THE USE OF ROLE-PLAY TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING SPEAKING

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Abstract

Despite the fact that speaking skill is considered to be the most essential skill for communication, this skill is still being taught in a relatively less proportion as in examination, the focuses are mostly on the other two English skills namely reading and listening. Therefore, students do not have adequate opportunity to practice their speaking skill. The speaking activity done in the classroom is mostly only performing conversations based on the textbook. This activity does not encourage students' creativity. Therefore, it will be necessary to do several activities that can stimulate their creativity. Applying role-play as a technique in the speaking class will be very useful. This technique offers several advantages such as motivating students to learn speaking in a fun way, involving students in collaborative work, and increasing students' confidence.

Keywords: *speaking skill, teaching speaking, role-play technique*

Abstrak

Terlepas dari kenyataan bahwa keterampilan berbicara dianggap sebagai keterampilan yang paling penting untuk komunikasi, keterampilan ini masih diajarkan dalam proporsi yang relatif kurang karena dalam ujian sekolah, fokus pembelajaran sebagian besar terletak pada dua keterampilan bahasa Inggris lainnya yaitu membaca dan mendengarkan. Oleh karena itu, siswa tidak memiliki kesempatan yang memadai untuk melatih keterampilan berbicara mereka. Aktivitas berbicara yang dilakukan di kelas sebagian besar hanya berupa melakukan percakapan berdasarkan buku teks. Kegiatan ini tidak mendorong kreativitas siswa. Karena itu, perlu dilakukan beberapa kegiatan yang dapat merangsang kreativitas mereka. Menerapkan permainan peran sebagai teknik di kelas berbicara akan sangat berguna. Teknik ini menawarkan beberapa keuntungan seperti memotivasi siswa untuk belajar berbicara dengan cara yang menyenangkan, melibatkan siswa dalam pekerjaan kolaboratif, dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa.

Kata kunci: *kemampuan berbicara, mengajar berbicara, teknik bermain peran*

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning English covers four skills namely: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Speaking can be considered as the most essential skill for communication among the other skills because people need to communicate to each other by using this skill. Generally, speaking can be considered as a productive skill rather than a receptive skill. It is because speakers need to produce some spoken texts as the output. In English speaking classes, students should be able to produce communicative competence as the output of this skill. Learning speaking is still in less proportion because in examinations, the focuses are mostly on the two skills: the reading skill and writing skill. Furthermore, the learning process is dominated by those two skills whereas students deal more with communication activity in their lives. Therefore, they do not have enough opportunity to practice their speaking well. The less proportion of learning speaking makes students consider the speaking skill as the most difficult and challenging skill to learn.

There are some reasons why speaking becomes the most difficult skill to learn. Basically, spoken communication is needed by students to interact with the surroundings, so the speaking skill will be an important skill that should be mastered. Speaking is considered as a productive skill which means that students should produce a certain output in speaking but not all of them dare to speak English. Self-confidence is needed to be a good speaker.

Secondly, speaking is considered as a difficult skill because there are some aspects that should be taken into account in learning speaking such as: fluency, accuracy, pronunciation and vocabulary (Brown: 2001). English language learners find it difficult because they should also pay attention to the grammatical form and its meaning as well. Furthermore, a good speaker should be able to speak meaningfully and correctly.

Speaking is also difficult since there are certain expressions that should be applied in different situations. A certain expression can only be used for certain function, so speakers should consider which expression will be suitable and acceptable.

There are some problems related to the teaching and learning process of speaking. The problems might come from the students' self-confidence, accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and the teaching and learning technique. The first problem is related to the students' self-confidence. In the speaking activity, the tasks are mainly about reading aloud the conversation written in the worksheet. Students do not have adequate opportunities to speak in English. When they are asked to have a performance, they are still shy and they also unwillingly do the activity because they are afraid to make mistakes.

The other problems are related to the accuracy and fluency. Accuracy in speaking deals with the use of grammatical structure; on the other hands, fluency deals with the ability to speak fluently and to place

right pausing. Speaking deals with those two aspects but in fact, the students sometimes ignore them and do not pay attention to the grammatical structures even though they speak meaningfully.

The next problems are the students' limited vocabulary mastery and also poor pronunciation. Because English is not their native language in Indonesia, their input of English vocabulary can be classified as very limited so the students might find it difficult to express their ideas to speak. They also find it difficult to pronounce some words because they have limited vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, they are kind of confused to pronounce some new words in English.

The last but not least is the problem coming from the teaching and learning process. Speaking is considered as the activity in which the students are asked to speak up. However, the activity done in the classroom is only performing conversations based on the textbook. The students mostly are asked to practice speaking by reading aloud some dialogues in the textbook. This activity do not encourage their creativity so it will be necessary to make some activities that can stimulate their creativity. Thus, applying a role-play as a technique in the speaking class will be very useful.

I. Discussion
A. The Nature of Speaking
1. The Definitions of Speaking

Speaking is one of the language skills which is categorized as a productive skill. According to Cameron (2001:40), speaking can be defined as an active use of language to express meaning so that other people can understand. Speaking occurs when a speaker uses a language actively to express and deliver meaning in order to interact with the listener.

Another expert, Thornbury (2005) considers speaking or oral communication as an activity which includes two or more people in which listeners and speakers have to react to what they hear. Each participant has a purpose or an intention that he or she wants to achieve in the reaction.

From the definitions stated by some experts above, it can be concluded that speaking can be used by the users called speakers to express ideas, deliver information, and convey meaning to the listeners. Speakers can use language actively to interact with the listeners.

2. The Importance of Speaking

Speaking skill is one of the English skills that has an important role in communication. Therefore, having a good speaking ability will be very beneficial for everyone. Richards (2006) suggests three functions of speaking. They are as interaction or "interpersonal" function, as transaction, and as performance. Speaking as interaction or "interpersonal" is in the form of conversation in which the function is to establish and maintain social relation. Speaking as transaction focuses more on the message than on the accuracy. The last, as performance, speaking is performed in the form of monologue rather than dialogue such as in speech, story-telling, etc.

To be a well-rounded communicator, people have to be proficient in all language skills.

Nevertheless, their ability to speak skillfully will give them several distinct advantages. According to Harmer (2001:271), there are some benefits for speakers who have good speaking ability. Firstly, a good speaker cannot only comprehend the language itself but also can convey the meanings that are intended so it makes the speakers have the ability to sequence and to assemble the idea of what they want to talk about.

Secondly, speakers can interact with other participants by understanding others' feelings and also knowing how to take turns or allow others to do so. The last, speakers are able to process the information they want to share to others and give the response towards the information. By having a good speaking skill, students can communicate each other and it becomes an important skill for their daily life since it has an important role for them as well.

To sum up, there are some benefits of being a good speaker that has ability of sequencing and assembling the idea, understanding other speakers' feeling and also being able to process any information through communication. Speaking is an essential skill to be possessed, considering its benefits it gives to the speaker.

3. Aspects of the Speaking Skills

There are four aspects of the speaking skill, such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary as stated by Brown (2001:268-269). The first is fluency. Students are considered fluent speakers if they are able to use the language quickly and confidently with few hesitations or unnatural pauses, false starts, word searches, etc. (Nunan, 2003:55). A speaker has to know where he or she has to pause or stop his or her speaking. It can be said that a good speaker should be able to produce words into groups of words that form a meaningful unit: phrases or clauses.

The second is accuracy. Accuracy deals with grammatical structures. Nunan (2003:55) states that students' speech matches what people say when they use the target language. Accuracy can be learnt by considering the grammatical structures, parts of speech, tenses, phrases, sentences, etc.

The next aspect is pronunciation. Pronunciation aims at clear and comprehensible pronunciation produced by a good speaker. Students who have a good pronunciation can make listeners easily understand and comprehend what they say in the target language. For the advanced level, it covers the stress pattern, intonation, voice quality, and the like. (Brown, 2001:284-285).

The last aspect is vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary mastery determines whether the speaker can speak fluently and accurately or not because the students who have limited vocabulary mastery will find some difficulties when they want to speak.

To be proficient speakers, people must be able to apply these four aspects in their talks. In this research, these aspects were also emphasized in the teaching and learning process. The researcher used role-play as a technique to improve all aspects of speaking such as:

fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

B. Teaching Speaking

1. Principles of Designing Speaking Teaching Techniques

To reach the goal of teaching speaking, it is important to design teaching techniques which can support the speaking learning processes. In designing these, there are some principles proposed by Brown (2001:275) as follows:

Firstly, teachers should use techniques that cover the spectrum of learner needs and the techniques are designed to help students perceive and use the language well. Teachers also do drilling activities that should be done as meaningful as possible. The next, the techniques should provide intrinsically motivating techniques because sometimes, students do not know why teachers ask them to do certain things, teachers should motivate them to understand why the tasks are given. The third, the techniques should encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful context to make students have meaningful interaction while doing the tasks. After doing the tasks, teachers should also provide appropriate feedback and correction because in most EFL situations, students are totally dependent on the teachers' feedback.

In teaching speaking, the teachers do not only focus on the speaking skill itself but they also need to integrate it with listening skill since these two skills can reinforce each other. That is why teachers should also create tasks that provide opportunities to initiate oral communication by integrating these skills. It hopefully encourages the development of speaking strategies that makes students speak more naturally.

Additionally, Harmer (2001) proposes some principles of teaching speaking. It helps students overcome their reluctance to speak by encouraging, providing opportunity, and by starting from something simple. It also asks students to talk about what they want to talk about and what they are able to talk about. Then it provides appropriate feedback.

The principles above imply that in designing speaking techniques, it has to be based on students' needs. Furthermore, teachers should use techniques that motivate students to use the language in meaningful contexts. Teachers also need to give feedback and corrections to assess students' performances.

2. Teaching Method

In the teaching and learning process, a teacher should have a teaching method that will be used in the classroom. Harmer (2001:78) states that a method is the practical realization of an approach. It consists of types of activities, roles of teacher and learners, and the useful materials, and includes various procedures and techniques that will be applied the teaching and learning process. The teaching method that can be used in applying role-play technique is Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP).

Richards (2006:8) states that PPP or a three phase sequence begins with an introductory phase in which new teaching points are presented and focused on comprehension and recognition. This is followed by a

second phase in which students practice using the new teaching point in a controlled context using content often provided by a teacher. The third phase is a free practice period during which students try out the teaching point in a free context and in which real or simulated communication is the focus.

Harmer (2001:80-82) also states that in PPP, teachers introduce a situation which contextualizes the language to be taught, then, it is presented and teachers ask students to practice the language by some repetitions and drilling. Therefore, at the end of the lesson, students can produce and use the new language or communicate by their own. This method is divided into three procedures:

a) Presentation: teachers show pictures of some situational contexts that will be discussed in the lesson while asking some question related to the topic being discussed. Teachers also model the sentence and demonstrate some words related to the topic.

b) Practice: teachers ask students to do repetitions and after that, teachers may ask students to repeat individually and correct any mistakes they hear. Teachers give some practices to check their understanding.

c) Production: at the end of the point of PPP, students are asked to use the new language and communicate with their friends using some knowledge they got. Teachers give some situational contexts that should be performed by students.

3. The Roles of Teacher in Teaching Speaking

In teaching speaking, the teachers have important role in the classroom activities. There are some roles of the teachers that should be played in the teaching and learning process. Brown (2001) states that teaching is giving and facilitating learning, enabling learner to learn, and setting the conditions for learning. Therefore, the teacher should be able to guide, to facilitate learning, and to set the conditions for learning to make the students be able to learn well.

Teachers need to play different roles in any types of classroom activities. There are three particular roles of teachers that relevance during the speaking activities stated by Harmer (2001: 347-349). Firstly, teachers should be the prompter. In speaking activities, teachers have to encourage their students to think creatively. Sometimes, in the middle of speaking classroom activities, for example, when students are involved in a role-play activity, they often get lose idea of what is going on in the activities or they lose words. Teachers cannot instantly help them because they must keep supply the right amount of encouragement for students to practice. However, they can help them by offering the discrete suggestion.

Teachers should also be the participant during the activity. There are times for teachers to join in an activity not as teachers, but as participants. It is a good reason for teachers to take part in the activity. They can be closer to monitor the progress of their students in the activities. However, in such circumstance, teachers have to be careful because they cannot dominate the speaking activity by having too

much talk. They keep providing their students enough opportunities to practice speaking.

Then, teachers also act as feedback providers for students. Most students expect and want their teachers to give them feedback on their performances. However, teachers should know when the right moment to correct their students' performances. Teachers need to make a clear difference between feedback during the activities are going on will inhibit students and take the communicativeness out of the activity. Based on the teacher roles above, teachers should understand in what part they have to use certain role. By combining all of the roles, it is expected that teachers can encourage students in speaking activity; hence the learning process will be more optimal.

C. Role-play Technique
1. The Definitions of Role-play

There are some definitions of role-play proposed by several experts. The first definition is from Ladousse (2004), who states that role-play is one of a whole gamut of communicative techniques which develops fluency in language, which promotes interaction in the classroom, and which increases motivation. Students are asked to play a part as either own or somebody's character in specific situation.

Ladousse (1995) also states the definition of role-plays by defining the words. 'Role' means playing a part either students' own or somebody else's in a specific situation. 'Play' means that the role is taken on in a safe environment in

which students are as inventive and playful as possible.

Another definition is stated by Harmer (2001:273), who says that in role-plays, teachers add the element of giving the participant information about who they are and what they think and feel. Students must not think themselves as students but as real participants in the situation. It can be an interesting activity for students because they can explore their imagination.

Role-play can be used to encourage students to practice specific situation as if in the real-life. Through role-play, students can develop their new language and explore their knowledge, experiences, and cooperation with others because they need to work together whether in pairs or groups to practice role-play.

2. The Types of Role-Play

There are two types of role-play stated by Byrne (1986) as scripted and unscripted role-plays. A scripted role-play is a role-play that uses a script provided by the teacher. Students are asked to perform dialogue or conversation by using script about the dialogue. Another type is an unscripted role-play which means that students perform their dialogue without any script. Teachers give a very clear instruction and picture of the situation that should be understood by students. They are also given enough time to practice before showing their performance.

Killen (1998) states that role-play can give students opportunities to practice in thinking real-life roles and dealing with real-work problems. Role-play provides some framework in which students build their own

sentences but they may decide by themselves what they want to say.

It can be concluded that by using role-play, students are trained to deal with the unpredictable nature of language because a very wide variety of experience can be brought to the classroom by using role-play. It also can stimulate the students to use and develop words which are very necessarily used in their environment.

3. The Advantages of Using Role-play

The application of a role-play technique is expected to give a positive influence for the teaching speaking. This technique stimulates the students to interact to each other in a fun way. Brown (2001) states that role-play should minimally involve two things. Firstly, role-play involves giving a role to one or more members of a group. Secondly, role-play involves assigning an objective or purpose that participants must accomplish. Role-play can be conducted in pairs or in groups.

Additionally, Amato (2003) states that role-play has high appeal for students because it allows them to be creative and to put themselves in another person's place for a while. Role-play gives a big contribution in learning speaking in foreign language because it can encourage students to think creatively and students' motivation in learning English. It also allows students to explore their knowledge, experiences, and cooperation with others. There are some advantages for students and teacher by applying role-play as a teaching technique in English class. For students, role-play provides opportunity to explore the inner resources, empathize with others and use their own experiences to practice the language. For teacher, role-play can be used to see students' creativity. Teacher can learn in how to set role-play activities that can be suitable for students. Furthermore, applying role-play as a teaching technique can give advantages not only for students but also for teacher.

A role-play technique has many benefits for teachers and students in speaking classes. Using this technique, students can explore themselves better because they will wear "masks" and pretend to be someone else and it is good to be applied as the solution for teachers to face the shy students so they can increase their self-confident.

4. Procedure of Conducting the Role-play Technique

In conducting the role-play technique, the teachers should follow some procedures to make a successful teaching and learning process. Ladousse (2004) states some points that should be remembered by teachers when setting up a role-play. Firstly, teachers should be able to distinguish between noise and chaos to make teachers can control the activity. Then, teachers should begin the activity with pair work rather than group work because one-to-one communication will make students more focus the issue of the conversation. Teachers should also use simple topics and short dialogues in role-play. The role-play designed by teachers should be flexibly performed by students. It should also be applicable for different number of students.

The next point is that students should have understood the situation

very well before starting so teachers should make sure that students are ready to join the activity. If there are some students who make some noise during the class activity, teachers should not too worry about the remaining students who are not participating since they do not disturb others. In delivering the instruction in the class activity, teachers should not use the difficult and complex language until students are used to the activity. In setting up the task, teachers should be able to set up it more progressively if he or she finds students stop or break, teachers can give quiet hint. Teachers should always give a feedback about students' performances. The last but not least, teachers should set strict time limit and make every attempt to stick to it. Discipline time management should be considered to succeed the teaching activity.

In addition, Huang (2008) proposes six major steps in the procedure of conducting role-play. Firstly, a teacher has to decide the teaching materials that will be used for role-play activities. It can be taken from textbooks/non-textbooks teaching materials such as picture books, story books, play-scripts, or comic-strips. Besides, the teacher can also create his or her own materials.

Secondly, after deciding the teaching materials, a teacher selects the situation and provides the dialogue for classroom activities. The situation context should relate to students real-life to make students practice about the real-life and it can also be useful for students in their daily life.

Thirdly, a teacher has to teach the dialogues to students by giving some examples or simulation. By teaching the dialogues for the role-play, the students can be ready for their own performances.

Fourthly, a teacher lets students have some practice with their partners. Similar to the previous step, it makes students more ready and confident to perform by having enough practices about the role-play.

The next step is having students modify the situations and dialogues which means the teacher has to give an opportunity to students to be more creative. And then the last step is evaluating and checking students' comprehension based on the speaking performance scoring rubric.

In conclusion, by setting up the role-play using some steps above, it is expected, the teaching and learning process will run more effectively to make students get a good result of learning speaking.

II. CONCLUSION

Speaking activities in the classroom are rarely given because the teaching and learning activities focuses more on the examination. This could lead to the results of students' low ability in speaking. The students' speaking ability can be improved by providing adequate speaking practices that can stimulate them to speak English more frequently. A role-play technique can be applied in the teaching and learning process to make them accustomed to speaking English.

However, it is also believed that drillings involving pronunciation, vocabularies, and expressions, also play an important role in the implementation of the

actions. Those speaking activities help to give some positive effects on the students' speaking ability. Firstly, the students are more motivated in learning speaking because they learn speaking in a fun way. Secondly, they work cooperatively because during the lesson, they work in pairs and discuss the tasks with their partners. Thirdly, they are more confident to speak in English and lastly, they can improve their speaking ability.

A role-play technique can be a good technique for teaching English especially for improving the students' speaking ability. It can be used to teach language functions in an interesting way. It is important to provide interesting activities to make the students keep paying attention to the teaching and learning process.

This technique makes the students actively involved in the lesson. They can actively take part in playing the roles. The English teacher should stimulate the students through pronunciation and vocabulary drills at the beginning of the lesson. The English teacher should also give expressions drills to provide the students with appropriate expressions that will be used in the students' performances. Therefore, the English teachers are suggested that they should use the role-play technique to improve the students' speaking ability. The teacher should also be creative designing materials and the media.

Through the role-play technique, the students are accustomed to speaking in English. The activities before the role-play should be followed by activities to make them improve their speaking

ability such as drillings and others tasks. It is suggested that they should be engaged in the whole activities to improve their speaking ability. This technique also provides them models in communicating in their daily life using English.

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