detailed answers, others are brief, and some appear to give careless responses. Similarly, when asked to conceptualize an idea or explanation, students are generally more comfortable expressing it in writing. This is because, in addition to having more time, students also experience much less pressure compared to being asked direct oral questions.

Students can also freely search for information from various sources to reference when conceptualizing an idea or explanation. When presented with a problem, students still cannot independently connect the issue to the concepts being discussed in the lesson. In this area, the teacher must continue to assist students in making the connection between concrete problems and the material being studied. Regarding the accuracy of students in using terms or symbols when explaining their opinions or answers, the teacher explained that not all students are able to do so. The determining factor is usually the student's academic background. This is related to the knowledge and references the students have.

In general, several indicators from the four aspects of social communication can be met by students. However, there are indicators that have not been mastered by students, namely: responding to statements or issues from the audience with convincing arguments; interpreting and evaluating ideas, symbols, terms, and social information obtained; using comprehensive representations to express social studies concepts and solutions. These indicators are influenced by the students' cognitive development. According to Bloom's findings, children aged 8 to 12 years have not fully developed their IQ (Intellectual Quotient), which is about 80% (Makmun, 2000). Therefore, certain tasks that require cognitive responses and higher-order thinking have not yet been mastered by elementary school students. It is certainly the teacher's responsibility to support students' cognitive development in ways that are appropriate for their age. According to Piaget, children aged 7 to 11 or 12 are at the concrete operational stage of development (Nurihsan & Agustin, 2013). At this stage, students can only operate logical principles by relating them to concrete objects. Therefore, the teacher's role

should be to present concrete problems from the students' environment during lessons. This way, students can be stimulated to actively engage in learning activities.

In the indicator of actively participating in responding to the opinions of other students, students are not yet able to independently engage in discussions about a problem with their peers. At the age of 6 or 7, children begin to show an increasing potential for cooperation (Nurihsan & Agustin, 2013). At this age, children start to be able to work with a group. According to Bronson's findings, one of the tendencies in students' social orientation patterns is reactivity-placidity, where children tend to respond actively to the situations in their surroundings (Nurihsan & Agustin, 2013). If an appropriate model or teaching method is presented, this tendency can be developed. One teaching method that can be used to improve students' responses in giving opinions is the implementation of the Active Learning method, specifically the Team Quiz type. This method has been proven to enhance students' responses and participation in both asking questions and expressing their opinions (Kusumawati, 2017).

Another indicator found in this study is that students still struggle to use social language and symbols correctly. This is due to the language development of students, especially elementary school students, particularly those in grade 5, who are in the age range of 10 to 12 years. At this age, students actually begin to enjoy more critical stories, such as travel tales, biographies of heroes, and other stories that are more complex and contain various values (Nurihsan & Agustin, 2013). This development presents an opportunity for teachers to incorporate interesting texts or stories that not only stimulate students' reading interest but also introduce them to the use of social language, symbols, and terms in a more varied manner. Through stories presented in lessons, students can be introduced to the concepts of social language and symbols in contexts that are easier to understand and relevant to their experiences. Teachers can use these stories or texts as a tool to enhance students' understanding of how language and symbols are used in daily life and the importance of understanding the meaning behind these symbols or terms. Such learning can be implemented as a routine that provides students with new insights while enriching their references to social language and symbols. In this way, students learn not only about language in a technical sense but also gain the ability to interpret and use language and symbols in various social contexts more accurately and effectively.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the importance of social communication in the context of social studies (IPS or IPAS) at the elementary school level. As a critical component of communication skills, which are integral to the 21st-century competencies, social communication plays a vital role in preparing students to navigate their future lives. Social communication skills encompass

four key aspects: reflecting, giving, discussing, and changing. These aspects are shaped by the students' individual backgrounds as well as the teaching methods employed by their educators. To foster the development of these skills, it is essential for teachers to be adept at selecting the appropriate models, methods, and strategies for instruction. Furthermore, lessons should be designed in ways that are not only informative but also enjoyable and engaging, capturing the interest and attention of the students. One recommendation for future researchers is to explore and develop innovative lesson designs that are specifically tailored to enhance students' social communication skills, ensuring they are better equipped for effective interpersonal communication both inside and outside the classroom.

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