Classroom Action Research: Improving Students Speaking Skills Through Role Play Technique

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A K

Penelitian ini menyelidiki efektivitas metode bermain peran (role play) dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa serta mengeksplorasi tantangan dan strategi yang terkait dengan penerapannya. Dengan menggunakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (Classroom Action Research/CAR) sebagai metodologi, penelitian ini melibatkan 19 siswa selama tiga minggu, yang mencakup pre-test, aktivitas bermain peran, dan post-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam kemampuan berbicara siswa, dengan skor rata-rata meningkat dari 27,2 menjadi 42. Aspek pelafalan (pronunciation), kelancaran (fluency), dan pemahaman (comprehension) meningkat dari kategori "kurang" menjadi "cukup," sementara kosakata (vocabulary) dan tata bahasa (grammar) menunjukkan kemajuan tetapi tetap dalam kategori "kurang." Aktivitas bermain peran yang didasarkan pada skenario realistis meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa serta keterampilan komunikasi interaktif mereka. Data dari rubrik, observasi, dan kuesioner mendukung temuan ini, mengonfirmasi efektivitas teknik tersebut. Namun, penelitian ini menyoroti perlunya strategi tambahan untuk mengatasi kelemahan yang masih ada pada kosakata dan tata bahasa. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada metode pengajaran praktis dengan memberikan wawasan tentang integrasi metode bermain peran untuk mendorong komunikasi yang lebih efektif dalam berbagai konteks pendidikan.

A B S T R A C T

This study investigates the effectiveness of role play in improving students' speaking skills and explores the challenges and strategies associated with its implementation. Employing Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the methodology, the study involved 19 students over three weeks, incorporating pre-tests, role play activities, and post-tests. The results revealed significant improvements in students' speaking abilities, with the average score rising from 27.2 to 42. Pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension improved from the "poor" to "fair" category, while vocabulary and grammar showed progress but remained "poor." The role play activities, based on realistic scenarios, enhanced students' confidence and interactive communication skills. Data from rubrics, observations, and questionnaires supported these findings, confirming the technique's effectiveness. However, the study highlights the need for additional strategies to address persistent weaknesses in vocabulary and grammar. These findings contribute to practical teaching methods, offering insights into integrating role play to foster more effective communication in diverse educational settings.

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a vital skill in language learning, as it enables students to communicate effectively and express their ideas. Despite its importance, many students face difficulties in speaking due to anxiety, lack of confidence, and limited vocabulary. These challenges are particularly evident in young learners at Yannahwittaya School, a primary school in Southern Thailand, where students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. This issue necessitates innovative teaching approaches that can create engaging learning environments and address students' speaking barriers effectively.

Role play is an interactive teaching technique that provides students with real-life scenarios to practice speaking. This technique immerses students in meaningful communicative contexts, enabling them to use language more naturally and fluently. Studies by (Tini Mogea, 2022; Katemba & Grace, 2023) demonstrate that role play enhances speaking proficiency by reducing fear and building students' confidence. Furthermore, in a context like Yannahwittaya School, where English is a foreign language and students often

struggle with limited vocabulary, role play offers a practical solution to develop both linguistic and communicative competence.

A growing body of research has affirmed the effectiveness of role play in improving speaking skills. (Ahmada & Munawaroh, 2022) found that the role plays method significantly increased students' fluency and willingness to speak. Similarly, (Muldi Lumiling et al., 2023) observed that role play improved speaking accuracy among eleventh-grade students. (Dwiyanti & Lolita, 2023) emphasized that role play not only enhances students' linguistic abilities but also encourages collaborative learning. In the case of second-grade students at Yannahwittaya School, role play helps them practice fundamental conversational skills, such as greetings, asking and answering questions, and expressing basic emotions.

Role play also enhances the various components of speaking, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension. Research by (Safitri & Tabrani, 2023) highlights that this method encourages students to actively use new vocabulary and practice sentence structures in meaningful ways. Similarly, (Ramadhan & Yundayani, 2020) found that role play facilitates collaborative learning, allowing students to interact with peers, share ideas, and refine their speaking skills through feedback. At Yannahwittaya School, role play activities allow students to engage in simulated real-life scenarios that strengthen their vocabulary and build confidence in using English in practical contexts.

While numerous studies confirm the effectiveness of role play in improving speaking skills, most focus on general outcomes without examining specific challenges faced by students during the role play process. For instance, studies such as those by (Safitri & Tabrani, 2023) provide valuable insights into the benefits of role play but lack an in-depth analysis of the barriers to its implementation. At Yannahwittaya School, challenges include the students' limited exposure to English outside of school and the influence of their native Thai language, which sometimes affects pronunciation and sentence structure. Addressing these barriers requires structured and contextually relevant interventions.

This study seeks to fill these gaps by addressing the challenges students face during role play activities and evaluating its effectiveness in the context of Yannahwittaya School. Unlike previous research, this study focuses on second-grade students, a demographic often underrepresented in speaking-focused studies, and aims to provide a structured framework for implementing role play tailored to their unique needs. By integrating insights from past studies and focusing on underexplored aspects, this research offers a fresh perspective on how role play can be optimized to maximize its benefits in language learning.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of role play in improving students' speaking skills at Yannahwittaya School. Specifically, it seeks to identify the obstacles students encounter during role play and develop strategies to overcome them. Additionally, the study aims to evaluate the role play technique's adaptability to different proficiency levels and cultural settings, providing practical recommendations for educators.

In conclusion, while role play has been widely recognized as a powerful tool for enhancing speaking skills, its full potential remains underexplored in contexts like Yannahwittaya School. This study contributes to the growing literature by addressing research gaps and developing a practical guide for implementing role play in classrooms. By doing so, it aims to support educators in creating student-centered learning environments that empower effective communication skills and foster confidence among young EFL learners in Southern Thailand.

2.   METHODS

This study employed the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, following the action research model by (Fussalam et al., 2023), CAR is a reflective and cyclical process designed to improve teaching practices and student outcomes through systematic steps. The research was conducted in four stages: planning, observing, implementing and reflecting. During the planning stage, specific strategies using the role play technique were designed. These strategies were then implemented in the classroom during the action phase. The observing stage done by collecting data on student engagement and performance. This informed the reflective stage and this where results were analyzed and used to refine subsequent actions.

The research was conducted over three weeks. It was with the first two weeks focused on pre-tests and the implementation of role play activities. These activities aimed to provide students with realistic scenarios to practice speaking skills. In the final week, a post-test was administered to assess changes in the students' speaking performance. This timeline allowed for sufficient observation and analysis of the impact of role play on their speaking abilities.

To gather comprehensive data, several instruments were used in the study. Observation was crucial in monitoring classroom interactions, the level of student participation, and the effectiveness of the teaching strategies. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to quantitatively measure students' speaking skills before and after the intervention. Additionally, questionnaires were used to collect qualitative feedback from both students and teachers, capturing their experiences and perceptions of the role play activities.

Students' speaking performance was assessed using a structured rubric designed to evaluate key aspects of language use. Based on the rubric (Sayow & Marsevani, 2024; Marsevani & Habeebanisya, 2022) included criteria such as pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary grammar, and comprehension. Each criterion was scored on a scale from one to four, allowing for a detailed evaluation of the students' progress. This scoring system provided clear evidence of the effectiveness of role play in addressing various dimensions of speaking skills.

Table 1. Rubric of Table Speaking Skills

CRITERIA	SCORE	DESCRIPTION
Pronunciation	4	Pronounces all words clearly and accurately with near-native fluency.
	3	Pronounces most words correctly with minor errors that do not affect meaning.
	2	Pronounces several words incorrectly, making understanding difficult.
	1	Pronunciation errors make speech almost unintelligible.
Fluency	4	Speaks smoothly without hesitation or long pauses.
	3	Speaks with minor hesitations but maintains flow.
	2	Speaks with noticeable hesitations and frequent pauses.
	1	Speech is disjointed with frequent and lengthy pauses.
Vocabulary	4	Uses a wide range of appropriate vocabulary confidently and effectively.
	3	Uses adequate vocabulary but with occasional repetition or inaccuracies.
	2	Vocabulary is limited, leading to repetition or difficulty expressing ideas.
	1	Vocabulary is severely limited, preventing meaningful communication.
Grammar	4	Uses complex grammatical structures with minimal errors.
	3	Uses simple grammatical structures with occasional errors.
	2	Grammar errors frequently disrupt meaning.
	1	Grammar errors make speech incomprehensible.
Comprehension	4	Understands and responds to questions with ease and accuracy.
	3	Understands and responds to most questions with minor misunderstandings.
	2	Understands some questions but often misinterprets meaning.
	1	Struggles to understand and respond to questions appropriately.

3.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The first cycle of the study focused on implementing differentiated instructional strategies to improve the speaking skills of Grade 2 students at primary public school in Southern Thailand. The planning phase aimed at identifying key areas for development, including pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar (Manorom et al., 2024). Various interactive speaking activities such as role-plays, group discussions, and peer feedback exercises were designed to engage students actively (Suban, 2021). A pre-test was conducted to assess students' speaking proficiency and identify areas requiring improvement. Initial observations indicated that students showed increased engagement and motivation to participate in speaking activities. Teachers also underwent professional development sessions to familiarize themselves with differentiated teaching techniques to ensure effective implementation of the strategies.

During the implementation phase, the activities were carried out, and the pre-test results revealed a wide range of speaking proficiency levels among the students. Many struggled with pronunciation, fluency, and appropriate vocabulary usage. Throughout the cycle, observations indicated an increase in student participation, with more students actively taking part in the speaking activities. The differentiated approach allowed students to work at their own pace, with additional support provided for those who needed it (Triyanti et al., 2024). Peer feedback and collaborative tasks contributed to a more dynamic and encouraging learning environment (Er et al., 2021). By the end of the cycle, the post-test results showed notable

improvements in students' speaking abilities, particularly in fluency and vocabulary usage. However, challenges remained, such as the need for further attention to pronunciation and more personalized support for lower-level students.

Observations further provided insights into the effectiveness of differentiated instruction. Students were more engaged and participatory, and the classroom environment became more interactive, with students taking more initiative in expressing their ideas. However, some students with lower proficiency struggled to keep up with more advanced tasks and required additional support. While peer feedback encouraged student interaction, some students were unsure about giving constructive feedback effectively, which affected the overall quality of interactions (Misiejuk et al., 2021). Multimedia resources such as videos and audio recordings were used to motivate students, though occasional technical issues disrupted lesson delivery (Brutman et al., 2024). The findings indicated that differentiated instruction played a crucial role in improving students' speaking skills, though further refinements were needed to address pronunciation difficulties and ensure more inclusive participation.

Discussion

Table 2. Rubric of Table Speaking Skills

NO	ASPECTS	PRE-TEST SPEAKING SCORES	POST TEST SPEAKING SCORES	IMPROVEMENTS
1	PRONOUNCIATION	31	42	11
2	FLUENCY	23	46	23
3	VOCABULARY	38	48	10
4	GRAMMAR	19	31	12
5	COMPREHENSION	25	43	18
	AVERAGE	27.2	42	14.8

When comparing the pre-test and post-test results, all aspects showed measurable improvements as reflected in the provided data. Pronunciation improved by 11 points, increasing from 31 to 42, while fluency demonstrated the most significant gain with a 23-point increase, rising from 23 to 46. Vocabulary saw an improvement of 10 points, going from 38 to 48, and grammar improved by 12 points, increasing from 19 to 31. Comprehension also showed a substantial improvement of 18 points, rising from 25 to 43. The overall average score improved by 14.8 points, moving from 27.2 in the pre-test to 42 in the post-test, demonstrating the effectiveness of the role-play technique in enhancing students' speaking skills.

These findings align with previous studies emphasizing the effectiveness of role-play in improving speaking competencies. For example, (Tini Mogea, 2022) highlighted that role-play significantly enhances speaking skills by offering students opportunities to practice real-life conversations in a supportive environment. Similarly, (Silalahi & Naisa, 2021) found that role-play fosters confidence and fluency, which were evident in this study's results, where students' overall speaking abilities improved from the "poor" to the "fair" category. This supports the notion that role-play is an engaging and practical teaching strategy for speaking skill development.

However, consistent with research by (Ramadhan & Yundayani, 2020), this study revealed uneven progress across speaking aspects, with vocabulary and grammar showing relatively slower improvements and remaining in the "poor" category. (Safitri & Tabrani, 2023) also pointed out that while role-play boosts fluency and comprehension, it needs to be complemented with other methods, such as explicit grammar instruction or vocabulary enrichment, to address persistent challenges.

Furthermore, these results echo (Fussalam et al., 2023)'s emphasis on the value of action research in classroom settings, which enables educators to identify specific weaknesses and evaluate interventions effectively. The average improvement of 14.8 points in this study aligns with findings that also reported gradual improvements in speaking abilities through role-play. Overall, while role-play proves to be an effective strategy for enhancing speaking skills, integrating additional methods can help ensure more balanced development across all aspects.

4.   CONCLUSION

The Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted to improve the speaking skills of Grade 2 primary school students in Southern Thailand has yielded significant results. By employing interactive methods, including role play and peer collaboration, the study demonstrated notable improvements in key speaking aspects such as pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Pre-test and post-test comparisons revealed an average improvement of 14.8 points, with fluency and comprehension showing the

highest gains. Qualitative feedback from teacher observations and student questionnaires highlighted the effectiveness of the role play approach in creating an engaging and supportive learning environment. Students found the activities enjoyable and reported increased confidence in using English during conversations. Despite these advancements, the study also identified areas requiring further focus, particularly in vocabulary enrichment and grammatical accuracy. The findings align with previous research, emphasizing the value of role play as a practical and motivational teaching strategy for enhancing speaking skills. Additionally, the iterative nature of CAR allowed for real-time adjustments to address challenges, reinforcing its applicability in classroom settings. Overall, the research underscores the potential of interactive and student-centered approaches to significantly enhance the speaking proficiency and engagement of young EFL learners, paving the way for sustained language development.

5.   REFERENCES

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