

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Education in the level of vocational training institutions must have the main objective of preparing human resources to enter the work world industry. Education is organized to prepare students to become human resources who have academic and professional abilities who can apply, develop, knowledge in the world of work and industry. Based on these objectives, it is necessary to make the best possible preparation for educational goals that can be achieved properly. The preparation is not only focused on students' knowledge, but also readiness skills must be a top priority in the learning process carried out. This is only done in order to prepare students to have a learning experience that suits the needs of the world of work.

With the great needs in teaching both academic and professional competencies in a shorter period compared to conventional or public school, potential workers are directed to a Vocational Education and Training (VET). However, VETs also face a number of challenges to be categorized as eligible in producing skillful and professional workers. Williams (2009) points out there are two major challenges in teaching VET's students namely the engagement and experiential learning. With the obligation to master certain set of skills in limited period, the instructional process should be able to engage students to actively participate in the learning. It is very unlikely that students are successful in learning if the instruction is monotonous nor assisting them to achieve the competencies demanded. Moreover, the instructions should also be in the form of experiential learning so that it can be implemented in their

prospective jobs. These two prerequisite conditions brings a major ethical challenges for the teachers as well (Nakar, 2019; Skiba, 2020). Teachers in this sector must be able to assist students to develop their professionalism through effective practices.

Quoting the data from the Ministry of Labor and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia (2022) there are 34 registered and accredited VET in Bali and 15 of them are in the hospitality industry. It is certain that these 15 VET institutions compete to produce best graduates and one of the keys is the students' mastery of English skills. Mastering a set of skills in English are the game changer for students. This thought is based on a number of studies that have proven so. Arias-Contreras & Moore (2022) emphasize that globalized world requires specialized workers who are able to use English in specific areas. Therefore, there is a great need to teach students English with specific terminologies, using them to handle certain task, as well as to ascertain their survival in working industry.

Since the needs of English in an industry could rapidly change due to practice oriented demands, the curriculum provided is also considered unstable (Xie, 2021). Reasonably, as what Keep (2015) harp on that teachers collaborating with the stakeholders and respective parties in institutional level needs to carefully analyze their instructional process periodically. It is important to examine whether or not the instructional process has successfully helped students to achieve the mandated competencies through useful means.

In English for hospitality industry, speaking is considered as one of the skills that is being put forward. It necessary to state that students use this skill to certain tasks such as handling complaints and requests, entering job interview, explaining services,

communicating with the employer or coworker, even topic about leisure. Such technical topics require students to be given more allotted time to practice their speaking (Wahyuningsih & Putra, 2020).

Specifically in job seeking in hospitality industry, a job interview represents a critical and conclusive stage in the job-seeking process. Many individuals perceive it as a daunting experience, as an inadequately prepared applicant may inadvertently convey a negative impression during this brief and interactive encounter (Wahyuni, 2019). The job interview becomes notably more challenging when conducted in English. Enhancing one's English communication skills not only contributes to an enriched social life but also augments future employment prospects. English is frequently employed as the medium of communication by interviewers during job interviews, and they attach great significance to initial impressions when making decisions (Pertiwi & Kusumaningrum, 2021). Insufficient language proficiency may lead to diminished opportunities for securing employment.

Likewise, one's ability to fluently use English during job seeking interview may lead them to at least three advantages. In a competitive job market, fluency in English can provide an individual with a competitive edge over other candidates. It shows that a person possess strong communication skills, adaptability, and the ability to work in diverse environments (Sumardi et al., 2022). It is often that employers seek candidates who can seamlessly integrate language skills and handling assignment skill. Likewise, the ability to use English in a job seeking interview fluently allows somebody to demonstrate your skills, present yourself effectively, and increasing one's chances of leaving a lasting impression on the interviewer.

On the other hand, such condition is faced with several challenges. Lapele (2019) argues providing and constructing contextual materials for students in speaking for hospitality and tourism is the main struggle. Unlike general topics, relevant sources in a form of books, guidelines, worksheet, and handouts are very limited. It depends on the teacher's creativity to provide such lively instructions by modifying their method, adjusting to students' level, and preparing the appropriate assessment tools. From students' perception, the poor speaking performance lies on the inability of the students to comprehend unfamiliar, yet very specific terms to be used in particular situation (Gaffas, 2019).

Taking into account of the aforementioned cases, students are having learning needs like what has been mapped by Lertchalermtipakoon et al. (2021) starting from the cognitive needs, sociological needs, and methodological needs. Cognitive needs implies that students love learning that increase their motivation and feeling that the knowledge they gain is somewhat useful for them at the same time. Likewise, teachers have role to create learning atmosphere that motivate students to be active in class by preparing subject and method in such a way to be delivered.

Another problems in improving the performance of students in ESP context is that although a number of studies have investigated how to improve speaking ability in job situated context like what to do in front office, restaurant, hotels, and even entertainment (Narzoles & Palermo, 2021; Vega & Moscoso, 2019; Vu et al., 2021; Yang & Wyatt, 2021). The research that specifically investigates the speaking ability of the students in a job-seeking situation or in a job interview is hardly found. Whereas some study has been conducted on speaking abilities in different fields such as the front

office, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment, there is a significant gap when it comes to job-seeking situations and interviews.

This led the researcher to conduct a preliminary study in one of the registered and accredited VET institution named Bali Crystal College. The preliminary study was conducted from January 25th – February 7th 2023. In this preliminary study, the researcher collected the data to find out the students' levels of communication skill through pre-test on the materials speaking in a job interview subject.

The researcher examines several documents related to required student qualification in the respect of communicating in English. The documents cover the Indonesian National Qualification Framework and the module of English instruction. It was found out that the National Framework inserts the material of joining job interview as basic level before going to other general and core competencies.

It implies that the material of joining an interview become a prerequisite before students are eligible to take general and core courses provided. At the same time, it implies how important it is to know and solve students' problem from the very beginning of their studying period particularly on speaking in a job interview. The researcher then continued the preliminary study by conducting a pre-test to new registered students on the materials of speaking in a job interview. Thereunto, constructing an assessment rubric was imminent to achieve a reliable assessment. Using the appropriate rubric with suitable criteria help test grader to save more time while measuring students achievement accurately (Saeed et al., 2019). Some important components to be included in the speaking rubric are pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and task accomplishment. These criteria are then inserted in

analytical rubric. It is as what Ulker (2017) states that each component in assessing speaking must be distributed into analytical scoring rubric and being given weight points afterward to see the degree of importance as well as detail reflection of students' ability. The preliminary study employs an adapted version speaking rubric performance by Ismailia (2021) comprises of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and task accomplishment.

After finishing the assessment rubric, the test was administered to know the initial condition of the students. There were 16 (sixteen) students from housekeeping class participated in this preliminary test consisting of 4 (four) female and 12 (twelve) male students. The result shows that there were only three students who got score > 70 , while 13 others still got score below the minimum requirements ranging from 42 – 59.6. In average, students score was at 57.9 which was far below the standard set by the institution (see appendix 2). This indicates that students still have serious problems in their speaking particularly on joining job interview subject. It can also be seen from the pretest results students are still facing problems in most of the components assessed through the assessment rubric.

From the preliminary observation, it was noted that the new registered 6 students were originally from upper secondary and 10 students from vocational schools. The problems found during the observation are as follows: (1) Students perform a limited understanding of industry-specific vocabulary and terminology particularly when the interviewer asks them to simulate their work in the related field; (2) Students are lack of confidence with their speaking abilities particularly when it comes to discussing their qualifications and experiences in professional setting which

results in ineffective presentation of themselves during the interview; (3) The observation also indicates that students are struggling to provide clarity in their speech that affect their comprehension during the interview simulation, and; (4) students need to be aware of the importance of non-verbal communication such as maintaining eye contact, using appropriate gestures, and exhibiting confident body language. In this initial reflection, the researcher also found that the use of role play in learning english for job interview has been implemented before, but only in the final session during the mid-term and final exams where the teacher as an interviewer and students as prospective workers. Role play activities in learning English for job interview were used only to find out the improvement of students' skills and seek grades.

Considering the problems found in the preliminary study. There is an urgency to provide students with teaching technique that does not only improve their speaking ability, but also engage them in a real-like situation as well as strengthening their social interaction capability. Role Play is considered propitious to overcome the aforementioned problems. Kasper and Youn (2018) asserts that role play is a perfect teaching technique for simultaneous education and training as well as understanding the function of social action in interaction between people. Role play also provides a simulated situation of a real context or the authenticity of the material taught to students (Amirkhanova & Bobyрева, 2020; Novaes et al., 2022).

As what has been mentioned earlier, this method is a potential alternative to be implemented in vocational education. Woodward-Kron and Elder (2016) conduct a subtest role play performance as the initial assessment of communicative competences of doctors in medical related topics. The assessment of the language production focuses

on the demand ratio of a medical officer performs a communication practice and how much being valued by the patients. The study results in 12 international medical graduates to perform outstanding speaking skill where all of them are above the standards set. Nayar and Koul (2020) add from their findings that the exceptional outcomes from utilizing role play in teaching is because this method is adjustable to any media insertion and modification as needed.

Role play works by allowing students to have the opportunity to take roles as somebody else in a specific situation (Insani, 2014). This particular student then takes charge of his/her own role given by teacher. Teachers in this regard need to be aware that role given must be specific, cognitively and linguistically relevant to the learning goals (Mardiningrum, 2016) . Specifically in speaking, even though role play does not need necessarily to be in pair or groups (Krebt, 2018), but a number of studies have shown that doing the role play in groups gives more significant outcome since it allows the increase of interaction and communication among students which in real life it resembles variety of situations that an individual face with different partner of communication (Idham, 2022; Nikmah et al., 2019; Wacana, 2018).

In relation to the encountered problems during preliminary study, it is clear that students have not performed sufficient sub skills in speaking covering pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency and task accomplishment. Taking these preliminary findings into account, role play is considered as the most suitable solution to improve the aforementioned aspects. Nikmah and Zami (2019) in their study that the most contributing part to the improvement of students' vocabulary through role play is due to immersion of the use of the language as well as the feedbacks. Throughout the role

play implementation, students are required to do a number of rehearsals as necessary before they are truly performing the role play. This attracts students to as if they are doing it in a real situation. Besides, rehearsals and feedback from teachers are chances for them to practice their pronunciation overtime.

Likewise, role play is also beneficial to enrich students' vocabulary. This idea is proposed by Lestari and Sridatun (2020) a study to seek the impact of role play toward students' vocabulary. They argue that since role play is important in the communicative approach since it gives students' opportunity to practice how to communicate in different social contexts and social roles, students also need to adjust their word choice which also means there is a high possibility to learn wide range of new vocabulary.

Fundamentally, role aligns with constructivist principles by providing learners with opportunities to actively engage in the learning process (Zakaria et al., 2019). In role play, participants take on specific roles and immerse themselves in simulated scenarios, allowing them to construct knowledge through firsthand experiences. By assuming different perceptions, making decisions, and interacting with others, learners actively construct their understanding of the subject matter. In role play, participants draw upon their prior knowledge and experiences to navigate the simulated situation, make sense of the information presented, and apply their understanding in a practical context. They actively construct meaning, negotiate interpretations, and adapt their thinking based on the interactions and outcomes of the role play

Lindawati et al. (2021) on the use of role play also answers that this technique is effective to enhance students' grammar understanding. They highlight that drilling

the grammar context through repetition in the practice phase of role play help them to consolidate their knowledge and automaticity in the language use. Regarding students' fluency, it is known that role play urges students' interaction that engage their listening and speaking skills in a more dynamic way. By being engaged in back and forth exchanges, students can learn to think and respond more quickly (Pratiwi & Su'ut, 2022).

In short, it is necessary to state that role play is an ideal solution to the problems found during the preliminary study. It is considered so since role play provides contextual learning environment where students can feel the atmosphere in the real situation to overcome their unfamiliarity problems. Besides, the active engagement and feedbacks given through this technique solve the confidence issue as well as improving their English-speaking skills on a job seeking interview. Thus, the researcher examines further how Role Play can improve the speaking skill of students of Bali Crystal College. It is also crucial whether role play becomes alternative to learn foreign language seen from the students' perception

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. How is role play implemented for improving students' speaking skills during job interview?
2. What is the students' perception on role play implementation in relation to their speaking skills in a job interview context?

1.3 Research Objective

There are two main objectives of this study covering

1. To describe how role play is implemented for improving students' speaking skills during job interview
2. To analyze students' perception on role play implementation in relation to their speaking skills in a job interview context

1.4 Research Significance

This study is expected to have some contributions, both theoretically and practically as stated below:

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

The use of role play in teaching speaking is expected to give valuable contributions to the knowledge of related theories underlying the role play technique like Constructivism and experiential learning theory. Role play is a constructivist approach to learning, which emphasizes the active construction of knowledge by the learner. In role play, learners are active participants in creating and negotiating meaning, rather than passive recipients of information. Additionally, role play is an experiential learning technique, which emphasizes the importance of learning through experience and reflection. Through role play, learners have the opportunity to practice language skills in a safe and supportive environment, and to reflect on their performance and identify areas for improvement.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

The implementation of Role Play in teaching is expected to bring significance to the following parties.

1.4.2.1 Teacher

This study can be used by English instructors, specifically those who trains vocational students, to support students to gain better oral communication skill for job application purposes.

1.4.2.2 Students

The findings of this study indirectly influence the learning experience for students from which they can feel how it is like to be in a job interview as well as becoming a guidance for them in learning other related subjects.

