



# Improving Students' Speaking Ability by Using Escape Room Technique at the Eight Grade of SMP Yabes School Medan

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: 2025-10-07 Revised: 2025-11-13 Published: 2025-12-02	This research aimed to improve students' speaking ability by using Escape Room technique at the eighth grade of SMP Yabes Medan. The researchers applied Classroom Action Research (CAR) which consisted of two cycles, and each cycle included planning, action, observation, and reflection. The subjects of this research were 28 students of class VIII. Two types of data were collected in this study, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data were obtained through speaking tests, while qualitative data were gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation. Researchers used speaking test to collect the quantitative data, meanwhile in qualitative data, researchers used interview, observation, and documentation. After conduction two cycles, the findings showed the mean score of students' speaking test increased from 74,64% in the first cycle to 86,96%. In addition, classroom atmosphere became more engaging and enjoyable, which reduced students' anxiety in speaking English and also provides a fun and interactive learning environment that encourages students to use English more actively in communication.
<b>Keywords:</b> <i>Classroom Action Research (CAR); Escape Room Technique; Speaking Ability.</i>	

Artikel Info	Abstrak
<b>Sejarah Artikel</b> Diterima: 2025-10-07 Direvisi: 2025-11-13 Dipublikasi: 2025-12-02	Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa dengan menggunakan teknik escape room di kelas delapan SMP Yabes Medan. Peneliti menerapkan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang terdiri dari dua siklus, dan setiap siklus meliputi perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Subjek penelitian ini adalah 28 siswa kelas VIII. Dua jenis data dikumpulkan dalam penelitian ini, kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Data kuantitatif diperoleh melalui tes berbicara, sedangkan data kualitatif dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Peneliti menggunakan tes berbicara untuk mengumpulkan data kuantitatif, sementara untuk data kualitatif, peneliti menggunakan wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Setelah dua siklus, temuan menunjukkan skor rata-rata tes berbicara siswa meningkat dari 74,64% pada siklus pertama menjadi 86,96%. Selain itu, suasana kelas menjadi lebih menarik dan menyenangkan, yang mengurangi kecemasan siswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris dan juga menyediakan lingkungan belajar yang menyenangkan dan interaktif yang mendorong siswa untuk menggunakan bahasa Inggris lebih aktif dalam berkomunikasi.
<b>Kata kunci:</b> <i>Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK); Teknik Escape Room; Kemampuan Berbicara.</i>	

## I. INTRODUCTION

English serves as a global means of communication and is recognized as the primary international language for interacting with people around the world. Mastering this language offers a number of significant benefits. Thanks to its widespread use globally, you can communicate effectively in almost any destination you travel to. Besides making travel easier, helping you meet new people, and understanding cultural diversity, English language skills are also crucial for emergency situations. Fluency in English naturally boosts your confidence when interacting with foreigners. This, in turn, opens up greater opportunities to make friends from various countries and expands your overall network.

The primary purpose of learning English is to support effective communication worldwide, facilitate travel, and open up opportunities to understand different cultures. Given the crucial role of English in almost every aspect of life, speaking skills are a crucial element that students need to master. According to Tarigan (1983:15), speaking is defined as the ability to produce clear sounds or words to express, convey, and convey thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Essentially, speaking is a production skill that involves a series of clear sounds to convey one's desires, needs, feelings, and hopes to others.

Crystal (2000) states that English functions as a universal language and is used internationally. This statement shows that English is used by many countries to communicate with each other

throughout the world. Furthermore, speaking is a good English skill, or more precisely, the ability to convey ideas, provide comments, and reject other people's views if they disagree with our own, as well as the ability to ask questions and provide answers. Currently, many students learning English lack adequate speaking skills. Therefore, they need appropriate learning methods or techniques to help them improve their speaking skills.

Based on observations of teaching practices conducted by the researchers at Yabes School several months ago, as well as a brief interview with one of the English teachers, a significant problem was discovered. The teacher stated that the English speaking ability of eighth-grade students at Yabes School was very low. This low ability was caused by two main factors: students' lack of interest in learning English, and economic factors that made students consider English unimportant. In addition, the teacher at Yabes revealed that all eighth-grade students' English scores did not meet the established Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) of 75. In fact, more than 60% of eighth-grade students scored below the KKM limit. Given this critical condition, researchers decided to choose Yabes School as the primary location for this thesis research. An escape room is a type of indoor team game where participants are challenged to complete various challenges using specific keywords to achieve success. In this study, researchers used escape room technique to improve students' speaking skills, with an emphasis on teaching descriptive texts.

The implementation steps are as follows: Researchers divided students into several groups. Each group was asked to describe various common objects, such as tourist attractions, cartoon characters, or favorite actors, based on predetermined keywords and images. This complete description was shared with the other groups until they could guess the object being described. This process would be repeated until all groups have successfully completed the assigned task. Overall, the escape room technique in teaching speaking focused on the application of puzzles, challenges, and collaboration in a time-limited setting, with the hope of supporting speaking practice and active learning.

Escape rooms are an innovative and engaging method of speaking English for anyone learning the language. Teachers and researchers can create unique learning experiences simply by utilizing these escape rooms. Furthermore, escape rooms can facilitate student

communication, which in turn increases their engagement. Overall, escape rooms are an effective way to create dynamic learning experiences, engaging students in situations that require communication skills while strengthening collaboration and problem-solving skills within the learning context.

## **II. METHOD**

Classroom Action Research (CAR) can be defined as a reflective research approach implemented in the classroom. Its primary goal is to encourage specific changes to improve the quality of the learning process, resulting in improved outcomes compared to the previous state. To achieve the desired goal, researchers must first implement a series of predetermined activities and variables. This research is designed to be conducted in several sessions specifically designed to ensure effectiveness and emphasize teaching strategies and student development, based on the CAR framework itself. In this study, the topic presented by the researchers is speaking skills. CAR is implemented through a continuous cycle consisting of planning, revision, initial observation, initial reflection, follow-up action, follow-up observation, and follow-up reflection.

This research was conducted at YABES Junior High School, located on Jl. Krakatau Ujung Gang Mawar. This research activity involved one English teacher, one researcher, and 28 students from grade VIII in the 2024/2025 academic year, who worked together as a team to carry out this research. Among the students, there were 20 female students and 8 male students. This class was chosen because grade VIII students were considered the right subjects for this research, considering that their speaking ability is still relatively low, especially in understanding dialogues in English. The researchers chose to focus on only one class, namely grade VIII, as the object of this research. The methods used to analyze the qualitative data in this study included observations of student activities during the learning process, as well as interviews conducted before and after the Classroom Action Research (CAR). In this context, the researchers compiled all the information obtained.

## **III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Result**

#### **1. Qualitative data**

Data are collected through in-depth interviews with teacher and students at different times. The interviews are

recorded digitally. Before the interviews, researchers ensure that students have available time and then select the interview location. In this way, each interview is conducted according to the students' wishes. They have the freedom to express their desires and needs without coercion, including the choice of language they wish to use during the interview process.

"From what I have seen, only a few eighth-grade students are able to speak English, and when they are in class, they are not very interested in learning English. Even when I give them assignments to come up and made sentences in English, they find it very difficult to think about it. Even though they are still in the easy sentence category, they still have lack formal speaking skills. However, if it is just to say hello and makes simple sentences, two or three students are already able to do it. That is what I see when teaching eighth-grade students." **English Teacher**

Furthermore, researchers interviewed the students in the class as well to find out what problems they were having learning to speak English.

"It is hard to understand, Ms, because I do not understand English. I have disliked English for a long time because it is difficult to understand. Sometimes I am confused by the frequently changing meanings." **Student 1**

English is hard, Ms. The language is sometimes hard to understand. Also, in class, we are never asked to come to the front to speak. We are even more clueless because we often just take notes and do assignments, Ms. We rarely practice, so I am even lazy when it is English time, Ms."

**Student 2**

After conducting research in the classroom, the researcher wanted to know the responses or opinions of teachers and students after the research was conducted. Here are some statements from English teacher.

"You are able to encourage children to be more active in class, following your directions when using the technique, I also see that they are more active and willing to come forward to present what they have done and also you are able to make the lesson not monotonous to just the material but also go straight to practice, that is one

good thing that makes children more active in learning to speak English and also I see from their assessments that they have improved quite a bit when you are in class". **English Teacher.**

The researchers also conducted interviews with students after conducting the research.

"It is fun, Ms. We do not get sleepy in class. Usually, we just take notes and do our assignments. When you come into our class, your teaching style is also fun. It is fun to play but also to study at the same time, so we are not stressed, and we are more willing to come forward to show our assignments, Ms." **Student 1**

"The lesson is fun, Ms. It is a bit too difficult, but we can still complete it because you help guide us. It is more fun. Usually, I am reluctant when it comes to English, but since you have been in the class for the past few days, it is become more fun in class." **Student 2**

Based on the interview results above, students demonstrated the improvements of their speaking skills. Documentation shows that students demonstrated high levels of engagement and enthusiasm during the teaching and learning process after implementing the escape room technique.

## 2. Quantitative Data

The quantitative data analysis applied in this study was a speaking evaluation in the form of class presentations with a free theme for each stage. In assessing speaking ability, scores were given to students ranging from 0 to 100. Some students created noise by chatting with their friends, interrupting them, and engaging in other distracting activities. The second challenge was that almost all students in the class lacked English dictionaries, which disrupted the learning process because they tended to ask the teacher for help when they were confused by unfamiliar vocabulary. The final problem related to speaking comprehension: students could only recite some of the texts given by the teacher without understanding their meaning. This was due to their limited English vocabulary and their limited understanding of English text structure. Therefore, the researchers decided to conduct a study by asking students to

describe pictures provided to understand their challenges in English speaking.

a) 2.1 Pre-Test Results

In this cycle, a pre-test was administered before class to gather initial data to understand students' speaking skills and identify challenges, they face in communicating in English. The test was administered to all 28 eighth-grade students for 40 minutes. The following are the pre-test results:

**Table 1.** The percentage of Pre-Test

No	Category	Value Range	Frequency	%
1	Very Good	80-100	2	7,14%
2	Good	75-79	12	42,85%
3	Enough	60-74	6	21,42%
4	Low	50-59	5	17,85%
5	Very Low	0-49	3	10,71%
Total			28	100%

The researchers identified the percentage of students' scores in the pre-cycle. Of the 28 students, 2 (7.14%) very good speaking skills, 12 (42.85%) good speaking skills, 6 (21.42%) enough, 5 (17.85%) less, and 3 (10.71%) bad. This indicates that although only a small proportion of students have excellent speaking skills, the majority still need to develop their speaking skills to a higher level.

b) First Cycle of CAR

In this phase, the researchers continued applying descriptive methods to improve students' speaking skills. In the first cycle, the researchers provided various treatments to students and offered a richer learning experience through the escape room technique. During the first cycle, the researcher observed that students demonstrated higher motivation to learn after the technique was implemented. This was evident in the increase in students' scores on the first post-test, where 20 out of 28 students successfully met the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) of 75.

**Table 2.** The percentage of Post-test 1 Cycle

No	Category	Value Range	Frequency	%
1	Very Good	80-100	16	57,14%
2	Good	75-79	6	21,42%
3	Enough	60-74	2	7,14%
4	Low	50-59	1	3,57%
5	Very Low	0-49	3	10,71%
Total			28	100%

At this stage, the researchers identified the problems faced by students when speaking in English. The researcher guided students on how to start when describing an object using English. Based on the results of the study, 16 students (57.14%) were in the very good category, and 6 students (21.42%) were in the good category. The data obtained in cycle 1 showed an improvement compared to the results of the previous pre-cycle. However, despite the improvement in implementation in cycle 1, there were still students who had not reached the good category: 2 students (7.14%) were in enough category, 1 student (3.57%) was in the less category, and 3 students (10.71%) were in the bad category.

c) The Second Cycle of CAR

In cycle 2, the researchers conducted an evaluation based on the data obtained in cycle 1. The researchers made improvements to the implementation of the previous actions to achieve better results, thus further improving students' speaking skills. The researchers provided almost the same learning as cycle 1, but with more mature planning, such as providing more detailed explanations and accompanying students in implementing the escape room technique with the descriptive text method. After all implementations were carried out by the researchers, the results of the study showed that after cycle 2, students' speaking skills had improved. This was evidenced by their post-test 2 scores, with 27 out of 28 students achieving a Minimum Passing Score (MPS) of 75, with an average student score of 0.96%.

**Table 3.** The percentage of Post-test 2 Cycle

No	Category	Value Range	Frequency	%
1	Very Good	30-100	25	89,28%
2	Good	75-79	2	7,14%
3	Enough	60-74	1	3,57%
4	Low	50-59	0	0%
5	Very Low	0-49	0	0%
Total			28	100%

At this point, students' speaking skills had improved. Based on the researcher's observations during cycle 2, 25 students (89,28%) were categorized as excellent, 2 students (7,14%) were categorized as good, and 1 student (3,57%) was categorized as fair. It can be concluded that students' speaking skills improved in cycle 2. Percentage analysis showed that 96.87% of students passed the test. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the implementation of the escape room technique has significantly improved students' English-speaking skills.

## B. Discussion

The data collected previously was obtained before the implementation of Classroom Action Research (CAR). The CAR itself generated data based on student participation in teaching and learning activities using the escape room method. In observations prior to the CAR, it was discovered that the traditional methods implemented by the teacher proved ineffective in improving students' speaking skills, due to some students' unfamiliarity with English, which hindered their understanding of the material being taught. Analysis of students' speaking test results revealed an improvement in their speaking scores. This suggests that the escape room method with descriptive text can be utilized to improve students' speaking skills. In the final evaluation of each cycle, several students' scores improved, indicating progress. The average student score in the pre-cycle was recorded at 64.67. After implementing the escape room technique, the average score increased to 74.64 in the first cycle and reached 86.96 in the second cycle. This improvement demonstrates the technique's effectiveness and successfully increased students' attention and motivation in learning

English, particularly in speaking. Therefore, the escape room technique can be categorized as a useful learning strategy for improving students' speaking skills.

## IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### A. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that the application of the escape room technique improves students' speaking skills. This is supported by quantitative data showing an increase in students' scores from the pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. This conclusion is based on data from the pre-cycle, cycle 1, and cycle 2, which shows that in the pre-cycle stage, the average student score was 64.67%. Furthermore, in cycle 1, the average student score increased to 74.64%, and in cycle 2, it increased again to 86.69%. These data prove that the escape room technique successfully improves students' speaking skills.

The researchers also collected qualitative data through interviews and observations with English teachers and students. From the explanation above, the results of the quantitative data indicate that the application of the escape room technique can improve students' speaking skills in describing objects in English. In addition, the qualitative data obtained by the researchers show that the use of the escape room technique is very helpful in making students more active during learning and can increase students' interest in learning to speak. In conclusion, the escape room technique has been proven to improve students' English speaking skills.

### B. Suggestion

Researchers suggest that English teachers should apply this escape room technique to promote students' active participation and enhance their speaking skills. Besides, researchers also encourage other future researchers to further explore the application of escape room technique for other skills, not only speaking skill.

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