DEVELOPING ROLE-PLAY CARDS AS THE MEDIA FOR ASSESSING SPEAKING SKILL OF SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT: This study aims at designing role play cards as media to support the speaking activities in the classroom. The researcher uses the ADDIE (Analysis-Design-Development-Implementation-Evaluation) model for Research and Development. The products are 30 pairs of role-play cards for practicing the functions of Asking for and giving Facts/Information (10 pairs of cards), asking for and giving things (10 pairs of cards) and asking for and giving services (10 pairs of cards). The try-outs show positive responses from both teachers and students in using the role-play cards.

Keywords: development, role-play cards, speaking skill

The five most widely spoken mother tongues in the world today are Mandarin, English, Spanish, Hindi, and Arabic (McKay, 2002). One of those languages, English, is considered as a language of wider communication. McKay (2002) stated that there are more than three hundred million English speakers in the world. Therefore, we can conclude that English is a popular language so that studying this language becomes significant in most countries.

In Indonesia, English is the first foreign language which is taught to the students as a compulsory subject. Harmer (2007) stated that students of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) need to learn English so that they can use it when travelling or communicating with other people who also speak English. Specifically, in the context of schools, the purpose of teaching English is to provide the students with fundamental of English skills for communication: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Speaking is the skill that the students use most in the real life situation. Speaking skill is an important part of the curriculum in language teaching, and this makes them an important object of assessment as well (Louma, 2004). This means that the teachers should determine what should be mastered by the students based on the level of education and choose the best design and materials for speaking activities given to the students. The teachers should acknowledge the students’ progress of speaking in teaching and learning activity.
Assessment in this study means ongoing process to diagnose the students’ problem of speaking skill in the learning activity. Teachers often mix up this activity as testing. Brown (2004) stated that tests are prepared administrative procedures to be used when learners have mastered all their faculties to offer peak performance, knowing that their responses are being measured and evaluated. The purpose of this study is to develop media to give the opportunities for learners to perform, take risks, and process feedback from the teacher. The assessment using the media developed has an important role to provide information about the students’ learning progress.

Based on the function of an assessment, there are two types of assessment. They are formative and summative assessment (Brown, 2004). The focus of this study is the formative assessment cards to help the students to grow their competencies and skill in speaking. For this kind of assessment, teachers usually conduct several techniques to assess the students’ progress in speaking; performing a mini drama, giving a speech, presenting a story, performing a role play, and so forth. One of the techniques which will be the focus of this study is performing a role play.

Performing a role play is a valuable method for learning. It encourages the students’ thought and creativity. According to Tompkins (1998), it lets the students develop and practice new language and behavioral skills in a relatively non threatening setting and can create the motivation and involvement necessary for learning to occur. Hattings (2001) also stated that role play would seem to be the ideal activity in which students could use their English creatively. In addition, the students will gain their social skills through acting out a story, as they take on different roles. Alan (1987) affirmed that role play can also practice and internalize students’ life skills. This means, the students learn and practice how to communicate with others, how to socialize, how to manage problems, and so on. Therefore, role play activity helps the students stimulate a conversation situation which gives opportunity to practice and develop their communication skill.

Assessment designers need to create the tasks and the instructions to be given to the examinees, the task materials such as pictures or role-play cards, and
the instructions to interlocutors that will be used. Role play cards may be used to provide cues for the participants (Louma, 2004). However, few media can support the students to practice speaking. Considering the importance of media for doing the role play, the researcher develops a set of role-play cards to be used for the seventh grade students. The seventh grades were chosen because they had received sufficient exposure toward English especially speaking.

The seventh graders are at the age of 12 to 13. Harmer (2007) stated that at the age of 12 to 17, students have a great capacity for learning, enormous potential for creative thought and a passionate commitment to things which interest them. They are different from young children who still need guidance for the material they learn. Young children will take information from whatever is going on around them (Harmer, 2007). In contrast, the secondary school students are ready to understand and accept the need for learning of a more intellectual type.

Based on the Standard of Content in Indonesia, the teaching of English in Junior High School is targeted for the students to reach functional level: language as a vehicle to communicate in everyday life (Depdiknas, 2006). In this study, the researcher focuses on the three language functions in basic competence of the seventh grade students in second semester: asking for and giving services, things, and facts. Those materials cover socializing (greeting), expressing and asking about attitudes (permission), giving and asking the factual information (asking).

In the product developed, the researcher attempts to make simple role play cards for the students since the level of seventh graders is still beginner. The role plays are constructed like conversation; the students take turn to speak, yet, the students are also expected to do “little act” such as to make gestures, eye contacts, and expressions. These conditions give the students chances to feel the real situation. Furthermore, the cards for role play provide opportunities for the students to explore their creativity through the topic given. According to Thornbury (2005), the role-play should not require sophisticated performance skills or a lot of imagination; situations grounded in everyday reality are best. Thus, the situations given in the role-play cards are from their everyday life. As an
impact, the students will not feel reluctant when they should do the speaking activity in the learning process.

The development of the role-play cards is based on the syllabus of English for seventh grade students. Three language functions are focused in this study; (1) asking for and giving services, (2) asking for and giving things, and (3) asking for and giving facts. Those basic competences are taught in the second semester. There are thirty pairs of cards, ten of which are for asking for and giving services, ten others are for asking for and giving things, and the last ten of which are for asking for and giving facts. The reason to produce thirty pairs of cards is due to the number of students in the class. By having thirty pairs of cards, the teacher has an alternative to shuffle the cards. Thus, the students cannot predict what they will obtain. Each card has two-side functions: the front side consists of picture which indicates the topic and setting; meanwhile, the back side contains the situation as guidance to perform.

Learners often complain that they cannot think of anything to say in speaking activity (Ur, 1991). In addition, Dabson (1983) stated that it is also difficult to convince students that role-playing in the language classes is beneficial and entertaining because the students are afraid to try. Therefore, the role-play cards developed by the researcher are designed to allow the students some rehearsal time. The students can map out what they are going to say. According to Underhill (1987), if learners are unfamiliar with role play, the procedure and purpose should be explained well beforehand as well as the written instructions. Therefore, in order to support the role-play cards, the researcher provides a booklet which covers the learning objective, the specification of role-play cards, how to use the role-play cards in the classroom situation, and sample dialogues as the guideline for the students, and the scoring rubric for speaking.

The result of the study is beneficial for the English teachers of seventh graders and other researchers. For the English teachers, this study is intended to help the teacher make the assessment activity become effortless. The teacher can also utilize this media for teaching speaking. For other researchers, the result of
the study can be used as a reference for further research on speaking activity as well as on the media for speaking skill.

METHOD

This research and development adapted the ADDIE model which consists of five steps, which are: (1) Analysis, (2) Design, (3) Development, (4) Implementation, and (5) Evaluation.

The flow of the procedure is shown in the diagram below:

![ADDIE Model Diagram]

**Figure 2.1 ADDIE Model**

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The final product of this study is a set of role-play cards which can be used by teachers to ask the students to perform speaking. The size of the card is 15.5cm.
This set contains thirty pairs of cards about asking for and giving services, things, and facts (10 pairs of cards of asking for and giving services; 10 pairs of cards of asking for and giving things; 10 pairs of cards of asking for and giving facts) which are included in the basic competence of speaking in the second semester of seventh grade students. Each card consists of two sides; front side and back side. In the front side there are 2 pictures about the topic and setting of the role-play. Those two pictures are used as guides for role-play performance. In addition, in the back side, there is the situation of what the student should perform. The situation consists of three sentences as clues for the students. To help teachers who want to use these role-play cards, the researcher also provides a booklet in the set of the role-play cards. The booklet contains the learning objective, the specification of the product, how to use the role-play cards, sample dialogues, and scoring rubric for speaking. The booklet and role-play cards are packed in a box. It aims to make the product more long-lasting.

The role-play cards which have been developed are non-multimedia product. It is chosen because based on the result of the analysis (needs analysis), a few LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) projectors can support the multimedia product in the school. In addition, the teacher can conduct the role-play activity outside the class due to the practicality to bring the cards.

These role play cards have several positive points. The cards are fun, attractive, and have good pictures. The situation given helps the students to practice speaking English. In addition, it broadens the students’ vocabulary from the dictions enlisted in it. Next, they can learn the materials in an effective way because in the dialogue, instead of only focusing on asking for and giving services, things, and facts, they also learn how to greet one another, express gratitude, and say goodbye. It makes the students confident to speak English. It helps the students to have fun activity because they can act based on the situation given. Subsequently, they will have motivation to learn English because they enjoy the activity.

In the try-out, both the teacher and the students also gave positive impressions toward the role-play cards. The activity using role-play cards is
helpful for the students especially to practice their speaking. The result of the questionnaire shows that more than fifty percent of the students stated that. In addition, they were also enthusiastic in the role-play because they can act based on their own roles. Then, the teacher can assess the students’ performance using scoring rubric provided. The teacher stated that the activity helps her to know her students’ ability in speaking so that when the students are wrong, she can help correct it. In line with that Russell & Shepherd (2010) argue that widespread evidence suggests that educators and students experience satisfaction with assessment-as-learning through role play and games.

The difference of this product with the other products is the specification. Each card contains two parts, the front and back part; the focus is in the front side. The pictures make it different from other products. Harmer (2007) has a model of role-cards which only have the front side for giving the situation for the students. Based on that type, the researcher tries to develop a new kind of role-play cards by giving illustration of the situation. The questionnaire given to the students shows that pictures provided in the card are very attractive for them. It is beneficial for the teacher because the student will get attracted by the cards so that the teaching and learning process will be enjoyable.

SUGGESTIONS

Several suggestions are given for English teachers and future researchers. For the English teachers, the role-play cards will be useful as a media for assessing speaking. They can use it when the students learn about asking and giving services, things, and facts. The teacher can modify the activity with any teaching method. In addition, the teacher can also schedule several meetings to discuss the results of the follow up activities of the role-play.

The future researchers who would like to conduct research on similar topic are suggested to develop media for speaking material targeted to students of Junior High School of different grades or different programs with more various activities. It is suggested that the future researchers modify the role-play cards to be more attractive and long-lasting.
English teachers must introduce the specification and how to use the product to students because the students do not know how to use it without any guidance. The students need some time to adapt with the activity given. In addition, the teachers should explain about the diction used in the cards or the teacher can give some time for the students to look up the meaning from the dictionary.

REFERENCES