

Promoting speaking and translation skills to EFL students through the sociodrama method

Mochammad Prasetya* and Rohmani Nur Indah

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri, East Java, Indonesia

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, East Java, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Related to the condition and situation of X class, some students get difficulty arranging the word in speaking English. Considering that problem, teaching speaking was applied using the Sociodrama method to improve students' speaking and translation skill. This research design is classroom action research (CAR), which has four steps. The result is that using Sociodrama can improve students' speaking and translation skills from 63% in cycle one, meaning that it was not a success because it did not reach the criterion of success, 60 points to 75% of participants. One of the factors that caused the first cycle to be unsuccessful was that the researchers grouped the students randomly. Therefore, the researchers changed the group to a different range of intellectuals in cycle two. Furthermore, the use of Sociodrama can motivate students to speak, and it can be fun and relax the students to pay more attention since they are more enjoyable learning English and suggestion for other people, especially for the English teacher to apply the sociodrama method for teaching speaking and translation.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia ranks 81 out of 111 countries on the English Proficiency Index in 2022 in terms of English proficiency (<https://www.ef.co.id/epi/>, 2022). This result is very concerning if we compare it with neighboring Singapore, which occupies the 2nd position, even though the era of globalization requires every individual to have reliable skills in the field of science and technology. We can balance education, economy, tourism, and cultural competition with other countries if we have quality human resources. Therefore, being proficient in English is a strength in itself.

Teaching and learning English in Indonesia has its challenges as an EFL country. The Indonesian government places English as a compulsory subject in schools, from junior high school to university. However, many students still cannot speak and translate English well, even though they have studied English for many years. Speaking is one of the essential skills when learning a foreign language because it is the basis of the ability to communicate (Oradee, 2013). Moreover, speaking skills are increasingly emerging as one of the critical competencies in the 21st century.

* Corresponding email: tyo.rsalfm@gmail.com

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As a result, teacher creativity is needed to develop speaking learning that can accelerate students' speaking competence (Menggo et al., 2019).

Based on the syllabus of senior high schools in Indonesia, speaking has been taught since the tenth grade. The students' competence has reached the standard of competence in the school, although there are still some errors. Generally, tenth-grade students have difficulty speaking. This condition happens because students refer to their mother tongue when translating conversations into English. Besides that, many students are afraid to participate in conversations because of their lack of vocabulary, so they cannot compose sentences with correct grammar (Khasawneh, 2021).

Realizing these problems, this study begins with creating challenging, effective, and efficient student-centered learning to motivate students to communicate freely. In realizing this learning objective, this study offered the use of the sociodrama method, which is assumed to help students develop their language skills (Sternberg & Garcia, 2000). One of the reasons is that sociodrama has a holistic or comprehensive use, namely a kinesthetic modality that binds emotions, thoughts, and body movements. These three things help the development of students by improving students speaking and translating skills. Kellerman in Browne (2005) also states that sociodrama is a method for socializing change and a form of intercultural communication.

The advantage of the sociodrama method is that learning in groups can help and strengthen each other in interacting; this learning is centered on students and the teacher only as a facilitator. This method provides a lot of experience in learning to speak English for students because they practice scenes, can empathize with what happens to other people because of the results of the roles played, and can also appreciate the meaning contained in the dialogues played. This is also supported by Smilansky's statement in Almon (2008) about the superiority of sociodrama that affects cognitive creative activities and social-emotional activities. Cognitive creative activities include better verbal language, enriched vocabulary, comprehension, better language level, greater curiosity, a better understanding of others, higher intellectual competence, and better cooperation between friends.

There are many studies related to the application of the sociodrama method in improving students' speaking skills, and the results show that the sociodrama method can significantly improve students' speaking skills (Nehe, 2019). This sociodrama method is also seen as very effective in improving English speaking skills and learning achievement, even at the primary school level (Suyitno et al., 2021). By applying the sociodrama method, primary school students can improve their English fluency and accuracy of their pronunciation (Jupon & Hamid, 2022).

For the context of learning speaking for EFL students, especially for tenth graders, a number of scholars reported the successful application of the sociodrama method, for example, what was found by Sinaga and Pangaribuan (2018). They stated that the tenth graders became more active in classroom activities to boost oral proficiency with the sociodrama method. In addition, tenth graders also enjoy learning to speak in the English classroom (Taufan, 2020). However, there is not enough empirical evidence on how sociodrama improves not only speaking proficiency but also translation skills. For this reason, more exploration is still needed to see whether the sociodrama method is also recommended to improve English translation and speaking skills, especially for tenth graders.

The difficulties encountered by students to participate actively in English speaking are due to the gap in effectively addressing the flow of ideas from other speakers. Therefore, they need to use speaking triggers such as learning media to promote their fluency. Syafiq et al. (2021) attempt to find the use of videos to improve speaking skills. In this case, the enjoyment provided by the media enables students to participate better in conversation activities. Similarly, when sociodrama is offered to be used in speaking class, it is expected to trigger the student's eagerness to get involved in the class dialogue practices.

This study aims to complement previous research that the sociodrama method not only improves students' speaking but also improves students' understanding and ability to translate. This research is a collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR) with an English teacher. This study departs from the assumption that the sociodrama method can result in an increase in students' speaking and translation skills.

METHOD

The place of this CAR is in the tenth grade of a state high school in Nganjuk, East Java, and the duration was in the half-final semester. The design of this research is CAR in collaboration with an English teacher. To find the existing problems, the researchers interviewed the English teacher. The teacher believed that the students were reluctant to speak during activities and found it hard to engage in English conversations. Students have difficulty expressing their ideas, and they are less active in participating in class. Therefore, the researchers were assisted by an English teacher to conduct collaborative classroom action research to improve speaking and translating skills by using sociodrama. This action is carried out in two cycles. The design of this study uses the Kemmis and McTaggart action research model (Altricher et al., 2002).

Collaborative classroom action research was chosen in this study as it involves collaboration among teachers, researchers, and students, which can foster a sense of shared responsibility and ownership for the research process and outcomes (Nevin et al., 2009). This approach recognizes that teachers and students have valuable insights and experiences to contribute and that collaboration can lead to more meaningful and relevant research outcomes.

FINDINGS

Related to the application of the sociodrama method and observation in the teaching and learning process of speaking and translating, it can be seen that teaching speaking using the sociodrama method was able to improve the speaking and translating skills of class X students. In the first cycle, the percentage of students who scored 60 was 63%, meaning that the percentage of students speaking and translating skills in the first cycle had not been achieved. Thus, the implementation of the sociodrama method in cycle 1 had not been successful yet.

One of the factors causing the failure to achieve class completeness in cycle 1 was that the researchers failed to control the course of the teaching and learning process in the classroom properly. The researchers did not create a good situation before explaining how to use sociodrama. Therefore, most of the students in the class were so noisy that the researchers had to explain more than once which caused this technique not to work well because the time allotted was limited. Likewise, the researchers did not collaborate with active and passive students. Thus, groups consisting of passive students did not go well.

Ramayulis (2010) states that if a new sociodrama is applied in teaching, the teacher must clearly explain the implementation technique. The teacher is also responsible for explaining the situation and problems, the course of events, and the background story that will be played. In addition, the teacher must also arrange the scene and ensure the mental readiness of the players.

In cycle two, the researchers collaborated with active and passive students and could control the class better than before. After that, the best drama performer with good wording got a prize from the researchers. The results of the speaking test using the Sociodrama Technique in cycle 2 showed that 75% of students achieved a score of 60, implying that in the second cycle, the students' speaking and translating skills increased.

Compared to the results of cycle 1, there was an increase in students' speaking and translation skills in cycle 2, such as students having serious discussions using English. Even small group discussions could really help each student because they could exchange ideas. Not only

that, but they also paid more attention to explanations from the teacher and asked all things related to the material that could help them complete the given task. It could be seen from the list that the percentage of students who got standard scores increased from 63% to 75%. The results of the observations also showed that students' enthusiasm (passive and active) increased from 63% of students to 75% of students. The percentage of students speaking and translating skills requirements in the second cycle of this research had been achieved, and the sociodrama learning implementation was a success.

The findings above indicate the sociodrama method can presumably improve students' speaking and translating skills, and it can also be assumed that the sociodrama method can improve class X students' speaking and translating skills. In addition, it was found that 75% of students could obtain a minimum score of 60 in the second cycle. This fact showed that there was an increase in the speaking and translating skills of class X students by applying the sociodrama method. In cycle 2, almost all students experienced an increase in the test scores of students speaking and translating skills. Cycle 2 was marked by increasing aspects of speaking and translating assessments, where students have been able to translate drama narratives into English and can act out dramas according to the expected procedures so that, generally, students can get good grades.

Based on the evaluation results of improving speaking and translating skills in the learning process cycles 1 and 2, it can be seen that students' speaking and translating skills in translating and acting out sociodrama improved. From the results of the evaluation in cycle 1, students completed 63%, and in cycle 2, students completed 75%. It can be seen that students' speaking and translating skills can improve after using the sociodrama method. Based on the facts of each cycle, it showed that the application of the sociodrama method in this study was successful. It was proven by the increase in activity in each cycle following the learning process.

There are several reasons why the implementation of the sociodrama method may have been successful in promoting students' speaking skills and enabling them to translate sociodrama scripts from their first language into English: First, the students need more practice for a better active engagement with the task of sociodrama. In this case, sociodrama is an active and participatory approach that involves students in the process of creating and acting out different scenarios. This can help to increase their engagement and motivation in the learning process, which in turn can promote language acquisition and skill development. At first, the students discussed and drafted their scenarios in their first language, and then they practiced translating the script into English, which took more time. Therefore, this activity can also be done as a take-home assignment. The student's involvement in the activity of planning the sociodrama promotes their active engagement and is also proven effective for intermediate students (Veiga, 2022).

Furthermore, the sociodrama method is effective in improving authentic language use. Therefore tenth, grader students need a longer time to develop their skills in using language for an authentic purpose. As shown in the finding of this study, sociodrama provides students with opportunities to use language in a meaningful and authentic way. By acting out different scenarios, students are exposed to a range of language functions and structures, which can help to improve their speaking skills (Nehe, 2019).

Not only practicing speaking the sociodrama method practiced in this study is also a good opportunity for the tenth grader students for social and emotional learning. Sociodrama can also help students develop social and emotional skills, such as empathy, perspective-taking, and communication (Banerjee et al., 2016). The time the tenth grader students planned the script of the sociodrama, they also practiced understanding the social condition represented in the dialogues. These skills can be valuable for language learning, as they can help students understand and navigate different social and cultural contexts.

The tenth-grader students in this study performed better in the second cycle because of learning from feedback and reflection. Through sociodrama, students can receive feedback from

their peers and teachers, which can help them identify areas for improvement and build on their strengths. Reflection on their performance and progress can also help students develop metacognitive skills, which can support their ongoing language learning (Anderson, 2012).

Overall, the sociodrama method can be a valuable tool for promoting language learning and skill development, particularly for learners who benefit from active and participatory approaches to learning. The results of this classroom action research were in accordance with the statement of Almon (2008) that sociodrama affects cognitive creative activities and social-emotional activities. Cognitive creative activities include better verbal language, enriched vocabulary, comprehension, better language level, greater and increased curiosity, a better understanding of others, higher intellectual competence, and better cooperation between friends.

The result of this classroom action research was also supported by previous research. Nehe's research (2019) resulted that the application of the sociodrama method can significantly improve students' speaking skills and also able to improve students' understanding and ability to translate. Then, Taufan's research (2020) resulted in the application of the sociodrama method, having made some progress during the learning process. Sociodramatic is useful to improve the students' speaking skills. In addition, most students feel interested in and enjoy the learning process by having a sociodramatic play in speaking class.

In this study, one of the reasons why sociodrama is effectively applied in tenth graders who are adolescent learners is because this method boosts students' comprehension. This is in line with that found by another study involving adult learners (Nuraeni et al., 2020). Moreover, in the Indonesian context as the locus of this classroom action research, students in the class come from various first-language contexts. The sociodrama method can bridge understanding and facilitate the development of students' expressive abilities in English. In another study that observed the application of the sociodrama method with students from multiple home languages, this method proved to be effective. Students are getting better at the productivity of expressive narrative skills (Malloy, 2021).

The successful implementation of the sociodrama method that can enhance the skills of speaking and translating ideas demands some requirements and preparation. Based on the result of reflection after the implementation of the second cycle of this collaborative action research, the following conditions were considered necessary. First, adequate training with the collaborative teacher. Teachers who want to incorporate sociodrama into their language teaching should have adequate training and knowledge about the technique. This includes understanding the principles and objectives of sociodrama, as well as how to create and structure sociodrama activities. During the planning process before the action implementation, the teacher should be equipped with a clear teaching procedure and step-by-step technique to make students understand the instruction. Adequate training ensures the success of the teaching practice (Levin & Rock, 2003).

Another requirement for better teaching and learning using sociodrama is clear learning objectives. It seemed that in the first cycle, the clear learning objectives for the sociodrama activities were not well represented. Accordingly, in the second cycle, the learning objective was informed to the class earlier. The teacher wrote the learning goal and the steps of doing the sociodrama method on the whiteboard to help students understand the purpose of the activity and stay focused on the language skills they are trying to improve. Clear and detailed instruction prior to the activities leads to the success of learning outcomes in EFL classrooms (Paolini, 2015).

The class activity should consider the duration needed. Accordingly, another preparation needed before applying the sociodrama method is to ensure the appropriate scenarios. Not only looking at the duration, but the scenarios used in sociodrama activities should also be appropriate for the language proficiency level of the students. In addition, the scenarios should be relevant to the student's interests and experiences to make the activity more engaging. Therefore, the teacher should discuss the topic of sociodrama that is relevant to the interest of the tenth-grader students.

By preparing the scenario well, it can anticipate the challenges and difficulties that the teacher and students potentially meet during the practice of sociodrama (Angelianawati, 2019).

In the implementation of sociodrama, the group composition involves various proficiency levels. The composition of the member of sociodrama groups is important for the success of the activity. Teachers should ensure that the groups consist of tenth-grader students with different proficiency levels, interests, and backgrounds so that the learning outcomes are attainable. Varying proficiency in a learning group is significant as a part of the success of collaborative learning (Lin & Lin, 2015).

Another criterion that supports the success of implementing the sociodrama method in this study concerns a safe and supportive environment. It means that the teacher should create a safe and supportive environment for the sociodrama activity, where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and making mistakes without fear of judgment. As the students prepared the script of the dialogue, the teacher monitored them and gave direct feedback. This is in line with the view of Thompson and Wheeler (2010) that when the teacher provides a supportive environment for learning, the students can express themselves more freely and stay focused on the task without making unnecessary noise.

After the sociodrama practice, another key to successful implementation is adequate feedback and evaluation. The teacher provided feedback in English mixed with the student's first language to ensure that the tenth-grader students comprehended the result of the evaluation during and after the sociodrama activity. This will help students understand their strengths and weaknesses and improve their language skills in the future (Muhsin, 2016). By addressing these requirements and preparations, teachers can successfully implement sociodrama in their language teaching and enhance students' speaking and translating skills

The finding of this study has several limitations. As this study employed collaborative classroom action research, it belongs to a practical and applied approach that aims to address real-world problems faced by the tenth grader students in Nganjuk as the participants of this study. Therefore, the identification of the issues is relevant only to their specific context. It might not be the same as the general context of other levels of English proficiency. Accordingly, the sociodrama method applied in this study can be a possible solution that is practical and meaningful for other students with similar issues.

As this study only lasted for several months, more experiment with a long teaching and learning duration is needed to confirm the validity and relevance shown in this study. In this case, the collaborative classroom action research applied to a larger scope in other schools of various English proficiency levels can enhance the validity and relevance of the research findings. This is possible as it is grounded in the experiences and perspectives of those who are directly involved in the research process. This can lead to research that is more meaningful and applicable to the context in which it is conducted.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research finding, it is clear that the use of sociodrama for tenth-grade students can improve their speaking and translating skills by implementing small group discussions consisting of five students with different proficiencies. Therefore, sociodrama, which involves role-playing and group discussions, can create an engaging and interactive learning environment that encourages students to use their language skills in a practical context. By working in small groups with peers who have varying levels of proficiency, students can practice and improve their speaking and translating abilities in a supportive and collaborative setting. Additionally, sociodrama can help students develop their social and emotional skills by promoting empathy, understanding, and communication. By exploring different perspectives and scenarios through role-playing, students can improve their ability to connect with others and work effectively in a team.

Overall, the use of sociodrama in language teaching has the potential to enhance students' language proficiency, as well as their social and emotional skills. Teachers and educators may consider incorporating sociodrama into their lesson plans as a means of creating a more engaging, interactive, and effective learning experience for tenth-grade students. To ensure that sociodrama is used effectively, EFL teachers should: (1) Be familiar with the sociodrama technique and how it can be used to improve language proficiency and social skills. (2) Understand the learning objectives of sociodrama and how they align with the language curriculum. (3) Have a clear plan and structure for the sociodrama activities, including the roles, scenarios, and objectives. (4) Create a safe and supportive environment for students to participate in sociodrama activities. (5) Provide feedback and guidance to students on their language use and social skills during and after the sociodrama activities. (6) Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of sociodrama in improving language proficiency and social skills and make adjustments as necessary. By following these guidelines, EFL teachers can effectively incorporate sociodrama into their language teaching and provide a more engaging and interactive learning experience for their tenth-grade students.

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