THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCRIPTED ROLE PLAY IN ENHANCING SPEAKING FLUENCY AMONG EFL STUDENTS AT SMP LABSCHOOL UNESA 3 SURABAYA

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ABSTRACT

Speaking fluency is an important skill for junior high school students, especially in the Indonesian EFL context where exposure to English is limited. Many students experience hesitation, frequent pauses, and lack of confidence when speaking English. Therefore, effective classroom strategies are needed to help students improve their fluency. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of scripted role play on speaking fluency of eighth-grade students at SMP Labschool UNESA 3 Surabaya. This study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test research design. The sample was consisted of 30 students divided into an experimental and control group. Research instrument used was a role play test with 6 topics related to daily-life context that focused on fluency rather than accuracy. The results show that after practiced during treatment, the experimental group achieved better improvement compared to the control group. This indicates that scripted role play is effective and has significance effect on students' speaking fluency. Therefore, it can be concluded that scripted role play is an appropriate strategy to support fluency development in EFL classrooms.

Keywords : *Scripted Role Play, Speaking Fluency, EFL Students, Quasi Experiment*

INTRODUCTION

English education in Indonesia is generally introduced as a Foreign Language (EFL) where it plays a role as a school subject rather than as everyday communication. Although English is a mandatory part of the national curriculum starting from junior high school, students have limited exposure to authentic language use outside the classroom which means that English remains symbolic rather than functional in students' daily lives (Akbar et al., 2023). Unlike learners in ESL environments where English is used as the dominant social language, most of Indonesian EFL students rely only on interactions with the teachers at school, without receiving any additional exposure or training outside of school. This makes Indonesian students' lack of development productive language skills, particularly speaking fluency.

Fluency refers to the ability to speak smoothly and effortlessly, with a natural flow of speech. It involves the speed and rhythm of speech, as well as the ability to produce language without excessive hesitation or pauses (Brown, 2004). This concept comes from communicative competence theory, which views language proficiency not only as knowledge of linguistic forms, but also as the ability to use language meaningfully in real-life interactions (Nematizadeh & Wood, 2019). Speaking fluently requires the integration of various linguistic components such as vocabulary, grammatical structure, and pronunciation (Daar, 2024). These components are combined through cognitive processing so that the speaker can focus on conveying meaning, rather than merely form.

As noted by Ur (1996), fluency is often hindered by anxiety related to grammatical accuracy. Therefore, focusing on communication by building self-confidence and the ability to convey meaning are key factors in achieving fluency, regardless of grammatical accuracy (Harmer, 2007). To overcome the speaking fluency problems, teachers need activities that allow students to speak more freely, confidently and contextually. One technique that can support this is scripted role play. Scripted ole play is an activity where students play certain roles in realistic situations and communicate based on those roles. Role play can also create a comfortable and stress-free atmosphere which is important for developing fluency in speaking. Mariyanah (2025) found that this activity was very helpful for junior high school students in practice their speaking without feeling afraid of making mistakes. Dwiyanti & Lolita (2023) also argue that role play provides meaningful speaking practice in real contexts, which can reduce hesitation and build confidence. When students participate in role play, they are trained to respond spontaneously which naturally supports the improvement of speaking fluency. This type of role play was also chosen because it makes every word used meaningful and easy to remember (Krebt, 2017). This situation allowed them to speak more naturally and fluently because they focused on continuing the interaction and how to keep the conversation going they were able to speak for longer periods and reduce unnecessary hesitation.

Most previous studies were conducted in contexts that differ from the setting of this study. For instance, Hijriati (2022) implemented role play to improve speaking skills among third-semester university students in Mataram, focusing on fluency and pronunciation. Similarly, Hanum (2023) examined role play with senior high school students in Aceh Besar and reported notable improvement in oral performance. Fitriani & Susiati (2025) also explored role play in a junior high school context, but their participants were seventh graders in Klaten, and the focus was

largely descriptive, highlighting obstacles in speaking rather than experimenting with different role play strategies. This study differs by focusing on eighth-grade junior high school students in Surabaya, offering a new population and regional perspective that has not been sufficiently represented in the literature. Through scripted role play, students are involved in situations that reflect real-life communication, encourage them to participate actively and speak more spontaneously. This study aims to demonstrate how scripted role play can support effectively to improve speaking skills and help students communicate better.

METHOD

The research design used in this study is quasi-experimental. Thyer (2012) states that this research design is very common to evaluate the outcomes of a method and educational interventions. To answer the research question, this research applied an experimental approach by using two groups; control group and experimental group. The control group received learning activity without scripted role play, while the experiment group received different treatment using scripted role play. The population was eighth-grade students at SMP Labschool UNESA 3 Surabaya, consisted of 30 students from two different classes; 15 students in each class.

This study administered pre-tests and post-tests to measure students' speaking fluency before and after receiving a specific intervention. The speaking rubric used to assess student performance was adapted from a study conducted by Alim et al. (2025) This rubric was selected because it had been used in previous research focusing on speaking as a performance skill; an aspect of expression was added to align with this study, which implemented performance-based activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study found that the role-play method can lead to a measurable improvement in speaking fluency. This improvement is evidenced by the increase in scores among the experimental group, which received treatment in the form of scripted role-play. An overview of student performance can be seen in the descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest scores presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' Scores

Group	Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	Pre-Test	15	38.27	18.089
	Post-Test	15	45.47	16.587
Experiment	Pre-Test	15	49.57	15.112
	Post-Test	15	59.47	17.262

As shown in Table 1, the average score in the experimental group increased from 49.57 to 59.47 while in the control group only increased from 38.27 to 45.47. This indicates a clear improvement in students' speaking fluency following the implementation of the program. These results indicate that the role-playing method makes a positive contribution to students' ability to

speak more fluently. The next step is to conduct a paired t-test to determine whether the observed improvement is statistically significant.

Table 2. Paired Sample T-Test Result

Group	Mean	t	Sig. (p)
Control	-7.200	-5.590	<.001
Experiment	-9.800	-9.791	<.001

As shown in Table 2, the p-value is <.001, which is lower than 0.05, indicating that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is statistically significant. This finding reinforces the notion that the improvement in students' speaking fluency is not a coincidence and supports the hypothesis that the role-playing method is effective.

Table 3. Improvement in Speaking Aspects

Aspect	Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean
Fluency	Control	9.33	11.67
	Experimental	13.07	16.73
Pronunciation	Control	11.47	12.20
	Experimental	12.00	13.80
Vocabulary	Control	8.93	9.20
	Experimental	10.87	12.93
Expression	Control	8.53	12.40
	Experimental	13.73	16.00

Table 3 shows that all measured components demonstrated improvement, particularly in terms of fluency. It was found that role-playing not only improved overall fluency scores but also strengthened key aspects of speaking ability.

The results of this study conclude that the use of scripted role-playing has a positive impact on improving the speaking fluency of eighth-grade students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). This conclusion is supported by the difference in final scores between the two groups. The experimental group, which received the special treatment using scripted role-playing, achieved a higher average score than the control group. These results demonstrate that students who practice speaking fluency through role-playing have more opportunities to communicate in English in real-life situations.

These findings also align with previous studies, which reported that role-playing enhances students' confidence and participation in speaking activities. Similar to prior research, students in this study demonstrated a greater willingness to speak and improved fluency following the intervention. This consistency reinforces the argument that role-playing is an effective method in language instruction. However, several limitations must be acknowledged. This study was conducted with a limited sample size and over a relatively short period. Additionally, individual differences among students may have influenced the results, as not all participants showed the same level of improvement.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of role play has significance impact on enhancing speaking fluency of eighth-grade students. Through role play activity, students have more opportunities to practice speaking, build confidence, and use English in more realistic communication situations. The results of this study also provide useful implications for English teachers which can support teaching activity in creating more interactive and student-centered speaking lessons, and provide authentic speaking experience. When applied in a structured form, role play has great potential to become an effective alternative method for improving the speaking fluency of junior high school. For further research, there are few things to consider, to ensure that the school schedule does not interfere the research process. Because this study focuses more on speaking fluency using role play, it requires more time and intensive in treatment stage. A larger number of participants will greatly affect the results of the role play implementation in junior high school students.

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