

Acquiring Fluency in Speaking English as a Foreign Language Through Role Play

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One of the language skills required for international communication is speaking. While students learn English, they often face some problems. They are always some students who do not talk in class because they are too shy and afraid to make mistakes. In fact, the students face difficulties in speaking such as difficulties in arranging the sentences or the lack of motivation. Related to these problems, role-play could be a solution to overcome the problems of speaking. The aim of this research is to know the effect of using role-play in teaching speaking. This research uses pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test for 15 students. In a nutshell, the test declared whether role-play has a significant effect on improving the students' speaking skills or not.

Keywords: role-play, speaking, motivation

Introduction

Every day in our lives we play different roles; we are fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, teachers, students, and much more. This is why role play is an essential part of educating our students because they need to learn that we all play a part in our society. Furthermore, role play prepares students for what they might want to be in life when they grow up; playing the part of a policeman, a doctor, or chef for example enhances their research skills because they need to look up what each profession does and apply it to their role. When students pretend to be a story character, their understanding of the story becomes better because they live it, rather than just reading and being a spectator. This will help students with becoming more creative and it enhances the learning experience and that is why it is a vital part of the process.

Research Question

Is it effective to teach speaking by using role-play?

Hypothesis

Role-play is effective in teaching speaking skills.

Literature Review

Speaking is one of productive skills that should be acquired by students. According to Brown (2001), speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing speech of sounds as main instruments. Cameron (1993) added that speaking is used to express meanings so that

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other people can make sense of them. As a result, speaking is an important skill that is used to communicate with other people. It is a difficult task for the teacher to teach speaking in the classroom. On the other hand, most of the students are shy to speak up in the classroom and they have low motivation. In order to improve students' speaking skill, teachers should find the perfect strategy or the appropriate technique of teaching speaking. In other words, teachers play an important role to create interesting teaching and learning techniques. Harmer (2007) believed that "Role-play can stimulate the students in real world and it gives learners an opportunity to practice communicating in different social context and different social roles" (p. 352). Speaking is the backbone of life and the fuel that motivates a person to achieve whatever he wants because it is the principle of communication.

Brown (2001) added that speaking is an interactive process of conducting meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. As a conclusion, speaking is a tool of communication with each other's, where the speaker can deliver his idea, opinion, and feeling through verbal skill to the listener.

Speaking is a difficult skill, so teachers should find an interactive technique in order to teach speaking skill for students. One of the techniques in teaching speaking skills is role-play. Role play is a method of acting out particular ways of interacting with each other's in imaginary situations. Byrne (1986) and Ladouse (1995) thought that role-play promotes interaction in the classroom and increases motivation. Budden (2006) reached a conclusion where he believes that "Role-play is any speaking activity when you either put yourself into somebody else or put yourself into an imaginary situation. Based on the explanation above, role-play is not only used to interactive teaching in the classroom, but also to stimulate the students in real life situations. Moreover, Byrne (1986) classified role-play in two forms:

(1) Scripted Role-play: It involves interpreting either the textbook dialogue in the form of speech. The aim is to convey the meaning of language items in a memorably way;

(2) Unscripted Role-play: The situations of unscripted role-play do not depend on textbooks. The students themselves have to decide what language to use and how the conversation should develop.

Research Method

This research used quantitative method and pre-experimental design. The writer used one group pre-test and post-test as design. In this research, grade six students of Phoenix International School, Lebanon were selected as population. 6A class was used to be sample of the research. There were 30 students, 17 boys and 13 girls. In this research, the research collected the data by using pre-test and post-test. Pre-test was implemented to find out the students' ability in speaking before the treatment. Then, the researcher did some treatments and role play technique was used as treatment. After treatment, the post-test was done to know the effect of using role play in teaching speaking comprehension. The data gathered from test were analyzed and interpreted to know the students' progress in speaking comprehension through role play.

Group *A* was as a sample (see Table 1 & 2).

Group *B* was the experimental group (see Table 3 & 4).

The pre-test was an oral description of a picture.

After a week of treatment for group *B*, the following results were found (see Table 4).

Table 1

Pre-test Results: Group A

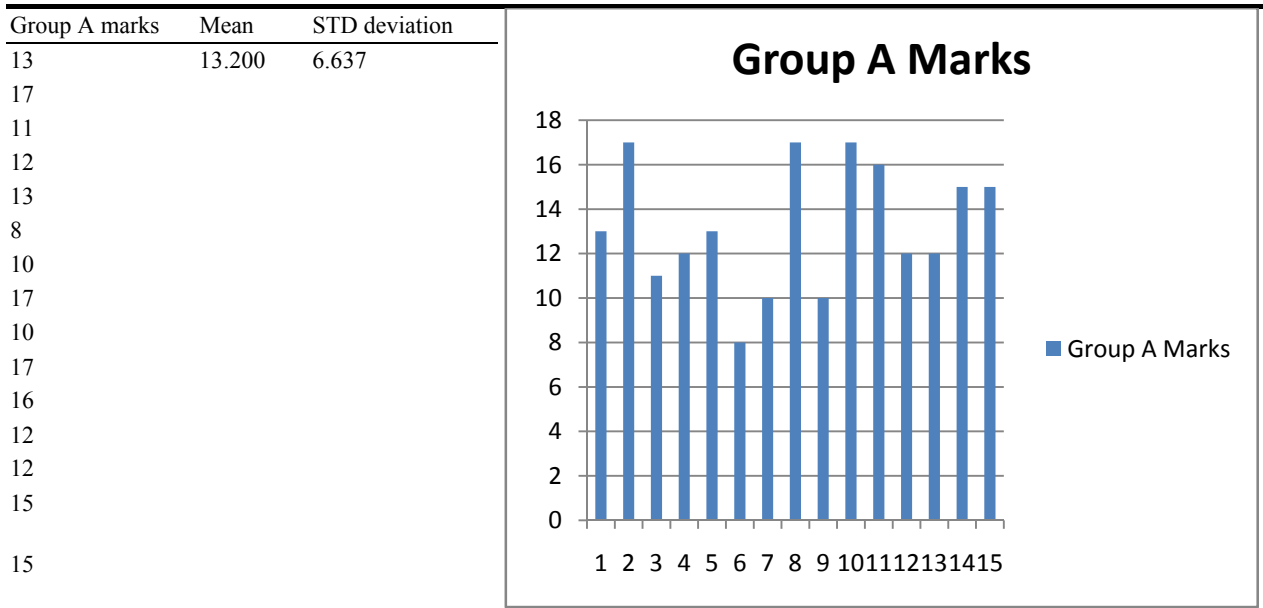


Table 2

Post-Test Results: Group A

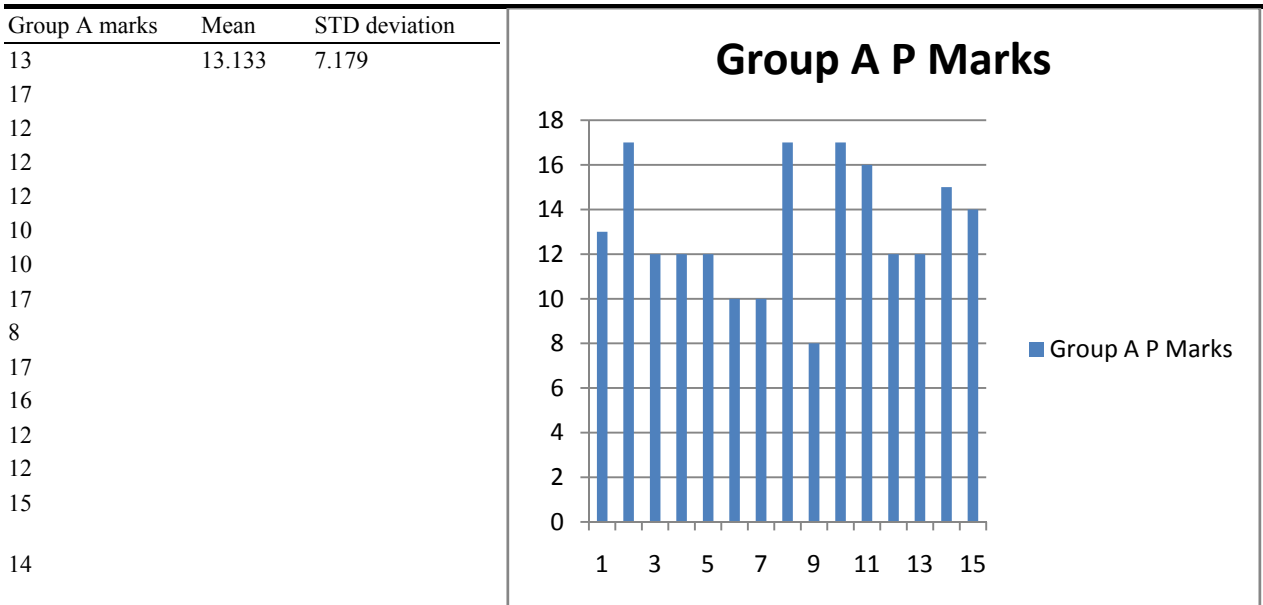
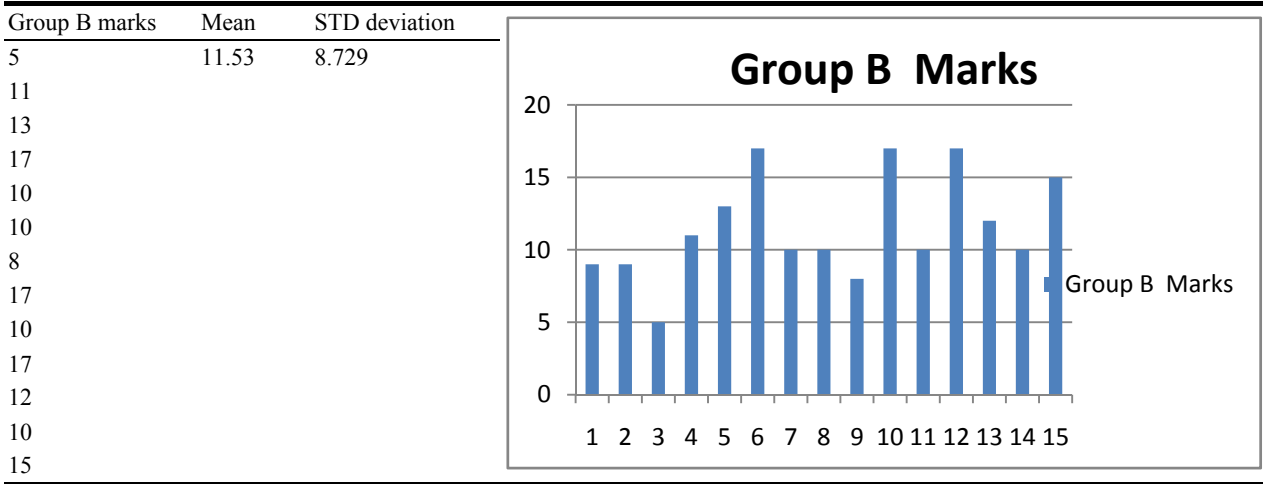


Table 3

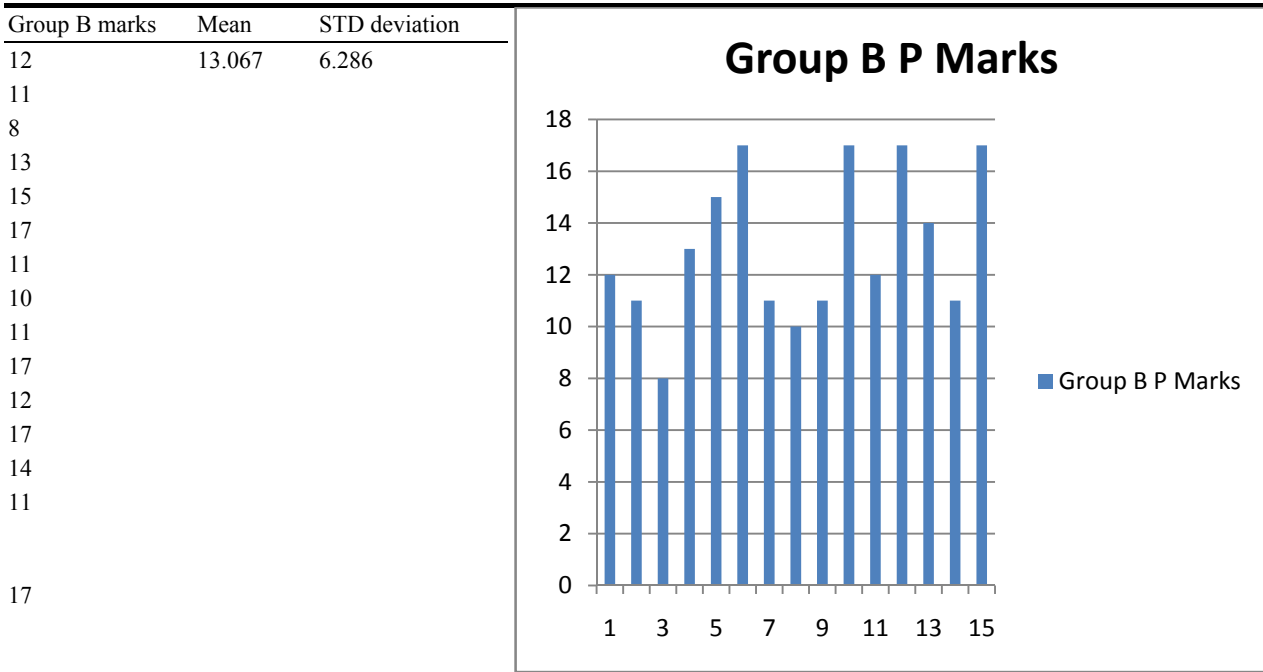
Pre-test Results: Group B



After a week of treatment, the following results were shown.

Table 4

Results of Post-Test Experiment: Group B



Discussion depending on results (see Table 5 & 6):

Table 5

Pre-test

	Number of students	Mean	Standard deviation
Group A	15	13.2	6.673
Group B	15	11.53	8.729

Table 6
Post-Test

	Number of students	Mean	Standard deviation
Group A	15	13.133	7.179
Group B	15	13.067	6.286

As the results show above, we can notice that the mean of the pre-test (13.2) and post-test (13.133) of group A remains constant somehow. While the mean of the pre-test (11.53) and post-test (13.067) of group B increases after a week of treatment by using role-play technique.

We can also notice that the standard deviation of group A increases after a week. It was 6.673 and it becomes 7.179. While the standard deviation of group B decreases after a week of treatment. It was 8.729 and it becomes 6.286. This means that role-play is an effective technique for teaching speaking skill.

Conclusion

Related to the results and discussions elaborated in the previous explanation, it can be concluded that role play is an effective tool in teaching speaking. There was a significant difference scores between pre-test and post-test. This conclusion is drawn as a result of the increase of the students' speaking score before and after treatment. Therefore, role play is effective in teaching speaking and it can be one of alternative techniques in teaching speaking and the hypothesis is valid.

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