SETTING SIGHT ON ROLE PLAYING:
TO ACCOMMODATE OR TO REPUDIATE?

Ika Apriani Fata[1]; Usman Kasim[2]; Dwi Juniyana[3]

[1,2,3]Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Syiah Kuala
Jln. Krueng Kale No. 21, Darussalam, Banda Aceh, Aceh, 23111
[1]ika.apriani@unsyiah.ac.id

ABSTRACT

To set sight on role play by means to look at EFL teacher's experience and students' perspectives of role play (RP) technique enactment in teaching speaking by using qualitative design. This research was a qualitative study. It was discharged at a Senior high school in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. It provided work for the instrument of observation sheet, field notes and interview guide, and also questionnaire. The methodology designated the combination of four mountainsides to expose in-depth the urgency of role play in which applied since 1936. The result of interview was exposed that the English teacher claimed that role play was a technique applied to promote speaking and it was corroborated by the result of field note. Likewise, regarding students' perspective depicted that the students indeed agreed on themselves of the usefulness of role play to enhance their speaking skill and motivation. Thus, Students asserted that the learning was more fun and enjoyable through role play itself. It is merely found in this research study that role playing can accommodate students' need and teacher's side in English language teaching. Nevertheless, this article applies a small subject as the participant. Therefore, the researchers recommended to have a deep look at reasoning students' point of view in terms of role play technique implementation in non-English class. And see ascertains how beneficial it is in terms of role play (RP) in a large classroom.

Keywords: students' perspective, EFL, role play, communication skill

INTRODUCTION

Role play, Trent (2009) has conveyed that it is the main important technique as it gives students a lot of prospects to practice communicating of various social contexts and in different social roles. To avoid the disadvantages of using role play technique, there are some ways to minimize the disadvantages needed to be deliberated. These issues relate to four main phases of a role-playing, namely: preparing, briefing, running and reflecting (Hartmann, *et al.*, 2008). Role play is a technique in English teaching in which students learn about an imaginary situation or role in order to develop the students' fluency. Besides, role play in the classroom involves students actively in the learning process by enabling them to act as stakeholders in an imagined or real scenario. In addition, Teed (2009) has mentioned that role play instruction requires good preparation and management. Role play is used as a technique for teaching insight and empathy competence (Blatner, 2005). He further defines role play, a derivative of a playing role, as a technique for exploring the issues involved in complex social situations. Correspondingly, Osborn, *et al.* (2008) has asserted that in communication, role play is a communicative technique developing fluency in people' speaking.

Findings of a number of previous studies suggest that role play improved students' speaking skill and English teachers' pronunciation (e.g. Hartmann, *et al.*, 2008; Qing, 2011; Westrup & Planander, 2013). Dealing with the previous studies of role play technique, the researcher conducted this research based on the journal published on Cross Culture Communication by Qing (2011). This articleis about role play as an effective technique to develop overall communicative competence. It further explains the details of role play activity from the teacher's side and the students'. Moreover, this article also reveals benefit of using role play in enhancing speaking ability.

Into the bargain, Westrup and Planander (2013) uphold that role play ran well in the classroom and the students perceived toward the implementation of role play technique in the classroom. This article mostly discusses the impacts of role play for students. However, the researcher found yet no research discussing the perception by EFL English teacher and students towards Role Play technique in teaching speaking in Aceh, therefore this study would fill in this gap. To effectively unfold the advantages of role-play, some critical design issues need to be taken into account. These issues are related to four main phases of a role-play, namely: preparing, briefing, running and reflecting

(Hartmann, *et al.*, 2008). Several possible constraints should be considered when implementing a role play into a course. First, the classroom should be suitable (e.g. movable furniture); second, there should be enough time available particularly for the feedback at the end. Currently, the time which needed to implement role play technique is one hour lesson; it is counted 40 minutes. Third, the teacher should provide the situation which would like to do. The last, the teacher divides the students into a group.

An essential part of each role play was the briefing of the actors about the situation and the characteristics of their role (Boonkit, 2010). This phase is placed in whilst activity of implementing role-play technique. For this purpose, the role scenario and role description had to be scripted. The role scenario set the background of a particular problem and the associated constraints.

Running is also placed in whilst activity of role play technique implementation. There are several forms of running a role play which form is chosen depends on the objectives of the role-play and the extent to which students are involved (Westrup & Planader, 2013). In a single role play, for example, a few students are performed while being observed by the class, whereas in a multiple role play groups of students are simultaneously active. An advantage of the former is that the whole group could share and discuss its observations, while the latter creates an environment where the students feel less embarrassed and exposed. The teacher fulfills different functions during a role play.

The most important activity in role play is reflecting. This is the post-activity of implementing role-play technique. During reflection, students step back and discuss what happened in the role play, identify the reasons for the observed behavior and outcomes as well as drew conclusions for improvements. By doing so, students should be able to relate their observations to other parts of the course. Thus, the links with previous and further teaching should be pointed out. Reflection could be achieved by posing questions verbally discussed in the classroom or answered in written documents. If possible, reflection should be placed immediately after the role play, so that students are able to recall their behavior and observations. Additionally, the time needed for reflection should not be underestimated, since role play usually produces a lot of discussion material.

Speaking is a complex skill requiring the simultaneous used of some different abilities, which often develop at the different rates. Either four or five components are generally recognized in analyzing the speech process (Fata, 2014). Likewise, speaking component provides an appropriate feedback in order to inform them whether their speaking is good enough or need to be increased. Then, it combines speaking with pronunciation and reading (Nurani & Rosyada, 2015). Finally, it is incorporated into the teaching of speech acts in teaching speaking.

Songsiri (2007) has mentioned that teaching speaking is developed to teach learners to (a) Produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns as confirmed by Qing (2011). (b) Use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language as supported by Fata (2014). (c) Select appropriate words and sentences in regard to the proper social setting, audience, situation and subject matter. (d) Organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence. (e) Use language as a means of expressing values and judgments. (f) Use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency.

METHODS

This research was a qualitative study. It was discharged at a Senior high school in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. At first, the researcher appointed five of role play English teachers, however only one of them agreed to be interviewed. Thus, the subject of this research was one of English teacher, and she eventually had more than twelve years of experience of teaching English and practicing Role Play technique frequently in teaching speaking. Thus, she qualified for the subject of this research. As the respondent, the first time the authors distributed questionnaire of more than 50 sheets, however only 28 students gave it back. In the interim, the object of this research was the students' insights of the implementation of role play technique and implementation of role play technique itself. The researcher obtained data starting point from the observation sheet adapted from Boonkit (2010), field notes adapted from Marshall and Rossman (2006), and interview guide also questionnaire adapted from Islami & Islami (2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Through observation, the researcher was surprised by the result that the teacher applied almost all of the role play's phases in teaching and learning speaking process, which was preparing, briefing, running, and reflecting phase. However, there were five points in number 4, 7, 13, 19, and 20 of observation sheet that the teacher modified the role-play technique.
(E1): The teacher should consider the class is suitable for movement. And the teacher checks the condition of the classroom whether the chairs and tables are suitable for the movement or not.

This finding accommodates the statement of Savage and Savage (2010) which stated that classroom management is much more than that, on the other hand, it also involves the establishment and maintenance of the classroom environment so that educational goals could be accomplished. Likewise, Tak and Shing (2008) have delineated classroom management as teacher's steering and coordinating the complex environment for the purpose of effective learning and teaching. Actually, the classroom is movable, so the students can move their chairs and tables while grouping, discussing, and performing. However, the teacher makes paired the students who sat next to each other, so they do not move around. For that reason, the teacher does not change the seat. Apparently, the implementation of seating management of role playing is not applied by English teacher. Our finding is on the contrary of Tak and Shing (2008) in which mentioned that role playing considered the importance of movement and seating regulation in role playing. However, the English teacher committed is not to do it accordingly. The seating regulation itself consists of horizontal rows, vertical rows, circles, and long tables which serve different purposes.
(E2): The teacher asks the students to prepare the properties for the role-play. As the teacher has requested that the students have to prepare all the things they need.

This finding supported the theory of Cole (2008) which stated that it is the teacher's role to provide effective plans or strategies in accomplishing students' educational needs, whose general purpose is to communicate using the

language being learned. These imply that it is teacher's responsibility to make students speak English by employing suitable teaching strategies of speaking. The teacher asks the students to perform unscripted role play. Meanwhile, the teacher plans to perform role play technique in order to increase the students' capabilities in speaking English. Therefore, English teacher does not ask the students to prepare the properties.

(E3): The teacher assigned what role should be played by which student. The teacher divides the role for each student.

This result is in line with Jones (2007) who reveals that a student-centered classroom is a place where the teachers consider the needs of the students, as a group and as individuals. Besides, the role play encouraged students to participate in the learning process all the time as supported by Ningsih and Fata (2015). The teacher's role is more than that of a facilitator. For this statement, there is a different perspective from both the teacher and students. The English teacher does not divide the role for each student; she gives the free role in choosing with their peer-learning. However, the students feel happy to choose the role by themselves without any commands from their teacher. It is supported that these activities are learner-centered. Learners work independently, and the teacher is not at the center of attention, she could stand back and listened more actively.

(E4): The teacher asks the students to relate the activity to other part of the course. After practicing the role, the teacher asks the students to relate their comprehension about what they did with other aspects.

This data supports the theory of Blatner (2005) who devotes to role play instruction requires good preparation and management. The teacher skips this statement since she had already done a similar one in advanced. In the point 15 reflects that the teacher tells the students to ask her about what they do not comprehend on. What is more, she tells them to reflect on other aspects when they create the dialogue. The researcher concludes that the teacher skips for the same reason of the statement in order to limit the using of time.

(E5): The teacher asks for the students' comment or opinion about what happened in the role play.
-The teacher encourages the students to speak to give their comment or opinions about what they have done.

In fact, giving the opinion as found in data is basically in line with Islami and Islami (2012) stating that role play is a communicative technique developing fluency in students' speaking. Therefore, the teacher also skips this point. In point 21, the students are asked to summarize the play and learning. This leads to an assumption that the teacher tells them once to do the similar action. When the students conclude the result of the learning process, the students also give their opinions and comments; hence to reduce the repetition the teacher skips the point.

Based on the observation, the researcher found that the students performed their role play in front of the class without any written dialogue in their hands. Subsequently, the students are capable of speaking English fluently without any created dialogue. Thus, the researcher concluded that the students get a headed of performing the role play.

In the list of the interview question adapted from Islami & Islami (2012), the English teacher explained how she implemented role-play technique. According to the teacher's answer from the interview, she explained to the students the condition before running the activity. As similar, she gave the condition before assigning the role play.

(E4):
Question: Did you discuss the situations with the learners before assigning role play to them?
Teacher's answer: I told them that we were going to play the role.

Blatner (2005) has defined role play as a derivative of a playing role, a technique of exploration of the issues involved in complex social situations. Therefore English teacher gives the condition or the topic which would be discussed. This is a must for her to tell the students in order to make them understand and make the lesson done well. For a reason, as the English teacher realizes that telling the students what they are going to do and explaining the condition or the topic for the students prior to the assigning role-play technique are important. Thus the English teacher performed the role-play technique.

The English teacher applies unscripted role play technique for students. She tells the students to create their own dialogue to perform their role.

(E5):
Question: Who does prepare the dialogue for the students?
Teacher's answer: I tell them to make the dialogue.

This result is in line with the statement of Chotirat (2010), unscripted ones are mainly concerned with preparing what to say, thus helping them noticeably improve their vocabulary or word choice. Additionally, unscripted role play provides students more opportunity to practice holistic features of language use in naturally occurring conversations. Unscripted role plays are very useful to increase their capabilities in speaking. They are active to think and create a good dialogue for their performance. Thus, the teacher is implemented unscripted role play for the students in learning speaking English.

Likewise, the main point to support the researcher's data, the teacher tells the researcher there are some steps in applying role play technique in teaching speaking.

(E6):
Question: Did you set some main phases or steps when spread on the role play technique?
Teacher's answer: There were some steps of applying role play technique.

Hartmann, *et al.* (2008) have revealed that in order to make the role play run effectively, some main phases are provided to help unfold the negative way, namely: preparing, briefing, running, and reflecting. As the result, the teacher told the researcher that she started role play from the beginning until the end had some phases to do of role play procedure itself.

The students' responses in the implementation of role play technique are great. The positive atmosphere happens in the classroom by doing this activity. According to Huang (2008), compared to other techniques, role play seems to be the most interesting one for the students. In role play, the students act or pretend to be someone else in the actual world situation that is brought into the classroom.

(E7):
Question: How was the students' response in implementation of role play technique?
Teacher's answer: They had positive response for the role play in learning speaking.

This data supported by Jones (2007) in which claim that role play creates the positive learning atmosphere in class, it also encourages cooperation between learners. The language produced here is more natural and authentic. The teacher said that the students seem really enthusiastic to learn speaking English by using role-play technique. By implementing role play, the students have peer learning or group to do the task; also they are highly motivated to talk with peer themselves. Finally, the teacher elaborates that there is a great influence on students' abilities in speaking English by using role-play technique.

(E8):
Question: What great influence did you get by applying role play technique?
Teacher's answer: Actually the implementation of role play technique was great so the students speak actively.

Harmer (2007) explained that role play could be used to encourage general oral fluency or to train students for specific situations. The English teacher elaborated to us that the students could directly use the expression depending on the condition they played. So, this finding supported Harmer (2007) which students are actively engaged during role playing. The students can communicate better, enjoy the learning speaking process, and feel the comfort through the lesson because the activity is playing the role. Moreover, the students looked active and confident to speak English.

The field notes guideline is adapted from Marshall and Rossman (2006). Prior to the start of applying role play technique, the teacher reviews the lesson taught in the previous meeting. The teacher asks the questions and tells the students who wanted to answer to raise their hands. In this stage, the students seem enthusiastic and active to respond the teacher's questions. Some of the students try to answer by raising their hands; they give the correct answer for the teacher's questions. It helps them to be brave to speak and overcome their nervousness.

The English teacher provides some pictures and dialogues for example before starting the role play activity. Then, she asks the students to learn the picture. The students are actively learning the picture, and they start to give their opinions about it. The teacher writes it down in order to make it easier for students to remain. The first picture is about trading in a traditional market. From those materials, the students can brainstorm and give their opinions. It trains them to be talkative in the classroom. Five minutes later, the teacher asks the students to brainstorm the topic relates to the use of expression and offering help of the languages features of the role play performance. The teacher helps the students by showing the common words or expressions used in offering help and services. Then the teacher shows the created dialogue and asks the students to think about where the dialogue took place. Additionally, the students answer the question based on the dialogue; where it happens and what expressions are used in the dialogue. Then, the English teacher asks them to differentiate between expression in offering help, services or things.

Budden (2006) has asserted that when role playing is included in the lessons regularly, the learners are given a chance to rehearse their English in a safe environment. In such time, the teacher starts to perform role-play technique. The students create the dialogue by asking their friends, not only to their partner but also to other groups. Sometimes the students also come to the front and ask the teacher what they do not know. The students often ask the teacher about what is the most appropriate word that can be used to convey the ideas to their friends.

Huang (2008) has stated that role play is a really worthwhile learning experience for both the students and the teacher. The teacher plays her role as a facilitator to the students in the teaching and learning process. In case there are too many students who asks her about the meaning of the words, the teacher orders them to look up in the dictionary.

The English teacher walks around and checks the students' work, sometimes she asks the students that have already finished their task or not. The teacher always strives to help them even though it is still hard for the teacher to control the whole class at that time. In accordance with the time which is set, then the teacher asks them to practice their work in front of the classroom, even though the students make the short dialogue but the teacher is pleased that the students are confident to practice in front of the class.

Trent (2009) has stated that role play is a primary technique to provide participation and involvement in the learning process. In a training environment, role play is allowed the learner to receive objective feedback about one's performance. During the practicing time, the students show their positive enthusiasm in performing their own role. They still strive to do their best to play their role and do the best performance although they know very a few of vocabulary. All of the students get the chance to practice in front of the class, and the teacher highly appreciates their work. The teacher appreciates them by saying such as "you did a great job", "well done", and "your performance is splendid".

The data for students' responses toward the implementation of role play technique are obtained from the questionnaire. The questionnaire is delivered to all of students in the class; the total of the students are 28 students (n=28). The questionnaire results can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Questionnaire Result

Items no	Score					
	Respondent n=28					MEAN
	SA	A	N	DA	SD	
Q1	20	8				14
Q2	12	16				14
Q3	18	10				14
Q4	10	15		3		9,33333
Q5	10	18				14
Q6	14	13		1		9,33333
Q7	15	13				14
Q8	12	16				14
Q9	21	7				14
Q10	10	1	8	9		7
Q11	22	6				14
Q12	19	9				14
Q13	20	8				14
Q14	11	17				14
Q15	21	7				14
Q16	14	12		2		9,33333
Q17	23	5				14

Source: Islami & Islami (2012)

As evidenced in Table 1, Q10 (M=7), "Role play gives a scope to show innovation" is the least often mentioned that show students' have a slight idea on how role play bridge the innovation in the classroom of teaching speaking. It is also can be concluded that students require further teacher's creativity to set the role play, either scripted or unscripted, towards the learning process itself.

On the other hand, there are almost half of the students or there are 43% (n= 12) of students for example Q17 (M=14), "Role play Improves motivation to practice to speak English" who strongly agree with the statement given of the questionnaires. Besides, more than half of the students or 57% (n=16) of students such as Q14 (M=14), "Role play reduces shyness" agree with the statement given. Likewise, in average, the students agree with the statement because teacher's feedback turns out helped them in making the improvement.

Trent (2009) has asserted that role playing is a primary technique to provide participation and involvement in the learning process. In a training environment, role playing allows the learner to receive objective feedback about one's performance. By doing role play technique, the students can increase their vocabulary. The students respond well toward this statement. The data shows that almost all of the students or 75% of students strongly agree with the statement. The rest of the students or 25% of students agree with this statement. While for other options which are neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree, no one chose these options. There is no doubt to say that role play helps them to increase vocabulary. By practicing and gaining courage from the teacher, they would speak and use varied of vocabulary in their activity. Discussing on motivation, Yu-mei (2009) has asserted that motivation is one of the several important factors that may influence students' English achievement. Motivation is a very important factor which determined the success or failure in foreign language learning because it could directly influence the frequency of using learning strategies, will power of learning, goal setting, and the achievement in learning (Li & Pan, 2009).

Dealing with students' responses were splendid itself. It reflects in the questionnaires' answer which is responded strongly agree and agrees in almost items. Although there are some items which have various answers from the students, it does not give the big impact for the result. The students are enthusiastic, highly-motivated, and created the positive atmosphere in the classroom. The implementation of role play technique by English teacher in teaching speaking is successful. The teacher implements role play technique by doing some steps; preparing, briefing, running and reflecting which is in line with Hartmann, *et al*. (2008). Although there are some steps skipped by the teacher, result of the implementation of role play technique is done well. Additionally, the teacher implements unscripted role play by following the structured steps. The teacher is well-managed in applying role play technique in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

In the context of Libyan and India EFL learners, role play is claimed successfully accommodated the English speaking skill. It is in agreement of Aceh (Indonesia) framework, among four instruments applied, it is concluded that students' perspective and teacher's effort show the significant of role play of teaching speaking even though seating management is not the teacher's concern. It is based on consideration that the students might speak to the students sit near to them. Likewise, seating management is considered of role play implementation. However, this research applies a small research subject and respondents, therefore, it cannot be generalized to all level of students. It is best suggested as further work to bring into play the larger setting of respondents and study non-English class implementation.

REFERENCES

Blatner, A. (2005). Using Role Playing in Teaching Empathy. *British Journal of Psychodrama & Sociodrama, 20*(1), 31–36.

Boonkit, K. (2010). Enhancing the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English. *Proceedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2*, 1305–1309.

Budden, J. (2006). *Role Play*. London: BBC Press.

Chotirat, S. (2010). *Oral Performance in Scripted and Non-scripted Role Play Activities: A Study of Repair Organization in English Conversation of Thai College Students*. Songkla: Prince of Songkla University.

Cole, R. W. (2008). *Educating Everybody's Children: Diverse Teaching Strategies for Diverse Students*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Fata, I. A. (2014). Is my stress right or wrong? Studying the production of stress by non-native speaking teachers of English. *Studies in English Language and Education, 1*(1), 64–74.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4th edition). New York: Pearson Longman.

Hartmann, A., Doree, A., & Martin, L. (2008). A Role play approach for teaching research methodology in construction management. In *'In: Dainty, A (Ed) Proceedings 24th Annual ARCOM Conference* (pp.334–346). Cardiff, UK: Association of Researchers in Construction Management.

Huang, I. Y. (2008). *Role Play for ESL/EFL Children in the English Classroom*. London: Kogan Page.

Islami, P., & Islami, T. (2012). Effectiveness of Role Play in Enhancing the Speaking Skills of the Learners in a Large Classroom: An Investigation of Tertiary Level Students. *Stamford Journal of English*, *7*(1), 218–233.

Jones, L. (2007). *The student-centered classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Li, P., & Pan, G. (2009). The relationship between motivation and achievement – a survey of the study motivation of English majors in Qingdao agricultural University. *English Language Teaching*, *2*(1), 123–128.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ningsih, S. R., & Fata, I. A. (2015). Exploring Teachers' Beliefs and the Teaching Profession in Aceh. *Studies in English Language and Education, 2*(1), 67–78.

Nurani, S., & Rosyada, A. (2015). Improving English Pronunciation of Adult ESL Learners through Reading Aloud Assessments. *Lingua Cultura*, *9*(2), 108–113.

Osborn, S., Osborn, M., & Osborn, R. (2008). *Public*

speaking guidebook. Boston: Pearson.

Qing, X. (2011). Role Play-An Effective Approach to Developing Overall Communicative Competence. *Cross Culture Communication*, 7(4), 36–39. http://doi.org/10.3968/j.ccc.1923670020110704.317

Savage, T. V., & Savage, M. K. (2010). *Classroom Management and Discipline Resources.' In: Curwin, R. L., and Mendler, A. N., (eds) Classroom Management, ASCD*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Songsiri, M. (2007). *An action research study of promoting students' confidence in speaking English*. (Dissertation of Doctor of Education Degree),Victoria University, Australia. Retrieved from eprints.vu.edu.au/1492/1/Songsiri.pdf

Tak, M. H., & Shing, W. L. (2008). *Classroom management: Creating a positive learning environment*. Hongkong: Hongkong University Press.

Teed, R. (2009). *Role Playing Exercises*. Canada: Alberta Education.

Trent, J. (2009). Enhancing oral participation across the curriculum: Some lessons from the EAP classroom. *Asian EFL Journal*, 11(1), 256-270.

Westrup, U., & Planander, A. (2013). Role play as a pedagogical method to prepare students for practice : The students' voice. *Hogre Utbildning*, 3(3), 199–210.

Yu-mei, L. (2009). On motivation and college English learning. *Sino-US English Teaching*, 6(1), 57–65.