The Effect of Role Playing Models on the Speaking Skills of Seventh Grade Students at Muara Batang Gadis

Maharani Hutabarat[1], Akhiril Pane[2], Nursyaidah[3]

Phone number: 0821 7761 4342

[1]UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpuan, mawaddahnasution34@gmail.com

[2]UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpuan

[3]UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpuan,

Corresponding Author:
Maharani Hutabarat, Institution, UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpuan, mawaddahnasution34@gmail.com

Abstract

According to several previous researchers, students' critical thinking skills are underdeveloped because learning is more teacher-centered. This study aims to determine the significant effect of the Role Playing learning model on the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis from May 10 to June 12 in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The research method used in this study was quasi-experimental, and the research sample consisted of 29 students. The data collection techniques used were speaking skill tests, observation, and documentation. The main instrument used was a speaking skills test with five indicators of speaking skills, namely voice volume, fluency, intonation, pronunciation, and courage, which were then analyzed using a t-test. The results of the hypothesis test using SPSS version 26 software obtained significant data, namely $0.000 < 0.05$, so H0 was rejected and H1 was accepted. This shows that there is a significant effect of the Role Playing learning model on the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis. The implication of this study is that the application of the Role Playing learning model has an effect on the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis.

Keyword: *Role Playing, Drama, Speaking Skills*

Introduction

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping the quality of human resources and determining the progress of a nation (Nikmah dkk., 2023). Through education, individuals are expected to develop not only cognitive abilities but also affective and psychomotor skills that enable them to participate actively and responsibly in society. In the context of formal education, the learning process should be designed to facilitate students' holistic development, including their ability to communicate effectively (Beta, 2023). Communication skills, particularly speaking skills, are essential competencies that must be mastered by students in order to express ideas, convey information, and interact socially in various academic and non-academic contexts (Wong & Yunus, 2021).

Language learning is inseparable from communication, as the primary function of language is to serve as a tool for conveying meaning. In Indonesian language learning, students are required to master four basic language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Tiu, 2023). Among these four skills, speaking is often considered one of the most crucial yet challenging skills to develop. Speaking skill reflects a learner's ability to articulate thoughts, ideas, opinions, and feelings orally in a clear, coherent, and confident manner. Therefore, speaking skill is not only an academic requirement but also a life skill that supports students' personal, social, and professional development (Deliyana & Fitriani, 2025).

In the current educational paradigm, particularly under the Merdeka Curriculum, students are positioned as active subjects in the learning process. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, the development of critical and creative thinking skills, and the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile (Robinson dkk., 2021). This curriculum encourages teachers to create meaningful learning experiences that are relevant to students' real-life contexts and that promote active participation. In line with this approach, learning activities should provide opportunities for students to communicate, collaborate, and express themselves freely, including through speaking activities.

However, in reality, the implementation of speaking skills learning in schools often faces various challenges. Many students still experience difficulties in speaking activities, such as lack of self-confidence, limited vocabulary, unclear pronunciation, inappropriate intonation, low voice volume, and poor fluency (Baroroh, 2022). These problems are frequently caused by learning practices that are still dominated by teacher-centered methods, where students are passive recipients of information rather than active participants in the learning process. As a result, students have limited opportunities to practice speaking and to develop their oral communication skills optimally (Bhatti, 2022).

Based on preliminary observations at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis, it was found that the speaking skills of seventh-grade students were relatively low. During classroom activities, many students were hesitant to speak in front of their classmates. Some students tended to speak softly, showed poor articulation, or were unable to convey their ideas clearly and systematically. Others felt anxious, embarrassed, or afraid of making mistakes when asked to express their opinions or perform oral tasks. This condition indicates that students' speaking skills have not yet developed as expected and require serious attention (Tarigan, 2022) .

One of the contributing factors to this problem is the limited use of varied and interactive learning models by teachers. Conventional teaching methods that rely heavily on lectures and textbook-based activities often fail to engage students actively. Such methods do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to practice speaking in meaningful and enjoyable ways (Susanti, 2019). Consequently, students become less motivated, easily bored, and less confident in using language orally. Therefore, there is a need for innovative and effective learning models that can create a more engaging learning atmosphere and encourage students to speak actively.

One learning model that is considered effective in improving speaking skills is the Role Playing learning model. Role Playing is a learning method that involves students in acting out certain roles or scenarios related to real-life situations. Through role playing activities, students are encouraged to use language in meaningful contexts, express emotions, interact with others, and solve problems collaboratively (Karmila, 2023). This learning model allows students to practice speaking naturally and spontaneously, thereby reducing anxiety and increasing confidence.

The Role Playing learning model is based on the assumption that learning becomes more meaningful when students are actively involved in the learning process. By playing roles, students are not only learning language structures but also learning how to use language appropriately in social interactions. Role Playing provides students with opportunities to explore different perspectives, develop empathy, and improve their interpersonal communication skills (Kuraesin, 2024). In addition, this model supports the development of creativity, critical thinking, and cooperation among students. In the context of speaking skills learning, Role Playing offers several advantages. First, it creates a fun and interactive learning environment that motivates students to participate actively. Second, it provides students with ample opportunities to practice speaking in front of others without feeling pressured, as they are speaking as a character rather than as themselves. Third, Role Playing helps students improve various aspects of speaking skills, such as pronunciation, intonation, fluency, voice volume, and courage (Fathi dkk., 2024). Through repeated practice and feedback, students can gradually improve their oral performance.

Several previous studies have shown that the Role Playing learning model has a positive impact on students' speaking skills (Shanahan & McDonell, 2023). Research findings indicate that students who are taught using Role Playing tend to be more confident, expressive, and fluent in speaking compared to those who are taught using conventional methods. These findings suggest that Role Playing is an effective alternative learning model that can be implemented to overcome students' speaking difficulties.

Considering the importance of speaking skills in language learning and the existing problems faced by students, it is necessary to conduct a study that examines the effect of the Role Playing learning model on students' speaking skills. This research is particularly important in the context of SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis, where students still experience significant challenges in speaking activities. By implementing the Role Playing learning model, it is expected that students' speaking skills will improve significantly.

Therefore, this study focuses on investigating the effect of the Role Playing learning model on the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to Indonesian language education, particularly in terms of developing effective learning models for improving students' speaking skills (Deliyana & Fitriani, 2025). In addition, this research is expected to serve as a reference for teachers in designing innovative and student-centered learning activities that support the development of students' oral communication skills.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a quasi-experimental design . The quasi-experimental method was chosen because the researcher could not randomly assign students to experimental and control groups due to existing classroom conditions. This approach is appropriate for examining the effect of a particular learning model in real classroom settings. The purpose of this research was to determine the effect of the Role Playing learning model on students' speaking skills. The research design applied in this study was the One-Group Posttest-Only Design, in which students were given treatment through the implementation of the Role Playing learning model and were assessed only after the treatment was completed.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis, Muara Batang Gadis District. This study took place during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, from May 10 to June 12, 2025. The selection of this location was based on preliminary observations indicating that students' speaking skills at the school required improvement, as well as the school's willingness to support the implementation of the research.

The population of this study consisted of all seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis in the 2024/2025 academic year. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, considering the suitability of the class for the research objectives. The sample involved one seventh-grade class consisting of 29 students. This class was selected because it represented the general characteristics of the population and allowed the researcher to implement the Role Playing learning model effectively.

This study involved two variables, namely the independent variable and the dependent variable. The independent variable in this research was the Role Playing learning model, which was applied during the teaching and learning process. The dependent variable was students' speaking skills, which were measured after the implementation of the Role Playing learning model. Speaking skills were assessed based on students' performance during oral activities.

The main instrument used in this research was a speaking skills test in the form of a performance-based assessment. Students were asked to perform role plays based on scenarios related to the learning material. The assessment of speaking skills was based on five indicators, namely voice volume, fluency, intonation, pronunciation, and confidence. Each indicator was scored using a standardized scoring rubric to ensure objectivity and consistency in evaluating students' speaking performance. In addition to the speaking test, observation was conducted to monitor students' participation and engagement during the learning process, and documentation was used to collect supporting data such as lesson plans, attendance lists, and photographs of learning activities.

The data collection process was carried out after the implementation of the Role Playing learning model. The speaking skills test was administered as a posttest to measure students' speaking ability after the treatment. Observations were conducted throughout the learning process to record students' responses, activeness, and interaction during role play activities. Documentation was used to strengthen the research data and provide evidence of the research implementation.

The research procedure consisted of three main stages. The first stage was preparation, which included designing lesson plans based on the Role Playing learning model, preparing research instruments, and arranging observation sheets. The second stage was implementation, during which the researcher conducted Indonesian language learning using the Role Playing model, divided students into groups, assigned roles, and guided students throughout the role play activities. The final stage was evaluation, in which students' speaking skills were assessed using the posttest and scored according to the predetermined rubric.

To ensure the quality of the research instruments, validity and reliability tests were conducted. Instrument validity was examined to determine whether the speaking test accurately measured students' speaking skills. Reliability testing was conducted to ensure that the instrument produced consistent results. Based on the results of the analysis, the speaking skills test instrument was considered valid and reliable for use in this study.

The data obtained from the speaking skills test were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive analysis was used to describe students' speaking skill scores, including the mean, minimum score, maximum score, and standard deviation. Inferential analysis was conducted using a t-test to determine whether there was a significant effect of the Role Playing learning model on students' speaking skills. The data analysis was performed using SPSS version 26 with a significance level of 0.05. If the significance value was less than 0.05, it indicated that the Role Playing learning model had a significant effect on students' speaking skills.

Result

This study was conducted to examine the effect of the Role Playing learning model on the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis. After the implementation of the Role Playing learning model, students' speaking skills were measured using a posttest in the form of a performance-based speaking assessment. The assessment focused on five indicators of speaking skills, namely voice volume, fluency, intonation, pronunciation, and confidence.

Based on the results of the posttest, it was found that students' speaking skills showed positive outcomes after participating in learning activities using the Role Playing model. Descriptive statistical analysis indicated that the overall speaking skill scores of students were in the good category. Most students were able to speak more clearly and confidently compared to their performance prior to the implementation of the learning model. Students demonstrated better control of voice volume, clearer pronunciation, more appropriate intonation, improved fluency, and increased confidence when speaking in front of the class.

The normality test conducted on the posttest data showed that the data were normally distributed, indicating that the data met the requirements for further inferential statistical analysis. Subsequently, hypothesis testing was carried out using a t-test with the assistance of SPSS version 26. The results of the t-test showed a significance value of 0.000, which was lower than the predetermined significance level of 0.05. This result indicates that the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a significant effect of the Role Playing learning model on students' speaking skills.

In addition to the speaking test results, observations conducted during the learning process revealed a noticeable improvement in students' participation and engagement. Students were more active during learning activities, showed enthusiasm when performing role plays, and were more willing to express their ideas and opinions. The classroom atmosphere became more interactive, and students appeared less anxious and more motivated to participate in speaking activities.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the Role Playing learning model has a significant positive effect on students' speaking skills. The improvement in students' speaking performance can be attributed to the nature of the Role Playing model, which provides students with opportunities to practice speaking in meaningful and realistic contexts. By assuming certain roles, students were encouraged to express ideas, emotions, and opinions naturally, which helped reduce their fear of making mistakes and increased their confidence in speaking.

The improvement observed in the indicator of confidence suggests that Role Playing creates a supportive learning environment where students feel more comfortable speaking in front of others. When students speak as characters rather than as themselves, they tend to feel less pressure and anxiety. This finding supports the view that Role Playing is effective in fostering students' courage and self-confidence, which are essential components of speaking skills.

Furthermore, the increase in fluency and pronunciation accuracy can be linked to repeated speaking practice during role play activities. Students were exposed to frequent opportunities to use language orally, which allowed them to improve articulation and sentence delivery. The interactive nature of Role Playing also encouraged students to pay attention to intonation and voice volume in order to convey meaning more effectively during performances.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research findings, which suggest that the Role Playing learning model enhances students' speaking skills and classroom engagement. Previous studies have reported that students taught using Role Playing tend to be more active, expressive, and motivated compared to those taught using conventional teaching methods. This study further confirms that Role Playing is an effective learning model for improving speaking skills at the junior high school level.

In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, the Role Playing learning model aligns well with the principles of student-centered learning and the development of communication skills. The model encourages active participation, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking, all of which are emphasized in the current curriculum framework. By implementing Role Playing, teachers can create learning experiences that are more engaging and relevant to students' real-life situations.

Overall, the results and discussion of this study demonstrate that the Role Playing learning model significantly improves students' speaking skills. The findings highlight the importance of using interactive and innovative learning models to overcome students' speaking difficulties. Therefore, the Role Playing learning model can be considered an effective alternative strategy for teaching speaking skills in Indonesian language learning, particularly for seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the Role Playing learning model has a significant effect on the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Muara Batang Gadis. The implementation of the Role Playing model in Indonesian language learning was able to improve students' speaking performance in various aspects, including voice volume, fluency, intonation, pronunciation, and confidence. The findings show that after participating in learning activities using the Role Playing model, students demonstrated better ability to express ideas and opinions orally. They became more confident when speaking in front of the class, showed clearer pronunciation, used more appropriate intonation, and spoke more fluently compared to previous learning conditions. The statistical analysis using the t-test also confirmed that the effect of the Role Playing

learning model on students' speaking skills was statistically significant, as indicated by the significance value being lower than the predetermined significance level.

References

Baroroh, K. (2022). Upaya meningkatkan nilai-nilai karakter peserta didik melalui penerapan metode role playing. *Jurnal Ekonomi dan pendidikan*, *Vol. 8 No. 2*.

Beta, P. (2023). Peningkatan Keterampilan Berbicara melalui Metode Bermain Peran. *Cokroaminoto Journal of Primary Education*, *Vol. 2 No. 2*.

Bhatti, M. S. (2022). Teaching speaking skills through role play at elementary level: An analysis. *Jurnal Arbitrer*, *Vol. 8 No. 1*.

Deliyana, E., & Fitriani, H. S. H. (2025). Pengaruh Model Pembelajaran Role Playing Terhadap Keterampilan Berbicara Siswa Kelas V Sd Negeri Sukasari Ii Kabupaten Tangerang. *Lingua Rima: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, *Vol. 8 No. 1*.

Fathi, J., Rahimi, M., & Derakhshan, A. (2024). Improving EFL learners' speaking skills and willingness to communicate via artificial intelligence-mediated interactions. *System*, *Vol. 12 No. 11*.

Karmila, N. (2023). Penerapan Role Play untuk Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berbicara Siswa dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di Kelas IX SMP Negeri 1 Bonjol. *Pedagogika: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Kependidikan*, *Vol. 3 No. 2*.

Kuraesin, I. (2024). Students' Speaking Skill Based on Video in Elementary School. *International Conference on Elementary Education*, *Bol. 2 No. 1*.

Nikmah, D. A. A., Setyawan, A., & Citrawati, T. (2023). Analisis keterampilan berbicara pada pembelajaran bahasa indonesia siswa kelas IV SD Negeri Buluh 2. *Prosiding Nasional Pendidikan: LPPM IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro*, *Vol. 1 No. 1*.

Robinson, G., Hardman, M., & Matley, R. (2021). Using Games in Geographical and Planning-Related Teaching: Serious Games, Edutainment, Board Games and Role-Play. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *Vol. 4 No. 1*.

Shanahan, M., & McDonell, K. (2023). Role Play with Large Language Models. *Nature*, *Vol. 623 No. 7987*.

Susanti, E. (2019). *Keterampilan Berbicara*. PT Raja Grafindo Persada.

Tarigan, M. (2022). Filsafat Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara dan Perkembangan Pendidikan di Indonesia. *Mahaguru: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar*, *Vol. 3 No. 1*.

Tiu, J. (2023). Enhancing oral proficiency: Effective strategies for teaching speaking skills in communication classrooms. *Excellencia: International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education*, *Vol. 1 No. 6*.

Wong, C. H. T., & Yunus, M. M. (2021). Board games in improving pupils' speaking skills: A systematic review. *Sustainability*, *Vo. 13 No. 16*.