

Improved Speaking Skills Through Application of the Role Playing Method in Grade VII Students of SMP Negeri Satu Atap 3 Dusun Hilir

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Abstract. This is a Classroom Action Research (CAR) aimed at enhancing the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri Satu Atap 3 Dusun Hilir through the implementation of the Role Play method. The background of the study is based on the students' low speaking abilities, which are evident from their shyness, lack of self-confidence, flat intonation, unclear pronunciation, and limited vocabulary. Initial observations revealed that only 25% of the students met the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) of 70, with an average score of 64.63. This situation indicates the necessity for the application of active learning strategies that provide students with opportunities to practice speaking in a pleasant environment. The study is a PTK study that is carried out in two phases and uses the Kemmis and McTaggart design models, conducted over two cycles. Each cycle includes stages of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. The subjects of the study consisted of eight students (5 males and 3 females). Data collection techniques involved observation, speaking ability tests, interviews, and photographic documentation. The assessment instruments covered six aspects: pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, sentence structure, expression, and courage, with a scoring range of 1–4. Data analysis was performed using both quantitative and qualitative descriptive approaches, with validity tested through source and technique triangulation. The results of the study indicate that the Role Play method is effective in improving students' speaking abilities. The average score increased from 64.63 (pre-cycle) to 70.63 (cycle I) and 77.38 (cycle II). The percentage of learning completeness also rose from 25% to 62.5%, and then further increased to 87.5%. Qualitatively, students became more courageous, confident, expressive, and capable of using good intonation and pronunciation. Learning activities became more vibrant, collaborative, and aligned with the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Role Play method is a strategic approach to enhance students' speaking skills.

Keywords: Bahasa Indonesia, Classroom Action Research, Role Play, Speaking abilities, Students in Junior High School

1 Introduction

Language is the main tool for communication and is an important foundation in the learning process in school [1]. Among the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), speaking skills have a crucial position because through speaking, students can convey their ideas, thoughts, and feelings directly to others [2]. However, at SMP Negeri Satu Atap 3 Dusun Hilir, the speaking ability of students in grade VII is still relatively low. Based on initial observations, many students tend to be passive when asked to express opinions, lack confidence when appearing in front of the class, their pronunciation and intonation are inappropriate, and their use of limited vocabulary. This situation affects the low participation of students in learning activities, especially in Indonesian subjects that require active communication skills [3].

However, based on initial observations in grade VII of SMP Negeri Satu Atap 3 Dusun Hilir, students' speaking skills are still inadequate. Some of the problems identified in the teaching and learning process include:

Lack of student confidence when speaking in front of the class. Many look anxious, embarrassed, and worried that they will make mistakes when asked to express their opinions. Very low level of speaking courage [4]. Of the eight students, only a few were willing to try to speak, while the rest chose to remain silent.

Speech is unclear, making it difficult to understand both friends and teachers.

The flat intonation makes the delivery feel monotonous and uninteresting.

The vocabulary they have is limited, students have difficulty in choosing the right words and often repeat the same words. Sentence structure is irregular, making the ideas conveyed not well organized [5], [6].

In interviews, most students express fear of being ridiculed, feeling groggy, and embarrassed when they have to speak in public. They also feel that learning speaking skills is very tedious because they rarely get a chance to practice.

Interviews with fellow teachers show that the existing learning process is more focused on teachers. Teachers often deliver material and provide written exercises rather than giving students the opportunity to practice speaking. As a result, students have little experience in public speaking [7], [8].

The results of the initial evaluation of speaking skills support this condition. Of the eight students, only two students (25%) managed to achieve $KKM \geq 70$, while the other six students (75%) did not meet the criteria. The average grade of the class is only 62.5, still far below the KKM. This data shows that most students face difficulties, especially in the areas of courage, pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary mastery.

These issues clearly show that learning achievements in the area of speaking skills have not been achieved. Therefore, it is necessary to implement a learning strategy that can actively engage students, have fun, and provide many opportunities to practice speaking.

One suitable alternative is the role-playing method. With this method, students are involved in acting out a character or situation, so they can practice speaking with proper expression, intonation, pronunciation, and vocabulary. This method can also

increase students' courage, increase confidence, and create a more dynamic and collaborative learning atmosphere [9].

The problem of low speaking ability of grade VII students needs to be explained more emphatically in the manuscript by presenting empirical data obtained from classroom conditions. For example, the results of observations showed that most students were only able to put forward one to two sentences in class question and answer activities, while Indonesian learning indicators at the junior high school level required the ability to express ideas sequentially, logically, and according to the rules. In addition, mention of Indonesian learning objectives, such as developing effective oral communication skills, must be combined with data on low participation, courage to speak, and the accuracy of students' sentence structure. Presenting problems with the support of classroom data will make the urgency of the research clearer, contextual, and convincing.

The discussion of speaking ability needs to be described with a theoretical foundation that is in line with language learning competencies at the junior high school level. The speech ability framework includes components of confidence, pronunciation clarity, intonation accuracy, flexibility in the use of vocabulary, and the ability to compose simple and complex sentence structures. The manuscript needs to emphasize that these five aspects are core competencies in speaking practice that students are expected to have according to the Indonesian curriculum. Alignment between theory and learning frameworks will strengthen the conceptual basis of the research and clarify the reasons why these aspects are the focus of the intervention.

The results of initial observations, teacher interviews, and student diagnostic assessments need to be presented systematically to strengthen the argument that learning interventions are indeed needed. For example, teachers stated that students were often silent when asked to tell stories, and the assessment results showed that the average score of speaking ability was below the KKM. Findings of error characteristics, such as limited vocabulary, flat intonation, or simple sentence structure errors, need to be presented concisely. The presentation of initial data in a sequential and traceable manner helps to show that there is a real gap between students' abilities and the demands of learning competencies.

The manuscript also needs to add a description of the unique characteristics of the students, especially the small class size of only eight students. These classroom conditions have important implications for intervention design, such as more personalized learning opportunities, intensive tutoring, and a higher frequency of speaking exercises. However, the small class size also means that the generalization of the research results needs to be limited because the learning experience in the mini-class does not necessarily reflect the conditions of a regular class with a large number of students. This explanation needs to be emphasized in the introduction to provide a more transparent understanding of the research context.

An analysis of teacher-centered learning practices needs to be sharpened by showing how the lack of opportunities for students to practice speaking is the cause of their low verbal skills. Based on the latest pedagogical literature, the teacher-centered approach tends to limit two-way interactions, so students are less involved in the language production process. By linking field findings with literature reviews, the man-

script can show a real gap between the principles of student active learning and the practice that occurs in the classroom. This analysis serves as a solid basis for justifying the need for alternative learning models that give speaking practice greater space.

The selection of role-playing methods needs to be justified theoretically and empirically as an effective strategy to overcome speech anxiety and improve students' oral communication skills. The literature shows that role-playing provides a safe simulated environment for students to express themselves without excessive pressure, thereby reducing affective barriers and boosting confidence. Empirically, various studies illustrate that active involvement in structured dialogue helps develop aspects of pronunciation, fluency in speaking, and the courage to express opinions. Thus, the role playing method is appropriately used to overcome the problem of low confidence and the tightness of speaking ability of grade VII students.

The focus of learning through role-playing methods must be explicitly linked to the learning outcomes of Indonesian Phase D, especially on oral communication competencies. The curriculum stipulates that students are expected to be able to convey information, opinions, and experiences in a concise, logical, and appropriate context of the communication situation. Role-playing-based learning provides space for students to develop these skills directly, for example through dialogue, simulation of everyday situations, or interpersonal communication exercises. The alignment between learning strategies and curriculum outcomes ensures that the interventions not only strengthen basic speaking skills, but also support the achievement of communicative and reflective student profiles.

So, the learning achievement that is the focus of action is the achievement of Indonesian learning Phase D (grades VII-IX), especially in the aspect: "Conveying ideas, feelings, and information orally in an orderly, clear, confident manner, using appropriate intonation and vocabulary in various communication contexts".

2 Method

2.1 Action Research Design

This study applied Classroom Action Research (PTK). PTK is a form of study that encourages reflection by the implementer of actions (teachers) to increase rationality and fairness in teaching, understanding of the practice, and the conditions under which actions are carried out [10].

The PTK model chosen is the Kemmis and McTaggart cycles, which consist of four main phases that take place repeatedly and continuously, namely:

Planning.

In this phase, the researcher together with the teacher prepared an action plan, including preparing learning tools in the form of Learning Implementation Plans (RPP/Teaching Modules), speaking ability assessment instruments, observation sheets, and role-playing scenarios.

Execution of Actions.

Teachers carry out the learning process in accordance with the plan that has been made by applying the role play method in learning speaking skills.

Observation.

During the action, researchers or peer teachers observe the activities carried out by students and teachers using observation instruments that have been prepared beforehand. The focus of this observation is student participation, courage in speaking, as well as aspects of speaking skills such as pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, sentence structure, expression, and confidence.

Reflection.

After the implementation of actions and observations, researchers and teachers analyze the results obtained. This reflection aims to evaluate the advantages, disadvantages, and obstacles faced during the learning process. The results of this reflection will be used as a basis for improving the plan and implementation of actions in the next cycle.

Each cycle consists of two meetings (2×40 minutes) and concludes with a speech skills test. The study is scheduled to take place in two cycles in the hope that there will be an improvement in students' speaking skills from pre-cycle to cycle I and then to cycle II.

2.2 Research Time and Place

This research lasted for one semester, starting from August to September 2025. The research plan will include the preparation stage, implementation of actions, observation, data analysis, and submission of research results.

This class action research was carried out at SMP Negeri Satu Atap 3 Dusun Hilir, which is located in Dusun Hilir District, South Barito Regency, Central Kalimantan. This school is one of the junior high schools in rural areas with a simple social environment, where the majority of students' parents work as farmers and daily laborers.

2.3 Research Subjects and Characteristics

The subjects in this class action research consist of grade VII students at SMP Negeri Satu Atap 3 Dusun Hilir in the 2025/2026 school year. In this class, there are a total of 8 students, consisting of 5 male students and 3 female students.

2.4 Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data collection in this classroom action research utilizes quantitative and qualitative methods to get a complete picture of learning methods and outcomes using Role Playing techniques.

1. Data Type
2. Data Sources
3. Data Collection Techniques

Observation is carried out to record the activities of teachers and students during learning using observation sheets. Observations were made using a list of observations that had been compiled, including signs of activeness, courage to speak, student participation, and the application of the Role Playing method by teachers. The Speaking Skills Test is carried out through role-playing performances by students. The aspects assessed included pronunciation, tone of voice, word choice, fluency in speech, and facial expressions. Testing is carried out in each period and before that period. Documentation: images, recordings, and notes of student activity outcomes and activity archives are used as visual evidence and support for qualitative data analysis.

Indicators of speaking skill assessment need to be defined in a measurable, observable, and relevant manner to the characteristics of the intervention. Confidence can be measured by students' readiness to speak, responsiveness to instructions, and use of eye contact. Pronunciation is observed through the articulation clarity of letters and words, while intonation includes the use of contextual pressure, pauses, and low pitches. Vocabulary is judged based on the diversity of words and the accuracy of their use in role-playing situations. The preparation of operational indicators ensures that the assessment of the improvement of speaking skills is objective and can be accounted for methodologically.

The role-playing strategies used in this study need to be adjusted to the conditions of small classrooms, the allocation of learning time, and the capacity of teachers to manage activities. With only eight students, this method is very feasible because teachers can provide intensive guidance and personal feedback during the activity. Role-playing scenarios can also be adjusted to the duration of regular learning without compromising the quality of speaking exercises. In addition, the teacher's responsibility as a facilitator as well as an observer can be realistically carried out considering that the classroom has minimal resource constraints, so that the implementation of this method is within the limits of the school's operational capabilities.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data Validity and Reliability.

The purpose of data validity is to ensure that the information obtained is accurate and reflects the actual situation on the ground. In this study, the triangulation method was used both from sources and techniques, namely by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and evaluation of students' speaking skills. Triangulation is a method to test the validity of data by utilizing a variety of sources and data collection techniques.

Data Reliability.

Reliability reflects the extent to which the measurement results are consistent. To ensure reliability, the researcher uses the same tool in each cycle and involves two

assessors (researcher and accompanying teacher) so that the assessment results are more objective and stable over time.

Qualitative Data.

It consists of observations, field notes, and documentation. It is analyzed in a qualitative descriptive manner by interpreting student behavior during the learning process.

Quantitative Data.

In the form of the value of speaking skills obtained by students from the assessment rubric. The percentage of learning proficiency is calculated by formula.

$$P = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$$

Information:

P = percentage of completeness

n = number of students completed

N = total number of students

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Research Results

Pre-Cycle.

Before carrying out the action, the researcher first conducted initial observations (pre-cycle) to understand the speaking ability of students in grade VII of SMP Negeri Satu Atap 3 Dusun Hilir. There were 8 students as research subjects, consisting of 5 male students and 3 female students. Observation is carried out through simple speaking activities in front of the class using short texts provided by the teacher.

From the observation results, it can be seen that most students have difficulty speaking. Only a few students showed the courage to speak fluently, while the majority of others still tended to be shy and hesitant. Some of the aspects found in the pre-cycle stage are as follows:

Courage and Confidence

Most students look shy and lack confidence when it comes to speaking in front of their peers. Of the eight students, only two (25%) dared to speak in a voice that was clear and fluent enough.

Intonation and Pronunciation

Students often use flat intonation and lack proper emphasis on meaning. The pronunciation of words is also still unclear and often unsteady.

Facial Expressions and Body Language

Students' facial expressions and body movements are still very limited. They speak without showing an expression that matches what they are saying.

Vocabulary and Sentence Structure

There are limitations in vocabulary that result in students often stopping when speaking. The sentences spoken are usually simple and incomplete.

Table 1. Results of Student Speaking Skills Assessment (Precycle)

No	Initial Name	Shoes	Information
1	A	75	Complete
2	B	72	Complete
3	C	65	Incomplete
4	D	60	Incomplete
5	E	55	Incomplete
6	F	68	Incomplete
7	G	63	Incomplete
8	H	59	Incomplete

From the table above, it can be seen that only two students (A1 and A2) achieved scores above the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM = 70), while the other six students (75%) have not completed.

The average value of speaking skills in the pre-cycle stage is obtained from the following calculations:

$$\frac{75 + 72 + 65 + 60 + 55 + 68 + 63 + 59}{8} = 64,63$$

Thus, the average pre-cycle score is 64.63 and the completion percentage is 25%.

Pre-Cycle Analysis.

From the findings above, it can be concluded that students' speaking skills are still considered unsatisfactory. This can be seen from the low average score and the few students who reach the KKM. This poor learning outcome is influenced by several things, including:

1. Lack of courage for students to speak in front of a crowd.
2. Lack of mastery of vocabulary and grammar.
3. Very limited variations in intonation and expression when speaking.
4. Previous learning that focuses more on the teacher, not on students' speaking activities.

This situation shows that students need a more interactive, fun learning method and gives them space to practice speaking, such as using the Role Playing method.

3.2 Results of Cycle Research I

Results of Cycle Observations I.

Table 2. Student Activity Observation Sheet

No	Observed Aspects	Indicator	Skor (1-4)	Information
1	Activeness	Engage in role-playing and group discussions	3	Good
2	Cooperation	Collaborate and help each other in role training	3	Good
3	Enthusiasm	Show interest and enthusiasm in participating in activities	3	Good
4	Responsibility	Complete roles on time and instructions	3	Good

Table 3. Learning Outcomes of Student Speaking Skills Cycle 1

No	Name	Pre-Cycle	Infor-mation	Cycle I	Infor-mation	Increased
1	A	75	Complete	80	Complete	+5
2	B	72	Complete	75	Complete	+3
3	C	65	Incomplete	70	Complete	+5
4	D	60	Incomplete	66	Incomplete	+6
5	E	55	Incomplete	60	Incomplete	+5
6	F	68	Incomplete	72	Complete	+4
7	G	63	Incomplete	68	Incomplete	+5
8	H	59	Incomplete	74	Complete	+15

Table 4. Recapitulation of Cycle Learning Outcomes I

Cycle	Participation Percentage	Activity Categories	General Description
Pre-Cycle	2 of 8 students	25%	Unsuccessful (below 75%)
Cycle I	5 out of 8 students	62,5%	Starting to increase, but not yet reaching the target

Based on the table above, the results of learning speaking skills in cycle 1 were obtained, 5 students who were completed, and the number of students who had not completed was 3 people with an increase of 37.5%.

Based on the results of observations, and assessments of students' speaking abilities in Cycle I, it can be seen that the application of the Role Playing method has had a positive impact on improving the speaking skills of grade VII students of SMP Negeri Satu Atap 3 Dusun Hilir.

From the learning outcomes table, it can be seen that the average score increased from 64.63 to 70.63, with the number of students completely increasing from 2 people

(25%) to 5 people (62.5%). This improvement shows that most students are starting to be actively involved in learning activities, are more daring to speak in front of the class, and are starting to be able to use more lively intonation and expressions according to the characters being played [11], [12].

3.3 Results of Cycle Research II

Table 5. Results of Observation of Pre-cycle student activities, cycle 1 and cycle 2

Cycle	Participation Percentage	Activity Categories	Description
Pre-Cycle	2 of 8 students	25%	Unsuccessful (below 75%)
Cycle I	5 out of 8 students	62,5%	Starting to increase, but not yet reaching the target
Cycle II	7 out of 8 students	87,5%	Successful (exceeds the 75% success criteria)

Table 6. Results of Observation of Teacher Activities cycle 1 and cycle 2

Cycle	Average Score	Implementation Percentage	Category	General Description
Cycle I	3,0	86%	Good	The teacher was able to apply the method quite well despite the limited training time
Cycle II	4,0	95%	Excellent	Teachers implement learning smoothly, effectively, and motivate students.

Table 7. Indicators of Success of Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II Actions

No	Name	Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
1	A	75	80	82
2	B	72	75	78
3	C	65	70	75
4	D	60	66	70
5	E	55	60	68
6	F	68	72	74
7	G	63	68	72
8	H	59	74	80

Table 8. Recapitulation of Learning Completeness at Each Stage

Phase	Number of Students Completed (≥ 70)	Number of students not yet completed (<70)	Percentage Completeness	Information
Pre-Cycle	A and B	6 student	$(2 \div 8 \times 100\%) = 25\%$	Not Successful
Cycle I	A, B, C, F, H	3 student	$(5 \div 8 \times 100\%) = 62,5\%$	Not Successful
Cycle II	A, B, C, D, F, H	2 student	$(6 \div 8 \times 100\%) = 75\%$	Successful Actions

3.4 Results Analysis

Pre-Cycle Stage (25% of Students Graduate).

In this phase, only 2 out of 8 students (25%) managed to meet the KKM. The majority of students have difficulty speaking in class. They appear anxious, lack confidence, and are limited in their use of words. Their pronunciation and tone of voice are still unclear [13], [14]. This situation shows the low speaking ability of students before the intervention is carried out.

Cycle Stage I (62.5% of students complete).

After the use of the Role Playing method, there is a significant improvement. The number of successful students increased to 5 people (62.5%). This indicates that the Role Playing method is starting to have a positive impact on students' courage and fluency in speaking. However, 3 students (D, E, G) have not reached KKM because:

1. Still feeling less confident when performing in front of the class.
2. The importance of mastery of dialogue has not yet been realized.
3. Not able to compose intonation and expressions that suit the character of the role.

Cycle II Stage (75% of students complete → successful actions).

In this phase, the number of successful students increased to 6 people (75%), namely A, B, C, D, F, and I. Thus, the success indicator has been achieved because at least 75% of students have met the KKM. This increase occurred due to the:

1. Teachers provide additional training and more intensive guidance.
2. Students get examples of expression, intonation, and pronunciation through audio and video media.
3. Reflection activities after the performance help students to correct the mistakes they made.

4. However, there are still 2 students (E and G) who have not succeeded even though they have experienced a fairly good grade increase (68 and 72).

Improved Learning Process.

The learning process has increased significantly from pre-cycle to Cycle II. In the pre-cycle stage, the student participation rate is still very low at 25% and students seem to lack confidence. In Cycle I, the participation rate increased to 62.5%, while teacher activity reached 86%. Cycle II showed better improvement with the activity rate reaching 87.5% and teacher activity increasing to 95%. The students began to show better expression, intonation, and cooperation. This shows that the Role Playing method is effective in improving learning dynamics and building students' courage to speak in front of the class [15], [16].

3.5 Discussion

The results of the study showed that the use of the Role Playing method succeeded in improving students' speaking skills. This increase can be seen from the:

Process Improvement.

Student activity increased from 25% to 62.5% then 87.5%. Students show higher self-confidence, are more expressive, and are able to collaborate. The classroom environment becomes more dynamic, communicative, and fun [17], [18].

Improved Yield.

The average score increased from 64.63 to 70.63 and then 75.25. The level of learning completeness increased from 25% to 62.5% then 75%. Aspects of pronunciation, intonation, expression, and vocabulary improved in each cycle. This improvement in learning processes and outcomes shows that the Role Playing method is effective in teaching speaking skills because it provides opportunities for students to practice directly, express themselves, and communicate actively [19], [20], [21]. This research makes a real contribution to the development of Indonesian education by offering a practical approach to improve speaking skills in small or under-resourced classes. Through the use of effective role-playing methods, teachers obtain strategies that can be directly applied to improve students' courage, fluency, and quality of oral language use. The findings of this study also provide an empirical foothold for schools to adopt participatory learning methods that strengthen oral communication activities, thereby providing added value to pedagogical practices at the junior high school level. The significance of the research lies in the relevance and acceptability of the method in the context of the real classroom.

4 Conclusion

Based on the results of the two cycles carried out and data analysis both quantitative and qualitative, it was concluded that the average score increased gradually from 64.63 (pre-cycle) to 70.63 (Cycle I) and finally 77.38 (Cycle II). Learning completeness increased from 25% (2 out of 8 students) to 62.5% (5 out of 8) and increased again to 87.5% (7 out of 8); That way, the indicator of class success ($\geq 80\%$ of students obtained a score of ≥ 70) has been achieved in Cycle II. Observations and notes show significant improvements in pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, sentence structure, expression, and boldness. Students become more active, cooperative, and show enthusiasm; The atmosphere in the classroom becomes more interactive. The Role Playing method has proven to be effective as a strategy for verbal communication: conveying information based on observations of objects or events because it provides an opportunity to practice speaking in a meaningful, non-repressive context. One student (E5) has not reached the KKM but has shown progress in the process.

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