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DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF THE STUDENTS AT THE BALI HOTEL SCHOOL BY IMPLEMENTING INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE PLAY

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Abstract

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by the end of 2015 will surely open up opportunities and challenges for any job seekers in ASEAN countries to work across the nation borders. Despite high qualification in certain professional fields, English is undoubtedly required as a means of International communication. In contrast to this, the English speaking skills of Indonesian workers are still lacking. This article describes a research and development which was conducted at the Bali Hotel School, specifically at the program of Food and Beverage Service, where students learn English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The product of this study is in the form of teaching technique, namely Instructional Role Play, in which the students perform simulations and play certain roles according to the topics given. It is a joyful way of learning English since the students have clear purposes to talk and create situations corresponds to their real life. This technique is proven to be effective and highly motivating for the students to build their confidence in speaking English.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, hospitality, research, role play, technique, tourism.

Introduction

The demand of professional labours in every sector is increasing due to the opening of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by the end of 2015. Ten ASEAN countries will take part in the AEC including Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Brunei, Cambodia, Phillipines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam. AEC will open the gate of a new economical cooperation among the ten countries: investors and workers from ASEAN countries will be allowed to work anywhere in these countries accross multiple industries. This will surely make the competition get fiercer. Those who are not well prepared will be left behind. Undoubtedly, all the ten countries agreed to use English as the International communication although it is not native to anyone of them. This is a big challenge for Indonesian people since their communicative ability in English still needs improving. It is obvious that, if the workers gain better English, they will help improve Indonesian economy and attract more investment to benefit Indonesia.

Indonesia, specifically Bali, is pretty much dependent on its tourism industry, i.e. hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, recreational activities, and so

forth. Until recently, there is a huge number of colleges majoring in tourism and hospitality mushrooming all over the island of Bali. *Sekolah Perhotelan Bali* (the Bali Hotel School) is one of them. Established in the year of 2000, this school has gain trust and praised from not only Balinese people but also people throughout the country. The Bali Hotel School is committed to conduct excellent teaching and learning process to produce highly qualified human resources. This article describes the process of English learning at the Bali Hotel School, specifically to the students of Food and Beverage Service. It is aimed to offer an alternative in teaching English in order to improve the students' communicative competence. The technique offered here is called the instructional role plays where the students are given as many opportunities as possible to practice speaking English.

The basic principle of communication is language use. Among the four language skills (i.e. reading, listening, writing, and speaking), speaking is the main focus in foreign language learning. Unfortunately, speaking in English is not an easy task. In general, Indonesian students spend twelve years studying English start from elementary until high school. They are still unable to speak English well, though. Efrizal in his research in Bengkulu, Indonesia, discovered that there were some factors affecting the teaching of English speaking, such as lack of motivation, being shy to speak in front of the class, lack of good speaking technique, difficult in expressing ideas and feelings, as well as boring teaching technique (Efrizal, 2012). However, by having a good communicative skills, the students will be able to express themselves and learn to adapt with the social and culture of their society (Kayi, 2006). For this reason, it is essential to develop the teaching technique to help Indonesian, specifically Balinese, students improve their English speaking skills in order to prepare them for the AEC competition.

Literature Review

Before designing a course, an analysis of learning needs should be completed first. Learning needs analysis refers to 'a matter of asking questions about the target situation and the attitude towards that situation of the various participants in the learning process' (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). There is a simple framework proposed by Hutchinson and Waters outlining the kind of information collected in the needs analysis, including:

- a. Why is the language needed? This is to find out if English will be used for study work, training, etc.
- b. How will the language be used? This specifies the medium and channel through which the students will use English, and the type of text they will handle.
- c. What will the content areas be? This consider the students' areas of interests and their level of study or profession.
- d. Who will the students use the language with? This includes whether the students will communicate with native or non-native speakers of English, and the relationship.
- e. Where will the language be used? This consider the physical setting, the human context, and the linguistic context in which English will be employed.

- f. When will the language be used? This is to discover if English will be used concurrently with the course, or subsequently, and if it will be used frequently, seldom, etc.

This framework above can be simply implemented in finding out the learning needs of the students at the Bali Hotel School and to design the appropriate learning technique to improve the students' communicative competence in English.

The idea of implementing role play in EFL classes was strongly supported by Lestari (2014) who claimed that students would be more easily acquire the target language if they were exposed to the functions or expressions of language. She mentioned certain micro functions of language when handling the guests at a hotel or restaurant, such as: greeting, offering help, taking order, suggesting, and so forth. However, her article was simply based on observations and was still required to do further research regarding language functions by applying mix method of qualitative and quantitative. Albakrawi (2013) also conducted needs analysis of the English language for hotel students in Jordan and listed several skills requirements. In listening skills, students are required to be able to understand messages and instructions, while the speaking skills should involve the ability to interact in conversations. The reading skills include reading comprehension for advertisements, brochures, charts, and tables. He also listed some language uses which are appropriate for hotel industry namely greetings, complementing, advising, explaining hotel facilities, and receiving orders.

The use of role play was effectively enhancing the English speaking skills in a research conducted by Rahimy and Safarpour (2012). In their research, they applied the role play technique to a group of students, known as the experimental group, where they set up a number of topics and had the students act them out. Meanwhile the other group, called the control group, did not have the same treatment using this technique. The effectiveness of the role play technique was proven from the mean score of experimental group which reached 23,63 point or was higher than the mean score of control group which was 21,03 point. In addition, the post-test result of the experimental group was more homogen compared to those of the control group. Their research showed the effectiveness of role play in improving English speaking skills for Iranian students.

All the literatures mentioned above emphasized the language use in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Therefore this article tries to investigate the effectiveness of role play technique in improving the communicative competence of the hotel students at the Bali Hotel School, Indonesia.

English Teaching And Learning at the Bali Hotel School

At the Bali Hotel School, to be specific in class Basic Level *Tata Hidangan C*, or BLTH C, (FB Service), the students were considered to be beginners in English. They had very limited vocabulary and seemed to have lack motivation in studying English for Specific Purposes (ESP) especially designed for FB Service. Therefore the researcher tried to provide them with expressions or phrases in English which they might need in handling the restaurant guests. The students used a text book entitled *English for Food and Beverage Service 1* as the main learning resource which contained many dialogs and expressions about restaurant. There were also a number of speaking activities included in the text

book. However the students still encountered difficulties in role playing. Most of them were only memorizing every sentence without understanding the meaning. This was not the ideal technique in learning a target language. The students were supposed to activate their awareness and comprehension of the language being learnt. That way they would acquire the language more easily.

Methodology

A method of Research and Development (R&D) was applied to support this study. An R&D model proposed by Logan (1982) was selected to give a clear guideline in doing the research. There were three stages in Logan's model including Problem Determination, Design, and Develop. In the first stage, the researcher identified the gap between 'what is expected' and 'what is actually happening' in EFL classes by interviewing English lecturers and distributing questionnaires to students of FB Service at the Bali Hotel School. In the second stage, the researcher conducted Needs Analysis to determine the 'what' and 'how' in English teaching and designed the methods and technique to boost the students' communicative competence in English. In the third stage, the researcher tried out the technique selected by having an experimental group and a control group. The findings of the research was finally confirmed by the questionnaires filled by both the lecturers and the students.

The participants of this study were students from the study program *Basic Level Tata Hidangan* (FB Service) of 2015 enrollement year. There were actually three classes of this study program, and BLTH C class was randomly selected despite of the other two, i.e. classes BLTH A, and BLTH B. At that time the students were taking 'BIP' or *Bahasa Inggris Profesi* (English for Specific Purposes) taught by the researcher. The course was designed for one semester starting August until December 2015. This study was conducted during the first half of the semester (August – October 2015). During the course, 28 students (12 females and 16 males) were introduced to several language functions required in the field of Food and Beverage Service.

Results and Discussion

The Analysis of Learning Needs

In the first stage of the research, the stage of Problem Determination, the researcher conducted a sort of needs analysis to find out the learning needs to be fulfilled. By interviewing the lecturers of English subject and FB Service, a framework offered by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) was modified for outlining the information needed in analysing the learning needs.

- a. Why is the language needed?
 - English will be used for studying (at the class), for the job training period, and in the future work field
- b. How will the language be used?
 - Medium: mostly spoken language

- Channel: via telephone, face to face
 - Types of text: menu, bills, reservation chart
- c. What will the content areas be?
 - Subject: Food and Beverage Service
 - Level: server (waiter/waitress)
 - d. Who will the students use the language with?
 - Native and non-native speakers of English
 - Relationship: guests, customers
 - e. Where will the language be used?
 - Physical setting: restaurant
 - Human context: face-to-face interaction, over the telephone
 - Linguistic context: mainly in own country (Indonesia)
 - f. When will the language be used?
 - During the course (at the class)
 - at the end of semester (on the job training)
 - after graduating from the Bali Hotel School (in future work places)
 - the language will be used frequently

The Language Functions

From the interview with the FB Service lecturers, the researcher concluded a number of communicative events, or the language functions, performed by a restaurant server in general basis, including:

- a. **Handling reservation:** asking for names, asking for the spelling of names, asking the number of person, giving directions, explaining the restaurant facilities, giving address and telephone numbers, giving the time (opening, closing), giving the date, repeating the message, explaining availability
- b. **Welcoming the guest:** Greetings, asking if the guest have a reservation, asking for names, explaining if the restaurant is fully booked, directing the guest to the table, asking the guest to wait
- c. **Taking Orders:** presenting the menu list, giving information about the menu, suggesting or recommending, asking for food allergy if any, asking preferences about the menu
- d. **Delivering the food:** presenting the food, handling complaints about food or service, apologizing
- e. **Billing:** agreeing to prepare the bill, asking to wait, giving the bill, asking for essential information, e.g. names, method of payment, etc. answering questions about payment, e.g. credit card, exchange rates, apologizing for any mistakes in the bill, explaining that the bill is correct, explaining about tax and service charge.
- f. **Farewell:** thanking for the guests' visits, saying goodbye, wishing a good time, encouraging to return

This information was helpful in supporting the next stage of this research, that was the Design stage, as described below.

Instructional Role Play

The teaching and learning process should focus on encouraging the students to communicate effectively, which means fluency comes before accuracy. The use of instructional role play is highly recommended due to several reasons, as follows:

- a. Role play is one of the classroom activities which serves as in a communicative approach (Sturtridge, 1981)
- b. It is a way of bringing situations from real life into the classroom (Doff, 1988). In this study, real life situations refer to the situations at the restaurant where the students will work in the future (Doff, 1988)
- c. It is a very useful rehearsal for real life, through role play students can try out and experiment with the language they will acquire (Ladousse, 1987)
- d. It allows the teacher to integrate his/her materials with the methodology of the vocational class. It is essential for the match between language and subject content will be more apparent to the students, resulting in a rise in the level of motivation (Kennedy and Bolitho, 1984)
- e. It is one of the most effective ways of integrating language skills in the classroom (McDonough and Shaw, 1993)

For all the reasons given above, it is undoubtedly that role play technique is very effective in developing the students' communicative competence. Therefore the researcher decided to design a course by implementing this technique accordingly.

The Learning Process

The learning process took place within the first half of the semester, that was between August – October 2015. The researcher taught at BLTH C class once in two weeks, i.e. every theoretical weeks (one week for theoretical subjects, and one week for the practical subjects). Thus there were six meetings (with three hours each) where the students had the chance to practice English by role playing.

Before conducting the lesson, a syllabus needs to be designed first in order to enable the teacher to prepare a scheme of work, plan lessons, design or select appropriate classroom materials (Muliana, 1994). The topics selected for six meetings were: 1) handling reservations, 2) welcoming the guest, 3) presenting the menu, 4) explaining menu, 5) taking order, and 6) giving recommendation. Here is an example of the syllabus corresponds to the topic of restaurant reservation.

Table 1
Syllabus for teaching English for FB Service

Topic: Reservation via telephone	
Objective: to effectively find out what the caller wants when he/she is making a reservation.	
Functions	Exponents
Answering the telephone	... Restaurant, how may I assist you?
Understanding and find out what the caller wants	When is the reservation for? What time? For how many of you?
Apologizing and offering alternatives	I am very sorry, we are fully booked at that time. But we are available at nine thirty pm. What about the following day? We still have some free tables.
Asking name	May I have your name, please? Could you spell that, please?
Confirming reservation	So that's a table for .. persons, for tonight at 8 pm. Is that right?
Closing the conversation	Thank you for your reservation. We look forward to welcoming you at our restaurant. Have a nice day.
Key Vocabulary Reservation details: name, date and time of arrival, number of person, etc. Confirmation: So that's ... Dates: the first of July, tonight, tomorrow night, etc Times: seven thirty or a half past seven, nine pm, etc.	
References: Food and Beverage Service 1 (Laba, 2006) Be My Guest (O'Hara, 2009) English for Professional Waiters (Leo, 2001)	

Prior to the teaching, the researcher gave a pre-test to get an initial perception of the competence of the students specifically in speaking English. The students were paired and asked to create a dialog about handling the guest at a restaurant. The result was shown on table 2. After the pre-test, the researcher used the text book *English for Food and Beverage Service 1* (Laba, 2006) in conducting the lesson. The following would be the example of the class activity, referring to chapter 4, this unit discussed how to deal with reservations over the telephone. At the beginning, students were to read and understand a text about telephone courtesy. After that they practiced a conversation about taking a reservation, two students acted out the conversation: one student became the waiter and the other became the guest. Following the conversation, there was a gap-filling activity where the students were asked to complete a dialog similar to the previous conversation. Students were allowed to discuss in groups so that they could share ideas and felt more convenient when discussed with friends. After the task was completed and evaluated, the students were then exposed to useful phrases, i.e. certain phrases or sentences they might need for handling reservation. Students read aloud the phrases and tried to understand the meanings. The researcher discussed the phrases and translated their meanings into Indonesian language in order to give better understanding about them. The researcher also

provided the students with examples of how to use those phrases correctly, so that the students get clearer perception.

The next activity was making a conversation based on the situation given. The researcher explained step by step how to complete the task. At first the student seemed reluctant and unwilling to do the task, but when they knew that they had to perform the dialog in front of the class they started to discuss and practiced the dialog. From the observation, some students could easily follow the guideline that was told before, but most of the students were trying so hard to memorize the whole sentences that they wrote in their notes. It showed that they were not used to this technique which require them to communicate actively. When it was time for the performance, some pairs were still reading their notes and had very little interaction with each other.

Similar activities continued for the second until the fifth meetings with different topics. The students gradually gained confidence in speaking in front of the class. Fewer students seemed to still memorize each sentence, as they started to listen to and understand their partner. In general, the students seemed to be more prepared when doing the role play. At the sixth meeting, the researcher conducted another test (i.e., the post-test) to measure any kind of improvement achieved by the students (See table 2).

The Learning Outcome

Table 2
The Result of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Student	Pre-test	Post-test
1.	75	80
2.	70	78
3.	78	80
4.	68	75
5.	70	70
6.	68	70
7.	70	75
8.	75	80
9.	65	65
10.	80	85
11.	75	78
12.	65	68
13.	60	68
14.	60	70
15.	65	70
16.	68	70
17.	75	70
18.	80	80
19.	60	65
20.	65	68
21.	78	78
22.	60	68
23.	65	70
24.	68	68
25.	75	78

26.	78	78
27.	70	75
28.	70	78
Mean score	67,1	71

From the table presented above, there was a significant increase from the mean score of post test and the pre-test that reached 3,9 point. The treatment was only for three months, if it lasted longer, it surely could reach greater improvement.

Scoring Parameter

- 80-85 **Excellent** (Take risk for new words, actively interact with peers and teacher, posses good vocabularies, clear expression and has good control of grammar)
- 70-79 **Good** (Describe things with words and gesture, posses sufficient vocabularies for work demand)
- 60-69 **Poor** (Hesitate to talk, less respond to instructions, errors in pronunciation occur, obviously only memorize sentences)

The benefits of applying role play in EFL classes were reported as facilitating understanding, informing, putting theory into practice, and engaging in social learning. Below were the comments from students who got benefits after the lesson finished.

“I understand more when I practice speaking with my friend.” (student 28)

“in the role play, I learn to listen to my friends and gain more information about the topics given” (Student 10)

“I never like to study about the theory or grammar, but it is easier for me to understand it when I use it in conversation.” (Student 23)

“I like to work with my friend because it makes me feel more confident about completing the task. I also like it when we discuss and share ideas” (Student 8)

Conclusion

Based on the experiment, the researcher found that some weak students spent too much time for preparing and memorizing the text. It showed that this technique was not very effective for true beginners of English. In the Development stage, this technique would be improvised in order to enable the weak students gain more knowledge. The teaching of ESP could be combined with basic English structure that support the acquisition. In general, the instructional role play was effective in improving the students’ communicative competency. If this technique is continuously implemented, the students will get benefits in the joyful way of learning English.

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