



**IMPROVING STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN SPEAKING CLASS THROUGH ROLE PLAY**  
**(The Case at Grade XI of State Senior High School 1 Pemalang in the Academic Year of 2012/2013)**

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**Info Artikel**

*Sejarah Artikel:*  
Diterima Oktober 2013  
Disetujui Oktober 2013  
Dipublikasikan  
November 2013

*Keywords:*  
*Students' Participation,*  
*Speaking Class, Role Play*

**Abstract**

The objective of this research is to improve students' participation in speaking class through the role play technique. The researcher employed collaborative classroom action research design. The research was conducted in a single class consisting of thirty six students. The procedure of the research consists of four main steps: planning, implementation, observation and reflection. To collect the data, he used some instruments i.e. observation checklist, questionnaire, and test. After the data were collected, the researcher analyzed them. The findings of this research showed that the students' participation improved from one cycle to the following cycle. This can be seen from the result of each cycle. The students' participation in pre-cycle was poor, in the first cycle was fair and in the second cycle was good. The students's speaking ability also increased from one cycle to the following cycle. This can be seen from the mean of students' speaking ability in pre-cycle was 75, in the first cycle was 79 and in the second cycle was 83. From the result of the research showed that the students actively participated in speaking class, their speaking ability was better and the teacher can implement the teaching technique appropriately.

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## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is the most difficult part in learning a foreign language because it is usage sense involves the manifestation either of the phonological system or grammatical system of the language. The reality shows that the most learners rarely use English in the classroom are still facing difficulties in dealing with conversation or discourse although they are actually understand the utterance ( Harmer, 2003: 251-252).

Based on the preliminary study conducted at State Senior High School 1 Pemalang on January 2013, the researcher found out some problems related to the instructional activities in this school. Those problems are that: 1) the students have low speaking ability; 2) the students have low participation in learning English; and 3) the teacher still uses monotonous and inappropriate teaching techniques.

Comparing to other techniques, role-play seems the most interesting one for the students. In role-playing technique, the students act or pretend to be someone else in the actual world situation that is brought into the classroom. Utilizing the technique, peer learning is also encouraged and sharing of responsibility between the teacher and the learner in the learning process takes place. Besides, for the shy learners, for instance, role play helps them by providing a mask where learners with difficulty in conversation are liberated.

Based on some reasons mentioned above, the researcher implemented the use of role play technique at the eleventh year students of State Senior High School 1 Pemalang. Hopefully, it is useful to be used by the English teachers at this school or other people as one of teaching strategies among many other strategies in improving students' participation in speaking class.

## METHOD

This study is an action research. The design of this kind of research is based on the spiral model suggested by Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988). Here, the researcher planned, acted, observed and reflected on the improvement of students' participation using role play in speaking class. Before the researcher entered to the action, he got

the preliminary study. He conducted pre-observation to find out the real problems faced by students. The collaborator helped to do the observation checklist. To support observation, the researcher gave a questionnaire to students and pre-test. From this event, the researcher found some problems of students in learning process. It was continued by doing the action. The research was conducted in SMAN 1 Pemalang. It is located in Jl. Jendral Gatot Subroto Pemalang. The subjects of the research are the students of the grade XI science program in the academic year of 2012/2013. There are 36 students consist of 15 males and 21 females. The research was conducted on January until May 2013.

The researcher conducted two cycles in the research. Every cycle included planning, observing, acting and reflecting. In the planning the researcher carried out preparing syllabus, lesson plan and teaching materials. While the researcher was teaching, he was also observing the students' activities, their response and participation. It is qualitative data. There are six indicators to observe the student's participation, namely : 1) listens when student or teacher speaks; 2) asks questions; 3) answers teacher and student questions; 4) becomes involved in planned activities; 5) takes part in class or role play; and 6) makes positive comments to other students. The criteria of participation improvements are poor, fair, and good participation. The researcher also took performance assessment to know students ability in speaking skill. It is quantitative data. There are five aspects according to Brown (2004:172) to assess speaking, namely : grammar, vocabulary, content, fluency and pronunciation. There are some useful steps to get an overall framework in analysis : pre-observation data, assembling data, coding the data, comparing the data, building meanings and interpretations, and reporting the outcomes, to present research finding from beginning to end.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### The Students' Problems in Pre-Observation

From the observation checklist and questionnaires, the researcher found out three big problems related to the instructional activities in this school. Those problems are that: 1) the

students have low speaking ability; 2) the students have low participation in learning English; and 3) the teacher still uses monotonous and inappropriate teaching techniques. The description of the students' problems obtained through preliminary study can be seen below :

No	Problems	Indicators
1	The students' low speaking ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The students just gave a little response when they were asked in English.</li> <li>- When the students were asked to give opinion, they just spoke a few words.</li> <li>- The students just smiled or silent when the teacher tried to converse with them out of classroom.</li> </ul>
2	The students' low participation in learning English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The students got ashamed and less confidence to ask something and to answer the questions</li> <li>- The students did not pay attention to the teacher and were not enthusiastic to the subject matter.</li> <li>- The students seemed get bored soon and uninterested in English subject.</li> <li>- The students did not participate actively in the instructional activity.</li> <li>- Some students look sleepy during the instructional process</li> </ul>
3	The teachers' monotonous and inappropriate use of teaching techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom activities were mostly based on the reading text.</li> <li>- The teacher just explained about the language and gave written task.</li> <li>- In speaking class, the teacher just explained the expressions and read the dialogue.</li> </ul>

Beside conducting pre-observation and questionnaires, the researcher carried out the pre-test to know the students' speaking ability. The result showed that their speaking ability was low. The mean of the students' skill in speaking was 75. There is no student got score that category was very good. There were 31 students (86%) got score between 72 until 84. This category was good. There were 5 students (14%) got score 60 until 68. This category was fair.

### The Implementation of Role Play in the Teaching of Speaking

This action research was conducted in two cycles. Role play was conducted in every cycle; thus there were two role play. The first role play was conducted in the first cycle in the last of February and the middle of March 2013. During this week, the researcher divided into 3 meetings,

namely; 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2013 and 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2013. This cycle was purposed to introduce the material and example of the dialogue, applying the role play and feedback discussion. The first meeting was aimed to introduce the material and explain it by giving example of role play from the dialogue. Before the students did role play, they construct a dialogue in pairs about an expressions. The second meeting was aimed to apply the role play. They played role play in pairs in front of the classroom. The third meeting was aimed to do feedback from the role play activities. Students gave comments the role play for other pairs.

The second cycle was conducted in the middle of March, the last April and the first May 2013. In this cycle the researcher divided into three meetings, namely; 20<sup>th</sup> of March, 25<sup>th</sup> of April, and 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2013. This cycle was purposed to

overcome the weaknesses of the first cycle. Based on the first cycle, the students still had weaknesses on grammatical rules, building vocabularies and pronunciation. The students still had shyness and awkward in doing role play. There are some students still felt embarrassed when they wanted to answer the teacher's questions, gave comments and responded to other students' comments. So the researcher used the big groups for students to do role play. The first meeting was review of previous materials. The second meeting applied the new role play for students. The third meeting was aimed to do feedback from the role play activity. Students gave comments, questions and answer in English. about the role play for other groups. They were more self-confident in these activities.

**The result of the improvement of participation**

Based on the observation, the role play technique could improve the students' participation in speaking class. A lot of students enthusiastically listened to the teacher in teaching and learning from the beginning until the end. They became

involved in planned activities. They took part in making the conversation in groups. All of them joined in creating the dialogue's transcript. They looked happy because they could devote and exchanged their ideas. All students took part in class doing the role play. They all carried out their conversation in groups. They showed their action in front of the class. They were more self-confident in performing the role play. Shyness could be reduced because they were playing with a lot of friends. They helped each other in the roles. The class atmosphere was more alive because there were questions and answers. The liveliness in speaking was more widely, not only in the role play, but after they had played the role play. They were active in providing questions and answers and devoted their ideas. They felt more self-confident and were not shy to give comments. Their comments were varied. Their participation in speaking were better. Actually, the feedback discussion was important to motivate students in speaking English. The result of the improvement of student' participation can be seen below :

Pre-Observation	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
a) There were some students who didn't pay attention when the teacher explained the material of teaching.	a) The students began enthusiastically listening to the teacher in learning process.	a) A lot of students enthusiastically listened to the teacher in learning process.
b) There were not students who became involved in planned activities. All students sat down on their chair to wait the teacher taught.	b) Students became involved in planned activities.	b) All students became involved in planned activities.
c) Only few students who took part in class doing the conversation.	c) All students took part in class doing the role play. But they still had shyness and awkward in doing role play.	c) All students took part in class doing the role play. They were more self-confident in performing the role play.
d) There were only few students who gave questions and answers.	d) There were some students who asked and answered the questions. But they still had a shame to raise their hands although actually they knew the answer.	d) The class atmosphere was more alive because there were questions and answers. They felt more self-confident
e) All students did not gave comments or response in learning because there was not time for them to do it.	e) It is not more than five students who gave comments or response.	e) The number of students who provided commentary had grown more than previous cycle.
f) Their participation in	They felt less confident	

learning speaking was poor. f) Their participation in learning speaking was fair.

f) Their participation in learning speaking was good. It is better than previous cycle.

**The result of the improvement of speaking ability**

After conducting cycle 2, the mean of the students’ skill in speaking was improving. It could be seen from their achievement score that was 75 in pre-cycle, 79 in the first cycle and 83 in the second cycle. In the last cycle, from 36 students, 34 students had an increased achievement score, 2 students had no score improvement, and there were not students had a decreased achievement score. Before cycle 2 was conducted, the lowest score was 60 in pre-cycle but after conducted cycle 1 and 2 the lowest score was 64. The highest score in pre-cycle was 84, after conducted cycle 1 and 2 the score increased from 88 to 92. It means that the students’ speaking ability increased from one cycle to the following cycle. The result of improvement of speaking ability can be seen below :

Category	Scor	Pre-	Cycle 1	Cycle
Very good	85-	0%	6%	39%
Good	70-	86%	83%	58%
Average	55-	14%	11%	3%
Poor	40-	0%	0%	0%
Very poor	0-39	0%	0%	0%

The highest, the lowest, and the mean of speaking ability score.

Category	Score		
	Pre-Cycle	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Highest	84	88	92
Lowest	60	64	64
Mean	75	79	83

**Response in Questionnaires**

The students’ response to the learning speaking by using role play can be reflected from the questionnaire response in the last cycle. All students can understand the material of expressions given by the teacher . They said that the rule of the game in role play is easy to do by them. The examples of the expressions given by the teacher are clear. Learning topics in speaking is very suitable so they very like to learn this topics and they always pay attention to the teacher's explanation in learning English. They always response teacher’s greeting in the first and the last teaching. There were 26 students (72%) not embarrassed to ask the teacher if they got less understanding in learning English while 10 students (28%) still felt embarressed to give questions. But about 35 students (97%), they asked to their friends if the lesson is not clear. So they can

solve the problems in learning by their friends and all of them always worked together to make conversation of role play although there were 3 students who did not joined discussion to creat the conversation transcript of role play in their groups. There were 24 students (67%) who were not embarrassed to raise their hands to answer the teachers’ questions so the learning teaching can run well.

In the first cycle, there were a few notes when the students played the role play in pairs. There were 11 students (30%) still felt clumsy to play role play and 16 students (44%) felt shy when they played a role play with their partner. Hereafter the researcher changed the technique of role play by doing in groups. It got the following result that there were oly 3 students (8%) felt clumsy to play role play and only 4 students (11%) felt shy when they played a role play with their groups. They

have had a self-confidence to speak English. Beside that, there were 33 the students (92%) were challenged to speak English through role play. They also enthusiastic to response their friends' acting in role play by yells and giving applause.

Finally all students (100%) said that learning speaking with role play is fun. The researcher was sure that the action he had conducted so far was successful.

**Response from Students' Comment in Journal**

From the students' journals or students' notes, it can be concluded below :

No	Questions and Comments
1	How do you feel during in learning speaking ? All students said that they were very happy (97%), only one student who said that he was nervous (3%)
2	What difficulties do you get in learning speaking on the expressions ? They got difficulties on : grammar (3%) and pronunciation (36%) vocabulary (22%) and expressions (16%) nervous and shy (6%), and no problem (17%)
3	What is your response about the role play technique ? They said that the role play technique was : very good (22%) very fun (39%) very interesting (28%) active, effective and creative (11%)
4	What is your impression to the teacher's style in teaching ? They said that the teacher was : fun 50%) interesting (31%) very good and communicative (7%) spirit and energetic (9%) patient (3%)
5	What is your advice for the role play technique in learning speaking ? They said that : They needed a large room as like hall (22%) Duration in role play should be longer (8%) They should support the role play with more equipments (3%) Role play was good and no problem (31%) The students should made better in role play (36%)

**CONCLUSIONS**

The problems that were faced by the students of grade XI of State Senior High School 1 Pematang in speaking ability can be found in preliminary study before conducted the action research by observation checklist, questionnaires and the oral-test. The problems are, 1) the students have low speaking ability; 2) the students have low participation in learning English; and 3) the teacher

used monotonous and inappropriate teaching technique.

The role play technique can be implemented in the teaching of speaking by the action from cycle to cycle. There were four steps to do the research : planning, action, observation, and reflection. The first cycle, students played the role play in pairs and the second cycle, the students practiced the role play in big groups. They have played role play better from cycle to cycle.

The role play technique gave positive contribution in learning speaking. The students can both build their participation and make the students' speaking skill better. It is proven by the students' participation which is increasing from time to time. The students' speaking skill also was assessed in every cycle and the results showed that their speaking skill was increasing. Beside that, the students got fun and joy during teaching learning process. It can be seen from the student's response in journal toward the learning speaking through role play. The students can respond the questions with long answers from the teacher and the students. They can also explain and give comments about role play activities.

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