THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ROLE PLAY TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING SPEAKING

Rakhmonova Shakhnoza
UzSWLU

ABSTRACT

The research paper investigates the impact of role-playing as a classroom technique on students' speaking skill on Uzbek EFL students at the university level. The students are 40 university language students in Uzbekistan State World Languages University in Tashkent. Then, they were divided into two groups, experimental and control groups. Thirty questions were given to both groups as a pre-test of speaking and the students asked to answer them orally. The experimental group then was taught speaking skill of the targeted role-play technique while the control group learnt speaking in their traditional method. After 20 lessons, the post-test of speaking was conducted in which the students in both groups were asked to answer the same way they did first. The results showed that there is a significant progress in speaking skill of experimental group. The two groups were significantly different due to using role play technique.

Keywords: *speech, speaking, experimental, EFL.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В исследовательской работе исследуется влияние ролевых игр как методики в классе на разговорные навыки студентов узбекского языка, изучающих английский как иностранный язык на университетском уровне. Студентами являются 40 студентов-лингвистов Узбекского государственного университета мировых языков в Ташкенте. Затем их разделили на две группы, экспериментальную и контрольную. Обеим группам было задано по 30 вопросов в качестве предварительного теста на говорение, и студентов попросили ответить на них устно. Затем экспериментальную группу обучали навыкам речи с помощью целевой техники ролевой игры, в то время как контрольная группа училась говорить своим традиционным методом. После 20 уроков был проведен пост-тест устной речи, в котором студентов обеих групп просили ответить так же, как они ответили сначала. Результаты показали, что в экспериментальной группе наблюдается значительный прогресс в навыках говорения. Две группы значительно различались из-за использования техники ролевой игры.

Ключевые слова: *речь, говорение, эксперимент, EFL.*

**Oriental Renaissance: Innovative,
educational, natural and social sciences**

SJIF 2023 = 6.131 / ASI Factor = 1.7

(E)ISSN:2181-1784

www.oriens.uz

3(6), June, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Chaney (1998) states that speaking ability is the process of sharing and building meaning while using verbal and non-verbal symbols, in different situations. Speaking is significant in both language learning and teaching. For long time, students recall the activities and memorized the conversations but nowadays, they should study how to express themselves. They should follow social and cultural rules in any context.

Many studies have shown that many EFL students in Uzbekistan hesitating with some activities like listening and speaking ones in university, they are unable to speak and use language in real life situations. Speaking skill has some problems, they are:

a.) students lack of motivation to practice in the lesson,

b.) students are anxious to take part in the conversation,

c.) students do not know what to say, and

d.) students do not like the prescribed textbook.

The nature of the stated problem gives Uzbek English teachers responsibility to adapt different techniques with the aim of improving learning the speaking skill in the classroom, but such techniques mostly were unsuccessful. One of the techniques used to teach the speaking skill, perhaps, is the role-play.Recently, oral skills (Listening and speaking) in Uzbekistan gained much attention in general English classes, due to the growing demands from schools, universities and markets witnessed a dramatic change. Most of students are looking for a job in big companies, schools and universities after graduation, the profession of teaching becomes very competitive. Market seeks for graduates who not only have a certificate but they ask for a high level of English communicative skills which can be assessed by conducting interviews in English language. So that, it is very significant to teach students some skills that they can use in the everyday interaction that they will face after graduation. As a result, listening and speaking skills instruction should be in near-to-real situations which is basic for all students.

The majority of teachers have employed role play , but very few have taught it as a teaching practice in their classes. Whereas the theoretical background on role play assumes there are many merits to conduct role play in English class, only some researches have shade light on the students' sides concerning role play.

The present research is only one part of an investigation project, which was conducted to study the effectiveness of role play in teaching English for different levels of university students in Uzbekistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arends (1998) assures on the practice of interacting with others as a method of doing teaching style active for teachers. It prevents instructing from being daily routine and out of date. When applying modern techniques, they are not necessarily entertaining new principles. Most of them shared a common principle of emphasizing verbal tasks that focused on meaning rather than language structure (p. 23).

Some researchers introduce and explain the benefits of excessive practicing role play techniques via showing that comprehension is established when the brain of a student codes and gathers data. Comparisons and decisions can be made as researchers examine the way others behave in different situations. Roles act as a short-cut way of identifying, recognizing, and labeling a set of appearances and behaviors (Van Ments, 1983). Students form expectations depending on appearance, behavior, and characteristic of a particular person. They predict what they will do in a given context. Ladousse (1987) states that can be allocated by social position or an occupation in everyday situations, such as a teacher, engineer, police or a president. Role is the mean of expressing the norms of the group and social skill to deal with an individual or a group.

Holt and Kysilka (2006) explain that surrounding or the situation the student will face, can impact his/her way of acting. When we see yourself or other role-players as members of congregation, an audience or students in a parade, then the way we behave changes according to our surroundings. For instance, the way that we used to behave with our friend is different from the way that we behave in formal situations. They acknowledged that roles can also be affected by a person's function or purpose. For example, people in the hotel industry may be carrying out the tasks of a manager,bell person, or representative. People who work in an airport will be carrying out the tasks of travel agent, flight attendant, captain or passenger. Since roles are dependent on situations, function and purpose, the instructor needs to carefully think when he/she would like to employ role play technique in the classroom. The teacher should consider the students engagement, role assessing, duration of the technique, and concluding of the idea.

Ones (1982) clarifies that students have to be responsible of their roles and expand their outcome as much as they can in the context in which they find themselves in order for an imitation to take place. The whole class can engage in role play, it can be interesting, and it may result in better teaching and learning of language.

Cornett (1999) shows that students improve fluency in language and oral interaction skills, beside the use of language of the body during face-to-face

Oriental Renaissance: Innovative,
educational, natural and social sciences
SJIF 2023 = 6.131 / ASI Factor = 1.7

(E)ISSN:2181-1784
www.oriens.uz
3(6), June, 2023

communication, when they participate in role play techniques. Those techniques are especially fundamental for students who may not often use English at home because those students are eager to speak and then improve their fluency and speaking with the chance to participate in role play. Role-play is simply required to play the other roles in the same way they think about how other roles may behave. As a result, role play can clearly present many aspects like reactions, values, feelings, and attitudes of the person.

Holt and Kysilka (2006) state that role play technique can be fun and develop learning, these techniques can be used as a student-student communication, they help EFL students to comprehend the importance of cooperation and to have an interest in learning.

Mitchell (1977) confirms that process of group relies on four factors: observation, reflection, interaction, and plan. Interaction is the peer-relation; observation is the feedback given by peers; reflection is the thoughts provided by group members; and the plan is the procedure to achieve the shared outcome. Once students employ those factors in a suitable way, their oral skills will work in correlation. Teachers try to establish an environment of a class where students have authentic activities and real-life communication that improve their speaking skills. So, the students should collaborate and work in groups to achieve these objectives. Harmer (1984) explains that there are many techniques to develop speaking skills, one of them is a role-play. In role-play technique, we have many social contexts and a lot of interactional roles, while teacher produces topics to the students such as feeling and thinking of a given role. Thus, the teacher can explain to the student for instance "You are Timur; you go to the dentist and tell him what happened last week"

Holt & Kysilka (2006) confirms that group work enlarge the availability of time available for oral interaction and permits many students to benefit from time allocated for speaking. Teaching in groups also reduces the inhibitions of the students who may feel shy who cannot speak comfortably with the whole class. Role-play can make all class be in engagement, and it can be interesting and lead the whole group to be in a situation of effective learning.

Language is basically speech, and speech is interaction by sounds. Speaking skill is used by a student in their interaction every day, this could be in or out school. Such skill needs many repetitions; it is mainly considered a neuromuscular not thinking process. It contains ability of sending and receiving messages. Thus, speaking can be seen as a way for showing opinions, believes, or even feelings to others (Huebner, 1960).

Oriental Renaissance: Innovative,
educational, natural and social sciences
SJIF 2023 = 6.131 / ASI Factor = 1.7

(E)ISSN:2181-1784
www.oriens.uz
3(6), June, 2023

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The subjects of the study were 40 Uzbek EFL college students in Uzbekistan State World Languages University, second course. Selected students divided in two groups of 20 each and were randomly distributed to an experimental and a control group. Students are taught role play activities while teaching prescribed topic called "Conversation".

Validity and Reliability

In order to get face and content validity as well as authenticity validity of the both tests, the tests have been exposed to the jury members, speaking teachers. Some modifications and recommendations are suggested by them and they considered in the final version of the tests.

Since scoring of an oral test is considered highly subjective, the present study used some aspects to increase the reliability of the oral test: Firstly, the researcher has adopted the test sheet for students' scores. Reliability coefficient is obtained by comparing the score of two teachers (both the researcher's score after listening to the tape recorder). The correlation is found to be (0.969) and this is considered a high and stable coefficient.

The Pre-test

The pretest was conducted first. The pretest was administered on the sample of the study for two groups. The researcher himself tested the sample of the study and he recorded the answers for scoring. The time needed for answering the question was between 10-15 minutes. The aim behind carrying out the pretest, is to compare the students' achievement scores in the pretest with that of the same students in the post test.

The Post-test

At the end of the teaching period, the students of the experimental group were post tested after a month. The same testing procedures were followed as conducted in the pretest. The students' oral performance in the posttest were scored under the same conditions as that of the pretest. The time requirement for answering the questions was 10-15 minutes for each student. The researcher conducted the pretest and the posttest under the same conditions.

Materials

The materials of the present study were of four sorts;

1. materials for the proficiency test,
2. materials for the pre-test,
3. materials for the post-test.

Production of spoken language like knowing how to talk a foreign language is usually considered as the most complicated aspect of language learning for both teachers and students. The present study deals with spoken language and the emphasis in the language classroom began to move from the traditional methods to new trends and focus on communicative competence as the ultimate goal of teaching. The oral test permits the researcher to measure the conversation (interaction) components and the linguistics components. Throughout the oral test students are encouraged to speak and then assessed on the basis of that speech. The materials for the proficiency test consist of 35 questions including grammar, vocabulary and sentence completion. The materials for the pre-test of speaking of the study included of 30 questions to be answered by the students in both groups orally. The role-play has three steps during the treatment of students pre role-play, while role-play and after role-play.

In the pre role play steps, materials were (technical data, activities, background information and rules) and language (frequently used vocabularies, idioms and some grammatical rules) are taken from the prescribed textbook, usually the teacher and in some cases the students, who have long experience in some contexts. The students were given the relevant words or phrases employed in role play techniques in order to participate effectively in such activities and have time to practice the role play without taking time to know the meaning of unknown words.

The second stage is during role-play, in this step, students read the text and acting a role as clarified in the model conversation, firstly be familiar with the situation and study the words ,items and idioms needed in the situation. Secondly, the students create their own script or a text. In this stage usually the teacher does not help students in producing their own words, all students did the writing and try to correct their mistakes because of their unfamiliarity with role play technique and with low self-confidence of their language. They were stimulated to enlarge the model conversation by adding extra questions or by practicing it with a new situation (e.g. students may create a new situation, which completely differs from the one in the original topic), and establishing new conversation. To avoid students sitting with the same partner, the students were randomly divided into new partner every week. Students also had enough time to prepare themselves before starting, to decide about the way they would manage their role and briefly repeat between two students for example. While the practice, they had a chance to ask for a help from their teacher or may be from any group who had a higher level in the English language. Role play interactions can happen among 3-5 different students. This could lead the students to participate in a variety of communications with different students in the same

	Oriental Renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences	(E)ISSN:2181-1784
O R	SJIF 2023 = 6.131 / ASI Factor = 1.7	www.oriens.uz
		3(6), June, 2023

interaction. This assisted students to be familiar and cope with a given situations and communication steps in spontaneous way, and act out the language they need in such a context , in addition it also created a wonderful chance for team work. At the end, students typed their conversations and they recorded only in their post role play stage.

The third stage is after role play which is giving feedback stage. The students received feedback from each other and the teacher as well. During this stage, the teacher may arrange the activities of the language which may help the students as a whole. Students can express themselves freely and effectively about how they want to interact in certain contexts but they were unable to. After practicing on their own conversations, students began typing their own text. During typing, each student should play both roles (he/she could be a client and customer).After the audio recording was also submitted for checking purposes.

Finally, the materials for the post-test of the study - the same 30 questions in the pre-test of speaking to be answered by the students in both groups. The students' performance in the pre and posttests of speaking were scored depending on five aspects: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

RESULTS

The data of the study are analyzed by applying the following statistical methods: a t-value (t-test) was calculated between the post-test scores of speaking skill in the two groups of students to show the impact in the hypothesis of the study.

The mean scores of the two groups have been compared; where the mean score of the experimental group is 15.27, while the mean score of the control group is 6.36. This indicates that there is a significant difference in the total scores of post-test between the experimental and control groups in a favor of the experimental group. This confirms that the experimental group is better than the control group.

TABLE (1)
THE TOTAL SCORES OF THE POST-TEST

Group	No.	$\overline{X}$	SD	DF	Computed t-value	Tabulated t-value	Level of significance
Exp.	20	15.27	7.31	102	3.50	1.99	0.05
Cont.	20	6.36	5.54				

Table two shows the results of two ANOVA coefficients calculated separately between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental and the control group of the study. This means that the pre-test and the post-test scores in the control group are close to each other when compared to those in the experimental group, which represents that treating the experimental group with role-play techniques has resulted in expanding the range of their speaking scores in the post-test.

TABLE (2)
THE COVARIANCE MATRIX BETWEEN THE PRE-TEST AND THE POST-TEST
SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND THE CONTROL GROUP

Group	Covariance
Experimental	1.15
Control	2.07

It is obvious that students' accents improved with experimental group more than control groups. It is expected actually to obtain this result because role play technique asks students to practice speaking and listening more than reading and writing. Students also should practice the repetition of the same words or expressions many times to comprehend their conversation. They were asked to on their accent and pronunciation , but simultaneously they had to focus on memorizing each line (this could be done mentally without speaking aloud). As a result, students might have paid more attention to accent or pronunciation while speaking.

CONCLUSION

The results show that the employed treatment affected the outcomes; thus, it can be concluded that using role-play as a classroom technique is obviously able to improve the performance as seen in a test of speaking among EFL students.

Based on the obtained results, certain justifications concerning the effectiveness of using role play techniques on EFL students' speaking skill can be made. Accordingly, the students under experimental group seemed to succeed because of getting involved and practice in role play technique such as group and peerwork. It can be concluded that if the class is framed as a community to work together supporting each other, it will have the opportunity to build their ability to interact with and understand each other, the best basis for all learning.

Furthermore,the results clearly confirm that role play techniques provide a kind of interesting environment for the students to flourish in. Such atmosphere leads to better attention in learning and stimulate them to participate in role-play techniques, where students take a new identity and learn to use a FL for every day interaction.

The present study mainly aimed to enhance the teachers' practice in the classroom,not only by bringing changes ,but also by offering new insights into students' use of role play in their real life situations. Role-play types were successful in assessing and encouraging university students to interact and communicate in groups and pairs and to enhance their speaking skill in their targeted language. Role play technique has different aspects which are beneficial in various situations. Role play can be suitable for both low and high level of students especially for university students to help them use their English. So, when university teachers try to employ

**Oriental Renaissance: Innovative,
educational, natural and social sciences**

SJIF 2023 = 6.131   /   ASI Factor = 1.7

(E)ISSN:2181-1784
www.oriens.uz
3(6), June, 2023

similar ideas with their students who want to master the language, they can prepare the role play techniques which are most appropriate for creating team work and English atmosphere for them.

REFERENCES

1. Arends, R.L. (1998). Classroom Instruction and Management. Columbus, OH: McGraw -Hill.

2. Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983) Teaching the Spoken Language: An Approach Based on the Analysis of Spoken English. New York: Cambridge University Press.

3. Byrne, Donn (1986): Teaching oral English. London: Longman. JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH 869

4. Chaney, A.L. (1998). Teaching Oral Communication. In: Grandes K-8. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

5. Cornett, C. E. (1999). Whole Language, Whole Learning. Phil Delte Kappa Educational Foundation.

6. Dickson, Patricia S. (1989): Acting French: drama techniques in the second language classroom. In: *The French Review* 63/2, 300-311.

7. Farhady, H., Jafarpoor, A., and Birjandi, P. (2000). Testing Language Skills: From Theory to Practice. Tehran: SAMT Publications.

8. Galloway, V. (1987). From Defining to Developing Proficiency: A New Look at the Decision. In: Byrnes, H. (ed.): Defining and Developing Proficiency: *Guidelines, Implementations, and Concepts*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 25–73.

9. Harmer, J. (1984). The Practice of English Language Teaching: Longman Handbook for Language Teaching. USA: Longman Inc.

10. Harper-Whalen, Susan &Morris, Sandra (2005). Using a role-play activity in training. In: *Training Solutions* 9, 1-4.

11. Holt, L.C. & Kysilka, M. (2006). Instructional Patterns: Strategies for Maximizing Student Learning. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

12. Huebner, Theodore, (1960). Audio Visual Technique in Foreign Language. New York: Cambridge University Press.

13. Kenneth O. Gangel. (2008). Teaching through Role Playing. (https://bible.org/seriespage/3-teaching-through-role-playing).

14. Ladousse, G.P. (1987). Language Issues. White Plains, NY: Longman.

15. Littlewood, William (1981). Communicative language teaching: an introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

16. Livingstone, Carol (1983). Role play in language learning. Singapore: London: Longman.

17. McInnis, D.J. (1998). Caring Communication in the Language Classroom. *Peace Review*. 10(4), 539-543.

18. Mitchell, L.S. (1977). Creating a Class: College Admissions and Education Elites. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

19. Pi-Chong, Su (1990). The effectiveness of role-play activities in learning English as a foreign language by Chinese college students. Ph.D. thesis, University of San Francisco.

20. Richards, J.C. (1983). Listening comprehension: approach, design, procedure. *TESOL Quarterly*. 17: 219240