The Challenge of Scenario-Based Teaching Using Drama Scripts

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Abstract

It is widely believed that the major purpose of foreign language learning is to master the speaking skill of that language. Learners even evaluate their foreign language learning on the basis of their achievement in speaking proficiency. This study discusses different teaching methodologies aimed at the development of task-based language learning, drama and the manifestation of scenario-based teaching. The aim of this article is to manifest a teaching technique which highlights the role of teacher-learner and learner-learner actual interaction by using drama. Research findings have shown that English literature is a rich source that can effectively be used in language teaching programs through plays. This technique is incredibly effective in learning, because learners become involved in the process of learning in a highly interactive environment. It gives learners the opportunity to produce and receive language by employing a variety of skills. It is argued that this technique is compatible with cognitivism, behaviorism, naturalism, and functionalism schools. The technique is suggested to be applied in EFL classrooms from basic to intermediate.

Key words: Task-based teaching, Scenario-based teaching, Scenario-based learning, Role-play

1. Introduction

Scenario is defined as 'a series of events that is projected to occur. When one runs through all of the possible outcomes of a conversation in one's head, this is an instance of a situation where they run through all possible scenarios. Scenario-based learning (SBL) uses interactive scenarios to support active learning strategies such as problem-based or case-based learning. It normally involves students working their way through a storyline, usually based around an ill-structured or complex problem which they are required to solve. In the process, students must apply their subject knowledge, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills in a safe, real-world context. SBL is often non-linear and can provide numerous feedback opportunities to students, based on the decisions they make at each stage in the process. Scenario-based learning is based on the principles of situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which argues that learning best takes place in the context in which it is going to be used, and situated cognition, the idea that knowledge is best acquired and more fully understood when situated within its context (Kindley, 2002). Language learners themselves can be relied upon as a great source of assistance for other language learners at home or in the language institute regarding different kinds of language learning activities or practices (Khoshsima & Banaruee, 2017).

It is commonly believed that the major purpose of foreign language learning is to master the speaking skill of that language. Learners even evaluate their foreign language (FL) learning on the basis of their achievement in speaking proficiency. Yet, as Kumaravadivelu (2012) comments, the more the novelty of communicative language teaching is wearing thin, the more "Task-Based Language Teaching" (TBLT) is gaining importance. In other words, in the post-modern era, the word "communicative" is gradually being replaced by the word "task". Hence, task-based instruction is shedding a new insight on teaching English as a foreign language. In Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL), tasks can be easily related to students' real-life language needs. Also known as "Task-Based Language Teaching" (TBLT), it focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to do

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meaningful tasks using the target language. Such tasks create contexts and opportunities for focusing on language form. Students are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation in a task-based approach. This makes TBLL especially popular for developing target language fluency and student confidence (Jane, 1996, p.135).

Speaking is fundamental to human communication. In our daily life, most of us speak more than we write, yet many English teachers still spend the majority of class time on reading and writing ignoring speaking and listening skills. The importance of English as an international language is in a continual growth. More learners want to master the language and speak it fluently. Still, there are obstacles to make this subject matter easy to handle. The process of learning any language is done through listening to someone talking, watching something being done, and doing something oneself. Of course, different individuals have different ways of learning, and variable competence according to how they obtain the information to be learned.

According to Richards (1988), role-play is drama-like classroom activities in which students take the roles of different participants in a situation and act out what might typically happen in a real situation. For example, to express apologies in English, a teacher may create a situation in which students take roles to apologize a customer. Role-play is a drama-like classroom activity in which students take the roles of different participants in a situation and act out what might typically happen in that situation. Role-play is defined as a technique that divides the students in the classroom into several groups of three to four. The teacher gives the situation and guideline the students to be learned, and the students can act as their role in conversation. Then the teacher asks the students to present their conversation in front of the class (Richards et al., 1987).

Former methods failed to meet the actual need of learners to communicate in the target language settings. After a long time of studying English, students still were not able to feel confident to engage in a real communication. The teacher provided some opportunities for the students to listen and to orally repeat certain strings of language that may pose some linguistic difficulty (Brown, 2007).

2. Background

Interest in language and language teaching has a long history, and it can be traced back at least as far as the ancient Greeks, where both Plato and Aristotle contributed to the design of a curriculum beginning with good writing (grammar), then moving on to effective discourse (rhetoric), and culminating in the development of dialectic to promote a philosophical approach to life (Howatt, 1999). If we focus on English, major attempts at linguistic description began to occur in the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1755, the real acceleration of change in linguistic description and pedagogy occurred, during which a number of movements influenced the field only to be replaced or modified by subsequent developments. At the beginning of the century, second language teaching method was usually the traditional method of Grammar Translation Method (GTM). This method was in use since the late eighteenth century. Learners were advised to study a list of vocabulary items and some practice examples to translate from L1 into L2 or vice versa (Kelly, 1969). The approach was originally reformist in nature, attempting to make language learning easier through the use of example sentences instead of whole text (Howatt, 1984). The emphasis on reading and writing did little to promote an ability to communicate orally in the target language (Schmitt, 2012). A new method was needed to stress on communication. The new method came to be known as the direct method.

The direct method, unlike the traditional method, emphasized exposure to oral language, with listening and speaking as the primary skills. Meaning was related directly to the target language, without translation, while explicit grammar teaching was also downplayed. It imitated how a mother tongue is naturally learnt, with listening first, then speaking, and only later reading and writing. The focus was squarely on the use of the second language, with stronger proponents banishing all use of the

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L1 in the classroom. One key difference is that L1 learners have abundant exposure to the target language, which the direct method could not hope to match (Schmitt, 2012).

During the World War II, the American military found itself short of people who were conversationally fluent in foreign languages. It needed a way of training soldiers in oral and aural skills quickly. The method focused on sentence patterns, pronunciation, intensive oral drilling, and memorization. In short, students were expected to learn through drills rather than through the analysis of the target language. This method worked during World War II (Schmitt, 2012).

The cognitive approach was a reaction to the behaviorist features of the audio-lingual approach. Chomsky's (1959) attack on the behaviorist underpinnings of structural linguistics in the late 1950s proved decisive, and its associated pedagogical approach to Audiolingualism began to fall out of favor. Discarding the behaviorist idea of habit-information, language was now seen as governed by cognitive factors, in particular a set of abstract rules, which were assumed to be innate. Chomsky (1959) suggested that children form hypotheses about their language that they tested out in practice. Chomsky (1959) presupposed that children are born with an understanding of the way language work, which was referred to as 'Universal Grammar'. They know the underlying principles of language and their parameters.

The tenets of communicative language teaching put emphasis on students' ability to use language in real-life situations, which were used in foreign and second language classroom. In task-based instruction, the priority is not the forms of language, but rather the functional purposes for which language must be used. While content-based instruction focuses on subject-matter content, task-based instruction focuses on a whole set of real world tasks themselves (Brown, 2007). This model offers the opportunity to "natural" learning inside the classroom and emphasizes meaning over form, but can also cater for learning form. It stresses the fact that real communication should take place. This real communication is not free of errors, which needs the active participation of teachers at providing feedback, and various types of feedback applied during classes affect the learning and teaching process (Khoshsima & Saed, 2016). Cook (1996) defines a task as something that is done, not said, it is a piece of work or an activity usually of specific objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, or at work. As Eskey (1997) points out real language learning is most likely to occur when the context of that learning is not only typical, but real when the learners are not merely acting roles, but trying to use their new language to fulfill genuine communicative purposes.

Nguyen's study (2017) compared the effect of role plays on young learners with adults with two different numbers of learners. Its results showed that there is a significant difference in the scores obtained from the adult group in the post test and found that the role-plays in pairs and small groups helped the weak students and role-plays should be used in the working adult students. That is, using role plays was shown to exert a positive effect on the speaking ability improvement of the learners compared to busy and young ones. It was observed that those learners who received more attention and scaffolds showed greater improvement in their speaking. In fact, the subjects performed better on speaking test through exposure to the scaffolding and motivation and not the text book support. This is significant in the study done by Nouralian (2013), either, they found out that learner's speaking ability improved more when they were provided with role-plays. Thus, speaking becomes a significant skill of language. It provides opportunity for language users to state their meaning orally. Speaking is then a process of massage and information that leads to produce utterances orally to meet special purposes (Manurung, 2015). Zainudin (2011) and his colleagues expressed that these activities created an information gap. Richards assumed that communication must take place to narrow the gap and accomplish the task. The focus of these activities was to negotiate meaning. It happened in a real situation. Hence, these activities increased chance to involve in learning and acquire language. Barge (2004) suggested special activities to do in-group. In this way the learners would encounter with a

learning problem. They should work collaboratively. Then they write and determine several solutions. Selecting a suitable solution is the next activity. They must present the final solution orally in the class. Barge stated that the result of these activities would be learning to communicate in a foreign language (as cited in Zhou et al., 2014). The procedure of these activities exists in role-playing technique. Activities of role-playing technique can be done in pair work, or group work. Learning language will be successful if students become engaged in learning activities and instead with their classmate actively. Cornett (1999) highlighted that students develop fluency in language and verbal communication skills, as well as the use of the body in face-to-face communication, when they are involved in role play activities. These EFL learners are stimulated to employ the language and then improve fluency and pronunciation with the chance to participate in role plays (Burke & O'Sullivan, 2002). Holt and Kysilka (2006) claimed that role plays can influence your role behavior and may result in better learning of language. Students may improve the ability to work cooperatively in group situations, and effectively deal with affective issues (Sarosdy, 2006). Richard (2003) asserted that role play allows learners be creative and personalize the conversations, and Qing's (2011) findings revealed that role play helps learners practice and develop inter-language and new behavioral skills. Cobo (2011) claimed that role plays enable learners to speak more logically and confidently. Richards and Bohlke (2011) and Harmer (2001) concluded that role plays mediate as a type of group-based learning and are used on a large-scale various teaching forms, yet, they may not be highly practical in all levels, and not manageable and beneficial to all learners. Because students feel being in an unpleasant clique and wish working with another learner.

3. An Illustration of a Scenario and a Role-play

Writing a scenario requires some components and steps to be developed. These steps are to be provided meticulously because they are the backbone of the teaching in this technique. Teachers need to follow all the steps in order to write an effective scenario. Here are some of the steps which are not based on the all-or-nothing approach. This means some other steps can be included also, and this depends on the writer of the scenario and the creativity.

- Investigate the learning needs
- Set the learning goals
- Select the approach
- Select the subject
- Select the topic
- Clarify the situation
- Review the scenario
- Have the scenario peer-reviewed

In order to provide an effective and practicable scenario, we followed all of the steps and the result is provided as an example in the following section. We have represented the genuine text in this paper, yet it may be manipulated in every classroom based on the needs analyses provided by the teacher. there will be various activities to end up the task with through the implementation of trials and errors while acting out the scenario. A full sample of a session practice is illustrated below. This sample is rendered from the book Anonymous (Green, 2008).

3.1. Sample (Friends (Green, 2008, p. 7)

Throughout the following, THEM move tables into classrooms for HER and SHE. HER and SHE sit. A few of THEM become classmates and sit at the tables. ME: He was on my bus – and lived near me. I'm not sure why he chose to go out of town for school but I was thankful to have him. He genuinely

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seemed happy to have me around and because he knew everyone, he gradually introduced me to more people. And I made a few friends. ME approaches SHE and HER.

ME: I met Her in English class. My first impression of Her was – bright and happy and fairy-tale optimistic. It kind of drove me nuts!... but, I couldn't help but love her carefree spirit. We were reading To Kill a Mockingbird – and it bothered Her... a lot. Every character meant something to Her; every racist comment in the book angered Her.

HER comes to life in English class.

HER: It's just wrong. Truly wrong. Atticus is respected, makes really powerful arguments that proves Tom's innocence – EVERYONE in the town knows, the jury knows... but it doesn't matter?... They're white and Tom is black – so Tom is guilty. He's guilty because of who he is, he's killed because of who he is. It's not about what he did – or I guess in this case – what he didn't do!... Does it not completely frustrate you?

ME: The class made Her cry that day. Some kids laughed at Her. Personally, I couldn't believe Her simple outlook wasn't an act. Her point was about injustice and judgement... (beat) huh – thinking about it... I wished I – and those other kids who judged Her – could have a little bit more of what she had. Her outlook was positive, and her feelings ran deep... though sometimes I wondered if – when – bad things happened in Her life would Her spirit handle it? Would it break Her somehow?

HER speaks to SHE. SHE comes to life.

HER: Hey!... If we go by my Mom's work we could drop it off and I can ask Mom for a ride. We can kill two birds with one stone.

SHE: ...well... I'm all for killing birds with stones.

ME: She was in my World Religions class. She grabbed my attention when She got into a discussion with another kid about God...ONE OF THEM: No! no way!!... you show me scientific proof!... you give me something I can see!... I just can't believe in things I can't see!

SHE: Well – I've never seen the inside of my stomach – are you going to tell me it doesn't exist?!

ME: You know – I don't even think she believes in God. It was just a good argument. She was smart. She was quiet and picked her moments. So when she talked – everyone listened. She had timing, a sense of humor, and spot on sarcasm that made me wish for that kind of clarity.

A scenario of this length and complexity takes teachers about 3-5 hours to pre-arrange and takes a session to rehearse and act out in the following session. That's the time teachers need after the goals have been identified, we know what the learners need to do in the real world, and we understand the mistakes they commonly make.

4. Focus on the learner

New developments in educational psychology also contributed to the rise of ESP, by emphasizing the central importance of the learners and their attitudes to learning (Rodgers, 1969). Learners were seen to have different needs and interests, which would have an important influence on their motivation to learn and, therefore, on the effectiveness of their learning. This lent support to the development of courses in which relevance to the learners' needs and interest was paramount. The standard way of achieving this was to take text from the learners' specialist area-texts about Biology for Biology students etc. The assumption underlying this approach was that the clear relevance of the English course to their needs would improve the learners' motivation and thereby make learning better and

faster (Hutchinson &Waters, 2010). A skillful teacher can reduce the possible negative effect of a corrective feedback by providing a simultaneous positive feedback (Banaruee, Khoshsima, & Askari, 2017) in SLB classroom atmosphere is prepared for teachers to be highly positive in providing feedback.

5. Conclusion

As discussed previously, researchers investigating the role of teaching speaking in second-language acquisition (SLA) have made remarkable progress in the last three decades. As progress is made and the questions become more complex, more sophisticated tasks and techniques need to be developed. Nonetheless, research on the impact of role-play on speaking proficiency on SLA development has been dynamic and continues to grow. This paper was an attempt to provide an accurate and comprehensive overview of the central issues as determined by the most prominent scholars and researchers in the field by examining role-plays in speaking.

The majority of teaching methodologies in language pedagogy enjoy a variety of conversation tasks in which role-play has been considered as a utilized task. These scholars, to name but a few, are Dorathy & Mahalakshmi, 2011; Richards, 2006; Zainudin, 2011; Barge, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Englander, 2002; Chauhan, 2004; Sato, 2001; Richard, 2003; Malmah, 1991; Mora, 2010; Huang, 2008; Khoshsima & Banaruee, 2017; Kowalska, 1991; and Porter-Ladousse, 1987; Budden, 2004, who all have supported the effectiveness of role-plays in developing speaking. There are also some scholars who revealed some disadvantages of role-plays viewing them less effective than other types of speaking tasks such as Thornbury, 2005; Richards & Bohlke, 2011; and Harmer, 2001.

It is concluded that incorporating role-play into classroom adds variety, a change of peace and easiness, and opportunities for considerable language production. Role-plays were concluded to be an integral part of the class and not a 'one-off' event. Providing role-play tasks in classrooms contributes to the collaborative and cooperative learning and raises the level of exposure to peer scaffolding which benefits all learners. The interaction resulted from group-work encourages more rehearsal and prearrangement on the side of both learners and teachers and makes the learning process dynamic. It is recommended to apply role-plays in ESP contexts in adult classes being adjusted to learners' aims after elaborate needs analyses. In addition, it provides learners the chance to not only evaluate their own learning progress and proficiency but also their peers' performance.

6. Pedagogical Implication and Suggestions for Further Research

Through this research, we can say that the implementation of role-play technique gives learners the opportunity to practice as it is so important in the communication approach to language teaching and learning. Learners become actively involved in experiencing the target language in a real environment. Apart from that, learners tend to develop an awareness and confidence in their ability of learning strategies. Learning processes vary from every individual to another due to the existence of diverse psychological and biological factors (Khoshsima & Shokri, 2017). The awareness of the fact that dissimilarity exists among learners' preferences in learning, determines teachers to accommodate learners needs accordingly.

Syllabus designers, supervisors, and teachers are among other groups who can benefit from the findings of this study. Role-play technique is an effective technique which develops ESP learners' speaking ability. According to the results of the study, language supervisors and syllabus designers can develop educational courses. This technique can easily make learners fluent and accurate first in class as a first step of their learning process and then in the real world when they are faced with similar situations. Furthermore, this study will help university ESP students to develop their speaking ability along with technical English. Moreover, textbook writers can include dialogues at the end of each unit

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to develop students speaking ability after they have acquired technical words and based on the dialogues; using role-play technique can develop students speaking ability.

Language teachers can benefit from the results of this study so as to manipulate the methodology throughout their classes and keep their students motivated and encouraged. Hence, a more up to date and utilized methods of teaching speaking will be popular. Teachers may take the advantage of using role-plays as their principal speaking task and remove the hindrances and the stress in the classroom, and have their classes more livelily. It may supply the field with satisfying information which can be the base for more researches in the current domain. Educational journals and magazines in Iran and in the world would benefit from this research as there are not sufficient researches done worldwide on the effects of role-plays in ESP contexts specifically on hotel staff and would publish more texts related to the issue to provide convenient information for their audience.

SBL can be used in a wide range of contexts, but it works especially effectively when used to simulate real-world practice, providing opportunities which may be difficult for students to experience within the confines of a course. Successful scenarios have been developed around topics as wide-ranging as structural failure in bridges; pesticide applications for apple orchards, and the nursing management of myocardial infarction. SBL can be used as part of either formative or summative assessment. SBL usually works best when applied to tasks requiring decision-making and critical thinking in complex situations. Tasks that are routine to the students will require little critical thinking or decision-making, and may be better assessed using other methods.

Scenario-based learning may be self-contained, in that completing the scenario is the entire task, or it may be the first part of a larger assignment requiring the student to complete the scenario, and then provide a written or oral reflection and self-assessment on the process.

A new line of research currently investigated by SLA researchers is the effect of different types of teaching techniques in different methodologies or even beyond method approaches. Interested researchers can delve into this area for more informative results concerning the effect of role-play task in subparts of speaking as; pronunciation, intonation, word power, grammar and sentence style. Based on this study, further research can be done into the application of the technique on pre-intermediate university students having courses of general English. English language institutes offering English courses on different proficiency levels can also carry it out. The study can be approached worldwide in different countries.

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