

Role-Playing Method for Students' Interpersonal Communication Improvement

Risqi Ekanti Ayuningtyas Palupi^{1*}, Budi Purwanto², Tri Wuryanto³

Politeknik Akbara, Indonesia

risqi.palupi31@gmail.com

Abstract : *Interpersonal communication involves interaction between two or more people, usually with a direct connection and with some sort of relationship being assumed. Interpersonal communication is often distinguished from group communication, organizational communication especially in corporate or business settings, public communication, or mass communication. The lack of students' communication activities signed by the students' commonly shy to speak up or delivering their idea. Most of them have a high anxiety in speaking. It also supports with there are no activities outside classroom in enhancing their capacity in speaking. The important thing to remember is that interpersonal communication is not part of an innate personality trait, but is a skill that can be learned and trained.*

This research aims to improve the ability of interpersonal communication by role playing method for second year students of Digital Business and Disaster Management Program of Akbara Polytechnic. This research is a Classroom Action Research. Subject of this research is 20 students. The data collection methods are test and observation. The first cycle of role-playing action is based on the drama script. The first and the second cycle focused on the aspect of speaking ability especially for grammar, diction/vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. The second cycle of role-playing action is based on the drama script but the students' roles are changed. The second cycle is focused on the aspect of equality which is still lack of it. The improvement of the teaching learning process can be shown by the result of students' speaking observation such as the students being active to deliver their character, use the correct grammar, delivering the message of the character fluency and comprehension, minimum the hesitation, and use various vocabularies. Moreover, the improvement also can be seen from the students' average test score of speaking, they are: (1) the students' average pre-test score is 60,4; (2) the students' average post-test score on the first cycle is 73,8; (3) the students' average post-test score on the second cycle is 89,5. It can be concluded that role-playing method can enhance the students' ability of interpersonal communication for student of second grade students of Digital Business and Disaster Management Program of Akbara Polytechnic.

Keywords: *Role-Playing Method, Interpersonal Communication, Improvement*

Abstrak : Komunikasi interpersonal melibatkan interaksi antara dua orang atau lebih, biasanya dengan koneksi langsung diantara keduanya. Komunikasi interpersonal ini sering dibedakan dari komunikasi kelompok dimana komunikasi organisasi terutama dalam pengaturan perusahaan atau bisnis, komunikasi publik, atau komunikasi massa. Minimnya aktivitas komunikasi mahasiswa ditandai dengan pada umumnya mereka malu untuk berbicara atau menyampaikan idenya. Kebanyakan dari mereka memiliki kecemasan yang tinggi dalam berbicara. Hal ini juga didukung dengan tidak adanya kegiatan di luar kelas dalam meningkatkan kemampuan mereka dalam berbicara. Hal penting yang harus diingat adalah bahwa komunikasi interpersonal bukanlah bagian dari sifat kepribadian bawaan, tetapi merupakan keterampilan yang dapat dipelajari dan dilatih.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan komunikasi interpersonal dengan metode role playing pada mahasiswa tahun kedua Program Bisnis Digital dan Penanggulangan Bencana Politeknik Akbara. Penelitian ini merupakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas. Subyek penelitian ini adalah 20 mahasiswa. Metode pengumpulan data dengan menggunakan tes dan observasi. Siklus pertama dilakukan dengan bermain peran didasarkan pada naskah dramayang dibuat dan dipilih sesuai dengan kesepakatan kelompok. Siklus pertama dan kedua nantinya difokuskan pada aspek kemampuan berbicara terutama untuk tata bahasa, diksi/kosa kata, pengucapan, kelancaran, dan pemahaman. Pada siklus kedua, aktivitas bermain peran berdasarkan naskah drama tetapi peran masing-masing mahasiswa diubah. Siklus kedua difokuskan pada aspek pemerataan dan penyelesaian pada aspek berbicara yang masih kurang. Peningkatan proses belajar mengajar dapat ditunjukkan oleh hasil observasi berbicara siswa seperti siswa aktif menyampaikan karakter mereka, menggunakan tata bahasa yang benar, menyampaikan pesan karakter dengan lancar dan mudah dipahami maksud dan ide yang disampaikan dengan meminimalkan keragu-raguan, dan menggunakan berbagai kosakata. Selain itu, peningkatan kemampuan juga terlihat dari nilai rata-rata tes berbicara siswa, yaitu: (1) nilai rata-rata pretes siswa adalah 60,4; (2) rata-rata nilai postes siswa pada siklus I adalah 73,8; (3) rata-rata nilai postes siswa pada siklus II adalah 89,5. Dapat disimpulkan

bahwa metode role-playing dapat meningkatkan kemampuan komunikasi interpersonal mahasiswa tahun kedua Program Bisnis Digital dan Penanggulangan Bencana Politeknik Akbara. Kata kunci: Metode Role-Playing, Komunikasi Interpersonal, Peningkatan

Kata kunci: Metode Role-Playing, Komunikasi Interpersonal, Peningkatan

INTRODUCTION

The basic skills that students should have in learning English are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Speaking refers to the act of vocal communication using language. It involves the use of phonetic combinations of vowel and consonant sounds to form words, and the use of enunciation, intonation, loudness, tempo, and other vocal aspects to convey meaning. In addition to conveying information, speakers unintentionally communicate various aspects of their social position, such as sex, age, place of origin, physical and psychological states, education, and experience. Speaking activities are an important part of language learning and can help students build confidence, improve listening and speaking skills, and connect with others.

Encouraging shy or hesitant students to participate in speaking assessments can be challenging, but there are several strategies that teachers can use to help these students feel more comfortable and confident. Here are some ideas:

- a. Pair up students. Pairing up shy students with more outgoing ones can help them feel more comfortable and confident in speaking up (Kriegel, 2023). This way, they can practice speaking with someone they feel comfortable around before speaking in front of the whole class.
- b. Set personal process goals. Encourage students to set personal process goals ahead of time to help them feel more confident in speaking up during a seminar or class discussion. This can help them focus on their own progress and feel more motivated to participate.
- c. Use social interactions or stories. Use social interactions, situations, or stories that may occur in real life and encourage shy students to participate in role-playing them. This can help them practice speaking in a more relaxed and natural way.
- d. Motivate and praise them. Encourage and praise any kind of participation from shy students in speaking tasks, even if it is just repetition. This can help them feel more confident and motivated to participate in future speaking assessments.
- e. Create a comfortable and supportive environment. Create a supportive environment where shy students feel comfortable participating (Fuhrman, 2022). This can be achieved by

demonstrating acceptance of, and respect for, difference, and highlighting other aspects of their strengths.

- f. Offer different ways to participate. Offer many different ways for students to participate, such as small group discussions, written responses, or online forums (Fuhrman, 2022). This can help shy students feel more comfortable and confident in participating in speaking assessments.

By using these strategies, teachers can help shy or hesitant students feel more comfortable and confident in participating in speaking assessments. Besides that, these strategies could enhance the students' interpersonal communication. It is important to remember that every student is unique, and what works for one student may not work for another. Teachers should be patient, supportive, and flexible in their approach to encourage all students to participate in speaking assessments.

Interpersonal communication is the process by which people exchange information, feelings, and meaning through verbal and nonverbal messages (<https://degree.astate.edu/articles/undergraduate-studies/what-is-interpersonal-communication.aspx>, 2022). It involves face-to-face communication, which includes hearing, seeing, and feeling body language, facial expressions, and gestures (Terra, 2023). Interpersonal communication is not just about what is actually said, but how it is said and the nonverbal messages sent through tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, and body language. It is often defined as communication that takes place between people who are interdependent and have some knowledge of each other. Interpersonal communication is an area of research that seeks to understand how humans use verbal and nonverbal cues to accomplish a number of personal and relational goals.

Interpersonal communication is important in both personal and professional relationships. It helps us connect and strengthen our bond with others, between teacher-students and both of the students (Parincu, <https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/interpersonal-communication.html>). Strong interpersonal communication skills are important for navigating situations in the workplace and can result in healthier teams with better relationships and outcomes.

Here are some examples of why interpersonal communication is an important part nowadays:

- a. Teamwork. It helps the students to have a communication among others. It requires the students to have a communication skill.

- b. Conflict resolution. In the interpersonal communication, both sides of students might listen each other, so all the conflict can be solved to gain the main purposes together. It also can be a form of problem solving for the students because both sides listen all the things related to the problem faced each other.
- c. Connection. Social connection is an important part of human being, especially for the students. By making a good support system of connection, the students also improve their mental health and well-being.

To improve interpersonal communication skills, it is important to observe how communication occurs and be more aware of the messages sent. Some key factors to consider when observing interpersonal communication include the messages exchanged, any noise that distorts the message, how feedback is given, and the context of the communication (<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/interpersonal-communication.html>). Moreover, it needs an appropriate technique to help the students building a good interpersonal communication, in this case is role play is chosen.

Role play is a communicative technique that can help develop fluency in language students (Nikmah et al., 2019). Role-play is a learning method aims to describe the past, or can also talk about various possible events either now or in the future. Role playing or playing techniques role has a goal of teaching about empathy to students. Students are invited to experience the world by seeing it from another person's point of view. Student asked to imagine himself in someone else's position in order to dive deep the feelings and attitudes shown by others, understanding and caring about the goals and struggles of others, and trying to play an unusual role, namely playing the role of other people who may be different from the characteristics that's in him.

Here are some ways in which role play can enhance students' speaking skills (Altun, 2015):

- a. Increased exposure to language. Role play can provide students with more opportunities to use the language they are learning, which can speed up the language learning process.
- b. Development of communicative competence. By producing speech in role-play activities, students can improve their command of communicative competence.
- c. Stress-free learning environment. Role play can provide a stress-free learning environment where students can enjoy using the language, which can help them gain self-confidence and promote their speaking skills.
- d. Motivation. Role play activities can motivate students to use the language effectively.

Krebt (2017) on his research entitled *The Effectiveness of Role Play Techniques in Teaching Speaking for EFL College Students* to investigate the effect of role-playing as a technique to enhance the Iraqi EFL students' speaking skill at the college level. This research applied the quasi-experimental design. The result of this research showed that role-play techniques afford an interesting atmosphere of teaching learning to students to participate actively in learning, made the students be brave to use English in their interpersonal communication, and students' vocabulary also enhanced both experimental and control group but the enhancement of experimental group was greater than control class, even it was not significant

Faqih (2017) conducted research entitled *The Use of Role Play in Speaking Activities for the 8th Grade Students*. This research used class action research method. Based on the analysis, this research showed that the use of role play in speaking activities helped the 8th grade students to increase their motivation in speaking English. The students showed some improvements in every cycle during the implementation of role play in the class. Therefore, a role play becomes one of appropriate technique in teaching speaking for increasing students' motivation to speak English.

Moreover, the implementation of role play activities can lead to better communication skills because students are engaged in conversational activities. One of the classic methods of Role-playing that can be used to enhance students' interpersonal communication abilities can be in form of these tips below:

- a. Discussion skill, the students act out skill by using appropriate posture and body language.
- b. Full group participation, the students should always focus on full group participation and mutual respect. Making sure of all students' respect to other audience member, and allowing the plenty of time to help students get comfortable.
- c. Patience and open-mindedness, Students will need to have patience and open-mindedness, as well as a positive rapport with each other.

In a role-playing scenario, two students act out a situation while the rest of the class watches. Afterward, the class discusses what went well and what could be improved. It's important to give constructive feedback and to focus on specific behaviours rather than personal characteristics. Furthermore, by optimizing role-play tips, it will be an effective method for helping individuals increase their self-awareness and gain confidence. It's most useful for helping individuals prepare for unfamiliar or difficult situations, and it can also be used to spark brainstorming sessions and improve communication. Moreover, the use of role-play in small groups is also one of an alternative to help learners cultivate the skills required to

engage in nuanced, often difficult conversations. Students not only demonstrate procedural knowledge, but also develop interpersonal communication skills.

Next, to facilitate role-playing activities in the classroom, some stages below can be followed:

- a. Establish classroom norms, create a positive and inclusive classroom environment by establishing norms that promote community and inclusivity. This will help students feel comfortable and willing to participate in role-playing activities.
- b. Discuss expectations, before starting the role-playing activity, have a discussion with the students about the purpose of the activity and the expected behavior. Talk about classroom etiquette and establish rules that promote student involvement and enthusiasm.
- c. Choose relevant scenarios, select role-playing scenarios that are relevant to the learning objectives and content of the lesson. This will help students apply their knowledge and reflect on key issues.
- d. Assign roles, assign roles to students or allow them to choose their roles. Make sure each student has a clear understanding of their role and the objectives they need to achieve during the activity.
- e. Provide guidance, offer guidance and support to students during the role-playing activity. Monitor their progress, provide feedback, and encourage them to reflect on their performance.
- f. Debrief and discuss, after the role-playing activity, facilitate a debriefing session where students can discuss what went well and what could be improved. Encourage them to reflect on their communication skills and provide constructive feedback to their peers.
- g. Encourage reflection, ask students to reflect on their experience and what they have learned from the role-playing activity. This can be done through written reflections, class discussions, or group reflections.

By following these strategies, teachers can effectively facilitate role-playing activities in the classroom. Meanwhile, in this research the researcher tries to solve the problem of students speaking by implementing role play as a teaching treatment. Then, the other sides, by implementing role play, the researcher help students to enhance students' capacity in interpersonal communication.

METHOD

Design and Participants

The research is conducted at second year students at Disaster Management and Digital Business Program, Akbara Polytechnic. The students consist of 20 students from the two department. The research was conducted in two cycles (May to June), 3 meetings for each cycle.

Meanwhile, in conducting this research, the researcher used an action research method. according to Kemmis and Taggart in Nunan (1992:18) argue that action research is a piece of descriptive research carried out by a teacher in his or her own classroom, without the involvement of others, which is aimed at increasing students understanding rather than changing the phenomenon under investigation. The characteristic of this research is to improve the quality of teaching learning process.

The model of action research used in this research is the model developed by Kemmis and Mc Taggart in Burns (1999:32). According to the model the implementation of the classroom action research includes four-steps in the following:

1. **Planning.** In this cycle, the step starts by identifying the problem(s): identity a classroom-related question that would like to research. The lack of students interpersonal communication being the main case. In this case, a good question may include “does the role play help students to get better interpersonal communication”?. Then, the researcher make a plan in form of “Lesson Plan” to gain the next stages.
2. **Implementing the action.** This second stage, by using the lesson plan made, the researcher do the action. Collaborate the role-play method and daily experience to enhance the students’ interpersonal communication.
3. **Observing the action.** While the implementation steps, the observing and monitoring is done. The researcher makes notes on diary form, to look for if there are some weaknesses happened. This kind of data used to be a consideration for the next cycle.
4. **Reflecting the result of the observation.** Based on the data taken before in implementing and observing steps, there are some considerations made to decide whether the next cycle needed or not.

The researcher made an evaluation on the observation result to find out the positive result and weaknesses during the action. To ensure whether or not there is an improvement of the students’ speaking skill, the researcher gives the students pre-test and post-test. After giving the test, the researcher analysed the result of the test by scoring it.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

Below is the table of collecting data and then explained by the detail. In the Table 1, it is found the techniques of collecting the qualitative and quantitative data in each step of the research completed with the participants, the data gathered and how to analyse them.

Table 1. Tabel of Collecting Data

Steps of the research	Participants	Techniques of collecting	Data
Pre research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test • Observation • Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scores • Field notes
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher • Students • Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Diary • Document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • photographs • students' answer sheet • diaries
Result discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • researcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching and learning process • students' achievement in speaking

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The two main points in this section come from the research questions, they are:

Identifying the Problem

To measure the early students' condition, the researcher conduct the pre-test and doing the pre-observation by interviewing the students. In this pre observation, some problems are found. The research found that lack of speaking skill is the main problem. The students feel shy to deliver their idea when teaching learning English. They also lack confidence to express their expression. Lack of vocabularies also being the next factors. Most of them shy to show their speaking ability in front of the class.

After finding the problems faced by the students, the research conducted pre-test. The pre-test was done before the doing the treatment to the students. The test was done in order to know the students' speaking ability. The mean score of pre-test was 60,04.

Based on the pre-observation and pre-test conducted by the research, it can be concluded that the ability of speaking, especially in interpersonal communication is still low. It should be improved by implementing a special teaching method, in this case is role-play.

Implementing role play to improve students' interpersonal communication

After finding the problems, the researcher made a plan to solve the problem. The stages consist of:

a. planning

After finding the problems, the researcher made a plan to solve the problems by using role play. The researcher prepared some various theme of dialogue which have some characters such as volunteer, manager, CEO, or other profession. Furthermore, the second cycles did in three meetings also. The revision of the lesson plan made form the result of the first cycle. The weaknesses faced in the first cycle such as error in grammar, lack of vocabularies, etc.

b. Acting

In this stage, the researcher implemented the teaching technique by using role play. Each student has their own character they are interest. By applying this approach, the students not only practice their speaking ability, but also gain their creativity in using language. They can bring their mood, expression, and gesture to deliver the main idea of the context. In this acting stage consist of two cycles, each of cycle divided into three meeting. In the first cycle, first meeting, the students are asked to prepare the topic based on their major. The students were also asked to make their own script, properties, all supporting equipment. Next meeting, the students are asked to perform their scenario in front of the class. The other students who did not perform, they are asked to give some comments related to their friends' performance, such as grammar, diction/vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. Finally, the researcher closed her research by doing a post-test individually.

Based on some considerations, all activities carried out in the first cycle are also carried out in the second cycle. The second cycle is closed by doing the post-test. The theme for the performance is still same, the students feel free to choose their own theme.

c. Observing

In the first cycle, there were some students who didn't pay attention to the instruction. Som of them were still feel confuse to do the instruction, especially choosing appropriate character. Besides that, the students still had difficulties in constructing sentences. They got several errors in sentence building indicated they were lack of vocabularies. There were

some students who asked about vocabularies and phrases. Moreover, there were some students also didn't take part effectively.

Moreover, the second cycle students seemed confident when they were asked to perform their role plays. The students enjoyed to deliver their idea based on their character well. They feel free to perform their script without much hesitation. They also got better in delivering the sentences without much errors.

d. Reflecting

After analysing the result of the cycle one, the researcher did a reflection in order to evaluate the teaching process and also being the consideration to have the second cycle. The observation result shows that there were some weaknesses found, such as the students still feel shy to deliver their character, lack of vocabularies, errors in sentence building, there are some hesitations while deliver the performance. The mean score of first post-tests showed that 73,8. It means that there is an improvement from the last students pre-test score, 60,04.

The result of the second cycle shows that there is an improvement in students' performance and also the post test score. From the performance shows that the students enjoy to perform their character. The students get better in constructing sentences in the correct grammar, more diction/vocabulary used, less hesitation in pronunciation, deliver the ideas fluency, and comprehension. Furthermore, the means score of second post test shows 89,5. It can be concluded that there is an improvement of the mean score from pre-test to post test, 60,04 to 73,8 to 89,5.

The Impact of Implementing Role-Playing Method for Students' Interpersonal Communication Improvement

Identifying the impact of the role play for students' interpersonal communication, the researcher analyses the two aspects examined. The first aspect from the students' observation result. The students are willingness to prepare all of their needs to performance. So, the performance would be better than their first performance in the first cycle. It can be seen that the students get better in building sentences, delivering their message fluency based on their own character. By using various vocabularies in their performance, it means that the students enjoy their character well. They are more confident to speak up by using the vocabularies that they prepare before. Their hesitation is also reduced. Moreover, the role play enables students to enhance the student' speaking skill. In other word, the students enjoy to create their interpersonal communication between partners.

The second aspect can be seen from the students' score. The students' score improves from the pre-test to the post-test.

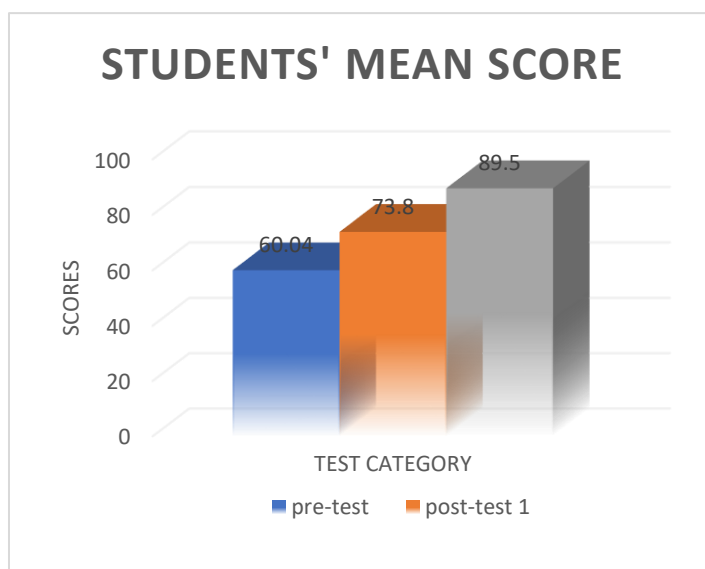


Figure 1. The Students Mean Score

CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion above, it can be concluded that:

1. The implementation of role play improves the students' interpersonal communication. It can be seen from the enhancement of the students speaking skill. The students being active to deliver their character, use the correct grammar, delivering the message of the character fluency and comprehension, minimum the hesitation, and use various vocabularies.
2. The implementation of role play enhances the students' speaking test score. It can be seen from the students' mean score from pre-test to post test, 60,04 to 73,8 to 89,5.

Some suggestion that can be conveyed with the result of this research are as follows:

1. For the teacher, the role play can be used continuously especially for the students with the homogenous character. It is because the role play has some aspects that can be maintained such as maintaining the speaking indicators.
2. For the students, the role play is one of the teaching learning methods that can be used in and outside of the class for enhancing the interpersonal communication between partners.

REFERENCES

- Altun, Mustafa. 2015. Using Role-Play Activities to Develop Speaking Skills: A case Studi in the Language Classroom. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*; Erbil. Vol. 1, Iss 4. Pp.27-33.
- Faqih, Dian. (2017). The Use of Role Play in Speaking Activities for the 8th Grade Students of SMP Negeri 1 Sleman. Universitas Sanata Dharma. Yogyakarta.
- Jhavery, BJ. 2022. Improving your soft skills using roleplays. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/improving-your-soft-skills-using-roleplays-bj-jhaveri-1f>. accessed at 13.57.
- Krebt, D. M. (2017). The Effectiveness of Role Play Technique in Teaching Speaking for EFL College Students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8(5), 863-870.
- Kriegel, Otis. 2023. <https://www.wgu.edu/heyteach/article/encouraging-students-participate-how-help-shy-students-speak1809.html>
- Nikmah, Altu, et.all. 2019. The Implementation of Role Play to Improve Speaking Skill of Student at IAIN Kudus. *Journal of English teaching and Learning Issue*. Vol. 2 (2). Pp
- O'Donnell, Nancy, et.all. The Use of Role Play To Teach Communication Skills. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED336160>. Pp 8. accessed at 13.55.
- Parincu, Zamfira. 2023. <https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/interpersonal-communication.html>
- Terra, John. 2023. <https://www.simplilearn.com/what-is-interpersonal-communication-article>
7 Top Methods for Teaching Excellent Communication Skill. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/teaching-excellent-communication-skills>. accessed 13.47.
- https://ablconnect.harvard.edu/files/ablconnect/files/role_playing_ataglance.pdf
- <https://ojs.lib.uwo.ca/index.php/tips/article/view/10320>
- <https://ablconnect.harvard.edu/want-facilitate-role-playing-your-class>
- <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED336160>
- <https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide/role-playing.shtml>
- <https://www.classcraft.com/blog/why-you-should-use-role-playing-in-the-classroom/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpersonal_communication
- <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/interpersonal-communication.html>
- <https://haiilo.com/blog/interpersonal-communication-definition-importance-and-must-have-skills/>
- <https://degree.astate.edu/articles/undergraduate-studies/what-is-interpersonal-communication.aspx>
- https://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/get-shy-students-talking.shtml
- <https://eltguide.com/the-eight-ways-to-engage-shy-students-in-speaking-tasks/>. Accessed at 19.47
- <https://edu.rsc.org/ideas/encourage-shy-pupils-to-participate/3010834.article>
- <https://www.wikihow.com/Evaluate-Speaking-Skills>