

**IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH ROLE PLAY:
ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS AT SPP SNAKMA MUHAMMADIYAH
TANJUNG ANOM**

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Abstract.

This study aims to enhance speaking skills through the role-play method for vocational students at SPP Snakma Muhammadiyah Tanjung Anom. The research focuses on improving students' English-speaking abilities by implementing role-play as an interactive learning strategy. Conducted as Classroom Action Research (CAR), the study involved two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two meetings. The research took place in Tanjung Anom Village, Deli Serdang, and included 15 students (both male and female) selected from a population of 30. The research process followed four key stages: planning, implementing actions, observing, and reflecting. Data collection was carried out using observation, tests, and documentation techniques, while data analysis employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The findings indicated significant improvements in students' speaking skills from the first to the second cycle, confirming the role-play method's effectiveness in fostering language proficiency. This research demonstrates that role-play is a practical approach to improving English communication skills among vocational students.

Keywords: English, Speaking Skills, Role Play.

INTRODUCTION

Language shows a nation, it is a proverb that we often hear or read, which means that language shows a person's identity. Language will reveal a person's character, thought patterns, habits, or even intelligence (Rosida, 2024). It means that people can communicate by using language but the language should be good so people can understand it well. Then, it is important to learn languages all over the world, like English where English is a part of our everyday lives. If it's not your native language, then it's your second language (Fadly, 2019).

Language also requires skills, one of which is speaking. Speaking is the skill of conveying messages through spoken language. Speaking is one aspect of oral language skills that is productive, meaning that it is an ability that a person has to convey ideas, thoughts, or feelings so that others can understand the ideas in the speaker's mind (Tarigan, 2021).

It is not easy to speak using English to communicate in daily life. Some students have speaking skills but not all have good and correct speaking skills. Then, speaking is part of practice in learning between English and vocabulary, which are required for achieving fluency. Vocabulary and speaking skills have a big correlation. The correlation is the more acquired vocabulary is mastered by students, the more possibility of fluency in speaking. These correlations should be maintained for acquiring

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English as the target language. Vocabulary is an important part of acquiring fluency in speaking skills (Efrizah et al., 2024).

Therefore, learning English speaking skills should receive attention in learning language skills in formal or informal education. Teachers are expected to help students in improving their English speaking skills. Many media can be used by either teachers or students to help this learning. Moreover, it plays a very important role in learning including English but if a person is not interested in learning something, it will not work well (Sari, 2023).

Another effective approach to improving students' speaking skills is the Role-Play Method. This method is particularly suitable at the school level because it helps students remember vocabulary more easily and enables them to practice using English in a practical context. Through role-play, students can develop their ability to speak using simple, everyday words that are relevant to their daily activities. Teaching speaking skills from an early age is crucial, as it helps students build competencies in thinking, reading, writing, and listening. These skills are honed as students organize, conceptualize, and express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas orally in English, even with basic vocabulary.

Observations at SMK SPP Snakma Muhammadiyah reveal that students' English-speaking skills are still underdeveloped. Only a few students are able to convey messages or information using simple or appropriate English, and many lack the confidence to speak in front of their peers. Some students are even hesitant to stand up and attempt to communicate in English. This indicates a need for targeted efforts to improve students' speaking skills. Such observations provide a foundation for addressing the issue and enhancing English-speaking abilities among the students.

This research employs the Role-Play Method to improve English-speaking skills, as it is both effective and engaging. The method not only helps eliminate students' fear of speaking but also makes learning more enjoyable, motivating them to actively participate. By integrating role-play into the learning process, students become more confident and enthusiastic, which ultimately contributes to significant improvements in their English-speaking abilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking is the ability to utter articulated sounds or words to express, and convey thoughts, ideas, and feelings. The main purpose of speaking is to communicate with others. To speak well, one must have speaking skills, therefore speaking skills are very important to learn so that one's ability to speak is getting better, especially when learning a foreign language. Speaking skills are also like other skills, which turn out to be more complicated than it seems and more than saying words.

To improve speaking skills one must have a good vocabulary. Most of the students found more difficulties in learning English. Fewer interactions in class made their vocabulary knowledge and ability low. They had no chance to explore their vocabulary. They were difficult to mention some vocabularies around them. They also found it difficult to share their opinion by using English (Ali, 2023). Vocabulary learning is potentially a main part of how learners understand other language than their mother language. Of course, there are some factors how students find it difficult to learn vocabulary (Fitriani et al., 2023).

From the above opinion, it can be stated that vocabulary must be mastered so that students can explore more and give opinions in good language and this can improve students' speaking skills.

Speaking skills are essentially the skill of producing a stream of articulation sound systems to convey will, needs feelings, and desires to others. In this case, the completeness of a person's speech apparatus is a natural requirement that allows him to produce a wide variety of articulation sounds, stress, tone, silence, and speech songs. This skill is also based on self-confidence to speak naturally, honestly, truthfully, and responsibly by eliminating psychological problems such as shyness, inferiority,

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tension, tongue-tiedness, and others (Dadang, 2021). Tarigan argues that speaking skills are the ability to pronounce articulated sounds of words to express, express, and convey thoughts, ideas, and feelings (Tarigan, 2021).

Speaking skills are the most distinctive and meaningful human behavior. This behavior must be learned, then it can be mastered. Elementary school-age children must learn from the people around them, family members, playmates, schoolmates, and teachers at school. All parties help children learn speaking skills (Tarigan, 2021). Besides, speaking skills are mechanistic skills. From this opinion, it can be explained that the more practice, the more mastered and skilled a person is in speaking. No one is immediately skilled at speaking without going through the process of practicing. In practicing speaking, a person needs to be trained in terms of pronunciation, intonation, word choice (diction), and the use of language properly and correctly (Slamet, 2021).

Based on some of the opinions above, it can be concluded that speaking skills are a person's ability to express ideas or ideas orally which are productive and mechanistic, which can only be mastered by practicing speaking and is a very important part of human life behavior as a means of daily communication to others. In learning English, it is necessary to practice speaking English a lot so that one gets used to hearing and using the language so that one has good skills in speaking English.

1.1. Role Play Method

The Role Play method is an interesting method to use in improving students' speaking skills in learning a language including English. Role Play will also motivate students in learning a language because when someone plays a certain character, it will be easier for them to remember the words that need to be spoken according to the character played in the Role Play. The roles are taken from everyday life. From role-play, aspects of feelings, attitudes, values, perceptions, problem-solving skills, and understanding of the subject matter can be achieved.

Role play is acting according to a predetermined role for certain purposes. The role play method is a form of educational game used to explain feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and values to appreciate the feelings, points of view, and ways of thinking of others by playing the role of others (Wahab, 2019).

In role-playing, students explore human relations problems by enacting problem situations and then discussing the enactments. It means that in the role-play method, students explore problems in human relations by playing a role in a problem situation and then discussing the rules. Role play is a learning method that comes from both individual and social dimensions of education. At a very simple level, role play is played out in a series of actions: describing the problem, acting out, and discussing the problem (Bruce et al., 2019).

Based on some of the above opinions, it can be concluded that the role-play method is one of the learning methods by placing students to carry out play activities or play roles with full appreciation and creativity based on the roles that have been given. This role-play method is used to achieve several learning objectives both instructionally and accompanimentally. The role-play method can be used to improve students' speaking skills.

1.2. Objectives of Role Play Method

The objectives of role-playing according to the type of learning are as follows: (1) Learning by doing, namely students carrying out certain roles in actual reality. The aim is to develop interactive or reactive skills. (2) Learning through imitation, namely the observer (student) equates themselves with the actor and the actor's behavior. (3) Learning through feedback, observers respond to the behavior of the role players that have been displayed. (4) Learning through study, assessment, and repetition, that is, actors can improve their skills by repeating them in subsequent performances (Oemar, 2013).

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Furthermore, Role play aims to, (1) explore students' feelings, (2) transfer and realize views regarding student behavior, values, and perceptions, (3) develop solving abilities problems, and behavior, (4) explore the subject matter in different ways (Bruce et al., 2019).

Based on the opinions above, it can be concluded that the purpose of role-play is a planned learning activity by playing roles to achieve interactive skills and foster students' social behavior in their lives.

1.3. Benefits of the Role Play Method

Role play has two main benefits, namely education for citizens and group counseling, but there are still several other benefits. Using this method will provide benefits if it is done with the correct steps, one of them is increasing the skill of communication (Wahab, 2019).

The benefits of role-play are as follows: 1. Students can improve their ability to recognize and take into account their feelings and the feelings of others. Students can have new behavior in dealing with difficult situations they are facing, and students improve problem-solving skills. 2. Role-playing can stimulate several activities (Bruce et al., 2019).

From the opinion above, it can be concluded that the benefits of role-play are to help students understand their feelings and those of others, improve their ability to solve social problems, and increase the skill of communication.

METHOD

This study utilized Classroom Action Research (CAR), a method designed to improve teaching and learning practices through systematic actions and reflective evaluation. CAR is characterized by three main components: research, which involves investigating a specific issue using methodological approaches to collect data for improvement; action, referring to deliberate activities aimed at achieving specific educational goals; and classroom, which signifies a focused educational context rather than a physical location (Arikunto, 2019). The research adhered to the established CAR framework, comprising four stages: planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. This approach aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the role-play method in enhancing students' English-speaking skills (Arikunto, 2019).

The study was conducted at SMK SPP Snakma Muhammadiyah, Tanjung Anom, involving a sample of 15 students selected from a population of 30. The participants, comprising both male and female students, were divided into three groups of five, enabling collaborative learning. These students were chosen randomly based on their interest in learning English.

The research followed a two-cycle process. Each cycle consisted of planning, implementing actions, observing outcomes, and reflecting on findings to improve subsequent steps (Arikunto, 2019). During Cycle I, the planning phase involved reviewing the English curriculum, creating detailed lesson plans with learning objectives and role-play scenarios, preparing instructional materials, and developing evaluation tools and observation sheets. The implementation phase included introducing role-play scenarios, forming student groups, conducting role-play sessions, and administering a test to evaluate students' speaking skills. Observations focused on student participation, motivation, and speaking performance, with results documented using observation sheets. The reflection stage analyzed the outcomes to identify strengths and weaknesses, which informed the improvements for Cycle II.

In Cycle II, the planning phase incorporated insights from the reflection on Cycle I. Revised lesson plans and updated assessment tools were prepared to address identified challenges. During

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implementation, new role-play scenarios were introduced, and students were encouraged to build on their prior experiences. Role-play sessions were conducted with improved instructional strategies, followed by group discussions and a second test to evaluate progress. Observations in this cycle focused on students' behaviors, including their courage, participation, material mastery, and overall learning motivation. The data collected demonstrated significant improvements in students' English-speaking skills.

Through this iterative process, the role-play method proved to be an effective strategy for fostering students' speaking abilities in English. The structured approach of planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting ensured continuous improvement and highlighted the benefits of active and collaborative learning.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This study aimed to evaluate the improvement of speaking skills through the role-play method among class X students at SMK SPP Snakma Muhammadiyah Tanjung Anom, Deli Serdang. The research followed several interconnected stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The process was conducted in two cycles, Cycle I and Cycle II. The analysis focused on test results from both cycles and observations recorded on the observation sheets completed by the researchers, as detailed below:

a. Cycle I

1). Data analysis of student learning activities

The following is the observation data of the role-play learning method for students in class X SMK SPP Snakma Medan.

No	Components Observed	CYCLUS I			
		I	II	Average	Percentage
1	Active participation of students in role-play.	15	15	15	100
2	Students who pay attention to the material of role-play	15	15	15	100
3	Students who do other activities during the learning role-play	0	0	0	0
4	Students who leave the class during the learning process of role-play	0	0	0	0
5	Students' ability to carry out roles according to instructions.	0	5	2,5	25
6	Collaboration among students during role play	15	15	15	100

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7	Students who ask for guidance	15	15	15	100
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<Table 1> Recapitulation of Observation Results of Learning Activities of Role Play Method in Cycle I Meeting I and Meeting II.

Source: Data Processed Results

Based on the data in the above table, an overview of student learning activities in Cycle I is obtained. Out of 15 students observed, 100% of the students actively participated in the role-play, 100% of the students paid attention to the role-play material being taught, 0% of the students engaged in other activities during the learning role-play, and 0% of the students left during the learning process of the role-play. Additionally, 25% of the students demonstrated the ability to carry out roles according to instructions, 100% of the students collaborated during the role-play, and 100% of the students asked for guidance in learning.

2). Data analysis of student learning outcomes

Based on research that has been conducted on class X students of SMK SPP Snakma Muhammadiyah, researchers obtained and collected data through cycle I test instruments. The results of the Cycle I test can be seen in the following table:

Statistics	Statistical Value
Subject	15
Ideal value	100
Highest score	85
Lowest score	50
Average value	63

<Table 2> Statistical Value of Students' Understanding of Speaking Skills after the Application of the Role Play Method

Source: Research Results of Cycle I Test

Based on the above table, the average value of learning outcomes of students' speaking skills with the role-play method is 63. The lowest value obtained by students is 50 out of a possible value of 100 and the highest value obtained by students is 85 out of an ideal value that may be achieved 100, this shows that students' abilities are different and varied. Some have very high, high, medium, and low scores.

If the learning outcomes of speaking skills are grouped into five categories, the frequency and percentage distribution are as follows:

No	Value	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	85 – 100	Very High	1	7
2	70 – 84	High	3	20

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3	55 – 69	Medium	9	60
4	46 – 54	Low	2	13
5	0 – 45	Very Low	-	0
Total			15	100

<Table 3> Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Students' Speaking Skills after the Application of Role Play

Method in Cycle I

Source: Cycle I Test Data

The table shows that the percentage of students' understanding scores after the implementation of cycle I is 13% in the low category, 60% in the medium category, 20% in the high category, 7% in the very high category, and 0% or none in the very low category.

The percentage of speaking skills completeness obtained from the learning outcomes of students' speaking skills after the implementation of cycle I is shown in the following table:

No	Value	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	0 – 69	Not Completed	11	73
2	70- 100	Completed	4	27
Total			15	100

<Table 4> Percentage of Completion of Students' Understanding of Speaking Skills after the Application of Role Play Method Learning in Cycle I

Source: Data Processed Results

Based on the table above, the learning outcomes of students' speaking skills using the role-play method showed an average score of 73%, with 27% of students categorized as complete and the remaining 73% categorized as incomplete. Since only 4 out of 15 students achieved the completeness criteria, it can be concluded that the teaching and learning process in Cycle I was not fully successful. Therefore, the researcher implemented improvements and continued the study into Cycle II to further assess and enhance the students' understanding of speaking skills.

b. Cycle II

1). Data analysis of student learning activities

Data from the results of cycle II observations were used to determine the extent of the application of role-play learning in class X students of SMK SPP Snakma Muhammadiyah. Based on the results of these observations, the researcher describes the data obtained as follows:

		CYCLUS I
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No	Components Observed	I	II	Average	Percentage
1	Active participation of students in role-play.	15	15	15	100
2	Students who pay attention to the material of role-play	15	15	15	100
3	Students who do other activities during the learning role-play	0	0	0	0
4	Students who leave the class during the learning process of role-play	0	0	0	0
5	Students' ability to carry out roles according to instructions.	5	5	5	34
6	Collaboration among students during role play	15	15	15	100
7	Students who ask for guidance	15	15	15	100

<Table 5> Recapitulation of Observation Results of Student Activities During the Application of Role Play Learning Methods in Cycle II Meetings I and II
Source: Cycle II Observation Data

The table shows an overview of student learning activities in Cycle II. Fifteen students in Class X SMK SPP Snakma were observed regarding aspects of their learning activities. Of the 15 students observed, 100% of the students actively participated in the role-play, 100% of the students paid attention to the role-play material being taught, 0% of the students engaged in other activities during the learning role-play, and 0% of the students left during the learning process of the role-play. Additionally, 34% of the students demonstrated the ability to carry out roles according to instructions, 100% of the students collaborated during the role-play, and 100% of the students asked for guidance during learning. In this case, the results are slightly different from those of Cycle I, particularly in component number 5.

2). Data analysis of student learning outcomes

Based on research that has been conducted on class X students of SMK SPP Snakma, researchers obtained and collected data through cycle II test instruments, and the results of the Cycle II test can be seen in the following table:

Statistics	Statistical Value
Subject	15
Ideal value	100
Highest score	90

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Lowest score	60
Average value	67

<Table 6> Statistical Value of Comprehension of Speaking Skills in Cycle II
Source: Cycle II Test Data

The table shows that the average score of students' speaking skills is 67. The lowest score obtained by students is 60 out of a possible score of 100 and the highest score obtained by students is 90 out of an ideal score that may be achieved 100, this shows that students' abilities are different and varied. Some have very high, high, medium, and low scores.

If the comprehension scores are grouped into five categories, the frequency and percentage distribution is as follows:

No	Value	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	85 – 100	Very High	1	7
2	70 – 84	High	12	80
3	55 – 69	Medium	2	13
4	46 – 54	Low	0	0
5	0 – 45	Very Low	-	0
Total			15	100

<Table 7> Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Students' Speaking Skills after the Application of Role Play Learning in Cycle II
Source: Processed Data

The table shows that the percentage of student scores after the implementation of cycle II is 13% in the medium category, 80% in the high category, 7% in the very high category, and 0% or none in the low and very low categories.

The percentage of completion of speaking skills obtained from student learning outcomes after the application of cycle II is shown in the following table:

No	Value	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	0 – 69	Not Completed	2	13
2	70- 100	Completed	13	87
Total			15	100

<Table 8> Percentage of Students' Speaking Skills Completion in Cycle II
Source: Processed data

The results indicate a significant improvement in students' speaking skills through the application of the role-play method. In Cycle I, the average score was 63, with the highest score at 85

and the lowest at 50. Despite 100% doing collaboration among students during role play, only 27% of students achieved the learning completeness criteria, leaving 73% categorized as incomplete. Challenges in Cycle I included student hesitation and a lack of familiarity with the role-play method. Reflection on these obstacles led to adjustments for Cycle II, such as providing more opportunities for students to express themselves and fostering a supportive learning environment.

In Cycle II, the average score increased to 67, with the highest score at 90 and the lowest at 60. This time, 87% of students met the learning completeness criteria, with only two students requiring additional guidance. Students displayed greater willingness to engage, improved pronunciation, intonation, and appreciation, as well as increased confidence in expressing opinions and answering questions. These results highlight the effectiveness of role-play in encouraging active participation and fostering language skills.

The overall improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II demonstrates the success of the role-play method in enhancing students' English-speaking abilities. By the end of Cycle II, students not only improved their scores but also showed more enthusiasm and engagement in the learning process. Learning outcomes were positively correlated with the level of student participation, indicating the importance of active involvement in achieving mastery.

Based on these findings, the role-play method is proven to be an effective instructional strategy for teaching speaking skills. Its implementation in SMK SPP Snakma Muhammadiyah can serve as a reference for similar educational contexts. The iterative process of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection in this study underscores the value of adapting teaching methods to address student needs and achieve better learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to improve students' English-speaking skills through the implementation of the role-play method in class X at SMK SPP Snakma Muhammadiyah. Conducted over two cycles, the research demonstrated a significant improvement in students' speaking abilities. The findings reveal that the use of role-play not only enhanced students' participation, confidence, and engagement but also positively impacted their overall learning outcomes. In **Cycle I**, students began with a moderate level of proficiency, as shown by an average score of 63, with the highest score being 85 and the lowest 50. Despite a 100% doing collaboration among students during role play, only 27% of the students achieved the completion criteria. Several challenges were noted, including students' hesitation to express themselves and their lack of familiarity with the method. Reflective adjustments were made to address these issues, including providing students with more opportunities to express themselves comfortably and encouraging greater participation. In **Cycle II**, after implementing improvements based on the reflections from Cycle I, students displayed significant progress. The average score rose to 67, with the highest score reaching 90 and the lowest improving to 60. A notable 87% of students achieved the completion criteria, indicating substantial improvement in their speaking skills. Students became more confident in their pronunciation, intonation, and expression. They also demonstrated greater willingness to participate in discussions, answer questions, and share opinions, which reinforced their understanding of the material.

Overall, this research highlights the effectiveness of the role-play method in fostering students' English-speaking skills. The method encouraged active learning and provided an engaging environment for students to practice and refine their language abilities. The findings suggest that role-play can be a valuable instructional strategy, especially for enhancing communication skills in vocational education settings. The positive outcomes of this study indicate that the role-play method can serve as a practical reference for improving learning processes in similar educational contexts.

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