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Developing Students' Speaking Skill through Role-Play:

-The case of second year Students of English at

Biskra University

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Master Degree in "Language Sciences"

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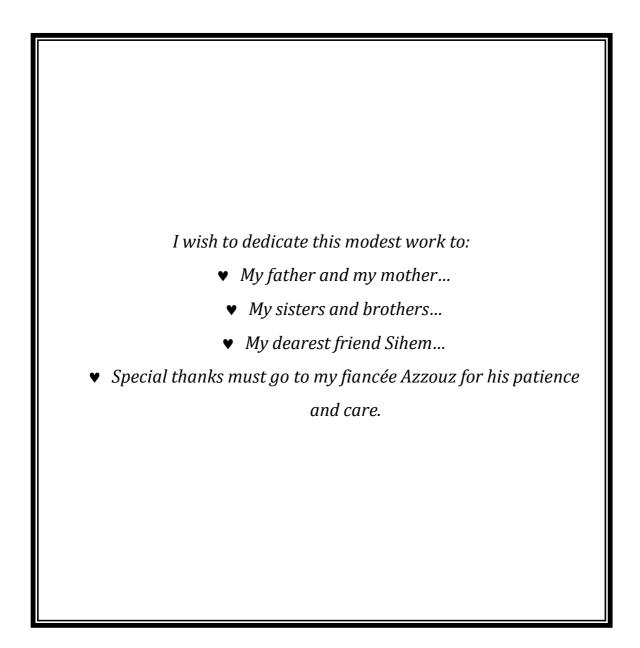
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<u>Dedication</u>

I wish to dedicate this modest work to:

♥ *My father and my mother…*

♥ *My sisters and brothers…*

♥ *My dearest friend Sihem…*

♥ *Special thanks must go to my fiancée Azzouz for his patience and care.*

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The present study aims to explore the effects of role-play on improving learners' speaking skill and communicating abilities. This work is mainly concerned with making use of role-play technique to maximize learners' oral production. It also attempts to shed light on the importance of using this technique with students of foreign languages. The basic hypothesis adopted in this study sets out that effective use of role-play technique can help teachers to develop their students' speaking skill and communicating abilities.This study is based on two questionnaire administrated to both the second year students and teachers of Oral Expression to get information about the impact of using role-play technique on developing the learners' speaking skill. The findings of the questionnaire showed that both learners and teachers consider role-play as an important technique in enhancing the skill of speaking.

الملخص

تبحث هذه المذكرة موضوع استعمال تقنية التدريس عن طريق العمل المسرحي الذي يقوم به التلاميذ. بأكثر دقة الموضوع يعالج تحسين المستوى الشفهي لطلبة السنة الثانية لغة انجليزية من خلال إدخال تقنية العمل المسرحي إلى حصص التعبير الشفوي.

تنقسم هذه المذكرة إلى جزئين ،جزء نظري وأخر تطبيقي الجزء النظري يحتوي على فصلين الفصل الأول عبارة عن مفاهيم خاصة بالقدرة الكلامية ويحتوي أيضا على أنواع وخصائص هذه الصفة التي تختلف من شخص إلى آخر. كذلك يحتوي هذا الفصل على بعض التمارين التي يستطيع الأستاذ من خلالها أن يطور المقدرة الكلامية لتلاميذه. الفصل الثاني يتحدث عن تقنية العمل المسرحي و نتطرق فيه إلى تعريف هذه التقنية و ذكر خصائصها وأهميتها هذه.بالإضافة إلى ايجابيات استخدامها خاصة مع التلاميذ المبتدئين في اللغة. أما الجزء التطبيقي فيحتوي على فصلين الفصل الأول يتحدث عن المنهجية المتبعة في هذا البحث حيث يفصل في عدة عناصر بدءا من المنهج من حيث كونه وصفي أو تجريبي.كذلك نقدم في هذا الفصل وصف دقيق للمجتمع الإحصائي والعينة التي تم اختيارها عشوائيا.وأخيرا الفصل الثاني من الجزء الثاني هو عبارة عن تحاليل ونتائج للأسئلة التي قدمت للأساتذة والتلاميذ.وفقا للتحاليل التي قمنا بها توصلنا إلى النتائج التالية :

❖ الأهمية البالغة لإدخال تقنيات جديدة كالعمل المسرحي .

❖ إمكانية تطوير وتحسين المستوى الشفوي للطلبة من خلال هذه التقنيات .

❖ عدم الوعي الكافي سواء من طرف الأساتذة أو التلاميذ بأهمية استعمال تقنية العمل المسرحي والطرق الأمثل للقيام بذلك .

❖ عدم تجاوب التلاميذ بما فيه الكفاية مع هذه التقنيات وذلك نظرا لعدم وعيهم بايجابياتها.

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Introduction:

Focusing on the oral skill in teaching a foreign language is an important aspect since the aim is to enable the learner to communicate effectively in a fluent and appropriate language. According to Hughes(2002) "One of the central difficulties inherent in the study of speaking is that it overlaps with a considerable number of other area and activities" (p.6). Indeed, in teaching a foreign language, the teacher uses many techniques that focuses on the oral aspects of the language more than the written one.

1-Statement of the Problem:

Researchers such as Jeremy Harmer (2001), Penny Ur (2000) and others suggest that fluency practice and discussions inside classrooms help students to develop their skills and abilities. Because speaking is considered as the most important skill to be developed when learning a second or foreign language. We have noticed that students who interact and speak in the classroom by playing roles of different situations achieve better in oral expression in most cases than those who always keep silent. Therefore, the problem, we are dealing with in this research, is the existing relationship between practicing the language by using role-play technique and developing the speaking skill. The precise question we would ask is, "what are the effects of role-play technique toward students' speaking skill?".

2-Significance of the Study:

As students we all faced problems in learning the speaking skill; one reason is because most learners are shy and afraid of being a part in a conversation and hence leads to the lack of practice, and, also because of this many researchers advise to apply some techniques including role-play in teaching speaking. According to them role-play gives students an opportunity to practice communication in different roles. Harmer (2001) states that simulation

and role-play are used to encourage oral fluency (p.274). Four these reasons we are interested in analyzing the use of role-play in teaching speaking for students of second year at the English Department at Biskra University. In addition, we want to know the advantages and may be the problems faced by students as well as teachers while using it.

3-Aims:

The purpose of our study is:

✓ to use role-play in classroom to teach speaking,

✓ to improve the students' speaking skill, and

✓ to find out the difficulties while using role-play technique.

4-Definition of terms:

Speaking skill: according to the Oxford English Dictionary (Second Edition): speak: be able to use a language. According to Harmer (2001) "the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language (on the spot)" (p,269).

Role-play: learning activity in which you behave as somebody else would behave in a certain situation. According to the concise Oxford English Dictionary (1978 edition) role-play is: "behaving in accordance with specified function (p,2)".

5-Main Questions:

1. How can the use of role-play improve the students' speaking?

2. What are the advantages of using role-play?

3. Are there any difficulties while using role-play technique?

6-**Hypotheses:** The present research is based on two hypotheses that shall be tested and verified through.

1. We hypothesise that if teachers use role-play techniques, they would improve their students' speaking skill and enrich their vocabulary.
2. We do agree that role-plays help teachers' to evaluate the performance of individual students.

7-**Research Methodology:**

In this research, we try to clarify the role and effectiveness of using role-play technique in teaching English and improving the learners' speaking skill. So, we intend to use the descriptive method. The main data gathering tool in this research is the questionnaire that will be given to second year students at the English department in Biskra University and their teachers of oral expression course.

8-**Research Limitation:** The research will deliberately focus on:

✓ finding out the causes leading to the lack of using role-play technique,

✓ finding and providing solutions to help students in developing their speaking skill, and

✓ encouraging teachers to use role-play to develop students' speaking skill.

9-**Structure of the Study:**

The present dissertation consists of four main chapters. The first two chapters constitute the literature survey. Chapter One represents a review of the speaking skill; its definition, importance, elements, types, and students' problems in speaking. Chapter Two is devoted to role-play technique; the main focus of this chapter is on its definition, importance, its main types. The last two chapters concerns the field work; the first is design and methodology in

which we clarify our data collecting tools and we speak about our population and sample of study. The last one is devoted to the analysis of the collected data by means of the teachers' and the students' questionnaires.

<u>PART ONE</u>

"Theoretical overview"

<u>CHAPTER ONE</u>

The Speaking Skill

Introduction

Speech plays a great role in our daily lives. Through speech we can express our feelings, ideas and points of view to others. In classrooms, especially where second or foreign languages are taught the main thing for most of the students is to speak fluently with the target language. Walter (1997, p.201) states that for many students who are learning a foreign language the prime goal is to be able to speak it.

In this chapter, we are going to deal with general issues about speaking; definition of speaking, differences between speech and writing in addition to some types of speaking activities. Also, we are going to mention some students' problems in speaking.

I.1. **Definition:**

I.1.1. **The speaking skill:**

As it was mentioned at the beginning of this work, speaking skill is considered as the main skill that must be achieved while learning a second or foreign language. According to Atma (2010, p. 19) Speaking skill is an interactive process of constricting meaning that involves producing and processing information. The speaking skill involves a communicative ability to use language to chat and transmit messages in different and appropriate situations. It is to interact with participants and carry a message of some sort.

Susanti(2007,p.6) states that in Oxford Advanced Dictionary the definition of speaking is to express or communicate opinions, feelings, ideas, etc, by or as talking and it involves the activities in the part of the speaker as psychological(articulator) and physical(acoustic) stage. According to Nazara (2011). "Speaking is a multifaceted construct" (p.30).

I. 1.2.**Elements of speaking:**

Harmer (2001, p.296) mentions the elements of speaking which refer to the language features that learners should have knowledge about. In addition to the processes of language and information in the same time when an interlocutor interacts with them. (As cited in Kouicem, 2010, p.27, 28).

A. **Language features**:

The following features are necessary for an effective speaking:

- Connected speech: This ability needs from the speaker of English to produce more connected sounds not only separated phonemes. These sounds may be modified, omitted, added or weakened in the connected speech.

- Expressive devices: English native speakers use effectively the phonological rules, which refer to the pitch, stress, volume, speed with the use of non-verbal means. These devices help them to convey their intended meaning. Students, then need to have this ability to employing such devices if they want to be effective communicators.

- Lexis and grammar: When learners produce same language function, they often use the same lexical structure. The teacher's role then, is to provide them with different phrases which carry different functions so that they can use them in the different stages of communication with others.

- Negotiation language: Learners benefit a lot from the use of negotiation language; they often ask clarification when they are listening to others' talk. So, the teachers have to provide them with the necessary expressions they need when they ask clarification from other speakers. Learners also need to well perform their utterances if

they seek to be understood and clear especially when they can see the other interlocutors did not understand them.

B. Mental/ social processing:

The necessary processing skills speaking are the following:

- Language processing: this refers to the ability of the learners/ speakers to process the language in their minds through putting it in a coherent order so that the other interlocutors can understand it and get the intended messages. Speakers also should be able to retrieve words and phrases from their memories to use them when they are interacting with others.

- Interacting with others: most of the speaking situations involve interaction between two or more interlocutors, that is to say an effective speaker need to be able to listen and understand others' talk then reacts through taking turns or keeping the others to do so.

- Information processing: this relates to the ability of processing the information in the mind rapidly, i.e. the time speakers get information; they should be ready to respond to the others' talk.

I.2. Teaching speaking:

Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Despite its importance, for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today's world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students' communication skills, because, only in that way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance(Susanti,2007,p.07).

As it was noted from what Susanti has said; the teaching of speaking has been developed from using only the repitition of drills and memorization to using other techniques that lead students' to express theirselves freely and use the language they are learning. The use of techniques help students to improve their speaking skill as well as their communicating abilities.

I. 2.1. **Differences between speech and writing:**

David Crystal (2002, p.94, 96) insists that in any account of the varieties of English, special attention has to be paid to the differences between speech and writing.

- Conversational language is often inexplicit, because the participants are face-to-face, and can rely on the situation to clear up any problems of meaning.

- Conversation is usually spontaneous; speakers have to "think standing up". They therefore do not have the time to plan out what they want to say, and their grammar inevitably loosely constructed, often containing rephrasing and repetition.

- The vocabulary of everyday speech tends to be informal, domestic, and more limited than in writing.

- The interactive nature of conversation requires a great deal of "manoeuvring" which would not usually be found in writing.

- Conversational can use a wide range of tones of voice which are difficult to convey in writing. On the other hand, writing has a wide range of graphic features that do not exist in speech such as capitalization.

Rebecca Hughes (2002, p.10, 11) mentioned two figures that provides a visual summary of some of the major, very general contrasts between the spoken and the written forms of language. The first diagram represents aspects which relate to how the tow forms are

generated: "Aspects of production" and the second deal with tendencies in attitudes to the tow forms: "Social Aspects".
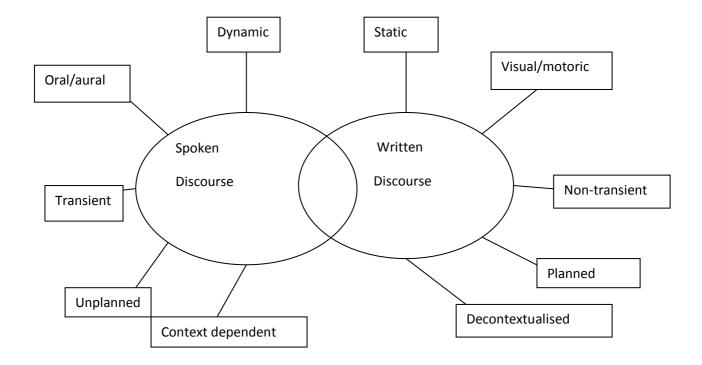
Dynamic

Static

Oral/aural

Visual/motoric

Spoken Discourse

Written Discourse

Transient

Non-transient

Unplanned

Planned

Context dependent

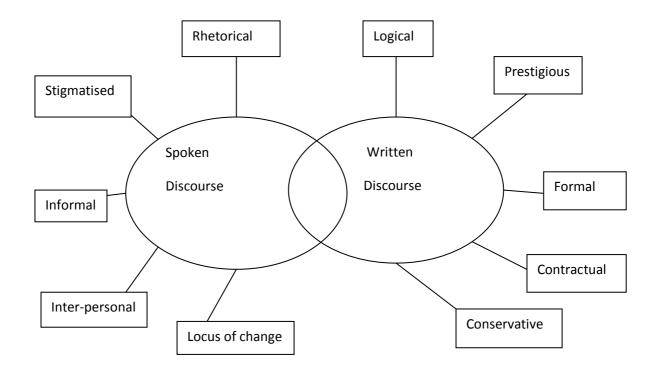Decontextualised

Figure 1 Aspects of production

Figure 2 Social aspects

I.2.2.**Students' problems in speaking:**

According to River, the main goal of teaching speaking is to develop the communicative efficiency. When learners try to express themselves there is a hesitation; cliché expressions which fill in pauses, much repetition and frequent indefiniteness as the speaker seeks the most convenient combination of element to express his intended meaning.(As cited in Boussiada,2010,p.15,16).

These difficulties are due to a lack of interest in the subject, poor listening practice, deficient vocabulary, or lack of self-confidence and fear of making mistakes.

A. Lack of interest in the subject:

Most of the students in foreign language classrooms stay silent because they have "nothing to say" (15).

This may be because the teacher has chosen a topic about which students know very little. This can be reduced by using role-play with interesting topics. Teachers can give their students opportunity to choose topics of roles that they will play.

B. Poor listening practice:

Listening plays a major role in the interactions that occurs between two or more people. Student may have an experience in expressing himself in the foreign language in a conversation. Therefore, the student does not comprehend sufficient elements in the message to be able to make further contribution to the discussion (15).

As we know, speaking is the most important skill above all. But from what Rivers said, we can understand that students may face lot of problems if they have a little practice of

listening even he is good in expressing theirselves using the foreign language, because if they fail to understand the oral language they will not be able to carry on the conversation.

C. Deficient vocabulary:

Most of the students find difficulties in using the appropriate words when expressing their thoughts so they use the simple form of language. The teacher must be aware of this psychological factor and help his/her students to feel at ease while using the foreign language (16).

Deficient vocabulary is another problem that most students face. While using the second or foreign language students try always to use the simplest form because they find difficulties in finding the appropriate words. Rivers advises teachers to help their students to feel at ease when expressing their thoughts and ideas.

D. Lack of self confidence and fear of making mistakes:

In many classes, some students prefer to keep their ideas to themselves because they are afraid of being corrected by the teacher. However, students' mistakes must be corrected, but when the student is attempting to encode his thoughts he should be interrupted as little as possible (16).

From this, we can say that the lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes are big problems and most students face them so they prefer to be a silent part in a conversation and they do not share their thoughts and ideas even if they are correct and good. Rivers said that teachers should be aware of this problem and they should help their students by trying to use the right time to correct their mistakes and not to interrupt them each time.

I. 3. **Types of speaking activities**:

There are many activities that can be used in classrooms to promote students' speaking skill, some of them are:

a. Discussion:

Susanti (2007, p.10) states that teachers can use a discussion after a content-based lesson for various reasons. The students may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion groups. Before the discussion, the teacher has to set the purpose of the discussion activity. According to Ur(1981,p.2) "the most natural and effective way for learners to practice talking freely in English is by thinking out some problems or situation together through verbal interchange of ideas; or in simpler terms, to discuss". Harmer(2001,p.272) mentioned one of the difficulties that may occur while using discussion activity (reason that discussions fail) is that students are afraid to give an opinion in front of the whole class. Harmer said that the "buzz group" is one way to avoid such difficulties. It means that students have a chance to discuss in small groups before they are asked to speak in public.

b. Prepared talk:

According to Kouicem (2010, p.41) making students present oral works in front of their classmates is the best way to make students gain their self-confidence. For Harmer (2001, p.274) "A popular kind of activity is the prepared talk where a student (or students) makes a presentation on a topic of their own choice".

c. Communication games:

Teachers can use such games to encourage and involve their students in a classroom interaction. According to Bybate (1987), such activities include first, "Describe and Draw" in which one student describes a given picture and the other one draw it. Second, "Describe and arrange"; one students describes a particular structure using oral language and the other reconstructs it without seeing the original one. Third, "Find the differences", two students have two similar pictures but with some differences, they must extract these differences through describing their pictures, i.e. without seeing each other pictures. (As cited in Kouicem, 2010, p.40).

d. Simulation and role-play:

Harmer (2001, p.274) states that students' "simulate" a real life situations (such as a business meeting, etc.) as if they were doing so in the real world. Simulation and role-play are used to encourage general oral fluency. According to Ur (1981, p.9) "the use of role-play has added a tremendous number of possibilities for communication practice".

I. 4. **Ideas for improving speaking:**

Joanna Backer and Heather Westrup (2000, p.77) look at how teachers can help their students improve their speaking skill and they suggest same ideas for that purpose.

I.4.1. Presentation phase:

When practicing speaking skill, students should only use language which they already know. It may be necessary for the teacher to check or pre-teach any vocabulary, grammar or functional language.

I. 4.2. Practice phase:

Students can work in pairs or in small groups; this gives all the class the opportunity to speak. Teachers should explain and monitor the activities carefully, so that the students get help when they need it.

A. Cued dialogue:

Teacher can write an outline of a four -or six- line dialogue which he want students to say on the blackboard. He uses cues, but without writing all the words (figure 3).

B. Class questionnaires:

The teacher or the students can make a list of words or pictures which suggest questions. Students work in groups asking the question and making notes of the replies, and report on what their classmates said (figure 4).

Student "A": Greet your friend

Student "B": Return greetings

Student "A": Ask a favor

Student "B": say "No" and give a

reason

Figure 3

Make a question using:

Market

Park

« Do   you like_____ ing _____?   Breakfast

Television

Football

Figure 4

C.   Diary-filling:

Teacher can ask each student to draw five diary pages in their notebooks. Students work on their own to fill in things they plan to do on five afternoons. Then each one talk to his/her partner and try to find out a time when they are both free to meet(figure 5).

D.   Ordering activities:

Make a list of favorite foods or activities on the blackboard. Each student put them in order of preference. Then, in pairs, students have to come to an agreement on their order of preference. Then, agree in groups of four or six students.

MY DIARY	Thursday
Monday	Friday Go shopping
Tuesday Visit Auntie	Saturday
Wednesday See doctor	Sunday

Figure 5

I. 4.3. Production phase:

According to Backer and Westrup (ibid: 79) these activities lead on from the guided practice activities suggested above. Teachers can use the cued dialogue as a conversation starter: students continue the dialogue in any way they want. At this stage teacher do not give students complete sentences, only possible topics. The class questionnaires could be extended to talking about other likes and dislikes, or students can discuss their preferences.

The diary-filling exercise can be made freer by students, they can talk about real-life activities that they are going to do in their near futur.Also; teachers can make ordering activities more creative by asking students to discuss one of the topics in detail. Weaker students can be encouraged to talk with a few helpful questions about the chosen topic.

I.5.**Speaking errors:**

While speaking, students may make lot of errors. These errors are of different kinds.

I.5.1. Types of errors:

Hedge (2000) distinguishes between two types of errors (as cited in Hadef, 2010, p.31):

a. Systematic errors versus mistakes:

   Systematic errors are errors which appeared in the first stage of studying the foreign language. Learners make this type of errors because of the lack of the foreign language knowledge. However, mistakes are those problems of the performance that are made by learners of tiredness, carelessness and so forth.

b. Global errors versus local errors:

These errors are communicative errors. Whereas, the global ones cause misunderstanding to the listener, local errors have to do with what a hearer can understand from an utterance.

   I. 5.2. Correction strategies of errors:

After an observation of different teachers' corrections during controlled practice, Hedge (2000) makes a list of six main strategies. Hadef (2010: ibid).

− The teacher frowns and says 'No, you don't say that. What do you say? Can anybody help Jaun?'

− The teacher repeats a sentence the student has just said, with rising intonation up to the point of the mistake, and waits for the student to self-correct.

   − The student has just produced a present- tense answer to past-tense question from the teacher. The teacher repeats the question, stressing the past tense form, and waits for the student to self-correct.

− The student uses incorrect intonation in a question. The teacher asks the class for an accurate version, then repeats it, asks choral repetition, an individual repetition, and finely returns to the original student.

−The teacher looks puzzled and requests clarification by asking 'what did you say?' which the student recognize as indication of an errors. Then the teacher waits for the student to self-correct.

−The teacher moves his or her hand to indicate error, gives the correct version, and asks the student to repeat it.

Even if the above strategies are observed in controlled practice, they are used also in non-controlled practice. All these strategies are constantly used at the moment of making the error during conversations or discussions which will make some problems in the activity and to learners' way of speaking. Moreover, interrupting learners each time to correct them will go away from the goal of the activity in hand, cut the students' ideas and the flow of the discussion (32).

I.6. **The role of the teacher**:

The teacher has to play different roles in the classroom at the same time. Harmer (2001, p.275/276) suggests three roles if the teacher is trying to get students to speak fluently:

❖ Prompter: the teacher should help his/her students when they get lost, or cannot think of what to say next or in some other way lose the fluency the teacher expects of them. Sometimes, the best option teacher can do is to leave the students to struggle out on their own. However, the teacher may offer discrete suggestions to help the students.

❖ Participant: teachers can participate in discussions or role-plays themselves to prompt covertly, introduce new information this will help the activity along, ensure continuing student engagement, and maintain a creative atmosphere. As Nawaz (2005) concludes, "It is sometimes appropriate to get involved and take part in the role-play" (p.16).

❖ Feedback provider: teachers should be aware of when and how to give feedback in speaking activities because over-correction may inhibit students and take the

communicativeness out of the activity. On the other hand, positively and encouragingly correction may get students out of difficult misunderstanding. Everything depends upon teacher tact and the appropriacy of the feedback provided.

Conclusion:

Teaching speaking is an important aspect in the field of teaching foreign languages. Speaking plays a major role in helping people to communicate with each other. Through speech we can express feelings; ideas and also we can exchange information. According to Wallace (1991):

The late twentieth century has been called 'the age of communication', and with some justification. The world is very rapidly turning into the 'global village' which has often been predicted. As the pressure to communicate increases, the divisions of language are felt even more keenly. So language teaching, especially of the great world languages, which are seen as international channels of communication, becomes ever more important. (p.2)

__Chapter two:__

Role Play technique

Introduction:

The late twentieth century has been called "the age of communication". The world is rapidly becoming a global village and the communication increases. Therefore, language teaching, especially of the great world languages, which are seen as international channels of communication, becomes ever more important (Wallace, 1991, p.2). Nowadays, the field of teaching languages demands for teachers to use different ways and techniques to help their students in improving their communicating abilities; these techniques are such group-work, role-play.

This chapter deals with one technique that may help teachers in enhancing students' speaking skill so that helping them to communicate freely with the target language. In this chapter, we are going to mention what is role-play according to different authors. In addition, we are going to mention types of role-play with examples of activities that can be used in classrooms.

1. Definition of role-play:

Foreign language teachers always try to help their students to improve their communicating abilities. Role-play and simulation are the most known activities in developing the speaking skill. According to Cambridge International Dictionary of English, Paul Procter (Ed.) (1996,p.123) role defined as the person whom an actor represents in a film or play while role-play is a method of acting out particular ways of behaving or pretending to be other people who deal with new situations. It is used in training courses language learning and psychotherapy. (As cited in Susanti,

2007, p.13). Wallace (1991, p.46) defines role-play as a form of simulation in which the participants adopt certain roles or parts, e.g. head-teacher.

Another definition is given by Rosensweig (1974, p.41), "Role playing is the dramatization of a real-life situation in which the students assume roles. It….presents the students with a problem, but instead of reaching a group consensus in solving it, the students act out their solution". (As cited in Hilles and Celce-Murcia, p.69).

Providing students with a suitable topic for discussion and dividing them into groups improves the quality of the verbal interaction. On the other hand, role-play can add a significant dimension to the 'standard' discussion, and is today more and more widely used. For role-play, the teacher may divide the class into small groups _ often pairs_ then gives situations and roles to act out and explore. This acting is done for the sake of the language and imaginative activity, not for exhibition; so students may enjoy seeing or showing off some particularly successful scene. (Penny Ur, 1981, p.9).

2. Role-plays and presentations:

Based on her experience with ESL students and her research into the use of drama in language education, psychotherapy, and speech therapy, Stern (1980) hypothesizes that dramatic activities in the classroom can be helpful in several ways. They appear to provide or increase motivation, heighten self-esteem, encourage empathy, and lower sensitivity to rejection. (As cited in Celce-Murcia and Hilles, p.61).

For Baker and Westrup (2000,p.91) all students of English, whether they are intermediate, advanced or beginners, need to practice more and more using their English freely in the classroom to practice the language they have learned. Group discussion activities and answering question in class give students a chance to practice speaking fluently. However, sometimes, only confident students take part. May more students will be able to practice communicating when they work simultaneously in pairs or in groups. These activities, which include role-plays and presentations, should be planned for the production phase of a lesson. Baker and Westrup say that teachers must prepare their students before using one kind of communicating activities and they must be sure that the following points are covered:

- The first time students do a simulation or a role-play, the language content must be very easy.

- Students must know enough vocabulary to do the activity.

- Students must have learned enough correct grammar or appropriate functional language to be able to do the activity.

- Students must have enough knowledge of the topic to be able to do the activity.

- Students must be able to finish the task successfully.

- Instructions for the activity must be very clear. The teacher can give these very clearly in the students' first or main language. Instructions can also be written on the blackboard. Teachers must check that students understand what they have to do.

- Activities must not be too long.

- Teachers must organize the activity so that students at all levels of ability have a part to play and benefit from the activity.
- The teacher does not correct during the activity, but can watch and note errors during the activity and correct when it is finished.

Danusaputra (2003), after comparing the effectiveness of role-play and dialogue technique to encourage students to speak in classroom, found that both techniques can be effectively used in EFL classes. (As cited in Widiati and Yudi Cahyono, 2006, p.208).

3. Simulation, Role-Play and Drama:

According to Baker and Westrup (2000, p.92) these three activities are similar. For all three, teachers should give students time to prepare by reviewing the language and information needed to do the activity.

Simulation:

In a simulation, students express their reaction to a fictitious (imaginary) situation using their own words and opinions. For Wallace (1991) simulation is a group activity, which imitates (simulates) situations, usually those that are found in people's real-life professional activities. (p.46).

Ken Jones (1982) states that there are three characteristics that a simulation must have in order to work:

- **Reality of function:** the students must not think of themselves as students, but as real participants in the situation.

- A simulated environment: the teacher says that the classroom is an airport check-in area, for example.

- Structure: students must see how the activity is constructed and they must be given the necessary information to carry out the simulation. (As cited in Harmer, 2001, p.274).

Role-Play:

Baker and Westrup (2000) say that in a role-play, students are given a part to play and they have to act out the role of their character. They state that role-plays are useful because students have to think about how their character will react. The teacher can decide on the roles before the class and give out role cards with information about the situation or problem. (p.92).

Drama:

A drama activity is in many ways a grander version of role-play. Drama for language practice does not always means learning a script by heart and performing it. Students can create a drama for themselves, using language they have learned. They need to do some preparation and may need to practice. They can do this preparation in groups and perform their improvisation to other groups, to the rest of class or even to the rest of the school. The presentation of a play is especially good if the school celebrates an English Day or if an English Club wants to promote its activities.

Role-Play is different from drama:

Nawaz (2005) states that both give the learner an understanding of a situation in real-life. They will gain some perceptions of the actions, attitudes and insight of persons or situations. However, role-play is different from drama in the sense that role-play is a strategy for exploration and does not attend to aesthetic concerns or aspects. It can be used to explore one situation or episode and does not need to be structured in the beginning, middle and ending episodes like in drama we have. The term 'role play' refers to a variety of classroom activities from controlled role-plays to free role-plays. First teachers ask students to practice controlled role-plays then they will easily enact free role-plays. (p.10).

4. Advantages of role-plays:

According to Ur (1981, p.9) the use of role-play has added a tremendous number of possibilities for communication practice. Students are no longer limited to the kind of language used by learners in a classroom: they can be shopkeepers or spies, grandparents or children, authority figures or subordinates; they can be bold or frightened, irritated or amused, disapproving or affectionate; they can be in Buckingham Palace or on a ship or on the moon; they can be threatening, advising, apologizing, condoling. The language can correspondingly vary along several parameters: according to the profession, status, personality, attitudes or mood of the character being role-played, according to the physical setting imagined, according to the communicative functions or purpose required. At one stroke, the limits of language use are enormously widened.

Moreover, role-play exercises are usually based on real-life situation: hence, the speech they require is close to genuine discourse, and provides useful practice in the kinds of language the learners may eventually need to use in similar situations outside the classroom.

Many students find this type of practice easier and more attractive than ordinary discussion. There are various reasons for this. Firstly, the fact that the kind of speech involved is concrete and personal, the issues relevant to actual life, make it relatively easy to think of things to say. Secondly, the criteria of what are 'good thing to say' are no longer so intellectual; the student does not have to say anything clever or original; any utterances that are true to the situation are acceptable , he can express himself in exclamations or half-sentences, he can repeat himself-anything goes(almost)! Hence, it is much easier for the student to be successful, and his confidence and self-esteem are boosted. Thirdly, many students find it easier to express themselves from behind the mask of being someone else; others find it simply more stimulating and exciting.

Van Ments (1983) identified three general advantages to role-playing activities: they are positive and safe in dealing with attitudes and feelings, they provide a safe venue for expressing personal and sometimes unpopular attitudes and opinions, and 'role-playing' is highly motivating as the majority of students enjoy these types of activities and become learners that are more inspired. (As cited in Graves, 2008, p.7).

Jarvis, Odell and Troiano (2002) state that role-playing as a teaching strategy offers several advantages for both teacher and student. First,

student's interest in the topic is raised (p.2). Poorman (2002) argues that 'integrating experiential learning activities in the classroom increases interest in the subject matter and understanding of course content' (as cited in Jarvis et al, 2002, p.2).

Secondly, there is increased involvement on the part of the students in a role-playing lesson. Students are not passive recipients of the instructor's knowledge. Rather, they take an active part. Poorman (2002) observes that 'true learning cannot take place when students are passive observers of the teaching processes (as cited in Jarvis et al, 2002, p.2).

A third advantage to using role-playing as teaching strategy is that it teaches empathy and understanding of different perspectives(ibid:p.3).

Educational advantages of using role-play:

According to Jarvis et al, (2002, p.4) the educational advantages of using role-play in teaching include the following:

- ❖ It encourages individuals, while in role, to reflect upon their knowledge of a subject. As such, role-play is an excellent teaching method for reviewing material at the end of a course of study.
- ❖ Individuals are required to use appropriate concepts and arguments as defined by their role. As roles changes, so might relevant concepts and arguments. Students may come, as a consequence, to appreciate more fully the relevance of diverse opinion, and where and how it is formed.

❖ Participation helps embed concepts. The importance of creating an active learning environment is well recognized if the objective is one of deep, rather than surface learning. Role-playing can make a valuable contribution in this process.

❖ It gives life and immediacy to academic material that can be largely descriptive and/or theoretical.

❖ It can encourage students to empathize with the position and feelings of others in the normal process of teaching, is likely to be missed.

According to Dr. A. Ramesh Babu (2012, p.248) There are at least four reasons why you should include role-play in all of our English courses.

1. The change of activity is always met by participants and will help to keep your sessions vigorous and interesting, as well as keeping the participants alert and active.

2. It helps to make them aware of gaps in their knowledge and the language that they need practice and learn.

3. Role play gives the contributors the chance to practice the new language that they have been working on in the course.

4. Role play can help you to assess the progress of your participants; as they are fully involved in their activity, you can watch their actions and keep a check on their language. You can deal with some of the points arising from your observations in the criticism session after the role-play.

5. Role Play Rules:

Role-play rules are mostly simple. Role-plays must be focused; the objectives must be clear and understood; instructions must be clear and understood. Feedback needs to be explicit, relevant, achievable and given immediately. The learners should understand the role-play which is crucial to learning and developing options of behavior. When the learners plan role-play sessions, they will habitually tell teachers that they will enjoy the experience. What are role-plays? How should one practice in role-plays? Are there any roles for it? Role-play method will be selected according to whether the educational goal addresses knowledge, attitudes or skills. In the acquisition of knowledge, role-plays can be valuable to observe and then discuss the knowledge of the role-players themselves is less important than the chance to observe, understand and incorporate information. For attitude development especially that which focuses on change of affect, then role-plays should be loosely structured so that players experience emotions spontaneously. While for skills acquisition, the opportunity for repeated opportunities with feedback is critical. (Babu, 2012, p.249).

6. Importance of role-play:

Nawaz (2005, p.11) states that role-play plays a great role in developing the following characteristics among students:

a) How to perceive ideas.

b) How to organize thoughts and ideas.

c) How to express feeling, emotions and reactions.

d) Listening and speaking abilities.

1- Before the role-play:

Before enacting role-play, learners have to plan carefully for integration of all language processes in the role-play:

a. Choice of the topic or theme.

b. Dialogue formation.

c. Provision of costumes.

d. Time management (to enact in a fixed time).

e. Setting of room physically i.e., rearranging the desks to make class more spacious.

2- Role allocation:

Role should be allocated to each member, slow or active, of the group so that each student can get an opportunity to speak out. When shy and weak students will perform and enact his/her role, he or she will be confident to talk in front of others. It is argued that teenagers can best play the part of teenagers because they understand how they themselves feel. Students will enjoy the part of a character, distant from their everyday experience, more.

3- During the role-play:

During the role-play students should observe attentively the performances of the performers and note down the flaws or shortcomings to avoid them for the next time

4- After the role-play:

Through discussion, assessment and feedback of the listener, role-play can be made more effective.

7. Types of role-play:

In case of role-play activities, according to Donn Byrne (as cited in Susanti, 2007, p.16-19), role-play can be grouped into two forms, scripted and unscripted role-play. In details, those types of role-play activities described as follows:

a. Scripted Role Play:

This type involves interpreting either the textbook dialogue or reading text in the form of speech. The main function of the text after all is to convey the meaning of language items in a memorably way. For more details, Adrian Doff gave an example of scripted role-play dialogue and reading text and how the process is:

Angela: Good morning. I want to send a letter to Singapore.

Clerk: Yes, do you want to send it by airmail or ordinary mail?

Angela: I think I will send it airmail. I want it to get there quickly. How much does it cost?

Clerk: To Singapore? That will be 30 pence, pleas.

Angela: (give the clerk 50 pence) Here you are.

Clerk: Here is your stamp, and here is 20 pence change.

Angela: Thank you. Where is the post box?

Clerk: You want the airmail box. It is over there, by the door.

To demonstrate a role-play activity based on the dialogue, the procedures given by Adrian Doff is as follows:

1) First, the teacher guides the role-play by writing these prompts:

(Where? / Air mail / how much? / post box? / thanks). Talk as you write to show what the prompts mean.

2) If necessary, go through the prompts one by one, and get students to give sentences or question for each one.

3) Call two students to the front: one play the role as Angela and the other one is the post office clerk. They should improvise the conversation using the prompts to help them. Point out that the conversation should be similar to the one in the textbook, but not the same; the conversation can be shorter than the presentation dialogue. It should just cover the main points indicated by the prompts.

4) Call out a few other pairs of students in turn, and ask them to have other conversation based on the prompts.

Based on these procedures, the writer views that the ways of organizing this dialogue can be carried out into pairs of students who would improvise a conversation in front of class, in turns. The teacher can also ask the students to practice the conversation privately with their partners before they act it out in front of the class.

b. Unscripted Role Play:

In contrast to scripted role-play, the situations of unscripted role-play do not depend on textbooks. It is known as a free role-play or improvisation. The students themselves have to decide what language to use and how the conversation should develop. In order to do this activity, good preparation from teacher and students is necessary. The example and procedures of unscripted role-play that is adapted from Adrian Doffís book are as follows: One student has lost a bag.

He/she is at the police station.

The other student is the police officer, and asks for details.

To brings out this ideas:

1) The teacher could prepare the whole class, by:

a) Discussing what the speakers might say (e.g. the police officer would asks the students how he or she lost the bag).

b) Writing prompt on the board to guide the role-play, and any key vocabulary.

2) The teacher could divide the class into pairs, and:

a) Let them discuss together what they may say.

b) Let them all try out the role-play privately, before calling on one or two pairs to act out in front of the class.

According to Nawaz (2005, p.10) that there are two types of role-play:

1) Controlled role-play based on a dialogue or text.

2) Free role-play activities.

All these activities are carried in pairs and groups.

8. Role Play Objective:

One should have very clear and comprehensible ideas about role-play topic. If one has ordinary ideas, he or she may perform ordinarily so clear thinking and role-play preparation result in clear out are you assessing skills or are you developing them? If you are assessing people, they need to know the competency level expected of them and the brief needs to have measurable outcomes. People also need to trust that the role-play will have the same level of challenge for them and their peers. Are you giving everyone the same level of challenge, or are you flexing according to the level of skill demonstrated by each individual? The former is more recommended for assessment, the latter for development. (Bubu, 2012, p.294-250).

How Role Play helps the Students:

Communication in the classroom makes the learners to communicate with other learners. Role-play permits students to develop an understanding of others' perspectives and encourages students to work with others in analyzing situations and developing workable solutions. It provides students an opportunity to apply concepts they have learned in a rich, realistic environment and gives them a chance to add insights into interpersonal challenges they are likely to face in their careers and private

lives. It not only permits students to effectively difference problem-solving methods by role-playing a situation several times from diverse perspectives but also offers a constructive channel through which feelings can be expressed and feedback processed. (ibid: p.250).

According to Boussiada (2010,p.19,20) role-play went through a period of relative unpopularity; yet this pity since it has a distinct advantages. In the first place, it can be a direct interactive method. It is an authentic technique for language use in interactive contexts to train students for specific interactive skills of arguing, information, persuading, discussing, or complaining…etc.It promotes spontaneous oral exchanges between participants instead of reciting already memorized stretches. Indeed, as Dickson puts it:"learners say what they want to say and not what someone has told them to say." (As cited in Boussiada, 2010, p.20).

Second, role-play allows hesitant students to be more forthright in their opinions and behavior than they might be when speaking for themselves, since they do not have to speak the responsibility for what they are saying.

Third, by broadening the world of the classroom to include the world outside, role-play allow students to use a much wider set of language use.

Role-play is an effective technique when it is open -ended so that different people would have different views of what the outcome should be and consensus has to be reached. There is a dynamic movement as the role - play progresses with students who lack self - confidence or have lower proficiency levels. To succeed with role -play,

the teacher has to give each student who does not play his role appropriately a card that describes the person or the role-played. The teacher needs not only to identify the situation, which will stimulate the discussion but also give them the role that matches the requirements of their personalities. Topics for role-play should be taken from students" current interest and anticipated experiences. This will contribute to increase the students' self-confidence as a speaker and his motivation to participate more. (Boussiada, 2010, p.20).

Conclusion:

In this chapter, we have discussed a technique that is particularly appropriate for teaching speaking. We have also mentioned its importance and objectives in addition to its types. Role-play technique helps teachers to motivate their students and to improve their speaking skill. According to Bubu (2012):

> The role-play shows the learners how to improve the English language. Though the learners hesitate to speak in English in the beginning, by role play they even try to communicate in English. We want our learners to gain fluency and accuracy in the oral presentation. Being accurate does not mean using structures and vocabulary correctly, but saying the right things in the right place, at the right time. We find these things in role-play, which removes all the doubts of the students in communicative approach. (254).

Chapter three:

Research Design

Introduction

The present study is designed to investigate the issue of "Developing Student's Speaking Skill through the use of Role-play". Furthermore, it is intended to explore whether including role-play activities in oral expression courses would have some beneficial effects on students' speaking skill and communicating abilities.

In the previous two chapters, we have presented what researchers discuss about our topic. In this chapter, we will speak about the methodology used in this research and the research tools used to gather data. In addition, we will talk about our population and the sample of study.

III.1.Objective of the study:

The objective of our study is to know whether using role-play can help teachers to improve their students' speaking skill and develop their communicating abilities.

III.2.Design and Methodology:

1. Method vs. methodology:

According to Kothari, (2004), research methods may be understood as all those methods and techniques that are used for conduction of research but Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it, we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along

with the logic behind them. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research methods/techniques but also the methodology. Researchers not only need to know how to develop certain indices or tests, how to calculate the mean, the mode, the median or the standard deviation or chi-square, how to apply particular research techniques, but they also need to know which of these methods or techniques are relevant and which are not, and what would they mean and indicate and why. Researchers also need to understand the assumptions underlying various techniques and they need to know the criteria by which they can decide that certain techniques and procedures will be applicable to certain problems and others will not. All this means that it is necessary for the researcher to design his methodology for his problem as the same may differ from problem to problem. (p.7, 8)

2. Qualitative vs. Quantitative research:

Johnson, B, and Christensen, L. (2008, P. 34) classify the main differences between qualitative and quantitative research as follows:

Criteria	*Qualitative Research*	*Quantitative Research*
Purpose	To understand & interpret social interactions.	To test hypotheses, look at cause & effect, & make predictions.
Group Studied	Smaller and not randomly selected.	Larger & randomly selected.
Variables	Study of the whole, not variables.	Specific variables studied
Type of Data Collected	Words, images, or objects.	Numbers and statistics.
Form of Data Collected	Qualitative data such as open-ended responses, interviews,	Quantitative data based on precise measurements using

	participant & observations, field notes, & reflections.	structured & validated data-collection instruments.
Type of Data Analysis	Identify patterns, features, themes statistical relationships.	Identify Type of Data Analysis
Objectivity and Subjectivity	Subjectivity is expected.	Objectivity is critical
Role of Researcher	Participants in the study may know researcher & their biases, & the researcher may know participant characteristics.	Participants in the study do not know researcher & their biases, & participant characteristics are deliberately hidden from the researcher (double blind studies).
Results	Particular or specialized findings that is generalizable.	Generalizable findings that can be applied to other populations
Scientific Method	Exploratory or bottom–up: the researcher generates a new hypothesis and theory from the data collected.	Confirmatory or top-down: the researcher tests the hypothesis and theory with the data collected.

3. Descriptive method:

In contrast to the experimental method, descriptive methods do not

Manipulate any of the variables of interest. Using a correlational approach, descriptive methods may be useful when ethical and practical

considerations make the use of any other method impossible. Behaviors are observed as they occur naturally. Descriptive methods may be used to (1) describe behavior, (2) explore a phenomenon, and (3) test hypotheses about behavior.

First, descriptive methods may be used to provide an accurate description of events. Description is a major goal of scientific inquiry. Because behavior is so varied and occurs in so many settings, social scientists have developed many ways of achieving this goal. Observation, case studies, and surveys provide descriptions of behavior. Such descriptions allow us to understand more fully the behaviors in question.

Second, descriptive studies may be used simply to explore a phenomenon.

Sometimes researchers begin with nothing more than an intense curiosity about some phenomenon. They may observe and interview people with the aim of finding out what people think, what variables are important, and what questions should be asked in future research.

Third, descriptive methods may be used in correlational studies designed to test hypotheses about the relationships between correlational methods are used, causal conclusions cannot be made about the reasons for the relationships examined. (Brown, Kathleen W, Cozby, paul C, Kee, Daniel W, Worden, Patricia E, 1999, p.75,76).

III.3. Data gathering tools:

In order to gather data for this research we intend to use questionnaire as a data-gathering tool. To investigate the role of using role-play technique in developing students' speaking skill, we thought of the necessity to involve second year students and teachers of oral expression module in this study by including their viewpoints concerning the subject under investigation. Learners' and teachers' opinions were gathered in a form of questionnaire.

a. Teachers' questionnaire:

The questionnaire was administered to five teachers with different length of instruction in oral expression at the Department of English in the University of Biskra. It includes both open-ended and close-ended questions. The main objective of this questionnaire is to discover the teachers' attitude towards using role-play technique in the classroom.

b. Students' questionnaire:

The students' questionnaire was supposed to be administered to the whole population of second year English classes at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra. It was not possible to include them all in the study, and therefore a sample was needed. Students' questionnaire includes both open-ended and close-ended questions. Their primary objective is to give the students an opportunity to give their opinions concerning the use of role-play technique and its effects toward their speaking skill.

III.4.The pilot study:

a. Description:

The aim of the pilot study is to evaluate the appropriateness of the questionnaires before handing them to our participants. In order to do so we choose randomly (10) students from the whole population and give them the questionnaires but with an additional section which is evaluating the questionnaire; this section contains five questions concerning the participants' opinions about whether the questions are difficult or inappropriate. The results we obtain from the pilot study could help us to make the questionnaire final before handing them to our real participants. We will take all the comments into consideration and we will also readjust and reform the questionnaire according to the results of the pilot study.

b. Results:

After finishing the pilot study of both teachers and students, we have got the following results:

First, all teachers agree that the questions are clear, easy and will help us to get sufficient information about the issue under investigation which is developing students' speaking skill through role-play technique. Therefore, the teachers' questionnaire is final and it can be submitted to our real sample. Second, all students agree that the questions are easy and very clear and they did not encounter any difficulties while answering these questions except one student who say that he found a difficulty in understanding the question number four from section two which is: do you

think the time allotted for oral expression module is sufficient? So, we decide to explain that question to students from our real sample when giving them the questionnaire to answer them. We will just explain it orally because we think that most of students will understand what do we mean by this question. Finally, the results of the pilot questionnaire help us to complete our study and since teachers and students agree that questions are clear we can start submitting them to our real sample which contains five teachers and 30 second year English students at the English Department of Mohammed Kheider University. Biskra.

III.5.Population:

It can be defined as a selected sample of a population studied to gain knowledge of the whole (Nawaz, 2005, p.25). The population of this research is second year students at the English department at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra. There are (12) classes and the amount of students is (500). According to River "it is generally admitted that the early stages of foreign language learning must be largely taken up with the thorough drilling of language forms and sequences, so that intraverbal associations are developed and the student learn to produce correct forms of utterance without concentrating on putting the element together" . (As cited in Hadef , 2010, p.43). This is the reason why we choose second year students as a population for our study.

III.6.The sample:

Because we could not work with the whole population, we selected a sample from a population consisting of (12) groups. The sample was randomly selected from about (500) student.

Second year EFL learners at the University of Biskra during the academic year 2012/2013 are (12) groups. Each group contains (41) to (58) students. We randomely choose (10) students from three random groups; ten from first group, ten from the second and ten from the third. Our sample, also, contains teachers of oral expression module; we have chosen randomly five teachers.

III.7.Data analyses:

After collecting data from the teachers' and students' answers we will analyze the results. The analysis could help to obtain information concerning the use of role-play at the English department at Biskra University and it could also help us to understand the objectives of applying role-play technique and whether this technique is beneficial or not in developing students' speaking skill.

Conclusion:

In this chapter, we have tried to clarify the methodology used to carry out this research and the main data gathering tools used which are the questionnaires for both teachers and students. In addition, we have mentioned the population and the sample of our study.

Chapter four:

Analysis of the questionnaires

Introduction:

The questionnaires were given to 30 second year students at the English Department at Biskra University and five oral teachers and they were asked to give their opinions concerning the issue under investigation.

Teachers' Questionnaire:

I. General information:

1. Gender:

	male	female
participants	2	3
percentage	40%	60%

Table 01: Teachers' sex distribution

Comments:

The table above indicates that the number of females (60%) is more than males (40%). This proves that females are more interested in the field of teaching foreign languages and English in particular, which has been considered as females' job in this country.

2. Degree(s) hold:

	BA (license)	MA (Master/Magister)	PHD (Doctorate)
participants	2	3	0
percentage	40%	60%	0%

Table02: Teachers' degree

Comments:

From the table above, we have noticed that most teachers (60%) hold MA degree. In addition, we can notice that no teacher hold a PHD.

3. Length of working as teacher of oral expression:

teacher	01	02	03	04	05
year	3	2	2	4	8

Table 03: Teachers' experience in teaching oral expression

Comments:

From this question, we want to know our teachers' experience in teaching oral expression. According to the results stated above, the length of teaching oral expression ranges from two year to eight years. Thus, each teacher would give us his own evaluation, opinions, attitude concerning the subject under investigation. In fact, different experiences will certainly provide different points of view.

4. Is the teaching oral expression a personal choice or an imposition on you?

	personal	imposed
participants	5	0
percentage	100%	0%

Table4: The choice of teaching oral.

Comments:

All the five participants argued that teaching oral expression was their choice. Most of them justify their answers by saying that they want to gain another experience in teaching the oral course. Also, some of them said that they want to remember their vocabulary again and to learn new ones as well.

II. Speaking skill:

1. Classify the four skill according to their importance:

	speaking	listening	writing	Reading
participants	3	2	0	0
percentage	60%	40%	0%	0%

Table5: Classification of the four skills

Comments:

60% of the participants classify the speaking skill in the first place which mean speaking is the most important skill among the four.40% from the participants said that listening is the most important skill than

comes the speaking skill. From the analyses above, we can say that all teachers believe that speaking and listening are the most important skills.

One teacher argues this by saying that the first purpose for an EFL student is to speak the language fluently; he is asked to convey messages orally before writing them. However, to be a good speaker is first to be a good listener. Reading comes last because it is a way to improve all the other skills. Another teacher believes that language should be used for communication above all; listening and speaking are the most important skills.

2. According to you, which of the four skills is difficult to be taught?

	speaking	writing
participants	4	1
percentage	80%	20%

Table 6: The difficulty of teaching skills

Comments:

Most of teachers (80%) find it difficult to teach speaking rather than the other skills because it deals with the oral aspect of language, which involves many sub-skills that should be considered. Another teacher says that speaking and listening are difficult to be taught because they are not really tied to specific rules. In the same time there are so much to teach about them. The teacher has to find the right technique(s),

method(s)/ activities to engage students in conversation. Moreover, many aspects are taken into consideration: pronunciation, stress, intonation, so they are a bit difficult to teach especially if the teacher is non-native.

3. In your opinion, what is the best way to teach speaking:

Comments:

Teachers suggest different ways and methods to teach speaking. One says that the best way is to focus first on listening activities. For beginning levels, drills can be used, students repeat individually or chorusly a dialogue to practice pronunciation, accent. For more advanced levels, the teacher may use free discussion/ role-play/ songs, in which new vocabulary is introduced. Another teacher says that the best way to teach speaking is the role-play and discussing about different subjects.

4. What are the speaking problems students most face in oral expression:

Comments:

All teachers agree that the most common problems students face in oral expression are the deficient vocabulary, the lack of self-confidence and fear of making mistakes.

5. According to you, which one of the following activities is good to enhance the students' speaking skill:

Comments:

All teachers agree that simulation and role-play in addition to discussion are good in enhancing students' speaking skill because they expose learners to variety of setting that really exists in real life. One of the teachers argues that these three are good because they are fun and motivating. Here students are spontaneous and have to improvise.

6. How many hours per week are allotted to the oral expression module?

The time allotted to oral expression module at the English department at Mohammed Kheider university is (3) hours per week.

7. Do you think the time allotted for the oral expression module is sufficient:

	yes	no
participants	2	3
percentage	40%	60%

Table 7: The time allotted for oral expression module.

Comment:

From this question, we want to know whether the time allotted for oral expression module is sufficient and to get some suggestions concerning that. Out of five participants, 2 (40%) have claimed that the time allotted for the teaching of oral expression is enough. However, (60%) have an opposite opinion that the time is not enough. They have

suggested that an additional session may be added per week because students need to express their thoughts. One teacher said that oral teachers need to work in laboratories so they can use audio-visual works, they need more instrument to motivate the teacher to teach and to give more and the student to learn and to love the module.

III. Role-play technique:

1. Do you use role-play technique?

	yes	no
participants	5	0
percentage	100%	0%

Table 8:Tthe use of role-play.

2. If yes, how often do you use it?

	sometimes	always	rarely
participants	5	0	0
percentage	100%	0%	0%

Table 9: How often teachers use role-play

Comments:

All the participants have argued that they sometimes use role-play technique in their courses to help their students in improving their speaking skill.

3. Do your students like playing roles?

	Yes	No
participants	5	0
percentage	100%	0%

Table 10: Do your students like to play roles.

Comments:

Teachers' responses to this item reveal that all of them claimed that their students like playing roles, which means that role-play motivates students and helps them to practice using their second language.

4. Do you think the use of role-play technique help to enhance students' speaking skill?

	Yes	No
participants	5	0
percentage	100%	0%

Table 11: Enhancing students' speaking skill.

5. In your opinion, does the use of role-play motivate students?

	Yes	No
participants	5	0
percentage	100%	0%

Table 12: Does role-play motivate students.

Comments:

By asking those two questions, we wished to know whether teachers are aware of the importance of role-play technique. The results are obvious, all the teachers agree that using role-play technique with students can help to motivate them and enhance their speaking skill.

6. Do you give the students opportunity to choose roles that they will play?

	Yes	No
participants	5	0
percentage	100%	0%

Table 13: Students' choice of roles.

Comments:

All participants agree that they all prefer to give their students an opportunity to choose roles that they will play because not all students prefer to be obliged to play roles imposed by their teachers.

7. The aim of this question is to get some suggestions concerning the problem of using role-play technique to develop students' speaking skill. Our participants' suggestions are mentioned under the following points:

❖ Role-plays are very useful activities for learners to develop speaking; however, they should be well-prepared and organized in terms of

subjects, students' level and interest in order to motivate them to perform.

❖ Role-play can be fruitful if some expressions/ words are imposed; i.e., students have to implement them in their role-play in order to learn them (new vocabulary) otherwise, they keep using the same expressions.

Students' questionnaire

I. General information:

1. Gender:

	Male	Female
participants	9	21
percentage	30%	70%

Table 14: Students' sex distribution.

Comments:

The high number of females enrolled in the Department of English at the University of Biskra proves the common belief that females have more tendency towards studying foreign language and English in particular. It means to get a profession as language teachers or interpreters that are commonly consider as feminine jobs in this country. Males generally tend to prefer scientific and technical branches (computing, technology, etc).

2. Is your level of English:

	Good	Average	Less than average
participants	8	21	1
percentage	26,66%	70%	3,33%

Table 15: Students' level of English.

Comment:

The majority of participants (70%) claimed that they have an average level of English. 8 participants (26,66%) have a good level while (3,33%) have less than average level of English.

3. Classify the following according to their importance:

	First	Second	Third	Fourth
skills	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
participants	12	10	7	1
percentage	40%	33,33%	23,33%	3,33%

Table 16: Classification of skills.

Comment:

The table above indicates that (12) participants (40%) reported that speaking is the most important skill, whereas listening comes in the second rank with (33,33%) of the total responses. These two important skills are the main components of oral expression course, which is a basic module in the program of second year students.

4. What is your favorite module:

	Oral	Written
participants	26	4
percentage	86,66%	13,33%

Table 17: Students' favorite module.

Comment:

When asked to determine their favorite module, 26 participants (86,66%) reported that oral expression is their favorite one because they can express their selves and use their second language freely. Also, they can discuss their opinions with their friends and with the teacher. On the other hand, only four participants (13,33%) reported that they love written module more than the oral expression one.

II.   Students' attitudes toward speaking skill:

1. How do you evaluate your speaking ability:

	Good	Average	Bad
participants	6	21	3
percentage	20%	70%	10%

Table 18: The evaluation of students' speaking skill.

Comments:

The majority of students (70%) claimed that they have an average speaking ability. Out of 30, 6 participants (20%) have a good speaking ability; however, 3(10%) participants have a bad speaking ability.

2. What are your main speaking difficulties?

Speaking Difficulties	Participants	Percentages %
Pronunciation difficulties	4	13,33%
Limited range of vocabulary	12	40%
Grammar	9	30%
Lack of practice	16	53,33%
Lack of self-confidence	15	50%

Table 19: Main speaking difficulties.

Comments:

❖ Pronunciation difficulties:

When asked to determine their speaking difficulties, four participants (13,33%) reported that pronunciation is one of the problems that they face in oral skill. Hence, the problem is a result of learners' educational background in which pronunciation practice was almost absent; it means that the learners did not communicate by using English language in the previous years.

❖ Limited range of vocabulary:

Out of 30 participants, 12 (40%) argued that their range of vocabulary is their main speaking problem. This is a result of the luck of knowledge of the language features (syntax, semantics).

❖ Grammar :

9 participants (30%) reported that their difficulties in speaking are related to their basic grammatical and structural difficulties, which prevent them from the effective communication in the target language.

❖ Lack of practice :

Out of 30,16 participants (53,33%) argued that their main problem in speaking is the lack of practice. This later can be a result of the following problem, which is the lack of self-confidence and fear of criticism.

❖ Lack of self-confidence:

The lack of self-confidence and fear of criticism represent another major problem that learners can face in the oral skill.15 participants (50%) claimed that they encounter such a problem that is related to the factor of inhibition. These later results from students' shyness fear of making mistakes and criticism. Thus, all the above factors lead to the lack of self-confidence which does certainly hinder the learners from developing their speaking skills.

3. How often the teacher gives you the opportunity to speak.

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
participants	16	11	3	0
percentage	53,33%	36,66%	10%	0%

Table 20: Students' opportunity to speak.

Comment:

Teaching languages requires helping the students and giving them the opportunity to speak. Out of 30 participants 16 (53,33%) argued that their

teachers always gives them the opportunity to speak, while 11 (36,66%) say that their teachers sometimes give them time to speak and express their thoughts. out of 30 participants, only 3(10%) claimed that their teachers rarely when give them time to speak in class.

4. Do you think the time allotted for oral expression module is sufficient?

	Yes	No
participants	12	18
percentage	40%	60%

Table 21: Time of oral expression.

Comment:

Out of 30 participants, 12 (40%) claimed that the time allotted for oral expression module is sufficient and they did not need an extra session. While, (60%) say that 3 hours per week which mean 2 sessions are not enough. They suggest adding another session because they need more time to express their thoughts and speak the language more. In addition, they suggest adding a session only for laboratory work because it is very important to listen to language spoken by natives.

5. What kind of speaking activities do you prefer more?

Comment:

All participants agree that discussions, simulation and role-play are the activities they prefer more because they can speak about different topics and they can express their feelings and points of view and discuss with their friends and with the teacher.

III.   Role-play technique:

1. Does your teacher use role-play technique?

	Yes	No
participants	23	7
percentage	76,66%	23,33%

Table 22: The use of role-play.

Comment:

23 (33%)from the participants claimed that their teacher did not use role-play technique in their courses. Out of 30 participants, 23 (72,66%) say that they are taught with role-play technique. Out of these 23 participants who have claimed that their teachers use role-play technique in their oral expression courses, 17 (73,91%) sometimes use this technique not always because of the time limits. While 2 out of 23 (8,69%) claimed that their oral teacher uses this technique but rarely.

2. Do you like playing roles?

	No	Yes
participants	10	20
percentage	33,33%	66,66%

Table 23: Do you like playing roles.

Comment:

By asking this question, we want to know whether students are interested in playing roles or not. The results show that out of 30 participants, 20 (66,66%) like to play roles to develop their speaking skill and to be more self-confident, to learn the right pronunciation and develop

their vocabulary. This means that most of the students are aware of the importance of role-play and its effects on their speaking skill.

3. Do you prefer to play a role: A- from your own imagination? B- Imposed by the teacher. C- Any role is ok.

	A	B	C
participants	14	6	10
percentage	46,66%	20%	33,33%

Table 24: Students' choice of roles.

Comment:

46,66% from the participants say that they like to play a role from their imagination because they can think of roles that motivate them and in which they can find their selves. Out of 30 participants, 10 (33,33%) claimed that any role is ok.

4. Do you think the use of role-play help to enhance students' speaking skill?

	Yes	No
participants	25	5
percentage	83,33%	16,66%

Table 25: The importance of role-play.

Comments:

This question seeks the students' opinions about the necessity of using role-play technique to enhance the speaking skill. The majority of the participants (83,33%) said "yes" which means that the use of role-play help them to develop their speaking skill and communication ability.

5. Do you think teachers of oral expression have to apply role-play technique in their courses?

	Yes	No
participants	30	0
percentage	100%	0%

Table 26: The use of role-play.

Comment:

All the participants agree that teachers have to apply and use this technique because it helps students to develop their speaking skill and communication abilities, motivate them and make them more self-confident. The use of this technique helps students to enrich their vocabulary by learning new words and expressions. All the students agree that role-play technique is enjoyable and it can help them to determine their levels.

Conclusion:

The analyses of the teachers' and students' questionnaires helped us to draw up many conclusions. First, the questionnaires revealed that teachers of oral expression in the department of English at Biskra University possess different teaching experiences. This diversity resulted in different teaching perceptions in terms of attitudes, viewpoints and evaluations of using role-play in teaching the speaking skill.

We have realized that the majority of teachers and students are aware of the affects of using role-play technique in the oral expression courses. Teachers claimed that role-play technique help them to motivate their students more and more, and it help to develop their speaking skill and communication abilities. Students agree that by using role-play they can enrich their vocabulary easily because they enjoy acting and playing different roles each time.

The questionnaires have showed that the major problems students face while learning the speaking skill is the lack of practice so they suggest adding another session for oral expression module to give them more time to practice and use the language they are learning.

General conclusion

Helping students to develop their speaking skill of foreign or second language is a difficult task. It requires some experience and regular practice of the target language. For many teachers, the best way to do that is to encourage students interact with each other using the language inside the classroom. Most of teachers find that role-play technique is one of the effective ways to enhance students' speaking skill and communicating abilities.

This study was conducted to investigate the efficiency of using role-play technique in improving the second year students' speaking skill. This investigation was carried out at the English Department in Biskra University. It claims to confirm or reject the hypothesis that states that using role-play technique helps to enhance students' speaking skill. Our research had led to conclude that role-play technique is very important in teaching English because it helps to improve students' speaking skill and their communicating abilities by giving them the opportunity to express their selves freely.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Teachers' questionnaire

Appendix 2: Students' questionnaire

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Appendix 2

Students' Questionnaire

Dear colleagues, you are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire which investigates the issue of using role-play technique to develop students' speaking skill. Thank you for contributioin.

I. *General information :*

1. Tick the appropriate box :

   Male ☐   Female ☐

2. Is your level of English :

   Good ☐   Average ☐   Less than average ☐

3. Classify the following according to their importance :

   Writing ☐   Reading ☐   Listening ☐   Speaking ☐

4. What is your favorite module?

   Oral expression ☐   Written expression ☐

- If oral expression please say why ?...
   ……………………………………………………………………………………..

II. *Students' attitudes toward speaking skill :*

1) How do you evaluate your speaking ability?

   Good ☐   Average ☐   Bad ☐

2) What are your main speaking difficulties?

- Pronunciation difficulties ☐

- Limited range of vocubulary ☐

- Grammar ☐

- Lack of practice ☐

- Lack of self-confidence ☐

3) How often the teacher gives you the opportunity to speak?

   Always ☐   Sometimes ☐   rarely ☐   Never ☐

4) Do you think the time allotted for Oral expression module is sufficient?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

- What do you suggest ?...
   …………………………………………………………………………………………

5) What kind of speaking activities do you prefer more?

a. Discussions ☐

b. Prepared talks ☐

c. Communication games ☐

d. Simulation and role-plays ☐

III. _Role-play technique :_

1. Does your teacher use role-play technique?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

2. If yes, how often does he use it?

   Always ☐   Sometimes ☐   Rarely ☐

3. Do you like playing roles?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

   If yes please say why ?...

   ……………………………………………………………………………………….

4. Do you prefer to play a role:

A. From your own imagination ☐

B. Imposed by the teacher ☐

C. Any role is ok ☐

5. Do you think the use of role-play technique help to enhance students' speaking skill?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

6. Do you think teachers of oral expression have to apply the role-play technique in their courses?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

- If yes, please say why ?..
  ……………………………………………………………………………………
  ………………………………………………………………………………..

- If no, please suggest other kinds of activities you think they are helpful…………..
  ………………………………………………………………………………..
  ………………………………………………………………………………..

Thank you for your contribution

Appendix 1

Teachers' questionnaire

Dear teachers, this questionnaire aims to investigate the issue of using role-play technique to develop students' speaking skill. As a case study, we have chosen the second year students at the Department of English at Biskra University.

Your contribution would be of great help to the subject. Please, you're kindly invited to answer the following questionnaires and to give comments if necessary. Thank you very much for your assistance.

I. *General information :*

1. Gender :
    Male ☐   Female ☐
2. Degree(s) held :
a. BA(License) ☐
b. MA (Master/Magister ☐
c. PHD(Doctorate) ☐
3. Length of working as a teacher of oral expression……………………………………
4. Is the teaching of oral expression choice or an imposition on you?
    Personal ☐   Imposed on You ☐
    – Justify your answer ?..

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………..

II. *Speaking skill :*

1. Classify the four skills according to their importance:
    Listening ☐   Speaking ☐   Writing ☐   Reading ☐
    – Why in your opinion ?...
    ………………………………………………………………………………….
2. According to you, which of the four skills is difficult to be taught?
    Listening ☐   Speaking ☐   Writing ☐   Reading ☐
    – Why? …………………………………………………………………………….
    ………………………………………………………………………………..

3. <u>In your opinion, what is the best way to teach speaking?</u> ....

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. <u>What are the speaking problems students most face in oral expression?</u>
   − Lack of interest in the subject ☐
   − Poor listening practice ☐
   − Deficient vocubulary ☐
   − Lack of self confidence and fear of making mistakes ☐
   − Other problems ☐
5. <u>According to you, which one of the following activities is good to enhance the students'</u>

   <u>speaking skill :</u>
   − Discussion ☐
   − Prepared talks ☐
   − Communication games ☐
   − Simulation and role-play ☐
   − Why ?..

   …………………………………………………………………………………………..

6. <u>How many hours per week are allotted to the oral expression module?</u> (……) hours.
7. <u>Do you think the time allotted for the oral expression module is sufficient?</u>

   Yes ☐   No ☐

   − Any suggestions ? …………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..

III. *Role-play technique :*

1. <u>Do you use role-play technique?</u>

   Yes ☐   No ☐

2. <u>If yes, how often do you use it?</u>

Always ☐   Sometimes ☐   Rarely ☐

3. <u>Do your students like playing roles?</u>

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

4. <u>If no, what do you think the problem is?</u> …………………………………………………..

……

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

5. <u>Do you think the use of role-play technique help to enhance students speaking skill?</u>

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

6. <u>In your opinion, does the use of role-play motivate students?</u>

   Yes [ ]   No [ ]

7. <u>Do you give the students opportunity to choose roles that they will play?</u>

   Yes [ ]   No [ ]

8. <u>Role-play can be used even in other courses, what do you think?</u>
a. Agree [ ]
b. Disagree [ ]
c. I don't know [ ]
d. Perhaps [ ]
9. <u>Any other suggestions</u> ………………………………………………………………….
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Thank you for your contribution