

## **Improving the Speaking Skill of Grade VII Students at SMP Negeri 2 Sentolo Using Role-Play in the Academic Year of 2016/2017**

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**Abstract:** This action research aimed to improve the speaking skill of grade VII C students at SMP Negeri 2 Sentolo through the use of role-play technique in the 2016/2017 academic year. This research was conducted in two cycles, and each of which had three meetings. The research used the procedure of action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). The instruments used to collect data were an observation checklist, a questionnaire, an in-depth interview guideline, and a speaking assessment rubric. The data were qualitative and quantitative in nature. The qualitative data were collected through observing the teaching and learning process, as well as having interviews with the students, the English teacher and the research collaborator. The quantitative data were collected through assessing the students' speaking performances by using an assessment rubric. The qualitative data were analysed by assembling the data, coding the data, building interpretations, and the outcomes were reported. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were analysed using descriptive quantitative analysis. Based on the findings, the use of role-play technique successfully improved the students' speaking skill. The qualitative improvement could be seen from the students' more active participation in different class activities including discussions, question and answer session, doing the games, reading aloud, pronunciation drills, and performing the structured and unstructured role-plays. The role-play technique supported the students' speaking skill improvement as it stimulated the students to speak to each other. Another improvement of the students' speaking skill could be observed from the students' ability to generate their ideas to speak in English. The qualitative findings were supported by the quantitative data results. The results of the students' speaking score proved that the students' speaking skills improved. The mean of the students' speaking scores improved from 8 in the pre-test to 12 in the progress test and to 16 in the post-test. In addition, the students' improvement was analysed in terms of their pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, fluency, grammar, interactive skills, the use of adjectives and the use of imperative words.

**Keywords:** Action research, improving, speaking skills, role-play.

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### **Introduction**

According to Kurikulum 2013, there are four major skills which have to be taught in English teaching and learning process. Those are receptive skills including listening and reading and productive skills including speaking and writing. Students have to be able to listen, read, write, and speak in English and they need to master those four major skills to achieve the goal of learning English.

One of the productive skills which have high influences in social interaction is speaking. Speaking is an important skill that students should acquire because one of the language skills that must be mastered by the students is the ability to speak or communicate in target language. Speaking involves verbal communication and paralinguistic and non-linguistic elements of speech which enables someone to deliver his or her meaning without any accompanying speech. For that reason, speaking is important for the students to master.

Yet, some students have low ability in speaking. It includes the seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Sentolo who had main problems related to speaking skills. The first, students had low level of self-confidence. The second, the students lack vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar accuracy. The third, the students did not get enough opportunities to speak English in English teaching and learning process.

Based on that fact, teachers have to choose the best way, approach or technique, or materials which are going to be used when teaching speaking. Regarding the problems above, the researcher desired to overcome the problems and improved the speaking skills of Grade VII C students of SMP Negeri 2 Sentolo through role-play technique. It is because role-play is believed to be able to stimulate and guide students to speak.

The flexibility of a role-play forms a new conversational practice and creates a positive environment in class, so the students can enjoy the speaking practice. When the teacher uses the role-play technique in classroom activities, it means that she/he gives students more opportunities to speak English. These opportunities are needed by the students to encourage them to use English in communicating, and it also will give more chances to the students to practice their speaking skill. Besides, role-play also help the students' self-confidence grow by taking different roles. Therefore, it was believed that role-play technique could be used to overcome the problems and to help the students to improve their speaking skill.

### **Research Method**

The research is categorized as Action Research (AR). It was conducted in the second semester of SMP Negeri 2 Sentolo in the academic year of 2016/2017. The subjects of the research were 32 students of Grade VII C. The research procedure followed the model of action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns (2010: 9). The steps were planning, action, observation, and reflection. There were two kinds of the data in this research. They were qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were obtained by doing observations, interviews, and documentation. The quantitative data were obtained from the tests (a pre-test, progress test and a post-test). The scores of the tests were analyzed by using descriptive analysis in the form of mean. The validity of the data was

obtained by applying democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity and dialogic validity.

### Findings and Discussion

There are some actions which are implemented in learning-teaching process. There are listening to an audio, question and answer session, reading aloud, playing “throw the ball” game, pronunciation drill, asking students to bring a dictionary, giving rewards and performing role-play.

This action research study was conducted in two cycles. The research findings and the discussion show that the speaking skill of grade VII C students at SMP Negeri 2 Sentolo improved through the use of role-play technique. The technique could facilitate students to have a better speaking skill. It also could increase students’ motivation. They also actively participate in the learning process by asking and answering some questions.

**Table 1: Planning Actions in Order to Solve the Feasible Problems**

NO	Feasible problems	Actions
	The students had low proficiency in pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, and grammar accuracy.	Introducing kinds of vocabularies, providing pronunciation models and doing speaking activities such as pronunciation drill and reading aloud.
	The students had low self-confidence and low motivation in learning English so they were shy and passive to speak English.	Implementing role-play activities with different roles and situations, and always motivating and encouraging the students to speak English during the speaking class.
	The students had low skill in practicing speaking as they got less chance to practice speaking in the class.	Providing more chances for students to practice their speaking skill by implementing role-play and doing some speaking activities. The researcher also used classroom English to make the students more familiar with English.
	The learning materials were monotonous.	Providing interesting and good materials for students using audios, videos and various kinds of handouts to make the teaching learning process more interesting.

**Table 2: The Findings of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2**

<b>NO</b>	<b>Before the Actions</b>	<b>After Actions Cycle 1</b>	<b>After Actions Cycle 2</b>
	The students lacked confidence.	The students' self-confidence was better although there were some students who were shy.	Most of the students spoke confidently.
	The students had limited vocabulary.	The students had good vocabulary mastery.	The students had much better vocabulary mastery.
	The students made pronunciation mistakes.	Their pronunciation mistakes decreased.	Their pronunciation was better.
	There was little opportunity to make them speak-up.	There were many opportunities for them to speak-up, e. g. by read aloud, pronunciation drills, play "throw the ball" game, and did role-play.	There were many varieties of opportunities for them to speak-up such as read aloud, pronunciation drills, play "throw the ball" game, and did role-play.
	The students were less enthusiastic on the teaching learning process.	They looked enthusiastic on the topic, but they were still noisy in the teaching learning process.	They enthusiastically got involved in the teaching learning process.
	The activities were monotonous.	The activities were more varied.	The activities were more varied and enjoyable.
	The mean score of the students' speaking skill was 8.	The mean score of the students' speaking skill was 12.	The mean score of the students' speaking skill was 16.

To support the qualitative data, the result of the pre-test, progress test and a post-test were used. The mean scores increased from 8 in the pre-test became 12 in the

progress test. Subsequently, the mean scores in the post-test became 16. The improvement is presented in the following chart.

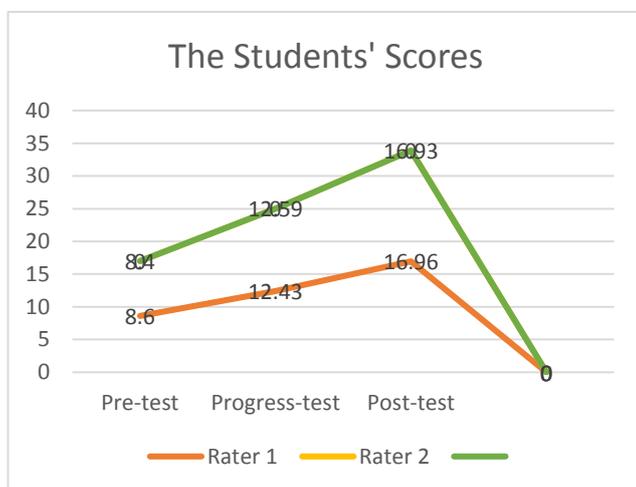


Figure 1: The students' mean score in pre-test, progress test and post-test

## Conclusions

The findings of the research elaborated above showed that the role-play technique could improve the speaking skill of Grade VII C students of SMP Negeri 2 Sentolo in various aspects as observed in their progress test and their post-test. Those aspects were pronunciation and intonation, vocabulary mastery, fluency, grammar, interactive skill, the use of adjectives and the use of imperative words. The use of adjectives is for assessing the descriptive text, while the use of imperative words is for assessing the procedure text. Their mean score in pre-test was 8, then it increased to 12 in their progress test, and increased to 16 in their post-test.

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