

## ROLE PLAY TO ALLEVIATE SPEAKING ANXIETY: ACTION RESEARCH IN ESP CLASS OF BATAM TOURISM POLYTECHNIC

### PENERAPAN ROLE PLAY UNTUK MENGATASI KECEMASAN BERBICARA DI KELAS ESP POLITEKNIK PARIWISATA BATAM

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#### ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the effectiveness of the role-play technique as a pedagogical intervention to reduce speaking anxiety among students in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course at Batam Tourism Polytechnic. Considering the significance of English proficiency in the hospitality industry, the research aims to enhance students' confidence and communicative competence through interactive learning methods. The study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design with a mixed-methods approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of role play. A total of 23 students participated as the sample of this research. Data were collected using speaking performance rubrics, observation checklists, field notes, and a speaking anxiety questionnaire adapted from Horwitz's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Oral test results indicated that 91.30% of students met the minimum mastery criteria, with 21 out of 23 students passing. Post-intervention data showed that 40% of students experienced low anxiety, while 60% were categorized as having moderate anxiety. These findings suggest that role play effectively reduces speaking anxiety and improves oral proficiency in an ESP context. It is recommended that structured role-play activities be integrated consistently within extended learning hours to maximize engagement and language practice.

**Keywords:** CAR, ESP, Role-Play, Speaking

#### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini menganalisis efektivitas teknik role-play sebagai intervensi pedagogis untuk mengurangi kecemasan berbicara pada mahasiswa dalam mata kuliah English for Specific Purposes (ESP) di Politeknik Pariwisata Batam. Mengingat pentingnya kemahiran berbahasa Inggris dalam industri perhotelan, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dan kompetensi komunikasi mahasiswa melalui metode pembelajaran interaktif. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) dengan pendekatan campuran untuk memperoleh pemahaman menyeluruh terhadap dampak role-play. Sebanyak 23 mahasiswa menjadi sampel dalam penelitian ini. Data dikumpulkan melalui rubrik penilaian berbicara, lembar observasi, catatan lapangan, serta angket kecemasan berbicara yang diadaptasi dari Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) oleh Horwitz. Hasil tes lisan menunjukkan bahwa 91,30% mahasiswa mencapai kriteria ketuntasan minimal. Setelah intervensi, 40% mahasiswa mengalami kecemasan rendah, dan 60% berada pada tingkat kecemasan sedang. Role-play terbukti efektif meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara dalam konteks ESP.*

**Kata kunci:** CAR, ESP, Role-Play, Speaking

## INTRODUCTION

English has been recognized as the dominant language of international communication for decades. Individuals across the globe strive to achieve proficiency in English to facilitate interaction across national boundaries in various sectors, including education, healthcare, business, politics, global security, and networking. As stated in Xhemaili asserts that “English is the primary language of international relations and diplomacy” and emphasizes that proficiency in the language is essential for fostering more effective collaboration within international organizations”. (Xhemaili, 2022) This shown that English proficiency is widely regarded as a fundamental requirement for engaging in international relations. It is often asserted that those lacking English language skills are at a significant disadvantage in accessing global information. In response, many people are actively pursuing opportunities to enhance their English qualifications, as the language has become an essential tool for participation in global communities. (Hidayat, 2024) Furthermore, with the increasing trend of globalization, the ability to communicate effectively in English is not merely beneficial but indispensable. In any context involving international collaboration or exchange, spoken English plays a vital and irreplaceable role. (Kawakibi & Indrawan, 2024) The integration of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) likewise reflects efforts to broaden international interaction by equipping learners with the language skills necessary for effective communication within global professional and academic communities.

As cited in Sukying (Sukying et al., 2023), Paltridge and Starfield define English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as a concept that emerged in the 1960s and has since become foundational in the fields of Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching (ELT). ESP is primarily concerned with developing learners’ English language competencies that are specifically aligned with the communicative requirements of particular academic or occupational settings. The development of ESP course materials—integrating both linguistic features and relevant disciplinary content—must therefore be grounded in a thorough analysis of learners’ authentic language needs within their educational and professional trajectories. In the hospitality industry, English for Specific Purposes has become an indispensable tool for professional communication. (Sukying et al., 2023) Given the global nature of tourism and hospitality services, English proficiency is a vital skill that enables hotel staff to interact with international guests, respond to service requests, and handle cross-cultural encounters effectively. (Maldin, 2022) Recognizing this need, hospitality education institutions, including Batam Tourism Polytechnic, place a strong emphasis on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly in areas relevant to hotel operations such as front office communication, housekeeping procedures, and guest services. English is not only taught as a general language, but also contextualized to suit real-life scenarios in the hotel setting, ensuring students are linguistically prepared for their future careers.

Batam Tourism Polytechnic acknowledges the significance of English language education, particularly English for Specific Purposes (ESP), in equipping students within the vocational hospitality sector with the linguistic competencies required for their future professional careers (Ma’fiah & Sumardiono, 2023). Given the global nature of the tourism and hospitality industry, the ability to communicate effectively in English is essential for students, especially as they prepare for overseas internships and transition into the international workforce. Mastery of ESP tailored to hospitality contexts ensures that students are not only linguistically prepared but also familiar with the terminologies and communication styles specific to their field. (Nikolić, 2024) To support this objective, the institution has structured its curriculum to include a total of eight (8) credit hours of English language instruction.

These are strategically distributed across several semesters—specifically semesters 1, 2, 4/5, and 6—allowing for a gradual and comprehensive development of students’ English proficiency. In the second semester, a targeted English course is offered to enhance students’ practical language skills and to prepare them for fieldwork or internships. This approach ensures that students gain both general and specialized English communication skills in alignment with the operational demands of the

hospitality industry. (Sulaiman Alhumaidan & Mohammed Alghamdi, 2023) This research specifically focuses on the English for Room Division course, which is part of the Room Division Management study program. The course is designed to equip students with functional English related to front office and housekeeping operations, including guest interaction, service procedures, and standard communication protocols used in hotel environments. Through this study, the researcher aims to examine how the course supports students in overcoming communication anxiety and enhancing their readiness for real-world hospitality settings.

Among the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking is widely regarded as the most crucial in English courses for the hospitality industry. This is supported by the findings of Maafiyah and Sumardiono (2021), which indicate that students require strong communicative competence, particularly in situational dialogues commonly encountered in hotel settings. Such findings underscore the importance of effective spoken communication in delivering high-quality guest services, handling inquiries, addressing complaints, and upholding professional standards within the hospitality context. (Kusuma et al., 2023) In response to this, the English curriculum in the Room Division Management program is specifically designed with a strong focus on speaking competence. While grammar and vocabulary are still embedded within the syllabus, they are taught implicitly to support communicative fluency rather than being the main instructional focus. The goal is to create graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also confident and articulate in delivering service through English.

Despite the communicative goals of the syllabus, instructors often face significant challenges in developing students' speaking skills, particularly their reluctance to actively participate in oral activities. (Sukying et al., 2023) Although lessons are designed to foster interaction, many students remain passive during discussions. They tend to listen attentively but rarely initiate or respond to verbal prompts, creating a contradiction between classroom behavior and the speaking-focused objectives of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction. This passivity limits opportunities for students to build communicative competence, which is essential for handling real-world interactions in hospitality settings.

A key factor contributing to this reluctance is students' fear of making mistakes, which leads to anxiety and communication apprehension. (Zulfikar, 2022) Speaking in front of peers or instructors often triggers emotional discomfort due to concerns about negative evaluation, ridicule, or appearing incompetent. As a result, students avoid using English spontaneously and instead prefer passive learning methods such as listening and note-taking. This avoidance behavior not only hinders language fluency but also prevents the development of confidence needed for effective guest interaction in professional hospitality contexts.

This fear of negative evaluation often leads to a lack of self-confidence, compounded by feelings of inadequacy and linguistic incompetence. When expected to articulate their thoughts, students may experience cognitive overload, overthinking their responses and ultimately opting for silence. Consequently, rather than risking embarrassment or failure, students choose to withdraw from verbal participation, suppressing their ideas and limiting their language development. A primary factor contributing to students' silence is speaking anxiety, which manifests as fear of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation, and a general lack of self-confidence. (Piniel & Zólyomi, 2022) Many students express a fear of being laughed at or judged by peers and instructors if they mispronounce a word or use incorrect grammar. This fear creates psychological barriers that prevent students from speaking freely. In the context of hospitality, where quick and clear verbal interactions are expected, such hesitation can significantly impede skill development. Instead of engaging in spoken tasks, students often choose to listen passively and take notes, which limits their opportunity to practice real-life communication scenarios.

Speaking anxiety among students in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts, particularly in hospitality programs, can stem from various internal and psychological factors. A significant number of learners develop mental blocks toward English, especially when it involves oral communication. They often perceive speaking as the most intimidating skill due to the pressure of real-time performance and fear of making mistakes. According to Horwitz, and Cope (Tsui & Cheng, 2022), language anxiety is most commonly experienced in speaking tasks, where learners feel judged and exposed. This anxiety

can lead to avoidance behaviors, such as reluctance to participate in classroom discussions or voluntary speaking tasks. Furthermore, students' negative self-perceptions regarding their English proficiency can intensify this barrier, especially if they compare themselves unfavorably to their peers.

Another factor contributing to students' speaking anxiety is the limited opportunity to practice speaking English both in and outside the classroom. In many non-English-speaking environments, English is used almost exclusively in academic settings. Outside the classroom, students often revert to their native language, resulting in minimal authentic language use. As highlighted by Wang, insufficient exposure to the target language in natural contexts inhibits fluency development and reinforces anxiety due to a lack of communicative confidence (Liu & Wang, 2023). Moreover, students may not be given adequate rehearsal time in class to prepare and practice their speaking skills. This limited practice reduces their readiness to engage in spontaneous communication, especially in high-pressure scenarios typical in the hospitality field.

In addition to learner-related factors, the instructional approach adopted by lecturers can significantly influence students' speaking anxiety. Teaching methods that are monotonous, overly teacher-centered, or reliant on repetitive routines may disengage students and increase their apprehension. It is emphasized by Douglas that repetitive classroom activities can lower student motivation and lead to boredom (Basturkmen, 2025). More recently, the new trend advocates for interactive, learner-centered approaches that promote meaningful communication and reduce performance pressure (Richards & Rodgers, 2021). When lecturers fail to create dynamic, supportive, and empathetic learning environments, students may feel intimidated or discouraged from participating, particularly if errors are met with harsh correction rather than constructive feedback. Therefore, pedagogical sensitivity and the incorporation of varied, interactive techniques such as role play, peer collaboration, and real-world simulations are essential to lowering anxiety and encouraging student engagement.

Given the persistent challenges associated with students' speaking anxiety in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms, particularly within the hospitality education context, it is imperative to explore alternative instructional techniques that align with learners' psychological and linguistic needs. Traditional teacher-centered approaches have proven insufficient in promoting active language use among anxious learners. As Xu stated in Zulfikar argue that students experiencing high levels of foreign language anxiety require a low-risk environment with engaging, participatory methods to build confidence and fluency (Zulfikar, 2022). Therefore, incorporating more dynamic and student-centered techniques, such as collaborative learning and experiential activities, becomes a necessary shift to foster effective spoken communication.

One such technique that has been widely recognized for its pedagogical value in reducing language anxiety is Role Play. Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated the value of this method in enhancing students' communicative competence within language learning contexts. The role-play activities contribute meaningfully to the development of learners' speaking skills by creating an interactive, low-stakes environment that encourages language production (Khamouja et al., 2023). Moreover, Role play also underscores the transformative potential of role play in bridging the gap between abstract linguistic and cultural knowledge and authentic communicative performance (S. Luo et al., 2024). Through dramatization and simulated real-life scenarios, students are not only exposed to cross-cultural dynamics but are also able to refine their listening and speaking abilities, organize language more effectively, and exercise greater creativity in spoken interaction.

Further supporting this pedagogical perspective, the correlation on the integration of role-play techniques significantly enhances students' confidence in using spoken English (Karyati et al., 2025). This increased self-assurance is a critical precursor to active participation in communicative tasks, particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts such as hospitality, where spontaneous, situational interaction is essential. Collectively, these studies highlight role play as a dynamic and multidimensional tool that fosters linguistic fluency, cultural awareness, and psychological readiness components crucial to the success of language learners in professional and academic settings.

Thus, it can be interpreted that this method involves placing students in simulated real-life situations often in pairs or small groups where they assume specific roles relevant to hospitality

contexts, such as receptionists, guests, or housekeeping staff. Role play enables learners to rehearse language meaningfully and interactively, allowing them to practice vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structure in a supportive setting. Role play provides a safe platform for learners to engage in communicative acts without the fear of public failure, thus gradually decreasing their speaking anxiety (Khamouja et al., 2023). By preparing dialogues, studying key phrases, and repeatedly rehearsing their roles, students become more familiar with the rhythm and flow of English, which contributes to increased fluency and self-assurance.

Furthermore, role play not only serves as a technique to practice language, but also promotes active engagement, peer collaboration, and learner autonomy. Students are given space to creatively express themselves, negotiate meaning, and reflect on their language choices. Recent studies, such as those emphasize that drama-based instruction like role play significantly improves learners' speaking performance and reduces communicative stress, particularly when the activities are authentic and contextually relevant to students' fields of study (Dawoud et al., 2023). In the case of hospitality students, incorporating scenarios such as hotel check-ins, complaint handling, and room service dialogues not only enhances their technical vocabulary but also prepares them for the communicative demands of the industry. As such, role play emerges as a highly effective strategy in bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use.

Role play has been widely recognized as an effective pedagogical approach in reducing students' speaking anxiety, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. According to Livbov in (Dawoud et al., 2024; Shang & Ma, 2024), role play transforms language learning into an active and motivating experience, allowing learners to engage in meaningful communication while distancing themselves from the fear of self-expression. When students assume a role, they are more willing to abandon their insecurities and become more expressive, as they feel less judged when speaking as someone else. This also emphasizes that role play promotes a psychologically safe learning environment, which is crucial for learners with high levels of language anxiety (Putri et al., 2024). It allows for spontaneous language use, cultivates self-confidence, and encourages creativity, all of which contribute to greater fluency in oral communication.

Beyond its emotional and psychological benefits, role play also simulates real-world scenarios, which is particularly relevant in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programs such as Room Division Management. Through carefully constructed role play tasks—such as handling guest complaints, managing reservations, or performing check-in and check-out procedures—students practice language that mirrors the communicative functions they will encounter in the hospitality industry. Integrating occupational contexts into classroom activities through role play enables learners to acquire both linguistic and pragmatic competence (Q. Luo, 2024). This not only enhances speaking performance but also prepares students for their future roles in the professional environment, making language learning both authentic and functional.

The challenges related to speaking anxiety and communicative competence in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts—particularly within hospitality education—have been widely explored in prior studies. Sukying et al. (2023), in *ESP Teachers: Insights, Challenges and Needs in the EFL Context*, highlights persistent issues ESP instructors face in motivating students to engage in oral communication, especially in language classrooms requiring situational interaction. Similarly, other study in *Teaching Culture and ICC in ESP in the Context of the Hospitality Industry* underscores the essential role of intercultural communicative competence and speaking confidence in preparing students for global service encounters (Nikolić, 2024). Moreover, other supporting study also reinforces these findings by identifying oral communication as a core gap in ESP curricula, advocating for learner-centered, agile strategies (Sulaiman Alhumaidan & Mohammed Alghamdi, 2023). In more focused area, examining ESP in Indonesian vocational hospitality schools, emphasize that students often lack the functional speaking skills necessary to handle authentic hotel service scenarios (Ma'fiyah & Sumardiono, 2023). Therefore, it has long established that the centrality of needs-based instructional design is needed to address domain-specific communicative challenges (Basturkmen, 2025). Collectively, these studies confirm that speaking-related issues in ESP are well-documented and

ongoing rather than novel or urgent, reinforcing the relevance of pedagogical innovations such as role play in addressing them.

Grounded in this theoretical and practical rationale, the researcher implemented role play as a classroom intervention to address speaking anxiety among second-semester students of the Room Division Management program at Batam Tourism Polytechnic during the 2024/2025 academic year. This action research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of role play in fostering a more confident and participatory speaking environment. The central research question posed was: “How can the role play technique overcome students’ speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms at Room Division Management of Batam Tourism Polytechnic?” In line with this question, the research objectives were to examine the process and impact of role play on reducing speaking anxiety and to evaluate its role in enhancing student engagement and language performance within the ESP classroom setting.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

This study adopted the Classroom Action Research (CAR) design to address students’ speaking anxiety and improve the effectiveness of English instruction, particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) settings. CAR is recognized as a powerful method to refine teaching strategies through systematic cycles of inquiry, reflection, and improvement. CAR enables educators to investigate their own teaching practices in real-time while directly engaging with student learning outcomes (Glenn et al., 2023). The central purpose of this study was twofold: to enhance the lecturer’s teaching performance and to reduce students’ speaking anxiety by implementing an interactive instructional technique—role play—within the Room Division Management program at Batam Tourism Polytechnic.

The research was carried out through a sequence of four interrelated phases: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Columbia Embury et al., 2025). Initially, the researcher identified the root causes of students’ anxiety and low participation during English-speaking activities. Based on these findings, a role play-based lesson plan was developed to encourage communication in realistic, low-pressure scenarios. In the action stage, the intervention was implemented in class, followed by systematic observation and data collection. Finally, the reflection phase involved collaborative discussions with a fellow English lecturer to evaluate the outcomes and revise subsequent teaching strategies. This cyclical approach ensured that the research remained responsive to classroom dynamics and learner needs.

In alignment with the participatory nature of action research, this study was conducted collaboratively between the primary researcher and a colleague teaching in the same institution. The collaboration enriched the objectivity and reliability of the findings by allowing triangulation of observations and interpretations. Collaborative CAR facilitates shared professional learning and supports educators in developing solutions rooted in their actual teaching environment (Phutthima et al., 2025). Both researchers worked together in preparing lesson materials, monitoring student behavior and performance, and reflecting on instructional effectiveness, thus ensuring the intervention’s fidelity and pedagogical soundness.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the instructional intervention’s impact, the researcher employed four research instruments: an observation checklist, questionnaire, field notes, and tests. The observation checklist was used to evaluate both student engagement and the lecturer’s instructional practices throughout the teaching-learning sessions. Field notes were kept to record detailed, qualitative observations on classroom atmosphere, interaction patterns, and unexpected occurrences. A structured questionnaire captured students’ perceptions regarding the effectiveness of role play in alleviating speaking anxiety. Finally, a pre-test and post-test were administered to assess the learners’ progress in speaking performance, particularly in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence.

To assess the students’ speaking improvements and their reduction in anxiety, a scoring rubric was employed that measured key indicators such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, interaction, and content relevance. This rubric was adapted from CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) guidelines and tailored to suit ESP learning outcomes in the hospitality domain. Using analytic rubrics in language assessment promotes transparency and offers specific insights into learner development (Little & Figueras, 2022). The use of both qualitative and quantitative instruments allowed

the researcher to triangulate data and draw well-founded conclusions about the role play technique's efficacy in fostering more confident, competent English speakers within the vocational context.

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the role-play technique in reducing students' speaking anxiety. It is emphasized that integrating both data types enhances the depth and validity of research findings by allowing researchers to triangulate data sources and better interpret complex phenomena in educational settings (Varghese et al., 2025). The qualitative data, obtained through observation checklists and field notes, were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative analysis proposed, which includes four main procedures: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Table 1. Speaking assessment rubric modified from CEFR levels A2–B2 for ESP

No	Category	Excellent (A)(Score: 91–100)	Very Good (B)(Score: 81–90)	Good (C)(Score: 73–80)	Fair (D)(Score: 64–72)	Poor (E)(Score: <64)
1	Fluency	Speaks fluently with only rare hesitation. Ideas flow naturally.	Generally fluent with minor hesitation that does not hinder meaning.	Moderate fluency with occasional pauses.	Hesitant and uneven flow; frequent pauses.	Very limited fluency; speech is mostly broken.
2	Pronunciation	Clear, accurate, and easy to understand; native-like rhythm.	Generally clear with minor errors; understandable.	Noticeable accent/errors, but intelligible.	Often unclear, affecting understanding.	Very difficult to understand.
3	Vocabulary	Uses a wide range of vocabulary accurately and appropriately.	Good range with minor errors in word choice.	Limited range, but sufficient for simple tasks.	Very limited vocabulary; repetition of basic words.	Inadequate vocabulary; meaning often unclear.
4	Grammar & Structure	Accurate grammar usage; complex structures used effectively.	Minor grammatical errors; mostly uses simple and some complex structures.	Frequent errors in basic structures, but message is conveyed.	Persistent errors that obscure meaning.	Grammar mostly inaccurate; message unclear.
5	Interactive Communication	Responds naturally, initiates and maintains conversation well.	Generally responsive and cooperative with good turn-taking.	Sometimes needs prompting to continue; interaction somewhat mechanical.	Minimal response; lacks confidence in interaction.	No meaningful interaction; relies on others.

These steps facilitated the identification of patterns and behaviors observed during the learning process, particularly regarding students' engagement, reactions to role-play activities, and classroom interaction dynamics. Meanwhile, the quantitative data, comprising students' scores from the speaking performance tests and their responses to questionnaires, were analyzed statistically using formulas (Varghese et al., 2025). To measure individual learning achievement (Daya Serap Individu/DSI), the formula applied was:

$$1. \text{DSI} = \frac{x}{y} \times 100$$

where X is the score obtained by an individual student, and Y is the maximum possible score. This allowed the researcher to determine each student's level of mastery in English speaking performance after the implementation of the role-play intervention.

- In addition to individual evaluation, the researcher also calculated classical learning achievement (Ketuntasan Belajar Klasikal/KBK) to assess the effectiveness of the strategy at the class level. The formula used was:

$$\text{KBK} = \frac{\sum N}{\sum S} \times 100\%$$

where  $\sum N$  represents the number of students who achieved the minimum success criterion ( $\geq 69$ ), and  $\sum S$  is the total number of students who took the test.

According to Ministry of Education guidelines (Permendiknas No. 20 Tahun 2007), a learning strategy is considered effective when at least 60% of students reach the minimum competency

standard. By combining these two methods of analysis, the study not only examined numerical improvements in student performance but also captured the underlying behavioral and emotional shifts resulting from the intervention. Addressing language anxiety requires both cognitive and affective insight, making the mixed-methods design particularly suited to language learning research (Liu & Wang, 2023). The criteria used in this study—minimum score of 69 for individual success and 60% for classical success—served as a benchmark to determine the impact of the role-play technique on students' speaking competence and confidence in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classroom context.

To accurately assess students' anxiety levels, educators and researchers require a structured and evidence-based evaluation tool that captures both psychological and behavioral indicators of anxiety during language performance. The rubric presented here evaluates speaking anxiety across five core dimensions: physical symptoms, verbal disfluency, avoidance behaviors, cognitive overload, and self-confidence. In addition to classroom observation, reflective self-report questionnaires can serve as a valuable source of data, enabling learners to express their internal experiences more openly. This dual-method approach offers a comprehensive understanding of students' speaking anxiety, informing targeted interventions to foster a more supportive and communicative language learning environment. This following rubric adapted from Howitz in Han about anxiety as the measurement standard for the questionnaire (Han et al., 2022).

Table 2. Anxiety rubric measurement

No	Category	Indicators	1 (Very Low)	2 (Low)	3 (Moderate)	4 (High)	5 (Very High)
1	Physical Symptoms	Sweating, shaking, increased heartbeat, dry mouth during speaking tasks	No signs	Rare and mild	Noticeable in some tasks	Frequent and moderate	Intense, interferes with performance
2	Verbal Disfluency	Hesitation, fillers ("uh", "um"), broken sentences, repetition	Speaks fluently	Minor hesitation	Moderate hesitation with message mostly clear	Frequent disfluency, impacts clarity	Severe, message often unintelligible or incomplete
3	Avoidance Behavior	Avoids eye contact, speaking, volunteering; stays silent	Actively participates	Slight reluctance	Participates with prompting	Avoids speaking unless forced	Refuses or completely avoids participation
4	Cognitive Overload	Overthinking, worry about mistakes, fear of judgment	Thinks clearly	Some concern about errors	Hesitates due to worry	Often paralyzed by fear	Unable to think clearly or respond when called on
5	Self-Confidence	Perceived ability to express ideas, belief in ability to speak English	Very confident	Generally confident	Somewhat insecure	Lacks confidence	Extremely insecure, shows self-doubt

Table 3 shows the following questionnaire designed to identify the details of the rubric with a Likert scale (1-5).

Table 3. Anxiety Questioner Indicator

No	Anxiety Indicator Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Always=5
1	<b>A. Physical Symptoms</b> I feel my heart pounding when I am asked to speak English in class. My hands become sweaty or shaky when speaking English in front of others. I experience dry mouth or shortness of breath when speaking English in class.
2	<b>B. Verbal Disfluency</b> I frequently repeat words or pause for a long time while speaking English. I often use fillers like "uh," "um," or "eh" when trying to express myself in English. I struggle to construct complete sentences spontaneously in English.



Table 3. Continued

Anxiety Indicator	
No	Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Always=5
<b>C. Avoidance Behavior</b>	
3	I avoid making eye contact with the teacher during English speaking sessions. I hesitate or refuse to volunteer to speak English in class. I prefer to remain silent rather than attempt to speak in English.
<b>D. Cognitive Overload</b>	
4	I focus too much on grammar rules when I try to speak English. I worry about making mistakes while speaking English. My mind goes blank or I feel confused when I am suddenly asked to speak English.
<b>E. Self-Confidence</b>	
5	I feel confident when expressing my opinion in English. I believe I can speak English adequately in contexts related to my field (e.g., hospitality). I worry about being judged negatively by peers or instructors when speaking English.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this classroom action research revealed that the implementation of the Role Play technique was significantly effective in reducing students' speaking anxiety and improving their oral English performance in the Room Division Management class. This conclusion was drawn from both qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

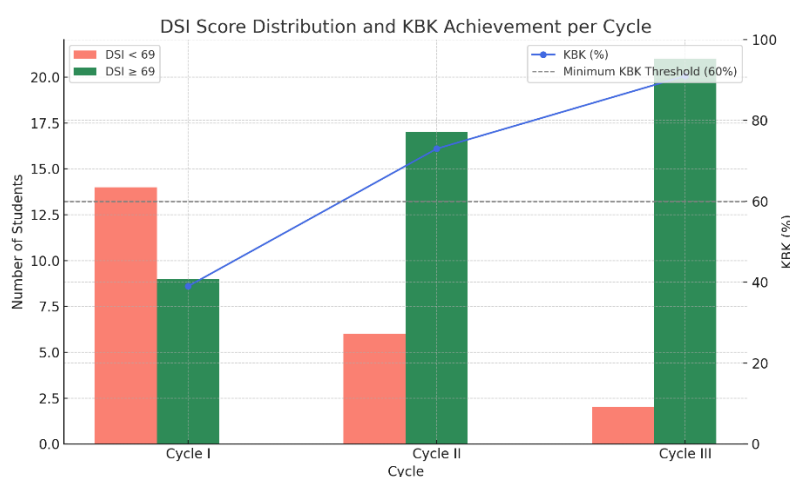


Figure 1. Comparison of DSI Scores and KBK per Cycle

The chart illustrates student performance across three learning cycles using a combination of bar and line graphs. The pink bars represent the number of students whose DSI (Daily Score Index) was below 69, indicating they did not meet the minimum individual passing score. In contrast, the \*\*green bars\*\* show the number of students who achieved a DSI score of 69 or higher, meeting the individual success criteria. Meanwhile, the blue line tracks the percentage of students achieving classical learning mastery (KBK), while the dashed gray line marks the minimum KBK threshold of 60%, which is the benchmark for group-level learning success. A DSI score of  $\geq 69$  signifies that a student has individually succeeded, but for the learning process to be considered effective at the group level, the KBK must reach at least 60%. The chart reveals that in Cycle I, only 39% of students achieved KBK, falling short of the required benchmark. However, Cycle II showed a marked improvement with 73% KBK, and Cycle III culminated in 91%, surpassing the minimum threshold and indicating that the learning intervention was successful in achieving its intended goals.

Based on the results of the oral performance test, 91,30% of the students achieved the minimum mastery criteria, with 21 out of 23 students successfully passing the test. These findings align with the series previous findings that emphasizes that role play enables learners to engage in purposeful communication, thereby promoting communicative competence. The significant improvement in

students' speaking achievement underscores that when learners are placed in meaningful, real-life scenarios, their motivation and willingness to speak increase (Herdiansyah & Idris, 2025; Karyati et al., 2025; Khamouja et al., 2023; Q. Luo, 2024; Yogi Susana et al., 2025).

The role play technique also showed a positive impact on classroom dynamics and student engagement. Observational checklists showed that students' participation was rated "very good," and the lecturer's classroom management and facilitation were also categorized as "very good." This shows that role play and occupational simulation enhance pragmatic fluency and foster learner autonomy in ESP settings (Dawoud et al., 2023). Students appeared enthusiastic, often laughing and fully immersed in their roles, which helped reduce their fear of being judged or making mistakes. According to Dawoud, the dramatic context in role play enables learners to temporarily suspend their self-consciousness and anxiety, allowing for greater spontaneity in speaking (Dawoud et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the results of the student questionnaires regarding speaking anxiety before and after the intervention demonstrated a notable decline in anxiety levels. Initially, several students exhibited high levels of anxiety; however, after repeated exposure to role play activities, all students moved out of the high-anxiety category. Only six students remained at a moderate anxiety level, and the rest experienced low anxiety. These findings echo the theory of anxiety in language learning that who argue that anxiety in language classrooms is often a result of fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety—factors that can be mitigated through supportive and student-centered instruction (Han et al., 2022). The role play technique, with its cooperative and performance-based nature, evidently helped students develop confidence and overcome psychological barriers to speaking.

The link between reduced anxiety and improved oral performance was also evident in the students' behavior. The more frequently students engaged in role play, the more confident and fluent they became. This supports the findings of Luo, who found that drama-based techniques significantly contribute to reducing speaking anxiety and enhancing fluency among EFL learners (S. Luo et al., 2024). Students' increased confidence positively correlated with higher speaking scores, validating the role of affective factors in language acquisition. It is further confirmed that student-centered learning approaches—such as role play—create emotionally safe environments where learners are more likely to take risks, speak up, and self-correct without fear of failure (Q. Luo, 2024).

Despite the overall success of the intervention, one challenge noted was time management. The lecturer often required an additional 10 minutes beyond the scheduled time to conclude each session. This is a common limitation in activity-based teaching, as noted by Richards and Rodgers who states that communicative language teaching often necessitates flexibility in timing due to the unpredictability of student interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 2021). While the extension of class time contributed to richer language use and engagement, future implementations of role-play should consider tighter structuring of tasks or possible integration into extended learning hours. Nonetheless, the results of this study affirm that Role Play is a highly effective pedagogical tool for addressing speaking anxiety and enhancing oral proficiency in ESP contexts.

Based on the results from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire adapted from Horwitz discovered in Amira, it was found that after three cycles of classroom action research, the levels of students' speaking anxiety had significantly shifted. Initially, students in this Room Division Management class displayed a wide range of anxiety levels (Amira Deani et al., 2025). However, the post-intervention data revealed that 40% of the students were categorized as having low anxiety, while 60% were in the moderate anxiety category. Notably, no students remained in the moderate-high or high anxiety levels, which were present during the initial assessment. This shift indicates that the role play technique effectively reduced students' anxiety levels by creating a supportive and interactive learning environment.

Horwitz describe language learning anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning. In particular, they identify three main components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Hsiao & Tseng, 2022; Piniel & Zólyomi, 2022). The significant reduction in anxiety levels in this study can be attributed to the nature of role play activities, which mitigate these components by allowing students to

rehearse real-life scenarios in low-stakes settings, promoting cooperation, and reducing fear of judgment. When students engage in role play, they are able to step outside their usual selves, which helps to lower self-consciousness and improve spontaneous language used (Shang & Ma, 2024).

Moreover, by assigning students into mixed-ability groups based on their initial anxiety levels, the lecturer strategically fostered peer support and modeling, which encouraged more anxious students to participate actively. Han et al (2022) stated that student-centered approaches that offer consistent exposure to speaking opportunities in emotionally safe environments help reduce anxiety over time. The data from this research aligns with their findings—students who repeatedly practiced speaking through role play gradually gained confidence, resulting in measurable changes in anxiety levels. While a portion of the students still experienced moderate anxiety, the absence of high-anxiety participants by the final cycle underscores the potential of role play as a powerful pedagogical tool to create a psychologically safe and engaging EFL classroom.

## CONCLUSION

This classroom action research concludes that the implementation of the Role Play technique significantly contributed to reducing students' speaking anxiety and improving their oral proficiency in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context—specifically within the Room Division Management class. Quantitative data from oral performance tests showed a remarkable increase in the number of students meeting the minimum achievement criteria, with 91.30% of students achieving mastery by the third cycle. Qualitative observations and student responses further affirmed high engagement and reduced affective barriers to speaking. The FLCAS questionnaire revealed that 40% of students were at a low level of anxiety and 60% at a moderate level, with no students remaining in the high-anxiety category by the end of the intervention.

Based on the findings, several suggestions can be offered for future teaching practices and research. First, for educators, it is suggested that teachers are encouraged to adopt Role Play regularly in ESP classrooms, particularly in hospitality-related programs, to provide students with authentic, low-risk opportunities to develop speaking skills. It is also advisable to group students strategically, mixing those with varying anxiety levels to foster peer support and modelling, as this was found to be effective in reducing apprehension. Second, for curriculum designers, it is recommended that Role play activities should be integrated into syllabus planning with clear time management strategies. Institutions should consider extending speaking sessions or allowing flexible class schedules to accommodate interactive methods that require more time but yield deeper learning outcomes. Last, for future research, subsequent studies could explore the long-term impact of role play on students' communicative competence and professional readiness. Furthermore, comparative studies using alternative affective strategies such as drama, task-based learning, or storytelling can offer broader insights into managing speaking anxiety in different ESP disciplines.

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