

## **IMPROVING STUDENTS SPEAKING ABILITY BY USING ROLE PLAY AT SEVENTH GRADE OF DARUL MAHDEEYAH, THAILAND**

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### **Abstract**

Many students find speaking as one of the most difficult skills in English. Therefore, the researcher wants to improve the students' speaking ability through the suitable teaching method, in this case is Role Play. The problem in this research is "how can the use of role play improve students' speaking ability of the seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in the 2015/2016 academic year?" And the objective of this research is to find out how role play can improve the English speaking ability of the seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in 2015/2016 academic year. Based on the research problem and the relevant theory, the hypothesis of this research is described as follows: Role Play can improve the seventh grade students' speaking ability at Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in the 2015/2016 Academic Year because by using role play method, students become more active in participating the class.

The design of this research is classroom action research. The research subject is seventh grade students that consisting of 16 students. Test and observation are used to obtain the data.

Role Play method improves the students' speaking ability in two cycles. The difference in each cycle is the researcher gives dialog to the students and teaches new vocabulary and how to pronounce words properly. It can be concluded that Role Play is able to improve the students' speaking ability and students' activeness in participating the class.

**Key Words:** *Speaking Ability, Role Play.*

### **I. Introduction**

Many students find speaking as the most difficult skill in learning English. It is supported by Palmer (2014) who states that occasionally make the students speak in front of the class does not automatically make them good speaker. In speaking, the speaker must add life to the words, and the lesson must focus on pacing, pausing, and adjusting speed for effect.

Based on the Thailand's curriculum (2008) the indicators for the seventh grade students in speaking a foreign language are speaking and writing appropriately to ask for and give information and express opinions about what has been heard or read, and speaking and writing to express their own feelings and opinion about various matters around them, various activities, as well as brief justifications appropriately. But in fact, the seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School in the 2015/2016 year cannot pronounce words

properly. Based on the interview in September 2015, it was found that almost all of the students cannot speak the words which have letter *n*, *s*, *l* as the last letter of the word. For example the word football, they pronounce it become “*futbon*”, well become “*wew*”, school become “*sekun*”, etc. They can pronounce alphabet properly except letter “*v*”, they pronounce it become “*wi*” not “*vi*”. It is because they use Pha’yan Chanak Thai or Thailand’s alphabet which comprise 44 letters and it has similar pronunciation between one word and another, also it is not complete as A-Z alphabet. The other weakness is they cannot make a sentence to communicate with others. They only speak two or three words and are not fluent. So, in this case the students cannot ask for or give information and express an opinion.

It is important to improve students speaking ability to get more information. Cremin (2009) states that talk is a rich resource for learning, it is also a mode of communication with considerable artistic power and potential. The teacher should improve their teaching strategies to make students get interested and develop students speaking ability. It is also supported by Palmer (2014) who states that speaking skill is the foundation of so much human interactions.

There are different ways of teaching ESL, Role play is one of the methods that can improve speaking ability. This method will make the students active and easy to learn because it keeps the situation enjoyable and fun. According to Lynne (2010) Role-plays offer people the chance to actively take part in their own alternate expression of identity, exploring parts of themselves. It is also offer a safe, relatively can sequence-free space where players can develop certain aspects of themselves. For this reason, the researcher is interested in analyzing the use of role play in order to improve speaking ability of the seventh grade students in Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in 2015/2016 academic year.

The problem of this research is how can the use of role play improve students’ speaking ability of the seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in the 2015/2016 academic year? And the objective of this research is to know whether role play can improve the English speaking ability of the seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in the 2015/2016 academic year.

The result of the research is expected to give the following benefits:

1. The result of the research can be beneficial reference for teachers as a consideration in teaching speaking English in classroom.
2. The result of the research can be beneficial reference for students in learning speaking English, especially using role play method.
3. The result of the research can be beneficial reference for other researchers who want to observe how to improve students speaking ability by using role play.

## **II. Method**

The design of the research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). This research is done collaboratively with the English teacher who teaches in seventh grade of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in the 2015/2016 academic year. The collaborative focuses on finding and solving the research problem, planning the action, implementing the research, observing, evaluating and analyzing the data.

Based on the research design, the actions of the research are implemented in four steps, which explained by Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1998 in Arikunto 2010:137). They are as follows:

1. Planning

A plan is a stage where the researcher develops an action that he/she needs to solve the problem that is found in the class. In this research, the students' speaking ability needs to be improved because they cannot speak clearly and cannot deliver their idea to others. To improve their speaking ability, role play method is brought to solve the problem by improving their vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and fluency.

2. Acting

In this stage, the researcher, implement the method to the students and collects the data from them based on their achievement in the class and their English speaking.

3. Observing

Based on the data collected, the researcher observes whether the students have achieved the criteria of success or not.

#### 4. Reflecting

Based on the result of the observation, if the students cannot achieve the criteria of success the researcher will modify the method and do cycle 2.

This research was conducted in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade class of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in 2015/2016 academic year. There were two cycles, and each cycle consisted of two meetings. Cycle 1 was conducted on September 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 2015. Cycle 2 was conducted on September 22<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> 2015. Cycle 1 test was held on September 18<sup>th</sup> 2015 and Cycle 2 test was held on September 29<sup>th</sup> 2015. When this research conducted, the students were about to face the first semester final test.

There were two meetings in Cycle 1. They were as follows:

- The first meeting was held on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015 from 13.00 to 14.20
- The second meeting was held on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 from 9.20 to 10.40

Cycle 1 was carried out through certain procedures with cyclical model consisted of four steps (1) planning, (2) acting, (3) observing, and (4) reflecting.

The reflection was done by calculating the students' score of speaking test of role playing class. Then mean score was 57.5 and the percentage of students who got score  $\geq 65$  was 50%. Based on the speaking test result of Cycle 1, it can be concluded that the standard requirement of the mean score and the percentage score of the student in speaking ability was not achieved yet. It was because role play was a new method for students, and they were not used to expressing their opinion or feeling orally in a role play. Indeed, speaking needs a lot of practice. Furthermore, the students did not have enough vocabulary so they could not arrange the sentence properly.

Since the result of the action in Cycle 1 had not achieved the objective of the research yet, the researcher implemented Cycle 2. In Cycle 2, the researcher gave the students some dialogs and taught some vocabularies for their role play so the students only focus on their role play, not in making or writing dialogs. There were two meetings in Cycle 2. The first meeting was held on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 from 13.00 to 14.20, the second meeting was held on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 from

9.20 to 10.40. Cycle 2 covered four steps namely: 1). Planning, 2). Acting, 3). Observing, 4). Reflecting.

The reflection was done after calculating the score of Cycle 2 test. Based on the calculation, the mean score was 68.13 and the percentage of students who got score  $\geq 65$  was 81.25%. It means that the standard requirement of the mean score of the student in speaking ability had already been achieved. The action can be stopped in Cycle 2.

In conclusion, role play is able to improve students' speaking ability by developing their active participation and creativity in expressing their opinion and feeling in a systematic way. It could help students to speak English fluently, accurately in pronunciation and vocabulary and it was worth being carried out for the speaking class.

### **III. Result and Discussion**

The result of the speaking test in Cycle 1 showed that the mean score of the students' speaking ability was 57.5 and the percentage of students who scored  $\geq 65$  was 50%. It means that the standard mean score (M=65), the requirement of students scoring  $\geq 65$  (E = 70%) in Cycle 1 of this research had not been achieved. From the data above, it can be concluded that Cycle 1 was not successful.

Based on the result of speaking test through role play in Cycle 2, the students' speaking ability in Cycle 2 was better than in Cycle 1. In cycle 1 the students made their dialogs for role play by themselves. So, the students were focus on their writing and their time for practicing role play was less. The cycle 1 was not effective, so the teacher and the researcher changed the way to implementing role play in class. In cycle 2 the students were given a dialog for their role play, so they could focus on their role play and had more effective time to practice their role play. The teacher also taught the students about new vocabulary that used in their role play and how to pronounce it. In cycle 2, the students' speaking ability was improved. The mean score of students' speaking ability was 68.13 and 81.25% students could achieve the minimum score of speaking. It means that role play is able to improve the students' speaking ability.

Therefore, it was investigated the cause of this matter. In the first cycle, the teacher and the researcher did not have complete preparation for role play. The students were asked to make a dialogs for their role play, so the students focus on their writing not on their role play. They also did not have a lot of time to practice their role play. Moreover, the students did not have enough vocabulary so they had difficulties in arranging words into good and grammatical sentences. From the reasons above, the action in the second cycle needed to be improved by giving more practice and more vocabulary about expression of daily activities and how to make a good dialog for their role play.

Speaking is more than just a way of making conversation; we use spoken language for a variety of reasons in daily life. Brown (2004) stated that speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed. Those observations are colored by the fluency, accuracy and effectiveness of a test takers' listening skill, which necessarily compromises the reliability and productivity of an oral production test. Brown and Yule (2001) add that the students need to know the English fluency, the pronunciation rules, knowledge of unfamiliar vocabularies and structure. In this case the goal of the teacher in teaching speaking was to enable student to apply the language as a means of communication consisting of fluency and accuracy in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. From the statement above, it can be clearer that speaking ability in this research was the ability to express someone's ideas orally in spoken form including in fluency and accuracy in pronunciation and vocabulary.

**Table 1.** Result of Students Speaking Test

<b>Preliminary Study</b>	<b>Cycle 1</b>	<b>Cycle 2</b>
50.63	57.5	68.13

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Based on the discussion of the result, it can be concluded that the use of role play is able to improve the seventh grade students' speaking ability at Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in 2015/2016 academic year by developing students' vocabulary, grammar and fluency through role play. Because in role playing the students are not only performing their role play but also learning

about English as the second language. So, the students can speak appropriately to ask for and give information and express their opinion and feelings.

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