IMPROVING ESP STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY THROUGH ROLE-PLAY ACTIVITIES
(In an example of teaching English to Law University students)

Usarova Dildora Abduazizovna
Tashkent State University of Law, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Abstract

Making the students able to converse in the target language is one of the key objectives of teaching English as a foreign language. Students need to speak English proficiently to communicate effectively. Students that struggle to communicate in English will find it challenging to express themselves during class activities. In this case, role-play is an effective way of improving speaking skill of Law University students. Students get the chance to demonstrate proper language functions in the roles and situations they are assigned through role-play. The outcomes of the research demonstrated that the role-play has a big impact on how well students talk.

Keywords: ESP, Law students, speaking skill, role-play.

Introduction

Currently, the aim of ESP learning is to express content in speech in addition to reading and understanding texts. Why a student should learn a foreign language is a crucial subject that should be covered in ESP classes. Business English, legal English, scientific and technological English, and other topics are the main areas of study for some ESP researchers, but all of these courses have a similar focus on the unique needs, deficiencies, and desires of their individual students.

According to Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998), ESP is primarily intended for intermediate or advanced students and is probably suitable for adult learners, whether they are enrolled in a tertiary institution or working in a professional capacity.

One of the four language skills in English is speaking, which requires the speakers to be productive in order to form spoken words and phrases into a sentence that can eventually enable communication. Speaking and writing are hence referred to as productive skills. In fact, many EFL students at the university level lack the proper training to practice their speaking skills.

Teaching students to read and comprehend specialized materials is the typical goal of English instruction in ESP programs. However, there have been changes in how ESP

learners are taught in recent years, and the development and construction of communicative competence has become the most important topic in ESP instruction. Cooperative learning, which involves students working together as partners or in small groups on clearly defined objectives, can be used to deliver effective comprehension strategy training. Comprehension skills have been taught well through cooperative learning training.

Literature Review

One of the four macroskills required for efficient language use is speaking, especially when speakers are not using their native language. The majority of the time, English language learners struggle to develop their speaking skills and forge relationships with people. Speaking ability should be cultivated along with other abilities because English is a worldwide language that is utilized as a means of communication. These integrated skills will improve learners' communication achievement in an international community. For many people, mastering speaking skills is the ultimate aim of learning a foreign or second language, and the importance of this goal sometimes overshadows the importance of the other skills.

Speaking is an essential component of teaching and learning a second language. Despite its significance, spoken instruction has long been devalued by English language teachers, who have instead focused on having students repeat drills or memorize dialogues. The objective of speaking instruction should instead be to help students become better communicators since only through improved communication skills will students be able to express themselves and grasp the social and cultural norms that apply to each communicative situation.

Role acting is a powerful tool for encouraging discussion in the classroom. Students assist one another in learning and using comprehension techniques as they collaborate to understand texts. In order to work in groups, teachers assist their students. Teachers also demonstrate the understanding techniques.

Role-play has a long history, dating back to the Greeks' use of theater as a teaching tool. Most likely, the first role-playing exercise was conducted when a teacher instructed a student to "act as though I am a customer and you are serving me." The student performed the part. The master took on the role of a prospective client. Play was used as a teaching tool when they discussed their roles later. In recent years, role-playing has become increasingly widely used in education.

The teacher can expand the classroom indefinitely and give fictitious natural contexts for the language being used by staging a dramatic situation (role-play) in the classroom by renaming things and persons in the space.

Harmer (2001) advocates the use of role-play for three reasons:

a) It is fun and motivating;

b) Quieter students get the chance to express themselves in a more direct way;

c) The word of the classroom is broadened to include the outside word.

Tompkins (1998) asserts that role-play or simulation is an effective method for learning a foreign language. It offers the students the chance to act out numerous parts that have been picked to depict actual roles that would be present in the situation. In foreign language classes, as well as in teacher and management training, role-play is a useful method for gauging student interaction. It signifies a change in focus toward more practical dialogue and communication.

In his research, Nguyen (2017) compared the impact of role-plays on young and adult learners with two different student populations. The post-test scores from the adult group differed significantly, according to the results, and it was determined that role-plays in couples and small groups assisted the weaker students and that they should be employed with working adult students. That is, when compared to busy and young learners, using role-plays had a beneficial impact on the learners' speaking abilities. It was shown that students who received more support and scaffolding improved more in their speaking.

Role-play in the classroom thereby offers variation to the classroom activity. It offers a chance for amusement as well as language production. Students can practice in a real setting that can be constructed, especially if it is made for a certain domain. Early on, the necessity to communicate across languages in fields like commerce and technology served as a major driving force behind the teaching of English for specific objectives. The fact that the objectives and course material are tailored to the individual needs of the students is a crucial component of an ESP course. The language, abilities, and genres pertinent to the particular English-language tasks the learners must do are then the main focus of ESP courses.

Materials and Methods

Students majoring in English are already familiar with the capacity to communicate (speaking), in contrast to students majoring in other spheres (ESP), therefore they want more work with the proper approaches to improve speaking skills. Students from non-language backgrounds who struggle with self-confidence and fear are a fairly common problem. Too much worry prevents learners from becoming emotionally invested in conversations (Banditvilai, 2016). Because of their fear of using the wrong words or making a mistake, they don't learn how to speak. The same can be observed with Law University students. While some students, who have good English skills, are

fluent in speech, others, with limited vocabulary and fear to speak, leg behind their peers. As ESP materials mostly cover specialized topics of Law, students are required to learn new specific vocabulary as well as improving their language skills.

The purpose of this study was to determine how beneficial role-playing is in teaching English to Law University students. This study was conducted to determine the efficacy of the role-playing strategy in enhancing English speaking ability. The study's groups, both control group and the experimental group are chosen from the students of Tashkent State University of Law. There were 44 students in this study's overall population. The control group studied English through traditional way, based on teaching ESP materials and learning new vocabulary as well as grammar. In contrast to the control group, the experimental group received instruction through role-playing. An observation sheet and a speaking test were used in this study. The students in both groups were asked to respond to a post-test on speaking after 20 lessons of instruction.

Results and Discussions

An observation checklist was used to track the performance of the experimental group. The researcher acts as the instructor, choosing the scenarios and setting up the dialogues as well as coming up with the activity that calls for collaboration among the students to complete a task. The teacher also teaches dialogue for role-playing, asks the students to practice the dialogue, fosters a desire for communication among the students, provides the students with the chance to express their own thoughts, ideas, and opinions, and creates an engaging classroom environment that helps the students feel comfortable using the language.

According to the findings of the current study, students who were taught through role-play performed better than those who were taught using a more conventional grammar-based approach. It results from the deliberate tactic. Students have the chance to investigate their capacity to be more active in the teaching and learning process through role-play. The students have the chance to sharpen their public speaking abilities, and they may perform in front of the class with ease. As a result, various explanations regarding the usefulness of applying role-playing techniques on Law University students' speaking ability may be made based on the data.

Additionally, the experimental group's vocabulary growth outpaced that of the control group. Although teachers chose the topics for role-play, students chose the words and phrases on their own, which helped them find the right words for the circumstance and also helped them expand their vocabulary.

Results of the improvement of speaking through role-plays:

1. Students are able to hold a brief conversation about a well-known subject.
2. Students are able to speak clearly and error-free in a brief oral presentation that they have prepared in preparation.
3. Students are able to use the proper language structures to present facts.
4. Students are able to respond to the judge's questions.

In addition, the experimental group members had a favorable perspective toward the effectiveness of role-playing assignments on their speaking skills, according to the study's findings as revealed by the post-treatment interview. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Nguyen's study from 2017, which investigated the effects of role-playing exercises on young and adult learners with two different student populations. The findings indicated that role-playing activities significantly improved EFL students' speaking abilities. Therefore, by incorporating role-playing activities into language training, we may give shy students good opportunity to express themselves and integrate the outside world with the classroom (Harmer, 2001).

Students who participated in role-playing exercises had to engage their imaginations, attend rehearsals, and perform in front of their classmates. This procedure undoubtedly enhanced their capacity for expression. They were thus more aware of their grammatical proficiency when performing their assigned tasks and better equipped for the actual talks that would take place during genuine events. Intriguingly, as the participants in the study worked through functional and situational conversations one after the other in the subsequent sessions, the researcher noticed less and less errors in their speaking. This strongly indicates the power of role-playing to raise awareness and improve self-awareness in learners. The recent study also demonstrated that learners can improve their verbal communication abilities, language fluency, and body language when participating in role-playing activities. Role-playing in the classroom provides variety, a change of pace, and potential for significant language creation, according to the study's findings.

Conclusion
As was previously stated, the present study attempted to address the research concerns regarding the effect of role-play tasks on enhancing the speaking abilities of ESP learners as well as Law University students' attitudes toward role-play and its effect on their speaking ability. Indeed, the findings showed that role-play exercises improved Law University students' speaking skills because they allowed ESP students to concentrate on both language learning and the learning process itself. Role-play activities give ESP students the chance to practice speaking in a variety of social circumstances and roles while transforming the non-innovative language teaching

and learning process into an inventive and appealing one. Role-play exercises can also boost ESP students' creativity when they are learning a new language. Role-play exercises are beneficial for all students and help foster cooperative and collaborative learning in the classroom. They also increase exposure to peer scaffolding.

References
1. Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. (1998). Developments in ESP: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Harmer J. (2011). The practice of English language teaching. Harlow (England) : Pearson Longman, 2011.
3. Harper-Whalen, S. & Morris, S. (2005). Using a role-play activity in training. Training Solutions. 9, 1-4.
4. Hedge, T. (2000). Teaching and learning on the language classroom. New York: Oxford University Press.
5. Tompkins, P.K. (2001). The Role Playing and Simulation. TESOL, IV (8).
6. Polvanova M. Improving students' speaking skills through the technique "Think-Pair-Share" in ESP classes / М. Ф. Полванова. — Текст : непосредственный // Молодой ученый. — 2018. — № 11 (197). — С. 185-187. — URL: https://moluch.ru/archive/197/48806/ (дата обращения: 18.08.2022).