

## TEACHING ENGLISH SPEAKING USING ROLE-PLAY TECHNIQUE AT A SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN BANDUNG

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doi: 10.35706/eltinf.v5i2.7530

To cite this article: Indriani, S. N. & Sakina, R. (2022). Teaching English speaking using Role-play technique at a senior high school in Bandung. *ELT in Focus*, 5(2), 55-66. doi: 10.35706/eltinf.v5i2.7530

### Abstract

The purposes of this study are to: (1) investigate how role-play technique is used in English speaking class, (2) to find out advantages of using role-play technique in teaching speaking from students' and teacher's perception, and (3) to figure out the difficulties that students and an English teacher encountered when using role-play technique in the classroom. The method used is qualitative with observation and interview as data collection techniques. The findings showed that the teacher carried out role-play technique with several stages such as delivering materials, dividing students into several groups to make a dialogue, students' practicing the dialogue in their group, students' performing the dialogue in front of the class, and evaluating students' performance. Role-play technique provided some advantages. Firstly, it gave students opportunities to practice their speaking ability. Secondly, it increased students' confidence to practice speaking in front of the classroom. Then, it improved students' interests during the learning process. Fourth, it made students add more English vocabularies. Finally, students could communicate in English frequently with their friends so they could maintain their social relation with their peers. When using role-play technique, the students found difficulties related to pronunciation, word or sentence structure, lack of vocabulary, and memorizing the dialogue. The teacher found that role-play technique was time consuming, and it was hard to make sure the suitability of the material to the activities.

**Keywords:** *Role-play technique, teaching speaking, senior high school*

### INTRODUCTION

English is an important language that must be owned by everyone in this modern era. There are a lot of people trying to learn to be proficient in English. Some of them are for the concerns of individual himself, such as: to be able to interact with each other with foreigners, travelling, find job, do business, conduct research, or educational needs. Students at schools studying English with

the goal is to acquire a variety of knowledge and students able to understand textbooks written in English to gain knowledge later, thus students immediately ready to entering the university level.

In learning English, there are several skills that must be mastered: listening (listening), speaking (speaking), reading (reading) and writing (writing). This paper focuses on one of the skills in English,

namely speaking. According to Efrizal (2012), speaking is one way to transfer ideas and messages verbally. Brown (2007:4) cited in Parmawati (2018) defines speaking as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing speech of sounds as the main instrument. Speaking in English can help students to express their thoughts and can share information with others. It also becomes an indicator of someone's ability in one particular language (Irianti & Muja, 2017). It can be concluded that speaking is an important skill used for transferring ideas, and it could be an indicator of someone's ability in one particular language.

Unfortunately, the ideal conditions above are still hampered by a lot of things in many English as a foreign language (EFL) classes, particularly in Indonesia. From several observations made in several schools, it is clear that students often feel less comfortable and less confident to participate actively, especially in speaking classes. Saurik (2011) identifies that most of students feel shy when they speak English language because they think they will make mistakes when they talk. They are also afraid of being laughed at by their peers. Meanwhile the expected condition is that students can participate in English learning activities without feeling pressured and can follow them with fun. Of course, in the end this became a separate problem among English teachers. Therefore, new innovations must be made by providing more interesting presentation in English speaking class, one of which is using role-play technique.

According to Rahman, Yassi, & Arafah (2016) "role play permits a lot of students chance to speak since they are the subject of learning, through role play students get a lot of time to speak". Rahayu (2015) also stated that role play is a procedure that involves students taking on a role and carrying out conversations with each person playing their part. It is also highly flexible, leaving much

more choice for the exercise of individual distinction, initiative, imagination, and role simulation as well. This means helping students to practice speaking in real-life contexts. Of course, physically involving students in role-playing in class will make them more effective and build confidence to be able to perform live. Therefore, it can be used as a teaching and learning process technique and help students to interact. Therefore, this technique can be an option to be used in learning English.

According to Donn Byrne, there are two types of role play, namely scripted role play and unscripted role play. Scripted role play involves the interpretation of either a textbook dialogue or a reading text in spoken form, the main function of the text being to convey the meaning of the language in an easy-to-remember manner. The situation of unscripted play has no different with the scripted play in any textbook or notebook. This role play without script is known as free role play or improv. The students themselves must decide what language to use and how the conversation should be developed. To carry out this activity, good preparation of teachers and students is needed.

There are several previous research findings related to this study, such as Sri Irianti (2011) concluded that role-playing activities can improve students' speaking skills as indicated by the scores they get. Another previous study was conducted by Kunto Laksono (2014) and reported the results of the study showing that the application of role-play techniques in the teaching and learning process of English is effective for improving students' speaking skills. Students can appear more confident. In addition, their motivation and enthusiasm in learning English also increases. However, what makes this paper different is the research results, and the research design where the author of this research will produce a comprehension description of the

use of role-play techniques in English-speaking class.

Therefore, the purposes of this study are to investigate how role-play technique is used in English speaking class, to find out advantages of using role-play technique in teaching speaking based on the perception of students and teacher, and to figure out the difficulties that students and an English teacher encountered when using role-play technique in the classroom. The results of this study are expected to show better utilization of role-play activities in teaching speaking skills to high school students.

## **METHOD**

The research used descriptive qualitative research. According to Nazir (2014:43), descriptive qualitative method is a method of examining the status of a group of people, an object, a condition, a system of thought, or a class of events in the present. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to describe the facts and phenomena being studied in the form of sentences. This research was conducted in one of senior high school in Bandung. The school that was used as the place for this research because its strategic place, complete facilities, and achievements in various fields, one of which is in English subject. The participants involved in this research were an English teacher and thirty students of the tenth grade.

Data collection techniques used in this research were interview, observations, and document analysis. According to Yusuf (2014), interview aims to record opinions, feelings, emotions, and other matters relating to individuals in the organization. By conducting interviews, researchers can obtain more data so that researchers can understand the culture through the language and expressions of the rights being interviewed; and can clarify things that are not known. The interview in this study was

a semi-structured interview where the outline of the topic to be asked had been prepared previously but when some interesting answers appeared, some questions were given more deeply for the problem. The interviews were addressed to an English teacher and representatives of each member of the role-play group. The purpose of carrying out this interview is to find out the advantages and disadvantages of using the role play technique.

The researcher observed directly into the classroom for four meetings in which the students were doing English speaking with role-play technique. Moreover, field notes were used to record all activities starting from teaching and learning activities carried out from beginning to end. This direct observation was carried out to get information related to seeing directly the implementation of the teacher using role play in the classroom, as well as how the students responded to these activities. Wenden (1992:80) states that some limited information about the learning process that may be obtained by observation. Therefore, the purpose of carrying out this observation is to figure out how teacher uses role-play in the classroom.

The last technique to collect data in the present study is by document analysis. The documents to be analyzed here were the exercises carried out by teachers and students as well as lesson notes written by students. By analyzing their notes, it helps to obtain the additional data as it makes it possible to identify strategies that may not have been used consciously. This document is important to study because it relates to answering all the questions from the three research objectives that have been described in the previous part.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

As mentioned previously, the purposes of this research include: (1) to investigate how role-play technique is used in English speaking class (2) to find out advantages of

using role-play technique in teaching speaking based on the perception of students and teacher (3) to figure out the difficulties that students and an English teacher encountered when using role-play technique in the classroom. The finding and discussion of the research are explained below.

### **How role-play technique is used in English speaking class**

The first research question is related to how role-play technique is carried out by the teacher in the classroom. This question has been answered by using data collection techniques in the form of observation. Observations are carried out directly in the classroom to see the teaching and learning process using role-play technique, student attitudes, and how students speak in groups. Before the teacher started speaking learning activities using role-play technique in the classroom, she gave a presentation of material to students. Djamarah (Pane, 2017:343) revealed that learning material is the substance that will be delivered in the teaching and learning process. Without learning materials, the teaching and learning process will not occur. Therefore, the teacher must have and master the subject matter that will be delivered to students. The material discussed at this meeting is about "What Are You Going to Do Today". The delivery of the material will be carried out by the teacher using the role-play activity in the classroom.

Role-play technique is considered suitable because it is in accordance with one of the learning competencies that must be achieved by students, namely students able to create short and simple oral and written interaction texts that involve the act of giving and asking for information by paying attention to social functions, text structure, and correct linguistic elements context. Role-play technique had been carried out by students in the last meetings.

Therefore, the teacher didn't need to re-explain what and how role-play is. The teacher immediately explained the material briefly and then gives some examples to start the role play activity. Before starting to create a dialogue, the teacher explained about the roles that usually appear in conversations with the theme of the material then invited students to express their ideas. After that, the teacher discussed with the students about the topic and started the discussion by doing brainstorming to get students' ideas related to the conversation and asking students to write a dialogue together. This activity was carried out about 20 minutes.

The next activity was dividing students into several groups of two or three students in which they discussed to make a dialogue related to the topic. The teacher gave 20 minutes for each group to make the dialogue. During the discussion of dialogue, the teacher went around the class from one pair to another to check students' involvement. According to Lyman Nurhadi (2005: 120), it is in accordance with the class situation where the teacher goes around seeing student discussions in groups to make sure all students are involved in making the dialogue text. Next, the teacher gave instructions to memorize the dialogue for approximately 40 minutes and when they are ready, they will perform it in front of the class.

The third activity was practicing the dialogue in their group. After all groups were ready to perform, the teacher invited the group to perform in front of the class. In order to create the conducive atmosphere in the class the teacher asked each group to pay attention and gave comments to the group that performed in front of the class. Suharsimi Arikunto (1988: 67) argues that classroom management is an effort carried out by the person in charge of teaching and learning activities or assisting with the aim of achieving optimal conditions.

The final step is the teacher's evaluation about the performance of each role-play group. According to Pane (2017:350) learning evaluation serves to see the success of students in learning, but also serves as teacher feedback on the performance they have done in the learning process. This is also done by the teacher, namely conducting evaluation activities. The activity is carried out in the last 10 minutes at the end of the learning activity. The activities and steps in all meetings were not much different. What distinguishes was the material that was delivered. In conclusion, the role-play technique carried out by the teacher in teaching speaking included delivering materials by the teacher, dividing students into several groups and they discussed to make a dialogue with their group member,

Then, students practiced the dialogue in their seats till they were ready to perform in front of the class. When the students performed the dialogue in front of the class, the other students paid attention and gave comments. Finally, the teacher evaluated students' performances of all members of the role play group.

From those stages that had been carried out by the teacher to conduct role-play technique, those are in line with the technical implementation of role-play technique proposed by Jakob (2018). According to Jakob (2018), the technical implementation of the role-play is consisted of some steps, namely dividing students into groups, giving students time to prepare the dialogue from the role-play that will be present, giving time to students in each group to present their role-play in front of the class, and allowing each student an opportunity to provide feedback among the group.

### **The advantages of using role-play technique in teaching speaking**

The second research question is related to the advantages of using role-play technique in teaching speaking based on the

perception of students and teachers. This question has been answered by conducting interviews to students and an English teacher. The students who were interviewed were two low achiever students and two high achiever students. The categories of low and high achiever students is got from the evaluation of students' performance before.

Based on the interview, there are several advantages that students get from using role-play technique in learning speaking. First, role-play technique gives students more opportunities to participate actively in the classroom so that their motivation is also increased. This finding is stated by the teacher as follow:

#### **Excerpt 1:**

*"The advantage of using role-play technique is giving more chances for students to participate more actively in the classroom, especially in their group, so that the classroom atmosphere becomes more different; the level of enthusiasm is increased. Seeing their friends perform in front of the class, they clap, give comments, laugh, so the classroom situation becomes more active and enthusiastic."*

This finding is also supported by student 3 who has the same view of role-play technique that it gives students chances to practice their English-speaking skill with their friends so that they can speak English more fluently in classroom. This statement is expressed by student 3 as follow:

#### **Excerpt 2:**

*"I think it (role-play technique) is great because it can give students opportunities to practice their English-speaking skill with their friends. Then it has been done quite frequently in this classroom.... It has many advantages such as students can speak English*

*more fluently little by little, and they can increase their vocabulary."*

The benefit of role-play technique in giving students more opportunities to practice their English-speaking skill is also confirmed by Osuafor (2017). Role-play technique serves a lot of opportunities for students to practice the language; thus, it can improve students' speaking ability (Osuafor 2017; Arham et al., 2016).

The second advantage of learning English using role-play technique is that it is able to increase students' confidence to speak English in front of the class. Teaching speaking using role-play actually requires students who lack the courage to come in front of the class bravely and speak up because they are required by circumstances and these activities involve conversations with group friends. This advantage is stated by student 6 below:

**Excerpt 3:**

*"Oh yeah, because I am a shy person when I speak in English, especially in front of my friends. I'm afraid to make a mistake. Because it's a group activity, I have to be brave enough to come forward. Otherwise, I won't get any grades."*

This finding is supported by the teacher who views that role-play technique can train students' confidence to be able to dare to speak in front of the class. For some students, speaking English is difficult to do, many words and sentences are difficult to pronounce. Moreover, some students are not confident enough to speak English, especially in front of the class. By using this role play activity, students are expected to have the courage to come to front of the class and speak English with their friends. This view is stated by the teacher as follows:

**Excerpt 4:**

*"The most important thing for speaking itself in my opinion is that students are brave enough to speak first, come to the front of the class. Sometimes, some of them lack self-confidence so they are embarrassed to speak English in front of the class. Thus, in my opinion the most important benefit to teach speaking using this role play is that students are able to and confident to speak English in front of the class."*

Based on the teacher's view above, it can be concluded that the most important thing in learning speaking is that students are confident to speak first and by using role-play technique students can improve their confidence to speak in front of the class. This finding is also supported by Arham et al., (2017) who stated that the implementation of role-play technique improves students' self-confidence. Suyono and Hariyanto (2014) added that the advantages of the role play method are that it is able to generate positive responses for students who are weak, incompetent, and lack motivation. In other words, role-play technique can encourage less motivated students to be more active participating in the classroom.

The third advantage of using role-play technique in learning English speaking is that it can increase students' interests during the learning process. Different with a teacher-centered learning where the students only listen and pay attention to the teacher's explanation passively, role-play technique requires the students to participate actively during the lesson because they should make the dialogue themselves, perform it in front of the class, then give comment to their friends' performance. Because they are involved actively in the classroom, they becomes more enthusiastic to the lesson. This statement is expressed by the teacher as follow:

**Excerpt 5:**

*“..... using role-play technique.... the classroom atmosphere becomes more different; the level of enthusiasm is increased. Seeing their friends perform in front of the class, they clap, give comments, laugh, so the classroom situation becomes more active and enthusiastic.”*

From the statement above, students look more enthusiastic during the learning process because they can participate actively by performing the dialogue in front of the class and also give comment to the other's performance. This advantage is also found by Osuafor (2017) who mentioned that role-play can increase students' interest in learning. Santoso (2011) added that one of the benefits of the role play activity is to generate enthusiasm and a spirit of optimism in students and to foster a high sense of togetherness and social solidarity

Then, by using role-play technique, students are able to add some new English vocabularies. Students' English vocabulary will increase because students make the conversation themselves with their friend. Whenever they don't know a certain word in English they will find it themselves and this happens repeatedly during role-play technique. This finding is stated by student 1:

**Excerpt 6:**

*“Because it's not the first time I've spoken English with my friends, so I got a lot of new vocabulary. Even though I didn't find it myself, I got new vocabulary from friends in my group.”*

When students practice their speaking ability with their friends, they might find some unfamiliar words for them, then they ask to their friends and get the meaning. This process can happen many times as

long as they interact with their friends in English. At last, their vocabulary will be improved. This statement related to the view of Arriyani (2010: 43) who stated that students' ability to speak English to be good and correct, such as speaking clearly, increasing vocabulary is because they have more conversations.

The last advantage of using role-play technique in learning English speaking is that being able to communicate directly with friends using English. When students speak with their friends more often, the communication and friendship will be even better. Moreover, if the two students who are not very close then paired in a role play group, it will provide good benefits for both of them. This statement is found in the interview result of student 1 as follow:

**Excerpt 7:**

*“Yes, I was happy because I could communicate directly with my friends in English. Although I don't really like the division of the group that I get. Because usually I'm just with my seatmate and now I have to be with other people. But I like being able to speak English with another friends.”*

This statement is reinforced by the theory of Lindsey & Colwell (2013). They state that the role play technique can maintain social relationships between children and their peers. This situation is useful for students to practice their social skill because they interact each other with the given role.

Based on teacher's and students' perception above, it can be concluded that teaching speaking English by using role-play technique serves a lot of advantages for students. First, it gives more opportunities for students to practice their speaking ability. Second, it increases students' confidence to practice speaking in front of the classroom. Then, it improves students' interests during the learning

process. Fourth, it gives students opportunities to add more vocabularies in English. The last, students can communicate in English with their friends more often, so that they can maintain their social relation with their peers.

### **The difficulties encountered by the teacher and students in using role-play technique in the classroom**

Teaching and learning speaking English using the role play technique is certainly not as easy as imagined. This difficulty can be felt by students and also the teacher. Continuing on the last research question, which is related to the difficulties found by students and the teacher when using role play technique in the classroom. This question has been answered by collecting data through interviews to students and the English teacher.

Based on the result of interview, the first difficulty faced by students when using role play technique in the classroom is related to pronunciation and word structure. Due to the difference between the spelling of English language and how to pronounce it, it can cause confusion for some students. In addition, the word structure of English language and Indonesian are clearly different, so sometimes some students speak English with incorrect word structure. Those difficulties are encountered by student 1 as follow:

#### **Excerpt 8:**

*"Maybe from the pronunciation, because I don't frequently speak English, so it's hard to pronounce. Then the structure of words and sentences in English is different from Indonesian. So, I have to practice speaking English often as you did earlier. Together with friends so that*

*to move forward, if something goes wrong, friends can help"*

From the interview above, the difficulties of speaking English with role play technique are about pronunciation and the large difference between the words or structure from Indonesian to English. The difficulty of English pronunciation is also found by Hetrakul (1995). According to Hetrakul (1995) the problem that is often faced by the students in speaking is about pronunciation. They felt difficult to pronounce certain words. In English language, pronunciation and spelling are different. Therefore, the students did not easily recognize the pronunciation.

The second difficulty found by students when using role-play technique is related to the lack of vocabulary. All students interviewed answered that they lacked in vocabulary. As a matter of fact, vocabulary is really important in speaking ability. When students don't have enough vocabulary, they cannot express their ideas in English very well. It was stated by student 2 below:

#### **Excerpt 9:**

*"My vocabulary is so lacking that when I forget a word or sentence in English, I can't continue speaking activities in a dialogue"*

The lack of vocabulary is one of difficulties faced by all students in this research. Based on Shahzadi, et al. (2014), students may not express themselves well because of inadequate and inappropriate vocabulary. In addition, Hosni (2014) assert that the most common speaking difficulties the students encounter in speaking EFL is lack of vocabulary. It was noticed that those students wanted to speak but they could not find the appropriate words to express what they wanted, thus they stopped speaking.



The third difficulty encountered by students when using role-play technique is the difficulty in memorizing the English text. This factor can be caused by the different structure of words or sentences in English and also the lack of practice outside the classroom. This statement is expressed by student 3 in the interview below:

**Excerpt 10:**

*"It's difficult, because the structure of word and sentence is very different from Indonesian, and getting used to memorizing English texts becomes even more difficult. In addition, I rarely practice speaking English outside the class too. At least, I only practice speaking English at school during English learning activities."*

From the statement above, the students found difficulties in speaking English using role play, especially when they tried to memorize the texts and this can be caused by the lack of practice speaking English outside the class independently by students. This finding is in line with the research found by Afisa & Yolanda (2015) which showed that the factors that cause difficulties in learning to speak English are the frequency of practice speaking English.

The difficulties of using role-play technique during speaking activities is also encountered by the teacher. Based on the result of interview, The first difficulty is that teaching speaking using role-play technique is so time consuming. It is clear that role-play technique requires a long time for preparation, explaining the materials, group-discussion, practicing the dialogue before performance, performing the dialogue, and evaluating the performance. On the other hand, time allocation of the learning process is quite limited. This is showed by the data from interviews with teachers as follows:

**Excerpt 11:**

*"Furthermore, it may be more on the use of a relatively long time. Because as you know there are many steps of role play activities. Starting from making the text independently by students, the process of understanding, memorizing and others. Of course, it takes quite a long time, while the learning time is so limited. So that with improvised preparation, of course, it will also result in less than the maximum in the appearance of students."*

From the statement above, the use of role play activities takes quite a long time. The opinion regarding these difficulties is similar to Djumingin (2011: 175-176) who stated that role-play technique requires a longer time allocation. Therefore, teacher preparation must be more mature and appropriate strategies are also needed to be able to carry out these activities well.

The second difficulty faced by the teacher when using role-play technique is related to the suitability of the material to the activity to be used. Because not all speaking activities can be done with role play. The teacher must pay attention to the competencies that must be achieved by students during speaking learning activities. The following is the result of interviews with English teachers.

**Excerpt 12:**

*"There must be difficulties, especially if the class uses role play activities for speaking learning activities. Because not all English material can be matched by using role play, therefore I must adjust what competencies students must achieve. The learning activities in the last weeks were in accordance with the method I used, because it contained aspects of competence, for example, students were required to write short and simple oral and*

*written interaction texts that had to involve action. So, I think this role activity is appropriate. It's good for the material to be studied with the competencies that students must achieve, maybe like that."*

From the statement above, the second difficulty that the teacher felt was related to the suitability of the material, the competencies to be achieved, and the use of appropriate technique. According to Hamzah (2008: 26-28), not all subject matter can be presented through role play technique. Thus, it is clear that not all learning activities can use the role play activity.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that students encountered some difficulties when they learn speaking using role-play technique. The first difficulty is about the pronunciation and word or sentence structure. Secondly, it is related to students' lack of vocabulary. Finally, students found difficulty in memorizing English texts. In addition, the teacher found two difficulties during teaching speaking using role-play technique. First, teaching speaking with role-play technique requires a lot of time. There are many steps that must be carried out starting from making dialogue texts, understanding content, memorizing texts, performing the dialogue, and evaluating students' performance with limited time. The second difficulty faced by the teacher is that the suitability of the material to the activity that will be used because not all speaking learning activities can use role play.

## CONCLUSION

Speaking is one of important skills that should be mastered by students to be used for transferring ideas. Unfortunately, some students feel less comfortable and confident to participate actively in speaking classes. Therefore, a certain technique is needed to encourage students' participation in the

class, one of which is role-play technique. This study aims at investigating how role-play technique is used in English speaking class, finding out advantages of using role-play technique in teaching speaking based on the perception of students and teacher, and figuring out the difficulties that students and an English teacher encountered when using role-play technique in the classroom.

Based on the findings, the role-play technique carried out by the teacher in teaching speaking included several stages such as delivering materials, dividing students into several groups to make a dialogue, students' practicing the dialogue in their group, students' performing the dialogue in front of the class, and evaluating students' performance.

In terms of the advantages of using role-play technique, the findings showed that it serves a lot of advantages. First, it gives more opportunities for students to practice their speaking ability. Second, it increases students' confidence to practice speaking in front of the classroom. Then, it improves students' interests during the learning process. Fourth, it gives students opportunities to add more vocabularies in English. Finally, students can communicate in English with their friends more often, so that they can maintain their social relation with their peers.

When using role-play technique, both teacher and students encountered some difficulties. The students found difficulties related to pronunciation, word or sentence structure, lack of vocabulary, and in memorizing the dialogue. Meanwhile, for the teacher the difficulties are that teaching speaking with role-play technique needs a lot of time and it is hard to make sure the suitability of the material to the activity that will be used in role-play technique. The results of this study are expected to show better utilization of role-play activities in

teaching speaking skills to high school students.

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