THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MERDEKA CURRICULUM THROUGH DIGITAL MEDIA TO ENHANCE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract
The objectives of this research are to find out whether the use of role play technique in enhancing the students' speaking skill, and to know the response of the students toward the implementation of the technique which is part of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy. This research was conducted at SMA N 1 Wonosari, Klaten. The study is classroom action research which consists of four stages such as: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The subject is the students of class XII Social 1. This class consists of 43 students. In this research, the researchers implemented role play technique in teaching speaking. The data were collected from the result observations, interviews, questionnaires, and tests. These data were compared and analyzed to get a conclusion as the result of this research. To analyze quantitative data, the research applied comparative data analysis and t-tests. To analyze qualitative data, the researchers applied interactive analysis. This research was conducted in two cycles of actions. The result of this research showed that after conducting the actions, the students' speaking skill improved and there were a positive response toward the implementation of role play technique. This improvement could be seen from the test result and the students' attitude during the lesson. The students' mean score in the pre-test was 50.90. It increased to 71.52. The response of the students is good. It could be seen from the result of questionnaire. Most of them said that role play technique is interesting and help them in learning speaking. It can be concluded that the use of role play in teaching speaking can improve the students' speaking skill. The students felt enjoyed in joining the class.

Keyword: *Merdeka curriculum, speaking skill, role play, classroom action research*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial necessity for human existence. Therefore, all individuals in Indonesia are entitled to access educational services. Education is deemed vital because it can transform the destiny of an underdeveloped nation into that of a developed one. A nation progresses as its education advances. The enhancement of human potential can be cultivated through educational initiatives typically administered by the government or private entities. Education can be described as a lifelong journey aimed at fostering the full potential within individuals, enabling them to lead fulfilling lives. It serves as a method of shaping people into valuable contributors to their country and society. The educational process is challenging and the outcomes are not immediate; rather, education represents a long-term investment whose benefits are realized when educated individuals fulfill their roles in society, aiding the advancement of their nation and community in their respective fields.

Education is consistently associated with the curriculum. *"The curriculum is a tool used to achieve educational goals so it can be said that the curriculum is a reference for the process of implementing education in Indonesia"* (Angga et al. , 2022). This assertion demonstrates that the curriculum should not merely be considered as a document, but rather as both a tool and a reference for educators to facilitate the most effective teaching and learning

process in order to meet educational objectives.

The curriculum is interpreted as a path or track of a vehicle that leads to a final destination. Along with this Law, Government Regulation Number 57 concerning National Education Standards in 2021 states *"The same thing is about the obligation to develop a diverse curriculum based on the characteristics of regions, educational units, and students"*. The realization of the development of the educational unit curriculum as the independence of the school (Sekolah Merdeka) which provides the widest possible opportunity for educational units to develop their respective operational curriculum according to their needs and characteristics. One of the policies is the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which seeks to enhance the quality of learning. It is anticipated that learning will be student-centered, valuing the distinctiveness and diversity of students' potential, interests, and talents, thereby ensuring that the learning process is expected to be effective and meaningful for students. English language has grown importance in Indonesia, particularly since the Merdeka Curriculum Policy was introduced. This policy grants educational institutions the freedom to create curricula that better suit local demands, allowing educators and policymakers to modify course material in accordance with the interests and needs of their students. However, the implementation of the policy's curriculum in teaching learning English is not going as well as we had hoped. Teachers, students, and policymakers continue to confront numerous obstacles, particularly because English is still a foreign language in Indonesia, making it difficult to practice and apply in daily life.

The ability of speaking is one of fundamentals aspects in the basic skills of language, after listening, reading, and writing. Teacher used the appropriate technique to apply in teaching activities in the classroom, for example role play. There are many ways technique to increase students' speaking skill such as use role-play, drama, debate, speech contest, etc. (Mead, Nancy A. and Rubin, Donald L: 1985). In integrating English into practical and relevant contexts, English teaching can be more engaging and meaningful for learners. Merdeka Curriculum Policy provides an opportunity to design this approach, motivating learners to develop English skills that will help them in their daily lives and compete in an increasingly global era. The role playing is an extremely valuable method in language learning . It encourages thinking and creativity, lets students develop and practice new language and behavioral skills in relatively nonthreatening setting, and can create motivation and involvement necessary for learning to occurs (Tompkins: 2006). Based on the theories above, role play can provide powerful and significant learning opportunities. The students can develop and practicing new language creatively. They can create motivation and involvement necessary while in teaching learning process. Role playing can be integrated with differentiated learning. It is one of the simulation methods that can train students' critical thinking. Meanwhile, differentiated learning is student-centered learning, where teachers develop lessons based on students' interests, learning preferences, and knowledge levels. This is line with Carol A. Tomlinson who is an educator since 1995 has written her ideas in a book entitled How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms about teaching that pays attention to individual student differences. Then her idea is known as "Differentiated Instruction" or "Differentiated Learning". In differentiated learning, teachers teach material by paying attention to the level of readiness, interests, and learning styles of students. Teachers can also modify the content of the lesson, the learning process, the products or results of the learning taught, and the learning environment. The differentiated learning process is implemented by schools in order to liberate students in learning because students are not required to be the same in all respects as others.

The setting of this study was at SMA 1 Wonosari, Klaten which implemented the Merdeka Curriculum and it has complete digital media learning facilities but most of them

still have difficulties in learning English, especially in mastering speaking skill. Based on the interview with the students, they answered that they often feel bored when teacher did give a conventional method and there were not varieties of technique in teaching learning process.

Teaching speaking to the students is not easy. The teachers must encourage their students to learn English and give them ways to learn it easier. They should pay attention on how the techniques used are suited and interest to the students in teaching learning process. In this case, with the limitation of students' speaking skill, teachers must modify their teaching learning process become interesting. As far as the English teaching in many schools is concerned, teacher must arouse the students' interest and make the technique easily so they may learn better. Teachers should not only use audio and written language to deliver the information. The teacher must practice speak in their lesson habit. In this case, the researchers choose role play technique in enhancing students' speaking skill. The students' speaking performance covers some components of ability such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

The researchers used the style part of role play called news anchor in teaching learning process. By using role play through news anchor media can increase students' ability in speaking skill. The students could be active and interactive in this technique.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is classroom action research. This design is chosen since this study deal with the classroom setting. The researchers used qualitative method to collect the data by using observation, interview, questionnaire, and documentation. The quantitative data is collected by doing test. While in quantitative method, the data are analyzed by comparing the student's score before and after each cycle or the result of pre-test and post-test. To analyze the quantitative data, the researchers accounted the pre-test and post-test at the end of each cycle. It is intended to decide whether the cycle was successful.

The action research used the model developed by Kemmis and Mc. Taggart in Burns (1999) in Septian Maharani, Gunarso Susilohadi, A. Handoko Pudjobroto article entitled Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery Through The Use of Wall Charts In Elementary Students, according to model, the implementation of the action research includes 4 steps:

a. *Planning*. The researchers developed the planning after knowing the teaching and learning problems. The planning is meant to compose solution of the problems. The researchers prepared the teaching method, technique or strategy of teaching, teaching materials, and lesson planning.

b. *Acting*. The implementation action was the realization of researcher's planning. The researchers started to act what has been composed in planning. In this phase the researchers started to teach the students by using material and technique which is planned before.

c. *Observing*. Observing has function to document the implication of action which was implemented to the subject. In this phase the researchers recorded all the events and what are happening in the research class. In observation, the researchers uses observation, field note, questionnaire, and test to collect information.

d. *Reflecting*. Reflecting is an action to reflect or think about evaluation which is done by the researcher related to the classroom action research implemented. Reflecting is also instrument to do back recitation about the action was implemented to research subject. Based on the reflecting the researchers established the action revision or re-planning to the next cycle.

The collecting data in this research, the researchers used qualitative and quantitaive data. The qualitative data were collected from the result observations, interviews, questionnaires,

and tests. While in quantitative method, the data are analyzed by comparing the student's score before and after each cycle or the result of pre-test and post-test. To analyze the quantitative data, the researchers accounted the pre-test and post-test at the end of each cycle. It is intended to decide whether the cycle was successful. So then, the score of pre-test and post-test can be calculated with the formula as follows:

$x = \sum xN$ $\qquad y = \sum yN$

In which:

X : Mean of pre-test score
Y : Mean of post-test score
N : Number of subject
$\sum x$: The sum of pre-test score
$\sum Y$: The sum of post-test score

Beside, the researchers also used t-test to measure whether there were significant differences between the students' achievement before and after the action. The formula could be seen as follows: $t = \sum DN\sum D2-(\sum D)2N-1$

T-test. (Butler, 1995)

Notes:

t = The t-value for nonindependent means
$\sum D$ = The sum of the difference scores
$\sum D2$ = The sum of the squared difference scores
N = The number of pairs

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research finding is obtained from the beginning until the last of teaching learning process. The researchers conducted two cycles and each cycle consists of four meetings. The researchers used some techniques to observe the result of first cycle, such as: test, observation, and documentation. The researchers compared the result of pretest score and first post test score. There was an improvement of students' class XII Social-1. The improvement could be seen from the mean score between pretest and posttest-1, the mean score improved from 51.90 became 57.61. Most of the students still got score under the passing grade but the score still showed the improvements. The improvement of mean score was 5.71. The improvement of the students' achievement could be seen from their mean score of the tests.

Table 1. The improvement of students' achievement in cycle 1

Score Explanation	Pre-Test	Post Test 1
Sum of the score	2138	2432
The number of the students	42	42
Students' mean score	50.66	57.90
Mean score improvement	**7.00**	

Based on the positive results above, the researchers decided to make improvisation in the next cycle. The researchers needed to revise the plan and applied it in the second cycle. The situation in the class should be improved. The researchers should can control the class and make the students more active.

Table 2. The improvement of students' achievement in cycle 2

Score Explanation	Pre-Test	Post Test 2
Sum of the score	2138	3004
The number of the students	42	42
Students' mean score	50.90	71.52
Mean score improvement	**20.62**	

The mean scores of pre-test and post-test 2 could be seen that there was an improvement of students class XII-Social 1. The mean score of pre-test was 50.90 and the mean score of post test 2 was 71.52. The mean score improved from 50.90 became 71.52. The improvement of mean score was 20.62. The improvement of the students' achievement could be seen from their mean score of the tests.

There were significant improvements of students' speaking skill after conducting the research and analyzing the data from observation and scores of pre-test and post-test. The result of the implementation can be seen in the following diagram:
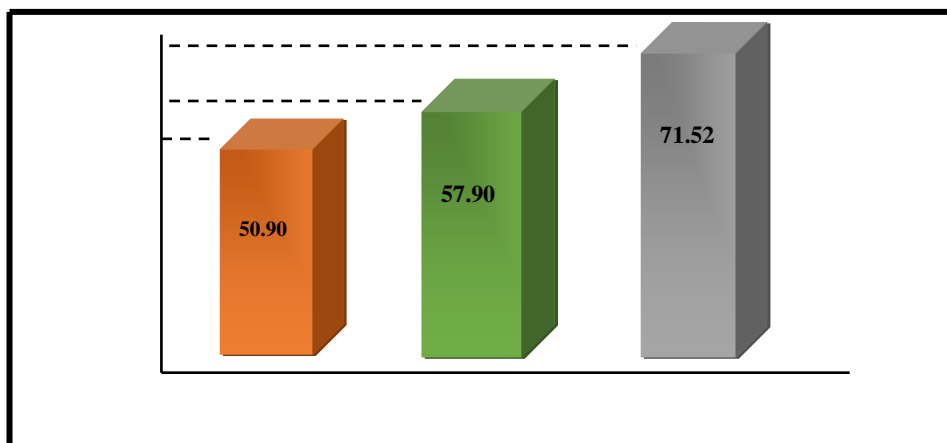

Figure 1. The Mean Score of Pre-Test, Post-Test 1, Post-Test 2

To know the effectiveness of the implementation of the use of role play, the researchers used t-test to calculate the significant value of students' mean score in every cycle. The researchers used $\alpha = 0.05$ as the level of significance. The value of the t-table in the level α – 0.05 (2 side test; $\alpha/2 = 0.025$) with the degree of freedom (df) = n-1= 42-1= 41 is 2.019 (from table of *t student*). The calculation of t-test between pre-test and post-test 2 can be seen as below:

t = 87,642.197,60-(87,6)242-1

$\quad$ = 87,68299,2-7673,7 41

$\quad$ = 87,6625,5 41

$\quad$ = 87,6410

$\quad$ = 87,620,24

$\quad$ = 4,32 $t_{o > t_{table}}$ $\longrightarrow$ (2,019)

From the computation above, the researchers found the level of significant of the students' improvement scores (t_o) was 4.32 and the t_{table} (t_t) for 42 students is 2.019. Because t_o was higher than t_{table}. It means that there was a significant difference between the score in post-test 1 and post-test 2 because $(t_o)_2$ was higher than t_t. Based on the computation of t-test above, there was a significant difference of students' improvement score. It also can be concluded that the use of role play was effective to improve students' speaking skill. The result of the test scores indicated that using role play technique was an effective technique in enhancing students' speaking skill. In the end of research, the researchers gave questionnaire to the students to know the responses of the use of role play through news anchor. The result of questionnaire are explained below:

a. First question was about the students' impression toward the use of role play implementation. There are four choices; really like, like, don't like, and really don't like. There are 28% students chose really like it, 58.13% chose like it, and 13.87% chose they

don't like it. From those results most of the students liked the use of role play through news anchor media.

b. Second question was about the students' opinion toward the use of role play implementation in enhancing their speaking skills. There are four choices; very helpful, helpful, not helpful, and very unhelpful. There are 34.88% students chosed very helpful, 65.12% chosed helpful. Based on that result, the researcher concluded that the use of role play helped the students to improve their speaking skills.

c. The third question was about the students' interest toward the use of role play implementation. There are four chooses; very interesting, interesting, not interesting and very not interesting. There are 20.93% chosed very interesting, 72.1% students chosed interesting, and 6.98% students chosed not interesting.

d. The fourth question was about the students' agreement toward the use of role play implementation in teaching speaking. There are four chooses: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. There are 41.87% students chosed strongly agree, 53.48% students chosed agree, and 4.65% chosed disagree.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the students gave positive responses in application of role play in speaking skill. The researchers could see from their enthusiastic when following teaching learning processes. The students more active and attractive follow the speaking class.

4. CONCLUSION

After the researchers analyzed the result of the implementation of role play technique which has been conducted to improve the students' speaking skill in class XII-Social 1 of SMA N 1 Wonosari, it can be seen that implementation of role play technique in teaching English speaking is beneficial in enhancing students' speaking skill. The students were more active and enjoy with the technique in speaking class. It can be seen from the mean score improvement of pre test to post test cycle 2. The mean score of pre test is 50.90 and the mean score of post test cycle 2 is 71.52. It means, there is a significant improvement. That sidnificant improvement is proven by using t-test. The researcher uses the 0.05 alpha as the level of significance. For 0.05 alpha level and 42 degree of freedom,the t-table is 2.019. the obtained t-value is 4.328. the t-value is higher than the critical value on the table (4.328 > 2.019). That proves the improvement was significant. The researchers concluded that role play can improve the students' speaking skill. The students' responses toward role play are also positive. The conclusion above showed that the use of role play technique can improve the students' speaking skill. In the other hand, the students can be more confidence. They do not feel shy more. They can express their ideas well. They do not afraid to speak in front of the class. During interactions, the students build new vocabularies and discover various phrases. After they master the language, they gain confidence and capable of experimenting with new words and phrases. In the other hand, role play offers a fantastic opportunity to enhance speaking skill which is line with the Merdeka Curriculum in the Merdeka Belajar concept. As we know that Merdeka Belajar is a learning program policy to restore the national education system that gives freedom to schools, teachers, students and all school resources to innovate, freely learn independently and creatively, which can be started through teachers as drivers of education.

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