

Integrating Role Play and Audio-Visual Media to Boost Speaking Skills: A Study of Eighth Graders at SMP Lab School Untad Palu

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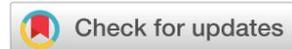
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of using role play combined with audio-visual media to improve the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Lab School UNTAD Palu. The research was conducted in response to students' difficulties in speaking English, such as limited vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, and lack of self-confidence. A quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design was used, involving two groups: an experimental group and a control group. Both groups were given a pre-test and a post-test to measure their speaking performance before and after the treatment. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software. The results showed that the experimental group made significant progress in their speaking skills, with the average score increasing from 60.00 in the pre-test to 82.11 in the post-test. In contrast, the control group showed only a small improvement, from 59.41 to 67.71. Statistical analysis confirmed that the use of role play supported by audio-visual media had a significant positive effect on students' speaking abilities, particularly in improving their fluency and accuracy.

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1. Introduction

Speaking proficiency is one of the most difficult skills for students learning English, especially in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings where students have few chances to practice real communication. According to Harmer (2007), speaking is more than just using correct grammar. It also involves the ability to think quickly and respond naturally in conversation. This makes speaking harder than other language skills such as reading or writing. In Indonesia, this challenge is even greater because students rarely hear or use English in daily life (Ritonga et al., 2020; Aswad et al., 2019; Sachiya et al., 2025). In addition, cultural factors, such as fear of making mistakes or being shy, often prevent students from speaking in class.

Many studies have shown that EFL learners face many kinds of problems when learning to speak English. Syafradi (2011) found that Indonesian students often struggle with limited vocabulary, grammar mistakes, pronunciation problems, hesitation when speaking, and psychological challenges like shyness and fear of making errors. These issues are also found in studies from other countries. Research by Brown (2004) and Richards and Renandya (2002) shows that speaking anxiety and lack of practice are two major factors that make it hard for students to develop their speaking skills.

Contemporary language teaching methodology has increasingly emphasized communicative approaches that prioritize authentic interaction over traditional drill-based instruction (Rahman et al., 2019; Prihandoko et al., 2021; Youngsun et al., 2024). Role-play technique has emerged as a particularly effective pedagogical tool, allowing students to practice language in simulated real-world contexts. Richards (1985) defines role-play as drama-like classroom activities where students assume different roles and improvise realistic scenarios, thereby developing both linguistic competence and communicative confidence.

The integration of audio-visual media with role-play activities represents a natural evolution in language teaching methodology. Reddy (2008) highlights that audio-visual aids, including videos, interactive devices, and multimedia presentations, can significantly enhance comprehension and retention by engaging multiple sensory channels. This multimodal approach addresses diverse learning styles while providing contextual support that facilitates language acquisition.

Several empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of role-play techniques in improving speaking skills across various educational contexts. Arya Al-akbar (2016) conducted action research at SMKN 2 Tarakan, investigating the impact of role-play combined with audio-visual media on first-grade students' speaking abilities. The study revealed significant improvements in integrated speaking skills, with role-play and storytelling techniques proving particularly effective for oral language development.

Hariani et al. (2018) focused specifically on audio-visual media implementation among eleventh-grade students, examining its effects on speaking motivation and skill development. Their research demonstrated notable improvements in fluency and comprehension, suggesting that multimedia integration can effectively address traditional speaking instruction limitations. Similarly, Soraya et al. (2018) investigated role-play technique application with eleventh-grade students, reporting significant speaking skill enhancement following systematic role-play practice.

These studies collectively indicate that role-play methodology, particularly when enhanced with audio-visual support, can effectively address common speaking difficulties. However, research focusing specifically on junior high school contexts remains limited, creating a gap in understanding how these techniques perform with younger EFL learners who may have different developmental needs and learning characteristics.

Preliminary observations at SMP Labschool Palu revealed persistent speaking difficulties among eighth-grade students, manifesting as limited vocabulary usage, frequent pronunciation errors, and reluctance to participate in oral activities. These challenges align with national educational concerns, as the Indonesian Ministry of Education (Kemendikbud Ristek, 2022) emphasizes the need for students to develop communicative competence across various contexts, including peer interaction, opinion expression, and discussion participation.

The traditional teacher-centered approach in many Indonesian schools gives students few chances to practice speaking English in real situations. As a result, they may understand the language in theory but struggle to use it in real communication. This gap between what is taught in class and what is needed in daily life makes it harder for students to improve their English skills

This study aims to investigate whether role-play technique combined with audio-visual media can effectively improve the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Labschool Palu. Specifically, the research examines the impact of this integrated approach on three key speaking components: accuracy (correct pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary usage), fluency (smooth and natural speech delivery), and comprehensibility (effective message transmission and reception).

By addressing this research question, the study seeks to contribute empirical evidence regarding innovative speaking instruction methods suitable for Indonesian junior high school contexts. The findings are expected to inform pedagogical practice and provide practical guidance for English teachers seeking to enhance their students' oral communication abilities through engaging, student-centered methodologies. Furthermore, this research aims to bridge the identified gap in literature concerning role-play implementation with younger EFL learners, thereby expanding our understanding of effective speaking instruction across different educational levels.

2. Methodology

The researcher used a quasi-experimental design for this study. This research focuses on the implementation of trials or experiments using role-playing techniques using audio visuals on students' speaking skills at SMP LabSchool Palu. The researcher used two classes, namely the control class and the experimental class. Where the experimental class received a trial of role-playing techniques with audio visual, while the control class did not.

The researcher used an unequal class pre-test and post-test design. Because, the researcher used two classes as a comparison to test the audio-visual role-playing technique on their speaking ability, namely the control class and the experimental class. To collect data, the researcher used pre-test and post-test to the students. The pre-test was conducted before the treatment, while the post-test was conducted after the treatment.

The study examined two primary variables: the independent variable (role-play technique with audio-visual media implementation) and the dependent variable (students' speaking ability measured across accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility dimensions). Speaking assessment utilized Heaton's (1988) validated oral proficiency rubric, adapted for Indonesian EFL contexts.

Table 1. Oral Proficiency Range of Score

No	Classification	Score
1	Excellent	86-100
2	Good	71-85
3	Fair	56-70
4	Poor	41-55

Quantitative data analysis utilized SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to examine pretest-posttest score differences between groups. Descriptive statistics characterized sample demographics and performance distributions, while inferential statistics tested treatment effectiveness. The analysis plan included paired-samples t-tests to examine within-group improvement and independent-samples t-tests to compare between-group differences.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of data collected from pre-test and post-test assessments administered to both experimental and control groups. The data analysis includes descriptive statistics, normality testing, homogeneity of variance testing, and inferential statistics using independent sample t-tests.

The classification of students' speaking scores in the pre-test and post-test can be seen in table below:

Table 2. Speaking Scores in Pre-Test and Post-Test

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Pretest Control	17	32	50	82	1010	59,41	2,018	8,322	69,257
Posttest Control	17	37	53	90	1151	67,71	2,666	10,993	120,846
Pretest Eksperoment	18	20	50	70	1080	60,00	1,819	7,716	59,529
Posttest Eksperiment	18	25	72	97	1478	82,11	1,800	7,638	58,340
Valid N (listwise)	17								

Based on the calculation results on the descriptive analysis presented in the table above, in the experimental group, the lowest pre-test score was 50, and the highest score was 70, in the post-test, the lowest score was 72 and the highest was 97. The mean value of the pre-test was 60.00, while the mean value of the post-test was 82.11. In the control group, the lowest pre-test score was 50, and the highest score was 82. In the post-test, the lowest score was 53, and the highest score was 90. Judging from the descriptive statistics, the pre-test and post-test scores. The mean value of the pre-test was 59.41 while the mean value of the post-test was 67.71.

The normality test was carried out on the pre-test and post-test data from the experimental group and control group. The following table shows whether the data from the two groups are normally distributed or not, with the criteria that the data is considered normal if the significance value (sig) is greater than 0.05.

Table 3. Result of Normality Test

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
pretest control	0,124	17	,200*	0,982	17	0,972
Posttest Control	0,170	17	,200*	0,933	17	0,245
pretest eksperimen	0,124	17	,200*	0,972	17	0,845
Posttest Eksperimen	0,125	17	,200*	0,934	17	0,251

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

This study used the homogeneity of variance test to identify homogeneity values. The results of the homogeneity test can be seen in the following table:

Table 4. Result of Homogeneity Test

Test of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Learning outcomes	Based on Mean	4,403	2	5	0,079
	Based on Median	0,344	2	5	0,725
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	0,344	2	3,128	0,733
	Based on trimmed mean	3,594	2	5	0,108

Based on the table above, the homogeneity test obtained an average value of 0.079. H_0 can be accepted if the p-value (sig) > 0.05 (0.079 > 0.05). This means that the variance of data in the experimental group and control group is the same. Thus, one of the non-absolute requirements for the independent sample t-test has been met.

To see whether there is a difference in the pre-test results of students from the experimental group and the pre-test of the control group, the independent sample t-test was used. Independent sample t-test was conducted to test the research findings because the data met the requirements of normality and homogeneity. The results are as follows.

Table 5. Result of Independent Sample-Test

Independent Samples T-Test									
		Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Difference	
Nilai	Equal variances assumed	2,019	0,165	-4,524	33	-14,405	3,184	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,478	28,366	-14,405	3,217	-20,991	-7,819

To find out more clearly the mean score of the post-test for the experimental and control group, it can be seen in the following statistical table below:

Table 6. Mean Score of Post-Test

Group Statistics					
Class		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Nilai	Post Test Control	17	67,71	10,993	2,666
	Post Test Experiment	18	82,11	7,638	1,800

Based on the data distribution analysis, the experimental group taught using the Role Play with audio visual technique showed a significant increase in the post-test score, with an average of 82.11. In contrast, the control group did not show a significant improvement, with an average post-test score of 67.71.

This means that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. This shows that there is a significant difference in teaching speaking before and after using the role play with audio visual technique. The researcher concluded that the role play technique with audio visual is effective in improving students' speaking ability at SMP LabSchool Palu.

3.2 Discussion

This study examined how role play combined with audiovisual materials influences students' speaking skills. The experimental group showed a significant increase in the mean score from 60,00 to 82,11, while the control group's improvement was more modest, rising from 59,41 to 67,71. This substantial gap suggests that the experimental treatment had a meaningful effect on students' ability to speak English naturally.

Role plays places students in real-life situations, compelling them to express ideas, use relevant vocabulary, and interact spontaneously. This aligns with Dwiyanti and Lolita (2023), who found significantly higher speaking scores in junior high students who performed role plays (mean 87.64 vs. 81.08). Additionally, Katemba and Grace (2023) observed substantial improvements in fluency and pronunciation among eleventh graders using role play.

When audio-visual materials such as video dialogues are integrated, students gain exposure to native-like pronunciation, intonation, and body language. Mugiyatmi & Sunarti (2023) demonstrated that combining audiovisual media with role play significantly increased mean speaking scores (from 56.72 to 69.79) among elementary learners. This supports Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning, emphasizing the value of dual-channel input.

Statistical analysis confirmed the reliability of these findings: data were normally distributed, variances between groups were homogeneous ($p = 0.079$), and the independent t-test showed a significant difference in post-test means. These results are consistent with the findings of Dwiyanti & Lolita (2023), and Katemba & Grace (2023), both using t-tests to confirm role play's positive impact on speaking in EFL classrooms. Moreover, foundational research by Budiarto (2019) found that similar audio-visual role play interventions help students become more independent in using English reinforcing our study's findings.

The findings hold practical implications for teachers: traditional teacher-centered approaches may not sufficiently develop communicative competence. Instead, providing interactive and multimedia-supported role play can enhance fluency, confidence, and motivation. Even in low-tech settings, teachers can use simple tools such as smartphones, recorded audio, basic video clips to achieve significant gains in speaking proficiency.

Despite positive outcomes, this study has limitations. It was conducted in one school with a limited sample, so results may not generalize broadly. Additionally, only short-term effects on speaking were measured. Future longitudinal research across diverse contexts would help assess whether gains are sustained. It would also be valuable to explore other skills such as listening or vocabulary using similar interactive methods.

In summary, combining role play with audiovisual media appears highly effective in improving EFL learners' speaking performance. The clear improvement in test scores, confirmed by statistical analysis and supported by current literature, shows that creating authentic, interactive, and context-rich speaking experiences is a powerful method in English teaching.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that integrating role play with audio-visual media significantly enhances the speaking skills particularly fluency and accuracy of eighth-grade students at SMP LabSchool Palu. The marked improvement in the experimental group's performance, as evidenced by a substantial increase in their post-test scores, confirms the effectiveness of this interactive and immersive teaching method.

More than just a teaching tool, role play supported by audiovisuals fosters a learning environment where students feel more confident, engaged, and motivated to speak. It addresses common obstacles in speaking English, such as limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, and low self-confidence, by making the learning experience contextual, collaborative, and enjoyable.

The implications of these findings are valuable for educators seeking practical strategies to improve language proficiency in junior high school learners. Teachers can use this method not only to develop language skills but also to build students' confidence and communication abilities in real-life scenarios. Moreover, the research reinforces the importance of active, student-centered learning environments where creativity and expression are encouraged.

However, there are still many weaknesses in this study. Therefore, the researcher hopes that future researchers will conduct further research on the features available in the Progos application and look at comparing it with other similar applications that can help all students because it can not only help improve students' English skills but can also simulate student interviews so that it can help their career paths to make it easier to find job opportunities and improve their language.

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