

## Improving students' speaking ability by using role play technique

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### Abstract

This study is conducted in order to improve students' speaking ability at second grade of one junior high school in Wasile, North Halmahera by role play activities. This study is related to the result of a preliminary study showed that the students were still low in English speaking skill; especially in giving interpersonal response. This study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) which is conducted to solve the students' problem in English speaking. The Classroom Action Research (CAR) was done based on Kurt Lewin's design. The writer did two cycles in which each cycle consists of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The data were gathered through qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were gained by analyzing the interview and observation result. Then, quantitative data were obtained from the students speaking score of pretest, posttest and questionnaire. Based on the research conducted in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade of the junior high school, the writer concluded that role-playing activity can improve students' speaking ability showed by the score they get. Furthermore, from the students' response Toward the teaching and learning activity during CAR, it is proved that the response of the students toward the teacher professionalism and their interest in learning speaking using role play technique is 75.00% and 78.57% that means it falls into the strong and very strong category. It can be conclude that the students like role play technique. Moreover, the observation checklist showed that the students seemed braver and more confident in speaking. It proven by their participation in the class conversation discussion, perform in the front of the class, pronunciation, fluency and felling confident about speaking.

**Keywords:** role play technique, speaking, car, EFL, junior high school

### Introduction

English becomes a part of the learning in school. Accordingly, the students must learn English in their school. Richard and Renandya (2002:204) <sup>[10]</sup> state that "is difficult for EFL learners, especially adults, to speak the target language fluently and appropriate". It is because minimal exposure to the foreign language and contact with the native speakers. Consequently adults' learners are poor in speaking English, especially regarding fluency (Richard and Roger, 2001) <sup>[11]</sup>. Therefore is more effective to be lern at an early age, especially in learning to speak (Brown:1980) <sup>[1]</sup>. Teaching and learning will be successful if students are supported by some factors such as the method that is used in teaching English, completeness of teaching facility, interesting media, and condition of school environment. According to *Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Indonesia in 2013*, English become a compulsory subjek in junior high and senior high school. In learning English, there ae four basic skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Lumona (2004:1) <sup>[7]</sup>, speaking skill becomes an important part in the curriculum which is applied in language teaching. Speaking skill is one of the basic skill in learning English which is importan to be learn. Realizing that the important part of communication in this era in English, speaking skill is needed to be mastered by EFL learners. Speaking is one of four language skills, which is the basic function of language as communication instrument. According to Scott and Ytreberg (1990:49) <sup>[13]</sup>, speaking is perhaps the most demanding skill for the teacher to teach. In their own language children are able to express emotions, communicate intentions and reactions, explore the language

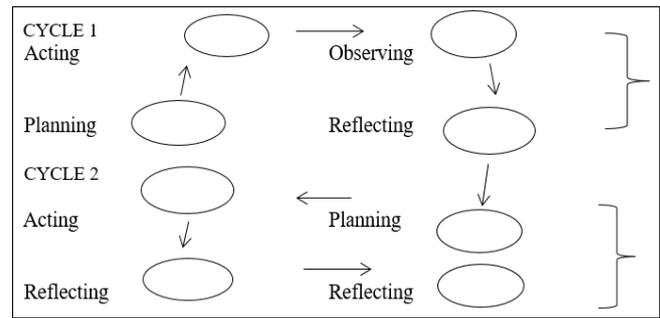
and make fun of it, so they expect to be able to do the same in English. In this research, the researcher did an observation to the students of one junior high school in North Halmahera. The researcher chooses this junior high school because it easy to reach and accessed. It is located in North Halmahera. Besides, this school is willing to allow the researcher to conduct the research in the school, especially in the second grade. The students in this school are still lackof motivation in learning English, especially English skill. Many of students are not brave enough to speak English. They speak softly or they preferred to be silent. On the other hanpd the teacher still uses monotonous and inappropriate teaching techniques. Many students tall difficulties in mastering the speaking skill because they do not practice it. Sometimes, the teacher only asks the students to read dialogue. Wheares, they need an interesting technique to stimulate them to speak in English. Besides, the students do not feel confident to speak in English. They are too shy and afraid of making mistakes. The researchers try to overcome this problem in order to improve their speaking skills particularly by promoting daily conversation. It is important to guide them how to use the language in some conditions or situations. Based on the problems, the researchers wanted to help the students to be motivated to speak in English. Many techniques can be applied to solve the problems above including role play. Many research findings say that this technique is effective to use in teaching speaking (Sunardi 2013, Umam 2011, Sari 2011) <sup>[15, 16, 12]</sup>. It can said that role play can provide the opportunity for students to speak so they can see through it and learn how the language should be used. As we know that people can think clearer and easier if they are in a good

condition and good mood. The use of role play gives the student more freedom to develop their English in their own way. Role play is important in teaching speaking since it gives students an opportunity to practice in different social contexts and in different social roles. In addition, it also allows students to be creative and to put themselves in another person's place for a while. According to Livingstone (1983: 6) [6], role play is therefore a classroom activity which gives the student the opportunity to practice the language, the aspects of role behavior, and the actual roles he may need outside the classroom. Role play technique was chosen because it is found helpful and successful for students are required to actively participate in the learning process, especially of speaking. In fact, most of the second year students at his junior high school still have difficulties in speaking. Some of the factors are most of students are too shy and afraid to take a part in the conversation; most of the students are still clumsy in speaking, they just speak when the teacher asks them; the students are not enthusiastic and not courageous enough to involve in the speaking learning process. Therefore, they need attractive techniques to stimulate them to speak English.

**Method of Research**

The method used in this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR) method which is derived from the root of action research. Kemmis in Hammer (2007) [5] defined action research as following: "Action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out". Thus, it is clear that classroom action research is evaluative and reflective as it aims to bring about change and improvement in practice (Burns 1999) [2]. There are 36 students involved in this research. It is chosen based upon the writer's observation at that class proving that they are not enthusiastic and not courageous enough to involve in the speaking learning process. They were encountered with the hesitance of practicing the material as well as the drilling conducted by the teacher in the learning process. In the other words, the students have the problems with their confidence. Therefore, they could not cope with the class material. That is why they need an appropriate strategy to help them improve their speaking. The role of researchers in the current research included observing students during the action, making lesson plans and the assessment or test before CAR (pre-test) and after CAR (post-test) in each final cycle. Furthermore, the researchers also collect and analyze data then report the result of study. On the other side, the teacher carries out the action based upon the lesson plan. The Classroom Action Research (CAR) procedure used in this research is Kurt Lewin's design. It consists of two cycles in which each cycle contains four phases; planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Moreover, in this study the researchers conducted this classroom action research into two cycles. As stated by Arikunto (2009) [14] that "Classroom action research should be implemented at least two cycles continuously". This means that a classroom action research should be conducted at least in two cycles. If the results are less satisfactory, researchers can perform the

cycle once again in order to achieve the criteria that have been determined. In order to be clear, the following is the model of Action Research by Kurt Lewin.



**Fig 1:** Kurt's Lewin's Action Research Design

Technique of collecting data in this research using qualitative data and quantitative data. "The qualitative data consists of observation. Meanwhile, the quantitative data uses questionnaire, pre-test and post-test" (Arikunto:2009, p.127-132) [14].

**Observation**

Observation was done to identify teaching and learning activities, especially speaking activities directed by the real teacher, and to reveal the problem of speaking activity in the classroom. It may be about students' response concerning the use of role play technique. On the other hand, to measure students' progress in speaking during Classroom Action Research, the writer will use an observation table according to Matthews (1994:111) [3] as follows:

**Table 1:** Assessing Students' Progress

Skill	Program
Participation in class	
Participation in discussions	
Giving oral presentation	
Pronunciation	
Fluency	
Feeling confident about speaking	

Then, the writer will use the following key to complete the table above:

- + = satisfactory progress, but need a little more practice
- □ = some progress, but need much more practice
- = little or no progress, need to pay special attention to improve this skill

**Test**

The test used in this study is pre-test and post-test. To know students' existing knowledge of speaking ability, the writer gives an oral test to the students. Because the test is an oral test, the writer divided the score into five criteria, which are the scores of Pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. It is based on Heaton's scale rating scores. After that, to get the mean, the scores from all criteria are summed and divided into five. The pre-test is done before implementing the role play technique. Meanwhile, the post-test is implemented after using the role play technique. The test is held on every second action of each cycle. Here are the rating scores of the oral test by Heaton:

**Table 2:** The Rating Scores of Oral Test

6	Pronunciation good - only 2 or 3 grammatical errors - not much searching for words - very few long pauses-fairly easy to understand - very few interruptions necessary - has mastered all oral skills on course.
5	Pronunciation slightly influenced by L1 – a few grammatical errors but most sentences correct – sometimes searches for words – not too many long pauses – general meaning fairly clear but a few interruptions necessary – has mastered almost all oral skills in course
4	Pronunciation influenced a little by L1 – a few grammatical errorsbut only 1 or 2 causing confusion – searches for words-afew unnatural pauses- conveys general meaning fairly clearly- a few interruptions necessary but intention always clear – has mastered most of oral skills on course
3	Pronunciation influenced by L1- pronunciation and grammatical errors – several errors cause serious confusionlonger pauses to search for word meaning – fairly limited expressions- much can be understood althoughsome effort needed for part – some interruptions necessary – has mastered only some of oral skills on course
2	Several serious pronunciation errors- basic grammar errors – unnaturally long pauses – very limited expression- needs some effort to understand much of is – interruptions often necessary and sometimes has difficulty in explaining or making meaning clearer – only a few of oral skillson course mastered
1	A lot of serious pronunciation errors – many basic grammar errors – full of unnaturally long pauses – very halting delivery – extremely limited expressions – almost impossible to understand – interruption constantly necessary but cannot explain or make meaning – very few of oral skill on course mastered

Each element characteristic is then defined into six chart behavioral statements as stated in the frames above. The writer will objectively see the characteristic of each student’s speaking ability whether they achieve 1,2,3,4,5 and 6. In order to ease the computation the writer converts the small score of Heaton to the scale of 100 as follow:

- 6 = 87-100
- 5 = 77- 86
- 4 = 67-76
- 3= 57- 66
- 2 = 46-56
- 1 = below 45

In analyzing the numerical data, first the researchers calculated the average of students’ speaking skill per action within one cycle. It is used to know how well students’ score as a whole on speaking skill. Second, researchers calculated the class percentage which pass the minimum passing grade (KKM) of 65 (sixty five). Third, after getting mean of students’ score per actions, the researcher identified whether or not there might have students’ improvement score on speaking skill from pre-test and post-test score in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

**Finding and Discussion**

Pre observation was conducted to observe the process of teaching learning in speaking activity before implementing the action. The writer conducted pre observation in the classes of 8A to 8D. Based on the pre observation result, the 9B class showed they are more passive than another class. Most students in 8B did not participate in class conversation, discussion, and shy in giving oral presentations. They were not courage to involve in the speaking learning process. They were encountered with the hesitance of practicing the material as well as the drilling conducted by the teacher in the learning process. In the other words, the students have the problems with their confidence. Therefore, they need a technique to improve their speaking skill and make the Englishspeaking lesson more exciting. The pretest was done before the the implementation of Classroom Action Research. Based on the result of pre test, the data showed that the mean score of pretest was 56.77. It means that the students’ speaking mean score before using role play or before implementing CAR is 56.77. There were 4 students who pass the minimum

Passing grade (KKM) and there were 32 students were still below the KKM. From the pre-test result, it could be seen that students’ speaking ability was still very low.

**Findings of the First Cycle**

**Planning**

In this phase, the writer made a planning for the action based upon the problems faced by students toward speaking ability. In this case, the writer arranged a lesson plan based on the teaching material. Beside of making lesson plan, the writer also prepared observation checklist to observe the students performance during the teaching learning process. The writer also prepared the post test 1 to collect the data to know whether there are some students’ improvement scores from pretest to post- test 1.

**Acting**

In acting phase, the teacher implemented lesson plan that had been made before. Here, the teacher conducted role play by using scripted role play. First, the teacher introduced the material by giving example of dialogue and related vocabulary items. Second, the teacher explained to the students about the situation and condition when using expression of asking and giving opinions. Third, the teacher wrote some examples and demonstrated how to pronounce it. Fourth, the teacher divided students into group of two and gave script of dialogue. Next, the students practiced and memorized the dialogue, and performed the dialogue in the front of the class. Then, teacher gave feedback to the students after finishing their performance. At last, the teacher gave general conclusion. That is about material that has been done by the students in their role play. In the second meeting, the teacher gave the post-test1 in the end of cycle 1. It was in role play form and conducted in pairs. The students created a dialogue based on the role card given then perform it in the front of the class. The post test 1 is carried to measure how well the students’ achievement in speaking improved. last, the teacher gave general conclusion. That is about material that has been done by the students in their role play. In the second meeting, the teacher gave the post-test1 in the end of cycle 1. It was in role play form and conducted in pairs. The students created a dialogue based on the role card given then perform it in the front of the class. The post test 1 is carried to measure how well the students’ achievement in speaking improved.

**Observing**

In this phase, the observer tried to notice all activities in the physical classroom activity. It might be about students’ response and students’ participation during teaching and learning process using role play technique. Related to the students’ response, some students still did not pay attention to the teacher’s explanation. Some of them also did not practice with their group. Moreover, they cheated each other while other students were asked to perform role play in the front of the class. However, the teaching and learning activity happened enthusiastically even some students seen do not interest. Second, related to the students’ participation, it showed some progress than before implementing the role play technique. Some students participated in class conversations, discussions, and giving oral presentations (perform). Their pronunciation and fluency were better than before. Besides, their feeling confident about speaking in have some progress even need much more practice.

**Reflecting**

The writer evaluated about the conclusion of implementing the action. Based on the result of posttest 1, they were only 13 students or 36.11% of students who passed the KKM. Then, the collaborator tried to modify the action in order 75% of students in the class could pass the KKM. Instead, the collaborator felt satisfied enough because their efforts to improve students’ speaking skill had been improved proven by score they get although not all the targets accomplished yet. Beside of that, the students seemed to accept the material easily by using role play. From the reflecting phase above, there must be more efforts to improve students’ speaking ability by using role play. This efforts was done in the next lesson plan of cycle two.

**Findings of the Second Cycle**

**Planning**

After finding the fact that the students’ speaking mastery was low, which was proven by their posttest 1 scores, the collaborator rearrange the lesson plan which was used in the previous cycle with some modifications. When in the cycle 1 the collaborator conducted role play using scripted role play, in the cycle 2, the colaborator will conduct role play controlled by cues and information. Besides, the teacher will explain about the material using pictures. The collaborator hope that it can stimulate students to be more creative. Beside of that, the writer still also prepared the observation sheet to note the classroom activities. Next, the writer also prepared the posttest 2 and questionnaire to collect the data. play controlled by cues and information. Besides, the teacher will explain about the material using pictures. The collaborator hope that it can stimulate students to be more creative. Beside of that, the writer still also prepared the observation sheet to note the classroom activities. Next, the writer also prepared the posttest 2 and questionnaire to collect the data.

**Acting**

In this meeting, the teacher asked the students the difficulty in using role play technique and try to emphasize some aspects that have not been done yet in the first cycle. Here, the teacher made some modifications in conducted role play. The teacher brought some pictures (related to the material given) that was about “asking, giving, and declining an opinion” such as picture of sports, films, and books. Then, she asked student one by one about asking, giving, and declining an opinion. When in the cycle 1 the teacher conducted role play through scripted dialog, whereas in the cycle 2 the teacher conducted role play through cued and information in order to stimulate students to be more active and creative in speaking. After the teacher divided role cards to each group, students created a dialogue and performed the dialogue in the front of the class. After finishing the performance, each student has been given feedback. In the second meeting the teacher gave the post test 2. It was in a role play form and conducted in pairs. The students created a dialogue based on the role card given then perform it in the front of the class.

**Observing**

In this phase, the observer tried to notice all activities in the physical classroom activity. It might be about students’ response and students’ participation during teaching and learning process using role play technique. First, related to the students’ response during teaching and learning activity, most of students paid attention to the teacher’s explanation and practice with their group enthusiastically. Second, related to the students’ participation, it showed some progress than in the cycle 1. Most students participated in class conversations, discussions, and giving oral presentations (perform). Their pronunciation and fluency were better than before. Besides, the students looked braver to speak English in the front of the class.

**Reflecting**

The collaborator analyze the result of cycle 2. Most of the students respond the teacher actively. Furthermore, the teaching learning process is done very well.

The collaborator felt satisfied because the students have significant improvement from the score they get from pre-test, post test 54 1 and post test 2. After achieving the target research of where minimum 75% students who pass the KKM, therefore the collaborator decided to stop the Classroom Action Research because it had already succeeded.

**Findings after Implementing the Classroom Action Research**

Below is the result of data including the pre-test, post test 1, and post test 2 in Table 3

**Table 3:** The Students’ Speaking Score of Pre-test, Post test 1, Post test 2

Student Number	Pre - Test	Post – Test 1	Post – Test 2
S1	55	64	74
S2	57	63	76
S3	55	65	75
S4	55	58	64
S5	54	57	62
S6	56	65	74

S7	56	58	63
S8	56	66	76
S9	56	65	76
S10	56	60	73
S11	55	60	70
S12	55	61	71
S13	54	66	74
S14	53	66	76
S15	57	60	72
S16	55	58	71
S17	60	61	70
S18	66	70	75
S19	55	58	61
S20	56	61	70
S21	58	67	74
S22	58	69	72
S23	57	59	72
S24	65	67	73
S25	53	60	72
S26	55	63	71
S27	56	63	70
S28	51	63	72
S29	57	64	74
S30	56	60	71
S31	68	70	74
S32	57	64	71
S33	53	63	73
S34	56	66	71
S35	67	73	77
S36	53	61	75
Mean :	56.77	63.30	71.80

Compare the test result between pretest and posttest of each cycle, the writer uses some steps. Those are calculating the students mean score of the test, calculating the class percentage, and calculating the students' improvement score from pre-test to post test 1 and 2 into percentage: In analyzing the data of pretest, the first step is to get the mean score of the class. Based on the result of pre test, the data showed that the mean score of pretest was 56.77. It means that the students' speaking mean score before using role play or before implementing CAR is 56.77. The second step is to know the percentage of students' score who passed the KKM (65). From that computation, the students' score percentage in the pretest is 11.11%. It means that there are 4 students who pass the KKM and there are 32 students are still below the KKM. Next, in the cycle 1 of CAR, the writer calculates the result of posttest 1 to know the students' score improvement from the pretest to posttest 1 result. There are three steps to get this improvement. Those are calculating the students' mean score of the class, calculating the students' improvement score into percentage and calculating the class percentage. In analyzing the data of posttest 1, the first step is to get the mean score of the class. Based on the result of posttest 1 above, the mean score of the class derived 63.30 in which there were 13 students who passed the KKM 65 (sixty-five). It shows that there are some improvements from the pre-test mean score. It can be seen from the pre-test mean score (56.77) to the mean score of the post test 1 (63.30). it improves 6.53 (63.30-56.77). The second step is the calculation to get the percentage of students' improvement score from pretest to the posttest 1. The third step is to know the percentage of students' score who passed the KKM (65) in posttest 1. From that calculation, the class percentage which pass the KKM is 36.11%. it means that in the cycle 1 of CAR, there are 13

students who passed the KKM and there are 23 students whose score are below the KKM. The students' improvements which pass the KKM is 25% (36.11% - 11.11%). Even though it is still needed more improvement because it could not achieve yet 75% as the target of success CAR. Furthermore, in the cycle 2 of CAR the writer also calculates the result of posttest 2 to know further the score improvement either from the result of pretest or posttest 1. There are three steps to know this improvement. Those are to calculate the mean score of the class, to percentage of the students' improvement score, and to calculate the class percentage which pass the KKM (65). Firstly is to calculate the mean score of the class in posttest 2. From the calculation, the mean score of posttest 2 is 71.80. It means that there are some students' improvement scores (8.8) from the mean of posttest 1 (63).The second step is to know the calculation of the percentage of students' improvement score. Based on that computation, it could be seen that the posttest 2 improves 44.09% from the pretest or 7.98 % from the posttest 1 (44.09 – 36.11). The last step is the writer tries to get the class percentage whose score pass the KKM. From that calculation, the class percentage is 88.88%. It means that in the cycle 2 there are 32 students who pass the KKM and there are only 4 students are below the KKM. The class percentage of posttest 2 shows some improvements from the previous test; the improvement is 77.77% from the pretest (11.11%) or 52.77% from the class percentage of posttest 1 (36.11%). Based on the result of the students' participation in speaking class through observation checklist, it was indicates the students' participation gradually increase from the pre observation into the second cycle. The students' participation improvement in speaking class can be seen in the Table 4.

**Table 4:** The Students' Participation in Speaking during CAR

Skills	Observatin	Pre-test	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Participation in Class	16.66 %	47.22 %	94.44 %	77.78 %
Participation in discussions	19.44 %	36.11 %	88.88 %	69.44 %
Giving oral presentations (perform )	13.88 %	44.44 %	86.11 %	72.23 %
Pronunciation	19.44 %	22.22 %	91.66 %	72.22 %
Fluency	25.00 %	38.88 %	88.88 %	63.88 %
Feeling confident about speaking	11.11 %	72.22 %	88.88 %	77.77 %

The explanations of the table above are as follow: first, the improvement of the students' participation during CAR is 77.78%. Second, the improvement of the students in class discussion during CAR is 69.44%. Third, the improvement of the students' performance during CAR is 72.23%. Fourth, the improvement of the students' pronunciation is 72.22%. Fifth, the improvement of the students' fluency is 63.88%. At last, the improvement of the students' confidence to speak in the front of the class during CAR is 77.77%. The improvement of the students' skills above means that the implementation of role play in speaking class has successfully improve the students participation in speaking class. The interpretation of the data results among the pre-test, the post test of cycle 1 and the post test of cycle 2 are as following: In the pre-test, the mean score of students on speaking test before carrying out CAR is 56.77. It is students' speaking score before they use role play technique. Meanwhile, the class percentage which pass the KKM is 11.11%. It means that there are only 4 students who are able to pass the KKM (65) and there are 32 students are out of the target. Next, the mean score in the post test of cycle 1 is 63.30. It means that there are some students' score improvement from the previous test (pretest), that is 6.53 (63.30 – 56.77) or 25%. Meanwhile, the class percentage which pass the KKM in posttest 1 is 36.11%. It shows there are 13 students who pass the KKM and there are 23 students whose score still under KKM. However, it is still needed more improvement because it could not achieve the target yet of success CAR, that is 75% (or at least 27 students) from the class percentage. That is why the writer and the teacher continue to the second cycle. Furthermore, the mean score in the post test of second cycle is 71.80. It shows the students' improvement score 8.5 (71.80- 63.30) from the posttest 1 (63.30) or 52.77%. Meanwhile, the class percentage which pass KKM is 88.88%. It means there are 32 students whose score pass the KKM and there are 4 students are under the target of KKM. This class percentage shows some improvement 77.77% from the pretest (11.11%) or 52.77% from the posttest 1 (36.11%) in the class percentage. The posttest of cycle 2 has fulfilled the target of CAR success, that is above 75% students could pass the KKM. It can be said that CAR is success and the cycle of CAR is not continued.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, it could be concluded that role-playing activity can improve students' speaking ability showed by the score they get. Furthermore, from the students' response toward the teaching and learning activity during CAR, it is proved that the response of the students toward the teacher professionalism and their interest in learning speaking using role play technique is 75.00% and 78.57% that means it falls into the strong and very strong category. It can be concluded that the students like role play technique. Moreover, the observation checklist showed that

the students seemed braver and more confident in speaking. It proven by their participation in the class conversations, discussions, perform in the front of the class, pronunciation, fluency and feeling confident about speaking.

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