IMPROVING STUDENTS’ SPEAKING COMPETENCE THROUGH ROLE PLAY (AN ACTION RESEARCH AT THE SECOND YEAR OF SMP N 1 TIRTOMOYO WONOGIRI)

RESEARCH PAPER
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A. Background of the Study

Language as a means of communication is very useful and flexible. It can serve human needs in their communication in any situation. We can express almost everything such as thoughts, emotions, political, actions, affairs, controversies, ideas, etc by means of communication (Srijono, 2001: 9). Because of it, language is an important thing in our life, because without language we cannot interact with other people.

English is an international language in the world. Therefore, it is important for people to learn it. By learning English, students are expected to absorb and keep up with the development of science, technology and art. English also the most famous and important foreign language which is taught from elementary school up to university level.

The teaching of English emphasizes the four basic language skills and one of the basic language skills is speaking. Speaking is “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbol in a variety of context” (Chaney, 1998: 13). By speaking with others, the students are able to know the kinds of situation in the world.
The use of English for speaking is not simple, because the speaker should master several important elements such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. In this case, English teachers have responsibilities to improve students’ English speaking skill, so the teachers are demanded to have teaching method in order to solve the problem faced by the students in learning English. The teachers also need the appropriate technique in teaching speaking in order that the students are able to be active and creative in teaching learning process of speaking.

To improve students’ speaking skill many methods can be implemented. One of them is role play. Newmark (1966) in Fauziati (2002: 127) states that one of the methods suggested for developing speaking skill is role playing. That is creating dramatic situation in a classroom, or in apart, simply acting out dialogues, but also in relabeling objects and people in the room to prepare for imaginative role playing. Role play is also a technique that can make the students work in pairs, support one another and to make the class more interesting and to reduce students’ boredom. Moreover, role play is fun and motivated, the students get the chance to speak more and it is useful to extend knowledge into feeling.

Commonly, the teachers always have some problems in teaching speaking. One of the problems faced by teachers in teaching speaking is the student won’t talk or say anything. The students feel shy about talking in front of other students. They tend to be silent because they do not want to show their weakness in
speaking English. It becomes the problem for the teachers to command the students to speak in the class. The other problem is monitoring students’ speech. In monitoring students’ speech, the teachers have problems such as the teacher cannot get near enough to his or her students to hear them. When students work in pairs, it is impossible for the teacher to hear the entire student’s speech because most of the students speak together. Then, the teacher cannot make out exactly what they are saying. The students’ mumbling or speaking softly makes it difficult to hear their use of language. Because of it, the teacher is difficult to give them language feedback on what they have said. Besides, the teacher cannot hear all students’ error. Therefore, it is difficult for the teacher to correct students’ errors.

The English teacher in SMP N 1 Tirtomoyo Wonogiri also has the same problem in teaching speaking. There are still many students who have low speaking ability. It is because the English teacher does not implement the appropriate technique in teaching speaking and lack of students’ motivation in learning speaking. Besides, low students’ speaking ability is also caused by some factors. Those factors are first; the students have limited vocabulary. The students stuck speaking when they do not know the meaning of English word. They use wrong diction in the conversation. Second, lack of students’ grammar mastery. Constructing and combining sentences are important to be learned by the students to produce sentences orally. It concerns with how to arrange a correct sentence in
expressing words and conversation. They do not understand well about the grammar. They are not sure to speak English. The last factor is about pronunciation. They are difficult to pronounce certain words. They are not confident to speak, because according to them, English pronunciation is strange to their tongue since they are accustomed to speak Indonesian.

Based on the background above, the writer is interested in improving the speaking competence of the second year students of SMP N 1 Tirtomoyo Wonogiri by employing role play as a method of teaching speaking.

**B. Problem Statement**

Based on the background of the study, the research problem focuses on:

1. How is the implementation of role play in improving the students’ speaking competence in SMP N 1 Tirtomoyo Wonogiri?
2. Can role play improve the students’ speaking competence in SMP N 1 Tirtomoyo Wonogiri?

**C. Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to improve the students’ speaking competence, while the specific objectives of the study in this research are:

1. to describe the implementation of role play technique on teaching speaking to the second year students of SMP N 1 Tirtomoyo Wonogiri
2. to know whether role play can improve the students’ speaking competence or not.

D. Limitation of the Study

This research has broader scope and it is impossible for the writer to handle all problems. Therefore, the writer limits the scope of the study. The writer just wants to know whether role play can improve the students’ speaking competence at the second year of SMP N 1 Tirtomoyo Wonogiri in 2008/2009 academic year.

E. Benefit of the Study

In this study, the writer expects that the research paper have benefits both practical and theoretical.

1. Practical Benefit
   a. The result of the research paper can be used as input in English teaching learning process in junior high school especially for teaching speaking using role play
   b. The result of the research paper can be used as the reference for those who want to conduct a research in English teaching-learning process.

2. Theoretical Benefit
   a. The finding of this research can enrich the theory of teaching English speaking to the junior high school students.
b. The reader will get a large knowledge about teaching speaking using role play.

**F. Research Paper Organization**

The organization of research paper is given in order to make the reader understand the content of the paper as follows:

Chapter I is Introduction which consists of background of the study, research problem, objective of study, limitation of the study, benefit of the study, and research paper organization.

Chapter II concerns with review of related literature. It deals with the previous study, communicative competence, teaching speaking, notion of speaking, role play, theoretical hypothesis and action hypothesis.

Chapter III is research method, which consists of type of the research, subject of the study, object of the study, data and source of data, method of collecting data, and technique for analyzing data.

Chapter IV is the data analysis and discussion and Chapter V presents conclusion and suggestion.