

Students' Perception of Applying Teacher-in-Role during English Learning Process: A Descriptive Study of Middle School Students

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ABSTRACT

Teacher-in-Role becomes one of the effective methods in the teaching and learning process which indicates the teacher also contributes to playing a role in the classroom to engage the students to take a part a role. This study aimed to describe students' perception of applying Teacher-in-Role which reflected the purpose of Teacher-in-Role. There were some purposes namely, stabilize the students' attention, trigger affective and cognitive responses, provide and collect information, try to speak and respond, face challenges or issues and try to handle them, and communicate patterns between teacher and students while Teacher-in-Role. This study was a descriptive study with interviews through focus group discussion as the instrument of this study. There were 10 students in one of the high schools in Padang who participated in this study. The result of this study was a positive perception of students who applied Teacher-in-Role in the classroom. It increased students' enthusiasm for learning and built a natural atmosphere while they played a role. The students are encouraged trying to take a role due to the unique characters that should be taken. The teachers also became part of them to play the role and also provide them the precise information. However, there was a student to showed the opposite which Teacher-in-Role was ordinary because the students face issues such as nervousness, limited vocabulary, less confidence, and tend to be passive in the classroom. Overall, the students illustrated the positive perception of applying Teacher-in-Role in teaching and learning.

Keywords: Descriptive study; Learning; Perception; and Teacher-in-Role.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers must consider students' understanding while teaching and learning by using effective teaching methods in the classroom. The method can impact students who are capable or incapable of particular materials. One of the teaching methods is Teacher-in-Role, which is called actor/actress in the classroom. The teachers take a role in the classroom by taking action to participate actively in the teaching and learning process. It is to support the students directly to be active in the classroom. In line with Baldwin (2018), Teacher-in-Role is an effective method to boost the spirit and energy of the students to contribute during teaching and learning. Teachers apply Teacher-in-Role to help the students understand the material that can be a real case. Thus, the teachers are aware of the material points.

Teacher-in-Role exists in the teaching and learning process as a bridge for teachers to convey the materials, including real-life atmosphere, by doing an action that is literally drama. In the educational program, drama is not a conflicted or argumentative plot among people. However, it means the role of teachers is to create actual conditions in a particular subject to give students real experience in the teaching and learning process. It is supported by Piazzoli and Kennedy (2014), who described that educational drama contained conventional drama such as voice, image, and process (Hidayati, et al., 2022). All these dramas are integrated to produce a real-life action, the same as reality. Drama supports students' participation in the classroom in which they have their rhythm in learning and reflect the materials in the actual situation because the drama connects with the lesson plan teachers design to achieve learning objectives.

In Indonesia, the application of Teacher-in-Role is quite familiar, and teachers use this method to assist students' understanding during the teaching and learning process. The teachers allow the students to express their ideas, feelings, or opinions by using the Teacher-in-Role in the classroom. It explains the students' contribution and tends to be active in teaching and learning, especially in junior high school. They need to take action and take the role to obtain more experience in teaching and learning, which several classroom activities created by the teacher. According to Harmer (2007), teachers organized various classroom activities to encourage the students to be enthusiastic in that activity (Santiana, et al., 2021; Dewi, et al., 2022; Muthmaninnah, et al., 2022; Sya'adah, et al., 2022; and Hardiyanti & Herda, 2023). The teachers apply the Teacher-in-Role to create an exciting and enjoyable classroom activity atmosphere for students.

This method provides opportunities for teachers and students in the classroom to be someone else, which means Teacher-in-Role is applied by teachers in the classroom to motivate the students in the teaching and learning process. Teachers use by involving the role. The teachers created the situation related to the materials and divided some of the students' characters. Then, teachers and students take action by playing the role of those characters. In line with Heathcote and Herbert (1985), teacher-in-role is an activity in which the teacher addresses the students as those characters who are the masters of the field of human characters within the context of imagination. It means students and teachers can build creativity in doing a role by using their fantasy to become one character.

This study develops students' experience in teaching and learning, in which students gain direct classroom practices. This study is conducted in one of the high schools in Padang, particularly in the 7th grade. The 7th-grade students get different experiences in applying Teacher-in-Role in the classroom due to teachers' new teaching and learning methods. The teachers applied this method to engage the students in different ways: the Teacher-in-Role method. Although this method is new for the 7th-grade students, they show their intention and participation by doing a role. The teacher applies this method to enhance the exploration by involving a part and creating their imagination of the context of the role that wants to be played.

Considering the role of teacher and students, sometimes there are gaps between teacher and students. However, in Teacher-in-Role, both teachers and students can get the same status. According to Baldwin (2018), teacher-in-role ensures the action of playing a role in the classroom related to three aspects: equal status role, provide information role and gather information role. An equal status role implies that teachers can be equal with the students involved in the classroom to make them contribute to the situation that the teacher creates. Providing information means teachers deliver the information or message to the students, not directly but by acting. It offers an exciting way for the students to catch the information. Last is the gathering information role, in which teachers gather information from students to get helpful information during the teaching and learning process. It emphasized that teachers can assist the students in being active and involved in the teaching and learning process that provides valuable student experience.

The use of the Teacher-in-Role strategy can impact students. This strategy enhances the engagement in the classroom activities. In Addition, Baldwin (2018) states that the Teacher-in-Role can (1) manage and stabilize the students' attention on a specific subject or circumstance, (2) stimulate and trigger affective and cognitive responses, (3) provide details and collect information regarding what the students in role understand and assume in within drama and what they could like to learn next, and (4) model various methods of speaking, trying to respond, and tend to behave in various environments. (5) Students face challenges and issues in recognising and handling in groups. Finally, (6) switch the conventional teacher/student communication patterns momentarily and uncertainly. Thus, some goals appear when the students enjoy teaching and learning and improve themselves to be active in the classroom.

Although students have their perceptions, the teachers apply Teacher-in-Role in the classroom. Students deliver their opinions or feelings related to what teachers do in the classroom due to their understanding of the materials. Richards and Schmidt (2002) argued that perception comes from the event or condition that is sight, heard, or touched. It implies the students can show their point of view of the Teacher-in-Role, which is that students are aware that teachers also contribute to actions in the classroom to make them enjoy the classroom. It is one method to avoid boring classrooms and passive students during teaching and learning. Therefore, teachers need to build a great atmosphere and do something creative to encourage the students to participate in every single activity in the classroom.

Moreover, there are several previous studies about teacher-in-role. Maniam et al., (2019) explained that Teacher-in-Role carried exciting experiences for students in primary school. Students pay attention to what teachers do in the classroom because the teachers also guide the students in learning. It emphasized that students can contribute during the teaching and learning process by listening to what teachers say in front of the class. The students were encouraged to practice and be involved in the role; thus, they got direct experience in the teaching and learning process. The other previous study was conducted by Piazzoli (2012), which provided challenges for students, including power, agency, and interaction that stimulated the students' confidence to understand the English language. This role created students to practice spontaneous and involved communication in the target language. Thus, Teacher-in-Role can be applied in the teaching and learning process in which teachers actively provide the students involved in the classroom.

Fatimah (2017) conducted EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of enacting Teacher-in-Role through MoE (Mantle of the Expert) in senior and vocational schools. This study revealed that the teacher and students collaborated in teaching and learning, indicating that teachers also participated in a role. It became a new atmosphere for students, and teachers played a role. This study also showed that the two groups of students and teachers enjoyed doing this activity to promote their experience. In addition, Rathore (2021) investigated the mechanism of Teacher-in-Role, which explained the function or type of Teacher-in-Role. The study also identified the crucial issue teachers and students face in teacher-in-role and found an effective solution.

Meanwhile, this current study emphasizes the implementation of Teacher-in-Role without analyzing the point of view of students that the teacher applies in the teaching and learning process. Thus, the gap can be seen that the area that wants to explore is not about the Teacher-in-Role but the students' perception while it is applied in the classroom. Furthermore, the subject of the study was implemented in primary, senior/vocational schools, but the current study investigates junior high school, particularly the 7th-grade students, which means it is new to do Teacher-in-Role in the classroom.

In conclusion, the previous study researched Teacher-in-Role to encourage students in the teaching and learning process. The other is the practice of teacher-in-role, which affects the students through MoE (Mantle of the Expert) to show the collaboration of teachers and students in the senior and vocational schools. However, the previous study only investigated the process of the teacher-in-role in the classroom.

Therefore, this current study focuses on the student's perception of applying teacher-in-role during the teaching and learning process. It is conducted in Padang's Junior High School, especially among the 7th-grade students. These students are beginners in Teacher-in-Role, which the students apply in the teaching and learning process. Thus, the researcher must answer, "What is the student's perception of applying Teacher-in-Role during the teaching and learning process?" Teacher-in-Role strategy generally can benefit students, especially in communication and speaking skills. Also, a teacher can get along with the student not as a teacher or facilitator but as a student with the same status, which can make student-teacher closer and impact their engagement in learning English.

METHOD

This descriptive study found out the students' perception of applying Teacher-in-Role. The descriptive study relates to the event, phenomena, or situation at a specific time. Therefore, this research aimed to describe a situation or condition to gain information from participants' responses (Creswell, 2012). The participants were students (4 male and 6 female students) in one of the high schools in Padang through focus group discussion, particularly the 7th grade students, about 12-14 years old. The participants were randomly chosen among 32 students in one classroom to follow the Focus Group Discussion as representatives to determine their perceptions. The participants were chosen because they had never been treated as a Teacher-in-Role in learning English. Therefore, it can create different perceptions between the conventional teaching method and the Teacher-in-Role strategy. First, the researcher asked some questions for students to analyze their point of view about the Teacher-in-Role that the teacher applied in teaching and learning. Thus, observation and interview became the way of collecting the data. Then, the researcher transcribed the whole interview through a focus group discussion of the student's perceptions of Teacher-in-Role, either positive or negative.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Most of the students delivered a positive perception of applying Teacher-in-Role in teaching and learning. It described students' enthusiasm for learning by using the Teacher-in-Role and positively impacted students for their learning. Through focus group discussion, the students delivered their own perception of Teacher-in-Role, which the teachers applied. The results revealed in an interview through focus group discussion:

Table 1. Results of the study

Questions	Responses	Students	Total
How excited are you in your class during the practice of Teacher-in-Role?	I really enjoy playing a role in the classroom, the teachers are also involved so that it catches the attention to contribute to playing the role. It is a fun activity to pay attention to the role.	Students 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9	8 students
	I don't expect too much from this method because I think just a common method. Literally, I don't understand English, and it is hard for me to speak English even though the classroom activity does an action or role some character. Each of us gets different characters, and difficult to know the vocabulary.	Students 6 and 10	2 students

Questions	Responses	Students	Total
Do you feel entertained or engaged when you were doing or watching the performance during the TiR	Teacher-in-Role carries out different classroom atmospheres, motivating to try responding to the role as an actor. Moreover, the Teacher-in-Role is not only interesting but also entertains the situation of the class. So I can understand what the teacher says and the material learned.	Student 1-10	10 students
Do you understand (get the information) when your friend or teacher was taking a role?	I understand what the teacher says and what my friend talks about. It is a simple way to understand speaking English with teachers participating in the role. It is such a fun class atmosphere. But the teachers encourage me to practice English and should actively play a role.	Student 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7	6 students
	Actually, I have a limited vocabulary to speak English, and I tend to be quiet until my teachers help me to say something or remind me of some vocabulary. Then, I am not confident enough to speak English. I did not know how to pronounce some words even though I understood when the others said English to me.	Students, 5, 8, 9, and 10	4 students
How do you feel about the amount of time you spend taking a role with your teacher or your classmates?	It is a unique activity in which I become an officer in one company. My classmates and I also play other roles related to the company situation. I try to speak English and feel free to deliver my thoughts because I imagine that I am an officer who works in a company.	Students 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9	7 students
	I am not excited to play a role because I do not understand what they say. I follow the classroom environment. I just respond simply, such as yes or no. The idea is blank, and I do not know how to utter the sentence well.	Students 7, 8, and 10	3 students
How did you feel when you were taking a role without a script?	"Personally, I prefer to play a role without a script, which means the imagination of the role can be huge. I can speak without memorizing some words or sentences that exist in the book, but I create them on my own and say them naturally so the role can be real.	Student 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9	6 students

Questions	Responses	Students	Total
	I am nervous about playing a role in which I do not have any idea what is delivered. Every character is different, and I need time to think before saying sentences or responding to my classroom/ teachers. Thus, I take my time to think of the idea and the words so that I can be involved and respond to them.	Student 1, 4, 5, and 10	4 students
In your class, how eager are you to participate in activities on TiR?	The teacher involved in playing a role makes me confident to talk because she assists me in speaking and responding to what my friend. says. I also can respond to her, which she pairs with while talking. That is to build good communication. The teachers boost her positive energy outside of playing a role I can discuss with her about the material.	Student 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	10 students

The table showed that the students conveyed a positive perception of applying Teacher-in-Role. The teacher engaged the students by applying Teacher-in-Role as one method to improve the students' achievement, especially in speaking. As a result, the students can be able to communicate with others and understand every single word that the others say. The students described their enthusiasm for playing a role, which means they enjoyed the teaching and learning process. Their responses indicated that Teacher-in-Role was the new one to be applied in the classroom and involved the teacher and the students in taking a role. Thus, the materials can be delivered well, and the students understand the materials by practising.

However, several students delivered a negative perception, stating they were not optimistic about playing a role in the classroom. They said that they did not understand well due to restricted vocabulary. The typical responses were that they did not know English and could not convey their ideas using English. Therefore, they preferred to keep silent while playing a role, or they could say yes/no to respond to the others. Sometimes, the teachers assisted them by giving them an idea or telling them a response, and then the students had to imitate what the teacher said during Teacher-in-Role.

DISCUSSION

Students' perceptions of applying Teacher-in-Role were various: students have their own points of view to convey their opinions. This result is based on the aim of Teacher-in-Role, which is that teachers can manage to play a role. There were six goals which teachers should be able to manage. They were to stabilize the students' attention, trigger affective and cognitive responses, provide and collect information, try to speak and respond, face challenges or issues and try to handle them and communicate patterns between teacher and students while Teacher-in-Role (Baldwin, 2018).

Teachers need to create the activities to become actual situations in which they contribute to the students because the students feel their teacher also shows their participation and acts with them. It is needed to maintain students' interest and attention. The students need the teacher to care for them by involving them in what they do in the classroom activity. Teacher-in-Role frames the teacher to manage the classroom flow in which the students are interested in trying the activities that are the role of someone. Students describe a positive perception of applying teacher-in-role, which is when teachers are responsible for managing the classroom based on the teacher's lesson plan (Larasati et al., 2019). Another perception of students was that the teachers stabilize students' attention by doing a role with the students. It provided students with enthusiasm for playing a role in the classroom. The students were excited to join the class and play the role of different characters. However, some students illustrated a negative perception of applying Teacher-in-Role. They emphasized that the Teacher-in-Role is ordinary and nothing special due to the same as the other method. It happened because the students did not understand English and did not have a strong desire to improve their English. In line with Siddiqui and Ahamed (2020), teachers must cooperate with the students in the teaching and learning process to be involved well in the classroom.

The application of Teacher-in-Role in the teaching and learning process was a decision that teachers made to stimulate their responses, particularly affective and cognitive responses. The students explained that they enjoyed playing with the teacher and classmates. The students have been triggered to improve and practice their knowledge with the teacher and classmates. Budiman and Apriani (2019) also support the idea that teachers need a resource for the students to understand the materials and guide the students playing a role. For example, the teacher corrected the students if they made a mistake in speaking. The teacher must prepare the competence to assist the knowledgeable and skilled student (González et al., 2011). Therefore, the teachers can learn the materials by acting excitingly. It can achieve students' learning objectives and pursue the material for the next. The other one was that students could confidently deliver their feelings or ideas to the teacher and friends in front of the class.

In addition, the students implied positive perception, providing information by doing a role. They assumed that the information was easy to understand, and the teacher also made the students know what to do and understand what to say. The information contained instructions, explanations, or compliments by teachers to interact with the students. Then, the students can gather information from different characters by taking a role. It stimulated the students to respond to the other characters. Arifah and Prijambodo (2017) argued that teacher feedback is necessary for students' evaluation to make them understand the information. On the other hand, the students implied that the information was not clear enough for them. The students lacked vocabulary, making it hard to conceive the whole information and collect it precisely.

Moreover, the students tried to speak and respond by positively perceiving the Teacher-in-Role during the teaching and learning process. The students can imagine being someone and creating the expression they want to deliver related to the character of a role. Teachers encourage the students to build the atmosphere by contributing an act to get a new learning experience.

As a result, the students gain more experience in teaching and learning as one of the teachers' professional benchmarks (Makovec, 2018). Teachers manage the class when they can handle it and engage the students in activities to make them enjoy and curious about the role. On the contrary, the students said they were not excited to try a role in the classroom and were less motivated to learn English.

While responding to the others, the students followed the activity but only said simple words due to limited or blank ideas. Challenges and problems come to the students in the classroom while playing a role, or teachers also face the problem. The problems include anxiety, nervousness, the blankness of the idea, or overthinking. The students said they face the problem of doing a role during teaching and learning. They needed to take time to think about what they wanted to say. They did not know how to pronounce some words. Thus, they need to handle it by thinking before saying the words or sentences.

Teachers have a role in managing the problem and finding ways to solve the students' difficulties (Annisa et al., 2021). The teacher is a bridge for students to help them face challenges and issues in teaching and learning. Thus, the teacher needs to control the students and monitor them while taking the role, which is discussing the effective way to solve the problem and keep the role in the classroom. Thus, the students conveyed their ideas and responded without a script. It is one solution for students who can reply without memorizing the sentences. It built students' confidence in the classroom to make the situation natural.

Last but not least is the communication pattern teachers and students create in the teaching and learning process. The students emphasized a positive perception that the relationship between teacher and students was warm and fabulous. It can be seen when the teacher tries to communicate with the students by using words or sentences that are easy and simple; thus, they can understand what the teacher uttered. The teacher's personality becomes valuable in building connections with the student, and the teaching and learning process can run well (Marwanto, 2020). Dynamic communication allows students to interact with the teacher and their classmates, developing their skills to talk with someone older than them. In addition, it maintains students' attitudes when communicating with the teacher, which teacher can convey the energy and monitor the students in doing a role (Fatimah, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The students need to be encouraged by the teacher in the teaching and learning by engaging them in various ways. One of them is Teacher-in-Role, which means playing a role and becoming the other characters to build the natural atmosphere in the classroom. It is not only for students but also for the teacher involved in taking a role with them. Therefore, the students can express their ideas or think and become someone else.

Overall, the students positively perceived applying Teacher-in-Role in teaching and learning. The students argued that the teacher could stabilize students' attention, stimulate and trigger affective and cognitive responses, provide and collect the information, try to speak, respond, and behave in the environment, face the challenges and issues and recognize them, and build dynamic communication patterns. Therefore, the students illustrated enjoying learning by doing Teacher-in-Role because they can be creative in describing a role and build their imagination to respond spontaneously.

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