Implementing Role Play in English for Business Class

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Abstract

This study is aimed at describing the implementation of role play technique in English for Business class. The participants of this study were 52 students majoring informatics system at Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia who enrolled English for business I. Data were collected through observation and interview. Then, the data were analyzed by using descriptive analysis. The result of this study shows that the implementation of role play was done successfully. Students played their role well. They could use English based on its context. More exposure toward real situated activities is suggested to help students develop their English ability.

Key words: role play, implementation, English for Business

Introduction

English has become a primary language used by international society. Spoken by millions of people, English is used in many fields. Many colleges in Indonesia provide English subject as a compulsory subject for those non-English study program. This is due to the demand of English language needed as a mean for communication. When someone can speak a language, it means that he can carry on a conversation reasonably competently (Brown, 2001:267). In doing so, students must be familiar with English in their own fields.

In higher education, teaching English to non-English study program gives certain challenges for lecturers. Based on the researcher's experience in teaching English for Business subject at Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia, most students were reluctant to speak. They had lack of vocabulary and difficulties in pronouncing English words. Silence was the only way to do when they had to study English. Moreover, English was one of the most avoided subject for them. Having learnt English for more than 6 years did not change their mind that learning English should be fun. On the other hand, learning English through textbook did not help students to improve their English ability. This condition was getting worse when students had to pass their minimum passing grade.

Based on the problem above, the researcher came to a decision to use role play technique in teaching students who enrolled in English for business course. Role play is a teaching technique that promotes students' engagements toward fun learning. Students pretended themselves as someone else. For instance, the syllabus of English for Business requires students to be able to use English in customer service. At this point, the students must play their role as a customer service and client. According to Dananjaya (2013) role play is an activity in learning process which is the students should not be worry, because in this role play activity, the real situation of live will be created. This activity differ with drama, the duration is very short. The teacher only gives short scenario and the students feel free to modify or improve the situation and character. Students could develop their creativity as Brown (2004: 174) stresses that role play gives students opportunities to be creative and permits them to have a rehearsal time which has an effect of lowering their anxieties. In addition, in implementing role play to teach the students, the teachers have an important role and responsibility to make the teaching and learning process run well. Harmer (2001: 275) points out three different roles that the teacher needs to play to get students speak fluently. The first role is as a prompter. The second role is as a participant, and the last role is as a feedback provider.

The objective of English for business subject is the students are expected to be able to conduct communication in English. So, the skill emphasized in this subject is speaking skill. Speaking skill is important because it is a complex skill requiring the simultaneous use of different abilities, There are five components generally recognized in speaking, namely pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. These components need to be accomplished by students. By using role play technique, students are expected to get more exposure toward speaking skill. The more they practice speaking English, the better English ability they will get.

Based on the description above, the researcher wants to describe the implementation of role play technique in teaching English for Business class and find out advantages of implementing role play.

Methods

This research uses descriptive qualitative design. Participants of this study were 42 students of informatics system study program who enrolled English for Business 1. They were the first semester students. English for business 1 is English subject for non-English study program. This subject covers materials about

learning English for business context. The materials were introduction, numbers, customer service, telephoning, and company profile. There were three topics that were taught by using role play techniques, they were telephoning, customer service and company profile. The objective of this course is students can conduct communication by using English in business context. The instruments used to collect the data were observation and interview. Observation is used to portrait the process of role play technique. Interview is used to find out advantages after implementing role play. The interview questions can be seen as follows:

1. What are benefits you got after using role play?
2. What impact do you get after using role play?
3. How does role play contribute to your English skill?

Results and Discussion

a. Implementing Role Play

The implementation of role play technique in teaching English for business class has been conducted well. Students played the role well. There were three topics delivered through role play technique, they were telephoning, meeting guest and talking about company. The activities done based on the following table.

Table 1. Teaching Activities Using Role Play

No	Materials	Media	Activities
1	Telephoning	The lecturer provides a video about practicing telephoning. Then, the students are given time to develop their activities related to telephoning.	1. Lecturer gives material about telephoning 2. Lecturer explains the learning objectives in telephoning. 3. Lecturer shows video in demonstrating telephoning 4. Lecturer gives a case to the students. 5. Students work in pair. One plays a role as customer service of a company, while another one is a client. 6. Students demonstrate how to receive a phone call in English and make an appointment by phone.
2	Meeting guest	The lecturer provides video demonstrating a customer service serves a client. Besides, students are also provided by textbook.	1. Lecturer explains learning objectives in meeting guest material. 2. Lecturer explains the material about meeting guest. 3. Lecturer gives a case to the students. 4. Students work in pair. One play a role a customer service, another one plays a a client. 5. Students demonstrate how to meet a guest and warmly greet the guest.
3	Talking about company	The lecturer provides slide and video in the classroom. Then, she explains the materials about company profile and show the video of presenting company profile.	1. Lecturer explains learning objectives in talking about company. 2. Lecturer explains the material about company profile 3. Lecturer gives a case to the students related to company profile. 4. Students prepare their company profile individually. They may choose what company that they will describe. 5. Students pretend themselves as a marketing manager of a company. 6. Students present their company profile in the following week.

In carrying out role play activities, there are some stages that students need to do. The stages include drafting, consulting, revising, rehearsing, role playing and evaluation. These stages are obtained from observation. The stages can be seen below.
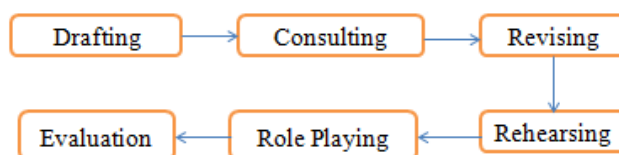
Picture 1. Stages in Completing Role Play Activities

1. **Drafting**

   In this stage, students create a draft for preparing themselves in playing the role. The drafts are developed based on the topics they have. During drafting, students are allowed to open dictionary and see the examples on the textbook and some sources from internet.

2. **Consulting**

   In this stage, students consult their draft to the lecturer. Matters being consulted include language use, content and word choice. Suggestions toward error are noted on the students' draft.

3. **Revising**

   In this stage, students revise their draft based on their lecturer's suggestion.

4. **Rehearsing**

   In this stage, students do rehearsal. They memorize their draft and practice demonstrating telephoning, meeting guest and talking about company without bringing their texts. They have to perform as requested by the role.

5. **Role Playing**

   In this stage, students perform role playing toward telephoning, meeting guest and talking about company.

6. **Evaluation**

   In this stage, students evaluate their performance based on the comments given by the lecturer.

b. Advantages in Implementing Role Play

Based on the result of interview, it can be found that there were some advantages in implementing role play in the classroom. The advantages include (1) more language exposure; (2) more confidence; (3) more experience, (4) more vocabulary, (5) actively involved in learning process.

Students have more exposure toward English language. Having more exposure enables them participate this English class. Altuan (2015) which stated that role-play is a strategy in which students are required to act specific roles through saying, doing, and sharing. Furthermore, using fun speaking activities, such as role-play and simulation approach really encourage the students to speak, and thus, this could lower their anxiety levels. It can be seen toward the students' response in interview.

> "*Saya jarang pakai Bahasa Inggris di kelas dan di luar kelas ms. Namun, saya merasa tertarik belajar Bahasa Inggris karena banyak kosakata baru yang saya peroleh.* (I seldom use English in   and out of the classroom. But, I get more interested in learning English because I get more vocabulary)" – Student 1-

On the other hand, another advantage during implementing role play is students have more confidence. Ladousse (1987) stated that role play is a very useful dress rehearsal for real life and helps many shy students speak out by providing them with a mask. Rajkumar (2012) claimed that role-playing exercises could be hard work for the instructor, both in preparation and in action, but the work tended to pay off in terms of student motivation and accomplishment. It can be seen from the response below.

> "*Kadang saya merasa malu dan grogi. Tapi, saya sudah berlatih sebelum tampil. jadinya saya merasa lebih percaya diri ketika tampil di depan kelas.* (Sometimes I feel shy and nervous. But, I had done rehearsal before practice. So, I feel more confidence performing in front of the class")" –Student 2-

Having more experience has something to do with implementing role play. Students get more experience during role play. According to Krebt (2017), role play is to participate in simulated social situations that are intended to illustrate the roles and contexts that direct to the real life. Role play is an approach in facilitating learning proves to be effective in reaching learning outcomes in three major learning domains: affective, cognitive, and behavioural (Maier, 2002, Rao & Stupans, 2012). Finally, role play engaged as a training approach that has the capacity to change behaviours and use only the best practices in the real world settings (Qing, 2011, Raja Hazirah Raja Sulaiman et al., 2017; Shangeetha & Rajah Kumaran, 2017).

"saya punya pengalaman baru selama belajar Bahasa Inggris. Saya merasa seperti tengah menjadi customer service. (I get new experience during learning English through role play. I feel like I am a customer service") –Student 3-

Another advantage of using role play is students get more new vocabulary used in business context. Role play help them develop their knowledge and enrich their English vocabulary.
"Saya memperoleh banyak kosakata baru dalam Bahasa Inggris. Saya selalu mencatat kosakata tersebut pada buku catatan saya. (I got many new English vocabularies. I always write those English vocabularies on my note book") –Student 4-

Lastly, role play helps students actively involved in teaching and learning process. Students have higher motivation in learning English. Thus, role play helps students to develop themselves in language learning. According to Rahayu, P (2015), role play strategy could minimize students' passiveness in the process of teaching and learning to speak. It also helps to improve students' motivation and develop group work activities.

"Saya merasa lebih semangat dan termotivasi untuk belajar Bahasa Inggris karena aktivitas belajarnya menyenangkan. Selain itu, saya juga memiliki lebih banyak wkatu untuk berinteraksi dengan teman-teman saya dalam grup. (I feel more motivated to learn English because the learning process is enjoyable. In addition, I have more time to conduct interaction to my friends in a group) -Student 5-

Conclusion

Implementing role play in English for Business class brings a real situation exposure to the students. Students play their role as a customer service officer, client, and marketing manager of a company well. Some advantages using role play are students have more language exposure, more confidence, more experience, more vocabulary and actively involved in learning process. Role play can be one of an alternative technique in developing speaking teaching materials. Besides, it can also be used as a reference in designing basic competences at any level of English for business.

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