

THE PORTRAYAL OF THE ROLE-PLAY IMPLEMENTATION IN TEACHING SPEAKING TO THE STUDENTS OF TOURISM STUDY PROGRAM

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Abstract: This paper entitled "The Portrayal of the Role-Play Implementation in Teaching Speaking to the Students of Tourism Study Program" was intended to investigate how role-play is implemented in teaching speaking to the students of Tourism Study Program and the students' responses towards the implementation of role-play. The participants of this study were an English teacher and eleventh grade students of one vocational high school in Bandung. Qualitative approach was used as the research method by employing non-participant observation and questionnaires to attain the data. The findings showed that the implementation of role-play motivated the students in learning English and help the students bridge the theory into practice. However, the role-play could not be optimally utilized to develop the students' speaking ability because the teacher violated some principals in teaching speaking and some elements in the implementation of role-play. This research is expected to contribute to the teaching of English especially in the use of role-play in teaching speaking. In addition, it is suggested for the next researcher to extend the research on the use of role-play not only in teaching speaking, but also in the other aspects of communicative language teaching.

Keywords: *role-play, teaching speaking*

Introduction

Role-play is a "free-flowing learning activity" in which the students are required to take on a role and pretend to be someone or something (Killen, 2006; p. 261). Ladousse (1995) illustrates the role-play as: the students take 'roles' as their own or somebody else's in specific situation and they 'play' their role in a safe environment as inventive and playful as possible. In other words, role-play is an activity where the students play roles as themselves or others' in a specific situation. In the role-

play, the students will be given their own roles and they should be responsible to develop the role-play based on the topic given in the certain situation. This may give the students an understanding about a situation or relationship among the real-life participants of a social process.

In the field of tourism and hospitality, many students derive great benefit from role-play and simulation (Harmer, 2001). The study conducted by Ghufuron (2009) shows that the use of role-play in teaching speaking is quite effective

and it can stimulate the students to speak English in direct communication in enjoyable and interesting atmospheres.

There are some benefits of the use of role-play. Livingstone (1983) & Ments (1992) argue that role play can increase students' motivation and involvement in the learning process. The research that was conducted by Liu (2010) concluded that there were not any obvious changes of using oral English tests method, but there were significant changes of using role-play activity method on the aspect of arousing the students' motivation of English speaking. Additionally, the students will get opportunity to be more deeply involved in thinking about how they will react in the real-life situations with different social contexts and in different social roles Ments (1999). Furthermore, role-play can be particularly effective in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and daily life since role-play provides "a clear focus for learning by emphasizing the application of knowledge in real situation" (Maddrell, 1994 & Killen 2006).

Other strength of role-play is it can build the students' confidence. Richardson and Kleiner (1992; as cited in Armstrong, 2003) assert that the students will be more confident to handle a real-life interaction as it has already been practiced, and role-play

is one of the activities for the students to practice facing the real world.

As the strength of the role-play, the challenges also appear in the implementation of role-play method. One of the most problematic challenges is the lack of time and material resources that discourage many teachers to apply this method (Maddrell, 1994; Livingstone, 1983; Ments, 1992; and Killen, 2006). Livingstone (1983) adds that role-play usually consumes large amount of time especially in the preparation stage because the students need to understand the language function first, then read or listen the model of the conversation, and practice to perform the role-play.

The second challenge is many teachers find conducting role-plays is quite intimidating as the outcomes are unpredictable. Role-play also may be very successful or a total failure depending on the personalities of the participating students (Killen, 2006). Furthermore, some shy students or the students who are unconfident may be reluctant to participate in the role-play activity and they may rely on the students who have more skill/knowledge to perform adequately during role-play (Ments, 1992).

For a successful role-play implementation, there are some main

elements in the role-play (Tompkins, 1998 & McDaniel, 2000):

1. building the students' knowledge by giving them the input first,
2. setting up the situation,
3. demonstrating a model related to the situation,
4. giving the students' opportunity to practice,
5. students perform the role-play by providing them the cue cards as the hints,
6. feedbacks and follow-up actions.

Based on those elements, there are some stages proposed by Livingstone (1983), which are considered have a clear and complete scaffolding, to conduct an effective role-play:

1. giving situation,
2. develop the role-play design based on the students' conditions,
3. giving linguistic preparation,
4. preparing the factual preparation,
5. assigning how the role-play should be performed (pair/group work), and
6. follow-up activities.

The discussions with other tourism and hospitality educators show that role-play is used practically frequent (Armstrong, 2003). However, the details of its application are seldom reported. Thus, this research attempts to investigate how the role-play is implemented in teaching

speaking to the students of Tour and Travel Business Study Program at one vocational high school in Bandung, the difficulties encountered by the teacher during the implementation, and the students' responses towards the implementation of the role-play itself.

Methodology

• Research Questions

The main objective of this study was to expose the research questions below:

1. How is role play implemented in teaching speaking to the students of Tourism Study Program?
2. How are the students' responses towards the implementation of the role-play?

• Research Method

This study employed the qualitative approach as the method of investigation. It was conducted by exploring and investigating behaviors and attitudes that happened in the classroom during the process of teaching and learning. A descriptive case study method was applied in this study to attain the data.

• Sites and Participants

An English teacher and thirty six students of 11th grade in Tourism Study Program of a vocational high school in

Bandung were the participants of the research. The rationalization of choosing the participants is because the teacher used role-play as the method to teach some topics related to the students' future occupation. Besides, the school is a Pioneering International Standard School in where most of the students possess above-average English proficiency.

- **Data Collection and Analysis Procedure**

To answer the research questions, the researcher collected the data from non-participant observation, interview, and questionnaires.

The observations were aimed at investigating how role-play is implemented in teaching speaking and discovering the students' responses during the lesson. There were five observation meetings and conducted in the classroom during the lessons. The schedules of the observations were as follows:

Table 1: Schedule of the Research

Time of Observation	Objective of the Lesson	Topic of the Lesson
1 st Observation (September, 11 th 2013)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students are able to compose dialogue about making reservation by using at least six modals auxiliary in the dialogue. 2. The students are able to perform a role-play of making reservation in front of the class. 	Making Reservation
2 nd Observation (September, 18 th 2013)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students are able to identify the parts of curriculum vitae and job application letter. 	Applying a Job
3 rd Observation (October, 2 nd 2013)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students are able to create curriculum vitae and job application letter. 2. The students are able to compose dialogue about job interview. 	Applying a Job
4 th Observation (October, 3 rd 2013)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students are able to demonstrate a role-play of job interview in front of the class. 	Job Interview
5 th Observation (October, 9 th 2013)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the role-play performance. 2. The students are able to identify their strengths and their weaknesses in the role-play performance. 3. The students are able to identify the good example of job interview. 	Review

The questionnaires were also distributed to know the students' responses specifically towards the implementation of the role-play.

After collecting the data from the observation and the questionnaire, the consistency for each similar phenomenon was coded and divided into groups and categories. Finally, the insignificant data were eliminated. Thus, it helped the researcher to collect, compile and find the data that were significantly important to the study. Some of the data were also displayed in the form of table and chart in order to make them clearer and understandable.

Data Presentation and Discussion

- **Research Question 1: How role-play is implemented in teaching**

speaking to the students of Tour and Travel Business Study Program.

Since the students learn English for Specific Purposes, the topics were not only limited on how to use some daily life expressions, but also how to deal with some situations related to the students' future occupations. Based on the observations conducted, there were two role-plays implemented in this semester (4th semester). In the first role-play, the students were required to perform a role-play about making reservation, while in the second role-play the students learned how to deal with job interview. The teacher conducted different steps as in the table below:

Table 2: The Steps in Implementing the Role-Play Conducted by the Teacher

First Role-Play	Second Role-Play
1. Providing the new expressions	1. Assigning how the role-play would be performed (in the group of four)
2. Helping the students to arrange the factual preparation by: a. Giving clear role-description b. Asking the students to prepare the properties	2. Giving situation
3. Giving situation for the role-play	3. Helping the students to arrange the factual preparation by: a. Asking the students to prepare the properties b. Providing the concrete information of the situation c. Giving clear role-description
4. Develop the situation based on the students' condition	4. Follow-up – giving feedback and open debriefing session
5. Assigning how the role-play would be performed (pair works)	
6. Giving feedback	

Both of the steps conducted by the teacher were quite different with the steps proposed by Livingstone (1983) which are:

1. giving situation,
2. develop the role-play design,
3. giving linguistic preparation,
4. preparing the factual preparation,
5. assigning the role, and
6. follow-up.

By comparing the steps conducted by the teacher and the steps proposed by Livingstone (1983), it appears that the Livingstone's steps seem to be more ideal because they have clear and complete scaffolding.

Furthermore, the phases provided by the teacher in implementing the role-play in the classroom were as follow:

1. doing preliminary activity,
2. practicing the dialogue,
3. performing the role-play, and
4. feedbacks and follow-up activities.

Those phases were almost similar to the phases suggested by Richards (1995). The difference was the teacher did not give the students opportunity to listen or watch native speakers performing the same situation as Richards suggested (1995). In addition, there were some elements that the teacher did not provide in some phases such as no model in the preliminary activity and no cue cards to help the students in performing the role-play.

Further explanation of each phase is presented below.

Preliminary activity. During the preliminary activity, the teacher conducted the lesson in clear sequence and applied the students-centered classroom.

Unfortunately, what the teacher did not put into action was giving exposure to the students to use English. The teacher mostly used Bahasa Indonesia in teaching. By contrast, Brown (2001) states that it is important to encourage the development of speaking strategies in which the students become aware of the language. It can be achieved at least beginning from a simple way such as asking for clarification or repeat something to the students using English (Brown, 2001). Hence, the students will indirectly get example from the teacher to use English.

In the first role-play, the preliminary activity was brainstorming about any kinds of reservation that the students would find in their future work fields and what expressions are used if the students want to handle the customer when making reservation. Meanwhile, in the second role-play, the preliminary activity was making a curriculum vitae and job application letter. Both of these preliminary activities are in line with Richards (1995) who states that preliminary activities can be brainstorming or any tasks that generate related language,

and prepares a role-play by establishing a schema for the situation. In addition, after both of those activities, the students were required to compose a dialogue. Livingstone (1983) states that composing a dialogue can help the students to consider the vocabularies or the expressions used in the role-play.

Figure 1: The Teacher is Monitoring while the Students were making the dialogue in the Preliminary Activity



Conversely, the teacher did not start the activity from receptive to productive skills. In designing teaching speaking, whereas, it is essential to “capitalize on the natural link between speaking and listening” (Brown, 2001; p.275). In the case of role-play, receptive skill can be as the model for the students. It can be listening to a conversation or watching a video about related topic. Unfortunately, the teacher did not provide any examples or models before asking the students to do the tasks. When this issue was confirmed to the teacher, it seemed that the teacher assumed that the students could find the models by

themselves in the internet (Figure 2). That's why she gave freedom for the students to use their gadgets in the lesson.

Figure 2

R	: <i>Memurut Ibu, dikasih model sebelum role-play itu penting atau tidak, Bu?</i>
Teacher	: <i>Sebenarnya sih... Penting dan engga [laughing]. Jaman sekarang kan anak udah bisa cari sendiri gimana sih role-play. Ga usah dikasih contoh, ga usah... Cuma ada baiknya sebenarnya dikasih, jadi anak itu ada bayangan.</i>
R	: <i>Ibu sendiri lebih prefer ke ngasih model dulu atau ngga?</i>
Teacher	: <i>[laughing] Mereka suka dituntut untuk lebih mandiri. Jadi saya hanya kasih tema. "Coba kalian cari sendiri di internet" Tapi masih dalam jam saya. Nanti kalo mereka, "Miss, yang kayak begini?" nanti saya lihat. "Oh ya, begitu." Mereka cari contoh sendiri, tunjukkan sama saya, benarkah? Kalo benar ya lanjutkan, kalo salah, "Bukan yang itu..." nanti perbaiki lagi. Kita lebih simple.</i>

This is contrary to Mc. Daniel (2000, as cited in Graves 2008) who strongly recommends that the teacher should give input to the students first before having them doing the role-play because a teacher cannot expect the students to do or assume that the students are able to perform a role-play about something that they have no prior knowledge of. It was proved in the second role-play. When the students were interviewed, they claimed that they got confused of how a job interview should be held by using English.

Practicing the dialogue. In both role-plays, the teacher provided the students with the opportunities to prepare themselves beforehand such as making the dialogue and practicing it. This is also relevant with as mentioned by O'Malley and Pierce (1996; as cited in Graves 2008)

that in the role-play, the students should prepare a dialogue before presenting it. Furthermore, by having rehearsal time, it has the effect of lowering anxieties, even if it takes for a few moments (Brown, 2004).

Performing the role-play. In the first role-play, the students performed in pairs without sufficient preparation from the students. As a result, the performances were not as satisfying as the second role-play. In the second role-play, most of the students who acted as the applicants were able to act out as if they were real applicants. This is in line with Killen (2006) who asserts that, in an effective role-play, sometimes the students become emotionally involved in their roles.

However, in the first role-play implementation, most of the students did not perform optimal because they read the text while performing. Livingstone (1983) asserts that this activity is called reading aloud dialogue with meaning and not a role-play. Nonetheless, this activity should be used as the preparation before conducting the real role-play.

In addition, the teacher did not provide role-cards as the requirements for performing the role-play. This is contrary to Richards (1995) who suggests that the students use their own dialogue to practice on the topic and use role-cards to perform. As Ladousse (1995) states that role cards

have important role in conducting the effective role-play; the teacher was supposed to distributed role-cards for the students to perform rather than asked the students to make the dialogue and let the students memorized it. Therefore, because the role cards contain brief role description and language functions suggested, the students are free to explore the role in a more spontaneous manner rather than just memorizing (Ladousse, 1995). It is also supported by Byrne (1986) who states that this kind of role-play (scripted role-play) will be less effective to train the students who use role-play as the practice to deal with conversation. If the students practice conversation by memorizing what they have written, it will be difficult for them to anticipate spontaneous situations in the real life.

Figure 3: The Students were performing the Role-Play about Job Interview



Feedback and follow-up. The feedbacks in the first role-play implementation were given after each pairs performed, while, in the second role-play

implementation, the feedbacks were included in the follow-up session in the separated meeting. In the second implementation, the teacher opened the comments session and welcomed the students' opinion about the previous role-play. This is in line with Horner & McGinley (1990, cited in Kodotchigova, 2002) that follow-up is crucial to discuss what has happened in the role-play and what the students have learned.

Figure 4: The Teacher is Giving the Feedbacks while Playing the Video of the Students' Performance



In giving the feedbacks, the teacher did not point out the students' mistakes in an offensive way. It is along the lines of Kodotchigova (2002) who suggest that every mistake should not be pointed out one by one because it might make the students less confident and less willing to do the other role-plays. Corresponding to that statement, the teacher gave the feedbacks to the students implicitly by showing a good example and letting the students compared and realized their

weaknesses. Hence, the students can have their own understanding and point of view about a good job interview. It has a same fashion to what Killen (2006) who affirms that discussion helps the students to make a reflection and understanding for better learning.

In addition, the feedback given was included to self-correction (Liu & Ding, 2009) where the students are given the opportunity to watch the performance again and reflect on the language used so that they may find it easy to spot their own mistakes. Unfortunately, the feedbacks were mostly on the students' voices and how the students act their roles, not focused on the students' speaking ability such as pronunciations, vocabularies, or grammatical structures, whereas the feedbacks were supposed to help the students to enhance their proficiency in speaking English.

From the analysis of the findings, it was discovered that in the second role-play, the students could perform better than in the first role-play. The students had better pronunciation and fluency in the second role-play even though it seems that most of the students tried hard to memorize the dialogue while performing the role-play. It can be seen that the process of the second role-play facilitated the students to perform better. The factors might be (1) the topic

that was something new for the students; (2) the preliminary activities, which were making the curriculum vitae and job application letter, could attract the students and help them to build more understanding about applying a job; (3) the longer preparation; and (4) the little feedbacks that were given after each of the students performing the first role-play. This is in line with Ghufron (2009) that the topic and feedbacks were quite influential in conducting an effective role-play. In addition, reflecting from the first role-play in which the students did many negotiations to perform the role-play, the teacher then built some commitments in the second role-play performance for the students to perform better.

Furthermore, from the way the teacher did in implementing role-play, it seems that the teacher's role in the role-plays conducted was a spectator and observer since the teacher watches and the role-play, observes the students' performance, then offers comments and advices at the end (Liu and Ding, 2009). It was also shown that the approach that the teacher used was skills-based approach since the students learned how to deal with reservation and job interview, practiced them, and then demonstrated the role-play. As Errington (1997; as cited in Armstrong, 2003) identifies the features of skills-based

approach are the students acquire and rehearse a skill or ability and demonstrates it to others, the activity is useful for specific tasks with clear performance criteria, and the role-play lends itself to practical skills which are difficult to express theoretically.

- **Research Question 2: The students' responses towards the implementation of role-play.**

This section analyzes the third research question which is the students' responses towards the implementation of role-play. The questionnaires were distributed to the students to know their perspectives over the implementation of role-play.

1. *The Students Responses Towards the Contribution of Role-Play in the Learning Activity*

The first aspect shows the students responses towards the contribution of role-play in the learning activity and the result is presented below:

Table 3: The Students' Responses towards the Contribution of Role-Play in Learning Activity

No	Statements	Percentage of each Answer			
		SA	A	D	SD
1	Role-play membuat saya lebih mudah memahami materi yang diajarkan	20.59%	79.41%	0%	0%
2	Role-play memudahkan saya untuk menerapkan teori ke dalam praktek	23.53%	76.47%	0%	0%
3	Role-play meningkatkan partisipasi saya dalam kegiatan belajar di kelas	11.76%	76.47%	11.76%	0%
4	Role-play membuat saya lebih ekspresif dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris	17.65%	73.53%	8.82%	0%
5	Guru sebaiknya lebih sering mengadakan role-play terutama saat mengajarkan speaking	20.59%	61.76%	17.65%	0%
Average		18.82%	73.53%	7.65%	0%

From the table above, it can be seen that best parts of students (73.53%) agree that role-play has a very important contribution in their learning activity.

The result also shows that, for the students, role-play takes important contribution mostly in bridging the theory to practice and in increasing the students' participation in the classroom.

This is in line with Maddrell (1994) who states that role-play can be particularly effective in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and daily life.

2. *The Students' Responses towards the Contribution of Role-Play in Learning Speaking Skill*

In this part, the category of the students' responses towards the contribution of role-play in learning speaking is presented and the result is shown below:

Table 4: The Students' Responses towards the Contribution of Role-Play in Learning Speaking Skill

No	Statements	Percentage of Each Answer			
		SA	A	D	SD
6.	Role-play memudahkan saya dalam berlatih berbicara Bahasa Inggris	52.94%	47.06%	0%	0%
7.	Role-play membantu saya dalam mengembangkan kemampuan berbicara Bahasa Inggris	38.24%	58.82%	2.94%	0%
8	Role-play meningkatkan motivasi saya dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris	20.59%	70.59%	8.82%	0%
9	Role-play adalah metode yang menyenangkan dalam berlatih berbicara Bahasa Inggris	29.41%	67.65%	2.94%	0%
10	Role-play membuat saya lebih berani dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris	26.47%	67.65%	5.88%	0%
Average		33.53%	62.35%	4.12%	0%

From the table above, it can be illustrated that best part of students (62.35%) agree that role-play has a very important contribution in learning speaking skill. Moreover, according to the students' perceptions, role-play helps them especially in boosting the motivation to practice the speaking skill. The teacher also supported that the students could be more fun when they learn by:

Figure 5

Teacher: *Kalo ke murid... bisa dilihat kalo di teori mereka bête, kalo di role-play mereka lebih fun. Kayaknya mereka lebih santai, menerima...*

This is along the lines with Livingstone (1983) who asserts that role-play can increase learners' motivation. The students' responses revealed by the questionnaire is also similar to Ladousse (1995) and Liu (2010) who claim that role-

play is also a fun way for them to practice speaking.

3. *The Students' Responses towards the Contribution of Role-Play in Preparing for the Future Works*

There were three indicators to check students' perception in this category, and the result is as follow:

Table 5: The Students' Response towards the Contribution of Role-Play in Preparing for the Future Works

No	Statements	Percentage of each Answer			
		SA	S	D	SD
11	Role-play membantu saya dalam memahami seperti apa pekerjaan saya di masa depan	35.29%	61.76%	2.94%	0%
12	Role-play membantu saya dalam mengembangkan imajinasi tentang pekerjaan saya di masa depan	29.41%	64.71%	5.88%	0%
13	Role-play membantu saya untuk lebih siap menghadapi dunia kerja	32.35%	64.71%	2.94%	0%
Average		32.35%	63.73%	3.92%	0%

The result of this category shows that best parts of the students (63.73%) agree that role-play has a very important contribution in preparing their future work. It can be seen from the point 13 that 64.71% agree that role-play can help them to get ready in facing their future works. The same number also shows that the students agree that they can build the imagination about their future works.

This is corresponding to Armstrong (2003) that role-play encourage the practical application and integration of knowledge to a professional context, supported by Richardson and Kleiner

(1992; as cited in Armstrong, 2003) that the students are more confident to handle a real-life interaction in their future works. The students also agree that role-play helps them in building imagination of their future works. This is also in line with Brown (1994; as cited in Armstrong, 2003) who argues that role-play is typically a highly interactive activity that captures the students' imaginations.

Conclusions

There were two role-plays implemented by the teacher in this semester. Generally, the teacher conducted the same stages in implementing role-play in the classroom. They were (1) preliminary activity, included brainstorming, discussion, giving the task related about related topic, and providing the general situation for the role-play, (2) preparing and practicing the role-play, where the students made the dialogue, practiced the dialogue and the acting, and preparing the setting and the properties, (3) performing the role-play, and (4) review session where the teacher gave feedbacks about the students' performances and welcomed for the students comments or opinions. The differences of students' performances between the two role-play were quite significant. The factors were the topic brought in the role-play, the

preliminary activity, the time for preparation, and the feedbacks given by the teacher.

It is recommended for the teacher to endow the students with comprehensible language function input and provide some models or examples for the students in the preliminary activity before asking the students to perform the role-play. It is also important for the teacher to use role cards to support students' in practicing communicative skills rather than just memorizing the dialogue. In giving the feedback, the teacher is suggested to focus not only to how the students act in role-playing, but also their proficiency of English especially in speaking skill. Moreover, in the debriefing session, it is recommended to divide the students into groups and give them some minutes to discuss their performances after watching the video, and then the teacher can ask every group to presents their opinions or comments.

Regardless to the steps that the teacher conducted, the students' responses towards the implementation of role-play were tended to be positive. The questionnaire results showed that the students' responses were predominantly positive in the contribution of role-play in the learning activity. They agreed that role-play eased them in bridging the theory into

practice and role-play could increase their motivation to speak English. They also agreed that role-play helped them in illustrating the real activity in their future work fields. The negative responses from the students were mostly about the model that the teacher did not provide before asking students to perform the role-play. They stated that they have difficulties in preparing the script of the role-play, especially in job interview role-play, because they did not get any examples and experiences.

Overall, this study can be envisaged to enrich the literature and/or as reflection on the use of role-play in teaching the students of tour and travel business in the level of vocational high school, which is still sparse.

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