

## THE USE OF ASYNCHRONOUS FLIPPED CLASSROOM ROLE PLAY TO IMPROVE THE SPEAKING SKILL OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

*Ever since the pandemic of novel Coronavirus hit the world, on March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization communicated that it became a global pandemic (WHO 2020) causing school disruptions all over the world. Instantly social distancing was announced publicly in Indonesia on March 15, 2020, and, on the same day, the governor of Banten Province dismissed all schools to prevent widespread of Covid-19. Creating activities to improve students' English skills during the pandemics of Covid-19 is quite a challenge where teaching and learning activities cannot be implemented face-to-face. For an English Specific Purpose course like this English Profession in which the length of course is four credits, not all learning activities should be online. This course was expected to practice students' English fluency related to their prospective responsibilities in Hotel Management. Relying on once a week face-to-face meetings is insufficient without getting supported with assignments for students to practice by themselves. Flipped classrooms were chosen to prepare students' activities outside online classrooms. As an alternative pedagogical approach, flipped classrooms use pre-class learning for students to apply and build basic concepts outside the classroom setting (Bergmann in Persky & McLaughlin, 2017). This research attempts to improve students' speaking skill by forming several small group role plays throughout the semester (Lazaraton, 2001) and extensive assignment asynchronously. The subjects were two classes of Hospitality Management students of a total eighty one students attending the English Profession class in the even semester of 2020/2021 academic year. The writer used role plays consisting of four students per group for extensive speaking assignments which were videotaped and uploaded on YouTube and evaluated on the synchronous meeting afterwards. The role plays were shown and discussed in classes related to the content and the group's performance in early class meetings. The rest of the session covered the same and related topic so that students had an overview of the topic to discuss. It was found out that the students enjoyed the role play assignments, improved their speaking skill including pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, as well as built their teamwork. It showed that role plays were one of activities to enhance students' speaking skill and other competencies related to students' English proficiency.*

**Keywords:** *flipped classroom, role play, speaking skill.*

### INTRODUCTION

The pandemic of Coronavirus-19 has changed the education method of teaching and learning activities. Since March 2020 online learning has been implemented fully in which students learn virtually from either Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, etc. while staying at home. A few education institutions had started using online learning before, but the majority then had to switch immediately. The national and local government announced the closing of all education institutions due to the increased widespread of COVID-19. This has changed the nature of a classroom not for all students to enter a physical classroom by coming to school, but students' presence was virtually counted. This abrupt change has resulted in new adjustments for both students and teachers. Considering all reasons to make virtual learning effective, learning sources need to be accessible by students easily.

A classroom can be held either synchronously or asynchronously. A synchronous classroom is where a lecturer meets students online directly (Kim, 2020) by using Zoom, Teams, Meets, and others. Whereas the latter is implemented before or after the online classroom. Referring to the Ministry of Education regulation, the majority of activities should not rely on synchronous but asynchronous meetings. More specifically, when it is given prior to a synchronous meeting, it is called flipped classroom in which students prepare themselves to attend the class by being given an individual or group assignment, among others, reading an article, watching a video, writing or producing a role-play (O'Flaherty and Phillips, 2015). Students' answers are then discussed in the classroom before discussing the main topic. It is expected that students will be well prepared and will understand better before covering the main topic.

As the writer taught the English Profession class to Hospitality Management students of the fourth semester, topics covered were about booking a room in a hotel, checking in a hotel, complaining, inquiring and replying, and checking out, among others. This course used an integrated approach by covering four language skills, and flipped classrooms were in the forms of reading and answering e-book exercises, writing a CV and cover letter, complaining and apologizing, role-playing, and replying to an

inquiry. In this paper the writer focused on the use of asynchronous role-play to improve students' speaking skill in a flipped classroom.

As speaking is a demanding skill for students to produce utterances for communication, this skill needs to be practiced together with other language skills. Brown (1994) mentions that speaking is difficult to acquire as it contains reduced forms, such as contractions, vowel reduction, and elision. Students must also acquire the stress, pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation. One of the ways to train students how to speak is through a role play. It is one of speaking activities suitable for practicing sociocultural variations in speech acts, such as complimenting, complaining, and such (Lazaraton in Murcia, 2001). The role play can be performed on a prepared script, created from set prompts and expressions from a model dialogue. The first three role play assignments in this research were through prompts and model dialogues and students had to modify them, and the fourth role play assignment was a free dialog prepared by students with a random topic taken from enlisted topics throughout the semester.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research used descriptive statistics, and the data were taken from a likert scale of rubrics. According to Cresswell (2008), in a quantitative study the data are in the forms of numbers from individuals in a large scale survey. The data were taken from a questionnaire given to students by the end of the semester. Descriptive statistics was used to find the sum and means of the results in percentage (Cresswell, 2008). The subjects of this study were 2 classes of semester 4 students, numbered 81 in total comprising of 69.1% female and 30.9% male students studying the English Profession class in the even semester 2020/2021 academic year of Hospitality Management at the University of Pelita Harapan, Karawaci Tangerang. The data collection was from students' video role plays uploaded on YouTube, notes from the lecturer and other groups after watching the role plays, other groups' assessment on the last role play, and a questionnaire about the role play assignments to all students. The first instrument below was a likert-scaled rubric filled out by each group after watching the fourth or final role play.

Table 1. Video Role Play Assessment by Other Groups

No.	Sub-Theme	1 (70%)	2 (80%)	3 (90%)	4 (100%)	Grade
1.	Title	Not interesting	Somewhat interesting	Interesting	Very interesting	
2.	Content	The content is unclear.	The content is somewhat clear.	The content is clear.	The content is very clear.	
3.	Vocabulary	Inappropriate vocabulary most of the time	Often inappropriate vocabulary	A few inappropriate vocabulary	Correct use of varied and rich vocabulary.	
4.	Language	Frequent grammatical, pronunciation, and intonation mistakes	A few grammatical, pronunciation, and intonation mistakes	One or two grammatical, pronunciation, and intonation mistakes	Excellent use of grammar, pronunciation, and intonation	
5.	Video organization	Disorganized and unstructured	Somewhat disorganized or unstructured	Organized but somewhat unstructured	Very organized and structured	
6.	Voice	Unclear	Sometimes unclear	Clear	Very clear	
7.	Virtual background and aids	No virtual background and aids (sounds and pictures)	1 virtual background and 1 aid (sound or picture)	2 virtual backgrounds and 2 aids (sounds or pictures)	≥ 3 virtual backgrounds and ≥ 3 aids (sounds or pictures)	
8.	Participation	A dominant member speaks most of the time.	Some members speak most of the time.	Most group members speak in an equal portion.	All group members speak in an equal portion.	

Comments: .....

The second instrument was a questionnaire in a Google Form using a Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” uploaded on Moodle so that individual students were able to access after the submission of the role-play evaluation to other groups to find out students' perceptions on the

assignments. This instrument contained the following statements: I have enjoyed the role play assignments; All of my group members have participated in the role play; My pronunciation has improved from the role plays; My grammar has improved from the role plays; The role play assignments has improved my speaking skill; The role plays have trained me for teamwork; There are no significant obstacles in preparing the role plays; I recommend this assignment to the next batch of students.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this semester there were weekly flipped classroom assignments given to students asynchronously based on topics to discuss in the following week. The purpose was for the students to be well prepared before studying the next topic. Those assignments were in the forms of role plays, writing a CV and cover letter, writing letters of complaint and apology, and designing a restaurant menu. In this paper, the writer is limited to discussing role plays to improve students' speaking skill from pre-intermediate to intermediate level. There were three role play topics, such as A Table for Two on session 4, Hotel Services on session 9, and Checking Out on Session 11. The role play assignments were taken from an exercise book with guided conversations. Each group of four students chose a topic and modified the conversation if applicable. The duration of each conversation was 5 minutes. The role play assignments ended with a free designed role play performed on YouTube which was evaluated and graded by other groups on session 13. The following are assessments on each role play performed in a YouTube and played during a Zoom class.

Role Play 1 on A Table for Two of session 4 was in the following subtopics: *Taking an Order, Seating the Guest, Taking Dessert and Coffee Order, Explaining that No Table is Available, Serving Food, Dissatisfied Customers, Taking Restaurant Reservation, Taking and Serving Beverage Order*. The evaluation based on the students' role plays from 2 classes was as follows: Students performed very well and knew their roles as a waiter, guests, and restaurant manager. Mostly the role plays ran well. Some feedback given were on the following: the duration of 2 role plays was shorter than 5 minutes; Mispronunciations of these words happened in pronouncing *Caesar salad, salad, and area*; also, one role play had an abrupt ending.

Role Play 2 on Hotel Services of session 9 was with the following sub-topics: *Helping Guests Ship a Parcel, Serving a Guest in a Gift Shop, A Little Girl Who Has Lost Something; Room Service, Dealing with Damage in a Room, and Bringing Extra Amenities to a Room*. Students performed their roles seriously. They seemed professional in doing their roles, and the role play was clear. Pronunciations needed to improve were *salad, dollars, and Caesar salad*.

Role play 3 on Checking Out of Session 11 was with the following sub-topics: *Checking Guests Out, Sorting Luggage after Checking Out, Getting Ready to Leave the Hotel, Leaving the Hotel, Storing a Luggage, and Exchanging Currency*. Students used virtual backgrounds, and their voices were clearer than before. Pronunciations needed to improve were: *scenery, serious, department*; an intonation needed to improve was *beautiful*; One or two students' speaking speed was slow or not a normal speed; A few grammatical mistakes found were: *"Are you forget?" "Can we bring the bottle? No, you don't."*

The final role play was graded and evaluated using Likert scale by other groups on session 13. Topics were chosen from weekly topics covered in the semester, and the duration should be minimum 7 minutes. From 2 classes, these were the results of the evaluation from the following topics chosen by each group based on the topics covered in the entire semester: *Cruise Ship, Event Planner, Service and Health, City Tour, Winter Holiday, Table for Two, Let's Go to Italy, and Fly Drive Holiday*. Each group freely developed the content of the role play, and it was submitted on Moodle and uploaded on YouTube a few days before the evaluation date. Based on other groups' evaluation, the following were the comments from other groups: The content was concise, complete, elaborative and varied. The video was interesting and creative. The group needs to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation. The virtual background was very good.

Table 2. Results of Questionnaire on Role Play Assignments (%)

No.	Statements	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	I have enjoyed doing the role play assignments.	1.2	0	32.1	66.7
2.	The role play assignments improved my speaking skill.	1.2	0	23.5	75.3
2.	All of my group members participated in the role plays.	0	1.3	15	83.8
3.	The role plays made me practice my pronunciation.	1.2	0	12.3	86.4
4.	The role plays made me practice using vocabulary	1.2	0	19.8	79
5.	The role plays made me practice using correct grammar.	1.2	0	22.2	76.5
6.	The role play assignments trained us a good teamwork.	0	2.5	18.5	79
7.	The role play assignments are relevant to my future job.	1.3	7.5	16.3	75
8.	I recommend this assignment to the next batch of students.	0	0	1.2	98.8

Notes: 1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Agree 4. Strongly agree

Seen from the above table, other groups gave good grades on their classmates' role plays, and they commented and gave feedback on other groups' content, virtual background, and language (vocabulary and pronunciation). Besides the evaluation from their classmates, the writer gave a questionnaire on Google Forms to find out their perceptions on the role play assignments. It was found out that 80 students (98.8%) enjoyed the role play assignments during the semester.

*"The roleplay is really fun and helps in lessons so that it is easy to understand."*

*"My impression is very happy and I can have a dialogue with friends."*

*"It is challenging and educational."*

Eighty students (98.8%) stated that the role play assignments improved their speaking skill as elaborated in their answers below. 79 students (98.8%) stated that all group members participated in the role plays. The role plays also improved students' pronunciation as 80 students (98.8%) stated.

*"I thought it was just a role play assignment, but it's not. These role play assignments are very helpful for my pronunciations, new vocabulary, job roles, and how to serve with polite language."*

*"The role play assignments make us talk more so we can improve our pronunciation."*

*"I feel like this role play assignments make me practice more to my pronunciation."*

*"Interesting, make me practice my pronunciation."*

The role plays also made them use correct grammar as 80 students (98.8%) stated.

*"This assignment practices my speaking, vocabulary and grammar."*

*"The role play idea for assignments is really good to improve our communication skills, especially since we are going to be in this industry."*

*"We can practice our grammar, vocabulary, especially our speaking."*

*"Overall, I think the role play assignments really helps student to improve their English vocabulary and pronunciation."*

*"It's good because we can train our grammar."*

Related to teamwork, 79 students (97.5%) stated that the role play assignments trained them to be good teamwork.

*"I have learned a lot from the role play assignments and it's increased my skills. Furthermore, it's increased the solidity in my teamwork."*

The role play assignments are also relevant to their future jobs in Hospitality Management of a Hotel according to 73 students (91.3%).

*"It's an elaborate assignment that recalls a lot of the phrases and words that I need to use, especially in the hospitality industry where it is crucial to know a broad knowledge of the English language."*

When asked about obstacles in doing the role play assignments, their answers varied, from deciding a group member's role (27%), teamwork (13.5%), role play duration (13.5%), language (grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary) (10.8%). Other small factors varied from writing the role play,

practicing it, and technical video making and editing. 98.8% recommended the role play assignments to be given to next batch students.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The use of flipped classroom in a form of role plays asynchronously was able to prepare students to understand a lesson well. Students enjoyed doing the role plays, and their speaking skill and language elements such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar showed improvements. This assignment also improved students' team work. Their knowledge and skills trained them to be prepared for their future work in Hotel Management. The students even recommended this role play assignment for the next batch. The writer suggested that this kind of assignment be given to students asynchronously in a flipped classroom as to prepare them to learn the next topic when meeting synchronously and to train their speaking skill suited to their major.

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