

Expressive Language Disorder in High School Students: Role-Play as a Coping Strategy at SMA Negeri 5 Kabupaten Sorong

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Abstract

This research explores the role of roleplay as a coping strategy for expressive language disorders among high school students, specifically at SMA Negeri 5 Kabupaten Sorong. Communication, especially in language learning, is essential for students to effectively express their feelings, thoughts, and opinions. However, many students experience difficulties in verbal expression, often due to anxiety and fear of making mistakes in public speaking. This challenge, also referred to as a speech disorder, hinders students' ability to communicate clearly. The study aims to assess the effectiveness of roleplay in overcoming these challenges by providing a safe, interactive, and engaging method for students to improve their speaking proficiency. Using a combination of pre-tests, post-tests, and observational data, this study evaluated the improvement in students' confidence, fluency, and overall communication skills through roleplay activities. The pre-test results showed that students' scores ranged from 5 to 9 in Feelings, 5 to 11 in Thoughts, 4 to 9 in Opinions, and 2 to 7 in General communication strategies. Post-test results indicated significant improvement, with scores ranging from 6 to 12 in Feelings, 7 to 12 in Thoughts, 7 to 12 in Opinions, and 3 to 8 in General strategies. The results demonstrate significant improvements in students' abilities to express feelings, articulate thoughts, and provide opinions in English, demonstrating the effectiveness of roleplay as a tool to enhance language proficiency. The findings suggest that roleplay can be an essential strategy in language education, particularly for students with expressive language disorders, as it encourages active participation, reduces anxiety, and fosters a supportive learning environment.

Keywords: Language disorder; roleplay; coping strategy

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the essential skills in language learning, including English. Many students face difficulties in expressing their feelings, thoughts, and opinions, especially in speaking. This can be caused by various factors, one of which is the fear or anxiety of speaking in public, often referred to as a speech disorder. Mu'awwanah & Supena (2021) stated that a speech or language disorder is a type of communication impairment, where a person experiences difficulties in the symbolic process. This difficulty results in an individual being unable to provide or use symbols that are recognized and, conversely, unable to transform conceptual understanding into symbols that others can understand. In addition, students should be able to carry out and dig their deep understanding about how they can use English orally as well as they can (Wael, Asnur & Ibrahim, 2018).

One specific type of language disorder is Expressive Language Disorder. According to Azizi et al., (2023), this condition is characterized by difficulty in expressing thoughts and

feelings through words, making it challenging for individuals to convey their desires to others. Furthermore, this disorder affects a person's ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, or ideas effectively, whether through spoken or written language. Despite having a clear understanding of what they wish to express, individuals with this disorder often struggle to communicate their messages clearly. According to Rizkiani & Darmawani (2022), the factors contributing to children's expressive language problems include internal factors such as cognition, genetics, prematurity, and gender. External factors include the use of two languages within the family and an environment that does not support the development of the child's speech.

Furthermore, According to Indriati (2015), the author states that speech and language difficulties in children can be attributed to several factors, such as developmental disorders, neurological impairments, and hearing problems. These difficulties affect children's ability to communicate effectively, both in receptive forms (understanding information) and expressive forms (conveying information). This disorder hinders an individual's ability to send, receive, and process information. Reluctance to speak or fear of making mistakes can significantly hinder students in developing their speaking skills, even in situations that should be safe and supportive. Juhana (2012) mentioned that the fear of making mistakes is one of the main factors that hinder students from speaking in English classes. This fear is primarily caused by concerns about appearing foolish in front of others and worrying about negative judgment from classmates.

This issue is even more pronounced in students learning English as a second language. Ryoo (2019), emphasizes that early childhood second language acquisition is heavily influenced by social environments and daily interactions, occurring naturally through consistent exposure and active engagement without formal instruction, highlighting the importance of a linguistically rich and age-appropriate environment to support language development. On the other hand, Salihoğlu (2024) highlights that low self-confidence correlates with higher language anxiety, and suggests interventions like positive reinforcement and stress-reduction techniques to alleviate fear, emphasizing the need for enjoyable, safe, and effective methods to address shyness and anxiety. Moreover, stated by (Wael et al. 2023) language learners have their own way to learn a language.

Therefore, methods are needed to address this shyness and anxiety in a fun, safe, and beneficial way. According to experts in language therapy, such as Martin (2023), using enjoyable methods in language learning or therapy can stimulate active student engagement, enhance social interaction, and strengthen overall language abilities. This approach allows students to engage in learning in a fun way, which in turn improves their language understanding and helps address language disorders more effectively. One method that can be used to overcome these issues is roleplay.

Roleplay is a technique that allows students to practice speaking in various roles, situations, and contexts. Komalasari (2014) stated that roleplaying is a model of mastering lesson material through the development of students' imagination and empathy. Imagination and empathy are developed by students by portraying themselves as real characters or inanimate objects. Anika (2023), explains that role-playing enhances children's receptive language skills by fostering creative interactions, understanding social contexts, actively responding to language, and improving their motivation, communication skills, and ability to adopt different perspectives in an engaging learning environment. Additionally, the roleplay approach provides students with the opportunity to practice English in real-world situations. This allows students to not only understand the material theoretically but also apply it in everyday conversations. For example, students can roleplay as speakers in discussions, presenters in seminars, or customers in a store. These situations help students understand the nuances of language use, such as intonation, word choices, and facial expressions that align with the context. This process helps them overcome awkwardness and increases comfort in speaking English.

Another study by Septami (2020) mentions that students' active engagement in practice-based learning, such as roleplay, has a positive impact on their speaking ability. They found that students involved in interactive activities were better able to overcome communication barriers and showed significant improvements in grammar usage and pronunciation. This indicates that roleplay is not only effective in reducing anxiety but also in enhancing overall speaking skills. Furthermore, roleplay has the potential to improve students' social skills. In a class, roleplay encourages students to collaborate with their peers, share ideas, and provide constructive feedback. This activity creates a collaborative learning environment, where students feel supported to try and learn from their mistakes without the fear of negative judgment. Such collaboration is vital for creating a positive and supportive learning atmosphere.

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of using roleplay in overcoming shyness and language disorders among students at SMA Negeri 5 Kabupaten Sorong. The main focus of this research is to see how roleplay can help students overcome anxiety and shyness in speaking and improve their ability to express feelings and opinions. By using a practice-based approach, this study is expected to make a real contribution to English language learning, particularly in developing students' speaking skills. Additionally, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for teachers and educators to implement roleplay as an effective, innovative, and enjoyable learning method in the classroom.

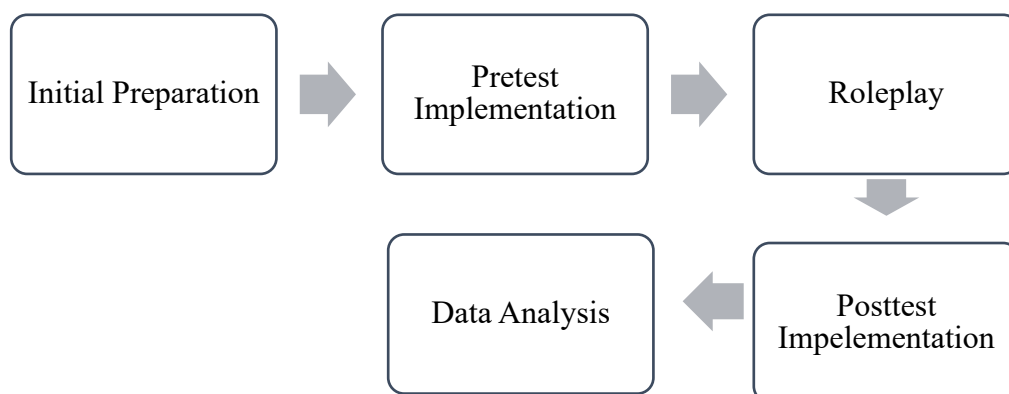
METHOD

The method employed in this study follows a comprehensive approach, which includes three primary stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. The preparation phase involves conducting an extensive literature review on key topics related to English as a second language, language disorders, the challenges and obstacles students face in language learning, instructional media, and the role-play method's application in teaching and learning. This literature review provides a solid theoretical foundation for the study, ensuring that all aspects of the research are well-grounded in existing academic knowledge.

For data analysis, the study employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data is gathered through pre-tests and post-tests, and the scores from these tests are analyzed to assess the improvement in students' English speaking proficiency. In addition to the test results, observational data is collected throughout the role-play activities, noting improvements in student performance, confidence, and language use. These observations provide valuable insights into how well the role-play method is being applied and its effectiveness in enhancing students' speaking skills.

The study was conducted over two days at SMA Negeri 5 Kabupaten Sorong, with 21 students from twelfth grade MIPA 2 class participating. This group of students was selected based on their needs for additional support in developing their English speaking abilities

Figure 1. Flowchart of Learning Method Implementation



The implementation process of the Roleplay teaching method at SMA Negeri 5 Kabupaten Sorong followed a structured sequence, outlined in the following stages:

1. Initial Preparation

In the preparatory phase, the researcher identified students who exhibited challenges in speaking English, such as reluctance, shyness, or a lack of confidence. This selection process aimed to target those who would benefit most from the intervention. The researcher also provided an explanation of the study's objectives, emphasizing the goal of helping students overcome language-related challenges and build confidence through the roleplay method. Additionally, the researcher developed roleplay materials aligned with the students' beginner-level English proficiency. These materials included practical scenarios, such as self-introductions, engaging in discussions, and asking for help, which were designed to simulate real-life communication. The materials were structured to ensure that the activities were relatable and supported the gradual development of students' speaking skills.

2. Pretest Implementation

After completing the preparatory phase, a pretest was conducted to establish a baseline of the students' speaking abilities. This pretest assessed their ability to express thoughts, emotions, and opinions in English. The test consisted of several questions requiring students to respond in various scenarios, such as introducing themselves, giving their opinions on simple topics, and interacting with classmates in English. The pretest was conducted individually, with each student performing in front of the researcher and their peers to create a controlled yet realistic evaluation setting.

3. Intervention Through Roleplay

Following the pretest, the intervention phase involved the implementation of the roleplay method over four sessions. Students were grouped into small teams or paired with peers to perform the roleplays, ensuring collaborative learning and mutual encouragement. During each session, the researcher actively monitored the performances and provided immediate feedback. This feedback focused on correcting errors in pronunciation, grammar, and sentence structure while also highlighting the students' strengths to build their confidence.

Each session focused on a specific theme to gradually build students' confidence and fluency. The first session concentrated on practicing self-introductions, allowing students to introduce themselves and exchange basic personal information. In the second session, students participated in topic-based discussions, where they explored simple topics relevant to their daily lives and shared their opinions. The third session was dedicated to practicing scenarios where students asked for help, such as requesting assistance from teachers or peers. Finally, in the fourth session, all themes were combined into comprehensive roleplay scenarios to reinforce the skills learned in the previous sessions.

4. Posttest Implementation

After the completion of all roleplay sessions, a posttest was administered to evaluate the students' progress. The posttest was designed similarly to the pretest, requiring students to respond to scenarios involving self-introductions, discussions, and interactive communication. However, the students were now encouraged to demonstrate improved fluency, confidence, and a broader range of vocabulary. The posttest provided a direct

comparison to the pretest, allowing the researcher to identify specific areas of improvement in students' speaking skills, including fluency, accuracy, and confidence levels.

5. Data Analysis

The final stage involved analyzing the data collected from the pretest and posttest. Descriptive statistical methods were used to calculate the mean, standard deviation, and overall score distributions. This analysis provided quantitative evidence of changes in students' speaking abilities after the intervention. The comparison between pretest and posttest scores helped determine the effectiveness of the roleplay method. Improvements in fluency, vocabulary usage, and confidence levels indicated the success of the intervention in addressing students' speaking challenges. Observational notes taken during the roleplay sessions were also analyzed qualitatively to supplement the statistical findings, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the students' progress throughout the study.

Through the methods and stages of this study, the following is the documentation of the implementation process of the Roleplay teaching method at SMA Negeri 5 Sorong Regency.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the problems and methods implemented, the researcher analyzed the results using pre-test and post-test assessments to observe changes in the research subjects before and after the intervention. This research presents data analysis derived from the pre-test and post-test implementation, aimed at measuring the changes in students' communication skills. A rubric-based evaluation approach was utilized as the assessment tool, designed to analyze various aspects of communication skills.

The rubric comprises four main dimensions: Feelings, Thought, Opinion, and General. Each dimension includes a series of questions assessing specific aspects of students' communication abilities. In total, 11 questions served as indicators, with scoring criteria ranging from 1 (very low) to 4 (high).

The purpose of the rubric was to measure the following items:

1. **Feelings:** This dimension assessed the students' comfort level in expressing their emotions, their ability to recognize feelings, and their strategies for overcoming nervousness.
2. **Thought:** This dimension focused on the students' ability to articulate ideas, improve communication, and demonstrate confidence in speaking.
3. **Opinion:** This dimension evaluated the students' ability to manage nervousness while expressing opinions, their reflections on speaking experiences, and their understanding of the importance of sharing opinions.
4. **General:** This dimension measured the students' awareness of strategies to overcome communication barriers, including their use of methods such as roleplay and their perception of its effectiveness.

Using this rubric, the researcher systematically identified the students' levels of communication proficiency. Below is the assessment rubric applied in the study:

Table 1. Assessment Rubric

| Aspect | Question | Criteria | Score 1 (Very Low) | Score 2 (Low) | Score 3 (High) | Score 4 (Very High) |
|----------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Feelings | 1. Comfort level in expressing feelings. | Comfort in expressing feelings. | Very uncomfortable | Uncomfortable | Fairly comfortable | Very comfortable |

| Aspect | Question | Criteria | Score 1 (Very Low) | Score 2 (Low) | Score 3 (High) | Score 4 (Very High) |
|---------|---|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Thought | 2. Identifying feelings that are hard to express. | Ability to identify feelings. | Unable to identify | Very limited identification | Fairly clear identification | Very clear identification |
| | 3. Strategies to overcome nervousness. | Use of strategies to overcome nervousness. | No strategies | Strategies not very effective | Fairly effective strategies | Very effective strategies |
| | 4. Difficulty level in expressing ideas during discussion. | Ability to express ideas. | Very difficult | Difficult | Fairly easy | Very easy |
| | 5. Response to ideas that are not understood. | Efforts to improve communication. | No effort | Very limited effort | Fairly good effort | Very good effort |
| | 6. Confidence level in expressing ideas. | Confidence in expressing ideas. | Not confident at all | Slightly confident | Fairly confident | Very confident |
| Opinion | 7. Nervousness level when giving an opinion. | Ability to overcome nervousness when giving an opinion. | Very nervous | Nervous | Slightly nervous | Not nervous at all |
| | 8. Experience in giving an opinion during class discussion. | Ability to reflect on experience. | Did not give an opinion | Gave limited opinion | Gave a fairly good opinion | Gave an excellent opinion |
| General | 9. Understanding of importance of giving opinion. | Students' understanding of importance of giving opinion. | Do not understand the importance | Very limited understanding | Fairly good understanding | Very good understanding |
| | 10. Use of strategies to overcome shyness. | Awareness and use of strategies. | Unaware of strategies | Slightly aware | Fairly aware | Very aware |
| | 11. Perception of the effectiveness of roleplay. | Perception of roleplay assistance. | Does not feel roleplay helps at all | Slightly helpful | Fairly helpful | Very helpful |

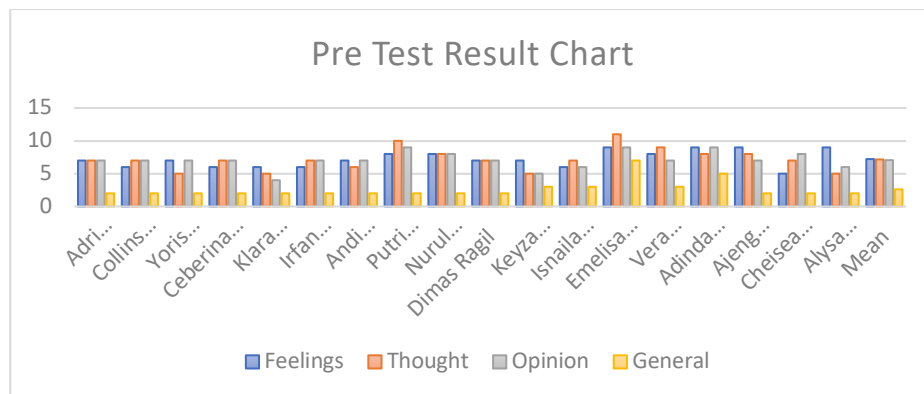
Based on the pre-test results obtained from 18 students, there was variation in the scores, indicating differences in the achievements across each dimension of communication skills evaluated. The data from the pre-test results is summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Pre-Test Results

| No. | Students' | Feelings | Thought | Opinion | General |
|-----|-----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
|-----|-----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|

| Initial Name | | | | | |
|--------------|----|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | AM | 7 | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| 2 | CF | 6 | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| 3 | YW | 7 | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| 4 | CK | 6 | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| 5 | KA | 6 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 6 | IF | 6 | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| 7 | AM | 7 | 6 | 7 | 2 |
| 8 | PC | 8 | 10 | 9 | 2 |
| 9 | NH | 8 | 8 | 8 | 2 |
| 10 | DR | 7 | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| 11 | KT | 7 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| 12 | IR | 6 | 7 | 6 | 3 |
| 13 | EO | 9 | 11 | 9 | 7 |
| 14 | VV | 8 | 9 | 7 | 3 |
| 15 | AN | 9 | 8 | 9 | 5 |
| 16 | AI | 9 | 8 | 7 | 2 |
| 17 | CM | 5 | 7 | 8 | 2 |
| 18 | AA | 9 | 5 | 6 | 2 |
| Mean | | 7.22 | 7.16 | 7.05 | 2.61 |

Chart 1. Pre Test Result Chart



The pre-test results conducted with 18 students showed variation in the scores obtained across each dimension of communication skills. Overall, the data indicated that most students were relatively comfortable expressing their feelings, although there were differences in individual comfort levels.

Scores in the Feelings dimension ranged from 5 to 9, with most students feeling fairly comfortable expressing their emotions, while some exhibited lower comfort levels. In the Thought dimension, most students demonstrated a reasonable ability to express ideas, although a few encountered difficulties. Scores in this dimension varied between 5 and 11, with some students receiving lower scores, reflecting challenges in articulating their ideas clearly and in a structured manner, while others showed stronger abilities in conveying their thoughts. Regarding the Opinion dimension, most students were able to express their opinions well, though levels of nervousness varied. Scores in this dimension ranged from 4

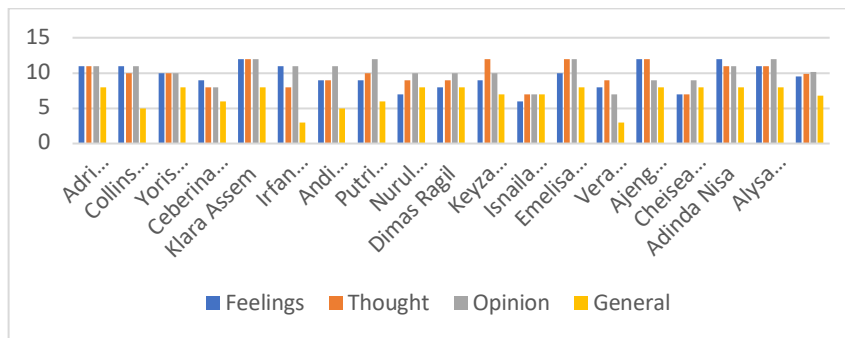
to 9, with the majority of students expressing their opinions adequately, while some experienced high levels of anxiety and struggled to articulate their views clearly. The final aspect, General, which measures students' awareness of strategies to overcome communication barriers, revealed that most students were not fully aware of or did not fully utilize strategies to improve their speaking skills. Scores in this dimension ranged from 2 to 7, with many students scoring lower, indicating a lack of awareness regarding communication strategies, although some students demonstrated a higher level of understanding about the importance of specific techniques to enhance their speaking abilities.

Overall, the pre-test results provide insight that, while most students show good potential in communication, there is still room for further development. The score variation across each dimension, with both the lowest and highest scores reflecting comfort, confidence, and students' understanding of the importance of communication skills, highlights the need for more focused and tailored interventions.

Table 3. Post-Test Results

| No | Students' Initial Name | Feelings | Thought | Opinion | General |
|-------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | AM | 11 | 11 | 11 | 8 |
| 2 | CF | 11 | 10 | 11 | 5 |
| 3 | YW | 10 | 10 | 10 | 8 |
| 4 | CK | 9 | 8 | 8 | 6 |
| 5 | KA | 12 | 12 | 12 | 8 |
| 6 | IF | 11 | 8 | 11 | 3 |
| 7 | AM | 9 | 9 | 11 | 5 |
| 8 | PC | 9 | 10 | 12 | 6 |
| 9 | NH | 7 | 9 | 10 | 8 |
| 10 | DR | 8 | 9 | 10 | 8 |
| 11 | KT | 9 | 12 | 10 | 7 |
| 12 | IR | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| 13 | EO | 10 | 12 | 12 | 8 |
| 14 | VV | 8 | 9 | 7 | 3 |
| 15 | AN | 12 | 12 | 9 | 8 |
| 16 | AI | 7 | 7 | 9 | 8 |
| 17 | CM | 12 | 11 | 11 | 8 |
| 18 | AA | 11 | 11 | 12 | 8 |
| Mean | | 9.55 | 9.83 | 10.16 | 6.77 |

Chart 2. Post Test Result Chart



After the intervention, a post-test was conducted to evaluate the changes in students' communication abilities following the designed activities. The post-test results, which cover the four main dimensions of Feelings, Thought, Opinion, and General, demonstrate the development in students' abilities to express feelings, convey ideas, give opinions, and overcome communication barriers.

In the Feelings dimension, most students showed a clear increase in comfort when expressing their emotions, with scores ranging from 6 to 12. This indicates that students now feel more at ease when speaking and sharing their feelings. In the Thought dimension, most students showed improvement in articulating ideas, though there was some variation in scores, ranging from 7 to 12. A few students received the highest score (12), indicating significant progress in conveying their ideas clearly and in an organized manner. Regarding the Opinion dimension, a notable improvement was also observed, with most students expressing their opinions more confidently. Scores in this dimension ranged from 7 to 12, showing that the majority of students felt more comfortable and capable of sharing their opinions in a more effective and structured way. The General dimension, which measures the use of strategies to overcome communication barriers, showed improvement, although not all students fully utilized the available strategies. Scores ranged from 3 to 8, with some students receiving lower scores, suggesting that awareness of communication strategies still needs to be enhanced.

Overall, the post-test results indicate that the intervention successfully improved students' communication skills across the four measured dimensions. However, some students still require more practice and attention to increase their awareness of the importance of communication strategies in enhancing their speaking proficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the use of the roleplay method is effective in addressing the shyness and language difficulties experienced by students in English language learning. Through roleplay, students are given the opportunity to speak in various situations relevant to everyday life, which helps them feel more confident and comfortable expressing their feelings, thoughts, and opinions. Despite variations in students' initial abilities, consistent application of roleplay can enhance students' speaking skills, particularly in overcoming anxiety and nervousness. This is evident from the pre-test and post-test results, which show a significant improvement in communication dimensions, such as comfort level in expressing emotions, ability to convey ideas, and giving opinions. Additionally, students' awareness of the importance of using strategies to overcome communication barriers also increased. Therefore, it can be concluded that roleplay is a highly effective method in language learning, not only improving speaking skills but also helping students overcome language difficulties in a fun and interactive way.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that educators implement the roleplay method more frequently in the language learning process, particularly to address communication barriers such as shyness and speaking anxiety. Teachers should prepare relevant and supportive scenarios to allow students to practice in various challenging yet safe situations, thereby boosting their confidence. Furthermore, continuous evaluation of students' progress, both through pre-tests and post-tests as well as direct observations, is crucial to monitor improvements in their speaking abilities. It is expected that with the application of this method, students will not only master speaking skills in English but also feel more comfortable and unafraid to actively participate in learning. Educators should also provide constructive and positive feedback to ensure that students remain motivated and engaged in the learning process.

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