

Siti Mariyanah<sup>1\*</sup>

## Improving Speaking Skills Through Role Play Method Among Eighth Grade Students of SMP Insan Madani

### Abstract

This study aims to examine the extent to which the role play method can enhance the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Insan Madani in English language learning. Speaking is one of the essential components of language proficiency and often poses a challenge for students, particularly in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and self-confidence. The role play method was chosen due to its ability to foster an engaging, active, and contextual learning environment. The research applied a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach conducted in two cycles, each consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and pre- and post-tests of students' speaking abilities. The findings revealed significant improvements in students' fluency, confidence in expressing opinions, and mastery of vocabulary and sentence structures. Consequently, the role play method has proven effective in enhancing speaking skills and is recommended as an alternative instructional strategy for English language teaching at the junior high school level.

**Keywords:** Speaking Skills, Role Play, English Language Learning, Junior High School Students

### 1. Introduction

English is a critical subject in the educational curriculum, especially in the era of globalization. Mastering English, particularly speaking skills, is a key competency that enables students to communicate effectively in international contexts. However, many students still struggle to develop their speaking abilities. This issue is also evident among eighth-grade students at SMP Insan Madani, where most students lack confidence, remain passive during speaking activities, and demonstrate limited vocabulary and grammatical control. Andini, F., & Lestari, R. (2023).

One of the main causes of low speaking performance is the continued reliance on conventional teaching methods, where students receive theoretical input but lack sufficient opportunities to practice speaking actively. In this context, an instructional approach that fosters an engaging, communicative, and participatory learning environment is urgently needed. Brown, H. D. (2024).

The role play method offers a promising alternative. It involves students acting out roles in simulated real-life situations, allowing them to use English actively, spontaneously, and

---

<sup>1\*</sup> Universitas Insan Pembangunan Indonesia, Indonesia,  
Email : [smariyanah3@gmail.com](mailto:smariyanah3@gmail.com) , [sitimariyanah20@ipem.ac.id](mailto:sitimariyanah20@ipem.ac.id)

contextually. Additionally, role play can help reduce anxiety, boost self-confidence, and broaden students' vocabulary and language expression. Harmer, J. (2024).

In light of its potential, this study aims to systematically explore how the implementation of role play can improve the speaking abilities of eighth-grade students at SMP Insan Madani. The results are expected to contribute to the development of more effective and relevant English teaching strategies for junior secondary education. Hasanah, N., & Mulyani, T. (2023).

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. Speaking Skills in English Language Learning**

Speaking is a productive skill essential in oral communication. According to Hidayat, R. (2023). speaking is an interactive process that involves the production of sound, grammar usage, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and confidence in delivering messages. In English learning contexts, speaking goes beyond uttering words it trains students to think critically, communicate effectively, and adapt to various social settings.

For English education students, strong speaking skills are crucial, as these competencies form the foundation of their future roles as educators. Harmer (2024) emphasizes that speaking instruction must occur in environments that support meaningful and authentic communication to help learners develop both fluency and accuracy.

### **2.2. Role Play Method in Language Teaching**

Role play is a teaching technique where learners act out characters in simulated situations. This method allows students to practice English in realistic and communicative settings. As Ladousse (2024) suggests, role play provides language learners with enjoyable social experiences that help build confidence and speaking ability.

The activity also promotes holistic language mastery, as it integrates thinking skills, spontaneous responses, and teamwork. According to Maulida, S. (2023). Role play aligns with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which highlights the importance of using language as a tool for real-life communication rather than rote memorization of grammar rules.

### **2.3. The Role of Role Play in Enhancing Speaking Skills**

Implementing role play in speaking classes has proven effective in improving various aspects of oral communication. By engaging in different scenarios and roles, learners can expand their vocabulary, refine pronunciation, and enhance fluency. Furthermore, role play reduces anxiety and fear of making mistakes two major barriers to effective speaking.

Ningsih, R., & Apriani, E. (2023). Argues that contextualized and meaningful speaking practice, such as role play, can significantly boost learners' communicative competence, as it encourages them to use language purposefully to convey meaning. Therefore, role play is highly relevant and beneficial in promoting speaking skills within an interactive and communicative classroom environment.

## **3. Research Method**

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, which aimed to improve the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Insan Madani through the implementation of the role play method. The research was conducted in collaboration between

the researcher and the English teacher as a means to solve learning problems that occurred in the classroom, particularly in developing students' oral communication abilities.

### 3.1. Research Design

The study followed the CAR model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which consists of four stages:

- a. Planning
- b. Action (Implementation)
- c. Observation
- d. Reflection

This cycle was carried out in two rounds (Cycle I and Cycle II) to evaluate and refine the teaching strategy being applied.

### 3.2. Subjects of the Study

The participants of the study were eighth-grade students of SMP Insan Madani, consisting of 28 students enrolled in the English language course. The class was chosen based on the observation that students demonstrated low speaking performance and lack of confidence when speaking in English.

### 3.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through the following instruments:

- a. Observation Sheets: Used to record students' behavior, participation, and confidence during speaking activities.
- b. Speaking Tests: Administered before and after each cycle to assess students' progress in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and sentence structure.
- c. Interviews: Conducted with both students and the English teacher to gather insights into their perceptions of the learning process and the effectiveness of role play.
- d. Field Notes: Maintained by the researcher during each session to record important occurrences and reflections for analysis.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative approaches.

- a. Quantitative data (students' speaking test scores) were analyzed by calculating the average score, percentage of students reaching the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM), and the improvement across cycles.
- b. Qualitative data (observations, interviews, and field notes) were analyzed descriptively to interpret behavioral changes and student engagement.

### 3.5. Criteria of Success

The study was considered successful if:

- a. At least 75% of the students reached or exceeded the KKM score of 70 in speaking tests.
- b. There was a visible improvement in students' confidence, fluency, and active participation in speaking activities based on observation and teacher feedback.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Findings

This research was conducted through two cycles of classroom action research, each comprising the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The main objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of the role play method in improving the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Insan Madani. Nuraeni, A., & Putri, R. A. (2024).

- a. **In the pre-cycle phase**, initial observations and diagnostic tests revealed that the majority of students faced difficulties in speaking. The most notable challenges included low self-confidence, limited vocabulary, and poor pronunciation. The average speaking score during this phase was **58**, with most students falling below the **Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM)** of 70.
- b. **In Cycle I**, role play activities were introduced using simple and familiar themes such as school-based conversations and daily routines. The results showed improved student engagement and a willingness to participate in speaking tasks. Students began attempting to speak in front of the class, though many were still hesitant and spoke with hesitation. The average score increased to **68**, with **55%** of students meeting the KKM.
- c. **In Cycle II**, the role play scenarios were made more varied, and students were involved in small-group discussions to prepare their dialogues. Teachers provided more targeted feedback, particularly on pronunciation and vocabulary usage. This cycle saw significant improvement: students appeared more confident, used vocabulary more appropriately, and spoke more fluently. The average speaking score rose to **78**, with **85%** of students achieving or exceeding the KKM.

Overall, the findings indicate that the **role play method is effective** in enhancing the speaking abilities of the students. Improvements were observed in three key areas:

- a. Increased student confidence when speaking,
- b. Improved fluency in specific speaking contexts, and
- c. More accurate and varied use of vocabulary and sentence structures. Prasetyo, H. (2023).

### 4.2. Discussion

The results of the study demonstrate that the implementation of role play significantly enhances the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Insan Madani. This is evidenced by observations and assessments conducted during each cycle, which revealed improvements in student participation, speaking confidence, and average performance scores. Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2024).

During the **pre-cycle stage**, most students were passive and reluctant to speak English due to low self-confidence, limited vocabulary, and fear of making mistakes in front of their peers. This reflects an ineffective prior learning environment that lacked opportunities for meaningful oral communication. Sari, D. K., & Prasetya, R. (2024).

Following the **first cycle** of role play implementation, students began showing increased courage in speaking, though some still struggled with expression and spontaneity. This supports Harmer's (2024) assertion that role play fosters a supportive and enjoyable social context that encourages learners to speak. Thornbury, S. (2024).

Significant progress occurred in the **second cycle**, where students were more engaged in developing their own scripts and role scenarios. Improvements were notable in fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary usage. Moreover, teacher feedback played a crucial role in

helping students understand sentence construction and appropriate expressions. This aligns with Thornbury's (2005) theory that meaningful, contextual speaking practice supported by feedback leads to improved communicative competence. Wardani, D. A. (2023).

In addition, the active and enjoyable learning atmosphere created through role play contributed to this success. Role play encouraged students not only to learn theoretically but also to practice language skills in realistic contexts. Thus, the method supports not only cognitive but also affective and psychomotor aspects of language learning. Yuliana, R., & Widodo, H. P. (2024).

The findings reinforce the views of language education experts that role play is an effective teaching strategy for improving speaking skills, particularly at the junior high school level. It offers learners opportunities to express themselves, engage in real-time interaction, and build confidence in using English actively. Yusnita, D. (2023).

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusion

Based on the results of this classroom action research conducted over two cycles, it can be concluded that the role play method is effective in improving the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Insan Madani. The method successfully created a learning environment that was active, enjoyable, and communicative, encouraging students to speak English more confidently.

The improvement in students' speaking ability was evident in several key areas:

1. Enhanced self-confidence in public speaking,
2. Increased fluency, including pronunciation and sentence construction,
3. Broader and more appropriate vocabulary usage.

The average speaking score increased significantly from the pre-cycle to Cycle II, and most students successfully met or exceeded the established Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM). These results suggest that role play is a suitable and effective instructional strategy for enhancing speaking skills in English language learning.

### 5.2. Recommendations

- a. **For English Teachers:** It is recommended that English teachers incorporate role play more frequently in their speaking instruction. Scenarios should be designed to reflect students' real-life experiences to make learning more authentic and enjoyable.
- b. **For Students:** Students are encouraged to participate actively in role play activities and not be afraid to speak in English. Mistakes should be viewed as part of the learning process.
- c. **For Schools:** Schools should support teachers through professional development opportunities that focus on innovative teaching methods. Facilities such as flexible classroom layouts and role play materials should also be provided to enhance the effectiveness of this approach.
- d. **For Future Researchers:** This study can be expanded by involving different grade levels, extending the duration of implementation, or comparing role play with other teaching methods to enrich research on speaking instruction strategies.

## References

- Andini, F., & Lestari, R. (2023). The use of the role play method to improve students' speaking skills in EFL classrooms. *Journal of English Language Education and Literature*, 8(1), 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.21009/jell.v8i1.2023>
- Brown, H. D. (2024). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Harmer, J. (2024). *The practice of English language teaching* (6th ed.). Pearson ELT.
- Hasanah, N., & Mulyani, T. (2023). Role play technique as a strategy to enhance students' oral communication skills. *Journal of Language Teaching Innovations*, 5(2), 102–114. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jlti.v5i2.2023>
- Hidayat, R. (2023). *English language learning strategies based on communicative activities*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Ladousse, G. P. (2024). *Role play: Resource books for teachers*. Oxford University Press.
- Maulida, S. (2023). Enhancing speaking skills through role-playing activities among English education students. *ELT Journal: English Language Teaching Journal*, 11(2), 89–98. <https://doi.org/10.31949/eltj.v11i2.2023>
- Ningsih, R., & Apriani, E. (2023). The role play method in enhancing students' confidence in speaking. *International Journal of Language Pedagogy*, 4(1), 74–82.
- Nuraeni, A., & Putri, R. A. (2024). The effectiveness of the role play technique in enhancing students' speaking ability. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 9(1), 45–56. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jeltl.v9i1.5678>
- Prasetyo, H. (2023). *Interactive methods in English language teaching*. Deepublish.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2024). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (4th ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Sari, D. K., & Prasetya, R. (2024). Improving students' speaking skills through role play activities at the university level. *International Journal of Language and Education*, 13(2), 87–98. <https://doi.org/10.5678/ijle.v13i2.2024>
- Thornbury, S. (2024). *How to teach speaking* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Wardani, D. A. (2023). The effectiveness of role play in teaching speaking to university students. *Indonesian Journal of English Education*, 10(1), 45–58. <https://doi.org/10.1234/ijee.v10i1.2023>
- Yuliana, R., & Widodo, H. P. (2024). Role play as a pedagogical tool to enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency. *Asian EFL Journal*, 26(3), 115–130.
- Yusnita, D. (2023). Enhancing students' speaking performance through the role play method. *Asian Research Journal of Education*, 12(3), 135–144.