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## The Use of Round Robin Technique to Improve Students' Speaking Skill

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### Abstract

*This study aims to find out whether the use of Round Robin Technique can improve the speaking skill of junior high school students. This research was conducted in one class and applied the pre-experimental design that was one group pre-test and post-test design. There were four meetings in this research including pre-test and post-tests. The sample is students in one class that consisted of 32 students, with 15 females and 17 males. The instruments used to obtain the data were pre-test and post-test. The mean of the student speaking score of the pre-test was 43.71 and the mean of the post-test was 79.2. The improvement from pre-test to the post-test was 35.49 points. The average score of the students was 79.2, it was higher than the Criteria Mastery of Learning (or KKM, Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal) of a junior high school in Banda Aceh, which is 70.00. The result of this study can be shown in the t-test that there was an improvement of students' speaking skill, with the t-test of 25.3, the degree of freedom is 31 and t-table is 1.696. Based on the result of the test, it can be concluded that the use of Round Robin Technique improved the students' speaking skills. This technique offered the students' chances to share ideas and opinion with their peers, speak up and express their argument in class.*

**Keywords:** Round Robin Technique, speaking skill, EFL junior high school students.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Based on the 2013 Curriculum of Junior High School, teaching English in Indonesia focused on students' language competence to be able to use the language in interpersonal, transactional, and functional context by using variously spoken and written English (Kemendikbud, 2016). In other words, English in 2013 curriculum at junior high school level is designed to provide and prepare the students' competence from four skills namely reading, speaking, listening and writing.

Based on the preliminary study that was conducted by the researchers with 32 students in the second grade of a junior high school in Banda Aceh, it is found that the students faced some same problems in mastery speaking skill. The students were informally interviewed and the result showed that a majority of the students spoke English in hesitation, use incorrect pronunciation, grammar mistakes, lack of vocabulary and nothing to say in the classroom.

To solve the problems above, there are some techniques in teaching English speaking, and one of those techniques is the Round Robin Technique. Round Robin is a technique created by Dr. Spencer Kagan in 1994. He explains briefly about the definition of Round Robin Technique as follows "...students in small groups taking turn contributing. The same structure worked well to equalize participation in cooperative learning teams. If students in small groups discuss a topic with no interaction rules, in an unstructured way, often one or two students dominate the interaction. If students are told they must take turns as they speak, more equal participation is ensured" (Kagan, 2003).

The researchers decided to solve the aforementioned problems by implementing Round Robin Technique as part of cooperative language learning to improve students' speaking skill at one of the junior high schools in Banda Aceh that is Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri (SMPN) 17. The researchers believed that the Round Robin Technique could be appropriate to be applied in teaching-learning English, especially for speaking. Henceforth, the research questions proposed in this study is:

1. Can the use of Round Robin Technique improve students' speaking skill?
2. Can the use of Round Robin Technique improve students' ability in understanding the speaking aspects of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension?

Accordingly, the researchers formulated the hypotheses:

- Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): There is any significant improvement on students' speaking ability after Round Robin Technique applied.
- Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no significant improvement on students' speaking ability after Round Robin Technique applied.

The result of this study is expected to positively contribute to the teaching and learning of the English language, particularly for teachers teaching English speaking to EFL learners. To use various teaching techniques is important to maintain students' interest in classroom learning, and this study focus on the Round Robin Technique.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

One of the skills in English subject is speaking. Speaking is an essential proficiency used to practice English for communicative purposes. Supporting by

Brown (2004), states that speaking is an interactive process that involves producing and receiving to process of the information to construct meaning. Moreover, Halimah (2018, p. 206) infers that “speaking is an ability used by a person as a tool to express, share and communicate one’s ideas, opinions, desires, or feelings to another depending on the context, the participants, the experience, the environment, and the purpose”. It means that speaking is one of the ways to exchange information between two or more people in gaining newly constructed meaning. The learners are also expected to be able to communicate and to produce their idea with their way of using the speaking skill.

Moreover, according to Zhang (2009) speaking skill is the most difficult skill to be mastered for the majority of English learners, and the learners are still incompetent in communicating orally in English (Al Hosni, 2014). Thus, many difficulties occur in the process of mastering speaking skill. Several factors make it difficult for learners to be master in speaking skill, according to Ur (1996), students face several problems that make them difficult to speak English properly such as inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother- tongue use.

Inhibition means that the students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy. The second factor is nothing to say, which means that students have no motive to express themselves. The third factor is low or uneven participation; only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all. Then, the last one is mother-tongue use which means the learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue. These all factors come into one problem, this problem from the teaching process which also affects the effectiveness of teaching strategy which means the Curriculum 2013 is unfulfilled.

Following the problems mentioned before, Round Robin Technique can be used by the researchers to solve the problems of these students in speaking skills. According to Barkley et al. (2005), Round Robin Technique is a technique supporting students to elaborate, explain, evaluate, and question the ideas in which the group members take turns in responding to the question with a word, phrase, or a short answer. Olsen and Kagan (1992) explain that Round Robin Technique is the way students sit in group table discussion (Round Table), explore and respond to the topic by using the oral skill (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Thus, the Round Robin Technique can improve students speaking skill significantly since it allows students to speak during the discussion.

### **3. METHODS**

#### **3.1 Participant**

This research was conducted at SMPN 17 Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The subject of the research was the students of the eighth-grade students of the school. In this research, the researchers took one class of the eighth-grade students, it was class VIII 7. This consisted of 32 students, they were 17 boys and 15 girls. The sample of this study was selected by using purposive sampling with the consideration that the English teacher who teaches in this school suggested the researchers take this class as research sample because she considers the English ability of students in this class is still low.

According to Sugiyono (2008), purposive sampling is the technique that takes samples as data sources with certain considerations.

### 3.2 Instrument

The aspects of the speaking test that assessed are grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and pronunciation aspects. The researchers adapted the scoring rubric by Brown (2004) which focused on 5 aspects of speaking skill pronunciation, fluency, grammar, comprehension, and vocabulary.

### 3.3 Data Collection

The research method which the method used to collect the data in this study is through the oral test. According to Ary et al. (2010), one group design pretest-posttest could compare students' achievement by pretest and posttest that only focus on one experimental group. The design involves three steps which are administering a pretest (O1) measuring the dependent variable, after that applying the experimental treatment (X) to the subject, and the last administering the posttest (O2) measuring the dependent variable. The researchers describe it with the following design formulation:

Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
O1	X	O2

**Figure 1.** Experiment designs of one group pretest and posttest.

In this research, the third researcher was the teacher in the class to implement the Round Robin Technique. Based on the figure above, it could be explained that:

(1) O1 (Pretest):

The pretest was conducted in the form of oral test which aims to know the students' speaking ability before the experimental treatment is implemented. The third researcher asked students to speak individually about three minutes from the topic "My Hobbies".

(2) X (Experimental Teaching/Treatment):

In this part, the Round Robin Technique was applied and the third researcher did it twice. In the steps of Round Robin Technique, first, the third researcher taught and explained to the students on the topic of "Holiday Experience". After the students have understood the materials, she divided the students into groups.

Each group consisted of 7-8 students and each member has a number. During the discussion, the third researcher controlled each group and make sure all of the students worked in their group by using their member number. Later, she called the number, and each member who had the number in the group must speak and explain what they know about the topic and her/ his experience on it. After that, the students had to compose a text and she asked one of the students to represent his/her group. He or she came in front of the class and conveyed the result of discussion from his/her group. Lastly, the teacher asked the students from other groups to comment on his/her performance.

In the third meeting, the third researcher taught and explained to students as done in the first treatment. In this meeting, she also taught similarly as in the previous meeting; asked students to work in groups and discussed with each other to create a narration or story on the topic “Experience at School”.

(3) O2 (Posttest):

The third researcher provided a test for the students to find out their improvements on speaking skill after using the Round Robin Technique, the students were given a topic, and then they individually answered the questions and explained about the topic of “My *Idul Adha* Holiday” for three minutes each in front of the class.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The aspects of the speaking test being assessed are grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and pronunciation aspects. The scoring rubric by [Brown \(2004\)](#) was used to score the tests, which focused on 5 aspects of speaking skill: pronunciation, fluency, grammar, comprehension, and vocabulary.

In this study, the researchers gave each aspect 20 points as the maximum score and each aspect has different criteria. For example in the grammar aspect, it has seven criteria (simple past tense, adjective, adverb, action verb, compound, and complex sentences, conjunction and pronoun). Each criterion was divided by 20 points, so each has 2.85 points. It was also calculated similarly for the other four aspects; vocabulary has five criteria (action verb, adverb, linking verb, temporal conjunction, and specific participant), so four points for each criterion. Pronunciation has 2 criteria (correctly and clearly), it could be 10 points for each criterion. Fluency has 3 criteria (without repetition, pause, and mumbling); the point for each criterion is 6.66. Comprehension has 5 criteria (sequence, comprehend the topic, comprehend the details, comprehend the context, and comprehend the function of the text), so each criterion has 4 points. So if a student gets 20 from each aspect then multiplied by 5 (for the whole components of speaking) the result is 100.

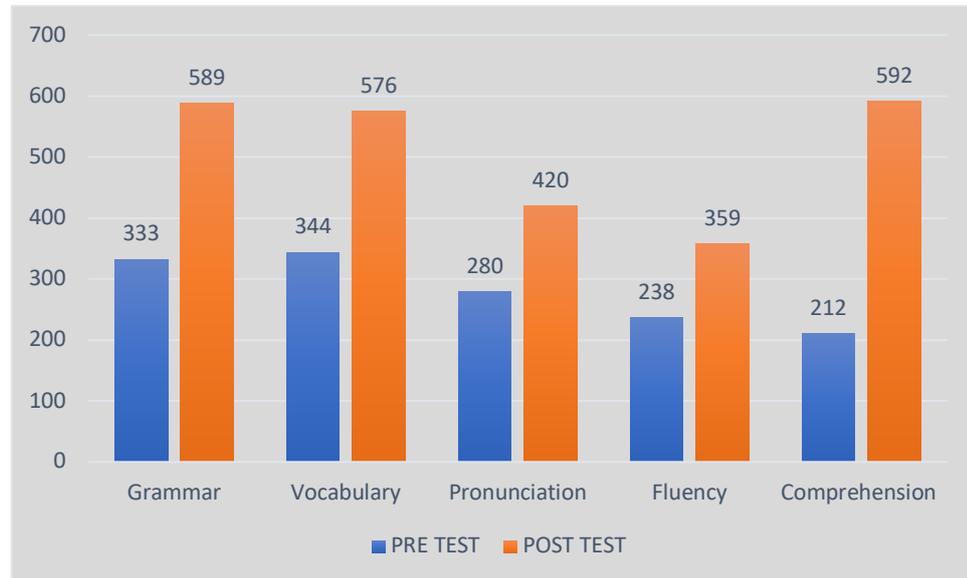
Meanwhile, to find out the significance of this research, the researchers used a significant value of 5% ( $\alpha = 0,05$ ), the rules to compare the t-score and t-table. [Sudijono \(2010\)](#) explains that if the t-score is equal or more than crucial t-score or t-table, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternatives hypothesis is accepted. It means that there are significant differences between the first variable and the second variable. Moreover, if t-score is smaller than the critical t-table, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternatives hypothesis is rejected. It means that there are no significant differences between the first variable and the second variable.

## 4. RESULTS

The researchers used the Round Robin Technique to improve students’ speaking skill. Four meetings were conducted to hold the pretest, experiment, and posttest. Before implementing the Round Robin Technique, the researchers conducted the pretest, and the mean score of the pre-test is only 43.71. It was too low because the Criteria Mastery of Learning (or KKM, *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal*) of the school is 70, 00. Then, in the first experiment, there were two meetings, where the third researchers

applied the Round Robin Technique. After that, the researchers did the post-test, and the result of the post-test is 79.2 for the mean score.

Figure 2 shows the comparison of the pre-test and post-test of the students during this experiment.



**Figure 2.** The comparison of pre-test and post-test during this experiment.

Figure 2 illustrates the total score of the five aspects in mastering speaking grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. In the grammar aspect, it can be seen that in the result of the pre-test is 333. It increases significantly in the posttest as the point calculated becomes 589. In the vocabulary aspect, the point is 344 in the pretest which then improves to be 576 in the posttest. The third aspect which is the pronunciation aspect, as seen on the chart, also shows a change in a positive way since the point in the pretest is 280 and increases in the posttest to 420. In the pretest of the fluency aspect, it calculates the point to be 238 and increases to be 359 points. Lastly, in the comprehension aspect, it can be seen that in the pre-test, the point is 212, and in the posttest, the point becomes 592. Hence, it can be concluded that the students' score has a significant improvement after comparing the result of the pretest and posttest after being taught with the Round Robin Technique. This technique let them work in pair and correct the mistake they make together as a team.

Next, the researchers looked at the significant improvement in students' speaking ability before and after being treated with the Round Robin Technique in class.

**Table 1.** Normality test.

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Post_Test	.155	32	.048	.962	32	.308
Pre_Test	.140	32	.111	.950	32	.142

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 1 shows the Shapiro-Wilk test, where the Sig. > 0.05, thus the tests can be used as data for normal distribution.

**Table 2.** Paired t-test.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre_Test	43.97	32	8.690	1.536
	Post_Test	78.59	32	4.384	.775

**Table 3.** Paired sample correlation.

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre-test & Post-test	32	-.189	.300

Table 3 showed the paired samples correlation where the value of the tests shows the relationship between the two variables in the paired sample.

**Table 4.** Paired sample test.

Paired Samples Test		Paired Differences			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Pair 1	Pre_Test Post_Test	-34.625	10.447	1.847	

Paired Samples Test		Paired Differences		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre_Test Post_Test	-38.392	-30.858	-18.748	31	.000

Table 4 shows the paired samples test as the main table of output that shows the results of the tests carried out. This can be seen from the significance value (2-tailed) in the table. The significance value (2-tailed) from this case sample is 0,000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). And the final test results are significant (meaningful) changes. It can be concluded that there are significant changes between the pre-test and post-test results.

Moreover, the statistical analysis showed that the value of the t-test is 25.3, the critical value is 0.05, and the degree of freedom ( $df = N - 1 = 32 - 1 = 31$ ) is 1.69552. The obtained t-score was 25.3. So, the t-score was higher than t-table ( $t_{\text{score}} = 25.3 > t_{\text{table}} = 1.69552$ ). It means that the main alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) of this research is accepted, where the use of Round Robin Technique helps the students in improving speaking ability and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected.

## 5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine whether the use of Round Robin Technique can improve second-grade students' speaking ability at SMPN 17 Banda Aceh. In relation to this matter, this section discusses the results of the data. The results showed that the high score from in pretest is 62 and the low score is 27. It means that the ability of students' speaking skill was still low before the Round Robin Technique was

implemented to the students in the class. However, after having implemented the Round Robin Technique, there was a significant improvement in the students' ability in speaking skill through the aspects of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. Based on the result of data, it revealed that the high score in the pretest is 72 and the posttest is 95. It can be concluded that there is an improvement on the students' overall speaking ability after treatments were given.

Nevertheless, some disadvantages of the Round Robin Technique were also observed in the classroom. This technique had made a couple of students to face difficulty in answering some questions or statements, and this was due to the fact that they did not have something to contribute in the group discussions. Meanwhile, the students who were active and had more ability than others could talk more. Again, passive students who did not have something to contribute experienced difficulties. Another shortcoming from this technique was that it required a lot of time because all students were expected to be able to learn to express their opinions and sometimes the teacher had to rush them in talking so that everyone had a chance to talk in class. These drawbacks were also presented in the work of [Baary \(2018\)](#).

Despite the disadvantages of the Round Robin Technique, the results of the tests revealed that this experiment was a success. Several factors that made the Round Robin Technique a success in this research. First, the technique is as one of the cooperative learning techniques that made the students comfortable to share ideas and opinion with their peers in class. The teacher had to move around a lot in class to monitor students who needed encouragement and help in speaking. Second, each student had time to speak up and express their argument. The teacher had to manage the time beforehand so that all students had the opportunity to speak. Therefore, all students had the chance to practice their speaking in class.

Similarly, [Sulaiman \(2015\)](#) also had implemented the Round Robin Technique to junior high school students at Gobah, Kampar Regency, Riau, Indonesia. The results also showed that the students' speaking skill of the school had been improved after Round Robin was implemented. This technique had provided the students with the opportunity to analyze ideas and solve problems together by using their oral skill. Another research by [Itsnaini \(2011\)](#) also revealed that teaching speaking by using the Round Robin Technique can improve students' speaking skills in junior high school in Semarang. Therefore, Round Robin Technique can solve the students' speaking difficulties as the advantage of applying this technique is to help students to improve speaking aspects like vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, and fluency.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the research results and discussion, the researchers conclude that the use of Round Robin Technique helps students in improving the speaking ability to master grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. It can be seen and compared from the mean score of speaking aspects achieved by the students both on the pretest and the posttest. Besides, there is a significant increase toward students' speaking ability in which before the experimental treatments were given.

Hence, it is highly suggested for English teachers to enrich their knowledge concerning a variety of methods and techniques in English language teaching. They

are also strongly encouraged to implement various techniques in the classroom to increase the motivation and ability of their EFL students to keenly learn English. Furthermore, this research is only limited to an experiment in one classroom of students due to the time constraint. Future research is suggested to focus on larger sets of data to obtain more robust results on the practice and benefits of using the Round Robin Technique in teaching speaking skill.

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