

Nursing Students' Reflections on English Role-Play Activities in ESP Class

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ABSTRACT

The use of role-play as a learning method is applied and maximized by teachers to facilitate students in learning English. This study aimed to explore the nursing students' reflections towards role-play activities in ESP class on what perceptions they have and how they perceive role-play. There are 60 nursing students from English for Specific Purposes (ESP) class at Politeknik Negeri Subang participate in this study. The data were collected via the questionnaire and the focus group discussions with 10 volunteered students. The questionnaire analysis results revealed that most students had learning enthusiasm $\bar{x}=3,55$ in learning English using role-play, enjoy role-play as an effective activity $\bar{x}=3,65$, and role play can improve their communication skill $\bar{x}=3,59$. The data from focus group discussions revealed that the students perceived that role-play is their English needs as nurses, as the encouragement from teachers for students to speak English, and as a means to facilitate them to be communicative in English. The students' reflections displayed that role-play is certainly suggested and considered appropriate for vocational institutions that need much direct learning for their profession since it entirely supports them to achieve in accomplishing their professional careers.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Published December 10th 2021



KEYWORDS

English Learning, Nursing Students, Role-play

ARTICLE LICENCE

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1. Introduction

English is rapidly gaining status as a global language where it is used in English-speaking countries and in other countries, including in Indonesia. Most businesses, offices, public services, and hospitals nowadays use English for daily communication and negotiations since it is the language of globalization, language use in the Internet, and international publications (Ferdian, 2020; Sipayung, 2019; Rahman & Weda, 2018). As a result, speaking skill is considered to be an important skill, especially for nursing students.

For some nurses, speaking English is one step closer to being a professional nurse because English becomes the international language to communicate in the world. In addition, the ability to speak English plays a major role for nurses who work in a hospital because English competency has been a long-standing problem for Indonesian nurses. It has negatively impacted Indonesia's attractiveness as a medical tourism center and has also negatively impacted Indonesian nurses' ability to migrate to other countries for nursing jobs (Ferdian, 2019; Rosanda, et.al., 2018). Thus, it is needed for the nursing students, as career workers in a profession that has increasing world demand, to improve their language competency to have the potential to move into international careers.

Nurses' English language competency can be prepared when they are studying in a university. In other words, English teachers should be able to improve their students' communicative competence to assist them in their professional careers. To master English effectively, English teachers should provide students opportunities to speak as often as possible. Furthermore, nursing students need to practice English more and more, particularly in the real situation. The suit way to train nursing students' speaking is by doing role-play. Incorporating role-play for nursing students with role-play activities will add their learning varieties, let them speak English, and it is also a change of pace and opportunities for language learning production. Cruz & Thornton (2010) mentioned that role-play becomes the right technique in English speaking practice because it is more fun for the students and they can act and speak the language to understand their role in the future. Additionally, Altuan (2015) highlighted that role-play is a strategy in which students are required to act specific roles through saying, doing, and sharing. Accordingly, role-play can also empower a more comprehensive learning experience for nursing students to be successful in their professional careers.

Some researchers believed that role-play is the right method in teaching speaking because it allows students to practice communicating in different social roles and gives students a chance to involve themselves as another person or play like in a drama. Crookal (2014) stated that role-play can be a quite simple and brief technique to organize which is also highly flexible, leaving much more scope for the exercise of individual variation, initiative, and imagination. In addition, Arham, et al., (2016) believed that role play is very essential technique in language teaching and learning, particularly for speaking because it can give students opportunities to practice communicating in different social contexts and social roles. Ruslan (2020) mentioned that the use of role-play can be more comprehensive learning because students can discover feelings, perceptions, values, and problem-solving strategies together. In addition, in doing role-play, students learn the language and act and speak the target language to understand their role in the future (Cruz & Thornton, 2010). Hence, using role-play for nursing students will be a good way since it can improve students' English skills and different skills such as ethical, practical, emotional, and social skills.

Based on the explanations above, the experts believed that role-play can be used in teaching and learning to improve nursing students' speaking competence and this research come up with the focus on the nursing students' reflections on English role-play activities in ESP Class. The researchers are willing to elaborate students' opinions about the of role-play activities in role-play activities and how they perceive role-play activities. It is sufficient to conduct this research since it will be beneficial for English teachers on how to do role-play effectively, so that they can create the candidates of nurses who can speak English.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design and Setting

This research uses mixed methods, as the type of research in which the researcher combined elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches. It is selected to assist the researcher in gathering and investigating the quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions via questionnaire and focus group discussions. The study will be conducted at Nursing Department in State Polytechnic of Subang in West Java Province. The researchers conduct an analysis with the students because this department has an intention to equip the students with the relevant skills, so that they can graduate as practice-oriented and knowledgeable professionals who have a good personality with English competency. The subject participants of this research are all of the nursing students who are taking English for Specific Purposes with the number 60 students. This group of students is considered as the participants for this study since they can provide the best information related to this study via questionnaires. Additionally, 10 students will be volunteers for the qualitative method and participate in the focus group discussions.

2.2 Data Analysis

The questionnaire and focus group discussion are used to gather data on the students' perceptions in the use of role-playing activities in their classes. In addition, the focus group discussions are used to understand what or how the selected participants hold certain beliefs or opinions about role-play activities in ESP class. The data collection process is conducted after the students are assigned to do a role-play from their English teacher. The data are participants' statements of a Likert scale from the questionnaire that has been distributed. The data provide advantages in explaining and strengthening quantitative results. The participants' thoughts and opinions will offer numerous and diverse answers as the obtained data that automatically help the researcher understand the quantitative data results. Additionally, to better understand the participants' opinions and beliefs, focus group discussions are conducted with the volunteers obtained from the participants who are willing to be interviewed. It gives and provides valuable information to support information on how groups of the selected participants think and experience role-play.

The collected data from the questionnaire are keyed into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0 to generate descriptive statistics and also reveal the percentage, average, and standard deviation value. Moreover, the obtained data from the focus group discussions are analyzed by thematic analysis to gain students' in-depth understanding and orientation of the students' insight, beliefs, and opinions of role-play activities. These research techniques provide new insights, increase a researcher's understanding of particular phenomena, or inform practical actions.

3. Findings and Discussion

The findings revealed what nursing students' opinions and how they perceived role-play activities in ESP class. In order to answer these questions, a questionnaire and focus group discussions were conducted. A questionnaire was used to determine students' perceptions of using role-play in ESP class. It revealed that there were three categorizations of their

perceptions; learning entails, learning effectiveness, and English communication skills. While the focus group discussions were conducted to respond how the students perceived role-play activities in ESP class.

3.1. What are the nursing students' perceptions on using role-play in the class?

To understand the students' views on role-play activities, a Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 18 items was categorized into three themes; students' learning enthusiasms, students' learning effectiveness, and students' English communication skill. The data then were processed through SPSS 25.0, with a specific focus on descriptive statistics as the following tables;

Table 1. Students' Opinions on Learning Enthusiasm

Theme	Items	Mean	SD	Frequency
Learning Enthusiasm	I am interested in learning English using role-play	3,42	0,65	Often
	I feel confident to do a role-play in English	3,72	0,92	Often
	I am motivated to learn English using role-play	3,77	0,96	Often
	It is challenging to learn English by using role-play activity.	3,47	0,83	Often
	I prefer learning using role-play activity rather than other activities	3,57	0,87	Often
	Role-play helps me to understand English materials in the class	3,32	1,07	Sometimes
Overall mean results		3,55	-	-

From table 1, it could be seen that the overall mean value of the students was $\bar{x}=3,55$. It indicated that the students had the enthusiasm to learn English towards role-playing. They agreed that role-play could trigger their interest in learning English, such as being motivated and confident to learn English in role-play activities.

Table 2. Students' Opinions on Learning Effectiveness

Theme	Items	Mean	SD	Frequency
Learning Effectiveness	I think it is an enjoyable way to learn English using role-play	3,88	0,99	Often
	I can practice what I have learnt in a class from role-play	3,73	0,95	Often
	role-play can improve my creativity in learning English	3,33	0,71	Sometimes
	I have enough preparation to do a role-play	3,93	0,99	Often
	I can learn many things in role-play from my partners.	3,70	0,93	Often
	I get many chances to practice my English in role-play	3,35	0,82	Sometimes
Overall mean results		3,65		

As shown in the table 2, the overall mean value of the students was $\bar{x}=3,65$, where it displayed that learning English towards role-playing was effective since they enjoyed and were able to practice English creatively. However, they also frequently had to prepare plenty their performance to practice their English in the role-play activity.

Table 3. Students' Opinions on English Communication Skill

Theme	Items	Mean	SD	Frequency
Communication Skills	I can communicate naturally using English in my role-play activity	3,62	0,90	Often
	I can be more active to speak English in role-play activity.	3,47	0,79	Often
	I feel more comfortable to speak English in role-play activity	3,75	0,95	Often
	Role-play gives me more time to use English	3,47	0,79	Often

Role-play improves my English pronunciation and intonation	3,37	0,86	Sometimes
Role-play helps me to improve my speaking	3,85	0,99	Often
Overall mean results	3,59	-	-

Table 3 showed that students stated that English role-play can improve their communication skills as their overall mean value was $\bar{x}=3,59$. In addition, they believed that using role-play can mean being more active and practicing, speaking, and communicating in English.

3.2. How do the nursing students perceive role-play activities in ESP class?

To determine how the nursing perceived role-play activities in ESP classroom, focus group discussions were conducted, and through the thematic analysis, it is found that three themes emerged. They were needs for nurses, encouragement to use English, and communicative English use. The following thoughts from thematic analysis were categorized into three themes. The details in actual words were presented below;

a. English Needs for Nurses

The students were asked to share their experiences in doing role-play in ESP class. They thought that role-play was essential for them since it can bring them to the real situation where they had to act as real nurses. They believed that role-play becomes their needs as nursing students to practice English. Thus, role-play for nursing students is essential to facilitate their English learning and prepare them for their future careers. As they mentioned that;

“We think that role-play is important for us because we need it. Role-play shows us a situation that will help us in the future. And we know that, as nurses, we should practice more and more. And it is good for us”

“Being a nurse must practice every day. So, we do not always practice in the lab but we also must practice how we talk, especially to speak English. So, I think role-play is a part of our need.”

“But, we also must know the meaning. It will be useless if we practice English, but we do not know the meaning. So, yes role-play is a necessity to practice how to treat people using English.”

From their comments, it could be concluded that their needs for role-playing were supported by their perceptions where they stated that they have a solid enthusiasm to learn English towards role-playing, as shown in the quantitative data ($\bar{x}=3,55$). Most of the students frequently learned English enthusiastically using role-play because they learned English and had a chance to practice in which it was really needed for every nurse to have more time in practice. Their beliefs of role-playing were also in line with Rosanda, et al (2018), who mentioned that as career workers in a profession that has increasing world demand, all nurses who have abilities in using English, including Indonesian nurses, have the potential to move into international careers. Cruz & Thornton (2010) added that role-play becomes the right technique for learning English because they can act and speak the language to understand their role in the future. It indicated that doing English role-play with real-life situations was suitable for nurses to increase their confidence as they were required to speak and show drama using English in front of their teachers and friends. Moreover, doing an English activity, such as role-play, can assist the students to regularly practice communicating in English create more adequate atmospheres for learning a foreign language. As Norcini (2016) stated, having communication in English, including using role-play, can be a key factor contributing to the workplace activities, among four other factors such as doing, the environment, practice, and coworkers. Thus, the ability to communicate in a foreign language, especially for nurses comprehensively, has become a basic need since it remains indispensable in healthcare practices and global demands for health tourism, such as using the English language to serve foreign patients of various nationalities. Consequently, this condition is also possible for Indonesian nurses to compete with international nurses from other countries.

b. Encouragement to use English

The students' perception of role-playing in ESP class showed that they needed encouragement from their teachers and friends. They mentioned that although they enjoyed role-play activity, there should be an initiation that stimulates them in doing role-play. As a result, with proper encouragement from teachers to the students, they would be comfortable to do role-play. As what they stated that;

“I think to make a good role-play, there must be a coordination between a group of students and teacher because I think the best role-play is when a teacher can stimulate us to speak and communicate in English.”

“Role-play also helps me to facilitate my English learning because I must make a dialogue text, prepare property preparation, and also train my English before the show.”

“Doing role-play helps me very much. I can learn from my teacher and my friends too. And I think it is good for us to practice English because we learn how to communicate and how to speak English.”

The students' statements about the importance of encouragement to use English also matched with the quantitative result ($\bar{x}=3,65$) about the effectiveness of role-playing for nursing students. They frequently felt comfortable with role-playing since it was an effective way to learn English, and this effect would run smoothly when the students were encouraged by the teachers and peers. What the students believed on the efficacy of role-playing is also underpinned by Ruslan (2020) who stated that role-play has future potential for comprehensive language teaching and learning since students can discover feelings, perceptions, values, and problem-solving strategies together. Additionally, learning towards role-playing makes students feel important in their participation because they can be creative to improvise based on their knowledge and experiences. (Arham, Yassi, & Arafah, 2016). Notably, the teachers function as a facilitator and controllers of the role-play activities conveyed by the students. Therefore, teachers should be able to encourage and stimulate them to speak English. The students are then perceived as active learners and become the center of learning to build independent learning (Ruslan, 2020). As a result, role-play has facilitated students to achieve their objectives of learning English since the effectiveness and encouragement in role-play activities are viable activities that engage students cognitively and affectively by activating their imagination and creativity.

c. Ways to communicate in English

The students' perception displayed that role-play is a means to communicate in English. They believe that it is a good way to practice and train their speaking. In addition, role-play also helped them have more time speaking English and be more communicative students, which will benefit their careers as nurses. As they commented below;

“I can practice more and more in role-play because we must be able to communicate. I think it is not enough to speak in the class and role-play give my friends and me to speak English and also doing communication in English.”

“Of course, we get improved in speaking skill, because in role-play we must speak, talk, and communicate using English. And it is a good way to practice English, I think.”

“So, being able as a communicative student in English, doing role-play is appropriate for nursing students because it gives us a chance to speak English based on our ways and styles. So, if we want to speak English, role-play is one of good ways for us.”

The students perceived role-play as ways to communicate in English, and it is also in line with what they regularly thought that role-play can improve their communication skill, as mean value ($\bar{x}=3,59$). It showed that role-play activities can facilitate students to communicate in English and automatically improve their communication skills. Their statements are also supported by some experts who believed that role-play is a communicative activity which involves the students to speak fluently with others using the target language (Adipranata, 2009; Blatner, 2009; Krebt, 2017; Muhammad, et al., 2019) and this strategy is the right technique in English speaking practice because they are required to act specific roles through saying, doing, and sharing Altuan (2015). In addition, role-play is undoubtedly a great technique to improve students' communicative competence since it allows the students to be more active and creative. Adipranata (2009) emphasized that role-play activities allow students to get a chance to stimulate their speaking skills, and they can perform efficiently. Thus, role-play is a brilliant technique in which it can make the students interact and communicate in pairs or groups using English. In other words, it has been proven that using the role-play technique is highly recommended to improve students' communicative competence.

4. Conclusion

This study showed a positive reflection of role-play activities in ESP class, especially for nursing students. There are some themes that emerged from their thoughts, they are learning enthusiasm that supports their English needs as nurses, effective learning from teachers' encouragement and communicative skill for their careers. Students' confidence in role-play allows them to create more good atmospheres for learning English and offer many insights related with their real-life situation as nurses. Additionally, role-play activities can create effective learning for the students since it is dynamic and enjoyable to be used for teaching-learning process and the teachers should be able to encourage the students to involve in a fun environment build them with independent learning. Lastly, role-play allows nursing students to act specific roles through speaking, performing, and sharing based on their knowledge and experiences. Consequently, the use of

role-playing for nursing students helps them achieve communicative competence for them to be ready for their professional careers.

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