

TYPES OF ROLE PLAY IN TEACHING LANGUAGE

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**Аннотация:** *Большой интерес исследователей вызывает использование нетрадиционных, интерактивных форм и методов в обучении иностранному языку. Именно поэтому актуальным является рассмотрение вопроса об использовании интерактивных методов, в частности метода ролевых игр, при обучении устной монологической и диалогической речи на ранних этапах обучения иностранному языку.*

**Ключевые слова:** *ролевой метод, интерактивный метод, методика, аутентичная деятельность, развивающие игры, полностью сценарная ролевая игра, полусценарная, бесценарная ролевая игра.*

**Annotation:** *The great interest of researchers is the use of unconventional, interactive forms and methods in teaching a foreign. That is why it is relevant to consider the use of interactive methods, in particular role play method in teaching oral monological and dialogical speech at early levels of teaching a foreign language.*

**Key words:** *role-play method, interactive method, technique, authentic activities, educational games, fully scripted role-play, semi-scripted, none-scripted role-play.*

A sense of equality, an atmosphere of dedication and good mood, a sense of feasibility of completing assignments give pupils the opportunity to overcome shyness in communication and has a beneficial effect on learning outcomes, as theoretical and sometimes practical material is imperceptibly assimilated.

Wigglesworth, an ELT specialist, expressed his views with regards to task based language teaching as “A central tenet of task based language assessments in that the tasks are designed to represent authentic activities



which test candidates might be expected to encounter in the real world outside the classroom.”<sup>3</sup>

Role play can be attributed to educational games, since it largely determines the choice of language tools, contributes to the development of speech skills, and allows him/her to simulate the communication of students in various speech situations. In other words, role-playing is an exercise for mastering the skills and skills of dialogic speech in an environment of interpersonal communication. In this regard, role-playing provides a learning function.

The main structural components of an educational role-playing technique are:

- educational and developmental goals;
- the content of the role play;
- the totality of social and interpersonal roles;
- communicative and didactic conditions, i.e., educational and communicative situation;
- props - any items can be used in a role play activity.<sup>4</sup>

As an importance of the participations in role-playing activities, there is a general increase in mood, motivation to study the subject, the development of imagination, creativity, the formation of labor, moral education, as well as the development of communication skills.

In the learning process, a role-playing can be considered as a form of organizing a speech situation used for educational purposes. The role-playing is based on an organized speech communication of pupils in accordance with the roles distributed between them. For learners, first of all, it is a fascinating activity since even the weakest students are able to take part in it.

During the game, students master such communication elements as the ability to start a conversation, to support it, to interrupt the interlocutor, to agree with his or her opinion at the right time or refute it, the ability to listen to the interlocutor, to ask clarifying questions and to defend their point of view. All study time during the role-playing process is allotted at the same time, not

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<sup>3</sup> Wigglesworth, Gillan. *Task and Performance Based Assessment*. In Elana Shohamy and Nancy H. Hansberger (Ed), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education, 2nd Edition, Volume 7: Language Testing and Assessment*. Springer Science Business Media LLC, 2008. Pp. 117.

<sup>4</sup> Dyachenko L. A. *Role play in the process of teaching a foreign language // Problems of modern science and education*. - 2015. - No. 4 (34). P. 2.



only the speaker, but also the listener is active, since he/she must understand the idea of the partner's statement, to relate it to the situation and logically and promptly respond and to make his/her speech or to answer questions.

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There are three types of role play, they are:

- fully scripted role-play
- semi-scripted role-play
- non-scripted role-play

In a fully scripted role-play, each word is given, and each student should understand or memorize his/her role.<sup>5</sup>

Such type includes explaining the model conversation in the prescribed textbook and the main aim of the conversation after all is to make each item of the language meaningful and easy to remember.

Byrne indicates that role play in this type can be appropriate for low level students who do not know the situation in the semi-scripted role play.<sup>6</sup>

The second one of role play includes a model conversation with some missing words and students should know how to fill in the blanks in suitable words of these contexts.

So, students can change the main conversation to some certain way and establish their own conversation. Such type of role play might be called as semi-controlled or as the teacher or prescribed textbook includes language input, but students should also specify the materials depend on a frame which supplies the situations to establish a real life context. This type can be used for students with upper-beginner to intermediate levels of proficiency, those students should be familiar with main procedures and seeks to go to higher level of tasks as semi-scripted role-play is less structured and less controlled than fully scripted role-play.

In the third type of role play where students may be given with keywords of dialogues, keywords and information, or contexts and aims in less controlled

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<sup>5</sup> Livingstone C. *Role Play in Language Learning*. – Longman, 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1983. P. 266.

<sup>6</sup> Byrne D. *Teaching oral English*. – Harlow, UK : Longman, 1986. – T. 2. P.134.



and structured tasks, in this type, students establish mini conversation based on keywords mentioned above, materials or contexts are simply as filling in gaps.<sup>7</sup>

Identifying such type of role play as non-scripted role play, and they argue that non-scripted role play provides a great chances to employ the information of techniques in a certain situations. Davies<sup>8</sup> states that students can build on their opinions and thoughts, and establish language on their level, acting out in some situations based on their understanding.

Non-scripted role-play can be practical to for middle to advanced level students as non-scripted role play in a free and structured way which sometimes demands special skills like problem solving.

Role playing has a tremendous potential for the classroom. First, by taking on the role of another person and by pretending to feel like, think like, and act like another person, student can act out their true feelings without the risk of sanctions or reprisals. They know they are only acting, and can thus express feelings ordinarily kept hidden. This experience can give rise to greater individual spontaneity and creativity in previously repressed or inhibited children.

Second, they can examine and discuss relatively private issues and problems without anxiety. These problems are not focused on the self; they are attributed to a given role or stereotype. Thus children can avoid the normal anxiety accompanying the presentation of personal matters that may violate rules and regulations. This experience may result in greater individual insights into behavior and a better understanding of the place of rules and behavioral standards. Such learning can be accomplished in a nonjudgemental situation where correct solutions are not the goal.

Third, by placing themselves in the role of another, students can identify with the real worlds and the imaginations of other children and adults. In this manner they may begin to understand the effects of their behavior on others, and they may gain significant information about the motivations for their own and other people's behaviors. By sympathizing with the scapegoat, many a bully may understand how it feels to be picked on; by sympathizing with the bully, many a scapegoat may understand why his behavior is a red flag to the bully. When both roles are examined and discussed by the entire class, both bully and

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<sup>7</sup> Pi Chong. *The effectiveness of role-play activities in learning English as a foreign language by Chinese college students* : doc. – University of San Francisco, 1990. P. 157.

<sup>8</sup> Davies A. *Principles of language testing*. – Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1990. – P. 147.



scapegoat may understand how their behavior looks to others, what some of their needs or motivations are, and what other forms of action might be appropriate. Students can begin to develop an elementary but systematic understanding of the science of human relations from repeated experiences and discussions of this sort.

Fourth, this increased opportunity for understanding oneself and others paves the way for behavioral change. Achieving systematic insights into self, into others, and into motivations for various actions can aid students in clarifying their own values and in effectively directing or changing their own behavior. By practicing a variety of behaviors in a series of role-playing exercises and by discussing the effects of each, students may be able to make more realistic choices for their actions than before. The supportive atmosphere may also legitimize in the students' eyes the peer-helping process in the classroom, encouraging them to give and receive insights, suggestions, and help.

Fifth, role playing may also be used to demonstrate less personal but pervasive problems between and among people and groups. Social problems, to the extent that they reflect conflict between man and man, can be dramatized fruitfully in the classroom. For instance, classroom portrayals of problems of prejudice may lead to greater understanding of the dynamics of this phenomenon and some clarification of ways of dealing with its occurrence. Such understanding need not be purely abstract, on the theoretical or moralistic level; it can include the alternative behaviors that are available when one is a witness to an act or feeling of racial, religious, or economic bias. Further, small-scale examples of political events, instances of political decision making, or dilemmas facing criminals and courts of law can be examined in the classroom. These portrayals may help make the student aware of selected social problems and the human meaning for those involved. They may help him to examine thoughtfully different ways of resolving social and personal conflict and to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each path. The exercises may not reduce conflict, but they may give the student skills to deal with his world more effectively. He may come to see the ways in which some of these universal social issues are reflected in his own relations with other individuals and groups and how they bear upon the decisions he must make in his own life.

Sixth, role playing that helps individuals to understand their own and others' behaviors can free them to utilize their intellectual potential more fully. Substantial research has shown that interpersonal relations and feelings of high or low self-esteem affect a student's academic performance. Thus role



playing directed toward understanding and changing interpersonal situations may lead indirectly to a higher level of academic performance. But it may also be used to present academic materials. Historical or contemporary events can be acted out in class to dramatize the feelings and conflicts of the participants in pivotal situations. After a brief introduction to the plot and characters, students can role-play a story, a novel, or a play in English class. The comparison between the student's portrayal and the author's presentation may stimulate thoughtful discussions about the author's style and point of view, the historical context and traditions, and similar topics. The technique of role playing can bring to the study of academic materials the dramatic import, the immediacy, and the student involvement that may otherwise be lacking in the classroom.

Seventh, role playing may prove to be an instructional technique particularly useful with nonverbal, acting-out students. The typical middle class child is apt to be satisfied with intellectual talk about a problem but reluctant to express the feelings and emotions necessary to a full understanding of the dynamics of the problem situation, or hesitant to carry his talk into action. Lower-class students, on the other hand, often reject the verbalism and abstraction of many activities, but delight in giving their more visceral responses. Through the acting-out technique of role playing, lower-class students can have a chance to experience success by making a valued contribution to the class activity in a way that is within their range of skills, and they can thereby become more highly involved in the total learning activity.<sup>9</sup> Middle-class students, through the confrontation with feelings and action provided by role playing, may learn to express concretely their intellectual understandings.

A final and unique advantage of role playing as an instructional technique is its active nature. Participants and audiences do not merely discuss theoretical problems of behavior and alternative ways of acting; they observe and practice new ways of behaving. Thus there is a stress on active participation in learning that enhances the learning itself. The necessary connection is made between knowing a principle and acting upon that knowledge. The mere addition of information neither solves classroom interpersonal problems nor teaches new social relations: interpersonal issues are resolved only as students or teachers begin to behave differently. New

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<sup>9</sup> Ashok A. M. *Effectiveness of Role Play in Enhancing Communication Skills of English Language Learners // Language in India. - 2015. - T. 15. - No. 4. - Pp. 4-7.*



behavior is the testimony of new information; it changes the effects one person has upon other persons. The shy child who can intellectually appreciate the importance of taking the initiative in beginning a conversation may practice this insight through role playing. With successful dramatic experience under his belt, he may be better able to introduce these new behaviors into the real life situation. Similarly, the bully who has come to understand himself and the scapegoat through observation and discussion has an opportunity to practice alternative ways of dealing with his aggressive feelings.

Skill practice in role playing is only one step in this change process, but through such understanding and practice and with decreased anxiety and isolation, a student may become willing and able to take the additional steps to change. He may still require a great deal of practice and reinforcement before he can apply these lessons to his own experience and actually perform more effectively.

Thus, role playing can be seen as one technique in an educational procedure that is directed toward the scientific improvement of classroom learning and social behavior. Such a procedure assumes that learning needs to be more than studying about and more than mere activity or real-life experiences. The classroom can provide the opportunities for relating ideas to action, theory to practice. It can become a laboratory for problem identification, for experience and analysis, for drawing conclusions, for formulating and reality-testing new behaviors, and for learning to generalize and behave differently in other situations.

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