

ESP Students' Perception on Role Playing for Boosting Their Speaking Skill

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Received: 28/05/2024

Revised: 07/06/2024

Accepted: 12/06/2024

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Abstract

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emphasizes on the use of English related to the students' major taken. It is manifested in four skills and one of them is speaking skill. The role-playing learning technique has been implemented for boosting their speaking skill. The aim of this research is to find students' perception towards the application of the role-playing learning technique in boosting students' speaking skill. As much as 31 students of Information System and Accounting Information System majors were employed to this research and it was conducted in Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika. This research was a descriptive and analyzed qualitatively. The data were gathered from students' perception which were obtained from their fulfillment of online form and also an open-ended interview. There were 13 questions to investigate and dig students' perception and it has represented the data. It resulted that they had positive perception towards the implementation of role-playing in English class with details: good for boosting linguistics (1). Accuracy of speech, 2). Appropriate placement of pressure, tone, joints and duration. 3). Word choice (diction). and 4). Accuracy of conversational targets (use of sentences)) and non-linguistics skills (natural, calm and not stiff, as well as their self-confidence). In conclusion, role playing can be recommendation for learning speaking English, not only for students in primary education, but also students in higher education.

Keywords: ESP students, perception, role playing, speaking skill

1. Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is given to develop students' linguistic potentialities to update knowledge in their specialties (Astuti, 2017). There, students are invited to practice English with their real situation and with the themes covering the computers, future technology, etc. The contents are various and they are related to students' major, about Information and Technology (IT). Surely, lecturer tries to conduct four English skills; speaking, writing, reading and listening. Among the skills mentioned, speaking becomes skill that students need to prepare to the job fields. For IT students, they are used to be familiar with the terms using English in their daily works.

To master English effectively, lecturers should provide opportunities for the students to speak as often as possible (Ferdian & Nirwana, 2021). Speaking is one of the four macro skills

necessary for effective communication in any language, especially when the speakers do not use their mother tongue. Unfortunately, speaking still becomes students' frightening specter since they have various reasons. Their inability to put words together and having to translate into English as well as their confidence in speaking in front of the class exacerbate this problem. Moreover, students are fear of making mistakes when speaking, for example: incorrect pronunciation, incorrect grammar, etc. Thus, teacher has to focus on the spoken form of foreign language and try to help students engage in speaking (Behtash et al., 2017) and the goal of teaching itself also is to improve students' communication skills since they can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules in circumstances situation (Wahyuni, 2015). In addition, students who are engaged in dialogues, their motivation and self-confidence will improve and help them with their speaking abilities.

To help them, lecturers need to use innovation in the learning process, one of which is using role playing technique as a learning technique. The history of role playing goes back to the time of ancient Greece, when the play was used as a teaching tool. The first role play was probably when a master teaching a student told him: "Act as if I were a customer and you would serve me." The student fulfilled his role. The master acted as a potential client. When they later discussed their role, play was used as a teaching method (Dorathy & Mahalakshmi, 2011). Baybakova & Hasko (2020) stated that role playing techniques can be quite successful in ESP discourse training. Further, by involving a group of students and making them active and dynamic participants in learning, role-playing games increase their motivation, develop teamwork, create a relaxed atmosphere to simulate and practice professionally oriented and work-related activities. Further, role-playing instructions are also good for organizing role-playing games, especially since the instructions can be very simple. This type of exercise describes a situation and tells participants how to act. Finally, there are scenarios that describe a sequence of events. They can be applied to everyday situations as well as fictional situations. Such activities encourage students to practice activities such as asking for and giving information, asking for permission, and apologizing. It must be remembered that students are having fun at the same time.

Altun (2015) stated that Role-playing activities promote and encourage students' motivation in a fun way and provide a rich language experience. Role-playing activities can be motivating because they are enjoyable and entertaining for learners. It integrates language skills in a natural way and helps students who have not experienced such motivation before. This has a huge impact on the atmosphere and dynamics of the classroom, allowing students to become aware of common English mistakes. Using role-playing gives students great opportunities to communicate with each other, even if they have limited vocabulary. Role-playing encourages students to communicate and express themselves boldly.

From the explanation above, therefore, the research question is how do ESP students perceive on role playing for boosting their speaking skill? Moreover, the aim of the research is to explore, discover and know the perception of ESP students on role playing for boosting their speaking skill.

2. Method

This research was conducted by employing students from two different majors: Information System and Accounting Information System of Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika with the time around three months. To get students' perception, some steps of research method

were conducted, including: 1) Spreading online form of questionnaires; 2) Fulfilling the forms done by the students employed; 3) Gathering the data; 4) Categorizing their answers; 5) Analyzing the data; 6) Interpreting all data gathered; 7) Conducting open interview for getting more information.

2.1 Spreading online form of questionnaires

The researcher spread online form of questionnaires to the students of two different study programs. Questionnaires consisted of questions such as: name, major, their opinion about English course, their opinion about speaking skill specifically and how importance of speaking skill for their work plan in the future, their opinion about the implementation of role playing in this class as well.

2.2 Fulfilling the forms done by the students employed

Students had to finish fulfilling the forms in three days while thinking of and figuring out of the answers appropriately. Students were free for expressing what they had from the implementation of role playing in this English course or there was not compulsion from the researchers during fulfilling the forms.

2.3 Gathering the data

After all students finished fulfilling the forms, the duty of researchers was to gather the data. While gathering, they also checked the students' answers about whether they answered suitable with conditions. If there was not inappropriateness, students would do in another day for getting the valid data.

2.4 Categorizing students' answers

Since the questions had difference, the answers must be categorized. They have been categorized into two, about speaking skill and roleplaying implementation in this English course.

2.5 Analyzing the data

The raw data categorized would be analyzed qualitatively by describing specifically.

2.6 Interpreting all data gathered

For obtaining clear result of the implementation of role playing, the data gathered needed to be interpreted. Data interpretation is the process of describing data collection that has been processed. In interpreting the data, researchers develop data and research results, make conclusions and provide recommendations at the end.

2.7 Conducting open interview for getting more information

Open interview was conducted for getting more varied and valid information. Students answered questions freely as if they were telling their lecturer about the themes taken in this research. The information obtained directly describes the situation and conditions when the roleplaying implementation was carried out. This open interview method was chosen because of its flexibility, direct interaction between researchers and students, and both can convey complex contexts.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Students' Responses in All Categories

No	Categories	Total	Percentage
1.	General opinion of English course	1	7.14%
2.	Self-assessment of students' speaking skill	4	28.57%
3.	The importance of English for students' future	1	7.14%
4.	The implementation of Role Playing for boosting students' speaking skill and confidence in English course	8	57.14%

Questions have been given to the students with some different categories. They were general opinion of English course asking students about what they felt, thought, and perceived towards the English course in the class. Although it was just a question, it has represented the data that students had various perception. Further, the following questions were about students' self-assessment in mastering speaking skill. They measured by themselves and compared before-after abilities in this English course. These categories consisted four questions that must be answered by the students. Besides, they were also questioned about the role of English for their future workplace whether it is important. For the most questions, it was about the implementation of role playing itself in this English course especially whether it boosted their confidence in using English for communicating and how they expressed their thought.

Q1. How was the English course in semester 1?

Table 2. Students' Responses of English Course in Semester 1

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Good; Very good; Run well	9	22.5%
2	Exciting; Not boring; Enjoyable	14	35%
3	Easy to understand	6	15%
4	Improving my English competence	3	7.5%
5	Lecturer's friendliness; Fun learning	4	10%
6	Little exciting	4	10%

A student had more than answers and they did it by adding the additional answers. The writer had categorized: good, very good, run well; exciting, not boring, enjoyable; easy to understand; improving my English competence; lecturer's friendliness, fun learning; and little exciting. Lucardie (2014) discovered in his research that adults regard the class is fun when they are able to participate in the process and they feel the contribution of teacher to the fun and enjoyment from the strategies and approaches they adopt. The most answers revealed that the English course during semester 1 was exciting, not boring and enjoyable supported by understandable material discussion, the effort to improve students' English competences, lecturer's friendliness and the fun learning. Besides, the writer also could not deny that some students felt little excited when joining the class. For further answer, they expressed that it was related to their ability to master English.

Q2. Do you find it difficult for mastering speaking skill?

Table 3. Students' Difficulties in Mastering Speaking Skill

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Yes	18	58.06%
2	No	13	41.94%

The focus of studying speaking skill is to improve students' oral production during the class and also out of class. Therefore, the class must aim to maximize individual language use. The oral language acquisition occurred in the children natural process in which by the time of their growth, the language use also is improved. Hosni (2014) stated that there are four conditions that should exist in the language learning, they are the exposure, opportunities to use the language, motivation and instructions. Those conditions influence students to whether they can join the class well. Based on the result of questionnaire, 58.06% of students had difficulty in mastering speaking skill and the rest found it easy in it. As EFL students, speaking skill always becomes the most difficult among the four English skills. The frequency of using English in each education level is still lacked and additionally they major in non-English study program now in which the English course is taken in two semesters only. It is dilemmatic, in one side students must master English, but in other side the time for doing that is lacked.

Q3. If you find it difficult, what does it make difficult?

Table 4. Students' Difficulties in Mastering Speaking Skill

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Self-distrust; Shy; Doubtful	5	15.63%
2	Mispronunciation	11	34.38%
3	Grammar competence	2	6.25%
4	English competence; How to arrange the words	2	6.25%
5	No interlocutor	1	3.13%
6	Lack of English vocabularies	2	6.25%
7	Difficulty to translate	3	9.34%
8	Nothing	6	18.75%

Some factors that make students find it difficult in mastering speaking skill were revealed by them. Most of them regarded that making mistakes especially mispronunciation was the real obstacle. James in Purnama et al. (2023) stated that mispronunciations happen when encoder pronounces words in speaking a foreign language spontaneously, not reading from the text. It is because learners make mistakes as a result of their ignorance of the system of sound in the second language. In line with the fact in this English class, students have been directed to consult with their dictionary to check how to pronounce the words, but they ignored and impacted to when speaking English. Besides, self-distrust, shyness, and doubt obstructed them to speak English fluently. They lacked of bravery for expressing what they thought in the form of speaking.

Q4. If you find it easy, what does it make easy?

Table 5. Students' Easiness in Mastering Speaking Skill

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Lecturer motivated students to speak English; Lecturer explains the material well	2	7.69%
2	Using daily English vocabularies; I am used to learning how to speak English; Using movie for learning how to speak English; Using daily context	9	34.61%
3	While reading text (Read aloud)	1	3.84%
4	Students' self-confidence; I like English; More practice of speaking English	6	23.07%
5	When being able to translate the words;	2	7.69%

The data above revealed that the most factors making students easier in speaking English especially in this course were about using daily English vocabularies, the habit of speaking English, the habit of watching English movies, and daily context. Candilas (2016) stated that exposure to the target language is one of determining factors an individual holds to gain proficiency in the second language. Those factors above were included to the exposures that lecturer tried to provide to make students afford to speak English. Besides, the second most factors were about students' self-confidence, preference of learning English, and more practice of speaking English. From students' knowledge of the daily context which is used as a topic in English lectures, this makes students more confident when speaking English. This is shown by the students' initiative to be willing to speak in front of the class, especially if they are together with their speaking partners (classmates). In addition, learning English preferences encompass preference for particular kinds of classroom activities, types of teacher behavior, grouping arrangements, language aspects which need emphasis, sensory modes (visual, auditory, tactile learning) and learning modes on one's own outside class (Willing, 1988). In this context, learning English preferences that influence students to find out easy in speaking English were the classroom activities, types of teacher behavior, and sensory modes of learning. Classroom activities included modeling, inviting student initiation and dialogue that had a close context to their lives. It shows the influence on students, such as the closeness of lecturers and students, giving students lots of opportunities to speak in front of the class, providing corrections when students make mistakes in language, and inviting other students to appreciate each other.

Q5. What problems do you encounter when speaking English?

Table 6. Problems that Students Encounter When Speaking English

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Difficult to pronounce; difficult to translate; practicing grammar in speaking English appropriately;	27	79.41%
2	Limited time to learn in the class;	2	5.88%
3	Unconfident	5	19.23%

Students did not always find it easy when speaking English. They also have their own difficulties. As many as 79.41% of students had difficulties with pronunciation, translating and mastering grammar. Rubin in Inayah & Lisdawati (2017) emphasized on the factors of speaking process elements; pronunciation, interlocutor, environment, confidence, and characteristics. The different way between the letters and pronunciation in English made students confused. Moreover, in Indonesia language, the letters written will be pronounced the same. For example: word with letters 'SAYA' will be pronounced the same. Besides, in English, the word with letters 'BOOK', it will be pronounced '/bøk/'. Suseno & Purwati (2020) stated that improving activities such as pronunciation, intonation and alternation in teaching and learning helps students develop their speaking skills. The next one was translation difficulty in which students regarded that when they have to speak, they have to know the meaning of the words. As a way of expressing their thoughts, many people use the translation method in their heads from the mother tongue to the target language and vice versa to convey their intentions to others in a foreign language. The mother tongue is the mother of other languages. Students learn different words using their mother tongue. It is a process of translation to acquire knowledge in other languages (Suseno & Purwati, 2020). Actually, it is a natural process the way students learning to speak English. Therefore, both students and lecturer should use the best method for overcoming this translation problem. Related to the confidence, students' mistrust usually occurs when students perceive that their interlocutors did not understand them or when they do not understand other speakers. Besides, they also had fear for making mistakes and looking foolish in front of the other people when they speak English. To convince the students that they are able to speak English is also important by searching for and practicing the theories about building students' confidence. Dalem (2017) maximizing students' English learning is a good way to boost students' confidence, she says, and teachers can provide regular opportunities to practice correct pronunciation and intonation and to converse freely. In this way, students experience better English language skills. Therefore, the teacher should create a comfortable atmosphere where students are encouraged to speak English and praised for speaking.

Q6. How important is it to use English for your job tomorrow?

Table 7. Students' Responses on the English Use for Future Job

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Important	30	96.77%
2	Unimportant	1	3.23%

In Gage & Prince (1982), Jupp and Hodlin classified the relationship between language functions and work situations into four categories: 1) work language needed for immediate work situations, 2) language for unusual work situations, 3) language for simple social contact, and 4) communication about personal rights and privileges. In line with the students' responses, they perceived that using English will be important for their job tomorrow. Here, the most of students perceived that English is important for their future work orally and written. Some of them stated that:

“We are going to be an engineer and accounting engineer and the most of language of IT is English so we have to learn and even master English for undertaking the work easily. We also hope that we can meet people more, not only Indonesian people but also the foreigner. Therefore, for

communicating with them, we need English for bridging our thought. In the future we need more cooperation.”

Q7. About Role Playing implementation in the last semester, was the practice of using Role Playing effective in improving your speaking skills?

Table 8. Students' Responses on the Effectiveness of Implementation of Role Playing

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Effective	31	100%
2	Ineffective	-	-

Students need to experience a real language environment to develop their language skills, and role words help students improve their speaking skills by teaching them common phrases and common words (Altun, 2015). In this activity, the students tried to play role using the words they master without the boundaries. The lecturer let them explore the topic by themselves. It automatically encourages their motivation to improve their speaking skill in fun way, moreover, they play it with their classmates which gave them freedom without feeling fear for making mistakes. All students perceived that the implementation of role-playing activities was effective to do in this foreign language class, both for understanding the learning material and practicing more the language skill itself.

Q8. Was the practice of using Role Playing effective in increasing your confidence when speaking English?

Table 9. Students' Responses on the Implementation of Role Playing in Increasing Confidence When Speaking English

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Yes	30	96.77%
2	No	1	3.23%

Low self-esteem in students leads to problems such as poor academic performance, poor social skills and negative behavior (Yafie et al., 2020). Sahlan (2022) in his study also stated that role play encourages students to learn actively. Here students should talk and communicate during the learning process. In this way, students can use the language in practice and practice their speaking skills. In role plays, students must communicate effectively to fulfill their roles. Role play engages different senses with learning, including hearing. This can help students listen and understand the language better. Thus, role plays can support the development of students' speaking skills. Constantly practicing role plays can help students perfect their language skills so that students' language skills improve through this learning practice and increase their confidence.

Q9. Was the practice of using Role Playing effective in increasing your motivation in speaking English?

Table 10. Students' Responses on the Implementation of Role Playing in Increasing Their Motivation

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Effective	31	100%
2	Ineffective	-	-

Harmer in Irkinovich (2022) recommends the use of role play for the following reasons: It is fun and motivating. Quieter students have an opportunity to express themselves more directly. The classroom world is expanded with the outside world, offering a much wider range of language options. In the implementation of role-playing in this class, the more practices, the more students tried to speak English. Although in the first time they had to be pointed to speak in front of the class and forced, like it or not, they have to do it in front of the class. All students perceived to be motivated when implementing role-playing activities during learning English, moreover, they did it with their mates and made it in fun way. However, they are still under the supervision of the lecturer so that there is no chaos and it disturbs other classes.

Q10. Can practicing using Role Playing help you understand English material?

Table 11. Students' Responses on the Implementation of Role Playing in Helping Them Understand English Material

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Helpful	31	100%
2	Not helpful	-	-

In one of advantages of role-playing activities in Craciun (2010), students can identify and correct misunderstanding. Besides, it gives students insight into their learning by creating their own role plays. Role-playing itself is the way for helping students apply what they had learned to the factual situation. From this, automatically, they can understand more towards the material. For example, the material of Simple Present Tense use, students can play role by talking about their daily activities with their friends in which they can ask and answer each other in effective and active conversation. Here, all students had positive perception that they can have good understanding on the material after having role-playing activities.

Q11. Are English lectures using role playing fun for you?

Table 12. Students' Responses on the Implementation of Role Playing

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Yes	31	100%
2	No	-	-

All students regarded that the implementation of role-playing activities was fun for learning English. Role plays can be motivating because they are enjoyable and entertaining for learners (Altun, 2015). Students were given the freedom to explore and elaborate their knowledge which was linked to their daily experiences, and also uses their daily language in English. Besides, role playing gives students the opportunity to improvise and use their imagination. It can stimulate their creativity in speaking, thinking and acting. The role-playing method is not only interesting

and fun, but also effective for learning English. By actively engaging students with the language, they quickly acquire grammar, vocabulary and many other aspects of the English language.

Q12. Does the practice of using Role Playing give you the opportunity to learn English more deeply?

Table 13. Students' Responses on the Implementation of Role Playing

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Yes	31	100%
2	No	-	-

All students have answered yes, it means that they think that using role play gives them opportunity to learn English more deeply. Role playing helps students practice their speaking skills directly. They know how to practice using appropriate vocabulary, grammar and expressions in appropriate contexts. For example, in one role-playing activity, students can act as customers in a service center of computer and other related devices interact with other students who act as sellers, service center officers and technicians. They must use English to state the complaint/damage to their computers, ask about the recommended devices to use and express their preferences. In these situations, the student learns language related to Information and Technology/computers, such as stating the complaints, asking the suggestion commonly used conversational expressions.

Q13. Do you feel more comfortable speaking English using Role Playing practice?

Table 14. Students' Responses on the Implementation of Role Playing

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Yes	30	96.77%
2	No	1	3.23%

Students are given the freedom to choose who they roleplay with because roleplay actually prioritizes their comfort. This is because students have a positive value in learning English and it does not make it something scary. Using this method, students can practice their teamwork skills so that they can express themselves without feeling pressured or stressed by pronunciation mistakes. In study conducted by Aisyah (2021), she stated that the role-playing method involves many students and makes students enjoy learning, and this method has added value, namely: a) it can ensure the participation of all students and gives equal opportunities to show their ability to work together to achieve success, and b) the game is fun experience for the student.

Q14. Does Role Playing practice improve pronunciation and intonation in speaking English?

Table 15. Students' Responses on the Implementation of Role Playing

No	Students' Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Yes	31	100%
2	No	-	-

Through this role play, students can practice correct pronunciation, courage, enrich vocabulary, grammar and listen to each other's pronunciation. This is also because lecturers have a role to provide feedback and correct statements so that they can be improved and improve their skills at the next meeting. All students agreed that practice of role playing has important role for improving their pronunciation and intonation in speaking English. The effect of applying this method on students is as follows: the number of students increases according to the students' English language courage, students' self-confidence, students' vocabulary, students' speaking voice, understanding of the material, oral fluency and so on. things like group collaboration increases (Pat, 2021).

4. Conclusion

From the findings in this research, it indicated that there was a positive perception regarding the implementation of role-playing in English classes of ESP. Evidence shows that linguistic and non-linguistic forms are increasing. In relation to language, it has a positive effect on the good pronunciation and intonation of students when practicing role plays. Of course, the linguistic aspects eventually affect their non-linguistic aspects as well. This includes motivation, confidence and comfort in learning English, especially speaking. In addition, they have the freedom to express themselves, role-play and behave as if they are related to their future IT work. This is because in the roles they apply the learning material in their everyday context. The researcher recommends this Role-Playing learning technique to be used as an alternative in teaching speaking skills, especially for ESP students.

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