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EFL Education Journal

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EFL EDUCATION JOURNAL

Haqiqotul K Budi Setyono, I Putu Sukmaantara	Implementing Genre-based Approach to Promote Students' Recount Text Writing Achievement at SMPN 1 Pujer Junior High School	957-974
Nafiatun Ainia A Erfan, I Putu Sukmaantara	The Use of Role Play to Foster the Eighth Grade Students' Speaking Achievement in an EFL (English as Foreign Language) Context	975-986
Irene Rahmaniar, Sugeng Ariyanto, I Putu Sukmaantara	Designing ESP Learning Materials for the Accounting Program at Vocational High Schools Based on Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Learning-Centered Approach	987-1000
Ismi F <mark>atma Nidaria,</mark> Wiwiek Eko Bindarti, Asih Santihastuti	Grammatical Error Analysis of the Eighth Grade Students in Writing Recount Text at the SMPN 1 Bangsalsari Junior high school	1001-1010
Hin Farah Intidara, Zakiyah Tasnim, I Putu <mark>Sukmaantar</mark> a	Developing Reading Materials by Using Hutchinson and Waters' Approach for Fashion Industry Students at the SMKN 3 Vocational School, Jember	1011-1026
Fera Dhamayanti, Eka Wahjuningsih, Asih Santihastuti	The Effect of Using Animated Video on the Eighth Grade Students' Listening Comprehension Achievement at the SMPN 1 Grujugan Junior High School in Bondowoso	1027-1038
Dwi Sa <mark>ntoso,</mark> Bambang S <mark>uharjito,</mark> Made Adi And <mark>ayani T</mark>	Teacher's Written Feedback on Students' Descriptive Text Writing and Their Perceptions toward the Written Feedback Given in Senior High School	1039-1054
Rofiatul Hoyr <mark>ia,</mark> Aan Erlyana Fardhani, Sugeng Ariyanto	Using Pop-Up Book Media to Improve The Eighth Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement at the <i>SMPN1 Arjasa</i> ' Junior High School	1055-1 068
Ima Ismala, Zakiyah Tasnim, I Putu Sukmaantara	An Evaluation of Reading Materials in the English Textbook "Bright: An English Course for Junior High School Students" Published by Erlangga Based on the 2013 Curriculum	1069-1 082
Fenny Vindy Astutik, Siti Sundari, Zakiyah Tasnim	Improving the Eighth Grade Students' Vocabulary Mastery through Tic Tac Toe Game at the SMPN 2 Yosowilangun Junior High School, Lumajang	1083-1092

Using Role Play to Foster the Eighth Grade Students' Speaking Achievement in an EFL (English as Foreign Language) Context

Nafiatun Ainia A, Erfan, and I Putu Sukmaantara, FKIP, the University of Jember

Abstract: The aim of this research was to foster students' speaking achievement through the use of Role Play. The participants of the research were the VIII A students of SMPN 2 Mayang. The total number of the participants was 40 students. The data collection methods in this research used test, interview, and documentation. The result of the speaking test in Cycle 1 showed 77.5% that students could achieve the score of passing grade (75). The result of observation in Cycle 1 was accordingly used to revise the planning for Cycle 2 so that the action in Cycle 2 could give better result than Cycle 1. The speaking test results in Cycle 2 showed 85% that the students could achieve the score of the passing grade. In other words, the use of Role Play can be used to foster the eighth grade students' speaking achievement at SMPN 2 Mayang in 2016/ 2017 Academic Year.

Keywords: Role Play, Speaking Achievement

1. Introduction

Speaking is one of the four language skills which functions as a means of communication in our daily life. Spoken language is more commonly used rather than written form as a means for interacting one and another. Speaking is the skill to communicate orally between two or more people that can be done through transferring messages using verbal or nonverbal language. Thus, in teaching and learning process, speaking takes the role as media of instruction. Speaking becomes the bridge between the teacher and the students (Kayi, 2006).

Meanwhile, Role Play technique is one of ways to teach speaking by putting students in a certain situation in pairs or groups. This means that the researcher put two or more students together as a group and gave them a handout sheet. It contains

975. Nafiatun A.A., Erfan and IP Sukmaantara are an EFL student and lecturers

976___EFL Education Journal, Vol. 4, No. 3 November 2017

975- 986

ISSN: 2338-4190

a situation, which they can read, discuss, look-up unknown words and share with their friends about the plot of the Role Play, the characters, the vocabularies and pronunciation. Furthermore, the researcher also gave the students a few more minutes for the discussion to get their practice of the Role Play and to get a feel for the role they will be playing. By this way, the students will get used to the words, sounds and the rhythm of the language (Anderson, 2006).

By using Role Play in the teaching of speaking, students could improve not only their knowledge in their speaking skill but also increase their motivation and confidence to speak. Learning through Role Play let the students work in group and have some friends to talk that can decrease the students' nervousness. Thus, learning using Role Play let the students use their gestures and facial expressions that will help them transfer what they want to say in both verbal and non-verbal way more fluently. As a result, students will be more convenient to express their ideas or their feelings in English.

Based on a preliminary study that was done to a certain group of English learners, there are two reasons why speaking in English is difficult to master. First, the students were lack of motivation. This made the students less confident with their capability in learning English. Another reason was that, the methods used by the teacher in teaching speaking skill were inappropriate. The methods that had been used by the teacher in learning English were only pair and group work to do written exercises. The use of those methods did not show any improvement of in the teaching and learning process of English.

Hence, the researcher offered a way that could motivate students to learn English especially to encourage students to speak and to give them the chance to

Nafiatun A.A, Erfan and IP Sukmaantara

Role play in speaking

977

communicate even with limited language called Role Play. The researcher used Role Play to teach English speaking for the eighth grade students. Based on the ideas above, the researcher believed that the students needed an interesting technique in teaching speaking that could motivate them to be more confident and could improve their speaking achievement. Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting a classroom action research entitled "The Use of Role Play to Foster the Eighth Grade Students' Speaking Achievement.

2. Literature review

2.1.Theoretical Framework

Role Play is one of some techniques of teaching speaking and a part of language teaching for many years. Many people have tried to apply Role Play in the teaching and learning process. Some of them say that there are several advantages of using Role Play, especially for making the students speak. In terms of role play activities, according to Donn ((1986)), Role Play can be classified into two forms, scripted and unscripted Role Play. Role Play involves scripted dialogues both in some textbooks and reading texts in the form of speech. The main function of the text after all is to convey the meaning of the language in a memorable way.

Thornbury (2010) mentions that the teaching of English as a foreign language requires the use of effective learning techniques, language games, drills or activities that can promote speaking skill. To overcome this situation there should be found an effective way to teach speaking for foreign language learners. Harmer ((2007)) states that good speaking activities can and should be extremely engaging for the students. If they are all participating fully and if the teacher has set up the activity properly, it can then give tremendous satisfactions from it.

978___EFL Education Journal, Vol. 4, No. 3 November 2017

975- 986

ISSN: 2338-4190

In contrast to the scripted Role Play, the performances of unscripted Role Play do not depend on scripted dialogues. This is known as a free Role Play or improvised Role Play. The students themselves must decide what language to use and how the conversation should be developed. To carry out this activity, a good preparation of teachers and students is really needed. Hence, in this research, the researcher used the unscripted Role Play to foster the eighth grade students speaking skill. The reason was the researcher let the students use their own creativity to create the plot of the story. The students would be able to develop the situation given by the teacher to be performed based on their own creativity. The students could use the vocabulary they were familiar with and make their own dialogues representing the role they would be playing. This type of Role Play would make them easier to perform because their brain would not be stuck on the structured conversation like in the scripted Role Play.

2.2. Conceptual Review

Role Play technique is one of ways to teach speaking by putting students in a certain situation in pairs or groups. This means that the researcher put two or more students together as a group and gave them a handout sheet. It contains a situation, which they can read, discuss, look-up unknown words and share with their friends about the plot of the Role Play, the characters, the vocabularies and pronunciation. Furthermore, the researcher also gave the students a few more minutes for the discussion to get their practice of the Role Play and to get a feel for the role they will be playing. By this way, the students will get used to the words, sounds and the rhythm of the language (Anderson, 2006).

By using Role Play in the teaching of speaking, students could improve not only their knowledge in their speaking skill but also increase their motivation and confidence to speak. Learning through Role Play let the students work in group and have some friends to talk that can decrease the students' nervousness. Thus,

Nafiatun A.A, Erfan and IP Sukmaantara

Role play in speaking

979

learning using Role Play let the students use their gestures and facial expressions that will help them transfer what they want to say in both verbal and non-verbal way more fluently. As a result, students will be more convenient to express their ideas or their feelings in English.

2.3. Review of previous studies

Anggraeny (2011) had conducted a research about the use of Role Play for teaching speaking. This research used the scripted Role Play and stated that the use of Role Play could improve the students' speaking skill, extended their motivation and confidence to speak and explored many things imaginatively. Further, Purnawan (2013) also had done a research on Role Play especially on students' narrating skill. This research also uses the same type of Role Play but for different level of participants. The research result showed that the use of Role Play helped the students to get easier in narrating a story within groups. Additionally, Fauzan's (2015) research on the use of Role Play was also resulting that there was a significant improvement on the students' speaking skill after the teaching-learning using Role Play. It was stated that 89% of the students could speak very well while performing Role Play.

In this research, the researcher used the unscripted Role Play to foster the eighth grade students speaking skill. The reason was the researcher let the students use their own creativity to create the plot of the story. The students would be able to develop the situation given by the teacher to be performed based on their own creativity. The students could use the vocabulary they were familiar with and make their own dialogues representing the role they would be playing. This type of Role Play would make them easier to perform because their brain would not be stuck on the structured conversation like in the scripted Role Play.

980___EFL Education Journal, Vol. 4, No. 3 November 2017

975- 986

ISSN: 2338-4190

3. The Study

3.1. Research Context

This research discussed about the use of unscripted Role Play to foster the eighth grade students' speaking achievement in the EFL (English as Foreign Language) context. Role Play as the technique to foster the students' speaking achievement. The improvement of students' speaking achievement was seen through their speaking score. The score was given during the test given by the researcher in each of the cycle.

3.2. Reseach Design

The study used classroom action research (CAR) as the research design. Burns (2010) states that a classroom action research is an action research which is applied in the teaching learning process. It can be in the classroom or out of classroom to improve teaching learning achievement in a certain lesson. This classroom action research was primarily intended to find out whether the use of Role Play can improve students' speaking skill or not. The research was conducted collaboratively with the English teacher of VIIIA SMPN 2 Mayang by following the action research model suggested by Elliot (1991: 71). The action research model consisted of six steps. They were: (1) preliminary study; (2) planning the action; (3) implementing the action; (4) observing the action; (5) evaluating the action; and (6) reflecting the action.

In this classroom action research, the teaching learning process was divided into two cycles. On account of this fact, the result of the post-test in Cycle 1 was used as valuable input and basis to accordingly revise the planning in Cycle 2. Therefore, Cycle 2 would be conducted to ensure the research results.

Nafiatun A.A, Erfan and IP Sukmaantara

Role play in speaking

981

3.3. Research Participants

The participants were the eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Mayang. They were the students of class VIII A in academic year 2016/2017 that was consisted of 40 students. The researcher decided to select this class because the students were passive English users. In addition, based on the result of interview with the English teacher during the preliminary study, the selected class had low scores of daily speaking achievement. Therefore, Role Play was applied to foster their speaking achievement.

3.4. Research data and analysis

There were three kinds of data collection methods used in this research; speaking test, interview and documentation. Speaking test was used to get the main data of VIII A students' speaking achievement by using Role Play. Dealing with the scoring system, the researcher had prepared a scoring rubric covering all speaking components and Role Play assessment. The scoring was done collaboratively with the English teacher. The students' speaking performance was recorded by using camera.

Interview in this research was done in the preliminary study. The English teacher of VIII A of SMPN 2 Mayang was the interviewee. The data collected were used to support the background of the research. They were about the methods that had been applied by the English teacher, the students' problem in learning speaking English and other supporting data about the research participants. The type of interview was guided interview. It means that the researcher prepared a list of the questions and asked based on the prepared questions to get the information needed.

982___EFL Education Journal, Vol. 4, No. 3 November 2017

975- 986

ISSN: 2338-4190

Documentation was used in the preliminary study. It had a purpose to collect the supporting data in this classroom action research. The supporting data were the list of the students' names in VIII A and the previous speaking scores from the English teacher. The obtained data from each Cycle were analyzed based on the scoring rubric of speaking assessment. To find the percentage of the students who got score ≥ 75 in the speaking test, their speaking scores were analyzed by using descriptive statistics (Ali, (1993): 186)

4. Research results and Discussion

4.1. Research results

This research was conducted to improve the VIII A students' speaking achievement at SMPN 2 Mayang. Based on the results of speaking test, there were 77.5% of the students who succeeded in achieving the score of 75 or more as the passing grade of English subject. This means that the action in Cycle 1 had achieved the research criteria of successful action that was 75%. The students' speaking test in Cycle 1 had achieved the criteria of successful research that was 75% of the students could achieve the score at least 75 in the speaking test.

However, the action was still continued to Cycle 2 because the researcher and the observer wanted to ensure the research results. Based on the result of the observation during the Cycle 1, the students could not express themselves and get enjoy with their performance. Most of the groups took around 2 minutes for the Role Play performance. The researcher and the observer believed that 2 to 3 minutes performance could not maximize the chance for the students to speak. So the researcher and the observer decided to continue the action to Cycle 2 and planned some revisions based on the weaknesses in Cycle 1

Nafiatun A.A, Erfan and IP Sukmaantara

Role play in speaking

983

Based on the results of speaking test, there were 85% of the students succeeded in achieving score 75 as the passing grade of English. This means that the action in Cycle 2 had achieved the research criteria of successful action that was 75% and it had consistent result with the research results in Cycle 1. The result of the observation showed that the students' speaking test in Cycle 2 achieved the English passing grade that was 75. It meant that the result of the speaking test in Cycle 2 had achieved the criteria of successful research that was 75% of the students could achieve the score at least 75 in the speaking test. The action was stopped, because the action result of the speaking teaching learning process through the use of Role Play had shown the consistent result on the students' speaking score.

4.2. Disscussion

This research was intended to foster the VIII A students' speaking achievement through the use of Role Play. This research used Classroom Action Research as the research design. The students' speaking test showed good results. 77.5% of the students with the mean score 75.5 could achieve the passing grade that was 75. There were only 9 students who achieved scores below 75 in Cycle 1. Although the research successful criteria had been achieved in Cycle 1, Cycle 2 was still conducted to ensure the research result. The result of the speaking test in Cycle 2 showed consistent results on the students' speaking scores. The percentage of the students who got at least 75 in the speaking test had increased from 77.5% in Cycle 1 to 85% in Cycle 2 with the mean score 85.5 and only 6 students got the score below 75.

Doff ((1988):104) states that the purpose of English oral practicing is to develop students' ability to communicate freely and spontaneously. Role play makes the students be able to communicate freely without any anxious in using language structures and vocabularies. Ments ((1999): 13) also mentions that Role Play is

984___EFL Education Journal, Vol. 4, No. 3 November 2017

975- 986

ISSN: 2338-4190

motivational and effective, because it involves activity that encourages and motivates the students to speak. The students in this research were motivated to have the courage to speak in front of the class. They were also creative to create the plot of the Role Play for their own group performance. In other words, it could be stated that; the use of Role Play could foster the VIII A grade students' speaking skill of SMPN 2 Mayang. In short, the results of this action in two cycles proved the hypothesis; the use of Role Play could foster the students' speaking achievement in the teaching learning process of speaking.

5. Conclusion

Based on the result of data analysis and the discussion in Chapter IV, it can be concluded that the use of Role Play could improve the VIII A students' speaking achievements at SMPN 2 Mayang in academic year 2016/2017. The improvement could be seen from the mean score of the students' speaking test and the percentage of the students who got scores at least 75 in the speaking test. The mean score had increased from 75.5 in Cycle 1 to be 80.1 in Cycle 2. Then, the percentage of the students who got score at least 75 in the speaking test had increased from 77% in Cycle 1 to 85% in Cycle 2. In other words, it could be stated that the use of Role Play could make significant improvement on the students' speaking achievement.

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Nafiatun A.A, Erfan and IP Sukmaantara

Role play in speaking

985

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