

Research Article

USING ROLE-PLAY ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING SPEAKING AT THE PEOPLE'S POLICE UNIVERSITY - PPU

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Received 04th August 2021; Accepted 06th September 2021; Published online 21th October 2021

ABSTRACT

English, nowadays, has become so globalized that it is growingly demanded on all fields in both society and industry. Specifically, Vietnamese students have to attend English class from secondary school as it is truly a compulsory subject in the education curriculum. The fact is that Vietnamese teachers are too acquainted to traditional teaching method of paying attention to only grammar and structures, except for fluency competence. As a result, oral communication in English is still a great challenge for both of teachers and students in Vietnamese context where has required the international language much since the joint of WTO.

Keywords: role-play; compulsory subject; education curriculum; oral communication.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking periods are often neglected to be replaced by grammar practice or are under the form of learning by heart dialogues, or repetition of drills (Lightbrown & Spada, 1999). Consequently, the emphasis of grammar or rules of structures is the most important so as to get good marks in Vietnamese students' minds. They do not have chance to practice English in classroom environment. Oral communication is actually a way for a person to express their ideas and opinions as well as show his or her feelings. Thus, they are only able to repeat the model conversations in books and can't build their own ones. That fact leads to their lack of confidence and belief in their capacity of speaking English (Susanti, 2007). Particularly, first-year students from PPU are reported to be afraid of speaking class most. They are worried and shy to speak in a crowd. The environment is usually boring and silent whenever it is a speaking class. This causes teacher's unwilling and tired attitude. Therefore, it is time for teachers or researchers to study on some effective techniques to not only create a warmer and more exciting speaking class but also increase students' interest in speaking, as well as improve their communicative skills. Role-play activity which is experimented to apply in speaking class in order to activate students is evaluated to be the potential teaching technique as it does involve more and more learners in the practice of speaking and the use of acquired language in concrete everyday situations safely (Dorathy, 2011). Some benefits gained from this teaching technique can be drawn in the next part. According to Albuhalk (2008), Islam (2012) and Mahmudah (2012), role-play activity can encourage students, especially shy ones to promote their willingness to speak English in class. Islam (2012) claimed that students get freedom to say out or express opinions and feelings because with role-play activity, they have chance to play the role of someone else, speak out others' thought. Fake but not fake, it is truly their identification or characteristic. Mahmudah (2012) pointed out that confidence would be built more and more along with warmer atmosphere in class. Additionally, students have more opportunities to use the language target in different social contexts. Susanti (2007)

declared role-play activity helps students to cope with real-life situations, daily expression and give them chances to deal with problematic issues. Students have to act accompanied to acting, which results in their practicing listening, speaking, and understanding. In other words, students can develop their critical thinking whenever handling information and finding ways to speak out, which demands a mental cycle (Noor & others, 2012). Islam (2012) emphasized one more outstanding advantage that role-play activities help create so many specific situations in particularly social framework that learners get experience new knowledge, cultures or traditions. Participation in role-play activities allows students to make decisions, see the results, receive the feedback and therefore learn how to adjust words and actions to produce more likeable results (Noor & others, 2012). During a role-play activity, Islam (2012) emphasized students are able to "practice and explore new cultural rules of behavior, and may also identify behavior that would be appropriate in their own culture but not appropriate in others". Last but not least, the role of teacher and students seems to exchange when students become active and free to interact with each other spontaneously. Le (2006) agreed that "this reduces students anxiety and facilitates learning, keep them motivated by stimulating their curiosity and keeping the material relevant, creating a tension to learn". It can be explained that "teacher must be a facilitator because students may need new language that be fed in by teacher who is able to watches role-play and the role-play offers comments and advice at the end so the teacher is also a spectator in this activity" (Eklova, 2007). Due to significant benefits above, present study aims to investigate (1) the way role-play activity is applied to address my first-year students in speaking class and (2) explore their motivation, behavior and attitude to this teaching technique. Either research methods or data analysis is discussed in details to answer two following research questions.

- How do role-play activities support my students in speaking class?
- What are my students' attitudes towards using role-play activities in speaking class?

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The summary of the innovation

Context of the innovation

Institution		PPU – The People’s Police University	
Class description features	Details	Notes	
Year level	First-year Non-English majored Pre-intermediate level	Students are from PPU.	
Macro-skill Task	Speaking skill Secondary research	Group work to implement role-play activity is compulsory to conduct with seven units in New Headway Pre-Intermediate by John and Liz Soar & Mike Sayer (Appendix 1)	
Number of students	100	There would be divided into 2 classes (one 55 students and the other 45 ones) with 20 groups in total, each has 5 members. An English lecturer who is a M.A of MTESOL with 5 year experience of teaching speaking takes charge of both classes.	
Time of innovation	The first semester Academic year 2014/2015	12 successive weeks of the term	
Lessons/week	3	In total, there are 7 lessons. Role-play activity would be applied for all lessons.	
Some features of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different in language proficiency levels. - Not good at both accuracy and fluency in English speaking. - Afraid of speaking English. - Tired of the traditional methods of teaching and learning English. 		

Innovation procedure

No.	Cycle	Week	Content
1	Cycle 1	Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing the purpose of the innovation (using role-play activities in speaking class) - Dividing class into 20 groups (those groups have to work from the beginning to the end of the innovation) - Introducing seven topics which are equivalent to seven units in the textbook. - Assigning particular group work with role-play activity (Appendix 1)
2	Cycle 2	Week 2-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observing classroom activities. - Teacher had to complete seven reflective journals which not only described things happening in class but also gave comments, feedback or inside thoughts. - Students had to complete the questionnaire in about 10 minutes at week 6 (Appendix 2)
3	Cycle 3	Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three groups and seven interviewees were selected randomly to share their ideas on issues in the interview questions (Appendix 3). Each focus group lasted about 30 minutes, while individual interview was about 15 minutes - All the interviews were audio-recorded.

Linkage

The topic of applying role-play activities has widely been studied on for the last few years (from 2006 to 2012) due to the necessity of improving students’ speaking capacity. The reference pack for the own research consists of eight studies as Le (2006), Eklova (2007), Susanti (2007), Albuhaik (2008), Joni & others (2008), Dorathy (2011), Mahmudah (2012) and Noor & others (2012). Before carrying out the investigation, we carefully studied on those researches to find out strengths and weaknesses. The following parts are some useful remarks. The first thing needed discussing is the participants as well as the settings in those studies. It is visible that students taking part in the above researches were at very young age, ranged from the age of 10 to 14. Most of them considered to be at elementary level were studying at primary, secondary or high school. None of the studies took population of older ages and higher English levels. Hence, it encouraged we to put focus on students at university. Particularly, in this context are first-year students from Faculty of Accounting, UNETI. Role-play activities designed for specific population must be in different framework. The second essential and important component is methodology used in each study. It is clear to see that the majority of those researchers employed quantitative method with pre-test and post-test (Albuhaik (2008), Joni & others (2008), Susanti (2007), Noor & others (2012) and Mahmudah (2012)). Questionnaire, of course, quantitative method was used in Dorathy (2011) and Eklova (2007). Only Le (2006) took advantage of interview and observation as qualitative approach to collect data on students’ opinions and teachers’ experience on speaking class with role-play activity. The most significant strength of pre-test and post-test is letting researchers see students’ different scores before and after the treatment. However, those authors couldn’t find out the way role-play activity support students as well as their attitude to the use of role-play activity in class. Though interview and observation are useful collecting devices because of formative data they brought to Le (2006), data collected and analyzed wasn’t strong enough to prove the research’s validity and reliability. That the reason why I decided to choose only qualitative method with three collecting tools as interview, questionnaire and observation with teacher’s reflective journal to triangulate the data for my research. Generally, the study will present the evaluation of the innovation project. In details, the rationale, the aims, the context and the procedure of the innovation project on the implementation of role-play activity to enhance speaking skill of first-year students from PPU were summarized in the first page. The second part of this project is how data will be gathered and interpreted through three stages to answer two research questions above. Appallingly, results made use of the data collected will be able to help to evaluate the innovation. In other words, it will emphasize the strengths as well as the limitations of the application of role-play activity in speaking class. Last but not least, it is remarkable to reflect on future work to advocate if innovation of role-play technique might bring advantages to student’s speaking competence.

EVALUATION METHODS

Evaluation

Evaluation is defined by Dahlberg & McCaig (2010) to be a type of applied research which subsequently emphasizes examining the worth or merit of practice instead of theory. According to Robson (2002), “evaluation research is essentially indistinguishable from other research in terms of design, data collection techniques and methods of analysis”. Of course, evaluation researchers take use of research methods as tools to collect and gather data then analyze or interpret those information (Patton, 1987) so as “not to prove but to improve” how well the research or innovation reached its aims (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield (1985, in Clarke, 1999)). As a result, the main purposes of evaluation could be inferred from its definition that

evaluation attempts "the making of judgments' about the worth and effectiveness of educational intentions, processes and outcomes; about the relationships between these; and about the resource, planning and implementation frameworks for such ventures". Overall, evaluation is clarified to be a procedure of assessing systematically the effectiveness of an object (Clarke, 1999). In this specific case, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using role-play activity to teach speaking skill for first-year students from Faculty of Accounting, UNETI. After conducting this evaluation research, researcher would be able to understand students' attitude towards using role-play activity, their problems and difficulties and their engagement in speaking class as well. Although role-play isn't a new idea to students (as they often deal with them under the theme of practicing dialogues), the role-play teaching technique in the research includes a larger scale out of practicing dialogues, which is hoped to raise students' enthusiasm and motivate them to enhance their speaking ability. As a researcher, this evaluation helps me to distinguish the differences between literature reviews and real context. Then I would permanently make implication for future work. In addition, being a teacher, I would be grateful to learn what really happened in classroom, how students got interaction, how they felt about speaking lessons with role-play activities. From that knowledge, I would be able to summarize and identify the strengths and limitations of the innovation so as to adjust the teaching method to motivate students.

WHY QUALITATIVE METHOD?

Qualitative method with three collecting devices as observation with teacher's reflective journal, interview and questionnaire were chosen for the innovation because of the following reasons. In Morse's (2002) views, qualitative data often concerned with social phenomenon in such way that researcher is apparently able to deal with opinions, ideas, behaviors, or feelings in the real world. Overall, "subjective, holistic, phenomenological, anti-positivist, descriptive, naturalistic and inductive" can describe the typical features of a qualitative research (Morse, 2002). Similarly, Merriam (2009) shared the same views that qualitative data helps dig deeper understanding of the objects which focuses on research's validity and reliability, not tests the hypothesis (Hinchey, 2008). Due to the close compatibility with work practice techniques, researchers probably tend to use qualitative strategies in practice evaluation (Dahlberg & McCaig, 2010). As a matter of fact, qualitative approach is the best choice to manipulate students' interest, their problems and difficulties and their involvement in speaking class with role-play activities. Besides, Hinchey (2008) declared that data gathered from three main collecting tools will thoroughly be triangulated to avoid ambiguity or single bias.

DATA COLLECTION

Description and explanation of research methods

Teacher's reflective journal

The first tool for collecting data was observation with teacher's reflective journal. Merriam (2009) made a clear statement that "classrooms are rich written or visual resources that contribute to teachers' understanding of what is happening in their classroom". Teacher's reflective journal allows him or her to contemporaneously record thoughts and insights about the teaching experience (Dahlberg & McCaig, 2010). In such way, it is capable for the teacher to "review and consolidate learning, to evaluate performance, to plan future teaching based on past teaching experience" (Gay, 1996). During the innovation, teacher also played a role of an observer. She went

around the class to see if students got involved in all tasks assigned, and of course, their perspective to the use of this teaching technique. Observation was made in every lesson to see changes in students' performance as well. At the end of the term, 7 papers of teacher's reflective journals which were equivalent to 7 lessons designed for successive weeks were collected.

Interview

In Dahlberg & McCaig's (2010) own work, they claimed that apart from observation, interview is the powerful tool to provide rich source of information. This kind of data is initially unique because each individual might show different thoughts on the same issue. Cormack (1991) illustrated that interview opened a wide road for researcher to study on participants' thinking. In this innovation, interview was carried out at the last week because at that time the teacher as well as participants had quite much experience with role-play activity. Interviews were carried out in several days and different location such as in a café, in school canteen or in a park. They weren't held in a classroom because it was expected that students felt comfortable and free to share their ideas. Both of teacher and students were interviewed to understand their perspectives in general and problems & difficulties in particular on the application of role-play activity in speaking class. 3 groups and 7 students from other groups were chosen randomly to take the interviews. Individual group lasted about 15 minutes, while 30 minutes was for each focus group. All interviews were recorded to get full version.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire is one of the most common devices to collect information with large population in a short time about a particular issue of interest because it can save time and money (Cormack, 1991). According to Gay (1996), questionnaire brings such benefits that

- to collect factual information in order to classify people and their circumstances;
- to gather straightforward information relating to people's behavior;
- to look at the basic attitudes/ opinions of a group of people relating to a particular issue;
- to measure the satisfaction of customers with a product or service;
- to collect "baseline" information which can then be tracked over time to examine changes.

In this specific case, students were asked to complete the questionnaire at week 6 in about 10 minutes. They had to indicate the specific answer to each question. Responses to all items were counted and inverted to the average score. I was able to collect various answers from a large number of respondents at the same time (here were 100 first-year students). The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions to find out students' attitude towards teaching speaking and implementing role-play activity: Questions 1, 2, 3 helped to get background of students' viewpoints towards speaking skill; students' opinion of the application of role-play activity was displayed through questions 4, 5; and questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 let researcher see their attitude to the new technique.

Reflection on research methods

Teacher's reflective journal

In class, she often went around to see how students did the tasks and explained willingly if necessary. At that time, he also wrote down

comments or feedbacks in his own paper. From those notes, she might therefore complete his reflective journal at the end of each lesson in order to be able to recall details or impressive things. Hence, it is found that almost the journals were completed in one cycle. A recommendation for that is teacher should have video recorded the classroom so she could review that recorded for many times. And after each time reviewing, she would be able to add comments or feedback on students and his way of introduction himself.

Interview

During the process of gathering data from both of individual interview and focus groups, a big problem was found that all interviews were taken at the end of the innovation. Although at that time, both of teacher and students got full experience with role-play activity, it was too late to change anything such as the way the teacher introduced the requirement or unsuitable assigned tasks which made students boring. Hence, it is suggested for the next innovation in the future that interviews should be conducted at the middle of the research in order to adjust any essential things. Another problem is the way choosing students for three focus groups. If the innovation had been redone, students at three levels would have been picked to join focus groups (low level, middle level and high one). It would certainly have brought such advantages a variety of different opinions or maybe students' expectation towards the use of role-play activity in speaking class.

Questionnaire

The limitation can be referred that some students were realized not to understand fully some items in the questionnaire, they circled the answer in random. This resulted in the inexact information collected, which resulted in wrong calculated statistic. Therefore, questionnaire should have been translated into mother tongue to make sure that students can understand full meaning.

ETHICAL ISSUES

The first ethical concern to carry out my research is getting permission from the Rector as well as the Vice Dean from Foreign Languages Department, PPU. I wrote Letters to them in order for my innovation project for first-year students to be accepted. The success of a study can be evaluated on the relationship between researchers and participants. I invited the population to a meeting at the beginning of the semester to introduce them the aims along with the content of the innovation project. During the meeting, participants were encouraged to raise questions about the project to get better understanding. I also needed their formal agreement to take part in this project voluntarily. Thus, Information Sheets and Consent Forms (Appendix 4, 5) were designed to take their signatures as proofs. Besides, participants could possibly withdraw at any time of the innovation procedure without getting any penalty. On the other hands, their answers or responses would be kept in secret files with limited access and deleted in 5 years after the innovation finished.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is such an essential procedure that researchers have to understand, evaluate and compare real situations with the pre-expectation. If the source of information is rich, the process of interpretation must carefully be taken into consideration. Hence, it is important to triangulate data collected from chosen research methods. The data collected was analyzed through a coding and sorting procedure. Because research questions examined a different aspect of data set, they were read carefully then were coded and

sorted in a manner and highlighted with different colors that allowed researcher to answer them specifically. When moving to the next question, researcher also re-coded and re-sorted. During the process, large number of data was attempted to be reduced, categorized or placed in logical and manageable groups. Serving the aims of the innovation project, data collected was categorized into three concepts as (1) students' attitude, (2) students' problems & difficulties; and (3) students' engagement. Coming up next is the way researcher analyzed and triangulated the data source.

RQ1. How do role-play activities support my students in improving their speaking skills?

Students' problems & difficulties

It can be seen that the use of role-play activity put either positive or negative impact of student's motivation in speaking class. In order to answer this research question, researcher analyzed data collected through individual interview, focus groups and teacher's reflective journal as well. To begin with any interview, some questions were raised "Do you have any idea of the term: role-play?", "Have you ever participated in a role-play activity before?" and "Do you like role-play activity?". All 7 students had the same opinion that role-play is a kind of activity in which people play the roles of some characteristics. One student shared her own experience:

"I have never attended any plays in class but when I was small, children in neighborhood and I often played the game of prince and princess, I was asked to be the princess. That princess had to be beautiful, wear the crown and pretty dress, be attacked by robbers but would be rescued by a charming prince. It brought a lot of fun. I was really happy. I love to be a princess again."

Other said

"I participated in a Vietnamese play not English one to prepare for the school festival when I was at high school. In English class, we hardly pay attention to oral communicating skill, time was only for grammatical practice".

Whereas, some participants reported that they had joined some English club and had had chance to do various activities there, including role-play activities. In spite of almost no experience with role-play activity, students conversely claimed that they liked this and would be very grateful to play someone else. It can be assumed that role-play may be a good way to involve students in speaking class. It may help students feel eager, exciting and ready to speaking task. When being asked about advantages or benefits of role-play activities students got after a few weeks with the new teaching technique, some students were not hesitate to list some usefulness. The first one is how an enjoyable and fresh way did students speak English. One student told me: "comfortable atmosphere sets up new flow of wind to English class". That is perfectly the key leading to motivate or increase their interest to speak English. Developing students' imagination and creativity is the second one. Students have chance to make up their own story, build their content and create funny detail to make their roles unique and interesting. An answer was given that: "our class was given a picture and asked to make our own story then play in front of class. We discussed then added many funny and strange details but in general it was logical and suitable to the custom and traditional. My class laughed a lot when we played on stages and finally we won that game due to the fictional details". Additionally, the students confirmed that they have chances to seek for information then understand more about cultures and traditions of the assigned contexts. On the other hand, a great number of responses to the advantages of role-play activities was to help students build more

confidence when speaking English: "I used to be shy and afraid of wrong pronunciation before, but now it changes due to time for practicing scripted dialogues". With role-play activity, students are encouraged to interact as well as make decision. And through the feedback he or she receives, he sees the results of his actions, and can therefore learn how to adjust his words and actions to produce more likable results. Besides usefulness, students were also asked about their problems and difficulties with role-play activities. Some reported their teacher's guidance as the main problem: "sometimes teacher gives the scenario, divides students' roles and gives some useful language ...". Nevertheless, it is not enough and "I do not know what I should do next, it is better if she explains more clearly ..." said the students. Another restraint is students' lack of vocabulary. Vocabulary has been a barrier to any students who can't express their roles' characteristics: "... I just learn by heart meaning of new word without its collocation, so I don't know what suitable situation to use it. I am scared of being laughed at ...". From this sharing, teacher should suggest a good way for students to learn vocabulary. On the other hand, three groups were chosen randomly to join the interview with structured questions as "Can you tell me your experience of learning speaking before and after role-play activity is applied? Could you please describe from your perspective something good and not good about role-play activity? Think of your experience with role-play activity, what would have made it better? Why? Would you like to learn other topic using this technique? Why? How is this method different from other methods used to learn speaking?". Three groups of different levels were chosen to join focus group interview because ideas or opinions obtained from those students were various, diverse, even contrastive. Speaking lessons in the past were too boring for students "... I repeated or learnt by heart the dialogues all the time ...". Some stated that role-play activity is rather good but it wastes the class time, which they don't have enough time to complete other task. Moreover, "... it is so noisy and confusing ... I can't hear ... my teacher can't manage ... " said some students. In contrast, others find class atmosphere warmer. Students related their experience with this innovative way of learning speaking. This is the first time they have opportunity to express themselves without being criticized because they are wearing mask of a characteristic "... I love to be Jane with my personality ... I feel great and enthusiastic...". Another good effect needed explaining is not only participants in the role-play activities but also the audience can benefit by better understanding as compared speaking alone most of the time. Learners also mentioned that this teaching technique is different from other ones because they have to understand tradition, cultures and content to be able to act it out. It is also a pictorial way of understanding an idea and it is better retained as a sequence of actions.

Students' engagement

All teacher's written drafts or diaries were collected accompanied with researcher's notes in class at the end of week 12. Researcher read them again and again, tried to categorize into key themes and arranged details in right order. Researcher highlighted or focused in colors students' interaction with others and movement in class. Gestures or body languages were taken notice much to see any good changes by new teaching technique. The more researcher got in details, the more exactly researcher could evaluate students. At the first few weeks, students seemed to be strange to the new concept of speaking lessons. Although teacher encouraged them by the promise of giving high score if they participated in role-play activity voluntarily and freely, they were still so shy and silent. In any other way, there were only some raised hands but the only things they did was repeating and imitating the dialogues in the textbook: "... I created many interesting situations for students to choose and get them involved but they only selected one as similar as in the textbook,

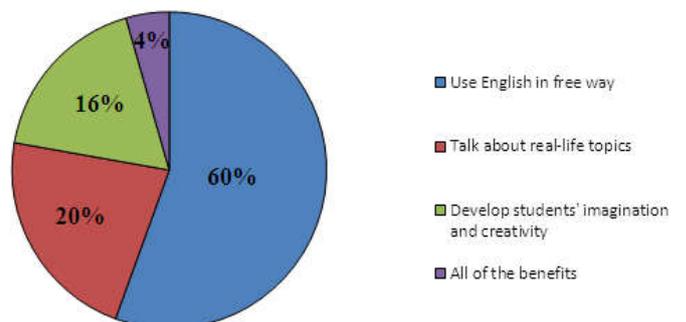
some don't know how to express their full ideas ... " After about four weeks with role-play activities, students became more natural and active in their tasks. How well they started to add more interesting details to their roles. And it was easy enough for me to recognize students' personality under the face of their characteristics. Another positive changes needed analyzing was how better their English was. They could speak more fluently with less wrong pronunciation. However, the classroom atmosphere became noisier, sometimes teacher found hard to manage it. Thus, either the teacher or researcher did realize students were attracted to interacting in English.

RQ2. What are my students' attitudes towards using role-play activities in speaking class?

Students' attitude

First is about students' viewpoints towards speaking skill. 45 percentages of students like English, 20 percentages like a little, 15 percentages don't like and only a small number of student which accounts for 10 percentages like speaking English very much. On the other hand, the calculated numbers shows that 40 percentages agreed that learning speaking is important but half of that statistic (20 percentages) considered it is not worth spending time for speaking class. From those views, I could easily understand that almost students who ranked about 58 percentages think that their speaking ability is just pretty good. Students with good and not good at speaking shared the equivalent number (20 percentages and 22 percentages), whereas none of the participants was confident to claim their very good speaking ability. When dealing with frequency of doing role-play in speaking class, nearly 2/3 students (about 68 percentages) stated that their teacher sometimes applies role-play activities in speaking class and the rest (32 percentages) reported their teacher rarely used. As a result, low frequency of implementing role-play activity led to the fact that students always found it very interesting (74 percentages) or quite interesting (26 percentages) and no one felt sleepy with this kind of activity. Students' attitude towards using role-play activity was described clearly with only 17 percentages participants didn't like this activity. Meanwhile, the majority which nearly doubled liked role-play tasks. Furthermore, role-play activity was claimed to bring such big benefit to 90 percentages students, which can describe that 60 percentages out of those students thought they could use English naturally and freely, 16% believed that they could develop their imagination and creativity, 20 percentages were confident when talking about real-life topics, only 4 percentages accredited all three advantages above. Their getting acquainted to role-play activity frequently built up students' interest to their roles speaking class (50 percentages). As a matter of fact, the percentages of good effects when they participate in role-play activity were equivalent by 35 percentages - 30 percentages - 35 percentages (confident in public speaking ability, interested in communicative activities and like to experience other characters)

Students' benefit when participating role-play activities



DISCUSSION

From data collection and data analysis, it is easier for me to answer the research questions. Statistic calculated from questionnaire shows that the majority of students from PPU like learning speaking class (80 percentages) and speaking with role-play activity (83 percentages); only 17 percentages dislike it. It was fun and motivating, which helps to involve quieter students into communicative interaction to express themselves, the size of classroom seems to be enlarged to the world outside. This fact offers a wide range of language acquisition. Students are aware of the importance of English communication so they would like to be practice English as much as possible. Alternatively, most of students stated in focus groups that they rarely participate in communicative activities in English class, so that role-play is such a new way which enables students opportunity to practice speaking, especially in front of people and use target language in realistic and different contexts. On the other hand, through interview, the recognizable reason is that the traditional method teaching in education curriculum limits students' capacity of learning speaking. Students don't have chance to practice English as well as they respect. Speaking time is always under evaluated and neglected by grammar and reading. The fact of not having more chance to practice speaking reduces students' interest in this field. Moreover, speaking lessons are sometimes boring because students are only required to learn by heart the dialogues then imitate. They can't show off their own personality as well as their imagination and creativity. When role-play activity was implemented into speaking lesson, students stated that this created warmer and more exciting atmosphere in class, they felt more relaxing and comfortable. Consequently, it is visible that students increase their interest of speaking English. Furthermore, the more chances students speak in front of people, interact with their classmates and get involved in the classroom engagement, the more confident of English speaking capacity they become. Moreover, dealing with role-play task, students have to learn new tradition and culture, know how to use the language target and be more flexible to social situations, which is a good way to broaden their minds. On the other hand, role-play activity encourages the use of critical thinking of analyzing and problem solving. In other words, students have to think critically during the process of implementing role-play activity. Some limitations, especially lack of vocabulary, does still exist. According to teacher's reflective journal, vocabulary is still a barrier to students. Sometimes students can't know which words they should use, which ones they shouldn't and the result is their characters failed, audience don't understand what they mean. Although role-play tasks are assigned beforehand, students are able to prepare their roles at home, they can't understand the collocation. Students' speaking ability is another problem, just at average level due to little time of practicing. For some introverted students, speaking in public is such a tedious duty. Last but not least, teacher is able to lost control of class because of noise or some students just think about other things outside the class. In that case, teacher can't manage to get involved all students to the activity.

Implication for future work

This study acted as a first step in the further study on the topic of using role-play activity to motivate students in speaking class and how ELT teachers use this technique as part of their emerging and developing teaching practice. As finding results above, students don't know the way to use appropriate words in certain contexts so vocabulary is students' great language barrier. Teacher should introduce how to learn vocabulary effectively. And, of course, students should change their way to learn new words, for example, vocabulary should be required actively every day. It is important for

them to pay attention to the meaning and using. Learning words in profound, in sentence and context is very helpful. Another issue needed noticing is how to improve students' confidence. Reading out loud an English newspaper, practicing talking in English with friends can be an effective way. Those things are possible to implement regularly. In order to make speaking lesson with role-play activity useful, teacher's instruction also plays an important part. Different from the old method of teaching, students become center of the class but with detailed and easy-to-understand instruction from teacher. The more specific instruction teacher gives, the easier acting out students get. Students would certainly feel useful if they are able to get some model sentences and actions besides giving scenario and useful language. As stated in previous part, student's background is different, their level isn't the same. Thus, it is necessary for teacher to group them in suitable and equivalent place. Besides, assigning suitable task to suitable group should be included. Furthermore, it is better if teacher gives role for all students in the class or asks them to follow the role-play activity to give their own comments and feedbacks. It will make students concentrate and not have free time for irrelevant work. As a result, teacher will be able to involve all students and manage the classroom. Giving more encourages and praises after the activities is also useful advice for teacher to maintain and increase students' interest in role-play activities. This doesn't mean that teacher has to compliment students all the time, giving comments and feedback on mistakes is a good way to help students fix their errors and improve their speaking skill. One more important issue is topic for role-play activities which should be diverse. Applying textbook topics and daily-life topic parallel is a good idea instead of using one type only.

CONCLUSION

Using role-play activity in speaking class brings certain benefit to both teacher and first-year students from PPU. This study was carried out with two research questions to find out ways that role-play activity supports students, their problems and difficulties when implementing new technique and students' attitude towards the new teaching method. Serving the aims of the study, I applied qualitative method, used three main tools of collecting data as observation with teacher's reflective journals, interview both individual and focus group and questionnaire to answer the research questions. Thanks to results derived from data analysis, it is found that after implementing role-play activity in speaking class, students admitted some positive effects. Role-play activities helped students to raise more confidence, develop their imagination and creativity, get more chances to interact in English, gain more cultures and traditions, build up critical thinking process and be able to speak more fluently. Those resulted in increasing students' interest of speaking class. However, this study still exists some limitations. First of all, time limitation makes result of data analysis not various. Researcher was able to interview some students out of 100 participants. Hence, many other students didn't have chance to raise their voice about the new technique. Secondly, the study only focused on speaking skill for first-year students from Faculty of Accounting, UNETI. It is rather hard to generalize the effectiveness of applying role-play activity for other students at the same university or other university. Thus, it is necessary to carry on a more extended study of the same topic to improve other skills as well. The fact that only one teacher took charge of applying role-play activity in 2 classes is another limitation. If there had been two English teachers, the way implemented role-play activity would have been different. Due to that condition, the researchers would have gathered and interpreted various data then imply which approach was more effective to students.

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APPENDIX I

No.	Week	Topic	Target language	Role-play activities
1	Week 1	Getting to know you	Tenses: present, past, future. Wh-questions.	Imagine you are joining a party to welcome first-students to UNETI. Go around, introduce then ask for others' information (name, age, hometown, majors, hobbies, lifestyle, etc)
2	Week 2	The way we live	Present simple & present continuous. Have & have got.	Work in groups of three. One is Roberto, one is Endre and other is Yuet Tung. Talk about your new life in the US.
3	Week 3	It all went wrong	Past simple & past continuous	Create your own characteristics of a perfect crime. Do your play on the stage.
4	Week 4	Let's go shopping	Quantity & Article	Imagine you are going shopping in NowySwait – the best shopping street in the world.
5	Week 5	Let's go shopping	Quantity & Article	Play the role of shoppers and shop keepers among one of five shops as: a computer shop, a newsagent's, a fruit shop, a small supermarket, a language bookshop.
6	Week 6	Let's go shopping	Quantity & Article	Play the role of shoppers and shop keepers among one of five shops as: a computer shop, a newsagent's, a fruit shop, a small supermarket, a language bookshop.
7	Week 7	What do you want to do?	Verb patterns & Future intention	Make an interview with four Hollywood kids (Trent, Amanda, Emily and Lindsey) about their unreal lives.
8	Week 8	What do you want to do?	Future intention	Make an interview with four Hollywood kids (Trent, Amanda, Emily and Lindsey) about their unreal lives.
9	Week 9	Tell me!	What's it like?	You are a millionaire and you are going to join a luxurious business club. Share your experience in your business and what you are going to do with your money.
10	Week 10	What's it like?	Comparative & superlative adjectives	experience in your business and what you are going to do with your money.
11	Week 11	Famous couples	Present perfect	Work in pairs, play a role of random famous couples. Tell your love story.
12	Week 12	couples	Tense revision	Work in pairs, play a role of random famous couples. Tell your love story.

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE

Respondents: First-year students from Faculty of Accounting, UNETI

Purpose: Collecting ideas, suggestion or recommendation of speaking classes with role-play activities. Your thoughtful assistance in completing the following items is highly appreciated. All information provided will be used for the project purposes only.

Thank you very much for your help!

1. Do you like speaking English?

A. Like very much B. Like C. Like a little D. Do not like

2. Do you think that learning speaking is important?

A. Very important B. Important C. Quite important D. Not important

3. How can you manage speaking skill?

A. Very good B. Good C. Pretty good D. Not good.

4. How often does your teacher apply role-play activity to assign speaking task?

A. Often B. Sometimes C. Rarely D. Never.

5. Is role-play activity interesting?

A. Very interesting B. Interesting C. Boring

6. Do you like role-play activity in speaking class?

A. Like very much B. Like C. Like a little D. Do not like

7. Do you think you are able to gain much when participating role-play activity?

A. Very profitable B. Profitable C. Pretty profitable D. Not profitable

8. In what way does role-play activity bring much benefit to you?

A. Develop imagination and creativity
B. Use English in free way
C. Talk about real-life topics.
D. All of the benefit.

9. Are your roles interesting?

A. Interesting very much B. Interesting C. Little interesting D. Not interesting

10. What are advantages of participating in role-play activity?

A. Confidence in public speaking ability
B. Interest communicative activities
C. Like to experience other characters.

APPENDIX III

Interview questions for individual.

- Do you have any idea of the term "role play"?
- Have you ever participated in a role play before?
- How do you cooperate to complete your assigned role play tasks?
- Do you and your partners get any kinds of conflict in the process of carrying out role play tasks?
- How do you negotiate with and motivate each other to accomplish the tasks?
- Do you think it is difficult to do a role play task? Why?
- What problems or difficulties do you face up with role play exercises in class? How do you get over?
- Do you find speaking lessons with role play activities more interesting and comfortable? Why?
- Do you feel more confident to speak English after lessons with role play activities?

Interview questions for focus groups

- Can you tell me your experience of learning speaking before and after role-play activity is applied?
- Could you please describe from your perspective something good and not good about role-play activity?
- Think of your experience with role-play activity, what would have made it better? Why?
- Would you like to learn other topic using this technique? Why?
- How is this method different from other methods used to learn speaking?

APPENDIX IV

Transcription for one semi-structured interview.

Questions	Responses	Categories
Do you have any idea of the term: role-play?	Yeah, I am not sure. I think participant would imitate someone else, not him or her in real life. And they would do according to the script.	Personal experience Personal experience
Have you ever participated in a role-play activity before?	Yes, sometimes. I have never attended any plays in class but when I was small, children in neighborhood and I often played the game of prince and princess, I was asked to be the princess. That princess had to be beautiful, wear the crown and pretty dress, be attacked by robbers but would be rescued by a charming prince. It brought a lot of fun. I was really happy. I love to be a princess again.	Personal experience Personal experience Motivation Feeling and expression Expectation
How do you cooperate to complete your assigned role play tasks?	When getting the requirement of the task, we discuss to write the script, learn by heart and practice for several times. Because it is a play, I think body language and gesture is very important. We try to act in the most natural way as we can. Sometimes we video recorded ourselves so that we can watch what we were on stages. It is funny. Those videos make us laugh a lot.	Personal experience Personal experience Communicative interaction Personal experience Motivation, Feeling and expression
Do you and your partners get any kinds of conflict in the process of carrying out role play tasks?	Yeah, of course, we sometimes argue enthusiastically, even have a quarrel about the content (laughing) that we didn't talk to another for a couple of days. But in the end we find a solution to the situation we created. And we have unforgettable memory together. That is awesome.	Feeling and expression, Communicative interaction Feeling and expression, Difficulties and problems Positive reaction Motivation Feeling and expression
How do you negotiate with and motivate each other to accomplish the tasks?	Firstly, teacher told us if we complete the task, we will be able to get bonus scores. You know, we love getting high scores. So we only try to accomplish the task at first. But when conducting the task, we try to act in various ways to make our play interesting.	Positive reaction Motivation, Expectation Expectation Communicative interaction Motivation,
Do you think it is difficult to do a role play task? Why?	Yes, it is very and very difficult. We are not good at English. So writing a script is complicated and learning by heart is such a tedious duty. But now we are all acquainted. Everything seems easier.	Feeling and expression Personal experience, Motivation Positive reaction
What problems or difficulties do you face up with role play exercises in class? How do you get over?	Yeah, the first problem is our lack of excellent ideas for the play. So we search on the internet, find similar situations, learn from them and modify to make them ours. The second trouble is lack of time. I myself live far from here. It takes me about one hour to get here by bus. I often come late for the trials before on real stage because sometimes I miss the bus. My group mates even get angry with me first. But finally they understand and pass it over. The third is our limited vocabulary. Whenever that, we have to stop and search appropriate words or phrases, then ask a better-at-English friend for help. On the other hand, I used to be shy and afraid of wrong pronunciation before, but now it changes due to time for practicing scripted dialogues.	Difficulties and problems Positive reaction Motivation Difficulties and problems Difficulties and problems Feeling and expression Positive reaction Difficulties and problems Positive reaction Positive reaction Feeling and expression Difficulties and problems Positive reaction
Do you find speaking lessons with role play activities more interesting and comfortable? Why?	Yeah. I love it. First I hated speaking. I was scared of being asked to talk in class. You know, I don't know what to say or don't have enough vocabulary, even my sentences are full of mistakes. I was shy and afraid of being laughed at. So whenever I talked in class, I tried to say with the softest voice (laughing). The speaking class was boring with the routine of teacher's asking and students' answering. I hope to have something different. And now with role play, preparing beforehand, I feel more confident and don't hesitate to speak English any more. I remember the first time I played on stage. When I finished, my friends and teacher clapped their hands to compliment me as well as my partners. That feeling was so great. I didn't believe in my eyes. Wow, it was so exciting. I would like to be complimented like that in the future.	Feeling and expression Personal experience Feeling and expression Difficulties and problems Personal experience Feeling and expression Expectation Motivation Feeling and expression Personal experience Motivation Feeling and expression Feeling and expression Expectation
Do you feel more confident to speak English after lessons with role play activities?	Yes, definitely. Now I am more confident and I try to speak English as much as I can. I find speaking lessons more interesting and comfortable and the atmosphere sets up new flow of wind to English class.	Feeling and expression Positive reaction Feeling and expression Expectation

Themes/ concepts**Difficulties and problems:**

Students' engagement: motivation, communicative interaction, personal experience, positive reaction.

Students' attitude: feeling and expression, expectation.

