# THE EFFECT OF USING ROLE-PLAY METHOD IN IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS OF BASIC LEVEL STUDENTS AT CENTRAL COURSE

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**Abstract.** This article examines the impact of employing the Role-Play method in improving the speaking skills of basic-level English learners in the Central English Course. Speaking a foreign language often presents challenges, particularly for beginner students who lack confidence and opportunities for practical application. Role-play, an interactive teaching strategy, fosters real-world communication by creating scenario-based learning environments, enabling students to engage in language use actively. A quantitative approach was adopted to assess the effectiveness of the Role-Play method. The research involved two groups: an experimental group participated in role-play activities and a control group followed traditional teaching methods. In this study, quantitative data were collected through pre-test and post-test assessments to measure the effectiveness of the Role-Play method in improving students' learning progress in fluency, accuracy, and confidence. This approach enabled precise statistical calculations and pattern identification, providing valuable insights into the impact of the intervention. The findings indicate that the Role-Play method significantly enhances language acquisition, with the experimental group demonstrating greater improvements in EFL students' speaking skills than the control group. This study underscores the value of integrating interactive and practical approaches into EFL classrooms. Role-play is a useful tool to connect classroom learning with authentic communication experiences, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in meaningful, real-world contexts. This research provides valuable insights into innovative pedagogical methods for foreign language learning.

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a fundamental aspect of communication, allowing individuals to convey thoughts, exchange knowledge, and participate in purposeful interactions. Communication is the act of exchanging ideas, facts, and feelings (Ishak & Aziz, 2022). Spoken language is different from written language in many ways (Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2010). Teachers play a crucial role in assisting students in identifying appropriate methods and learning techniques for them to improve their communication skills (Setyawan, 2020). Role-play has emerged as a promising instructional method for addressing these challenges. By allowing students to assume different roles and participate in simulated scenarios, Role-Play creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment. This approach boosts both their interest in learning and their communication proficiency, as evident from the clear progress observed before and after its implementation (Lubis & Nasution, 2024).

Through the use of instruments such as exercises, observations, and student learning outcome tests, the use of role-play effectively stimulates active student participation (Karmila, 2023). It encourages active participation, fosters creativity, and helps students practice language use in contextually relevant situations. Furthermore, the method is effective for linguistic improvement and aids in building self-confidence and reducing speaking anxiety. Anxiety plays a crucial role in second language acquisition (Puspitasari et al., 2022). Role-play fosters creativity, reduces language anxiety, and encourages spontaneous language production, making it a popular strategy in communicative language teaching (CLT).

Role-play in language learning has been extensively explored as an effective teaching strategy to develop communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This literature review examines the theoretical frameworks, previous studies, and the pedagogical advantages of role-play, particularly in enhancing speaking skills.

The concepts of communicative language teaching (CLT) serve as the foundation for role-playing as a teaching method. CLT emphasizes interaction as both the means and goal of language learning (Richards, 2005).  Role-play aligns with this framework by encouraging learners to use the target language in meaningful and realistic contexts, simulating real-world communication scenarios. Brown (2000) highlights the role of CLT in reducing the gap between language instruction and practical usage, which is particularly relevant for speaking skill development (Putri et al., 2024).

In addition, Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis supports role-play as it lowers learners' anxiety levels and creates a supportive environment conducive to language acquisition. This interactive and engaging approach helps reduce the affective barriers that often hinder EFL learners from practicing speaking skills (Krashen, 1982; Setyawan et al., 2022).

Speaking skills encompass fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and confidence all of which are critical for effective communication. Several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of role-play in developing these skills. Fluency and Pronunciation: Role-play provides repetitive practice and contextualized speaking opportunities, which contribute to improved fluency and pronunciation accuracy. Harmer (2001) suggests that engaging in dialogues and improvisational activities during Role-Play enhances learners' ability to speak naturally and with better intonation. Vocabulary Usage: The method exposes learners to diverse lexical items and encourages their practical application. Thornbury (2005) notes that Role-Play activities often include context-specific vocabulary which facilitates retention and contextual understanding (Hia et al., 2024). Confidence: A controlled and supportive Role-Play environment helps learners overcome their fear of making mistakes, thus boosting their confidence (Maarof, 2018).

Numerous empirical studies have highlighted the benefits of Role-Play in EFL settings. For example, Dwiyanti & Lolita (2023) surveyed EFL learners in Indonesia, which revealed that Role-Play significantly improved speaking fluency and reduced learners' anxiety. The study emphasized the interactive nature of Role-Play as a factor in maintaining learner motivation. Fitriana (2022) explored the use of Role-Play among beginner-level EFL learners and found significant improvements in both vocabulary usage and self-confidence. In recent research,(Nguyen, 2023) studied the impact of drama-based activities on the speaking abilities of high school EFL students. Katemba & Grace (2023) explored the Role Play Technique's effectiveness on EFL students' speaking proficiency, revealing a significant improvement in their speaking skills after participating in role-playing activities.

Role-play has been identified as a dynamic tool for promoting active learning and addressing the challenges of EFL instruction. Some of its notable benefits include increased learner engagement, real-life application, anxiety reduction, and   cultural awareness. Larsen-Freeman highlights that interactive techniques such as role-play foster meaningful communication and active participation, making them an effective tool in second language acquisition (Freeman, 2014). Role-play enables learners to practice language in authentic contexts, bridging the gap between classroom instruction and real-world usage (Richards, 2005). By simulating real-life communication in a supportive environment, Role-Play lowers the affective filter and allows learners to experiment with language without fear of judgment (Krashen, 1982). Role-play often incorporates culturally relevant scenarios, helping learners understand and use language in appropriate cultural contexts (Setyawan & Nawangsari, 2021).

This research explores the effect of using the Role-Play method to improve the speaking skills of basic-level students at Central Course. Specifically, the research eamines its impact on fluency, accuracy of pronunciation as well as vocabulary, and confidence compared to traditional teaching methods. The findings aim to contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting active learning approaches in language education and provide practical insights for EFL instructors.

Role-play motivates students to engage actively in simulated communicative situations, fostering practical language use and interaction. The interactive nature of Role-Play allows students to practice pronunciation in real time, receiving immediate feedback and corrections from peers or instructors. CLT emphasizes the importance of interaction as both the means and goal of language learning. Role-Play aligns with this approach by engaging learners in realistic conversational contexts, enabling them to practice language in meaningful ways (Richards, 2001). Therefore, the structured and interactive format of Role-Play likely contributed to greater student engagement and motivation. Learners perform better when their anxiety levels are low, and they feel confident and motivated. Role-play reduces the affective filter by creating a supportive environment where learners feel safe to experiment with language (Krashen, 1985).

TBLT highlights the use of meaningful tasks to promote language acquisition. Role-play is a task-based activity that encourages learners to use language purposefully and creatively (Paul et al., 2018). The Role-Play method supports constructivist principles by allowing students to know through experiential and contextualized learning (Piaget, 2005). Empirical Studies stated that Role-play has been exposed to improve speaking skills, particularly in fluency and confidence, as students practice real-life scenarios (Rohm et al., 2021). Findings indicate that Role-Play significantly enhances speaking fluency by simulating authentic communication (Ali & Anwar, 2021). The impact of using role-play as a method in teaching EFL can help teachers provide students with a safe, interactive environment to practice using English in practical and meaningful contexts, which significantly reduces their fear of making mistakes. Students reported increased self-confidence in speaking English after participating in Role-Play activities (Ruzmetova, 2022). The Role-Play method integrates multiple speaking sub-skills (fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence) within a single activity. This approach facilitates well-rounded improvement, as evidenced by the consistent gains across all skill areas.

This research aims to assess the effectiveness of Role-play as a teaching methodology for improving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking skills, focusing on its ability to enhance fluency, confidence, and engagement. Rooted in communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) frameworks, Role-Play provides an interactive, structured format for practicing language in meaningful contexts. The method's constructivist foundation Piaget (2005) Allows learners to build knowledge through experiential learning, integrating essential speaking skills into a cohesive and engaging activity.

"The primary objective of the research is to examine the effectiveness of the Role-Play as a teaching method in improving the speaking skills of basic-level students at Central Course. Speaking is a critical component of language acquisition and serves as the primary mode of communication in most real-life interactions. However, basic-level learners often encounter challenges in developing fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence due to limited practice opportunities in realistic and interactive contexts. Research has consistently highlighted the importance of creating communicative environments to foster language learning (Suwito et al., 2025). This study aims to address these challenges by employing Role-Play as a teaching strategy designed to simulate authentic conversational scenarios within the classroom.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test assessments to examine the effectiveness of the Role-Play method in improving EFL learners' speaking skills. The research involves two distinct groups of students, each consisting of 20 participants from the Central Course. The analysis compares two groups: Experimental and Controlled. The improvement was measured through pre-test and post-test assessments. ANOVA tests whether there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups. The t-test was used to compare the means of the two groups.  The data analysis conducted during this investigation serves as the foundation for the hypothesis. Null Hypothesis (H$_0$): There is no significant improvement in the student's performance after the role-play method (pre-test and post-test scores are not significantly different). Alternative Hypothesis (H$_1$): There is a significant

improvement in the student's performance after the role-play method (pre-test and post-test scores are significantly different).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation using pre-test, treatment, and post-test results was as follows. Source of Variation: Between Groups: Sum of Squares (SS): 216.225, Degrees of Freedom (df): 1, Mean Square (MS): 216.225, F-value: 140.3339, p-value: $2.516 \times 10^{-14}$ (highly significant, $p < 0.05$) Within Groups: Sum of Squares (SS): 58.55, Degrees of Freedom (df): 38, Mean Square (MS): 1.5408, Total: Sum of Squares (SS): 274.775, Degrees of Freedom (df): 39. the conclusion: The p-value is significantly less than 0.05, indicating a substantial difference between the two groups. ANOVA tests whether there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups listed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** ANOVA test two group

| Anova: Singele Factor | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SUMMARY** | | | | | | |
| **Groups** | **Count** | **Sum** | **Average** | **Variance** | | |
| Experimental | 20 | 113 | 5,56 | 2,55526316 | | |
| Controlled | 20 | 20 | 1 | 0,52631579 | | |
| **ANOVA** | | | | | | |
| **Source of Variation** | **ss** | **df** | **MS** | **F** | **P-Value** | **F crit** |
| Between groups | 216,225 | 1 | 216,225 | 140,333903 | 2,5164E-14 | 4,09817173 |
| Within Group | 58,55 | 38 | 1,54078947 | | | |
| **Total** | **274,775** | **39** | | | | |

The data from two groups were analyzed to evaluate the impact of role-play on language learning outcomes. The following Table 2 summarizes the results of the pre-test and post-test for each group.

**Table 2.** Anova Pre-test and Post-test

| Group | Mean Pre-test | Mean Post-test | Improvement | p-value | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experiment | 05.08 | 11.45 | 0,25472222 | P<0.05 | Sig.i |
| Control | 0,274305556 | 08.00 | 02.05 | P<0.05 | No sig. Imprmpo |

Experimental Group: Pre-Test Mean = 5.08, Post-Test Mean = 11.45, Improvement = 5.65, $p < 0.05$ (Signiicant).  Control Group: Pre-Test Mean = 0.27, Post-Test Mean = 8.00, Improvement = 2.05, $p > 0.05$ (Not Significant). Additionally, the ANOVA and t-test results corroborate the findings. The ANOVA test produced an F-value of 140.33 with a p-value of $2.52 \times 10^{-14}$, clarifying a remarkable dissimilarity of the groups. The t-test results further supported this, with a t-value of 3.865 and a p-value of 0.00042, it was wellbelow the critical threshold of 2.024 for significance. The t-test was used to compare the means of the two groups listed in Table 3.

**Table 3.** T-test Compares Two Groups

| Group | Average Pre-test | Average Post-test | Rage improvement | p-value | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental | 5,8 | 11,45 | 5,65 | 2,182E-12 | Significant Imoroment |
| Control | 5,95 | 8 | 2,05 | 9,675E-07 | Not sig |
| **Statistical Measure** | | | **Value** | | |
| T-Statistic | | | 38,654 | | |
| P-Value (two-tailed) | | | 0,00042 | | |
| Critical t-value (two-tailed) | | | 20,244 | | |
| Degrees of Freedom (df) | | | 38 | | |
| Conclusion | | | Sig.difference between Exp and Control Group   (P< 0,05) | | |

Statistical Outputs: t-Statistic: (3.8654), p-value: 0.00042 (significant, $p < 0.05$), Critical t-value (two-tailed): 2.0244. the conclusion: These statistical results suggest a substantial

difference between the two groups, supporting the hypothesis that the intervention (role-play) had a measurable impact on the experimental group's performance.

The experimental group showed a marked improvement in their post-test scores, with an average improvement of 5.65 compared to the control group's improvement of 2.05. This suggests that the experimental group, which underwent role-play activities, experienced greater language learning gains. The p-value of < 0.05 for the experimental group indicates that the improvement was statistically significant, reflecting the positive impact of role-play on language acquisition. This study is in line with the findings Katemba & Grace (2023) that role-playing can be used as an approach to improve student speaking.

The experimental group's considerable improvement indicates that role-playing exercises can effectively lower language anxiety and raise student interest. This research emphasizes the value of active engagement in language acquisition, as students are placed in simulated real-life scenarios that allow them to practice language abilities and encourage them to use language in actual contexts. Role-play activities can create a more relaxed atmosphere, essential for learners who may feel nervous or self-conscious about using a new language in front of others. By engaging in role-play, learners had the opportunity to experiment with language without fear of making mistakes, as the focus is more on communication and context rather than perfection.

Furthermore, the higher improvement in the post-test scores of the experimental group further supports the hypothesis that role-play can improve both language skills and classroom interaction. As students participate in these activities, they actively engage in conversations, developing fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation confidence in speaking. This increased interaction in the classroom helps break down social barriers and fosters a more collaborative learning environment. Role-play encourages students to engage with their peers expressively, making the learning process more dynamic and interactive. These factors combined contribute to a more engaging and effective learning experience, where students improve their language abilities and develop essential communication skills for real-life situations. Supporting the theory are the findings of Dwiyanti & Lolita (2023); Ishak & Aziz (2022) which state that role-playing can improve speaking skills.

These results align with prior research on the benefits of role-play in language learning. Previous studies have shown that role-play can create a low-stress environment, which is crucial for students who experience language anxiety. By facilitating authentic communication, role-play encourages active learning, which leads to better language retention and improved speaking skills. The current study's findings are consistent with the prior studies, which also demonstrated the positive effects of role-play on language acquisition.
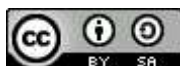
## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study found that the experimental group, which actively participated in role-play activities, exhibited a significant improvement in language skills compared to the control group, which did not engage in such activities. This improvement was evident across various metrics of language proficiency, including fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The experimental group's increased involvement and confidence in speaking the language was probably influenced by the role-play gave them chances to practice the language in authentic, engaging situations. Furthermore, the statistical analyses, including both ANOVA and t-test, confirmed that the observed improvements in the experimental group were not due to random chance. These analyses revealed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups, providing robust evidence that role-play activities had a meaningful impact on language learning outcomes. The results strongly support the hypothesis that incorporating role-play into language instruction can significantly enhance language skills, as the experimental group's students demonstrated greater progress in their scores linked to their counterparts in the control group. This finding underscores the effectiveness of role-play as an instructional strategy that can foster deeper learning and more effective language acquisition in educational settings.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that role-play be integrated into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching methods. Role-play offers an interactive and enjoyable way for students to practice language in a meaningful context, thus improving fluency, reducing anxiety, and increasing engagement. Teachers should consider incorporating role-play techniques into their lesson plans to enhance student learning outcomes. Future studies could investigate the long-term effects of role-play on language learning by conducting longitudinal research. Furthermore, using role-playing exercises in diverse EFL contexts—for example, with different age groups or in cultural contexts—could aid in gaining a deeper understanding of the wider relevance and influence of this teaching approach.

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