

The Impact of Role Play on Enhancing EFL Students' Interaction in English

Khalid Lahbib

¹*Applied Language and Culture Studies (ALCS), ChoibDokkali University, El Jadida, Morocco*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2778-7838>.

Email: khd.lahbib@gmail.com

Hamza Farhane

²*Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fes, Morocco*

Email: hamzafarhane96@gmail.com

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v4i4.1146>

APA Citation: Lahbib, K, & Farhane, H. (2023). The Impact of Role Play on Enhancing Learners' Interaction in Speaking. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 5(1), 28–51. Retrieved from <https://ijlls.org/index.php/ijlls/article/view/1155>

Received:

05/01/2023

Accepted:

26/02/2023

Keywords:

practical action research; Moroccan high schoolers; role play; speaking; experiment; ELT.

Abstract

This practical action research assesses the impact of using role play in developing Moroccan high school students' English speaking skills. Role play is one way where students can use English in a real life context, and thus they end up improving their English speaking skills or at least transferring the knowledge they are taught to a real life situation. A lot of Moroccan high school English teachers have recently noticed that their students' English speaking is not really good, and they have then started conducting action research based on different teaching strategies that can be used to help students improve their English speaking skills. We conducted an experiment where we divide students into two groups: a control group (n:20) which is taught without using role play, and the experimental group (n:20) which is taught using role play. The results report role play to have a positive effect on students' speaking skills in the sense that there is a significant difference in the mean score between the control group and the experimental group.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

English has become an important language to learn in today's world due to the huge number of people using it as the first international means of communication among many

other languages. In this respect, English is taught either as a foreign language or as a second language depending on each country. One of the countries where English is taught as a foreign language is Morocco. This means that the only chance Moroccan students have to learn English is the classroom due to the fact that English is not used outside such as home, the street or institutions.

As a result, Moroccan students tend to lack enough exposure to authentic English. Many studies have shown that Moroccan EFL students tend to lack fluency in their English speech (El Hannaoui, 2017 & Guebba, 2020). Some of these research studies have attributed this lack of fluency to the fact that students are not well exposed to authentic English. Moreover, some studies focused on the implementation of several speaking activities like watching films and conducting projects in the framework of a cooperative learning (El Hannaoui, 2017), while others examined the relationship between the Moroccan EFL students' attitudes towards speaking in the classroom and their proficiency in this skill (Guebba, 2020).

In this regard, the main purpose of this action research is to investigate role play as one of the strategies that can be used to expose students to real life language and thus improve their speaking skills. In other words, this action research tends to study the effectiveness of role play in developing Moroccan high school students' English speaking skills. The rationale behind this investigation is the fact that role play is one way where students can use English in a real life context, and thus they would end up improving their English speaking skills or at least transferring the knowledge they were taught to a real life situation.

As stated earlier, learning English is challenging for Moroccan students as they have to do more effort outside the classroom to keep in touch with the language. This includes listening, writing, reading, and most importantly, speaking. A lot of Moroccan high school English teachers have recently noticed that their students' English speaking is rudimentary, and they have then started conducting action research based on different teaching strategies that can be used to help students improve their English speaking skills. The main strategy this action research revolves around is role play. The study investigates the impact of role play on Moroccan high school students' English speaking skills. In this regard, this study assumes that the more role play is used in the English foreign language (hence EFL) classroom, the more students would take part in the classroom discussions, and thus end up improving their English speaking skills.

2. RESEARCH QUESTION(S):

This paper addresses the following questions:

1. To what extent can role play affect Moroccan EFL students' speaking skills?

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The main aim of this part is to shed light on the most important concepts that are considered crucial to the present study. In this respect, the objective of this part is to define the following concepts: Fluency, speaking fluency, task, and role play. This part tries to define these key concepts based on different scholars' opinions in the literature. Defining these key concepts helps in gaining a deep understanding of the impact that role play can have on enhancing students' interaction in EFL classrooms. Moreover, in order to test the effectiveness of role play on enhancing students' level of interaction in the classroom, it is very essential to see how other scholars have defined this concept and the way it should be implemented in the classroom. Discussing these definitions can give us a clear plan on the way the study should be conducted, the way role play should be tested as well as how students' interaction would be measured at the end of the study. Therefore, having clear definitions of the key concepts is of great importance to this action research.

4. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPT

Speaking

Speaking is defined as the skill that allows us to communicate effectively. It gives us the ability to convey information verbally and in a way that the listener can understand. According to Florez (1999) and Howarth (2001), speaking is a two-way process involving a true communication of ideas, information or feelings. This means that speaking requires some kind of interaction between two parts. Linking this definition to the EFL classroom, speaking requires an interaction between students and their instructor. They could discuss ideas of certain topics, information or even feelings.

Fluency

According to the Oxford English dictionary (2021), fluency is: 1) speaking or writing in an articulate and natural manner. 2) Using language easily and accurately. In addition, fluency means speaking without hesitating too much, making very few mistakes, and understanding the majority of what is said to you in normal and casual contexts. It is defined by Van and Alexander (1997) as a reasonable speech with sufficient precision, with

reasonable correctness (grammatically, phonologically, and lexically). According to the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, fluency is the ability to produce written and/or spoken language with ease.

Talking about fluency in EFL classes, it is very essential to mention that Moroccan students tend to have difficulties while trying to interact in the target language. This is due to the fact that English is taught as a foreign language in Morocco and thus Moroccan students of English have a lack of exposure to it. In this respect, the only chance they have to experiment with the English language is the classroom. Therefore, Moroccan students need some strategies to help them interact better in English, which is the main aim of this action research.

Speaking Fluency

Speaking fluency refers to the learner's ability to speak without searching for words, and the speech is understood. The speaking fluency has been defined as the “automaticity and speed of speech production” (Brand & Gotz, 2011, p. 256).

Housen and Kuiken (2009) argue that “accuracy and fluency do not operate in complete independence from each other” (p. 469). That is, grammatical errors may impede fluency and, therefore, communication. Fluency and accuracy operate together in helping the EFL learner in developing speaking proficiency. However, other studies (*cf.*, Crowther et al., 2015; Brand & Götz, 2011) argue that fluency and accuracy operate independently from one another (in speaking). Moreover, Albino (2017) argues that speaking fluency “can be determined by several components such as speech rate or number of filled and unfilled pauses, number of errors, and use of formulaic language”.

Task

A task refers to a language learning endeavor that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate and/or produce the target language as they perform the same set of work plans (Lee, 2000, p. 32). In education, a task refers to an activity where communication is necessary; for example, deciding something, solving a problem, or telling someone to do something. Tasks are characterized by being authentic and communicative. They also focus on multiple skills rather than one. In addition, tasks are meaningful for learners as they focus on the content of the course.

Role play

Role play is a communication activity that aims at improving learner's speaking fluency through enabling them to interact in class and increase their motivation to learn. Role play originates in psychodrama which investigates the world of experience through dramatization (Moreno, 1965). In that capacity, in the educational field, Role play is a mostly used activity. The learner acquires knowledge naturally and meaningfully in context. During the Role Play preparation, learners can choose the words and expressions related to the context they want to explore. Therefore, role play promotes the learner's creativity through collaborative work (Waffa, 2014).

Fluency in speaking is one of the most important skills to acquire as an English student. Therefore, in order to help students interact in the classroom, teachers must try some fluency-based tasks such as role play while teaching speaking in order to offer learners enough exposure to English and thus interact as much as they can.

This part defined the key concepts that this study revolves around and which are considered the basis. Next, a review of some previous studies on role play will be considered in order to have a clear vision on how other scholars conducted their study and thus avoid repeating the same thing. Also, reviewing previous studies on the same topic can help the researcher to have an idea on how to conduct the action research, how to measure and test data as well as how to analyze and draw conclusion.

5.LITERATURE REVIEW

Conducting any research in any given field of study requires the researcher(s) to deeply review most of the relevant studies done on the same topic being conducted. In this respect, investigating the impact of role play on developing students' speaking skills requires some kind of review of the relevant studies that were conducted by other scholars on the same topic. The main objective of this part is to discuss three main studies done on the effectiveness of role play as an activity in enhancing students' speaking skills in the EFL classroom. The rationale behind reviewing and discussing these research studies lies in the fact that it gives an idea on how other researchers have conducted their study on role play and how they implemented it as a classroom activity as well as how they measured its impact on students' speaking skills. Also, reviewing these studies helps in taking into account some of the limitations other researchers encountered while conducting their studies and thus try to avoid them in order to have a successful implementation of role play in the classroom. Discussing these studies includes mentioning the title of the study and the researcher(s), the

school where the research study was conducted as well as the country. Also, the review includes the main objectives, the hypotheses adopted by the researchers in their studies, the population, data collection instruments, data analysis techniques as well as the results of the studies along with general conclusions.

One of the previous studies that were conducted on the issue of role play and its impact on students' interaction in speaking is that of Arifin and Hum (2013). Their study is entitled "Teaching speaking ability through role play". The main aim of their study is to examine the effectiveness of role play on developing speaking skills of the tenth grade of second semester's students of SMA Negeri 1 PasaguanKetapang in Indoneisa in 2011/2012 academic year.

Students had many difficulties in speaking due to several reasons. First, they do not have enough vocabulary items to use. Second, students were not interested in the materials presented to them in the English subject. The last problem these students suffered from is that they did not have the required self-confidence to speak in front of the whole class and whenever they tried to speak in public, they feel shy and thus end up being silent in the classroom. Therefore, Arifin and Hum tried to look for some techniques to help these students enhance their speaking skills. In this respect, these two researchers decided to work on role play as a strategy to develop students' speaking skills and thus develop their interaction in the classroom.

Concerning the research methodology adopted in this study, the two researchers used an experimental study in which they did a pre-test in order to have the ability to compare the results between the experimental and control group. This way, the two researchers can have a conclusion on whether role play has an impact on enhancing students' speaking skills. As for the population of the study, it consisted of tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 PesaguanKetapang in academic year 2012.

As for how the study preceded, the two researchers started by giving students the pre-test before the treatment and the score is taken by means of looking at the fluency and pronunciation of students. At the end, the two researchers asked their students to practice some conversations in pairs and they were recorded in order to observe whether there were any improvements in students' speaking skills. Data were collected from students' speaking ability in the pre-test. In this respect, the two researchers made a speaking score table in which they noted down students' actions in fluency and pronunciation along with a score out

of 100. An example of how data were scored and analyzed is shown below. (Arifin& Hum, 2013, p.4).

Table 1

Data scoring and analysis sample

Aspect	Students' action	Score
Fluency	The speaking is natural, smooth as a native speaker.	80-100
	The speaking is occasionally hesitant.	60-79
	The speaking is very slow.	50-59
	The speaking is stuck and producing non-contextual words.	0-49
Pronunciation	Native pronunciation, with no trace of foreign accent.	80-100
	Not foreign accent and occasional mispronunciations but do not interfere the understanding.	60-79
	Foreign accent required concentrated listening, and mispronunciation, lead to occasional misunderstanding.	50-59
	Frequent errors and very hard to understand.	0-49

The results of the study revealed that there were significant differences between the results of the pre-test and those of the post-test. In this regard, the mean score of the pre-test was 58.17 and after the treatment was given to the students, the mean score was raised from 58.17 to 69.64. The main factor resulting in this difference, according to Arifin and Hum, is role play. The two researchers said, “the use of role play technique is effective to increase their speaking ability especially fluency and pronunciation” (Arifin & Hum, 2013, p. 12).

After conducting this study, the researchers concluded that there were several advantages of implementing role play in teaching students speaking skills. The first advantage of using role play in the classroom, according to the researchers, was that it tends to help them speak in real life situations in the sense that students were asked to practice some dialogues in pairs. Also, students were able to develop their vocabulary in the sense that

students were asked to create their own conversations during the implementation of role play in the study. Moreover, role play was proven to help students gain self-confidence and courage in the classroom in the sense that they were asked to practice conversations in pairs and thus they tend to overcome the anxiety they used to have in front of their classmates.

However, Arifin and Hum (2013) noticed some weaknesses behind implementing role play in the classroom. One of these weaknesses was that “the class management was not under control because the class was noisy and [...] the fear of making errors and the confidence could be the factors of why students did not participate in classroom activities.” (Arifin & Hum, 2013, p.12). These are considered as future recommendations for researchers willing to conduct research on implementing role play in developing students’ speaking.

In conclusion, EFL students tended to lack enough vocabulary and self-confidence while trying to speak the target language. Therefore, researchers tried to look for some strategies to help them overcome these problems and thus help them develop their speaking skills. The results of this study showed that role play was one of the effective techniques that can be implemented to enhance students’ speaking skills and thus develop their interaction in the EFL classes. However, future research studies should take into consideration the class size as well as students’ shyness when it comes to speaking in front of their peers in the classroom in order to assure a successful implementation of role play in EFL classes.

Ayuningtias et al., (2019) reported results from an action research under the title of “The Use of Role Play to Improve Students' Speaking Skill”. English has become a very important means of communication, and so developing learners' speaking skill was a must to achieve effective communication. Furthermore, there are effective activities that can be used in the classroom to help students increase their speaking skills.

The study aimed at measuring the impact of using the role play activity, to improve the students' speaking skill. Also, it aimed at raising students' motivation to speak English through employing the role play activity. It was hypothesized that the use of role play is more effective in motivating students to speak English.

The study involved 30 students with 20 females and 10 males of class X Accounting at SMKN 3 Karawang during Academic years 2017–2018 from Beijing University, China. The participants were divided into a control group and an experimental group. The data was collected using observation notes, questionnaires, and interviews in two cycles. There were four stages in each cycle:

Human Relations in Jane Austen's novel Pride and Prejudice

1. The planning of the action: In this stage, the researchers prepared the research instruments, designed the lesson plans, selected the role play activity, set the criteria of success, and made the research schedule.
2. The implementation of the action: In this stage, the researchers acted as teachers who implement the action (role play activity).
3. Classroom observation: the classroom English teacher played the role of an observer who observes the implementation of the action.
4. Reflection: the researchers reflected on the results obtained from the observation and the implementation of the action.

It was noted that many students in the SMKN 3 Karawang found speaking to be the most difficult skill to develop. To master speaking, students needed a good command and/or knowledge of the English vocabulary and grammar. They needed to develop self confidence in order to speak confidently. However, students in the SMKN 3 Karawang did not want to practice speaking English. Most of them did not have the willingness to speak. If asked by the teacher to try speaking in class, they just kept quiet and said nothing. Also, during the interview, the researchers asked the students and their teachers about the reasons behind the students' unwillingness to speak. Some students said that they could not speak in class because they lacked vocabulary as well as the confidence to speak, and their teachers reported the same reasons. Therefore, vocabulary and confidence appeared to be the main reasons behind students' unwillingness to speak.

Through a four-week study, it was shown that students in the experimental group who used the role play activity became more motivated to speak English than students in the Control Group. Moreover, there was improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II in the students' speaking skills. The average score of the test in Cycle I was 58.08, and in Cycle II it was 58.06. After the implementation of the role play activity in every cycle, the students' speaking scores were getting better. It can be seen from the result of students' average score that in Cycle I, it was 83.07, and in Cycle II, it was 77.08. Based on the results of their study, the researchers recommended that the role play technique should be used in teaching and improving student's English speaking skills.

Purnamawati et al. (2014) reported a study that took place in SMPN 12 Pontianak. The study at our disposal aimed at testing the hypothesis that implementing role play technique serves in developing students' speaking skill.

The reason behind conducting this study lies in the fact that students of the eighth grade in SMPN 12 Pontianak suffered from a number of problems regarding speaking in English. First, these students lack motivation to practice the target language in daily conversation. Second, they are too shy and afraid to take part in conversations. However, the main problems that those students suffered from are: 1) they had poor vocabulary, 2) they were not interested in the material about English that was given to them, and 3) they rarely practiced English.

The total number of the participants in this study is 223 second-year students of SMPN 12 in the academic year 2013-2014. The participants were divided into seven classes. Yet the researcher took class G, which consisted of 34 students, as a sample to be researched because the students' English ability in that class is equal. Moreover, the researchers believed that the role play technique would be successfully applied in that class and give the effect for students' achievement.

The method used in this study was a pre-experimental method that applied a pre-test and a post-test as instruments to measure the effect size of the treatment that took place after the pre-test was administered. Hence, to collect data, the researcher had to apply a measurement technique which was a kind of an *evaluationsheet* to measure students speaking ability.

The process of analyzing data was a little bit complex as it involved statistical and mathematical calculations; that is, the researchers used several formulas to calculate the results of pretest and posttest. They used another formula to calculate students' different score between the results of the pretest and posttest.

The administration of the experiment occurred in three phases:

1st phase: pretest was given to students on April 3rd, 2014 to see the students' ability in speaking. The result of this test was 50.58.

2nd phase: the treatment was done in one meeting on April 12th, 2014 which involved the application of the role play technique. In this phase, the teacher tried to make the meeting more interesting by explaining the roles, the situation the students had to do in the role play and the goal or the outcome they had to get.

The posttest was administered on April 19th, 2014 to know the students' post conditions in speaking activities. The score of students in this test was 64.41. After this, the

Human Relations in Jane Austen's novel Pride and Prejudice

researchers did some computations to determine the effect size of the treatment that yielded 1.68 which was higher than what was estimated 0.5. Based on the above mentioned computations, the researchers could come to the conclusion that using role play technique helped improve and develop speaking ability for eighth grade students in SMPN 12 in Pontianak. They also concluded that adopting role play technique in speaking based lessons motivated students to speak in English.

In conclusion, reviewing and discussing the three previous studies is important for several reasons. First, throughout reviewing these three studies, it has been noticed that there are certain factors that tend to prevent students from participating and speaking in the classroom. Some of these factors include: students' shyness, anxiety, low self-confidence as well as students' attitudes towards the English language as a school subject. In this regard, it is very important to see if these factors are also common among Moroccan EFL students given that the three studies were conducted abroad. Moreover, reviewing these studies gives us an idea on how to implement role play as a speaking activity during the whole research process as well as having a clear plan on how to conduct the experimental study. The context of these studies is somewhat similar to the Moroccan context in that English is taught as a foreign language there. Also, the results of these studies are very helpful when it comes to formulating the research hypotheses in the sense that the research hypotheses will take into consideration some of the extraneous variables that were observed to affect students' speaking in the classroom and thus try to control them in the experiment in order to ensure a successful implementation of role play and measure its effectiveness in enhancing students' speaking in the EFL classroom.

Studies that put into use role play to develop Moroccan EFL students' speaking skills are still rudimentary. Some studies focused on the implementation of several speaking activities like watching films and conducting projects in the framework of a cooperative learning (El Hannaoui, 2017), while others examined the relationship between the Moroccan EFL students' attitudes towards speaking in the classroom and their proficiency in this skill (Guebba, 2020).

El Hannaoui (2017) studied the effect of implementing several speaking activities like watching films and conducting projects in the framework of cooperative learning on enhancing Moroccan EFL students speaking skills. Data was collected from 40 Moroccan high school students, studying EFL, from both art and science streams. They belonged to three school levels (common core, first year baccalaureate, and second year baccalaureate).

The participants were observed to have difficulties with speaking. The study determined these difficulties by means of interviews and questionnaires. The findings unraveled the effectiveness of the given activities in developing students' speaking skills. Finally, EFL teachers were urged to implement the activities in their classes to ensure quality in speaking classes.

Guebba (2020) reported results from a study on the relationship between the Moroccan EFL students' attitudes towards speaking in the classroom and their proficiency in this skill. The study reflected on results from Garder (1985) who claimed that the students attitudes towards speaking in the classroom correlates positively with their speaking proficiency. That is, students with positive attitudes towards speaking in the classroom tended to achieve high speaking proficiency. Guebba's study aimed, first, at determining Moroccan EFL students' attitudes towards speaking in the classroom by means of a questionnaire. The second aim was to determine the students speaking proficiency using a speaking test. Data was collected from 80 1st year baccalaureate students majoring in art stream from Ibn Abbad Secondary High School in Kenitra, Morocco. The finding disconfirmed Gardner's findings. Although the participants had positive attitudes towards speaking in the classroom, their speaking proficiency was low. However, different linguistic as well as non-linguistic factors were reported to explain the results.

Guebba suggested some implications for the EFL teachers. First, teachers were asked to provide a stress-free environment for students to push them to produce language freely. Second, teachers were asked to encourage cooperative learning in the classroom among the students. Third, teachers were encouraged to possess positive attitudes that can be transmitted into students in class. Fourth, teachers should acknowledge learners' differences. Fifth, teachers need to draw students' attention to the importance of the English language and its added value on their future career. Sixth, teachers were asked to vary the classroom seating. Seventh, curriculum designers were asked to take learners' attitudes towards foreign language learning into account when designing textbooks and treat speaking as an independent skill and not just part of communication.

6.METHODS

This action research is cross-sectional. We adopt a quantitative approach, which is typified in an experimental design, to study the effect of role play on developing high school students' speaking skills. This section sheds light on (1) the school where the action research takes place, (2) the population involved in the study as well as the sampling techniques and

Human Relations in Jane Austen's novel Pride and Prejudice

the rationale behind that, and (3) the main data collection instruments along with the rationale behind choosing them as well as the steps followed to reach the results.

The School

The current action research takes place in a high school called Imam El Ghazali which is located in SidiBennour. It is one among the three high schools in SidiBennour where there are two main streams: Science and Literature. However, Imam El Ghazali is the only high school in SidiBennour where students go to study Technical Sciences including Electrical and Mechanical sciences. Students come from several regions in SidiBennour to opt for this stream. The following picture shows a satellite view of the school.

Figure 1

A Satellite View of Imam El Ghazali High School in Sidi Bennour.



Next is picture 2 that shows the front door of the school where students, teachers as well as the administrative staff enter the school whereas picture 3 shows the school from inside.

Figure 2

Imam El Ghazali High School's Front Door in Sidi Bennour.



Figure 3

Imam El Ghazali High School from Inside in Sidi Bennour.



Research Population and Sampling

The teacher who is teaching in Imam El Ghazali high school has six common core classes. Three out of the six classes are of literature stream and they have four hours of English per week. On the other hand, the three other classes are of Technical Sciences stream and they have three hours of English per week. Before moving to sampling, it is very important to mention that almost all Technical Science classes have the basics of English and

Human Relations in Jane Austen's novel Pride and Prejudice

their speaking skills are not bad compared to literature students who tend to suffer a lot from almost all the language aspects.

Therefore, out of the six classes, only one literature class was chosen based on the teacher's observation that the students in that particular class always hesitate to participate in class, and even when they raise their hands to take part in the classroom discussions, their speaking skill is not that good. In this respect, the research population consists of six common core classes but the sample focuses on only one literature stream class. The research sample, according to Merriam Webster dictionary, refers to "the act, process, or technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population." The total number of students in the six classes is around 180 students. However, the sample class consists of 41 common core students.

in this particular action research, the teacher uses the probability sampling method. This particular method is based on random selection of the participants where every student has the same chance to be chosen in the study. Moreover, since all the 41 students have the same low level of speaking, every student has the same opportunity to be part of either the experiment group or the control group. This sampling method helps the researcher (the teacher in this case) to guarantee that the sample would be representative of the population.

In addition, since this action research uses probability sampling, a simple random technique was implemented by the teacher to divide 41 students into two groups. In this respect, each student was assigned a number from 1 to 41. After that, these numbers were uploaded to online random picker software where it randomly chooses a number each time until it reaches 20 students who would be the experiment group. It is very important to mention that out of the 41 students, one student has never attended any session, which makes it 20 students in the experiment group and the other 20 students in the control group. (The online random picker software URL: www.randomlists.com).

All of the 41 students are Moroccan and range between 14 and 17 years of age and almost 80 percent of them came from rural middle schools where they studied English for the first time. The other 20 percent of students are from SidiBennour and they also studied English for the first time in the middle school. It is very essential to mention that all of the students have been studying in the public sector since the first time they joined school. Therefore, being part of a private school is not a variable that could affect the results of the study.

7.DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

This action research makes use of an experimental study as a way to test the effect of role play on high school students' speaking skills. In this respect, Gay and Airasian (2000) claim that experiment studies are "the only type of research that can test hypothesis to establish cause and effect relationship." In the case of this action research, the experiment tends to test whether role play causes students to develop their speaking skills or not. Moreover, in an experimental study, the researcher tries his/her best to manipulate one independent variable and at the same time control other independent variables that might seem to affect the results of the study.

Relating this to the action research at hand, the teacher manipulates one independent variable which is the teaching strategy implemented to teach the experiment and the control group. In this regard, the teacher uses role play as the main strategy to teach the experiment group whereas he uses information gap strategy to teach the control group. Furthermore, many other independent variables were held constant. These other independent variables that were controlled include students' level of English and their public sector background.

This action research makes use of an experiment as it is the only way to see if there is a causal relationship between role play and students' speaking. In this regard, the teacher starts the experiment with a pre-test for the whole class before dividing students into two groups. The chart below represents the rubric that was used by the teacher as a pre-test.

Table 2 below represents the most important elements focused on while evaluating students' speaking performance in speaking. For expression, students express themselves with emotions. As for volume and speed, it evaluates whether the presenter can be easily heard by others and speaks in a natural pace. In eye contact, we see if the student keeps eye contact with the addressee(s). Regarding posture, we see if the student faces the addressee(s) throughout the speaking period. Students' use of body language and gestures is evaluated in gesture.

Table2

Speaking rubric used as a pre-test for students.

	<u>Excele</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>DevelopingLi</u>
<u>nt</u>	All elements present (4)	Most elements present (3)	Someelement present (2)	mitted/one element present (1)
Expre				
ssion				
Student expresses himself/herself with emotions.				
Volu				
me and speed				
Present er can easily be heard by others and speaks in a natural pace.				
Eye				
contact				
Student keeps eye contact with his/her addressee				
Postu				
re				
Student faces the addressee throughout the speaking period.				
Gestu				
re				
Student				

t uses body language and gestures.

Total/
20

Comments

After administering the pre-test, the results showed that out of 40 students, 26 students got 8/20 as their speaking performance showed at least a good body language and good voice projection though they made several mistakes in terms of grammar and vocabulary. The other 14 students got 4/20 as their speaking performance was noticed to be developing in the sense that they spoke with a steady and natural pace. To calculate the mean score of the 40 students in the pre-test, the teacher took all the marks of the 40 students and then divided them on 40. Mathematically speaking, the mean score is $(26 \times 8) + (14 \times 4)$. The total is 264. If we divide 264 on 40, the result is 6.6. In this respect, the mean score of the 40 students in the pre-test was 6.6/20. The pre-test was in the form of a conversation, that students were asked to prepare at home, in which they introduce themselves to each other and ask each other simple questions including age, city, favorite school subject(s) as well as hobbies.

The first lesson taught to common core students is *self-introduction* where students have to learn how to introduce themselves, how to introduce someone else as well as how to ask about someone. In this respect, the teacher used two teaching strategies to teach this particular lesson: information gap activities for the control group and role play for the experimental group.

Starting with the control group, the teacher asked the students to read the conversation on page 8 (student's book/outlook textbook) and try to fill in the table on page 9. Below is the chart that students were asked to fill in pairs.

Table 3

Students' chart

Introduce yourself	Introduce someone	Ask about someone
.....
.....

.....

....

.....

.....

After finishing the lesson with the control group, the teacher changed the strategy from information gap activities to role play to teach the same lesson about *self-introduction* to the experimental group. The teacher brought a video in which there was a dialogue between two or three students talking to each other and students were asked to watch and listen carefully to the different students talking. Before playing the video, the teacher pre-taught some vocabulary words as well as some key expressions used to introduce one-self and others as well as asking about others.

After that, students were asked to take the roles in the video and model the dialogue in groups of three. After all students modeled the dialogue, the teacher asked the same students in the experimental group to rehearse the dialogue at home and come to class in order to perform it in front of their peers. When they performed the dialogue in front of the whole class, the teacher orally asked students in the experimental group about the expressions used to introduce one-self and someone else as well as to ask about others. Like the control group, the teacher spent two sessions with the experimental group.

Right after four main sessions, the teacher used a post-test where students were asked to prepare a dialogue at home in pairs or groups of three where they try to get to know each other, ask about each other as well as introduce other students to each other as a production stage of the lesson. Next is a script of the dialogue which students were asked to prepare and deliver as a post-test.

Student A: Hello! My name is.....How's everything?

Student B: Hi I am good thank you. What about you?

Student A: I am also fine. Where are you from?

Student B: I am fromWhat about you?

Student A: I am from.....

Student B: How old are you?

Student A: I amyears old, and you?

Student B: I amyears old. What are your favorite school subjects?

Student A: My favorite school subjects are And

Student B: Nice! Let me introduce you to.....He is my friend.This is

Student A: Hello.....How are you?

Student C: Hi! I am good. Thank you. And you?

Student B: I am also good. Nice to meet you!

Student C: Nice to meet you, too.

Student A: See you later. Goodbye.

Student B: Take care.

It is very essential to mention that the post-test is the same as the pre-test except that the post-test includes expressions of self-introduction, introducing others as well as asking about others which they were taught in lesson 1. Also, the same rubric was used to test students' speaking skills based on the same criteria used in the pre-test.

The results of the post-test showed that out of the 20 students in the control group, 12 students got 8/20 meaning that they used at least two criteria of speaking in their speaking performances, whereas 6 other students got 4/20 as they used at least one speaking criteria in their performance. The other 2 students could not perform their dialogue as they were extremely shy though the teacher did his best to encourage them to perform. In this respect, the mean score of the control group is the total marks of the 20 students divided on 20. This means $(12 \times 8) + (6 \times 4) + (2 \times 0)$. The total is 120. If we divide 120 on 20 students, the result is 6. In this respect, the mean score of the control group in the post-test was 6.

On the other hand, 11 out of the 20 students in the experimental group got 12/20 as they showed at least three speaking criteria in their performances of the dialogue whereas 4 students got 8/20 and the other 4 students got 4/20. The mean score of the experimental group in the post-test was calculated the same way by gathering all the marks of the 20 students and then divide them on 20. This means $(11 \times 12) + (4 \times 8) + (4 \times 4)$. The total is 180. If we divide 180 on 20 students, the result is 9. In this regard, the mean score of the experimental group in the post-test was 9. Table 2 below shows the difference between the control group and the experimental group in the mean score.

Table 4

	The control group	The experimental group
The mean score/20	6	9

8ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The table above shows that there is a difference of 3/20 in the mean score between the control group and the experimental group. These results can be interpreted based on the effectiveness of role play as an independent variable that was used to teach the experimental group as opposed to the control group where information gap was used to teach them the lesson. However, some important factors were noticed during the implementation of the experiment. First, after dividing the class randomly into two groups, it was observed that the experimental group consisted of 9 females and 11 males whereas the control group had 15 males and only 5 females. Therefore, gender was not controlled in the experiment since the sampling technique was random and thus the results cannot be surely explained based on role play as the only independent variable.

Also, the results could be attributed to the fact that some students were motivated to perform whereas others were shy and demotivated to do so. Hence, other psychological variables could be part of the difference in the mean score. Moreover, doing the pre-test, the experiment as well as the post-test in less than a week cannot guarantee that students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group just due to role play. Instead, it might be that students in the experimental group did a great job in rehearsing the dialogue more than students in the control group did. Furthermore, it is very important to refer to the fact that two students from the control group did not participate in the post-test and thus the mean score could be more than 6 if they had taken part and performed their dialogue

In conclusion, this practical action research has attempted to study if there is any causal relationship between role play and students' speaking skills. To accomplish this aim, the teacher made use of an experiment where he administered a pre-test to the whole class before dividing them, and then the class was divided into a control group and an experimental group. The control group was taught using information gap activities, whereas the experimental group was taught using role play. The results showed a difference in the mean score in favor of the experimental group over the control group. The interpretation of this difference in the mean score cannot only be attributed to role play as there were several weaknesses in the study such as the appearance of gender as another variable as well as other

psychological variables such as anxiety and students' shyness which prevented two students from participating in the post-test.

Conclusion

This action research has attempted to investigate the effectiveness of role play in developing Moroccan high school English students' speaking skills. In order to accomplish this objective, the researchers conducted an experiment where they divided students into two groups: the control group which was taught without using role play and the experimental group which was taught using role play. The results revealed that role play has a positive effect on students' speaking skills in the sense that there was a significant difference in the mean score between the control group and the experimental group. In this respect, the control group's mean score was 6/20 whereas that of the experimental group was 9/20.

Based on these results, a difference of 3/20 in the mean score between the two groups can lead us to conclude that it is due to role play only. However, it is not the case due to several other factors. First, when the researcher randomly divided the class into two groups, it was observed that the experimental group consisted of 9 females and 11 males whereas the control group had 15 males and only 5 females. Therefore, gender was not controlled in the experiment since the sampling technique was random and thus the results cannot be surely explained based on role play as the only independent variable. Second, the results could be attributed to the fact that some students were motivated to perform whereas others were shy and demotivated to do so.

Hence, motivation among other psychological variables could be part of the difference in the mean score between the control group and the experimental group. Moreover, implementing role play in a short period of time is not sufficient to judge its effectiveness in improving students' speaking skills given that 'speaking' as a language aspect requires time and effort to improve. In this respect, the results could possibly be attributed just to the fact that students in the experimental group did a great job rehearsing the dialogue more than students in the control group did. In addition, it is essential to refer to the fact that two students from the control group did not participate in the post-test and thus the mean score could be more than 6/20 if they had taken part and performed their dialogue. As a result, all of these factors would lead us to talk about the main limitations of this action research.

The first main limitation is the way students were divided in the sense that non-random selection could give the researcher the chance to have the same number of males and

Human Relations in Jane Austen's novel Pride and Prejudice

females in both groups. As a result, for future researchers willing to work on the same topic, it is necessary to consider the sampling technique when trying to divide students into the control group as well as the experimental group. Also, the effect of role play on students' speaking skills is such a huge topic which requires at least a term to start noticing results that are attributed to role play only. In this regard, conducting an experimental study within one or two months is not really enough and thus it is highly recommended for future researchers to take their time and consider conducting their action research within at least a term to have satisfying results that can be attributed to role play rather than having several other extraneous variables showing up during the experiment.

References

Airasian, P. and L. R. Gay. (2000). Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application Sixth Edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.

Arifin, Z.S. and Hum, E. (2013). Teaching speaking ability through role play. PBS, FKIP TanjunguraUnivesity, Pontianak

Ayuningtias, O. D., Wulandari, W. and Yana, Y.(2019). The use of role play to improve students' speaking skill. Professional Journal of English Education 2(3): 416-420. DOI:[10.22460/project.v2i3.p416-420](https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v2i3.p416-420)

Bazouki, A.(2021). The Oxford English Dictionary(2nd ed.). Oxford university press.

Brand, C. and Götz, S. (2013). [Fluency versus accuracy in advanced spoken learner language. Errors and Disfluencies in Spoken Corpora](#), 117–137.

Crowther, D., Trofimovich, P., Isaacs, T. and Saitu, K.(2015). Does a Speaking Task Affect Second Language Comprehensibility? The Modern Language Journal 99 (3): 80-95.<https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12185>

Florez, M. A. C. (1999). Improving Adult English Language Learners' Speaking Skills.ERICDigest: 5-7.

Housen, A. and F. (2009). Complexity, accuracy, and fluency in second language acquisition. Applied Linguistics, 30 (4), 461–473.

Howarth, S. C. (2001). Towards a Social Psychology of Community: A Social Representations Perspective. The theory of social behavior, 31(2):223-238.

Leem J. (200). Tasks and communicating in Language Classrooms. New York:McGraw-Hill

Moreno, Z. T. (1965). Psychodramatic rules, techniques, and adjunctive methods. *Group Psychotherapy*, 18(1-2): 73-86.

Parida, A. Rout, P. & Kumar Swain, B. (2017). An action research on improving seventh standard students' creative writing skills in English. *ISOR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 22 (6), 17-20.

Solliyah, P. S. and Luwandi, S. (2014). The use of role play in teaching speaking. *English Education Study Program, FKIP Untan, Pontianak*.

Wafaa, A.Y. (2014). Cooperative Learning in the EFL Classroom. *Proceeding of The 2014 WEI International Academic Conference, Austria*, 92-98