

The Impact of Role-Playing on Oral Communication Skills: A Study of EFL Learners at Al-Marj University

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Abstract:

This research investigates how role-playing techniques can improve the oral communication abilities of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. 40 sixth-semester students from the English Language Department at the Faculty of English, Al-Marj University, were involved in the research. Data were gathered through standardized tests, observations, and self-assessment questionnaires using a combination of methods. The results highlight the important function of acting out scenarios in enhancing fluency, confidence, and communication skills, as well as promoting a positive and engaging learning atmosphere. The findings of using such methods show significant advancement in students' language abilities, confirming the success of this interactive teaching approach. Additionally, students shared positive opinions about role-playing, valuing its capacity to provide a practical and low-pressure environment for practicing language skills. These results are consistent with previous studies that highlight the significance of hands-on and experiential methods in language learning, supporting the potential for wider use of role-play in EFL education.

Key words: role-play technique, speaking skills, confidence, communication skills

الخلاصة:

تستكشف هذه الدراسة كيفية تحسين تقنيات التمثيل التمثيلي لقدرات التواصل الشفوي لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). شارك في البحث 40 طالباً من طلاب الفصل السادس في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة المرج. تم جمع البيانات من خلال اختبارات معيارية، وملاحظات، واستبيانات تقييم ذاتي باستخدام مجموعة من الأساليب. تسلط النتائج الضوء على الدور المهم لتنفيذ السيناريوهات في تعزيز الطلاقة والثقة ومهارات التواصل، بالإضافة إلى تعزيز جو تعلم إيجابي وجذاب. تؤكد النتائج تقدماً ملحوظاً في قدرات الطلاب اللغوية، مما يثبت نجاح هذه الطريقة التفاعلية في التعليم.

الكلمات الرئيسية: تقنية التمثيل، مهارات التحدث، الثقة، مهارات التواصل

1-Introduction:

Role-play is a highly effective strategy for language teaching, offering an engaging and interactive means to enhance speaking practice and develop communication abilities. By simulating real-life scenarios, learners can engage in emotionally engaging and contextually meaningful language use. Beyond enhancing vocabulary and fluency, role-play builds self-confidence and encourages spontaneous conversation. It creates a safe space for language practice, allowing learners to explore diverse perspectives and refine essential conversational skills. Qing (2011:37) stated "Role-play is the prediction in real-life circumstances with social actions". Consequently, role-play can significantly contribute to developing strong speaking abilities, establishing itself as a valuable teaching technique that deepens students' understanding of real-life scenarios. This article examines previous research and scholarly perspectives on discussing the various definitions of role-play and its importance in speaking and the use of role-play in language learning, focusing on its effectiveness in improving contextual learning, enhancing communication skills, building confidence, and fostering active engagement among learners.

2-Literature review:

This section explores prior research on the application of role-play technique in language teaching, with a particular focus on its impact on speaking skills. The review aims to address the research questions by examining the influence of role-play on learners' speaking proficiency. This study specifically examines the role of role-play technique in improving students' communication skills, fostering fluency, and boosting their confidence in spoken language.

2-1 Definitions of the concept of role-play:

Grasping and understanding the concept of role-play is crucial for examining its influence on language learning. Numerous scholars have defined and evolved the understanding of role-play in educational settings over time, emphasizing its importance as an instructional method. Smith (2020:45) for example, defines "Role-play as a technique in which individuals act out or simulate particular roles to practice behaviors, learn new skills, or explore different perspectives in a controlled environment" " In addition, Lowenstein

(2016) described role play as a method of drama that prompts participants to improvise actions demonstrating the anticipated conduct of individuals in specific scenarios. Furthermore, Rayhan (2014) also defined role play as an activity in which students can express their ideas, feelings, and opinions in words or speech to each other, Holt and Kysilka (2006) too clarified that role play can demonstrate how students' actions and behaviour changes affect outcomes in keeping with their environment. In a role-play exercise, students must assume responsibility for their assigned roles, and increase their result as they position themselves for imitation to occur. In summary, role-play technique could be defined as educational activities that involve students participating in role-playing situations or scenarios to improve skills such as communication and problem-solving. In language teaching, role-playing requires students to take on specific roles and participate in conversations or activities that imitate everyday situations, like requesting food in a dining establishment, reserving seats, or managing professional communications.

2-2 The role of Role-play technique in speaking courses.

Rojas and Villafuerte (2018) highlight that role-play is a commonly employed strategy in language learning due to its ability to create realistic and engaging scenarios that foster the development of speaking skills. Additionally, role-play activities often stimulate students' creativity and promote collaboration, leading to more effective and meaningful conversations.

Several studies outline methods for integrating role-play into speaking classes. For instance, Susan House (as cited in Fadilah, 2016) outlines four key steps: (1) students review sample dialogues, (2) pairs are assigned specific roles and dialogues, (3) students enact their roles, and (4) the teacher gives feedback, allowing students to switch roles and repeat the activity for reinforcement.

Holt and Kysilka (2006) highlight that role-play activities can make learning more engaging and effective. These activities encourage interaction among students, helping EFL learners develop a sense of collaboration while fostering curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Fadilah (2016) observed that role-play activities can enhance students' pronunciation and vocabulary by encouraging frequent, meaningful language practice. This interactive approach helps students gain confidence in speaking, as they become

more comfortable sharing their ideas in front of others within a supportive environment. This increased self-assurance is particularly beneficial for those who might otherwise experience anxiety about speaking.

2-3 The impact of role-play technique on speaking skills

Research on role-play techniques has been widely conducted worldwide, often focusing on how this teaching method impacts students' speaking skills, classroom atmosphere, and confidence. keezhatta (2020) conducted quasi-experimental research on Saudi students to examine the effectiveness of role-play in English instruction. This study found that role-play enabled students to speak more effectively. Additionally, Keezhatta noted that students were motivated to speak English and demonstrated creativity while engaged in role-play activities. Role-play is a highly effective teaching tool in language acquisition and communication skills training, greatly enhancing speaking activities. Its value can be seen in several main areas of language teaching and learning.

The approach of Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, emphasizes that meaningful communication is crucial for language learning. Furthermore, Harmer (2007) posits that role-play can help reduce students' speaking anxiety by fostering a supportive environment that encourages them to take risks in using language.

In their 2009 research, Liu and Ding employed the role-play technique to investigate how students behaved in groups when faced with familiar scenarios. They assessed students' language abilities, error patterns, and effective skills for providing feedback to support improvement. Their findings suggested that providing familiar contexts led to positive outcomes in student performance. Additionally, instead of offering immediate feedback, they recommended using videotaped sessions accompanied by oral feedback, allowing for self or peer correction. Following this feedback approach, they observed notable improvement as students responded well to familiar scenarios and progressed accordingly.

2-4 The importance of impacting role-play technique in speaking classes

The importance of role-play techniques is summarized in the following:

2-4-1-Enhance contextual Learning:

The positive influence of role-playing on contextual learning is increasingly recognized, especially in education focusing on hands-on skills and empathy. Teachfloor (2023) for example, explains how role-playing allows students to engage in authentic scenarios in a secure, supervised setting. Students can enhance their understanding and retention by actively applying theoretical knowledge and engaging in decision-making and communication. This approach to active learning connects theory and practice, making abstract concepts more concrete and applicable.

Ellis (2003) also explained that role-playing allows learners to apply language in authentic settings, helping them comprehend how vocabulary and grammar are used in practice. Furthermore, Nunan (1999) notes that learning in a specific setting improves memory and aids in applying language abilities in real-life situations.

2-4-2-Improved Communication Skills:

Participating in role-play develops essential communication abilities, such as active listening, turn-taking, and appropriate body language. Bygate (1987) highlights that such interactive practice boosts fluency and supports effective conversational flow. In recent study by Learnexus (2023) offers in-depth information on how to create and implement role-playing scenarios, highlighting the importance of using realistic environments and believable characters to enhance communication skills. By mimicking actual interactions and challenges, these scenarios enable participants to practice and develop their communication abilities effectively.

2-4-3-Boosted Confidence.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) found that communication apprehension is a key aspect of language anxiety, causing students to experience nervousness when speaking in public because they are afraid of receiving criticism. Role-playing can worsen this situation for students who lack confidence in their language skills. Furthermore, Through role-play, learners can explore language without the pressure of making mistakes, fostering a supportive environment. Gass and Selinker (2008) point out that this low-stakes setting helps reduce anxiety, making students more comfortable with speaking activities. Dörnyei (2001) discovered that when language tasks are presented as enjoyable

and stress-free activities, students are more likely to feel confident and interested. This indicates that if role-play is effectively incorporated, it can create a relaxed atmosphere that reduces anxiety about speaking.

2-4-4-Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:

Role-play technique often requires learners to think on their feet and adapt their responses as situations unfold, strengthening real-time problem-solving and critical thinking abilities. Barner-Rasmussen and Björkman (2011) suggest that taking on different roles promotes cognitive flexibility.

2-4-5-Empathy and Perspective-Taking.

Role-play allows learners to embody various perspectives, promoting empathy and a broader understanding of different viewpoints. Kramsch (1993) argues that this aspect is vital for effective communication, as it builds awareness of cultural and social nuances.

2-4-6-Increased Motivation and Engagement:

By incorporating play-like elements, role-play can make language learning more engaging and enjoyable. Richard-Amato (1988) notes that these playful activities enhance motivation, contributing to better learning outcomes and retention. In addition, Pugh and Grillitsch. (2023) explore the impact of incorporating role-play alongside other experiential learning methods in creating a lively and engaging classroom setting, ultimately boosting students' eagerness to engage.

2-4-7-Opportunities for Feedback and Reflection:

Role-play technique provides immediate feedback, enabling learners to assess their performance and identify areas for improvement. Swain (2000) underscores that this reflective practice is essential for building metacognitive awareness and advancing language skills. Moreover, Keezhatta (2020) emphasizes that role-play technique provide students with immediate feedback, enabling them to quickly adjust and enhance their language abilities. This hands-on practice allows learners to absorb feedback more effectively than through isolated drills, as they are actively using the language in realistic contexts similar to everyday situations outside the classroom.

Research questions

- 1-Is role-play effective in enhancing speaking proficiency?
- 2-To what extent does using role-playing techniques improve student speaking achievement?
- 3- How does the implementation of role-play techniques impact the speaking skills of language learners?
- 4- what are the students' perceptions of using the Role-playing method to improve student speaking achievement

3- Methodology:

3-1 Participants:

This study involved 40 participants, all of whom were EFL sixth-semester students at the English Language Department at Al Marj University. Those students were purposely assigned to assess their perspectives and attitudes toward the role of role-play technique in speaking courses, as they had demonstrated strong speaking abilities. Additionally, they have the ability to express themselves. Therefore, this study aimed to evaluate their performance in role-play technique as part of their Speaking C course, Students collaborate to engage in various scenarios and explore a wide range of topics through interactive discussions. After the final exam, participants answered the Self-Assessment questionnaire to provide feedback on their experience with the method and share their attitudes toward this specific approach.

3-2 Data Collection :

The study was based on descriptive research leading to more precise and dependable results. The study used three primary data collection methods: standardized speaking tests, observational techniques, and a Self-Assessment questionnaire. Mixed methods research allows researchers to integrate the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative methods. This will help the researcher to collect more data to describe and observe the population of the study. In addition, they will also examine the importance of engagement role-play technique in speaking classes. Utilizing a combination of research methods such as tests, observations, and self-assessment questionnaires is crucial in educational and social sciences research, as it offers a comprehensive understanding of

phenomena. Tests can uncover vocabulary deficiencies, observations may reveal a lack of engagement, and self-assessments might indicate a requirement for increased interactive tasks (Creswell, 2014).

3-2-1-Standardized Speaking Test

A validated test was used twice in the course: one at mid-course and the other at the end of the course to assess students' speaking skills. These tests offer reliable criteria across fluency, coherence, vocabulary, grammatical range, and accuracy (McNamara, 2000). Bachman & Palmer (1996) identified them as reliable measures of proficiency; allowing for comparison across individuals and groups and providing quantitative insights into students' speaking proficiency. Tests offer quantifiable, uniform data that give an understanding of how well participants perform and their levels of knowledge (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The authors assessed the students' speaking test reliability using a speaking rubric to grade their speaking ability scores. The test assessed criteria that were specifically selected to align with the research objectives.

- Pronunciation: Clarity and correctness of sounds.
- Fluency: Ability to speak smoothly without pauses
- Vocabulary: Range and appropriateness of word choices.
- Grammar: Accuracy in sentence structure.
- Confidence: The ability to express ideas with assurance, maintaining eye contact, clear articulation.
- The ability to react to questions: It includes showing confidence under pressure and the ability to engage in meaningful interactions while addressing inquiries directly.
- Conversational Skills Usage: the nature of speaking and using body language
- Using transition words: the ability to use transition words while they speak in exam time.

The purpose of conducting such exams is to enhance the credibility of the research results, which aims to examine the main objective of the study: assessing the impact and effectiveness of role-play techniques.

3-1-2- Observational Techniques:

Researcher, **who is the instructor for the speaking C module**, observed and recorded students' performance during both traditional and role-play technique. A structured checklist was used to assess participants' behaviour during role-play, focusing on:

- Engagement: Level of participation and enthusiasm.
- Interaction: Quality of communication with peers.
- Language Use: Appropriateness of language in context
- Anxiety: they can speak without fear.

Detailed notes were made on participants' performance in each role-play session that was observed. Observer provided constructive feedback to promote self-reflection. This approach allows researchers to capture language use subtleties that standardized tests may overlook (Hughes, 2003), providing a valuable qualitative complement to quantitative data. Observations provide a deeper understanding of the context by capturing genuine interactions and environmental factors, as stated by Dörnyei in 2007.

3-2-3- Self-Assessment Questionnaire:

Self-assessment questionnaires are known to enhance learner autonomy and metacognitive awareness by encouraging students to identify their strengths and areas for improvement (Brown & Hudson, 2002). The questionnaire, provided in Appendix 1, was designed for ease of completion and consisted of six questions. It incorporated mix of Likert-scale items, yes/no question, and open-ended questions to provide more detailed insights into the main research goal, aiming for more reliable and comprehensive data. This approach enabled both quantitative analysis and a deeper exploration of students' attitudes toward the role-play method. Additionally, self-assessment surveys captured individual participant opinions, including their levels of self-confidence, motivation, and perceived progress (Brown, 2001).

To conclude, statistical methods such as paired t-tests were employed to analyze quantitative data from standardized tests, identifying significant changes in speaking proficiency. Observational data was systematically coded and analyzed to uncover prevalent patterns in participant engagement and language use. Responses from the self-assessment questionnaires were analyzed descriptively to evaluate shifts in participants' perceptions of their speaking abilities.

3-3- Research design:

The researcher, who is the instructor for the speaking C module, conducted studies throughout the three-month semester with two exams: one in the middle with a maximum score of 40, following the university's grading criteria. The second one at the end of the semester achieved a perfect score of 60 based on the university's grading standards. At the start of the semester, the teaching approach was conventional where the instructor provided the topic beforehand for students to prepare and discuss. During the midterm exam, the students were individually asked questions by the researcher, who gave each student a chocolate before the exam began as a form of motivation; to experience a sense of calmness. They are questioned on a specific topic chosen by the teacher from a selection of different topics during the exam. The researcher captures, records, and assesses their speech based on certain criteria like using a variety of vocabulary, interaction with the question, confidence, word order, grammar, fluency in speaking, and using transition words.

3-4 Data Analysis :

This section analyse the data of different data collection.

3-4-1The analysis of standardized test:

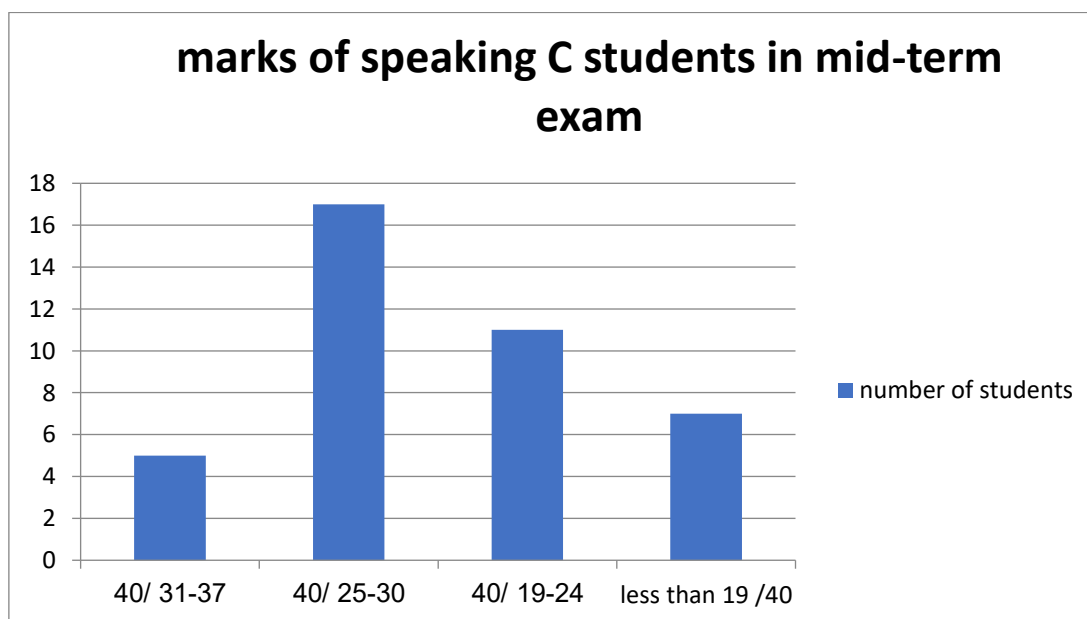


Figure (1) marks of speaking C students in mid-term exam

Standardized Speaking Tests revealed that the students speaking test in the exam with a total score of 40, it was noticed that some students made an effort to do well in their speaking test, figure (1) shows the different grades from different students. It could be seen that many students' marks are moderate since the majority of students about 43% have scored 25-30 which means that they have some skills of speaking but they have different problems which were noticed by the observer, these difficulties could be observed :

- Restricted Conversational Skills Usage: Several students demonstrated a lack of natural conversational abilities and instead depended on rehearsed or memorized material. The traditional teaching approach, which usually prioritizes grammar and written tasks, seems to result in deficiencies in students' ability to speak naturally, causing some difficulty adjusting to find suitable answers during exams.

-Higher levels of test anxiety and rigid presentation: Students accustomed to structured, teacher-led activities showed increased test anxiety levels, which led to a more formal and inflexible communication style with reduced expressiveness. This rigidity often impaired their capacity to interact smoothly and confidently with their chosen topics.

-Focus on accuracy rather than fluency: Conventional teaching approaches prioritize grammatical accuracy over conversational fluency. As a result, students often focused on proper grammar and structure, resulting in hesitant speech patterns with frequent pauses that affected the overall fluency of their answers as Richards and Rodgers (2001)' study.

-The effect of topic familiarity on the topic: Students demonstrated greater confidence and clarity in their speech when discussing familiar subjects. On the other hand, they tended to struggle with thinking on their feet and using language creatively when dealing with topics they weren't as familiar with, mainly because they hadn't practiced speaking in adaptable ways.

To examine the goal of this study, the students will have another exam as a component of their course at the end of the semester, the researcher's integration of role-play technique into the Speaking C course provides a structured, practical approach to improve speaking skills. Over six sessions, students engage with real-world topics like COVID-19, landmarks, and depression, which they choose based on relevance and interest, adding some level of engagement and personalization to their learning experience.

For the final exam, in which the total mark is 60 as the university's grading criteria, each student group randomly selects one of six prepared topics. This setup allows students some time to think through and organize their ideas before role-playing in groups of three. This preparation phase lets them mentally rehearse, enhancing their spontaneity and confidence in using the language during the role-play (Ur, 1996). Figure (2) illustrates a significant improvement in students' speaking performance compared to their mid-term exam results. The majority of students achieved high scores, with 17 students earning marks between 50 and 57, which are classified as excellent grades.

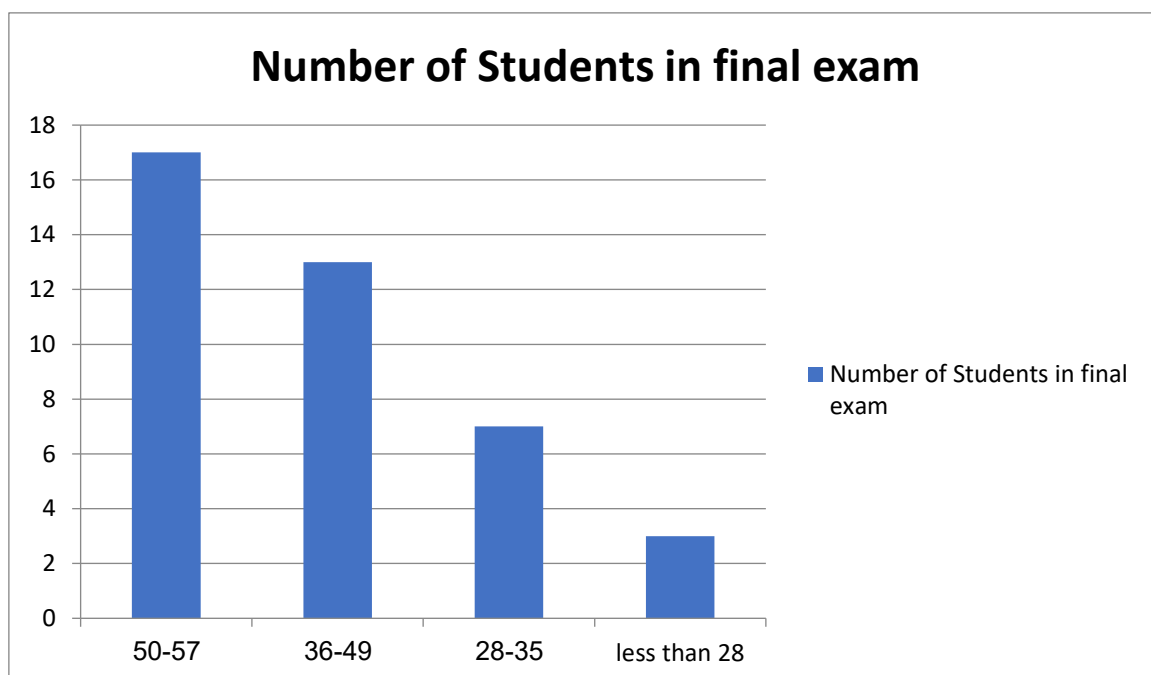


Figure (2) the marks of students in the final exam in speaking C course

3-4-2 Analysis of observation technique:

Using observation to measure the influence of role-play in speaking classes makes available insights into student engagement fluency, self-assurance, and cultural comprehension. There are some conclusions drawn from observational courses on the use of role-play technique in speaking class, with some examples that might show how observation capturing improvements in language skills, confidence, cultural sensitivity, and collaborative abilities can strengthen the effectiveness of role-play as a language teaching strategy.

1-Increased Student Engagement

Engaging in role-play frequently results in increased participation from students, who show more enthusiasm and curiosity when engaging in authentic situations. Observational studies often find that students are more eager to engage and display excitement during role-playing activities, possibly because of the opportunity for creativity and learning within a specific context.

During a simulation on "COVID-19 awareness," students assumed the roles of a healthcare provider and a patient as they discussed their personal experiences. (Ur, 1996) believed that Observers observed that students were very engaged, showing heightened eye contact and gestures, suggesting a high level of involvement.

2-Enhance fluency and naturally: Engaging in role-play promotes natural language usage, enhancing fluency by prompting immediate responses from students in character. Observers frequently mention that students engaged in role-play activities tend to speak more fluently and confidently, with fewer pauses and hesitations, compared to when they participate in traditional speaking exercises (Harmer, 2007).

In a depression scenario, for example, students in a certain group took on the roles of a psychotherapist, a supportive friend, and someone in need of guidance. They try to give feedback and suggestions to each other.

3-Improved cooperation and communication abilities

Collaborating in role-play exercises improves students' group work skills. Observers frequently comment on the enhanced turn-taking, negotiation, and support demonstrated by students when collaborating in situations that involve shared decision-making and language clarification (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

4-improve confidence

Observers often mention that participating in role-play exercises increases students' speaking confidence because taking on a role reduces the anxiety of speaking as oneself. This increase in confidence is most noticeable in shy students who are initially unsure about joining class discussions (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). As Rahayu's study (2015) asserted engaging in role-play is beneficial for students who are introverted and struggle with communication.

In a role-play activity focused on "Introducing Famous Landmarks," a typically reserved student assumed the role of a tour guide and confidently detailed landmarks using

descriptive language and gestures, demonstrating a growth in confidence within the structured activity.

3-4-3 Analysis of self- assessment questionnaire :

Following the final exam, which incorporated the role-play technique, participants filled out a self-assessment questionnaire to assess their perceptions of their speaking skills in alignment with the research objectives. The results of self-assessment questionnaire are as follows.

When evaluating question 1 on the survey, which explores the utilization of Role-play technique. Approximately 95% of people believe that role-playing should be included in speaking classes.

As shown in Figure (3) below about question no. (2) in the questionnaire most of the participants feel and believe that role-play activity enhances and promotes their speaking skills supporting their responses

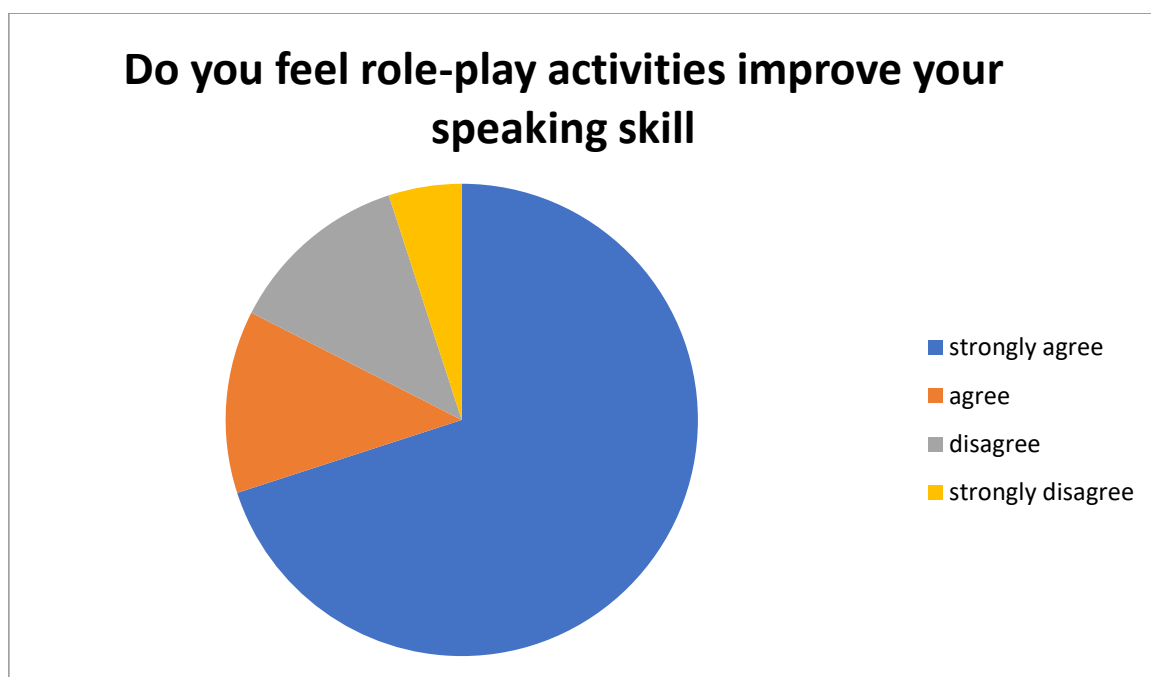


Figure (3): **Do you feel role-play activities improve your speaking skill?**

To explore participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of role-play technique in enhancing speaking skills, it is essential to determine which aspects of role-play are perceived as most beneficial. In question (3), students rated role-play's impact on fluency,

vocabulary acquisition, confidence, and real-life language practice using a scale from 1 to 5. The analysis reveals that approximately 58% of participants identified confidence-building as the most significant benefit. They attributed this to “the safe environment role-play provides”, “enabling them to practice speaking without the fear of real-world repercussions”. Taking on roles allows students to step outside their self-consciousness, reducing anxiety and fostering increased confidence, as highlighted by Brown (2001). Based on Ladousse (2009), role play is a simple and efficient way to prepare. Due to Students need to engage in public speaking and perform in front of their peers, role-playing can significantly enhance their self-assurance. Brown (2001) elaborates that role-play encourages students to experiment with language forms by detaching from their self-perceptions, resulting in greater ease and willingness to communicate. Additionally, 20% of participants indicated that role-play promotes fluency, while 10% believed it aids vocabulary development. Another 12% of respondents emphasized the value of practicing real-life language scenarios as a key advantage of role-play technique. Fadilah (2016: 210) underscores this by stating that "applying role-play in teaching speaking provides students with opportunities to practice communication in various social contexts, allowing them to assume different roles and adapt themselves to these scenarios." This highlights role-play as a dynamic teaching strategy that addresses multiple dimensions of language learning.

Quantitative agreement ratings, like those in question 4, allow the researcher to assess students' views on how role-play impacts public speaking confidence and engagement. 30% of participants believed that role-playing activities are enjoyable in language education due to the introduction of diversity and creativity, diverging from conventional lecture styles. Just like in Larsen-Freeman's viewpoint. And **Kao and O'Neill (1998) in their book when they examined that** the role of drama and role-play techniques in boosting learners' confidence, engagement, and language proficiency.

In addition, Brown (2001) believes that getting students involved in practical, creative situations could boost their motivation and result in a more enjoyable learning experience. Additionally, Nation & Newton (2009) suggest that the fun and engaging nature of role-play activities enhances comprehension by facilitating a positive emotional experience that enhances memory retention. On the other hand, with High levels of agreement around

70% of the participants would believe that role-playing helps reduce the discomfort of public speaking or speaking in front of others. Role-play is frequently praised for its ability to help students become more comfortable with public speaking by providing a structured and encouraging setting for practice, which ultimately decreases the nervousness related to speaking off the cuff in front of classmates (Ur, 1996). When students assume different roles, they may experience a sense of detachment from their own identities, leading to decreased self-consciousness and performance anxiety (Harmer, 2007).

By analysing the frequency of anxiety (from "Very often" to "Never") in question 5, we can better understand how role-play impacts students' comfort levels in the language since approximately, all of the participants agreed that they never feel anxious in engaging in role-play activity which indicates a high level of comfort and a favourable connection with the activity. These students might view role-playing as a secure and fun chance to use language skills without feeling judged. Studies indicate that students who have low language anxiety often find role-play to be enjoyable and beneficial for language practice (Dörnyei, 2001).

To analyze participants' responses to question no. 6 Students' reactions to role-play evaluations can vary based on their comfort levels, beliefs about effectiveness, and past experiences. Here are some responses such as: "I really like role-play exams because they feel more realistic. It's like I'm actually using the language instead of just memorizing answers." "Role-play exams make me feel more engaged and active during the exam. I can show what I really know without feeling pressured to give the 'right' answer." "I feel like role-play exams are so much more practical because they let me practice real-life conversations." "I like that role-play exam are different from regular tests". "It gives off a conversational vibe rather than feeling like a test, reducing my nerves". Participants' responses suggest that students who have a positive attitude towards role-play exams generally value the hands-on, interactive, and stimulating qualities of this format. They value the opportunity to demonstrate their language abilities organically, without the stress of a strict format dictating a "right answer", and believe that role-playing enhances the connection between academic learning and practical use in everyday life. These

results align with studies that show experiential and communicative learning can reduce anxiety, boost engagement, and enhance language retention.

4- Main Findings:

Having discussed the findings, the main conclusion of this study can be reached, which is:

4-1-Effectiveness of Role-Play in Improving Speaking Proficiency

The results demonstrate that role-play technique is crucial in enhancing students' speaking proficiency. Standardized speaking assessments conducted midway through and at the end of the semester provided measurable evidence of improvement. Initially, **43%** of the participants received scores between **25-30 out of 40**, indicating moderate speaking skills. This initial performance underscored a foundational level of proficiency while also pinpointing areas for improvement. Following the introduction of the role-play technique, the scores in the final exam notably increased, with most students achieving marks ranging from **50-57 out of 60**. (Palmer, 1996; McNamara, 2000).

4-2-Impact of Role-Play Technique on Speaking Achievement

The role-play technique not only led to higher scores but also enhanced student engagement in speaking activities. Observational data revealed increased enthusiasm and willingness to participate in role-play scenarios. For instance, during a COVID-19 awareness simulation, students exhibited higher engagement levels, marked by effective eye contact and expressive gestures, indicating a stronger connection to the language practice. This supports Ur's (1996) view that role-play fosters authentic language use and promotes active participation.

4-3-Influence on Language Learners' Speaking Skills

The structured nature of role-play brought about significant changes in language behavior. Observations indicated that students exhibited greater fluency and reduced hesitation during role-play compared to traditional speaking tasks. In these scenarios, students responded quickly while in character, which facilitated a natural conversational flow and boosted their confidence. Harmer (2007) supports this by highlighting that role-play fosters natural language use and enhances fluency through engaging experiences.

4-4-Students' Views on Role-Playing

Feedback from the self-assessment questionnaire revealed overwhelmingly favorable perceptions of role-play as a means of improving speaking skills. Around **30%** of participants noted that role-play considerably increased their confidence, as it allowed them to practice without the fear of real-world repercussions. Many students expressed that role-playing made them feel more relaxed and involved in speaking tasks. Participants noted that "Role-play exams feel more realistic, enabling me to use language more naturally rather than relying solely on memorization." This reflects Brown's (2001) findings regarding the connection between role-play and enhanced communicative confidence.

Qualitative responses further validated these findings, with students appreciating the practical aspects of role-play, which they felt better equipped them for real-life conversations. A significant number of participants (approximately **28**) indicated that role-playing alleviated their anxiety regarding public speaking, supporting the idea that such activities create a nurturing environment for practicing language skills (Ur, 1996).

5-Conclusion and recommendation :

Role-playing is recognized as an effective educational strategy that not only aids students in improving their speaking abilities but also cultivates the communication skills necessary for practical language use. The findings of this study underscore the significant role of role-play in enhancing the speaking abilities of language learners. The research indicates that role-play not only improves linguistic competencies but also fosters a supportive and engaging educational environment, as evidenced by standardized assessments, classroom interactions, and student feedback. The notable increase in speaking scores, reflecting students' progression from moderate proficiency to greater fluency and confidence, affirms the effectiveness of this teaching approach.

Furthermore, the study highlights students' positive perceptions of role-play, as it provides a more authentic and less intimidating method for practicing language skills. This aligns with prior studies that stress the importance of experiential and hands-on learning in language acquisition (Ur, 1996; Brown, 2001). Enhancing speaking skills

through role-play, students are better prepared for everyday communication and develop essential competencies for effective interaction in various contexts.

Based on the findings, this study recommends incorporating role-playing as a core element in language teaching strategies, given its interactive and learner-focused approach. Teachers are encouraged to develop activities that utilize role-play to strengthen communication skills and promote active participation. Moreover, future research should investigate the long-term effects of role-playing on language development, assess its applicability in diverse educational settings, and explore the incorporation of technological tools to enhance its effectiveness. These research directions could provide meaningful insights to further refine and expand the use of role-playing in language education.

Incorporating Technology Investigating will be recommended for further studies since the impact of technology on supporting role-play exercises—like online role-playing platforms or virtual simulations—could boost student participation and offer more opportunities for language practice (Kern, 2014).

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire:

Thank you for participating in this survey about role-play technique in language learning. The purpose of this questionnaire is to understand how role-play exercises influence speaking skills and confidence in language classes. Your responses will provide valuable insights into the benefits, challenges, and overall effectiveness of role-play in enhancing language proficiency and oral communication.

This questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. All responses are anonymous, and the information collected will be used solely for research and educational purposes. We appreciate your honest feedback, which will help us improve language learning methods and create a more engaging classroom experience.

- 1- Do you think role-play should be used more often in speaking classes?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
- 2- Do you feel role-play activities help improve your speaking skills?
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
- 3- How effective do you find role-play activities for the following aspects? (Rate from 1 = Not effective to 5 = Very effective) and why
 - ☐ Improving fluency: _____
 - ☐ Building vocabulary: _____
 - ☐ Enhancing confidence: _____

- Practicing real-life language use: _____

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4- How much do you agree with the following statements?

- Roleplay helps me feel more comfortable speaking in front of others.

1. Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

- Roleplay activities are engaging and fun.

1. Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

5- How often do you feel anxious or nervous during roleplay activities?

- Very often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

6-How do feel about your exam by using role- play activities.

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Thanks a lot,