
**TEACHING SPEAKING THROUGH ROLE PLAY TO IMPROVE
STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL
(A COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH (CAR) KULLIYATUL
MUALIMIN AL ISLAMİYAH CLASS AT PESANTREN AL-FATH
BEKASI)**

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Abstract

The objectives of this study are; (1) to find out what activities should be applied to encourage the students' speaking skills, (2) to find out whether role play was an effective way to increase students' speaking skills, and (3) Find out how role play significantly impacted to the students' speaking skill. The nature of this study is Collaborative Action Research (CAR). The procedures were to conduct teaching activities which were split into two cycles; the Activities in each cycle were planning, action, observing, and reflecting. This study took place in Pesantren Al-Fath Bekasi involving a collaborator and 19 students of kulliyatul mualimin al islamiyah class (Second Grade of Senior High School). The data collection instruments were holistic oral rubric tests, questionnaires, observation checklists, observation forms, and interview transcripts. The students' speaking performances were checked facial expression, vocabulary, fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. The research findings were that role play was very helpful for the students and teacher in teaching and learning English; role play had a significant impact on students' speaking skill performances.

Keywords: Teaching Speaking, Role Play, Collaborative Action Research, Cycles

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah: (1) untuk mengetahui aktivitas apa yang sebaiknya diterapkan untuk mendorong keterampilan berbicara siswa, (2) untuk mengetahui apakah role play merupakan cara yang efektif untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa, dan (3) untuk mengetahui bagaimana role play berdampak signifikan terhadap keterampilan berbicara siswa. Penelitian ini bersifat Penelitian Tindakan Kolaboratif (Collaborative Action Research/CAR). Prosedur yang dilakukan adalah melaksanakan kegiatan pembelajaran yang dibagi menjadi dua siklus; Aktivitas dalam setiap siklus meliputi perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan di Pesantren Al-Fath Bekasi dengan melibatkan seorang kolaborator dan 19 siswa kelas kulliyatul mu'alimin al-islamiyah (Kelas Dua Sekolah Menengah Atas). Instrumen pengumpulan data meliputi tes rubrik lisan holistik, kuesioner, daftar periksa observasi, formulir observasi, dan transkrip wawancara. Penampilan berbicara siswa dinilai berdasarkan ekspresi wajah, kosakata, kelancaran, ketepatan, dan pengucapan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa role play sangat membantu siswa dan guru

dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris; role play memiliki dampak signifikan terhadap kinerja keterampilan berbicara siswa.

Kata kunci: *Pengajaran Berbicara, Role Play, Penelitian Tindakan Kolaboratif, Siklus*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English is known as a global language as half of the world's population is using it. This condition pushes people all over the world to master it for different purposes. People who learn English for business, social needs, politics, education, or other things. It is not an exaggeration to say that English was the most used language to bridge someone to communicate with other people from different countries. By mastering a universal language, people could develop their business relationships and increase their economic growth. People who are fluent in English have a competitive advantage over other candidates. One of the "50 most influential business leaders in the digital age which held more than 200 patents, Jay Walker said in his seminar titled "The World's English Mania that "now English is becoming the language of problem-solving, not because America is pushing it, but because the world was pulling it." Since English was a universal language and the widespread use of the English language was narrowing the communication gap, people all over the world accepted English as a language to use for communication. Therefore, to compete with other human resources, the students, especially the younger generations like junior, senior high school, or University students had to learn English seriously.

One of the important skills that should be acquired by the students is speaking. Brown (2001) cited that when someone can speak a language it means that he can carry on a conversation reasonably competently. In addition, he states that the benchmark of the successful acquisition of language is almost always the demonstration of an ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through an interactive discourse with other language speakers. It is like a baby, his /her parents would say that she /he has acquired his/ her language if she/he can utter some clear sentences. The most important thing in speaking is whatever the speaker says, it should be made sure that it can be understood by other speakers. Coming from those things that other speakers judge other speakers whether he /she is a good speaker or not. Nasiri (2016) cited in Chaney stated that "Speaking was the process of making meaning by using verbal and nonverbal symbols in different contexts." It can be classified as speaking when one communicates their opinions or ideas orally or written. There were three processes in speaking namely a speaker produced words that would be accepted by the listener; the last process was the listener processed the information stated by the speakers to decide what response should be extended. The basic function of a language was communication; when one wanted to express their feeling, thoughts, or ideas, they had to extend it by using the ideas; the effective way to utter our thoughts or ideas was through speaking.

Through speaking, one can explain the ideas more clearly, and if there is a misunderstanding about ideas, it is easier to clarify. It is often stated in school from

elementary school until university that teachers, students, parents, and stakeholders do not need more skills but speaking. It is commonly found that students are good at English when he/she can speak English well. In other words, people would consider whether one is good or bad based on speaking skills. Although they are forced to learn and be able to master four skills of language namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Besides, speaking is the most common way to communicate with other people. It happens in any field like in the neighborhood, market, education, science, business, etc. Baker and Wenstrup (2003) extended their opinion about the importance of speaking as one of, information, so they become well-informed students one of the reasons why speaking skill was important was because speaking English well helps students to access up-to-date information from the world so that students could be well informed of the development of the world.

Based on the explanation above, it could be ensured that speaking was a very urgent skill to master by students to compete with real-life challenges. Yet, only a small number of students can speak English although they have learned English from their childhood. Unfortunately, the students had not been able to speak English. It did not happen because the students were still reluctant to speak, especially in English. This condition attracted the researcher's attention to find out the real problem of why the students could not speak English as expected. The observation and interview had been conducted and some important information was gained as to why they were reluctant to speak. Some factors are lack of vocabulary, less confidence, afraid of making mistakes, confusion in structuring the words, less motivation to speak, less knowledge of target languages, less exposure, and miscellaneous factors. To overcome those problems, it was needed to find a suitable method or technique in transferring the teaching materials which were concerned about pronunciation, intonation, comprehension, accuracy, and fluency.

Because the objective of this research is to find out the suitable technique or method in teaching to fix those common problems, it was searched and analyzed that the suitable method to be applied was Collaborative Action Research (CAR). It was a method of finding out what works best in that classroom so that the teacher could improve students' learning for a certain class. The researcher had applied 2 cycles which cover plan, action, and reflection.

The technique was Roleplay which provided students to practice English speaking with their friends in the classroom like in their real-life context. Harmer (2007) stated that in role-play the students play a role given to practice English speaking as if they are in real life. Before practicing the role, the students have to understand their role; comprehending the role covered the dialog, the character, what facial expression they had to show, and other things that made their role as if the role one. A role as a businessman could be different from a role as a greengrocer; the differences cover the clothes, the way of talking, the identical language, etc. Role play was one of the class activities that were arranged in the classroom which drove the students to pretend or act on others' behavior and characteristics. This activity was an effective activity to make the student practice

their English with their friends like in real life. Besides, applying role play allowed the students to improvise the character as they wanted to base on their experience from watching, or directly experiencing the character they acted. It meant that the students could feel free to create how his /her role became more alive. According to Killen (2006), role play is an unprepared drama where people do improvisation on acts that is normal for real situations. In role-play, students take on characters and demonstrate behaviors as if they were in real-life situations. This activity offers several advantages according to experts. Kouvava et al. (2011) stated that role play is a way for students to experience real-life scenarios in various situations to achieve different purposes. It allows them to experience and understand different life situations firsthand. Furthermore, Kucharcikova et al. (2015) explained that students draw from their own experiences to simulate real-life situations, helping them connect what they learn with their everyday experiences. Joyce and Weil (1996) also pointed out that through role play, students can explore feelings, attitudes, values, and problem-solving strategies. This provides them with an opportunity to understand themselves and others in a more profound context. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Snow (2014) added that role play is an effective method for expressing various sociocultural utterances, helping students master language use in different social contexts. Thus, role play not only enhances students' language skills but also helps them understand the social and emotional aspects of communication.

METHOD

To have more explanation about the research object, “a qualitative method” was chosen in this CAR. Doing this collaborative action research, a model from Owen (2007) was adopted which was started with planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. So, the moment of action research was developing a plan of action to improve what was already happening, acting to implement the plan and observing the effects of action in the context of which it occurs. Some experts like Kurt Lewin, Kemmis and MC Taggart which became the references of action research, especially classroom action research which has four important components in doing action research namely planning, action, observation and reflection. The flow of the action research was as follow:



Figure 1 Action Research Model

The research was conducted in three cycles which each cycle consisted of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. There were several steps to collect the data. First, in the pre-research had been informed to the collaborative teacher and the students. It was explained about the flow of the research and what they should do like getting involved in watching video and role play activities, and interviews. Second, the research observed the activities process and would be reflected in every cycle. The last was to analyze all the data by using a qualitative analysis. Data analyses used non statistical analyses / qualitative analyses. It was to describe the process of learning activities in detail. The data analyses were taken from video tape, recap of interview, and observation recap.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The way EFL students learn how to speak English

To avoid misunderstanding about the term of EFL students and ESL students, it is important to define them first. EFL students means that the students live in a place/country which does not talk in English in their daily communication like in Indonesia. English is still a strange thing for the citizen in general; whereas, ESL students mean students who live in countries that consider English as their second language like in Singapore, Malaysia or other countries. Besides their mother tongue-language, they use English as their communication tool with their family, friends, colleagues, in public places etc. So, learning how to speak English for EFL students needs more struggle than ESL students. There are some language processes for EFL Students, especially students of Pesantren Al Fath Bekasi, when they speak English. Some of them need to convert their language from their mother-tongue to Indonesian then to English. It made them need more time to speak. It happened to some students from the countryside that do not use Indonesian as their daily communication. The interference of their mother-tongue was quite high especially in expression that has adjective and noun or noun and noun, for examples:

Adjective + noun

magic black --> black magic

water mineral --> mineral water

movie good--> good movie

Noun+ noun

list attendance--> attendance list

board information --> information board

Expression

Kamu sarapan apa tadi pagi? □ You breakfast what this morning

Berapa umur mu? □ How many ages are you?

Role Play

This research was held to find the effectiveness applying role play to encourage students' speaking skill of Pesantren Al Fath students. Talking about speaking skill meant talking about students' speaking performance. The elaboration in 3 cycles which were stated in table 1 and 2 that the students' performance in each cycle was different. However, most of them had the same problem. To score speaking performance, it had some common criteria/features like fluency, accuracy, pronunciation and vocabulary. It is aligned with the British Council organization's speaking features namely grammar range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, task fulfillment, fluency and pronunciation. IELTS has slightly different criteria, yet generally they have the same criteria /features. The criteria belonging to IELTS are fluency and coherence, lexical coherence, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation. In this research, the criteria which were used were fluency, accuracy, facial expression, and pronunciation. Facial expression was classified because it has an important role in communication, from the facial expression one could know what the interlocutors mean. To rate the students' speaking performance, holistic oral language scoring rubrics created by Underhill (1987).

Before practicing the role play, the students were driven to practice some dialog first to make sure that they pronounced the word properly. Sample dialog they watched in the video was as follow:

Dialog 1 in a hotel

Customer : This is our hotel. Let's go inside

(They are walking to receptionist)

Hello

Receptionist : Good afternoon! How may I help you?

Customer : We'd like to check in, please.

Receptionist : Certainly. Do you have a reservation?

Customer : Yes, it's under Scott. I've booked a triple room.

Receptionist : May I see your ID, Please?

Customer : Sure. Here it is.

Receptionist : Thank you.

Yes. I have found your *reservation*. This is your room key. Your room is on the second floor. Just take a lift on the left, when you get off the lift, turn left. Your room is at the end of the corridor on the right side.

Customer : Thank you very much

Receptionist : it was my pleasure.

Students' Performance on Role Play

Running the research was conducted 2 cycles which consisted of four to six meetings for each cycle. The phases of each cycle were planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In the action phase, it took some meetings to cover the material that had been transferred to all students. Every meeting consisted of 90 minutes.

1. Meeting on Meeting one is just for an introduction session; the collaborator told the students about the researcher and his purposes. In this meeting, it was explained about the activities that would be done along the period of research. Knowing the activities, most of the students looked interested in those programs. Besides, he had to make a deal with the students, what the students should do or not do. Dealing with some rules and regulations in the beginning was essential to make the students aware of their role.
2. Meeting 2, 3, 4 In meeting 2, the researcher started the discussion with the students about direction as stated in the English syllabus of Pesantren. The students were driven practice the role play two by two. The students were asked to do free dialog like what they did with their teacher before. It was a way to find the students' real competency.

From these practicing times, a number of information was obtained about the student's problem and what should be done in the next following meeting. Some problems were found like the pronunciation, the vocabulary which related to the topic, and how to express their feelings. Actually, the students' problems had been informed by the collaborator, but the researcher needed to directly decide the proper action. After knowing the students' condition, it was not right if the researcher pushed them to do a role play. On the other hand, they had many things to fix first as a basic to practice the role play. It was not easy to fix their pronunciation, to add their vocabularies, and to speak with proper intonation, their fluency and accuracy. But, at least, the students could say the words/expressions which related to material properly.

To fix the students' problem above, it was planned to give some treatment to students. As the researcher stated before, it was impossible to fix all things on this research period, yet at least, guiding them on how to do it in the process of research was a must in terms of relating to direction materials.

1. Meeting 5

Meeting 5 was used to explain how to pronounce the words/expressions. The practice was done one by one; it was done to make sure that the students could pronounce the words/expressions properly. To have more practice, They were ordered to practice in pairs; smart students were matched with the low students. Giving more exposure to the students was an effective way in learning a language. Then, the students had to memorize all of the words/expressions to practice in pairs again; a student tested another student.

2. Meeting 6

In the last meeting of cycle 1 was a facial expression/ intonation session. In this case, the researcher just wanted to make the students aware that in communication facial expression/intonation was very important as well because it could convey other meanings of the message. A sentence that was not with a question word is commonly known as a statement, yet sometimes it could be meant as a question depending on the intonation used. This matter was important to discuss with the students so that the students could minimize the mistake in saying the words/expressions/sentences.

Table 1: Recapitulation of Students Speaking Performances of Cycle 1

NO	Rate of Students	Description	Number of Students	Percentage(%)
1	6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicates competency in social and classroom settings 2. Speaks Fluently 3. Master a variety of grammatical structure 4. Use extensive vocabulary by may lag behind native-speaking peer 5. Understands classroom discussion without difficulty. 	0	
2	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speaks in social and classroom settings with sustained and connected discourse; any errors do not interfere with the meaning 2. Speaks with near native fluency; any hesitation do not interfere with communication 3. Uses a variety of structure with occasional grammatical errors 4. Used varied vocabulary 5. Understands simple sentences in sustained conversation; requires repetition 6. Understand most spoken language including classroom discussion. 	0	
3	4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiate and sustains a conversation with descriptor and details; exhibit self-confidence in social situation; begin to communicate in classroom settings 2. Speaks with occasional hesitation 3. Use some complex sentence; applies rules of grammar but lack control of 	3	16%

		irregular forms (e.g. runned, mans, not never, more higher)		
		4. Uses adequate vocabulary; some words use irregularities		
		5. Understand classroom discussion with repetition, rephrasing, and clarification		
4	3	1. Begins to initiate conversation; retells a story or experience; ask and respond to simple questions	12	63%
		2. Speaks hesitantly because of rephrasing and searching for words.		
		3. Uses predominantly present tense verb; demonstrate errors of omission (leave words out, word endings off)		
		4. Uses limited vocabulary		
		5. Understand simple sentence in sustained conversation; require repetition		
5	2	1. Begins to communicate personal and survival needs	3	16%
		2. Speaks in single –word utterance and short pattern		
		3. Uses functional vocabulary		
		4. Understand words and phrases; requires repetitions		
6	1	1. Begins to name concrete objects	1	5%
		2. Repeat words and phrases		
		3. Understand little or no English		

From the data above, it described that the students' English-speaking skills were not satisfied. Most of them still spoke English hesitantly and they had problems in vocabularies stock. Consequently, they needed speakers' repetition to make them understood. There 12 students out of 19 students or 63 % had the problem. Even 3 of them or 16% were only able to speak survival languages. They just spoke in a very short pattern of English and sometimes just spoke word by word. For example, they just said like "Toilet, where?" instead of saying "Could you tell me where I can get a public restroom?" or just said turn left, turn right, etc without giving detailed information to get a place. It seemed that the researcher would need much time to deal with those students before driving them to a role-play session. Driving them to have role play directly would have failed because the students had a low foundation of English. As stated on table 9 that practically only 3 students or 16% students could be relied on or have sufficient knowledge of English to have role play. The researcher thought that 16% was not a satisfied number, yet it was the condition that should be faced. Yet, the researcher should

be happy that he still had some students who could help him although 16 % was a small number. The researcher could make the students assistants at least to be a leader of students' discussion. Sometimes Maximizing students really worked in certain discussions. Looking at the recapitulation in table 9, it was not an easy thing to deal with. The researchers needed hard-work to help the students out of the problem. The students' performance was displayed on this following chart:

Cycle 2

Acting

The meeting in cycle 2 was not as many as in cycle 1. Why? Because the materials like pronunciation, vocabularies, and other materials which were given in cycle 1 were just given briefly in cycle 2. The students were driven to role-play practice directly.

1. Meeting 1 to Meeting 4

To engage the students in the role-play, the students were merely asked to practice a dialog like what they watched by sharing the script. It scaffolded them to have more practice. The students were guided to remember how to pronounce the expressions. After the researcher ensured that the students could pronounce them well, the students practiced the role play in pairs in front of the researcher; some students needed to help and correct on the spot about the mistake; all of the activities were recorded. After they did the role play, in which a dialog script was provided, the students were driven to practice the role play without giving the script. The researcher was just a facilitator, the students were provided their space to practice a role play without preparing the script, yet they were given some moments to prepare with their partners. Each group had 5 to 10 minutes to practice in front of the class/ the researcher. The process of practice ran well, most of the students and group could play their own role well. Here are a sample of video scripts:

Table 2: Rate of Students Speaking Performances of Cycle 2

NO	Speaking Features	Number of Students					Need more Attention
		Excellent	Good	moderate	fair	limited	
1	Vocabulary	2	6	7	4	0	0
2	Fluency	0	4	10	3	2	0
3	Accuracy	0	10	5	2	2	0
4	Pronunciation	0	4	9	4	2	0

Table 3: Percentage of Students Speaking Performances of Cycle 2

N O	Speaking Features	Number of Students					
		Excellent	Good	Moderate	fair	limited	Need more Attention
1	Vocabulary	11%	32%	37%	21%	0%	0
2	Fluency	0	21%	53%	16%	11%	0
3	Accuracy	0	53%	26%	11%	11%	0
4	Pronunciation	0	21%	47%	21%	11%	0

From the tables, it could be said that there was much improvement on students' speaking performance. For example, in cycle 1, there were 68 % of students fair in pronunciation; in cycle 2 decreased became 21 %. It meant that it increased the rate of moderate and good. Yet this achievement just related to the topic which had been discussed.

CONCLUSION

The students enjoyed role play in practicing their English. However, role-play did not run smoothly in the beginning because of the weakness of most students to practice the role play based on the topic. They had big problems with vocabulary pronunciation and grammar as well. To make the role play run well, the researcher had to deal with those things first. They were enthusiastic to learn and kept practicing and memorizing some words/expressions; They adored trying to try to practice the role play with their partner for two cycles. In addition, the role play had a significant impact on students 'speaking skills. It was shown by the result of scoring/marking in each cycle. The students got a lot of chances to master the topic.

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