

Teachers' Perceptions Towards Using Role-Playing as a Teaching
Technique of Speaking Skill in EFL Classes
إدراك المدرسين لاستخدام تجسيد الأدوار كأسلوب تعليمي لمهارة التحدث في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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Abstract

Speaking is an important language skill. It is essential because most people communicate their ideas to others through their speaking abilities. One of the difficulties that English language learners face is the failure to hold a conversation. Some students avoid speaking because they are too shy or have severe anxiety when speaking. Speaking can be taught in a variety of ways, including role-playing, storytelling, and guessing games. The researchers in this study use role play as a teaching technique of speaking skill to help students learn how to solve spoken communication problems in English language. The goal of this study is to explain how the role-play technique can help students enhance their speaking skills in Iraqi preparatory schools. This research is conducted with a sample of (100) teachers from different preparatory schools in Iraq. The tool of the study is a questionnaire developed mainly for preparatory schools' teachers. The results of the questionnaire analysis indicate that teachers are in favor of the application of role-playing technique to improve students' speaking skill. As a result, the researchers advise using a variety of techniques when teaching speaking to students to improve their speaking abilities, including role playing, discussions, and simulation activities.

Keywords: Perceptions, Role-Playing, Teaching Technique, Speaking Skill, EFL.

المستخلص

التحدث هو مهارة لغوية مهمة. التحدث مهم لأن معظم الناس ينقلوا أفكارهم للآخرين من خلال قدراتهم على التحدث. ان إحدى الصعوبات التي يواجهها متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية هي عدم القدرة على إجراء محادثة. يتجنب بعض الطلاب التحدث لأنهم خجولون جدًا أو لديهم قلق شديد عند التحدث. يمكن تدريس المحادثة بعدة طرق، بما في ذلك تجسيد الأدوار ورواية القصص وألعاب التخمين. استخدمت الباحثتان في هذه الحالة تجسيد الأدوار كأسلوب تعليمي لمساعدة الطلاب على تعلم كيفية حل المشكلات. الغرض من هذا البحث هو وصف كيف يمكن لتقنية تجسيد الأدوار أن تساعد الطلاب على تحسين مهارات التحدث لديهم في المدارس الإعدادية العراقية. تم إجراء هذا البحث مع (100) معلمًا من مدارس إعدادية مختلفة في العراق. أداة الدراسة هي استبانة قدمت للمدرسين. تشير نتائج تحليل الاستبانة إلى أن المدرسين يفضلون تطبيق تقنيات تجسيد الأدوار. نتيجة لذلك، تتصح الباحثتان استخدام مجموعة متنوعة من التقنيات عند تدريس التحدث إلى الطلاب من أجل تحسين قدراتهم في التحدث، بما في ذلك تجسيد الأدوار والمناقشات وأنشطة المحاكاة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإدراك، تجسيد الأدوار، أسلوب التدريس، مهارة التحدث، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

1. Introduction

Teaching speaking in the classroom is always expected to lead to communicative activities that allow the development of interpersonal connections between students and teachers as well as between students themselves. Syafryadin (2020) states that conversation is one of the activities that pupils engage in. By facilitating oral communication of the material being covered, the interaction creates a situation that engages pupils and supports their efforts.

According to Richard (2008), one aspect of communication is speaking. He demonstrates that speaking is one of the most effective forms of communication. Nunn (2003) argues that speaking is more challenging than reading, writing, and listening due to real-time situations and limited editing time..

There are several modern techniques and approaches to teaching foreign languages in a communicative manner. Every teacher selects them based on the age and interests of the students, their language level (beginner, intermediate, or advanced), and the amount of time available for the activity (Karomat, 2021). According to Ur (1991), a variety of techniques for encouraging speaking or conversation are meant to aid students and guide them into a more advanced dimension that reflects their progress in English. The facilitation of dialogues, improvisations, plays, role-playing, speeches, discussions in small groups, debates, movies, cultural orientation, proverbs, humor, songs, poetry, correspondence, group projects, field trips, and games are some examples of these techniques.

Students can use one of these techniques to their advantage, such as the role-play technique, which helps students develop their speaking skills. In many situations, role-playing enables the individual to feel more in control and flexible. L2 learners can practice using the language in a variety of situations by role-playing, and as they get better at it, they should be able to do so more naturally in different contexts (Stern, 1983). The researchers' goal is to investigate teachers' perceptions towards role-playing technique in teaching speaking to non-native English speakers at Iraq preparatory schools.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Speaking Skill

One of the four foundational abilities in English is speaking. English is spoken in Iraq as an EFL language. Speaking is a skill that people use to communicate in everyday situations, whether they are at school or not. Speaking calls for quick responses and contributions from both listeners and speakers. Brown (2004). According to Harmer (2011), speaking is the capacity to process language and data quickly, determine language features, and talk easily. Speaking English is hard because there are so many skills to learn, including sentence construction, vocabulary growth, grammar, listening exercises, and practicing applying them all in context (Sihotang and Zaharani, 2020).

According to Goh and Burns (2012), learners regard speaking as the most important of the foreign language skills (listening, reading, and writing) and strive to improve it because mastering a foreign language is primarily dependent on being a fluent speaker of the target language. Speaking is described as an interactive oral communication process by Purnamawati et al. (2015) in which one person expresses an idea, emotion, or piece of information to another. The main objective of learning English is to be able to communicate with others, especially foreigners, by using it as a tool.

2.1.1 The Components of Speaking

According to Syakur (1987), the speaking skill has at least five components these elements include:

2.1.1.1 Pronunciation

Students can speak more clearly by pronouncing their words, which they do when speaking. It means that if students have good pronunciation and intonation, even those with limited vocabulary and grammar can communicate effectively Syakur (1987).

2.1.1.2 Grammar

Grammar is an essential component of communication. If the speaker uses poor grammar, the meaning of the statement may change. if blatant violations of grammar rules. According to Scrivener (2005), making accurate written or spoken sentences is made easier by grammar.

2.1.1.3 Vocabulary

Learning to master vocabulary can help students communicate, write, or translate words' meanings. They will not be able to speak, write, or translate anything into English if they do not understand the words' meanings. A student's ability to speak English can be improved by learning new words (Putri, 2010).

2.1.1.4 Fluency

Many language learners strive to become fluent speakers. The main indicator of someone speaking a foreign language successfully is their level of fluency. Fluency is usually referred to as the ability to speak freely and continuously. The teacher gives students unrestricted access to the classroom while assessing their fluency during the teaching and learning process.

2.1.1.5 Comprehension

Understanding is a key component of speaking and oral communication. One subject must initiate the conversation as well as respond to the speech. Lin (2010) defined comprehension as the ability to take in data, analyze it, and produce an accurate and cohesive understanding of the input. Utilizing an interactive strategy to achieve a meaningful understanding of the input is an example of well-developed comprehension abilities.

2.2 Role-Playing Technique

According to Harmer (1984), one technique for developing speaking ability is role-playing. Role-playing is described by Doff (1990) as a technique of introducing real-life situations into the classroom. Role-playing is a successful technique of teaching and learning because it provides a holistic education through a multi-level experiential journey of discovery, expression, and mastery where all students and teachers develop together.

Role-playing technique has been used to improve teaching and learning at various educational levels by increasing motivation, retention, and active participation (Gathumbi and Masembe ,2005; Rodgers and Evans ,2008; Dick and Carey ,2001; Collie and Slater ,1987). Holt and Kysilka (2006) demonstrated that role-playing technique can both be enjoyable and promote learning. By fostering student-to-student communication, they can also assist EFL students in understanding the value of teamwork and arousing interest in their studies.

Role-playing in the classroom is a technique that, in the opinion of Osuafor (2017), has many benefits.

1. Keeping the students at the center is a major focus of role-playing.
2. Role-playing can spur students' interest in their studies.
3. Students have numerous opportunities to practice their language and social skills through role-playing.
4. Role-playing can help students develop a real-world concept and broaden their understanding.

5. Students can develop wholesome social habits by role-playing. They pick up the proper behavior for the circumstances.

2.2.1 Types of Role-Playing

Fully scripted role-playing, semi-scripted role-playing, and unscripted role-playing are the three types of role-playing that are available. According to Harper-Whalen and Morris (2005), everyone in a fully scripted role-play is expected to know or memorize their line. One example of this type of conversation is explaining the model conversation from the textbook that is required. The main goal of the conversation is to make each word in the language meaningful and easy to remember. According to Byrne (1986), low-level students may find this kind of role play appropriate if they are unfamiliar with the situation in the semi-scripted role play.

The second role-playing scenario involves a model conversation with missing words, allowing students to fill in the blanks with appropriate words. The materials depend on a frame, like real-life situations. Semi-scripted role-playing is less effective than unscripted and should be used with students who have mastered upper beginner to intermediate levels of learning (Livingstone 1983).

Non-scripted role play involves students constructing mini conversations using keywords and information, filling in gaps. This type of role play allows students to build on their opinions and thoughts, establishing language and problem-solving skills. It is suitable for middle to advanced level students and offers a free and structured approach to learning (Dickson 1989).

2.3 Teacher's Role in Role-Playing Activities

According to Ladousse (1995), when planning role plays, teachers need to consider the following: If role-playing is not likely to be planned, the teacher may have trouble managing his class.

1. Pair work is preferred over group work for practical and psychological reasons. Pair work simplifies communication without disturbing the class, while group work involves direct, private conversations (Hedge, 2000).

2. The teacher is expected to select a role-playing activity that corresponds to each student's level to ensure that role-playing is used with all students (Rodriguez, 1983).
3. Limit the duration of the activity until the students become accustomed to it (Hedge, 2000).
4. The teacher needs to make sure that the students have a thorough understanding of the subject before starting a lesson (Henley, 2009).
5. As the students become accustomed to this activity, the teacher's job is to use role-playing that is not too challenging or emotionally taxing, tolerating a small amount of native language use if it facilitates the role-playing (Sàrosdy, 2006).
6. The teacher's job is to inspire students; they should not worry about the one or two pairs or groups that choose not to take part in the activity (Gow, 1993).
7. In the report stage, a teacher's role is to introduce the presentation to set the tone for listening, to choose who will speak next, and to provide a summary at the conclusion (Saetan, 1991).
8. The teacher's spectator role is to observe the role play and provide instructions and advice at the conclusion of the activity (Hedge, 2000).
9. Role-playing should avoid distressing psychological experiences and be interesting, not dull, to reduce student anxiety. Teachers need to focus on play rather than role (Sàrosdy, 2006).
10. Teachers need to remain unobtrusive, pay attention to students' mistakes, and offer feedback for additional practice and revision. Teachers do not need to correct students' mistakes to demotivate them (Livingstone, 1983).

3. Methodology

In this study, the researchers design a questionnaire as a tool to explore teachers' perceptions of the role-playing technique used to teach speaking skills. The questionnaire consists of (10) items see appendix (A), and (100) English language teachers from Babylon's preparatory schools represented the study's sample. The qualitative method was used to analyze the collected data, the researcher used Spss as statistics to analysis the data, and the results showed the

teachers' perceptions towards using the role-playing technique to teach speaking skills.

4. Results

4.1. Results Related to (RPT)

Table (1)
Results of t-test for (RPT) technique

N	D.F	Mean	S. D	Test Value	T-test		Sig.
					calculated	Tab	
100	99	13.08	3.139	12	3.441	1.66	0.001

Based on the above table the results presented that the mean score was (13.08) with a standard deviation of (3.139), which is greater than the significance level (0.05), while the assumed mean of the scale was (12). To test the statistical difference between them, the one-sample t-test was applied and revealed a statistically significant difference in favor of the mean score, with a calculated t-value of (3.441), which is greater than the t-table value of (1.66) at a significance level of (0.05) and a degree of freedom of (99). and conclude that there is a significant difference between the population mean and 12.

The findings indicate that the teachers in the study's sample have positive opinions of the application of the role-playing technique in EFL classes. The current study is based on how EFL teachers view using the role-playing technique to improve speaking ability. The analysis of the questionnaire data shows that

teachers support the use of role-playing technique in the classroom to help students improve their speaking abilities. Role-playing is successful in teaching speaking, making it a viable alternative to other speaking instruction techniques.

5. Conclusion

Speaking is an important component of any language; through speaking, people can communicate with each other. In the classroom, students need some methods, techniques, and different activities that can help them improve their speaking in the target language. One of these techniques that the study was exposed to is the role-playing technique. Based on the findings of the study, role-playing is considered an effective technique that helps students improve their speaking.

Role-playing is a valuable educational technique for both students and teachers. Along with giving students more chances to act and interact with their peers who are attempting to speak English, this program will help students' speaking, listening, and understanding skills in the language. The classroom environment is made more enjoyable and lively by role play. The language becomes more practical and realistic for students to use. As a result, they will be able to appreciate the importance and usefulness of English. ESL/EFL instructors should experiment with and apply role play more frequently in their classes, as it is a useful teaching strategy. The researchers suggest using a variety of teaching methods, such as role-playing, discussions, and simulation activities.

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Appendix (A)

Questionnaire's Items

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Role- Play Technique (RPT)					
1-The use of RPT enhances students' comprehension of short stories.					
2- RPT develops students' communication skills through students/students and students/teacher interaction.					
3- RPT enhances students speaking skill.					
4- RPT increases the use of Vocabulary.					
5- RPT improve student's pronunciation.					
6- RPT develops listening skill.					
7- RPT helps students to learn about the target culture.					
8- RPT helps students in develop their experiences of the target language.					
9- RPT prepare students for real life. If they expose to the target culture.					
10- RPT allows students to explore realistic situation by interacting with people.					