

Improving Students' English Speaking Skills Through Role Play for Eighth Grade Students: A Case of SMPN 1 Gunungwungkal Academic Year 2022/2023

Lulu Damayanti^{1*}, Tarcisia Sri Suwarti², Sri Wahyuni³

¹English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

²English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

³English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

*Damayantilulu01@gmail.com

Abstract

This study is to find out whether any significant difference in speaking skills of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Gunungwungkal before and after being taught using role play technique. The population consists of 33 students from one class. Pre-experimental research was used in the research method. Pretest and posttest procedures were used in this study's pre-experimental design to accomplish that objective. Students' speaking abilities were tested orally through role-playing. The mean Pre-test score indicates that students' speaking skills before being taught using role play are very low. Role-playing helped students improve their speaking skills, according to the average score data. There was a difference between the means before and after being taught using role play. The test is taken after role-playing had a mean score, which is sufficient for success. There was a significant difference in students' results before and after being taught by role play. The t-test was higher than the critical value on the table. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted that there is an increase in students' speaking ability. The researchers conclude that the Role Play technique is effective and useful based on the findings of the data analysis because when used, students are active and appreciate it.

Keywords: speaking skills, role play, english learning

Introduction

One of the four macro skills required for efficient language use is speaking, especially when speakers are not using their native tongue. Since English is utilized for communication on a global scale, especially online, it is important to acquire English speaking abilities with other skills in order to improve communication outcomes with both native English speakers and other members of the global community (Boonkit, 2010). English is used to communicate with individuals who live in various world areas, states, countries, and continents because it is regarded as the universal language and is spoken worldwide (Rao, 2019). When we talk to someone knowing a language, we typically mean that person can use that language to form coherent sentences, or in other words, that person can speak that language. As a result, when someone claims to speak English, they also typically claim to

The 2nd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature

Vol. 2(1), August, 2022

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

know English (Kubiatko et al., 2014). Because English is extensively used around the world, students must be able to acquire English speaking abilities.

Many students struggle with successfully expressing their ideas, thoughts, and questions in English. This happens due to many factors, including doubt, fear, shame, and the fear of being misunderstood. By establishing effective speaking abilities, students may express themselves in class and with foreign speakers. Speaking English is the most challenging talent to achieve through pre-observation at SMPN 1 Gunungwungkal. Students must have confidence in their ability to learn English skills. When they are compelled to speak English, they lack confidence and are afraid of making mistakes.

Teachers should be aware of the ELL (English language learners) problem and use a variety of teaching tactics to help their students improve their speaking abilities in English classes. Oral Communication skills are one of the most vital in today's society, especially for young people. The researcher feels that the role-playing technique can help students master speaking skills. Over the past decade, role-play has been increasingly important in education. Numerous pieces of research have been done on the value of role plays in supporting students' learning. Role-playing activities can boost students' interest in the material being covered in class. Additionally, it can raise student engagement levels. In the classroom, students move from being passive recipients to being active performers (Astuti, 2022).

In this study, the researchers will find an enjoyable way to teach speaking. The technique is role play. This gets students out of themselves and their inhibitions. It is also massively fun. The dialogue is a daily conversation, so the students will feel at ease. Based on the background of the study, the writers take the title "Improving Students' English Speaking Skill Through Role Play for Eighth Grade Students: A Case of SMPN 1 Gunungwungkal Academic Year 2022/2023". Three research questions guide this study;

1. How are students' speaking skills before being taught using the role play technique?
2. How are students' speaking skills after being taught using the role play technique?
3. Is there any significant difference in speaking skills of the students before and after being taught using the role play technique?

Literature Review

Speaking

According to Brown, speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed. When a person can speak the language, it means that he can have a proper conversation. In addition, he cites that the standard of success in acquiring a language almost always implies the ability to achieve pragmatic goals through an interactive conversation with another language (Brown, 2004). Since most speech is the result of linguistic stringing, speakers make choices in vocabulary, structure, and conversation.

There are several principles in designing the speaking technique according to Brown:

- a. Use techniques that cover the spectrum of learner needs.
- b. Provide intrinsically motivating techniques.
- c. Encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts.
- d. Provide appropriate feedback and correction
- e. Capitalize on the natural link between speaking and listening.
- f. Give students opportunities to initiate oral communication.

The 2nd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature

Vol. 2(1), August, 2022

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

g. Encourage the development of speaking strategies.

(H. Douglas Brown, 2000)

Elements of Speaking

According to Harmer, Speakers of English, especially as a second language, must be able to speak in a variety of styles and situations, and they must be able to use a variety of conversation improvement strategies.

a. Different speaking events

The purpose of speaking events, we can define them as interactive and non-interactive. The conversation that occurs when we buy a newspaper at a newsstand is interactive. While leaving a message on the phone the answer is non-interactive.

b. Conversational strategies

To improve their skills, we can ask students to analyze transcripts of real talks, direct their attention to how the speaker asks other people's questions, and so on.

c. Functional language, adjacency pairs and fixed phrases

When teaching speaking, we must make students aware of fixed expressions, functional sequences and eternal pairs of pairs. We can do this by teaching functional exchange.

(Harmer, 1991)

Micro and Macro Skills of Speaking

There are micro and macro of speaking according to Brown:

Micro skills

1. Produce differences among English phonemes and allophonic variants.
2. Produce chunks of the language of different lengths.
3. Produce English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythm
4. structure and intonation contours.
5. Produce reduced forms of words and phrases.
6. Use an adequate number of lexical units (words) to accomplish pragmatic purposes.
7. Produce fluent speech at different rates of delivery.
8. Monitor one's own oral production and use various strategic devices-pauses, fillers, self-corrections, and backtracking to enhance the clarity of the message.
9. Use grammatical word clauses, systems word order, patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.
10. Produce speech in natural constituents: inappropriate phrases, pauses groups, breath groups, and sentence constituents.
11. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.
12. Use cohesive devices in spoken discourse.

Macro skills

1. Appropriately accomplish communicative functions according to situations, participants, and goals.
2. Use appropriate styles, registers, implicature, redundancies, pragmatics conversations, conversation rules, floor-keeping, and yielding, interrupting, and other sociolinguistics features in face-to-face conversations.

The 2nd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature

Vol. 2(1), August, 2022

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

3. Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as focal and peripheral ideas, events and feelings, new information, generalization and exemplification.
4. Convey facial features, kinesics, body language and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language.
5. Develop and use a battery of speaking strategies.

Macro skills are more complex than micro skills when it comes to assessing assessments on spoken language activities. Both have a level of difficulty that is determined by the test's stage and context.

(Brown, 2004)

Types of Classroom Speaking Performance

According to H.Douglas Brown, there are 6 types of speaking performance listed. This applies so that students are expected to be implemented in class.

1. Imitative

Students practice intonation contours or try to determine specific vowel sounds. This type of imitation is done not for the purpose of meaningful interactions, but to focus on certain elements of the language form

2. Intensive

Intensive speaking can be self-initiated or can even be part of some pair activities, where learners explore certain forms of language.

3. Responsive

Many of the students' speech in the classroom was responsive, answered the teacher's question briefly, or the students started the question but the response was not extended into a dialogue.

4. Transactional (dialogue)

Implemented for the purpose of conveying or exchanging specific information, is a form of broadly responsive language.

5. Interpersonal (dialogue)

Interpersonal dialogue, which is carried out, aims to maintain social relations rather than to convey facts and information.

6. Extensive (monologue)

Students are asked to provide an extended monologue in the form of an oral report, summary, or perhaps a formal short speech and deliberation.

(H.Douglas Brown, 2000)

Classroom Speaking Activities

The 2nd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature

Vol. 2(1), August, 2022

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

According to Harmer, the classroom speaking activities currently in use are at or near the end of the communication continuum. The following categories are used for speaking activities;

1. Acting from a Script

The teacher can ask students to act out a drama scene they wrote down, then film it. It is important for students when working on a drama script, feeling they will act it out for real. Next, the teacher gives some time before appointing students to present the drama.

2. Communication Game

Communication games aim to get students to speak as quickly and fluently as possible. Many games can help students, such as having a dialogue with other students, describing something, finding similarities and differences in pictures, or talking for 60 seconds with topics given by the teacher.

3. Discussion

Creating groups and then interacting by presenting events formally or informally. For example, students predict the content of a reading text, by providing their responses to the text, or debate. Or have a quick conversation about the right kind of music for a wedding.

4. Prepared talks

Students make a presentation on a topic of their own choice, then they will present their presentation verbally well.

5. Questionnaires

Students can design a questionnaire on any appropriate topic, and the teacher can act as a resource to assist them in the design process. The results obtained can later be used for written work, discussions, or prepared talks.

6. Simulation and Role-Play

Simulations and role-playing can be used to encourage oral fluency and train students, such as simulating life as if they were doing it in the real world.

(Harmer, 1991)

Role Play

According to Brown, role play is a popular pedagogical activity in communicative language teaching classes. Role plays allow some rehearsal time so that students can map out what they are going to say (Brown, 2004).

1. The Procedure for Role Play

According to the Huang, there are six major steps in the procedure for role play:

- a. Decide on the Teaching Materials

The teaching materials can be taken from textbooks or non-textbook teaching materials such as play-script, comic scripts, cartoons, picture books, story books and pictures. The teacher can also create his or her own teaching materials based on the student's level and interest, teaching objectives and appropriateness for teaching.

The 2nd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature

Vol. 2(1), August, 2022

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

b. Select Situations and Create Dialogs

For every role-playing situation, dialogs should be provided (by the teaching material or teacher) or created by the students themselves.

c. Teach the Dialogue for Role Plays

The teacher teaches the vocabulary, sentences and dialogs necessary for the role play situations. The teacher should allow students to ask how to say the words they want to say.

d. Have Students Practice the Role Plays

Students can practice in pairs or in small groups. When students are confident enough to demonstrate or perform in front of the class, the teacher can ask them to do so for their classmates.

e. Have Students Modify the Situations and Dialogs

Once students have finished and become familiar with a real role play situation, they can modify the situations and/or dialogs to create a variation of the original role play.

f. Evaluate and Check Student's Comprehension

The teacher should evaluate and check if students have successfully comprehended the meaning of the vocabulary, sentences and dialogs. Teachers can also evaluate students' understanding and comprehension while observing students' interactions, practices, and performance of their role plays.

(Huang, 2008)

Method

In this research, the researchers used quantitative research. Quantitative research was research that used a quantity including numbers to get the data. The data in this research is collected by comparing pre-test and post-test to see whether there would be a significant difference between promoting speaking skill with and without role play by one class as a pre-experimental group. The illustration is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Illustration of Pre-Test and Post-Test Design

Pre- Test	Treatment	Post- Test
X	O	Y

Creswell (2002)

A test is offered to the students in order for them to achieve the goal. To attain the object, a test is given to the students. Next step, the researchers will analyze the data with 4 steps. There are scoring of spoken tests, the mean of each element, students' score, the criterion of student's ability and mean of the score are pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

The researchers employed Brown's characteristics in rating speaking to score the students' speaking abilities both pre- and post-test. They are in the following table.

Table 2. Aspects of Scoring of Speaking

No.	Aspect	Score
1.	Pronunciation	1-5
2.	Vocabulary	1-5
3.	Grammar	1-5
4.	Fluency	1-5
5.	Comprehension	1-5

(Brown, 2004)

Because the researchers discover the research results, data analysis is a crucial aspect of this study. The significance of the discrepancy was determined using the test results. The following were the steps in the data analysis:

Scoring

The score was given by the writers after the test was completed. After receiving the test score, the mark was applied to the table achievement.

Table 3. Levels of Achievement

Score	Grade	Level of Achievement
90-100	A	Excellent / Outstanding
80-89	B	Very Good
70-79	C	Fair
60-69	D	Poor
0-59	E	Fail

(Brown, 2004)

1. Mean

The researchers then counted the data after receiving the results of both the pre-test and post-test. The counting was done to determine the pre-test and post-test mean by Urdan (2010):

2. Standard Deviation

The standard deviation and standard error of difference of means were then determined. Standard deviation, according to Cohen (2007), is a measure of the dispersion or range of scores, determined as the square root of the variance. The researchers, on the other hand, employed Urdan's (2010) standard deviation and standard error of difference of means formulas.

3. Analyzing the data using the T-test

The researchers then used the t-test to analyze the data. The t-test is used to see if there are statistically significant variations between the means of two groups (pre-test and post-test) utilizing parametric data obtained from random samples with a normal distribution, according to Cohen (2007). The researchers, on the other hand, utilized Urdan's (2010) t-test formula.

Finding and Discussion

A. Research Findings

The students' speaking skills before being taught by using role play (pre-test)

Students at SMPN 1 Gunungwungkal were tested to compare their speaking skills before and after being taught using role play. The researchers conducted several activities throughout the study to collect data, including the pre-test, treatment, and post-test.

The researchers conducted a pre-test for 33 students of class VIII C. The students were divided into small groups of two to three students each, according to the topic of the material. The researchers then graded the pre-test results of the students. 1864 was the average pretest score of the students before they began learning using role-playing. Each point for each element was added up by the researchers, and the result was then multiplied by 4. Then it was divided into categories based on the percentage of students' pre-test scores, it proceeds as follows;

Table 4. The percentage of the students' pre-test results before being taught by using role play

Score	Grade	Level of Achievement	Total students	Percentage
90-100	A	Excellent	0	0%
80-89	B	Very Good	0	0%
70-79	C	Sufficient	2	6.1%
60-69	D	Insufficient	22	66.7%
0-59	F	Fail	9	27.2%
Total			33	100%

Following Cohen's stated formula, the percentage of the student's marks, according to the results, no student or 0% received a grade of excellent/ outstanding, or very good; 2 students or 6,1% received a rating of sufficient; 11 students or 33,3% received a grade of insufficient; 20 students or 60,6% received a grade of fail. This indicates that the majority of students had poor speaking skills because they typically received failing grades.

The researchers reached the conclusion that the students had poor speaking skills. No one is a student at the high level. Most of the students received failing grades. Additionally, the pre-test mean for the students taken prior to learning employing role-playing was 56.5 and was given an "F" for failure. It indicates that the students still don't fully understand how to speak English well. Therefore, before the post-test was given, the student's speaking skills needed to be improved through role-playing.

The 2nd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature

Vol. 2(1), August, 2022

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

The students' speaking ability after being taught by using role play (post-test)

All of the students were present in this meeting. The post-test and the pretest were similar. Each group performed and presented the dialogue for roughly three minutes per group. They did well on the post-test. The student's performance was then graded. The post-test scoring criteria applied to the performance as well.

The researchers show the results of the post-test given based on the table above. Thirty-three students participated in the post-test, which was done by VIII C. After using role-playing to teach, the student's final score was 2376. Each point for each aspect was added up by the researchers, and the result was then multiplied by 4. Then it was divided into categories based on the percentage of students' results, as shown below:

Table 5. The percentage of the students' post-test results before being taught by using role play

Score	Grade	Level of Achievement	Total students	Percentage
90-100	A	Excellent	2	6.1%
80-89	B	Very Good	3	9.1%
70-79	C	Sufficient	12	36.4%
60-69	D	Insufficient	16	48.4%
0-59	F	Fail	0	0%
Total			33	100%

According to the results above, 2 students, or 6,1% of the class, received an excellent/outstanding grade; 3 students, or 9,1%, received a very good mark; 12 students, or 36,4%, received an sufficient grade; 16 students, or 48,4%, received an insufficient grade; and 0% of the class received a failing grade. It indicates that the students' speaking skills have improved.

The post-test mean for the students was 72. The researchers reached the conclusion that the students' speaking skills had developed to an acceptable level. 2 students are at a sufficient level. The students' excellent performance was the result of role-playing technique.

The significant difference between students' speaking ability before and after being taught by using role play

The researchers was able to conclude that there had been a noticeable improvement in the students' performance both before and after being taught by using role play. The pre-test mean of 56.5, which was classified as a fail grade, and the post-test mean of 72, which was classified as a sufficient grade. The improvement of students' speaking skills is 15.5.

The researchers calculated standard deviation and standard error deviation to examine the t-test results after obtaining the average of the students' results before and after being taught through role-play.

The research found the t-test result based on the calculation above. The researchers then analyzed the t-value. The hypothesis is accepted if the t-value result is higher than t-table. The t-value was 19. The researchers determined the degree of freedom to determine the t-

The 2nd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature

Vol. 2(1), August, 2022

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

table (df). $df = N-1$, $df = 33-1 = 32$. As a result, the critical value table at the t-table in the level of significance of 5% is calculated to be 2,03. $T\text{-value} > t\text{-table}$ ($19 > 2.03$) was the outcome. The hypothesis is therefore accepted. The speaking abilities of the pupils before and after being taught through role plays by students from SMPN 1 Gunungwungkal in the academic years 2022/2023 showed a substantial difference.

B. Discussion

In this research, the researchers discussed the use of role-playing techniques to improve students' English speaking skills for SMPN 1 Gunungwungkal in the academic year 2022/2023.

One particular class, VIII C, with 33 students was chosen as a sample for this research. A pre-test, treatment, and post-test were then given to them. The effectiveness of using role play could answer the statement of the problems, according to the research's findings. It can be seen from the students' results that the mean was 56,5 before they were taught through role-playing. It falls under the fail grade category. The student's level of accomplishment remained low. When being asked to speak in front of the class, the students encountered numerous obstacles. The students were unable to understand what was being said. They struggled with the proper vocabulary and grammar when asked to create a dialogue. The majority of students also failed, as evidenced by the fact that they struggled to pronounce the majority of English terms clearly and accurately. They weren't sure what they ought to say as a result. so that the message is not understood by the other friends as well.

They learn more after being taught through role-playing, and it may allow them to comprehend the actions taking place around them. Because they have done research and observations before conveying what they see or feel in their daily lives, they can describe each action more accurately. In class activities, students can better understand the material taught by the teacher because they are asked to role play. They must play the role they choose, which of course is a daily activity around them, so that they understand much more about what they are conveying. It was shown by the mean post-test score of the students after being taught through role play, which was 72. It was given the grade of sufficient. As a result, after being taught by using role play, the students' speaking abilities improved from 56,5 to 72.

According to the results above, there was a 15,5 difference between the means before and after being taught using role play. As a result, there was a big difference between the speaking abilities of the students before and after they were taught using role-playing. The post-test mean for the students shows it. The study therefore concluded that role-playing is an effective method for teaching speaking skills. Additionally, the results were better than before role-playing was used to teach.

The performance of the students significantly improved. The graph up top shows that 60,6% of the students who received a grade below 60 prior to using the tour guide role play. After employing role-playing to teach, there was a noticeably lower percentage of pupils receiving a failing grade on the subsequent test. Students who scored lower than 60 in percentage decreased from 60,6% to 0%. Additionally, the highest percentage of the students' performance prior to employing role-playing to teach them was 60,6% on a score of under 60.

The 2nd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature

Vol. 2(1), August, 2022

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

In contrast, the scores of 60 and 69 represented the highest percentage of the student's final grades after role-playing-based instruction. 48.4% was the percentage. The researchers came to the conclusion that role play significantly improved the students' speaking abilities after conducting all of the analyses.

The researchers did a t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between being taught using role play before and after. The t-test score was determined through computation using the t-test formula. The outcome was 19. In the meantime, 2.03 was the critical number in the t-table for the 5 percent alpha level, and $df = 32$. 19 was the obtained t-value. As a result, the t-value ($19 > 2.03$) was higher than the table's critical threshold. It indicates that there was a noticeable improvement when speaking skills were taught utilizing the role-playing technique. It was successful in enhancing students' speaking abilities. H_a was therefore approved.

Conclusion

Results show that role-playing helped students improve their speaking skills, according to the average score data. There was a 15.5 difference between the means before and after being taught using role play. The alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted that there is an increase in students' speaking ability.

Using role-playing techniques to teach speaking, other researchers can learn something new about teaching English. In order to make the teaching and learning process more efficient, enjoyable, and fascinating, the researchers should develop the technique, particularly role play. Another researcher may use this final project as a reference for their final project.

References

- Astuti, D. P. (2022). The Importance of Role Play in Teaching Process, 2(8.5.2017), 2003–2005.
- Boonkit, K. (2010). Enhancing the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 1305–1309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.191>
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language Testing Book: Principles and Classroom Practice*. Book, 314.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017). *Research Methods in Education*. In *Research Methods in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315456539>
- H. Douglas Brown. (2000). [H. Douglas Brown] Teaching by Principles, Second (BookFi.org).pdf. In *Teaching by Principles An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (p. 491).
- Harmer, J. (1991). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*.pdf (p. 386).
- Harmer, J. (2010). How to Teach English with DVD. In *Aviagen*.
- Huang, Irene Y. 2008. The Internet TESL Journal, vol. XIV, no. 22, <http://itesjl.org/>.

The 2nd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature

Vol. 2(1), August, 2022

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

- Kaplan, S. A., & Cohen, P. (2007). Review: The somatomedin hypothesis 2007: 50 Years later. *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 92(12), 4529–4535. <https://doi.org/10.1210/jc.2007-0526>
- Kubiatko, M., Vaculová, I., Torkey, shiamaa abd E. F., Khromchenko, O., Shutilo, I., 宗成庆, Shin, M.-H., Leong, L., Ahmadi, S. M., Rohmahwati, P., Tobergte, D. R., Curtis, S., Leong, L., Ahmadi, S. M., Kürüm, E. Y., Yuliani, Y., & Lengkanawati, N. S. (2014). Teaching Speaking Skills levistri halawa Teaching Speaking Skills. *Kodifikasia*, 27(1), 341–359.
- Rao, P. S. (2019). VS Publications Alford Council of International English & Literature Journal(ACIELJ). *Alford Council of International English & Literature Journal(ACIELJ)*, 401(2), 6–18.
- Urdan, Timoty C. 2010. *Statistics in Plain English*. New York: Taylor and Francis Group.