

**APPLYING ROLE PLAY TECHNIQUE IN SPEAKING ACTIVITY
FOR STUDENTS OF AKADEMI SEKRETARI BUDI LUHUR
JAKARTA**

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Abstract

Teaching can not be defined apart from learning. Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the student to learn, setting the conditions for learning. There are several techniques can be applied by the teacher in order to improve the students' ability. Each technique has its own strengths and weaknesses. One technique can be appropriate for a certain class condition but it can be inappropriate for other classes' conditions. Some students enjoy getting involved while others are reluctant to participate in class. Some students can get advantages, while others can not. he most popular language teaching technique which emphasizes on communication and real life situation is the role play technique. Since it demands the creative and active involvement of the students, using the role play technique, it is expected that the students can learn and practice their speaking skill more effectively.

Keyword: Technique, role play, speaking ability.

A. Introduction

1. The background of the problem.

Many students of English consider that speaking skill is the most difficult one among the other three skills. They clearly feel that classroom-based speaking practice does not prepare them for the real world although they understand their teacher's English. When they speak outside the classroom, they can't understand others. This is to say that these students have not been reached the level of English fluency and they are still badly in need of more supervision and guidance from their teachers inside and outside the class.

Due to the fact above, the teacher - as a mediator in the educational process, should realize their vital role and should pay extra attention on all influencing factors, including the methodology and techniques of teaching in the class. Teaching is no longer based on the teacher-oriented model in which the teacher plays the most important part and is the central activity in the class. Teaching now is more students' oriented in which the students are the focus of the teaching and learning process. It is the teacher's responsibility to organize the classroom as a setting for communication and communicative activities (Richard and Roger: 2001) Teachers should be able to use appropriate teaching technique in order to get the effectiveness of the language learning and teaching process.

The most popular language teaching technique which emphasizes on communication and real life situation is the role play technique. Since it demands the creative and active involvement of

the students, using the role play technique, it is expected that the students can learn and practice their speaking skill more effectively.

One of the English subjects given at the Akademi Sekretari Budi Luhur Jakarta, is Speaking which requires the students to communicate orally. The teacher found that most of the students have difficulties to express their ideas and thought in the form of oral communication.

In view of the above, it is necessary to do a kind of research to find out the solution of the existing problem. The researcher should spot light on exploring the English speaking problems which the students are facing up with. Also, the researcher should find out suitable solutions taking in account the old and new findings in language teaching and learning process.

2. The identification of the problem:

Based on some researcher's observations at Akademi Sekretari Budi Luhur Jakarta Jakarta, it was identified that one teaching learning problems that should be critically improved is the students' interaction in speaking class. The problems were identified as follows: many students become very nervous and embarrassed when asked to speak English. They do not have self confidence to speak, afraid of making mistakes, and can not arrange the sentences. When the teacher asks questions, nobody responds. They have lack of motivation to practice English either with the English teacher or friends. When the teacher asks them to practice with their friends, they tend to use Indonesian language or they just keeping silent. This problem is due to many reasons.

- a. They do not know how to talk to each other using correct grammatical sentences
- b. They feel that they are not able to pronounce English words well
- c. They feel that they do not know how to speak English correctly
- d. They lack competence and skillful teachers who can be taken as examples for the students to be fluent in English

With regard to the reasons enlisted above, it is obvious that the speaking learning skill being used in the language institutions especially in high education is not quite good enough to promote students and teachers to meet accuracy, fluency and appropriateness. That is why there should be urgent steps to figure this problem out as soon as possible.

Based on the background of the study, the questions coming up to the surface are as follows:

- a. What are the factors that promote students' English speaking skill?
- b. What are the obstacles that inhibit students have good English speaking?

3. Theoretical Framework

a. Role Play Technique

Role play, according to Larsen and Freeman (2000: 134), is very important in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) because it gives students the opportunity to practice communicating in different social context and in different social roles. The same opinion about role play is also stated by Harmer

(2007:352) who explained that role play can be used to encourage general oral fluency or to train students for specific situations. When students are doing role plays they need to know exactly what the situation is, and they need to be given enough information about the background for them to function properly. Role-playing activity is a valuable classroom technique that encourages students to participate actively in the process of learning. In other words, second language students can experience the target language in context to learn how to interpret and exchange meanings for real communication.

b. Reasons For Using Role Play In English Classes

There are some possible advantages of using role play in the lessons. Budden (2006: 37) says that when role play is included in the lessons regularly, the learners "are given a chance to rehearse their English in a safe environment. Lessons where role play is used can be motivating for learners because such lessons are different from the traditional ones, they are more interesting, funnier and lively. Thus students are more likely to learn. The work is dynamic and they are actively involved in the process.

Ladousse suggests that learners are similar like children playing school, doctors and so on. In this way they can use their imagination and create their own reality, they can experiment with their knowledge of the real world and develop their ability to interact with other people. The activity does not threaten their personality, it can build up their self-confidence when they see that they can complete the task successfully. They can also find out how well they can communicate in English.

Moreover, in role play learners do not think like someone else because they are someone else. Learners who participate in imaginary role play situations can activate the functional language, develop the phatic forms, which are necessary for communication. Klippel points out that for learners who are studying English in a non-English speaking setting it is very important to experience real communicative situations in which they learn to express the meaning.

Another great advantage of role play is that the physical environment of the classroom can be remade to remind of different places: doctor's surgery, restaurant, shop and so on. This offers more language opportunities.

Scrivener stated (1998: 363) All of these are good ways to get students using the language. By bringing the outside world into the classroom like this, we can provide a lot of useful practice that would otherwise be impossible in cafes, shops, banks, etc."

According to Ladousse, role play also supports the confidence of shy learners because here they are provided with a mask and they can learn the structures and use them in the familiar setting of their classroom. They learn how to interact with other people without being afraid that their mistakes might cause some misunderstanding.

Walcyn-Jones and Howard-Williams (2002) add that these activities are learner-centred. Learners work independently and the teacher is not at the centre of attention, he/she can stand back and listen more actively, think up strategies for helping the learners increase their knowledge. Role play creates positive

learning atmosphere in class, it encourages cooperation between learners. The language produced here is more natural and authentic. It seems that there are many reasons why teachers should use role play in their lessons. Most of all, this activity develops learners' fluency in speaking, it supports interaction and increases motivation.

c. The Advantages of Using Role Play

Choosing role play as a teaching technique for students of higher education is an alternative way to teach them English conversation. To teach the children English conversation, role play can be used as a means of improving their ability in speaking. It is based on simple conversation/dialogues that will be played by the students through role play. Role play can motivate the children to act every conversation/dialogues part by part and then they can understand what the conversation is. We know that children like playing rather than studying, so to teach English conversation in my study, I used role play as teaching technique because students could take the role of people based on the topic that was given.

Using a role play is fun and motivates students to learn English conversation easily because they can play and study. Role play is a vital and important aspect of a child's development and language is a part of that play. Children learn that word can be used as a form of entertainment. Children talk while they play either alone or with their friends. Paul (2003: 148) states that children are very sensitive. If we are bored, nervous, have inner doubts about the materials we are using, or do not respect and love children, this will all come across very clearly to most children. If, however, we are positive, feel comfortable with ourselves and with the children,

and how exciting the world of English is, the children will sense this, too. Make them enjoy studying and practicing English conversation is the objective of role play in transactional and interpersonal conversation. In role play, students are pretending to be someone else or some different persons. They imagine roles in the class based on the topic which tells them how they feel.

4. Significance of Research:

This reserach is significant for the following:

- a. The finding of this research is supposed to provide theoretical backgrouds of education settings with the hope of promoting the students speaking skills. It will do as an output for both students and teachers to have new ideas about language learning and the role of self-independence and role playing in the development of their fluency in English. For teachers, this research is to contribute to material development and methodology being used to teach speaking and motivate teachers to reconstruct the student attitudes helping them to build up certain concepts and situations individually.
- b. Support the improvement of language teaching and learning process in public, and speaking skill in private. The research may be a platform to pledge for the reflexion and construction of significant techniques and models of learning and construct a solid frame for the educationalists for a better use and application of language learning theories. This will make teachers to be able to promote their creativity through discovering their own new constructive ways and `methods of teaching along with the running ones. In this regard, the apllication of role playing as

one of these techniques will contextualize and lead students to the point and guide teachers to create various learning plans.

- c. It will be useful for the researchers themselves to make it in use to understand profoundly the phenomena of educational research which concerns about finding alternative solutions to the current problems, especially the promotion of students speaking competence to be fluent and accurate.

B. Research Methodology

The method of this research takes the form of Action Research as one of the strategies in improving or increasing the practice of learning. It can be achieved by doing such reflection in order to diagnose condition, and then try it systematically as an alternative way to solve learning problems that is usually being faced in the class.

According to Priyono (2001:6), some characteristics of action research are:

- 1) On the job problem oriented. It means that the subject of action research study is the daily problems faced in everyday life. If a teacher carries out action research, the problems to be investigated are the teaching and learning problems as his main duty and responsibility.
- 2) Problem solving oriented. Unlike empirical studies, action research is always held with the main aim of solving certain problems.
- 3) Improvement oriented. Action research is always meant to make changes and improvement by making use of the element involved in the process of development.

- 4) Multiple data collection. To fulfill the principal of critical approaches several method of data collecting are used, like: observation, test, interview, questionnaire, etc.
- 5) Cyclic. Actions are implemented with certain order as planning, observing, action, and reflecting which shows critical and reflective thinking.
- 6) Participatory (collaborative). The researcher cooperates with other people. This way is used to heighten the validity of observation.

C. Research Findings

There were three teaching activities in the action phase. Each activity consisted of three different stages; pre-communicative stage, communicative (whilst speaking) stage, and post communicative stage. Each meeting lasted in 60 minutes. While teaching and participating in each activity, the teacher observed the class at the same time in order to know the students' reactions and the outcomes that happened in the class.

1. Teaching Activities

a. Activity I : Self Introduction

Self-introduction was the activity presented by the teacher to students for the first period of the speaking course.

1) Stage I: Pre Communicative Stage

At this stage, the teacher greeted the students and introduced himself and told the students to ask any questions related to him. The teacher answered all the questions given by

the students and wrote some useful expressions when asking and giving information about someone. The teacher read the expression on the board and asked the students to repeat it. After the students practiced the expression, the teacher asked them to introduce themselves one by one.

2) Stage II: Communicative Stage (Whilst Speaking)

The second stage was communicative stage or during-activity stage. At this stage, the teacher explained the role the students had to play during the communicative activity. The students performed their role play in front of the class in pairs. During the role play activity, the teacher took some note about the problems faced by the students. The role play activity lasted after 50 minutes.

3) Stage III: Post Communicative Stage

The post communicative stage, concerning organizing activities focused on the development of speaking skills and describing the ending phase of an activity which included stopping the activity, and providing feedback after the activity. At this stage, the teacher asked the students to discuss the language errors which occurred during the communicative stage. This activity ended in 10 minutes.

b. Activity II : Asking the Way

The same as the first activity, this activity took about 90 minutes to finish. The material given was "Asking the Way". The activity was conducted in three stages, as follows:

1) Stage I: Pre Communicative Stage

In stage I, as the warm-up activity the teacher asked the students where to go if they want to do something. The teacher encouraged the students to answer the questions orally. After asking the questions about the places or buildings, the teacher explained some phrases to use when asking the way. The teacher asked the students to read some expression of asking and giving the directions and told them to memorize the important expressions. After several minutes, the teacher asked the students to sit in pairs. This activity needed 15 minutes of time.

2) Stage II: Communicative Stage (Whilst Speaking)

In whilst speaking stage, the teacher started the activity by giving the explanation about the roles to be performed by the students. The teacher wrote the roles on the white board and asked the students to perform the speaking activity according to the roles given. Students in pairs performed their roles and practiced the conversation. The time used in this stage was about 50 minutes.

3) Stage III: Post Communicative Stage

Post communicative stage was the ending stage of the speaking activity. In this stage, the teacher asked the students to perform their conversation in pairs in front of the class. While the students performed their conversation, the teacher observed and corrected the mistakes made by the students.

c. Activity III : Telephone Calls

1) Stage I: Pre-communicative stage

In the pre communicative stage, the teacher (researcher) warmed the students up by asking them questions; what they know about telephone. They were also asked to compare the face to face communication and telephone communication. After discussing, the teacher/researcher explained about the procedure of making telephone calls and the students were given several minutes to read the material and memorize the expressions to be use in making telephone calls. After a few minutes, the teacher distributed the telephone role play cards to the students and asked them to prepare the role they were going to play.

2) Stage II: Communicative Stage (*Whilst speaking*)

After having the role play cards, the students were asked to make a conversation or dialogue according to their role. The students practiced the role several time before they were asked to perform in front of the class. To do the activity in the stage II, teacher gave the students 30 minutes to prepare. During the practice the teacher observed the class and took some notes about the mistakes in the grammar and pronunciation made by the students when they were making conversation

3) Post Communication Stage

After some students played the telephone role cards, the teacher told the students about the mistakes they have made during the speaking activity. The teacher gave homework to the students and ended the class.

D. Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to describe how role play is used in teaching speaking skill to the students of Akademi Sekretari Budi Luhur Jakarta as well as to describe how role play can improve the students' speaking skill.

Based on the data interpretation and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that teaching speaking using role play was very helpful for the improvement of the students' ability in speaking. Most students could speak English fluently when they are in face to face situation. They did not feel nervous anymore to speak in front of the class since they got a lot of practice.

Teachers should bear in mind that every class or individual is of different condition and this very often influence the methodology of teaching in the class. However, The teacher should be able to choose such a teaching technique that can encourage students to get actively involved in the language learning and teaching process.

There are various kinds of teaching techniques and role play is one of them. The latter has its own strength and weaknesses. Some students get more benefit of using role play while others do not. This is due to the fact that students have different preferences towards techniques of teaching. The more students prefers the technique chosen by the teacher, the better they will learn.

Furthermore, Role play is beneficial because it makes the students more enjoying as they no longer feel confused. They become more free and less anxious to express their ideas in English. In addition, role-play activities enable the teacher to create a communicative classroom environment, in which students are emotionally involved in the language learning process. This helps the students learn English better actively.

In conclusion, a variety of learning activities should be designed on the basis of students' interest and individual differences. The teacher should be able to apply the suitable teaching technique which the interests of all students and serve the benefit of learning.

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