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## **A Role-Play-Based Pedagogical Model for Improving EFL Students' Speaking Readiness in Professional Contexts**

*Agatha Lisa<sup>1\*</sup>, Nadia Gitya Yulianita<sup>2</sup> and Rahma Fitriana<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>English Education Department, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia: [agathalisa@uny.ac.id](mailto:agathalisa@uny.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup>English Language and Literature Department, Universitas Jenderal Sudirman, Purwokerto, Indonesia: [nadiagityay@unsoed.ac.id](mailto:nadiagityay@unsoed.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup>School of Languages and Linguistics, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia: [rahma.fitriana@student.unimelb.au](mailto:rahma.fitriana@student.unimelb.au)

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### **ABSTRACT**

Speaking in professional contexts has been incorporated into teachers preparation programs to equip students with practical communication skills for professional settings. However, previous studies exploring how role-play-based pedagogical model can address the needs of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in this context remain limited. To fill the gap, this study presented teaching experiences involving EFL students using role-play-based pedagogical model. Over the course of a semester, students completed three big projects, namely mock interviews, talk shows, and professional meetings. These classroom activities were proposed and conducted individually, in pairs, or groups. Adopting a qualitative case study design, data were collected from multiple sources, including video-recorded classroom observations and supporting documents such as students' projects and reflective writing. The participants comprised 58 EFL students enrolled in the 2023/2024 academic year in Speaking in Professional Contexts (ENG6207) course offered by English Language Education Study Program (ELESP), Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. The results showed two key aspects, namely (1) learning-teaching activities in role-play-based pedagogical model and (2) EFL students' experiences, including perceived benefits and challenges encountered. The results offered insights for experts and teachers interested in replicating or adapting similar role-play-based learning activities. Therefore, detailed implications and recommendations were presented and discussed concisely to offer valuable insights for institutions, educators, curriculum designers, and policy makers.

### **KEYWORDS**

EFL speaking readiness, experimental learning, pedagogical model, professional context, role-play

### **ABSTRAK**

Berbicara dalam konteks profesional telah menjadi bagian dari program persiapan mengajar yang dirancang untuk membekali mahasiswa dengan keterampilan komunikasi praktis di lingkungan profesional. Meskipun demikian, kajian-kajian penelitian sebelumnya yang mengeksplorasi

### **KATA KUNCI**

Kesiapan berbicara Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa asing; pembelajaran

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bagaimana model pedagogis berbasis permainan peran (role-play) dapat memenuhi kebutuhan mahasiswa EFL dalam konteks tersebut masih sangat terbatas. Oleh karena itu, untuk mengisi kesenjangan dalam temuan penelitian terdahulu, studi ini bertujuan untuk menyajikan pengalaman mengajar mahasiswa EFL melalui penerapan model pembelajaran berbasis permainan peran. Mahasiswa menyelesaikan tiga proyek utama dalam satu semester, yakni mock interviews, talk shows, dan professional meetings. Kegiatan-kegiatan ini dirancang dan dilaksanakan di kelas secara individu, berpasangan, maupun berkelompok. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian studi kasus kualitatif, data diperoleh dari berbagai sumber, antara lain rekaman observasi kelas dan dokumen pendukung, seperti hasil proyek dan tulisan reflektif mahasiswa. Peserta dalam penelitian ini adalah 58 mahasiswa EFL Tahun Akademik 2023/2024 yang mengikuti mata kuliah Speaking in Professional Contexts (ENG6207) pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. Temuan penelitian ini mencakup dua aspek utama: (1) proses pembelajaran dengan model pedagogis berbasis permainan peran, dan (2) pengalaman mahasiswa EFL, yang meliputi manfaat yang dirasakan serta tantangan yang dihadapi. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan wawasan yang bermanfaat bagi para peneliti dan pendidik yang berminat untuk mereplikasi atau mengadaptasi kegiatan pembelajaran berbasis permainan peran serupa. Oleh karena itu, implikasi dan rekomendasi yang terperinci disajikan secara ringkas untuk memberikan kontribusi yang bermakna bagi lembaga, pendidik, perancang kurikulum, dan pembuat kebijakan.

*berbasis pengalaman; konteks profesional; model pembelajaran pedagogik; ; permainan peran*

**\*Corresponding Author :**

Agatha Lisa

English Language Education Department, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

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## INTRODUCTION

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), speaking skills, including grammatical accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, coherence, and lexicon range, are widely regarded as one of the most essential components of language acquisition and effective communication. Speaking serves as the primary medium for expressing ideas, conveying thoughts, and communicating essential information effectively and fluently across various contexts, from informal conversations to academic and professional settings. Good oral communication skills are highly valued in the workplace, leading to professional success and career development. However, improving students' speaking competences presents several significant challenges, including students' anxiety, fluency issues, limited vocabulary, grammatical and pronunciation difficulties, and a lack of self-confidence (Asyasyfa et al., 2019; Quvanch, et al., 2024). This is largely due to the spontaneous, dynamic, unpredictable nature of spoken communication (Brown, 2004; Bygate, 2009). To address these challenges, a variety of instructional strategies have garnered significant scholarly interest in the field of EFL education. These strategies are recognized for the potential to improve students' speaking skills. Several studies have investigated EFL speaking practices using strategies such as presentations, contextual drama, storytelling, and debates (Hwang et al., 2024; Tsang, 2022),

as well as the integration of technology-enhanced learning tools, including videoconferencing, GenAI, Augmented Reality (AR), and MALL apps (Kim & Kweon, 2023; Tsai, 2023; Zhang et al., 2019). These strategies aim to improve speaking skills, academic engagement, foreign language enjoyment, and overall learning outcomes. For example, Peng et al. (2025) reported that after 17 sessions of podcast-based speaking activities, the spoken language abilities and academic engagement of 70 Iranian EFL students significantly improved.

Among the diverse instructional strategies explored in EFL speaking practice, role-play has emerged as a particularly effective method for bridging classroom learning with real-world communication needs. It engages students in simulated professional scenarios, such as job interviews, business meetings, and workplace negotiations, enabling the practice of language use in meaningful, context-rich settings. Several studies have shown the benefits of role-play in fostering critical thinking, improving collaboration and communication skills, and supporting decision-making. Recently, Kaygısız and Akar (2025) stated that role-play as an instructional technique consistently improved linguistic skills and supported both cognitive and affective development. Therefore, role-play, whether implemented face-to-face, online, or in blended learning environments, has been widely adopted across various disciplines for communication training, specifically in fields such as travel, tourism, (Doğantan, 2020; Guachalla & Gledhill, 2019) and education (Budiman et al., 2023; Yen et al., 2015). The effectiveness of role-play is grounded in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which also corresponds to constructivist learning theory. Both perspectives emphasize that students construct knowledge through active engagement and reflection rather than passive reception. Kolb's model, in particular, underlined the importance of learning by doing, articulated through a cyclical four-stage process, namely experimentation, experience, observation, and conceptualization. In this framework, role-play serves as a powerful instructional strategy that closely reflects each stage of the experiential learning cycle. It immerses students in context-rich, concrete experiences, encourages reflection, and provides opportunities to apply knowledge in practice. The theoretical grounding is particularly relevant to this current study.

A preliminary study, conducted through an open-ended survey during the first class session, asked students about their dream jobs. The results showed that not all students in English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) aspired to become English teachers. Although teaching remains a prominent and traditional career path for education majors, several students expressed interest in alternative fields such as content creation, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), the hospitality industry, entertainment, and other professional sectors. In the current globalized context, the career opportunities available for ELESP graduates are increasingly diverse. The graduates are no longer limited to teaching in schools or language courses, and may also pursue careers as interpreters, translators, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) trainers, content creators, scriptwriters, and more. These roles demand strong linguistic competence and the ability to communicate appropriately and confidently in professional settings. The preliminary study emphasized the importance of preparing students for diverse communication demands in broader professional contexts, making role-play a pedagogically sound and contextually appropriate method for supporting speaking readiness. Despite the critical role of speaking practice in equipping students with practical communication skills for diverse workplaces, few studies have examined how a role-play-based pedagogical model can effectively address the needs of EFL students in professional settings. To bridge this gap, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How was role-play-based pedagogical model designed and implemented in speaking classes?
2. What are EFL students' responses after experiencing role-play-based pedagogical model in speaking classes?

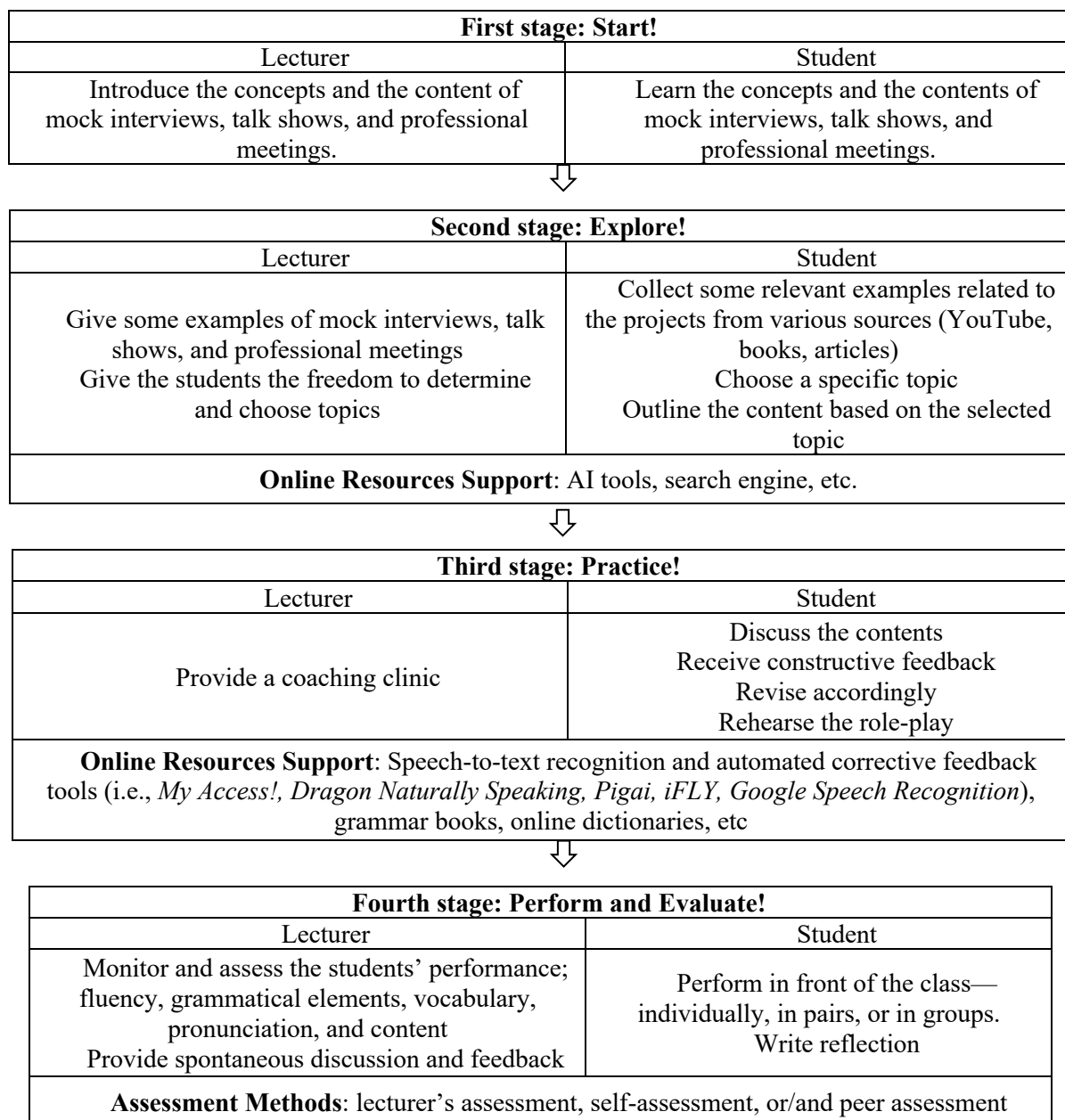
## **METHOD**

A qualitative case study design was used to address the two research questions. According to Yin (2018), a case study is a design that utilizes various types of ethnographic data from multiple sources. It enables research experts to gain a holistic and real-world perspective by comprehensively examining and understanding single or multiple cases in complex social phenomena, including those related to professional practice in education (Graurer, 2012; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). In the context of language education, this study explored the teaching-learning activities involved in the implementation of role-play-based pedagogical model aimed at improving EFL students' speaking readiness in professional contexts.

This study was conducted in a compulsory course, Speaking in Professional Contexts (ENG6207), during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. A 16-week instructional program, presented in Figure 1, was designed using role-play-based pedagogical model. The model comprised four stages facilitated by the lecturer and students: 1) introduction to the learning activity, 2) exploration of the learning content through independent study, 3) preparation through scriptwriting and rehearsal, and 4) performance of role-plays in class. A cohort of 60 EFL students from three regular classes in ELESP at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta was invited to participate. Two participants, repeater students from different academic batches, were excluded. Consequently, 58 participants completed all data collection processes. In line with qualitative research standards, this sample size was considered sufficient to obtain specific and extensive details about the case under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). The participants were in the third semester of the 2023/2024 academic year and came from diverse geographic backgrounds, including various islands, provinces, and cities across Indonesia. The sample was heterogeneous, with a majority of female participants (63.79%, N=37), and male participants, comprising 36.20% (N=21). Participants were between 18 and 20 years and had more than 7 years of English learning experience. Informed consent was obtained to ensure participants fully understood the study's purpose, procedures, and potential benefits. Participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the process.

Data for this case study were collected from multiple sources, including video-recorded classroom observations and supporting documents, such as students' projects and reflective writing. Classroom observations involved gathering first-hand information by observing participants to identify and record the full range of activities during the implementation of role-play-based pedagogical model. The supporting documents were used to complement and validate data obtained through classroom

observation. The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative design, specifically thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), supported by in vivo coding (Miles et al., 2014). All the data were sorted into units of analysis to identify the ideas and opinions, find patterns, investigate the connections between the categories, interpret the data from multiple sources, and meet the trustworthiness criteria.



**Figure 1.** The structure and workflow of a role-play-based pedagogical model in the present study

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical results related to the two research questions: 1) the implementation of role-play-based pedagogical model, and 2) EFL students' responses to the implementation of role-play-based pedagogical model.

### Learning-teaching activities of role-play-based pedagogical model

Research Question 1: How was role-play-based pedagogical model designed and implemented in speaking classes?

This innovative model was implemented through three major projects, namely mock interviews, talk shows, and professional meetings. A detailed and structured schedule was provided by the lecturer at the beginning of the semester, ensuring students were aware of the due dates for each project. The implementation of the model is discussed as follows.

#### a. Mock Interview

In the first stage of this learning-teaching scenario, the lecturer introduced the concept and content of a mock interview. This included definitions, purposes, structure, commonly used English phrases, potential challenges in using English during job interviews, and several strategic frameworks (i.e., P-E-N, 30-60-90 Day Plan, and S-T-A-R) for answering both expected and unexpected questions. In the second stage, students searched for examples of mock interviews from various sources, such as YouTube, e-books, and articles. In the third stage, the lecturer reviewed students' preparations, supervised the content quality, and provided constructive feedback. In the fourth stage, the lecturer acted as Human Resources Director (HRD) and conducted mock interviews with students, who assumed roles of job candidates. Each student was allocated 10-15 minutes for the mock interview session. This activity was designed to provide a simulated real-life professional job interview experience, allowing students to practice how to frame responses for common interview questions. Without any endorsement intended, Table 1 presents a list of EFL students who participated in the mock interview activity after selecting real job vacancies from various online platforms. Students independently examined and selected specific positions based on interests and career aspirations. Job vacancies were sourced from reputable job portals such as Glints, Kitalulus, LinkedIn, JobStreet, and Deals.

**Table 1.** Examples of Specific Job Positions Selected by the Students

Student (Pseudonym)	Source	Job Position	Company/Industry
Eka	Glints	English Teacher	Best Kids Galaxy
Tian	Kitalulus	English Trainer/English Teacher	Double Decker Indonesia
Lyly	LinkedIn	English Teacher	EF Kids and Teens Cinere
Dita	Jobstreet	English Teacher	Koperasi Serba Usaha (KSU) Swaloka
Gea	Deals	Content Creator	PT. Aura Harmoni Estetika
Rara	Jobstreet	Primary School Teacher	Australian Independent School (AIS Indonesia)

HRD (lecturer) subsequently asked a series of typical interview questions structured to help students demonstrate qualifications, abilities, and thought processes. Each question was related to specific frameworks or strategies to guide students in structuring responses effectively. The following are examples of the questions and the corresponding frameworks used:

1. Tell me about yourself? (P-E-N)
2. Why are you interested in this job? (P-E-N)
3. What would you do first? (30-60-90 Day Plan)
4. What is your greatest strength? (S-T-A-R)
5. What is your biggest weakness? (S-T-A-R)
6. What are your goals? (P-E-N)
7. Provide one case question, for example, in education: "If a student was being disruptive in your class, what would you do?"

For assessment, each student received a score and written feedback from the lecturer. Using speaking rubric, the evaluation focused on students' fluency (confidence, rate of speech, coherence, flow, and continuity), vocabulary, grammatical accuracy (word order and form), and pronunciation.

b. Hosting and participating in a talk show

The second learning activity in role-play-based pedagogical model was hosting and participating in a talk show. In this project, students worked in pairs and conducted a 12- to 16-minute talk show. The detailed classroom activities for the project are presented as follows:

1. The lecturer asked students to check YouTube and select a talk show video that matched their interests. Students could select from well-known talk shows such as Jimmy Kimmel Live, The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, TheEllenShow, The Oprah Winfrey Show, among others.
2. Students analyzed the structure of talk show, focusing on language expressions, how the host developed the questions and responded to the guest(s)'s answers, how the guest(s) reacted to the host's questions, and how the conversation flowed.
3. The lecturer invited students to form pairs, allowing the freedom to select partners.
4. Students selected a topic, brainstormed ideas, and began drafting script.
5. The lecturer monitored students' progress and preparation, offering support through a coaching clinic.

**Table 2.** Examples of Students' Talk Show Topics and Preparation Materials

<b>Students (Pseudonyms)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Materials/Properties Used</b>
Caca and Tika	Tourism	PowerPoints Slides, Video
Xander and Johnny	Game	Application, Pictures
Farah and Prilly	Beauty	Make-Up tools
Ivan and Rangga	Healthy Lifestyle	Water Bottle, Pictures, Healthy Food
Sonia and Ate	Manga	Digital Comic, Video
Varrel and Tara	Mental Health	PowerPoints

Assessment for this project followed the same criteria as the first project. Each student received a score and feedback from the lecturer based on speaking rubric.

c. Chairing and participating in a professional meeting

The third learning activity in role-play-based pedagogical model was chairing and participating in a professional meeting. In this project, students worked in groups of 4-5 members and conducted a 15- to 20-minute business meeting. The classroom activities were delivered through two instructional formats, namely a blended asynchronous-synchronous and in-person. The first phase involved a blended asynchronous-synchronous learning activity. The detailed intervention steps for this phase are as follows:

1. The lecturer provided a document titled *Effective Meetings Toolkit*, a 30-page guide published by the University of Cambridge in 2023.
2. Students were asked to work in groups of 3-4 members and discuss the following questions: 1) What is an effective meeting?, 2) What is/are the structure/parts of a meeting?, and 3) What are roles of the chair, the secretary/minute taker, and the attendees in a meeting? To answer these questions, students were encouraged to consult reliable resources such as books, research articles, and other academic materials.
3. Students were invited to open the file titled *Business Meeting Script* shared in the WhatsApp group, assign roles (CEO, secretary, and attendees), and practice the dialogue. Afterward, the conversation was recorded using a phone or voice recorder and the audio files were submitted along with the names and assigned roles (e.g., Sasa as CEO, Arvel as the Secretary, and Sigit and Wijaya as the Attendees).

The second phase involved an in-person classroom learning activity. The detailed steps are as follows:

1. The lecturer selected group leaders based on the highest scores and speaking progress. Each group was composed of four members with diverse speaking proficiency levels, namely one with the highest score, one or two with moderate scores, and one or two with the lowest scores.
2. The group leaders were invited to participate in focus group discussion (FGD).
3. During FGD, the lecturer comprehensively explained the structure and workflow of chairing and participating in a professional meeting. The leaders were given the freedom to assign roles in their teams (CEO, secretary, and attendees).
4. To support performance improvement, printed feedback summaries were provided for all group members. This was intended to help leaders identify members with lower or moderate performance in previous speaking projects and focus on the specific aspects demanding improvement.
5. Students began working in groups, discussing the meeting topic and determining a specific agenda for their professional meeting. The results of these activities are presented in Table 3.

In relation to this project, the lecturer offered group consultations to members who were most likely to need assistance, and was available for consultation in the days leading up to the group performance and could be contacted through WhatsApp or Zoom. For assessment, each group received a score and feedback from both the lecturer and their peers. Peer feedback was collected through a Google Form consisting of six items. Furthermore, as part of the final project, students were invited to reflect on the following: (1) what was learned from chairing and participating in a professional meeting; (2) three aspects demanding improvements for future experiences in similar contexts; and (3) the feeling after the experience, along with an explanation of their emotions.

**Table 3.** Examples of Professional Meetings Performed by the Students

Name	Company/Industry	Roles	Agenda
Group 1	Food and Beverage (F&B)	CEO, Secretary, Head of Accounting, Head of Marketing	New product launch, sales and marketing strategy, logistics and supply chain challenges, and any other business
Group 2	Game	CEO, Secretary, Director of Gaming Tool Developer and Content, and General Counsel	Current game and development progress, legal issues, product testing, and user feedback
Group 3	Hospitality	CEO, Secretary, General Manager, Head of Marketing	Monthly guest review, upcoming seasonal promotions, service improvement, and occupancy rate
Group 4	Fashion	CEO, Secretary, Head of Creative and Production, Head of Marketing and Logistics	Upcoming collections designs, marketing plan, product distribution, and any other business
Group 5	Footwear	CEO, Secretary, Head of Production, Head of Sales and Marketing	Evaluation of each division, monthly sales, number of product returns, and any other business

For the assessment, each group received a score and feedback from the lecturer and their peers.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) guided the role-play-based pedagogical model in this study. The theory emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through active engagement and reflection rather than passive reception. To enhance students' speaking readiness in professional contexts and job markets, the model implemented a four stage cycle: 1) Start!, 2) Explore!, 3) Practice!, and 4) Perform and Evaluate!. These steps corresponded to Kolb's experiential stages of experimentation, experience, observation, and conceptualization, ensuring that students actively engaged in and reflected on authentic learning experiences.

#### **EFL students' experiences: perceived benefits and challenges encountered**

Research Question 2: What are EFL students' responses after experiencing role-play-based pedagogical model in speaking classes?

The lecturer asked students to write a reflection the experiences during the implementation of role-play-based pedagogical model at the end of each project. From 294 units of analysis, four themes of perceived benefits and three themes of challenges encountered during the implementation were identified. The discussion starts with the perceived benefits, as follows:

### 1. Students' Satisfaction

The first theme refers to students' emotional presence, specifically the feelings about participating in speaking experiences in a practical environment. For example, S7, S2, and S24 stated that role-play-based pedagogical model was enjoyable, beneficial, and meaningful for future professional careers. The responses reflected a strong sense of appreciation for the model. They uttered:

"It is so much fun, and I'm grateful for the chance to have this experience. I believe it will be useful for me in the future." (S7/L1/SS16)

"The practice feels like a real meeting. It's fabulous!" (S2/L4/SS3)

"I'm happy with my partner. I think we have good chemistry—perhaps because we share a common interest in fashion and beauty. I felt confident in my role as a guest on the talk show and was even able to engage the audience by inviting them to practice make-up together." (S24/L4/SS27)

### 2. Practical application

The second theme is practical application. Role-play-based pedagogical model was designed to provide students with both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience through three structured role-play activities. Several students mentioned gaining experience in context-based simulated situations similar to potential encounters in the future professions. For example, S14, S42, and S31 remarked:

"I got so much information, like how to answer an interviewer's questions directly and in relation to my job application. I also discovered strategies like the 30-60-90, P-E-N, S-T-A-R frameworks, which I hadn't known before. [Additionally,] I've learned about the responsibilities I'll have when I become a teacher." (S14/L1/PA36)

"I need to have various strong reasons to convince the interviewer that I am the best candidate for the job I am aiming for." (S42/L2/PA112)

"I now understand how to be a CEO who leads meetings, although I still have a lot to learn. I need to learn more about how to manage my nervousness in formal meeting settings." (S31/L1/PA78)

### 3. Collaborative learning

The third theme is collaborative learning. This method was intended to encourage students to work with peers or in groups. As part of the course objectives, students were expected to collaborate on two out of three assigned projects. Group work involved a multifaceted interactive process engaging motivation, commitment, metacognitive awareness, and emotional components, such as adaptability and openness to group diversity. Through collaboration, students practiced sharing opinions, understanding others' perspectives, appreciating diverse ideas, building supportive learning environments, helping each other, and solving group problems. The following statements by S9, S25, and S50 reflect students' experiences in a collaborative learning environment:

"We need to prepare many things together, such as choosing the topic, preparing the script, and selecting the appropriate properties." (S9/L4/CL11)

"Team coordination [in professional contexts] is essential for conducting an effective meeting." (S25/L3/CL21)

"I should be able to work with anyone. For this topic, [chairing and participating in a professional meeting] Miss Agatha assigned group members based on specific criteria." (S50/L2/CL32)

#### 4. Problem-solving

The fourth theme is problem solving, which is widely recognized as a crucial skill for 21st century students. The students reported engaging in real-world problem solving tasks through both individual and group activities during the implementation of role-play-based pedagogical model. These activities facilitated students' practice of identifying, addressing, and solving diverse problems. For example, S7, S28, and S46 stated:

“As the group leader, acting as the head of the department [CEO], I learned about leadership and how to provide solutions to problems.” (S7/L2/PS9)

“We faced many problems, but AI helped our group find solutions. The lecturer allowed us to use AI as long as we didn't directly copy and paste the texts.” (S28/L5/PS31)

“Our group included a retaker student who was difficult to contact. During a consultation session, we asked the lecturer to help us get in touch with her.” (S46/L3/PS40)

Based on the results, the model was considered effective in facilitating the development of students' speaking skills. Several students expressed contentment with the learning experience, citing its relevance to future workplace communication, its emphasis on teamwork, and contribution to critical thinking through problem-solving tasks. The four perceived benefits of the implemented model could be interpreted through Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) and the 21st-century skills framework (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). For instance, collaborative learning involved students working with peers or in groups to accomplish team-based speaking projects, either in person, face-to-face, or virtually through digital platforms. Students engaged in social learning by negotiating and collaborating with diverse team members to achieve shared goals. Furthermore, problem-solving, considered a form of expert thinking, was one of the essential 21st-century skills that fostered higher-order and critical thinking. This skill prepared learners for complex communication challenges, enabled them to lead better solutions, and enhanced their readiness for professional work. It was effectively cultivated through the cyclical four-stage process of experimentation, experience, observation, and conceptualization. For instance, problem-solving skills were developed when students collaborated to complete group projects requiring them to make decisions.

The results of the successful role-play-based pedagogical model aligned with the findings of Huertas-Valdivia (2021), showing that engaging students in staffing process simulations could improve employability skills such as analytical capability, teamwork, decision-making, problem-solving, autonomous learning, creativity, and oral competence. Similarly, Guachalla and Gledhill (2019) found that authentic learning activities, such as role-play delivered through group work, pair activities, and individual interviews, effectively supported the development of interview and teamwork skills. Despite the success of role-play-based pedagogical model, some students reported facing challenges during its implementation. The three main challenges are presented and discussed as follows:

##### 1. General opinion

The first theme, general opinion, concerns students' emotional responses, physiological expressions, and behavioral reactions. At the end of each project, students were invited to share the overall impressions of role-play-based pedagogical model. Students were free to express their thoughts without any impact on the final grades. Responses included a range of emotions, such as happiness, excitement, satisfaction, embarrassment, panic, sadness, feeling

overwhelmed, or worry, as well as mixed feelings. For example, S6 and S38 expressed that the projects were challenging. They said:

“This is so fun and challenging—it motivates me to improve my performance every week.” (S6/L1/GO7)

“I need to improve my speaking skills, control my anxiety, and learn to answer questions in a more relaxed and confident way.” (S38/L2/GO42)

## 2. Developing idea

The second theme is developing idea. In the early stages of planning the projects, many students found it challenging to generate and organize relevant content. For example, S53 and S29 reported struggles with idea generation during the planning phase. They reflected:

“I didn’t know where to start. It was difficult to choose the best script and align it with our topic. But the lecturer gave us time for consultation, and we gained some valuable insights.” (S53/L1/DI48)

“Miss Agatha said that it’s hard, but only at the beginning—and that’s totally true. My group faced some problems when we started working on the script. It was our first time writing a script for a mock interview and for a group project.” (S29/L2/DI34)

## 3. Self-confidence

The third theme is self-confidence, referring to students’ emotional states, opinions, and beliefs regarding the ability to achieve a specific objective. Confidence influences students’ choices, satisfaction, motivation, determination, and resilience. Therefore, strong self-confidence is essential for successfully completing tasks in diverse learning situations. S15 and S45 identified self-confidence as a major challenge, particularly when performing in front of the class. They expressed:

“I need to build my confidence and improve the pronunciation of unfamiliar professional business terms—such as sales, product distribution, and marketing. I also face challenges with stuttering and selecting appropriate vocabulary.” (S15/L4/SC24)

“I didn’t trust myself to do well, and I forgot some of the dialogue parts I had memorized. I even felt a bit dizzy after the performance.” (S45/L3/SC37)

The challenges reported by students, particularly self-confidence and idea development, were closely related to foreign language anxiety (FLA) and other psychological constraints that negatively affected oral performance (Gallego et al., 2020; Horwitz et al., 1986; Quvanch et al., 2024). For example, students who lacked confidence often hesitated, feared making mistakes, and worried about being evaluated by peers or teachers, which made it difficult for them to express ideas spontaneously and hindered their language learning progress. This finding suggests that anxiety can limit the cognitive resources necessary for the development of oral communication skills. To address these challenges, targeted coping strategies are needed to help students manage anxiety, build self-confidence, and generate ideas during speaking activities. For example, students can be encouraged to prepare thoroughly, practice speaking with peers or through technological tools such as AI applications, engage with English-language media such as YouTube videos or podcasts, improve grammatical knowledge, and employ brief relaxation techniques, including deep breathing and maintaining calmness, before participating in speaking classes (Özdemir & Seçkin, 2025; Theriana, 2023). Prior research has also highlighted the crucial role of creating a supportive classroom

environment and providing constructive feedback in managing foreign language learning anxiety (Liu, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study investigated the implementation of role-play-based pedagogical model in speaking classes as well as EFL students' responses after personal experience. The results show four themes of perceived benefits, namely satisfaction, practical application, collaborative learning, and problem solving, as well as three themes of challenges, namely general opinion, developing idea, and self-confidence, encountered during the model's implementation. Following the results of this study, there are some significant implications for experiential learning theory, teacher-educators in the field of English language learning-teaching, and future work. First, role-play-based pedagogical model could serve as a guideline or alternative method for facilitating speaking practice through simulated real-life communication scenarios in professional contexts, such as job interviews, business meetings, and talk shows. Second, its teaching-learning materials, classroom activities, teaching procedures, and assessment strategies of the current role-play-based pedagogical model can be further developed according to the need of the targeted environment and teaching outcomes. Third, future studies can replicate this study with alternative designs, such as true experimental or time-series approaches, to validate the model's effectiveness in enhancing speaking readiness through structured assessments (e.g., pre- and post-tests). Alternatively, qualitative studies using questionnaires or in-depth interviews could provide richer insights and capture students' perspectives, challenges, and learning outcomes in specific and extensive detail.

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