

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES TOWARD SCRIPTED AND UNSCRIPTED ROLE PLAYING IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study has two main research objectives, namely, to find out the students' experiences in scripted and unscripted role play and to find out which mode of role play, scripted or unscripted, better assist them to develop speaking competence. This research took two classes of seventh grades as the participant with each class had 34 students. Mixed qualitative and quantitative method was chosen to answer the research questions. The qualitative method used the observation and questionnaire as the instrument. The quantitative method used SPSS to test difference of speaking scores between the scripted and unscripted classes. One of the findings is that the students were doing well in preparing the role play such as, building sentences and understanding the role play card. Another finding is that they experienced difficulty during the role play performance. In evaluating role play, students got some positive impact. Also, the results showed that the students who did unscripted role play got better speaking scores than students who had scripted role play did. It can be concluded, even though they face some difficulties during the performance, students had some positive impact after doing role play and unscripted role play is better than scripted role play in assisting students speaking competence. The result of this study can help English teacher determine the appropriate and effective method in teaching students' speaking skills.

Keywords: *Speaking, Role Play, Scripted Role Play, Unscripted Role Play.*

Introduction

In this modern era, students should be able to speak English fluently because it is really needed in academia to express their thoughts like opinion, argument, and idea, especially at international events. It supports the statement that speaking is important for students because, in academia, students have to deliver their thoughts

in English at international events (Wu & Miller, 2020). However, in Indonesia, many students still need help speaking English appropriately. It is still difficult to express their opinion or thoughts by using English. It was supported by the data from Education First (EF) that showed the English proficiency index in Indonesia was low.

That was also one of the skills that usually students have felt difficult to learn is speaking; that is why usually students become silent during the learning process because of several elements like language, vocabularies, and good pronunciation (Sofyan et al., 2018) (Pinatih, 2021). Sometimes students are poor in one of them or all of them, which makes students have low confidence to practice using English to communicate with others. Those weaknesses make students afraid of making mistakes while they speak English in the class.

Academically, in teaching speaking English, there were some techniques that can be used in the class, such as a show-and-tell, presentation, drama (role play), and question-and-answer (Arbain & Nur, 2017) (Suhaedi & Nanning, 2019). In these techniques, the teacher has an important role to help students improve their speaking skill by deciding what techniques that can motivate students to speak in English. Then, the students' experiences in practicing speaking with those techniques can motivate students in practicing and improving their speaking skills.

One of those techniques frequently used was role-play. Based on Ur (2000), role play is all the classroom activities in which students imagine themselves in a situation out of the classroom, then they act the role of another person or characters differently from themselves by using suitable language based on the context. The students can create the interesting role play story to encourage their speaking skill based on the interesting themes that given by the teacher (Nikmah, 2019).

Role playing is not only done in one way, but there are several ways of doing role playing according to students' abilities. Based on Krebt (2017) and Neupane, (2019) suggestion, there are three types of doing role play in the class, fully scripted role play, semi-scripted role play and non-scripted role play. First, fully scripted role play is the role play that the participants engage in a role-playing scenario where every aspect of the dialogue and actions is pre-written and rehearsed. Unlike improvisational

or partially scripted role play, there is no room for spontaneous or improvised responses.

Second, semi-scripted is role play in which the participants have a combination of scripted elements and opportunities for improvisation. This type of role play provides a framework with some predetermined dialogue or scenarios, but also allows participants to adapt and respond spontaneously within that framework. Semi-scripted role play allows for a balance between structure and improvisation. It provides a guiding framework while still allowing participants to bring their own creativity and adaptability to the role play scenario.

Third, non-scripted role play, also known as improvisational role play, is a form of role play where participants engage in spontaneous and unscripted interactions without predetermined dialogue or actions. It emphasizes creativity, quick thinking, and adaptability (Wulandari et al., 2021). It allows participants to explore different perspectives, problem-solving approaches, and communication styles (Berry & Kowal, 2022).

From those kinds of role play, most students in Indonesia do scripted (fully scripted) role play. Teachers seldom implement unscripted (non-scripted) role play, and most English teachers in Indonesia implement scripted role play as a technique to practice speaking skills. One activity that usually uses scripted role play in the class is when students present their text. For example, students were asked to create a narrative text with a certain topic in a group. Then, the teacher asked them to change the text to a script or scenario that included the dialogue. After that, they have to present their text by performing a role play based on the script that they created before.

However, unscripted role play is needed to be given to the students because it can show students speaking skill level because they speak spontaneously, not memorize the sentence. When students get unscripted role play, they train their brains to memorize all the vocabulary they have before. Then, they try to build a sentence spontaneously to respond to the other person (Tiana & Rini, 2021). Students' fluency and the vocabulary they use while doing unscripted role play can show their speaking

skill level. Yet, such a study which compare students' experiences in both types of role play was rarely conducted.

Based on the explanation above, this study has two research questions. First, how do the students apply scripted and unscripted role play?. Second, which mode of role play, scripted or unscripted, better assist them to develop speaking competence? Mixed method, qualitative and quantitative method was chosen to answer the research questions. This method appropriated for this study because it has two types of data. The first data was in the form of word or description to know students' experiences. Then, the second data was in the form of number, students performance score, to find out the better mode of scripted and unscripted role play.

Therefore, based on the problem and previous study above, the research was conducted to find out the students' experiences in scripted and unscripted role playing and to find out the better mode of role play, scripted or unscripted, to assist students develop their speaking competence. Also, it only focused on students' experiences in doing role play as the teaching technique of speaking skills in the junior high school that can. Find out the students' experiences is importance for the teacher to know the students' feeling during the teaching learning process by using scripted and unscripted role play. On the other hand, based on the students' experiences and find out the better mode and role play, teacher can determine the best method, scripted or unscripted role play, to teach speaking skill to the students.

Method

1. Research Design

This research was conducted by using mixed methods which are qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Qualitative research approach was used to understand the phenomenon which was students' experiences when doing scripted and unscripted role play and a quantitative research approach was used to find out the better mode of role play by analyzing the numeric data in the SPSS. It was supported with a statement by Ary (2014) who stated that qualitative was a study that examined a phenomenon in depth and understanding the detail, while quantitative

was used as objective measurement to answer the research question by collecting numerical data.

2. Participants

The research took two classes in seventh graders, consisting of class A and class B; each class consists of 34 students. Thus, there are 68 students as participants. Class A and Class B had different role play to get experiences in both techniques. Class A got scripted role play, while class B got unscripted role play. Then both classes shared their experiences based on the activity they did before.

3. Instruments and Data Collections

The data from this study were collected from the observation, student's responses in the questionnaire and students' performance scores. The researcher observed students responses in doing the activity in the class. Then, the questionnaire was shared after students performed the role play. The second data was got from students' performance scores. The scores were took when the students have role play performace in front of the class.

4. Data Analysis

This research used three steps to analyze the data and answer the research question number one. According to Ary (2014) there were three steps in analyzing qualitative research. First, familiarizing and organizing, second coding and reducing, and three, interpreting and representing. The first step was familiarizing and organizing. In this step, the researcher read all the data that she got from the observation checklist and the questionnaire. Then, the researcher organized the data in order to make it easy to analyze.

The second step was coding and reducing. To help the researcher in analyzing the data, the researcher coded the data. In this case, the researcher coded the students' responses in the questionnaire. After that, the researcher reduced unimportant sentences. The last step was interpreting and representing. In this step, the researcher interpreted and represented by describing the result of the analysis. The result is described in the form of words or description. The description provided

the meaning, the story, and the explanation, so that the researcher made a report through description detail.

To find out which role play, scripted or unscripted, better develop speaking competence, a quantitative research approach which is t-test in SPSS (Independent sample t-test) was conducted. The t-test should be done to compare the mean scores of two different classes to find out the better mode of role play. The data got from students' performance scores when doing scripted or unscripted role play in the class. The analysis focused on finding out the better mode of role play to develop students' speaking skill.

Results

1. How the students apply scripted and unscripted role play

During the data analysis, there were some main themes that were found by the researcher including the procedure of scripted and unscripted role play. Both kinds of role play had similar procedures. First, preparing the scripted role play, students asked to build the detailed scenario of role play, while in unscripted role play students asked to comprehend the situation and design the role play. Second, students act out or perform the scenario or situation that they had. Lastly, after having the performance students discussed and evaluated what they have learned in role play. The meaning of each theme was presented by using the result of observation and student quotation in the questionnaire below.

2. Students' Experiences In Preparing Role Play

The first step that students had to do in role play was preparing the role play. Students prepared the role play by creating the detailed scenario, determined the characters, and memorized the scenario in scripted role play. Students who did unscripted role play had to identify and understand the situation. And then, the students also design how to respond to each other related to the situation that they had. During the preparation students wrote their experiences that they felt. Mostly, students participated in both kinds of role play, scripted or unscripted. When preparing scripted role play, students helped each other in problem solving during the

preparation especially in creating the detailed scenario. They discussed it together to build the dialogue and determine the character for each one.

Then, in doing unscripted role play, most of them participated by explaining the situation card to their friends to build the storyline and determine the character and how to respond to each other. Some students who did not participate in scripted and unscripted role play did not help their group in preparing the role play, so they disturb their own group because they cannot perform in a good way.

Then, there were some feelings that were felt by the students when preparing and doing scripted and unscripted role play. Mostly, they felt excited, nervous and scared in doing both kinds of role play. Students who felt excited in doing scripted and unscripted role play because they can practice speaking English with their friends by playing the role and they can add new vocabularies in English and improve their speaking skills. The other hand, they felt nervous and scared because they felt that they were not fluent in speaking English or they could not speak English. Also they were afraid to make a mistake during the performance like they forgot the dialogue or did not know how to respond to their friend when performing in front of the class.

The difficulty that students faced when preparing role play was building the sentences when making the dialogue for scripted role play and preparing themselves for unscripted role play. Student 1 who prepared the scripted role play said "I have difficulty creating English sentences because I don't know a lot of English vocabulary". Student 2 said "I need a long time to build the dialogue because it is difficult for me. While student 1 who prepared unscripted role play said "I cannot make sentences in English because I'm poor in English" and student 2 said "I have difficulty responding to the conversation quickly". It happened because they do not have enough vocabulary in English words. Therefore, they were not able to create long sentences based on the context to respond to each other. But, they could solve this problem by creating the sentences using simple words.

3. Students' Experiences During The Role Play Performance

The second step of role play was to act out or perform the scenario or situation that they had. Students who did scripted role play had to act out their detailed scenario

that they had already memorized and designed by performing in front of the class. Then, after they got preparation students who did unscripted role play had to act out the situation that they got from the teacher.

During the role play performance, most of the students enjoyed and were interested in the role play because it was the new method to practice speaking skill and they did it in groups. Few students did not interest and enjoy this activity because they felt scared and nervous and they could not solve it. Also, they have low self-confidence to perform in front of many people.

Mostly, students demonstrated role play enthusiastically, because the method of practicing English was fun and doing together with their friends in groups. The stories and characters that they have to play also make them more enthusiastic to do the role play. It can be seen when they were asked to demonstrate the role play. All of the groups wanted to perform the role play. They appear voluntarily without being forced by the teacher.

However, many of them felt embarrassed during the performance because they had to perform in front of their friends by using English. It can be proven from their answers in the questionnaire. Student 3 who had scripted role play said "I feel nervous, awkward, and embarrassed because it was witnessed by a lot of people". Student 4 said "I feel embarrassed because all of my friends witnessed". While student 3 who had unscripted role play had the same feeling. Student 4 said "I feel embarrassed because I'm afraid my friends will laugh at me". The other student said "I am embarrassed because I have to perform in front of the class." It made them unable to explore the character and speak with a low voice.

There was a certain difficulty or challenge that students felt when doing scripted and unscripted role play in front of the class. Students who participated in role play wrote that they have difficulty in pronunciation, which they experienced when doing scripted and unscripted role play. Most of the students got this problem during the performance.

The difficulty that students face in both kinds of role play was pronunciation. All of them were poor in pronouncing English words that made it difficult for students

to speak English during the performance. It happened because they seldom practice speaking in English, they don't even speak English during the English class. That was why they could not pronounce many English words correctly.

Besides that, that problem made students who were doing scripted role play difficult in memorizing the scenario because they could not read the word correctly. Therefore, Many students forgot their dialogue during the performance in front of the class. Then, for students who were performing unscripted role play, they could not build sentences spontaneously, so they needed more time to prepare themselves before performing role play. In performing in front of the class, sometimes, they remind each other who turns to speak. This difficulty made the performance not run smoothly because they did not know what they were going to say, so few students paused during the role play.

4. Students' Experiences In Evaluating Role Play

The last step of role play, scripted and unscripted, was for students to discuss and evaluate what they have learned in role play. In this step students got feedback from the teacher and they discussed it together to evaluate their performance. In this case, students who did scripted and unscripted role play wrote the effect that they felt as the evaluation after having scripted or unscripted role play.

After performing scripted and unscripted role play, students got some advantages. Students who have participated and performed scripted and unscripted role play wrote that they got a good impact. They were to increase their self-confidence, train their memory, add English vocabulary, increase their creativity and imagination, and also improve their speaking skill.

The first advantage that students felt was to increase their self-confidence because they have to perform in front of the class. To get a good performance in front of the class they have to be confident because all of their friends inside of the class get attention and see them performing role play. It can be seen from their performance. They tried their best to give a good performance, even though they looked so nervous they tried to solve it and finish the performance well. Student 5 said "I got improvement in speaking in front of people" Then, Student 6 said "I could

speak in front of many people". This condition could increase their self-confidence to speak and perform in front of many people.

Then, the second advantage that students got after doing scripted and unscripted role play was to train their memory. Student 7 in the scripted class said "I could memorize my dialogue in the scenario and practice together before performing role play". Student 8 said "I could read and memorize the scenario in English. While in scripted role play student 7 said "I could remember the English vocabularies that I had before. This activity could train students' memory because they are required to memorize the dialogue in scripted role play. while, in unscripted role play, they were required to remember English words and build them into sentences as preparation before performing. Then, students asked to perform without text in front of the class in both kinds of role play, so they have to remember their turn to speak and how to respond to each other based on the context.

The third advantage was adding students' English vocabulary. They could add their vocabulary because they often open English dictionaries during the preparation of role play. Sometimes, they asked the teacher to get the English of the certain word. Also, student 9 wrote in the questionnaire "I know some English vocabulary that I didn't know before after doing the role play." Student 10 said "After preparing and doing role play, I learned some new vocabulary in English" The students who had unscripted role play wrote the similar thing.

Beside that, students felt that role play increased their creativity and imagination. It could increase students' creativity because they should explore and develop the story to get a good role play. On the other hand, they should imagine the story so that they could understand the story and deepen the character, so they can play the role in a good way and relate with the story. It can be seen from their activity during the role play, such as they built the story including the dialogue for each character in scripted role play and also they comprehended the situation card then prepared a sentence related with the situation and their character.

The last impact that students felt after doing scripted and unscripted role play was to improve their speaking skill, especially their pronunciation. Student 11 said "I

can pronounce English words in the correct way after doing role play." Student 12 also said "There is improvement in myself, that is I can speak English in a good way". Most of them wrote that they could pronounce the English word better than before because they learned how to pronounce the words correctly by the teacher before performing the role play. After that, they read and said the words or sentences many times to memorize them. Therefore, they could speak English better than before, especially in pronouncing certain English words.

5. The mode of role play, either scripted or unscripted, which can assist students speaking competence.

Scores of the students performance by using scripted and unscripted were used to find out the better mode of role play to assist students speaking competence. The scores were obtained from students' scores in each criteria based on the rubric. The rubric has five criterias that also represent students' speaking skills to assess students' role play performance. They were Participation in Preparation and Presentation, Presentation of Character, Achievement of Purpose, Use of Non-Verbal Cues (voice, gestures, eye contact, props, costumes), and Imagination and Creativity. The researcher gave scores in each criteria in assessing role play performance with the scale between 1 to 4, then counted them with the formula to get the final score.

The final score which was the result of the calculation from the score in each element became students' role play performance score that was analyzed. It showed the lowest score of students performance by using scripted to be 40 and the most elevated one to be 80, while the lowest score for students performance by using unscripted to be 40 and the highest to be 85.

The participants for each role play, scripted and unscripted were 34, so total participants of this research was 68. And then, the mean of students' score was 62.5 for scripted class and 56.47 for unscripted class. The median score in unscripted role play class was 60 and in scripted role play class was 55. Also, the standard deviation in unscripted role play class was 11.56 and in scripted role play class was 12.28. From that result showed that the mean score between both kinds of role play was different

and the student mean score in unscripted was higher than students in scripted role play. Those results were measurable by using a statistical test in SPSS.

Assessing students role-play performance was conducted in 2 meetings in both classes because each class there are 6 groups that have to perform. In both two meetings the researcher took the students performance score based on the rubric. Then, Those scores were final scores that have been counted based on the formula. Before analyzing those scores by using t-Test, the researcher tested homogeneity variance across the groups.

The homogeneity test variance across the groups used Levene's method test. The value of Levene was shown based on the 'based on the mean' row which is 0.92 with the P-value (sig) 0.763. It seems that the variables were equal between both classes or homogen because the P-value (0.763) is higher than 0.05 ($P\text{-value} > 0.05$).

Furthermore, the scores have been analyzed by using the T-test in SPSS which was the Independent Sample T-test. It has been done to know the mean score values of both kinds of role play and determine Is there a difference in the average appearance of scripted and unscripted classes or not.

Based on the result of the t-test, it seems that, $t = 2.084$ and $p\text{ value (sig 2 tailed)} = 0.041$ (less than 0.05). It can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the mean score of the students' performance using scripted and unscripted. Then, the students' mean score values showed that 34 students in unscripted class reached an average score 62.5 while 34 students in scripted class reached an average score of 56.47. It seems that the mean score in unscripted class is higher than mean score in scripted class. It means that students' scores in unscripted classes are better than students' scores in scripted classes. It can be concluded that the use of unscripted role play is better in helping students' speaking competence, because students' score in unscripted class is higher than students in scripted class.

Discussion

This study, the students' experiences in scripted and unscripted role playing in junior high school were reported based on the students' feeling or experience that they had after having role play. The themes developed based on the role play procedures which were preparing role play, acting out of performing role play, and evaluating role play.

The first question that was answered was about how students apply scripted and unscripted role play aimed to describe students' experiences during the activity. The first finding in preparing the role play is All of the participants were doing well in preparing both kinds of role play. This finding corresponds with theory Lara Castro & Díaz Larenas (2019) in that the student gave full attention and commitment to the role playing. In other words, this result shows that students' had strong commitment in preparing the role play by helping each other to design how they will perform in front of the class such as creating the detailed script, discussing the situation, memorizing the script, and designing how they will respond to each other.

On the other hand, the finding during the performance strengthens the finding of previous studies such as Lara Castro & Díaz Larenas (2019) in that Students said acting out role play in front of the class was so difficult because they felt that their friends would laugh at them. In other words, this research shows new results that they also felt embarrassed when doing scripted and unscripted role play because they had to perform in front of the class and all of the members of the class noticed them. This fear of being embarrassed made them take more time in preparing and performing the role play because they got some pauses when interacting.

Another finding of this research is that this activity also had some difficulties that students felt during the practice speaking class in the class by using role play. This finding conforms with theory Krebt (2017) and Keeney et al., (2022) in that speaking had some problems including students' lack of motivation to practice, students were anxious to take a part in conversation, and students did not know what to say. In other words, this study showed, mostly, students did not know what they were going to say, mispronounced, and they could not solve their nerves when doing scripted or unscripted role play.

Then, the other finding of this study is that scripted and unscripted role play also gave some positive impact for students in learning English. It conforms with theory Stevens (2015) and Clarita et al., (2020) in that role play was an activity that was beneficial for students. It could be said, the researcher showed a new finding that students got some benefit from the role play. For example, they got many new vocabularies in English, they were enthusiastic and enjoyed the teaching learning process by using role play, their self confidence improved, and all of them got a chance to speak in English. It also fits with theory Toding (2021) in that students made progress in some factors like the students enthusiastic to follow the activity in the class, students more confident to perform, students got new vocabularies related with the topic, and they got more chances to speak and practice English during the class. It means that the researcher showed new evidence that role play gave advantages for students' speaking skill.

Moreover, the finding strengthens previous studies such as Mottweiler & Taylor (2014) and Tiana & Rini (2021) in that role play was correlated with students' ability in enhanced creativity. In other words, this research shows new evidence that students' creativity and imagination were trained during the activity, especially during the preparation and act out the role play, so it could improve their creativity. That could happen because during the activity students asked to complete the story, build the character, and describe the characters by acting out it.

The finding answered research question 2 is that unscripted role play was better than scripted role play in assisting students speaking competence. It corresponds with theory Toding (2021) in that teaching using unscripted role play can improve students' speaking skill. In other words, the researcher has proven that by using unscripted role play students can get better scores.

The students who got unscripted role play had better scores than the students in the scripted role play because they produced their own words based on the situation they had given, so they can improve the conversation easily. It corresponds with what Spencer-Oatey (2008) and Cheng & Lam (2020) found, In unscripted role play or open role plays the interaction develops across several turns. It could be said that the

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researcher shows a new finding that by producing the sentences with their own words, students can improve the conversation easily.

Furthermore, students who got unscripted role play got a better score because they achieved the goals easier than scripted role play because of the situation that they got. It corresponds with theory Phuetphon et al (2012) and Tiana & Rini (2021) in that Through unscripted role-playing situations given, the pupils' speaking skills improved. In other words, the researcher showed that the situation could give inspiration and guide the students in producing the sentences. The sentence also fitted with the context. While in scripted role play, they had to create the goals and the storyline, then, many of them had difficulty in building the dialogue because in scripted role play students only got the theme so they had to create the goals by themselves.

This study more focused on students' feelings about scripted and unscripted role play that made it different from the other study that had the same field. The result could help the teacher to know what their students felt when they had scripted and unscripted role play like whether the students felt happy, what difficulties that they face, what impact do they feel after having scripted and unscripted role play, etc. Based on the result, the teacher could adapt the role play to make it more suitable and comfortable for students, and also help the students to solve their difficulties.

The other one, this study also focused on to find out the better kind of role play. It compared between scripted and unscripted role play and discussed the better kind of role play more deeply to assist students' speaking skill. The result could help the teacher determine their choice which kind of role play is more appropriate and better for students, especially to practice speaking English.

The result of this study was important, especially for English teachers. It can help them determine the appropriate and effective method in teaching and improving students' speaking skills based on the students' feeling during the teaching learning process. However, this study was done only in one of the Junior high school, so this study do not represent the other students from the other school and it cannot be generalized to other contexts. Therefore, the future reseach needs variant of school

to do the reseach and it should be done in the other level of school. Also, the future reseach can apply the better method and improve the instrument to get more spesific dan deeper data.

Conclusion

This study yields two main conclusions. First, find out the students' experiences in scripted and unscripted role play. In preparing the role play, students were doing well in preparing the both role play by helping each other, but they felt difficulty in creating the sentences when preparing scripted role play and comprehending the role play cards when they were preparing unscripted role play.

Then, during the performance mostly students felt enthusiastic and enjoyed the role play, but also felt some difficulties like they felt embarrassed, got mispronounced, and they could not solve their nerves. Also, students who did scripted role play, difficult in memorizing the scenario. After having role play, students got some positive impact such as they got new vocabularies in English, improved their self-confidence, improved students imagination and creativity, and improved their pronunciation.

Second, this study found unscripted role play better in assisting students speaking competence than scripted role play. Students who got unscripted role play got better scores than students who got scripted role play. In unscripted role play students were superior in presenting characters and achieving goals that made them get better scores than students who had scripted role play.

Dealing with the future research, to achieve the better and deeper result of the implementation of scripted and unscripted role play and its effects on the students. It is necessary to improve the instrument to get more specific data. The future research also needs more variants of school and the other level of education in purpose to find out the effect of scripted role play and unscripted role play to the other students and the other level of education. Then, it can develop the implementation of scripted and unscripted role play and reach for every level of education to improve students' speaking skill.

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