Research Paper
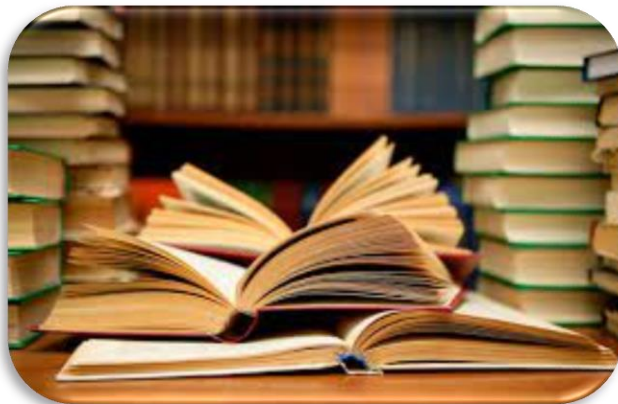
The Interrelationship between Literature and Language Teaching: Drama and Speaking

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ABSTRACT

The paper aimed to understand how role-playing affected the speaking proficiency of pre-intermediate EFL learners. Speaking skills in the experimental and control groups were evaluated. 24 pre-intermediate students from the English Translation Field of Chabahar Maritime University in Chabahar, Iran, who were chosen for the study based on their performance on a pretest, comprised the participants. Twenty was the range of their ages. Both male and female students were present. While the treatment implemented for each group was chosen randomly, these two groups were not. The placement test results showed the participants' homogeneity and degree of proficiency. Using role-playing techniques, the researcher conducted in-group activities to simulate conversation. The conventional method of instruction was given to the control group simultaneously. The post-test was given to understand their improvement in speaking after eighteen sessions utilizing "Speak Now 1". According to inferential statistics, the experimental group members performed differently in the post-test. After comparing utilizing two independent paired t-tests, the mean for the control group was 12 while the experimental group was 14. The mean of the two groups differed by 2 points, and the p-value was p= 0.026<p= .05. In summary, the experimental group had better outcomes. Also, it could improve their speaking ability using the above-mentioned book that acting in front of their peers, enhanced their expressive abilities.

Keywords: Communicative Approach; Drama; Speaking; Role-play; Task-Based language learning

ارتباط متقابل بین ادبیات و آموزش زبان: نمایش و صحبت کردن

مقاله به هدف درک اینکه چگونه بازی نقش توانایی صحبت کردن دانشجویان زبان انگلیسی مقدماتی را تحت تأثیر قرار می‌دهد، تهیه شد. مهارت‌های صحبت کردن در گروه‌های آزمایشی و کنترل ارزیابی شدند. ۲۴ دانشجوی مقطع مقدماتی از رشته ترجمه انگلیسی دانشگاه دریایی چابهار در چابهار، ایران، که بر اساس عملکرد خود در آزمون پیش‌آزمون انتخاب شده بودند، شامل شرکت‌کنندگان بودند. محدوده سنی آن‌ها بیست سال بود. دانشجویان مرد و زن حضور داشتند. در حالی که درمان برای هر گروه به صورت تصادفی انتخاب شده بود، این دو گروه نبود. نتایج آزمون جایگاه نشان داد همگنی و درجه توانایی شرکت‌کنندگان. به کارگیری تکنیک‌های بازی نقش، پژوهشگر فعالیت‌های گروهی را برای شبیه‌سازی گفتگو انجام داد. روش سنتی آموزش به گروه کنترل به صورت همزمان داده شد. پس‌آزمون به منظور درک بهبود توانایی صحبت کردن پس از هجده جلسه با استفاده از *Speak Now 1* داده شد. طبق آمار استنتاجی، اعضای گروه آزمایشی به طور متفاوت در پس‌آزمون عمل کردند. پس از مقایسه با استفاده از دو آزمون t مستقل جفت، میانگین برای گروه کنترل ۱۲ بود در حالی که برای گروه آزمایشی ۱۴ بود. میانگین دو گروه به اندازه ۲ امتیاز متفاوت بود و مقدار p برابر با 05. =p<p =0.026 بود. به طور خلاصه، گروه آزمایشی نتایج بهتری داشت. همچنین، با استفاده از کتاب فوق‌الذکر که بازی در مقابل هم‌دانشجویان خود را تقویت کرده بود، می‌توانست توانایی صحبت کردن خود را بهبود بخشد.

کلمات کلیدی: روش ارتباطاتی، نمایش، صحبت کردن، بازی نقش، یادگیری زبان مبتنی بر وظایف

INTRODUCTION

Literature and language go hand in hand, representing two complementary aspects. The concept of language itself is indispensable, serving as a means to exchange information. In the realm of communication, the English language holds particular significance .Major literary forms can be divided into poems, drama, etc. Dramatic instruction is a useful tool for inspiring most students. It offers opportunities for the entire class to participate in the creative process of producing a drama and can be applied in a variety of ways. Not every student needs to play an actor in the play; some can be employed in different capacities that better suit their abilities and character. Drama, acting, or dancing can be an engaging way to tell a story and get students thinking about relationships, historical power struggles, current environmental issues, and debates. It is similar to role-playing games but has a conclusion. This is a production of some sort that can be presented to the parents and the community, the rest of the class, or the school during assembly.

A prevalent misunderstanding is that mastering a foreign language is the main goal of learning it. The foundation of human communication is speech. Although most people speak more than write in their daily lives, speaking and listening skills are still often neglected by English teachers, who devote most of the time in class to writing and reading. English's standing as a global language is only becoming stronger. More students aspire to become fluent speakers and language masters. However, there are challenges to making this subject matter simple to understand. Any language can be learned by watching someone else do something, doing it yourself, and listening to someone else talk. Naturally, different people learn in different ways and have varying degrees of competency depending on how they get the knowledge they need to learn. Pupils studying English as a second language (ESL) typically don't get many chances to interact with English speakers outside of the classroom or in the global community. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), a significant portion of language learners worldwide study English to advance their professions.

In most situations, speaking is thought to be the skill that is used the most. In daily communications, speaking is employed in L2 contexts more frequently than other skills, according to Rivers (1981) (Torky, 2006). For this reason, it appears that educators are giving their students access to more authentic scenarios and exercises to improve their public speaking skills. In particular, combined with the role-playing method in an ESP setting, this will boost their confidence and speaking skills. According to Richards (1988), role-playing is a classroom activity that resembles drama and involves students acting out scenarios that could typically occur in real life by assuming the roles of various participants. For instance, a teacher might set up a scenario where students pretend to be customers apologizing to teach them how to do so in English. For many people, becoming fluent speakers is the final aim of learning a language; other aptitudes are ranked based on their relative importance (McCarthy, 1998; Nunan, 2001a). One method that helps improve students' fluency in the target language and foster interpersonal communication is role-playing. According to Hadley (2003), the focus needs to change from grammatical competence to communicative competence, which demonstrates how and when to use language. Speaking appears to be the most crucial communication skill, for this reason.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The history of role-playing dates back to the Greeks, who employed plays as a teaching tool. Most likely, the first role-playing exercise began when a student was being taught by a master, who told him to "act as if I am a customer and you are serving me.". The students fulfilled their obligation. The teacher acted out the part of a prospective client. The play served as a teaching tool when they talked about their roles afterwards (Corsini et al. 1961). Corsini et al. describe Moreno, the Viennese psychiatrist. was the first to conduct a scientific analysis of role-play. The sociometric measure, which examines interpersonal attraction and group membership in institutional settings, was developed by Moreno (1946). e. g. reform educational institutions. To treat patients with psychological issues, he employed role-playing for psychiatric purposes. These plays are referred to as socio-drama and psycho-drama. The main activities in psychodrama are the enactment and its emotional and behavioral confrontations; little to no discussion or analysis occurs (Joyce and Weil, 1980). In the 1920s, there was another source in Germany (Corsini, Shaw & Blake, 1961; Wohlking & Gill, 1980).

Most of the time., developing relationships with others and becoming better speakers of English present challenges for language learners. Since English is a language that is used by people everywhere for communication, speaking abilities should be developed in tandem with other abilities to improve learners' communication achievement in a global community. The most crucial component of learning a language for many people is becoming fluent speakers, and all other skills are secondary (McCarthy, 1998; Nunan, 2001a). Participating in dialogues will boost students' motivation and self-confidence and facilitate their speaking. Teachers used to provide some patterns that concentrated on specific language form elements to teach speaking skills. They made an effort to practice more by doing it again. The instructor gave the students some chances to listen to and repeat verbatim some language strings that might be a little difficult for them to understand (Brown, 2007).

The real communication requirements of students in target language contexts were not met by previous approaches. Even after extensive English language instruction, students were still unable to feel comfortable enough to participate in genuine conversation. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been demonstrated to be very effective in creating authentic language use scenarios in language learning environments. To improve speaking skills and gauge progress, role-playing aims to provide a realistic environment in which language learners can practice speaking in authentic contexts. The study's implications are noteworthy since the technique isn't used in ESP contexts in the literature. Parivash Zare-Behtash (2017) researched the effect of role-playing.

Numerous works have been done on role-playing, as was previously mentioned. It was novel in that it made use of the recently released book "Speak Now 1". Investigating the following research questions is necessary from both theoretical and pedagogical viewpoints.

RQ1. Does role-playing improve Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability in an ESP context?

RQ2. Does the role-playing task improve Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' ability in comparison with the diagnostic task?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

24 pre-intermediate students from Chabahar Maritime University in Chabahar, Iran, who were chosen for the study based on their performance on a pretest, comprised the participants. Twenty was the range of their ages. Both male and female students were present. Twelve individuals made up the control group, while the remaining twelve students made up the treatment or experimental group. While the treatment that was implemented for each group was chosen at random, these two groups were not. Initially, the participants engaged in a placement test administered by Chabahar Maritime University's Language Center to evaluate their knowledge of English. The Center used this examination to evaluate the homogeneity and proficiency level. Furthermore, an interview was carried out to ascertain their ability to converse at a pre-intermediate level.

Instruments

In 2022, the English department of Chabahar Maritime University, located in Chabahar, Iran, hosted this study. There were three two-hour sessions per week for a total of eighteen sessions using "Speak Now 1". Three testing instruments were used by the researcher to gather data: (1) Longman Placement Test (2004), which demonstrated the subjects' homogeneity and placed them within a reasonable range of proficiency. The homogeneity of the pre-tests in this study can be seen using the Paired Samples T-test. The interview served as the second instrument, and SPSS version 26 served as the third.

Longman Placement Test

Instructors gave out the Longman Test at the start of the course (Pearson Education Polska, 2004). This test demonstrated the uniformity of language proficiency among students. Students who scored 0-45 on this test were classified as elementary learners, 46–80 as intermediate learners, and 81–100 as advanced learners. Four language learning macro-skills were tested to show the proficiency level. When it came to writing skills, the subjects said they couldn't write and had trouble speaking and listening, even though they wanted to speak because it was part of their job requirement. Therefore, the researcher attempted to concentrate on speaking and listening rather than assigning reading and writing. In the pre-test, the research evaluated the students' speaking proficiency.

Interview

To obtain demographic data about the subjects, the researcher asked the learners a few questions during the interview. For students preparing for pre-intermediate level, the questions were clear and easy to understand. It gave the necessary details about the participants, including their age, major in school, place of origin, and mother tongue. It made it easier for the researcher to understand the participants' basic information. The same speaking exam was given and recorded after the course, following eighteen treatment sessions. Two raters who are both PhD candidates in TEFL were given the exam results to score. The data will be analyzed. The findings of the assessment may provide insight into how role-playing methods affect EFL students.

Procedure

Eighteen sessions, lasting two hours each, were held three times a week to administer the treatment. Using role-playing and in-group activities, the researcher conducted conversations with the experimental group. Using a variety of assignments and activities, the researcher attempted to implement a general lesson plan in each session for the experimental group. The traditional approach based on the textbook was used in the control group, which enjoyed performing diagnostic tasks. To determine how much the learners' speaking proficiency had improved, During the most recent session, those two groups took a speaking test. The test's results provided the researcher with data to analyze the findings.

Experimental Group Procedure

after the preliminary exam had been administered, which yielded information regarding the test of participant homogeneity, research groups received instruction for eighteen sessions, three times a week, lasting two hours each. While reading and listening were important skills to have, speaking was the only one that was practiced for the entire eighteen sessions of the course. In addition to role-plays being assigned as homework projects for students in the experimental group, regular class assignments included homework that needed to be completed in the classroom.

In one of the two classes, role plays were set up so that the experimental group's students would have some material related to the subjects covered in the book to work on and act out. The researcher attempted to watch the experimental group for three steps to adhere to a general lesson plan.

Step 1. Pre-Task Phase

The researcher asked open-ended questions regarding the topic to warm up the students. The researcher inquired as to whether she also used preview activities to help learners get ready for speaking by having them practice pertinent vocabulary.

Step 2. Task Phase

Following an introductory exercise, the general comprehension listening material was played by the researcher so that the students could comprehend the main idea and then act it out. Students were expected to start understanding phrase structure at this point and sentences as well as listen to how the new words were pronounced. The students received a dialogue-style text the following week. To gain an understanding of the role's content and to share their thoughts, it was requested that they read the texts aloud. Finally, the teachers gave the students instructions to role-play and act out each person

Step 3. Role-Playing

The last step involved giving the students dialogues to practice each scenario with one another. The scenarios exemplified actual discussions about the English translation field students. The teacher's role in conducting role-playing is crucial. When needed, the teacher is available to assist students. Students should take on different roles during each role-play, which should be done at least twice. Competent students can perform the role-play for the entire class in group settings.

Before, if necessary, the teacher would fill one of the roles. No corrections were made by the teacher until the role-playing was complete. The instructor served as a facilitator as well. As the role-play continued, learners occasionally discovered that they were having trouble understanding new words and phrases. Teachers were able to "feed in" the necessary information during the practice phase. This necessitated that the teacher observes the lesson and offers help when required at the conclusion, functioning as a kind of facilitator or spectator. An instructor may participate in class activities as needed; that is, when circumstances call for it, the instructor may become involved and participate in role-playing. The conventional method was applied to the control group. Stated differently, the instructor warmed up the class with questions while also having them practice pertinent vocabulary through preview exercises. Without offering the control group the opportunity to participate in role-playing, the teacher used two students to have a conversation and the reading together. They administered a pre-activity to the group participating in the experiment. The trial group consisted of the visual aids task served as a pre-activity. Ultimately, following the program, both groups underwent measurements, and a post-test was used to gather quantitative data. An interview that was recorded exactly like the pre-test interview served as the post-test. Two PhD candidates rated the interviews.

Control Group Procedure

Following the exam, students were instructed in research groups for eighteen sessions, three times a week, for two hours each. While reading and listening were important skills to have, speaking was the only one that was practiced for the entire eighteen sessions of the course. Additionally, instruction took place in the classroom when assignments were due as part of the regular curriculum, and the control group also received workbooks as homework. In the control group, speaking was also practiced through reading and listening through diagnostic tasks. As a post-reading exercise, the students were asked to discuss the passage after answering a few general questions about its title during reading time. Replicating what they heard and discussing the listening topic were common listening speaking assignments. The diagnostic speaking tasks commenced primarily with a warm-up and a challenge to indicate whether one agreed or disagreed with the topic. After that, five to ten yes/no questions from the textbook were asked; most of them started with auxiliary verbs related to the grammar focus. Students were instructed to look at certain words or images and then participate in class discussions on the subject.

Data Analysis

The post-test results were compared to the role-playing participants using an independent t-test sample. Furthermore, two samples of paired t-tests were used to evaluate whether the participants' treatment had resulted in any speaking knowledge acquisition. The mean scores were compared utilizing a paired samples t-test. Using Cronbach's Alpha formula and the Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient tests, the assessment's internal consistency was assessed.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics
The type of data, data distribution, and data comparison with other comparable data are all identified by descriptive statistics.

Table 1

Control and Experimental Group Descriptive Statistics

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest for Both Groups	Control	12	9.25	1.35	.39
	Experimental	12	9.50	1.38	.39

Table 1 demonstrates that every learner is at the intermediate level as a result. That is to say, the students' proficiency in the study's target areas the control and experimental (role-playing) groups, respectively, did not significantly differ from one another.

Table 2

Homogeneity in Pre-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std.Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest for Both Groups	Equal variances assumed	.06	.80	-.44	22	.65	-.25	.55	-1.40	.91
	Equal variances not assumed			-.44	21.9	.65	-.25	.55	-1.40	.91

The outcome, as shown in Table 2, is t = 0.44 with a degree of freedom of 22. Notably, P is greater than 0.05 (P>0.005), indicating that there is no difference between the means accepted. This supports the homogeneity of the group by showing that there was no appreciable difference between the two groups.

Research Question One

Does role-playing improve Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability in an ESP context?

Table 3

Paired-Sample

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest Experimental	9.50	12	1.38	.39
	Posttest Experimental	14.75	12	2.41	.69

According to Table 3, the pre-test performance mean score was 9 and the post-test mean was 14. The development of speaking proficiency in Iranian EFL learners can be positively impacted by using role-plays in ESP courses, according to the findings.

Table 4

Paired Sample Test for Experimental Group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Paired Samples Test for Experimental Group	-5.25	2.34	.67	-6.73	-3.76	-7.77	11	.000

The inferential statistics presented in Table 4 are the basis for the P value less than 0.005 (P<0.005) and the t= -7.77 with an 11 degree of freedom. There is statistical significance evident in standard deviations (2.34). Stated differently, there was a high probability that the learners' speaking ability would increase as a consequence of the instruction they were given. Results from pre- and post-tests indicate that using role-plays in ESP classes helps Iranian EFL learners improve their speaking ability.

Table 5

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest control	9.25	12	1.35	.39
	Posttest control	12.75	12	1.60	.46

Ninety-five points was the mean score from the pre-test, and twelve points came from the post-test. 3 points is the progress pre-and post-tests.

Table 6

Paired Samples Test for Control Group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Paired Samples Test	-3.50	2.15	.62	-4.86	-2.13	-5.63	11	.000

for the control group							

Table 6 illustrates that the P value less than 0.005 (P<0.005) and t=-5.63 with an 11-point degree of freedom show that the control group participants did not perform as expected in the speaking portion of the post-test. according to Table 6's inferential statistics. The standard deviations (1.81). In other words, there was a good chance that the learners' speaking proficiency would improve as a result of the treatment they received. This suggests that giving diagnostic exercises and teacher-student repetitions to Iranian EFL students in ESP courses has a positive influence on the development of their speaking.

Research Question Two
Do role-plays enhance the speaking proficiency of ESP learners in comparison to diagnostic tasks?

Table 7
Paired Samples Correlations of Control and Experimental Groups

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Paired Samples Test for the control group	12	.05	.87
Pair 1	Paired Samples Test for Experimental Group	12	.34	.27

According to Table 7's inferential statistics, the speaking scores of the students in role-play significantly improved, and there was also a stronger correlation between their results. Table 7 illustrates that the role-play (experimental) group has a 0.29 correlation difference. They have made some progress, even though the diagnostic group correlation of scores from the pretest to the posttest is not as high as that of the experimental groups.

Table 8
Reliability

Groups	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Raters	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control Group (Pretest)	.76	2	.70	.011
Control Group (Posttest)	.83	2	.71	.009
Experimental Group (Pretest)	.87	2	.78	.002
Experimental Group (Posttest)	.78	2	.64	.023

Table 8 shows that assessments made by the two raters have a highly significant inter-reliability. Table 8's alpha data show that they are nearly equal to 1, indicating that there was no subjectivity in the evaluation. The results of the test also show a high degree of rater reliability in task scoring. It is above the 0.6 level. The raters' strong agreement is demonstrated by this highly significant finding, which suggests that the profile of speaking test results is highly trustworthy when utilized for evaluation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper aimed to assess how role-playing helps students learn English in an ESP setting and how they will become proficient speakers of the language in addition to picking up some specialized vocabulary relevant to their line of work. First, the post-test results showed a significant improvement in performance. The speaking proficiency of Iranian pre-intermediate learners in ESP contexts improved significantly as a result of role plays, as shown by tables 4, 6, and 7, indicating that the null hypothesis is rejected. Table 7 shows that, in comparison to their pre-test results, the performance differed significantly from the results. The second hypothesis—that role-plays significantly improve Iranian pre-intermediate learners' speaking ability —is supported by the role-play group's superior performance on the diagnostic tasks given to them in comparison to the control group.

The findings illustrated while both therapies and the speaking skills of the students improved in both classes, role-playing exercises and instruction proved to be more beneficial than diagnostic tests. The effectiveness of these kinds of speaking tasks is therefore said to be greatly impacted by the demonstration of role-play speaking tasks. In contrast to the diagnostic tasks in the control group, the teacher in the current study attempted to maximize speaking learning by utilizing the benefits of role plays as a subtype of drama. The findings showed that both teaching methods were successful in improving the pre-intermediate Iranian language speaking proficiency.

According to the findings, it's possible to say that using role-play offers opportunities for significant language production, variety, and a peaceful change of pace. It doesn't have to be a "one-off" event; it can be a crucial component of the lesson. Role-playing exercises increase exposure to peer scaffolding and foster collaborative and cooperative learning in the classroom, which is beneficial for all students. Group work fosters interaction between students and teachers which leads to increased preparation and rehearsal on both sides, adding dynamic elements. It is advised that role-plays be used in advanced education that are tailored to the objectives of the learners following thorough needs analyses. It also enabled students to evaluate their peers' work in addition to their learning progress and proficiency.

Pedagogical Implication

This paper aimed to find out how role-playing methods at Chabahar Maritime University in Chabahar, Iran, helped English language learners improve their speaking skills. The outcome demonstrated the effectiveness of this method. The research's conclusions will be useful to syllabus designers and textbook authors so they can incorporate this method into their teaching. Other groups, such as teachers, and supervisors can benefit from the results. Furthermore, this research will help university ESP students become more proficient in speaking and technical English.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

The study's findings demonstrated that using ESP text in role-playing exercises helped English translation field students' speaking skills. However, the study's results are constrained by its small sample size and brief treatment duration. Comparing the students' performance on two assignments allows for the formulation of only preliminary conclusions. Longitudinal monitoring of the impact of role-playing exercises is essential. Researchers studying second-language acquisition are now examining a new area of study: the impact of various teaching modalities within or outside of various methodologies.

Researchers who are interested in learning more about the impact of role-play tasks on speaking components such as pronunciation, grammar, sentence structure, and pronunciation should be investigated in this area. In light of the results of this study, the technique's application to pre-intermediate university students enrolled in general English courses can be further explored.

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Biodata

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