



The Use of Role Play Technique in Teaching Speaking at Senior High School

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ABSTRACT

This study which used library research is intended to look some theories and research findings related to the use of role play in teaching speaking. It is difficult for students to convey the idea in English due to lack of vocabulary, idea, self-confidence, and motivation. To solve the problems, the teacher should apply an appropriate technique to improve student's speaking skill. In this research, the writer recommends role play technique. Role play is a technique which can develop students' fluency in target language, promote students' speaking skill or interact with each other in classroom, increase motivation and make the teaching learning process more enjoyable. The study shows that using role play technique is effective in improving the students' speaking skill and students' self-confidence. This study is expected to be useful for English teachers in teaching speaking, and students can also be motivated in learning and developing their speaking skill effectively.

Introduction

In this modern era, people have to master more than one language. Language as a tool for communication takes an important role in our daily activities. Without language, we will be left behind. Communication in foreign language is a bridge to get information, knowledge and culture. Indonesia as a developing country has realized that English as an international language has to be mastered by Indonesian. English is important to learn because of several reasons: it is lingua franca of the world and it is important for every aspect of life. Therefore, many people want to improve their English.

There are four skills in language teaching; speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Speaking and writing, language generated by the learners, is called productive skill (output), and reading and listening, language directed at the learners, is known as receptive skill (input). The speaking skill is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in target language. Teachers can be considered successful in teaching speaking if students are able to communicate in English. They are able to master vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. So, teachers need to provide opportunities for students to practice speaking.

Nunan (1991: 39) states that the most important aspect of learning a language is mastering of speaking, it means that we have ability to carry out a conversation in the language. So, we need a lot of practice in learning speaking and the teacher must provide students the opportunities to practice speaking.

Speaking is "an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information." "It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and involving, but it is not completely unpredictable" (Florez, 1999: 1). Speaking is an expressive language skill in which the speaker uses verbal symbols to communicate.

In speaking, it is very important for students acquiring the ability to express their ideas and opinions. Consequently, this competency should be mastered by the learners of language. Following are the elements of speaking ability according to Harmer (2001: 269-271), language features such as the connected speech, expressive devices, lexis and grammar, and negotiation language. Connected speech is the modifying in sounds production or utterances such as assimilation, omission, addition, weakened (through contraction and stress patterning). An expressive device is the alteration of the speed, volume,

and stress of utterances to show the feeling. The use of this device contributes the ability to convey meaning. Then lexis and grammar is necessary for the teacher to give of supply of certain words and language function, such as agreeing or disagreeing, surprise, and so forth. Lastly, negotiation language is the benefits to clarify and to show the structure what we are saying. Therefore, those elements are completely significant a speaking ability.

Furthermore, Harmer (2001: 104) states that the other element of the speaking is mental/ social processing except the language skill for the speaker, but the rapid processing skill is also necessary, such as language processing, interaction, and information processing.

The language processing is the effective speaker to convey their intention to someone else and they process the words or retrieval of words or phrases from memory to communicate with people. It helps the students to develop habits of rapid language processing English. Then, interaction is the student interacting with the other and they understand each other. Lastly, information processing is related to the perception of some else concerning the response to other feeling in using the language. Thus, the mental has important role to succeed the communication particularly in speaking ability.

According to Harmer (2001), these are principles of teaching speaking: First, help students overcome their initial reluctance to speak. Be encouraging; provide opportunity; start from something simple. Second, ask students to talk about what they want to talk about. After that, provide appropriate feedback. Then, combine speaking with listening and reading. Finally, incorporate the teaching of speech acts in teaching speaking.

In learning speaking skill, the students often found some problems. They are reluctant to take part in the conversation. It is caused by lack of vocabulary, idea, self-confidence, and motivation. Another problem influenced by the students in learning speaking is class size. The number of students also influences students' focus in learning. If there are a lot of students in a class, they do not have opportunity to participate in teaching learning process.

The learners have their own difficulties in learning the language. Particularly improving speaking skill is not easy for the students. The Following are the problems of speaking skill (Munjayanah, 2004: 17):

- a. *Inhibition*: unlike reading, writing or listening activities, speaking requires some degree of real-time exposure to an audience. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say thing in foreign language in the classroom: worried about mistakes or simply hesitate of the attention that their speech attract.
- b. *Nothing to say*. Even they are not inhibited, you often hear learners complain that they cannot think of anything to say: they have no motive to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they should be speaking.
- c. *Low participation*. Only one participant can talk at a time if he or she is to be heard; and in large group this means the each one will have only very little talking time. This problem is compounded of some learners to dominate, while other speaks very little or not a tall.
- d. *Mother tongue use*. It is easier for the student to use their mother tongue in their class because it sounds naturally. Therefore, most of the students are not disciplined in using the target language in the learning process.

Therefore, the writer tends to try a method that helps learners develop their communicative strategies. During 1970s and 1980s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) arose to help learners develop their communicative strategies. In this method, learners become the center of teaching learning process and more actively involved. They are expected to have communicative competence rather than linguistic competence, and be able to communicate in the target language.

The goal of communicative competence is to make the students use the language. Richard and Rodger (2001) state that one of the major features of CLT is the use of language learning to communicate. Since language is a vehicle to express the meaning, the students will have the ability to communicate and it will develop their speaking skill. CLT in teaching speaking can make the students support each other because this method needs relationship in a group. Besides, it makes the students become critical and creative.

The theory of language in CLT is communication. Therefore the final aim of CLT is communicative competence. CLT is a method to the teaching of second and [foreign languages](#) that emphasizes [interaction](#) as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a [language](#).

CLT is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning. When students involve in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used, and this will allow them to learn how to use the language.

According to Freeman (1986: 135), there are five techniques in CLT which are focused on students' speaking ability and develop the communicative competence, those are: authentic materials, scrambled sentences, language games, picture story, and role play. In this section, the writer limits the discussion of CLT technique only on role play.

Role play is one of the techniques in CLT. It is very important in teaching speaking because it gives students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social context and in different social roles. It allows them to be creative and to put themselves in another person's for a while. It also gives opportunity for them to participate in the class because each student has character in role play. Furthermore, this teaching technique could empower the students to communicate

independently, made the students feel comfortable during discussing any topics, and fostered interaction with one another. Student satisfaction was positively associated with unscripted role play.

Role play is the act of imitating the character and behavior of a type of a person who is very different from you, either deliberately, for example as a training exercise, or without knowing it. In this sense, the students pretend as someone else in the real world situation brought into the classroom. As a kind of guided conversation technique that is essential to the development of the speaking skill, role play provides framework in which the students build their own sentences but they may decide by themselves what they want to say (Valette and Disick, 1972: 231-235).

In role play technique, students are assigned roles and put into situations that they may eventually encounter outside the classroom. Because role play is imitated life, the range of language function that may be used expands considerably.

The aim of using role play technique in teaching speaking is to encourage students to think and be creative, let students develop and practice new language and behavioral skills in a relatively non-threatening setting, and can create the motivation and involvement necessary for learning to occur. Using role play technique in teaching speaking is a useful and exciting way of focusing on conversational language. By using role play technique, students can express their own feeling.

There are three factors that can contribute to a role play's success, they are: making sure that the language demanded is well within the learner's capacity, the teacher enthusiasm, careful and clear presentation and instructions.

In case of role play activities, according to Byrne in Susanti (2007: 16), role play can be grouped into two forms, scripted and unscripted role play. In details, those types of role play activities are described as follows:

a) **Scripted role play**

This type involves interpreting either the text book dialogue or reading text in the form of speech. The main function of the text after all is to convey the meaning of language items in a memorable way.

b) **Unscripted role play**

In contrast of scripted role play, the situations of unscripted role play do not depend on textbooks. It is known as a free role play or creativeness. The students themselves have to decide what language to use and how the conversation should develop. In order to do this activity, good preparation from teacher and students is really necessary.

It has been mentioned before that role play is one of the activities to promote speaking. Through role play activities the students learn how to express ideas, opinions, or feeling to others by using words or sounds of articulation. Role play is important in the communicative language teaching because they give learners an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and different social roles. Role play is a highly flexible learning activity which has a wide scope for variation and imagination.

According to Ladousse (1995: 6), role play uses different communicative techniques and develops fluency in the language, promotes interaction in the classroom and increases motivation. Here peer learning is encouraged and sharing of responsibility between teacher and the learner in the learning process takes place. Role play can improve learners' speaking skills in any situation, and helps learners to interact. As for the shy learners, role play helps by providing a mask, where learners with difficulty in conversation are liberated. In addition, it is fun and most learners will agree that enjoyment leads to better learning.

Several reasons for using role play in teaching speaking quoted from Ladousse (1995: 7) as follows:

- a. A very wide variety of experience can be brought into the classroom and we can train our students in speaking skill in any situations through role play.
- b. Role play puts students in situation in which they are required to use and develop those forms of language which are so necessary in oiling the works of social relationships, but which are so often neglected by our language teaching syllabuses.
- c. Some people are learning English to prepare for specific roles in their lives. It is helpful for these students to have tried out and experimented with the language they will require in the friendly and safe environment of a classroom.
- d. Role play helps many shy students by providing them with a mask.

Richard (2003: 223) proposed 11 steps in implementing role-play technique. Those are introducing the topic, stimulating student interest, presenting new vocabulary, reading a story that clearly identifies a problem, stopping the story at the climax, discussing the dilemma, selecting students to play the roles, preparing the audience to listen and later to offer advice, acting out the rest of the story, discussing alternative ways of dealing with the problem, and replaying the plays using new strategies if necessary.

In conclusion, role play is a technique which can develop students' fluency in target language, promotes students to speak or interact with others in the classroom, increases motivation and makes the teaching learning process more enjoyable.

For these reasons, the writer is interested in analyzing the use of role play in teaching speaking and also wanted to know advantages and disadvantages of using it. The reason for using role play is to make the class more interesting and not boring because this technique gives opportunity to the students to play the characteristics in front of the class contextually. So, the students have high motivation in learning English.

This study is aimed at looking some theories and research findings related to the use of role play in teaching speaking. So, the writer recommends that the teacher can implement this technique in teaching speaking.

The writer limits the discussion of the study about role play technique in the form of unscripted role play in teaching interpersonal dialogue. Furthermore, this study is hopefully able to give an alternative teaching technique in teaching speaking.

Method

The method used in this study was library research. The data were collected in the form of statements suggested by the experts related to CLT and role play in speaking. The writer found the theory about CLT, role play and speaking in the data collected by the experts in the libraries and the writer also searched some references from website in the internet. The technique used in collecting data was by searching in libraries and internet. First, the writer looked for information about speaking and role play from books, articles, journals, thesis, previous studies and internet. Second, the data were collected based on statements, opinions, and theories suggested by the experts. Third, the writer discussed those theories and decided whether or not role play can improve students' speaking ability and make students active. The writer used the technique of data analysis by understanding the collected data, and then the writer analyzed the related books and journals to find out the solutions of the problems that are mentioned in the background of this study.

Finding and Discussion

During practice of role play of this research, students felt confident to speak in English and express their idea by acting out the dialogue. Moreover, they also become more creative when the teacher asked them to create their own dialogue. The classroom atmosphere became more alive and the students were actively involved in teaching and learning process. They laughed at other group members who made any mistakes. They seemed relaxed and excited during the performance period. This means that there is an improvement on the students' self-confidence. The finding showed that the students' self-confidence also improved, so it can be said that implementation of role play technique was successful and met the criteria of success.

The improvement of the students' speaking performance in this study might be due to some benefits of role-play technique and this result appeared to confirm the result of a previous studies. Huang (2008) states that a student can enjoy and profit from a role play experience "in terms of improved communication skills, creativity, increased social awareness, independent thinking, verbalization of opinions, and development of values and appreciation of the art of drama". It is in line with the statement of Siwu (2005) that the implementation of the role play technique had improved the students' speaking skill. It is revealed through the improvement of the students' speaking performance and their self-confidence.

Based on the findings of the study, it was shown that the appropriate procedure of role play technique gives beneficial contribution both in improving the students' speaking performance and improving students' self-confidence.

In short, the successful of speaking ability can be achieved by using role play technique effectively since the students would like to make use the target language in role play activities both in class and outside the class.

Most of EFL students are passive, and they hesitate to communicate in the target language because of lack of vocabulary, idea, self-confidence. Still, they are lack of motivation in acquiring the target language. In this case, the implementation of role play technique would assist the students become more flexible in developing a sense in many different role situations. As Brown and Thornton (1963: 95) also mention that role play enable students to understand other individual's motivations by acting out other persons' roles. Still, Coelho (1946: 246) says that role play provides an opportunity for all students to participate in it.

Umam in his research "*Improving the Students' Speaking Ability through Role Play Technique*" found that role play is effective in improving students' speaking ability. From his analysis of the students' speaking performance, it was found that there was a very significant improvement. Although some of them still made some mistakes on several language elements being observed, namely, fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, the number of those who did so had decreased.

Umam (2011) used the data to measure whether the implementation of the role play technique had met the criteria of success or not. It can be inferred that the implementation of the role play technique could improve the students' speaking performance as well as students' self-confidence. In preliminary study, there were 4 students who stayed in *poor* level, 14 students *fair* level, and 6 students *good* level. None of them reached *very good* or even *excellent* level. After role play technique was implemented, their speaking performance improved significantly. So, it can be said that the implementation of role play technique was successful and met the criteria of success.

Alwahibee (2004) who has done a research by using role play activities believes that role play can help the students to interact and gave them many chances to talk. Role play let the students create situation and make dialogue. Role play promotes interaction in the classroom and builds interpersonal relation between students.

As the result of this activity, the students' speaking ability has been improved; they have become more confident when speaking in English. They did not feel shy or hesitant anymore. The students are creative where they are asked to select the situations and make the dialogue. Specifically, it will improve their thinking skill.

Furthermore, when implementing role play in teaching learning process, Mutiasari (2012) found that role play can improve the students' speaking skill. The improvements of the students' speaking skill are: role play makes the students interested in speaking English; the students attract to understand and practice the dialogue; the students do not feel shy to speak in English.

After analyzing the research findings, the writer concludes that Umam found that role play is effective in improving students' speaking skill. Alwahibee found that role play helps the students to interact, so they have opportunity to talk with each other. Mutiasari states that the students are interesting in speaking English when the teacher use role play in teaching learning process.

Since the students' speaking performance and their self-confidence for every meeting had showed significant improvement and had met the criteria of success, then the study can be stated as a successful research project.

Conclusion

Conclusion

After doing analysis based on the theories in answering the research questions "How role play technique improves students' speaking ability?" and "How role play technique improves students' self-confidence?" the writer can conclude that:

- Role play helps the students to communicate orally. They become confident to talk by acting out a play.
- Role play let the students talk in English by practicing dialogue and learn how to interact with each other. Also, they become more creative in creating their own language.
- Role play makes the students did not feel shy when they speak English.

The finding of the study indicated that role play gives beneficial contribution both in improving the students' speaking performance and improving students' self-confidence during the instructional process.

Besides, role play was effective in enhancing the students to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process. It was shown by the students' high motivation in the class. Class interaction was improved. The use of role play makes the class more active and alive and makes the students more motivated in learning and easier to grasp the lesson.

In a few words, we can say that role play technique has positive impact in improving learners' speaking skills as it gives the students a chance to explore different situations of real life and enables them to speak accurately and confidently in that situation in the target language. Although during role play in a large class room, the situation gets chaotic and the performers sometimes forget their dialogues, which create embarrassment, eventually with the help of little feedback from the teachers, this problem can be resolved. Teachers may give verbal feedback or written feedback in case of technical difficulties while recording acts.

Suggestion

The success in teaching does not depend on the lesson program only, but more important is how the teacher presents the lesson and uses various techniques to manage the class more lively and enjoyable. Regarding to the teaching speaking by using role play, the writer gives some suggestions for the teachers as follow: they have to use the appropriate material for role play activity, explain the students how to create a good dialogue, and evaluate the students about role play activity. Students also must have self confidence in acting out the dialogue. They have to practice the dialogue in order to help them communicate in English orally.

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