

The Use of Role Play to Improve Teaching Speaking

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Abstract- This study aims to describe : (1) the nursing students' interest in learning English through Role Play for developing speaking skill; and (2) the significance of students' achievement in speaking performance after learning English through role play. The research was conducted at STIKES Amanah Makassar. The method applied was quasi experimental study. The samples were selected by applying purposive sampling technique. The data of pre- test and post-test were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) with t-test and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). The data gained by questionnaire were analyzed using Likert scale. The results reveal that the students have high interest in role play as indicated by 88,33 % of the students agree with the role as a learning method. They argue that role play makes them speak as if they were in real situation. The class is dynamic and life. They become active in learning because not only speaking skill developed but also nursing skill developed. The results also reveal that there is a significance difference of students' achievement in speaking performance as indicated by their score in pre-test and post-test. Students who learn speaking through role play show a significant improvement in post test. So Role play is considered as an appropriate method for developing English speaking skill for nursing students at STIKES Amanah Makassar.

Index Terms- Role, play, learning, speaking, performance

I. INTRODUCTION

English speaking skill is one of the skills of language to be required in global interaction or communication. It can not be denied that English speaking skill becomes the most favourable skill needed for professionals in Indonesia recently. Indonesian workers are required to be able to communicate in English for working overseas. The health professionals such nurses are required to communicate in English in medical area. The interest of health professionals to work overseas is increasing significantly from year to year (Grehension, 2011). In this context the need for English speaking skill automatically becomes urgent for overseas workers to support their performance in doing their job. It was found that 70% of Indonesian workers have problems in communication in English which made them get difficulties in doing their jobs properly (Grehension, 2011). Some research found that English for specific purposes can not develop students speaking ability (Damayanti, 2010).

Developing good quality of teaching is one of the conditions required for second language acquisition. Teachers play significant role to create teaching methods that stimulate students to speak or use the language in real context. One technique that can be considered effective to stimulate speaking

skill is role play. Role play urges students to communicate in a specific context in which students have a role to act. In this case role play is suitable for health professional candidates such as nurses. Students act and speak the language that refers to their role in the future (Barbara and Thorntun, 2008). By applying the role play, students develop language skills and nursing skills at the same time. Nursing students learn to communicate in English with patients, doctors and family in context of health and at the same time they learn how to behave politely and demonstrate how to use the medical tools properly.

Role play is very important in teaching speaking because it gives students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles. In addition, it also allows students to be creative and to put themselves in another person's place for a while. Role play is considered suitable for vocational classes that urge much direct learning for their profession. Students are not only as passive learners but they become active learners since there are various activities that put them in an active process. In this case the writer proposes the study on "Implementing Role Play to Improve Nursing Students' Speaking Performance at Stikes Amanah Makassar.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

Research location and design

This research took place at STIKES Amanah Makassar. It lasted for a month starting from in May 2012 – June 2012. This research applied a quasi experimental study, that involves two groups, *experimntal group and control group*.

Population and Sample

The population of this research were the nursing students at Stikes Amanah Makassar in Academic year of 2011 - 2012. The total population of nursing students in this academic year is 286 students. The number of sample was 60 students who entered STIKES Amanah in 2010 and they were in the fourth semester.

Data Collection

In collecting data, three instruments: speaking, questionnaire, and interview. The researcher measured the students' speaking performance in the two groups before and after study by speaking pre-test and post-test and conducted questionnaire and interview to know the students' respond towards the use of role play in their speaking class.

Data Analysis

The students' speaking performances were scored based on four aspects which are fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary. These aspects are the criterion-reference system in

ESL speaking which is described by (Tomei, 2008). The data then were analyzed and interpreted by means of SPSS 17.0.

Research Findings

The data collected through pre-test and post-test as shows that the students' performance of the two groups improves significantly. The students' pre-test, the mean score of experimental group is higher than the control group = 47.0000 > 45.4000. However, from the statistical calculation, it is confirmed that the difference is not significant. The researcher found that the t-observed value is lower than t-table value, where t-observed is 0,410 and t-table is 2.021 at 0.05 level of significant at 58 degrees of freedom (T-observed < T-table, $\alpha = 0.05$). Sig.(2 tailed) is 0,0622 which is higher than 0,05. Therefore, we can conclude that two groups had the same previous speaking competence.

In Control group's post-test, there is a significant improvement. The mean score in pre-test enhance from 45.4000 to 58.8667 in post test. The mean difference in paired sample test shows the number of 13.4667 (58.8667-45.4000) and the standard deviation is 2.44573. The researcher found that the t-observed value is higher than t-table value, where t-observed is 30.159 and t-table is 2.021 at 0.05 level of significant at 58 degrees of freedom (T-observed > T-table, $\alpha = 0.05$). Sig.(2 tailed) is 0,00 which is lower than 0,05. The comparison data between pre-test and post test indicates that the mean score is significantly different.

In Experimental groups' post-test, there is also a higher improvement. The mean score in pre-test enhance from 47.0000 to 66.4333 in post test. The mean difference in paired sample test shows the number of 19.4333 (66.4333-47.0000) with the standard deviation of 3.79367. The researcher found that the t-observed value is higher than t-table value, where t-observed is 28.057 and t-table is 2.045 at 0.05 level of significant at 29 degrees of freedom (T-observed > T-table, $\alpha = 0.05$). Sig.(2 tailed) is 0,000 which is lower than 0,05. The comparison data between pre-test and post test of experimental group indicates that the mean score is significantly different.

Students' Response

The data findings indicate that the highest rank of the mean score is 47% of strongly agree students. The second is 40,50 % agree students. There is 10,17 undecided, 1.3% disagree and 0.17 strongly disagree.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result from the pre-test and post-test demonstrated a significant improvement in the quality of the students' speaking performance in the experimental class while the quality of students' speaking performance in control condition was slightly improved. This implies that the students in both groups gained in the speaking performance, but those in the experimental condition gained more. It is indicated that role play as designed properly improves the students' speaking performance significantly.

Based on the findings above, it shows that role play is an effective strategy to develop English speaking performance particularly students in vocational class or students in a specific

need of English. Role play strategy supports the theory of Vygotsky in Brown (2008) as stated that the development of language performance occurs in sociocultural interaction in learning process. Students do communication in context of nursing profession. Students realize that their role for the future is presented in the classroom. On the other hand role play urges students to speak directly in the target language to develop communicative competence as stated by Hymes and Savignon in Savignon (2008). The theories that the role play based on are Social learning theory and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT approach). The two theories are considered relevant to role play since social learning insist the integration of social life into learning (Vygotsky in Brown 2008). In this case social role in various area are selected based on the students' needs. This kind of learning brings students social experience how to do the role in specific context of communication. Here role play opens the stage for students to explore what they see, they know and what they learn to behave in their prospective career.

Here CLT is implemented in role play strategy. Savignon (2002) used the term communicative competence to characterize the ability of language learners to interact with other speakers, to make meaning, as distinct from their ability to perform on discrete-point tests of grammatical knowledge. Students have ample opportunity to communicate in the target language. That is why they do not feel shy or doubtful to speak English.

In role play students not only learn the language but also they try to behave as if they are in real work. So they lean two things a the same time that is language and nursing behaviors. One big problem in learning a foreign language is to find the opportunity to speak in English. During the role play, students get much opportunity to speak since they have to practice it in group before acting it in front the class. And speaking in the context of nursing, the students enjoy it since they have previous knowledge of it. One important thing is that role play stimulates and urges them to speak. In context of learning, providing effective stimuli is a hard job for an English teachers to bring students into an active condition of using English (Wohlkin, 1980). Role play is categorized as a good strategy to stimulates students to speak. Students are urged to make improvisation in the conversation. In this context, students are provided opportunity to be more creative in using language. That goes with the theory of learning that a good learning is not only make students memorize the materials but make them enthusiastic and creative to find more by themselves.

Role play is approved to be a communicative language learning since students are actively get involved in conversations (Nunan, 2001). Students are not passive but as active learners. Students become the centre of learning not the teachers as found in common ways of teaching. Students are step by step led into the independent phase of learning. Firstly students are provided guided conversation in which students totally follow the script and the next phase students are provided semi-script where students are provided a half of the conversation and the rest are created by the students. And in independent phase, the students are provided a context and they create and develop the conversation by themselves. So role play strategy develops students' participation in learning effectively.

Role play strategy is categorized as skill orientation development. In this context, it is quite suitable to develop

professional skills particularly for students who are in vocational classes. Ments (1999) stated that role play really provide students meaningful experiences where students not only understand but only they have to act or behave as if they are in real work. So some skills needed in profession are elaborated in learning through role play. It seems that role play prepare students how to work professionally when they are finished their study. Learning in context of developing professional skills is categorized expensive learning. Why is it expensive? To learn certain skills, it needs a lot of equipment or tools and setting where students use to develop their skills. In context of nursing profession, it needs a lot of medical equipment or tools and clinic setting or hospital to enable students to learn and develop skills. Such situation of learning with modern equipment and setting is available but very expensive. Role play can be a solution to provide a cheap learning but meaningful for students in developing skills either speaking and nursing skills. It is cheap because the teachers just use imitating equipment or tools and designed setting that can bring students to feel as if they are in real setting of work such as in clinic, or hospitals and facing real patients or doctor as their partners in real work. So even the learning use cheap equipment but they get a lot of experiences for their profession.

A good learning occurs when students are the centre of learning not the teacher. The old paradigm shows that teachers are always dominant in classroom learning. In order to change this paradigm, teachers should provide and design the learning to avoid the teachers' dominance in the class. Here role play becomes a solution for making the students be the centre and subject of learning not object anymore (Tompkins, 1998).

Providing role play in the class, it means that students play much role in learning. In developing speaking and nursing skills, students are guided to speak and do some acting in pairs or in groups. The teachers just functions as facilitator and controller of the activity. Teachers just help the learning when students get stuck such as finding difficult words to say or some expression to say something. Students are given opportunity to be creative to do some improvisations based on their knowledge or real experiences they read or see in real life. This kind of learning makes students feel important in their participation. Learning by doing has great effect in skill development. In context of speaking, the proverb says that practice makes perfect. Role play allows a lot of students opportunity to speak since they are the subject of learning. Some research found that generally lack of speaking is caused by lack of opportunity to practice speaking in the classroom. Through role play students get a lot of time to speak in nursing area. So it seems that they are engaged in their setting of nursing and they speak about their phenomena of nursing activities. So here they are focused speaking and building nursing skills totally for their profession.

Role play provides nursing students a deep learning. Since learning through role play involves all senses of human beings. Cognitive, affective and motoric aspects are developed simultaneously and comprehensively (Doff, 1993). Students develop their knowledge and develop their affective aspects such sympathy, empathy, attentive, responsibility, while motoric

aspect such as speaking skills and nursing skills for example; welcoming patients and using the equipment and tools properly. Students' English speaking skill can be developed properly if role play can take place as much as possible in their learning. As stated that learning to speak means having time to speak directly about the phenomena around us. So nursing students can have much opportunity to speak English in their nursing field.

IV. CONCLUSION

Role Play strategy is approved effective to improve students' interest to speak English in the nursing classroom. The students who studied through role play show significant improvement in their speaking performance on the post test. Role play is an appropriate strategy to be implemented vocational class. The English teachers should design it to meet students level such as children class, adult class or vocational class or general class. Role play materials should be contextual with students real life. The role that the students act should be familiar with the students. Role Play activities can be provided in the classroom or outside the classroom. The tools or facilities in role play are considered effective to build communication.

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