



**TEACHING SPEAKING BY USING ROLE PLAY  
TO THE EIGHTH GRADERS OF  
STATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL 15 PALEMBANG**

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**Abstract.** English speaking skill is one of skills to be noticed in this globalization era. However, Indonesian English speaking skill was still low. Therefore, the objective of this study was to find out whether or not the use of Role Play strategy could improve students' speaking performance. 60 out of 212 eighth graders of State Junior High School 15 Palembang were chosen randomly as the sample. In collecting the data, the pre-test and post-test were given to both groups to measure their speaking skill. The result showed that speaking achievement of the students who are taught by using role play were significantly improve those who were not. Role play could motivate and attract their attention to the lesson. They were active in expressing their ideas, feelings and opinions freely. The students like role play because it is like a game. Thus, the students enjoy to be active orally especially for shy students. It means that role play is effective to be used in teaching speaking to the Eighth Graders of State Junior High School 15 Palembang.

Keywords: *Speaking skill and role play*

**Introduction**

English becomes the most essential language in the world. Almost all of the people from many different countries around the world use it to communicate. The area of English has always become a special interest. It's because of the importance of English in any scope of our lives. In international relationship, English speaking ability is very important to be conquered. According to Crystal (2003, p. 2),

English is a global language, they would say. You hear it on television spoken by politicians from all over the world. Whenever you travel, you see English signs and advertisements. Whenever you enter a hotel or restaurant in a foreign city they will understand English, and there will be an English menu.

It shows that English does not only play officially but also in daily lives. In facing this globalization era, the non-native English speaker should be aware and ready to have English speaking ability. He also (2003, p. 87) states that English speaking ability is very for travelling abroad. Moreover, White (2004) states that language is an integral part of learning and oral language has a key role in classroom teaching and learning. Speaking is a spirit of teaching and learning process. In teaching and learning process, the language learners should be active in questioning, sharing and comprehending the material especially in English class. So that, the learning outcome will be achieved. It indicated that speaking English is crucial, not only in working area but also in education especially for English class.

Unfortunately, the students have difficulty to speak in the class. According to Young (1990), speaking class tends to make the students feel nervous and anxious. Speaking in front of the class is a spot of anxious producing for students, especially speaking English. It indicated that students' problem in speaking is not only the anxiety but also their self-confident. The students' difficulties influence their English speaking skill no matter how long they have been learning. Those facts also supported by the report of *English Proficiency Index* (Education First, 2011), Indonesian speaking skill was on the 34<sup>th</sup> rank out of 44 nations with the score 44.78. Meanwhile, in Asia was on 10<sup>th</sup> rank out of 13 countries. Moreover, a research done by Fajariyah (2009) showed that the mean score of students' speaking achievement of SMPN Baki Sukoharjo, was 6.05. Furthermore, Zulfikri (2010) found the mean score of students' speaking achievement at of SMK Negeri 6 Palembang was 67.37. Moreover, English speaking skill is not to be assessed on examination even national examination in Indonesia.

By having facts above, students' speaking skill in Indonesia could not be ignored. Even though students' speaking achievement in Palembang was better than Baki Sukoharjo, but it has not achieved the standard score which the standard score in Indonesia is 75. The teacher should be active to find and implement an appropriate technique in solving the students' difficulty. Smith and Ragan (1999, p. 10) state that teachers should select or develop activities and information sources that will assist learners in reaching the learning achievement. It shows that, the teachers do not only focus on traditional teacher-centered. In helping the students to upgrade their English speaking skill, the teachers should apply an enjoyable and fun technique which make the students fun and interest to the lesson. One of techniques could be applied to deal with is role play.

Role play is one techniques can be applied in teaching speaking. It gives the students opportunity to be free in expressing their feeling and upgrading their speaking skill. According to Freeman (2000, p. 134) states that role-plays are very important in CLT because they give students opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles. Harmer (2001, p. 274) states that role-play can be used to encourage general oral fluency or to train students for specific situation. Rahimy and Safarpour (2012) found that role playing seems to provide a sort of enjoyable environment for the learners to flourish in. In role play activities, students grab a new character to use the foreign language for daily conversation. Role play would seem to be an ultimate activity in which students could practice their English creatively and it stimulates the students to communicate, give

them an opportunity to train and upgrade their speaking skill. For these reasons, the writer was interested in using role play in teaching speaking to the eighth graders of State Junior High School 15 Palembang.

**Method**

The quantitative research was used in this study. There were experimental and control groups. Both of the groups were given a pretest and posttest. However, the treatment was given to the experimental group. The treatment was conducted in 14 meetings during two months from February to April 2011. Each meeting took two teaching hours (2 x 45 minutes).

The population of this study was the eighth graders of SMP Negeri 15 Palembang in the academic year 2010-2011. To get the sample, the name of class was rolled by using fish-ball which the first name of class appeared as experimental group and the second appeared as the control group. The number of student for each class was different, the experimental group has 39 students and the control group was 38 students. So, the number of the sample was 77 students.

The data were obtained by using a speaking test. The samples were interviewed one by one by the writer. Interviewing was about their identity, daily activity and conducted to assess the students' speaking skill. The interviewing was recorded which it would be scored by the two raters.

**Findings and Interpretation**

**Table 1**  
**Result of analysed data of Speaking Achievement Both Group (Total and the Aspect)**

Variable	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean diff. pre and post Exp	Mean diff. pre and post Con	T-value and sig. between pre and post Exp.	T-value and sig. between pre and post Con	T-value and sig. post-test between Exp. and Con
	Mean Exp.	Mean Con.	Mean Exp.	Mean Con.					
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.9103</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>14.4487</b>	<b>13.4474</b>	<b>0.5384</b>	<b>-0.0526</b>	4.172 .000	1.434 .160	3.277 .002
<b>Vocabulary</b>	2.7179	2.6447	2.9231	2.6711	0.2052 38.1%	0.0264 -50.2 %	3.411 .002	-1.000 .324	2.401 .019
<b>Grammar</b>	2.9231	2.8421	2.9231	2.8289	0 0 %	-0.0132 25.1 %	1.000 .000	-1.000 .324	1.166 .248
<b>Fluency</b>	2.7308	2.6316	2.8462	2.6184	0.1154 21.4 %	-0.0132 25.1 %	2.160 .037	-1.434 .160	1.945 .055
<b>Response</b>	2.9872	2.8684	3.0641	2.8421	0.0769 14.3 %	-0.0263 50 %	2.226 .032	-1.434 .160	4.419 .000
<b>Pronunciation</b>	2.5513	2.5132	2.7051	2.4868	0.1538 28.5 %	-0.0264 50.2 %	3.132 .003	-1.671 .103	1.977 .051

After analyzing the data, the result showed that the mean students' speaking score of control group was 13.5 in pre-test while 13.4474 in post-test. The mean difference of students' speaking score between pre-test and post-test was -0.0526. The students in control group was totally decrease. Only on vocabulary aspect significantly improved but the rest of the aspects was decreasing.

Meanwhile, the mean difference score of experimental group was 0.5384 which 13.9103 in pretest and in post-test 14.4487. This indicated that the students speaking achievement of experimental group significantly improved after implementing the teaching technique. According to the result analyses showed that the students' speaking score was had a progress totally, but in aspect view showed that there was 1 out of 5 aspects was not improved. The grammar aspect was not

improved because there was no significant difference of mean score between pretest and posttest. While the other aspects of speaking was improved, the highest improvement was on vocabulary aspect with mean difference 0.2052 and followed by pronunciation aspect with mean difference 0.1538 then fluency 0.1154 last response 0.0769.

Independent sample t-test was used to find out the significant difference in speaking achievement between the students who were taught using role-play strategy and those who were not. The significant difference exists if the  $p$  values (Sig 2-tailed) was less than 0.05. The results of independent sample t-test showed that the mean difference of posttest scores between the experimental and control groups was 3.277 and the significance value was 0.002 ( $< 0.05$ ). Therefore, it can be stated that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted. It means that *there was significant difference in students' speaking achievement between the students' who are taught by using role-play and those who are no*. It was in line with Yulianti (2009) who found that APS technique is beneficial to improve the students' speaking ability and improving classroom situation. Moreover, Rahimy and Safarpour (2012) found that role playing seems to provide a sort of enjoyable environment for the learners to flourish in. It expressed that the use role play in classroom helped the students to improve their speaking skill.

**Table 2**  
**Students' Response to the Use of Role Play in Speaking Class**

No	Statement	SA	A	DA	SDA
1	I had been learning English by using role play	0 %	0 %	25.64 %	74.35 %
2	I play role-play more frequently in classroom	0 %	0 %	41 %	58.97 %
3	Our teacher of English always uses role-play in class	0 %	0 %	53.84 %	46.15 %
4	The teacher and peers give feedbacks to you after the role-play performance	0 %	0 %	79.49 %	20.51 %
5	It is plausible to implement role-play in classroom	82.05 %	17.94 %	0 %	0 %
6	I like role play to be used as a teaching technique	71.79 %	28.2 %	0 %	0 %
7	Role play can help you to learn English especially speaking	64.1 %	35.89 %	0 %	0 %
8	I meet some difficulties in role playing	0 %	0 %	89.74 %	10.25 %
9	Role play decreases your anxiety in speaking	66.67 %	33.33 %	0 %	0 %
10	Role play builds my self-confidence in speaking	58.97 %	35.89 %	2.56 %	2.56 %
11	I expect the teacher to give you to do role-play	43.58 %	56.41 %	0 %	0 %

In order to have the students' response towards the use of role play in classroom, the questionnaire was given to the experimental group. The questionnaire has 11 statements with four choices; strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The questionnaire result showed that the students had no experience using role play in English class because 74.35 % students were strongly disagree. Their teacher never used role play in English teaching and learning activities. Role play was possible to be used in English class with 82.05 % students strongly agree. So

that 71.79 % students like role play as teaching technique. 64.1 % said strongly agree that Role play helped the students to learn English especially in speaking. Most of the students strongly agree that Role play helped the students in decreasing their speaking anxiety and build their self-confident in speaking. 56.41 % students agree that role play would be used in English class by the teacher.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

Having the result of the research showed that there was no significant improvement for the students who were not teaching by using role play, the students in control group. On the other hand, the students with role play technique significantly improved their speaking skill. Even though the students' speaking skill improved totally but in grammar aspect of speaking there had not difference between pre-test and post-test. Vocabulary aspect had a huge contribution in speaking progress, it allows the students to upgrade their vocabulary knowledge. Role play allocates much new vocabularies to be memorized in practicing it by the students. The students also learn the use of word in context. In doing the role play, the students practice and pronounce the word that will be used correctly. So that the pronunciation aspect was on the second stage in this research. By having much practice, the students were not only able to communicate fluently but also decrease their speaking anxiety. It sets the students to perform confidently. Overall, the students could respond the communication well. Then, the speaking activities in classroom runs well. Unfortunately, the grammar aspect was not improved. It could not be done well. In role play activity, the grammar was not focused by the students. They probably focused on practicing the role play; building vocabulary, pronouncing, speaking fluently and responding the speaker. It does not allow the student to focus on grammar aspect.

In learning speaking skill, the students often find some problems. The problem frequently found is that their native language causes them difficult to use the foreign language. Other reason is lack of motivation to practice the second language in daily conversation and they are also too shy and afraid to speak English. They do not expose to speak English. So that, there was significant differences between the students with role play and the students who do not. The students who taught by using role play performed better. The students were more interested to be involved in teaching and learning process. Role play makes the students enjoying the classroom atmosphere. It also allows the students to be fun in learning. Especially, shy students were able to be involved and active in classroom. By implementing role play in English class, the students will have much experience in speaking practice and context in real life which can help the students to build their skill. Experiencing much situation, it allows the students to perform in real situation. It also gives the students to have a good language by knowing and comprehending the language use in environment. Shy students is helped by proving a mask. A mask is not the real mask but it is a new character that the students to play in. then, the students will not be burden to play it because they only play someone character accordingly.

In teaching and learning activities, the teacher never uses role play in improving students' English speaking skill. Teacher-centred technique always

implements in classroom. It was only not capable for the students but also making the students to be inactive. They just listened and wrote the material without taking apart orally. So that the students will not be able understand the material well. The teacher probably think that there is no oral test in examination even national examination. This reality make the teachers and students ignoring the speaking skill. It does not matter whether they are able to speaking English or not. They even only focus to have a high score. So that, most of the students who have high score does not warrant their speaking ability as well. After implementing role play in English class, the students are interest to be active in teaching and learning process. They think that role-play can help them to practice speaking English. The role play is like a game that make them enjoy the learning. It does not only allow them to explore their skill but also build their self-confident, especially for the shy students. Role play provides Shy students a mask to speaking English. They argued that they have no an experience to role play techniques in classroom.

The teachers had better realize about the classroom atmosphere and the students' condition at the beginning of the course by conducting a pre-test. By having that, the teachers will know what they will do to their students. The teachers should not be only more active to find an appropriate teaching technique but also prepare an interesting material to fit the students. When the students enjoy the classroom atmosphere, they will more excite to learn and the learning outcomes will be achieved. They also should not only focus on the written for but also the development students' speaking skill as one of the goal their teaching process. The students should improve their speaking skill by having more practise especially whose speaking skill still need to be improved. To support it, they should upgrade their vocabulary knowledge that will help them in a conversation. The students also should be active in classroom by asking about the material which they are not able to understand and join English speaking club. By having much experience in speaking, the students will be able to build their self-confidence which will help them to speak up in classroom. For the further researcher, they should find or add an additional factor which influence the students to speaking English.

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