

# Role- Play Technique and the Oral Skill Improvement: A Case Study of Some Libyan Students at the English Language Centre of the Libyan Academy in Tripoli

Nadia Saeid Ben Hamed  
Faculty of Languages- Department of English  
university of Tripoli  
nadia.s.benhamed@gmail.com

## الملخص

تهدف الدراسة التي تعرضها هذه الورقة الي تسليط الضوء علي استخدام (تبادل الأدوار الحوارية) لتقوية المهارات الشفهية لدي الطلاب فوق المتوسط بمركز اللغة الإنجليزية بالأكاديمية الليبية بجنزور خريف 2017. معظم أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية ومن ضمنهم الباحث لاحظوا بأن معظم الطلاب بهذا المركز لديهم القدرة علي القراءة والكتابة باللغة الانجليزية ولكن قدرتهم الشفهية بهذه اللغة ضعيفة جدا. مدة الدراسة البحثية كانت خمسة أسابيع ، تم تطبيق تقنية تبادل الأدوار الحوارية علي مجموعة فقط بينما درست المجموعة الأخرى بالطريقة التقليدية. امتحن الطلاب بعد انتهاء الأسبوع الخامس ودونت النتائج للمجموعتين. أظهرت النتائج بأن هناك تأثيراً فعالاً باستخدام هذه التقنية في تقوية المهارات الشفهية لدي الطلبة.

## Abstract

This study aims at investigating the effectiveness of using role-play technique in teaching the oral skill of Libyan pre-intermediate level students. The sample of the study consisted of forty students (20 students in each group) chosen from the Libyan Academy in Janzour, Tripoli and assigned to experimental and control groups. Data of the this study were collected in Fall 2017 within almost one semester period. There were pre-post written tests and also speaking test designed for equivalent groups. Then the data of this study were assessed and analyzed. The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the results. This indicates that using role-play technique in the speaking classes may have a significant positive impact on improving learners' oral skill. The study also suggests some recommendations to develop methods of teaching speaking.

## 1. Introduction

The main goal of modern language teaching is to help learners to become communicatively competent. Compared with other kinds of communication, oral communication is the dominant. Consequently, speaking is the most important and useful function language serves. Obviously, most of English language testing specialists stress the role of communication (particularly oral communication) in any language teaching program.

For example Littlewood (1999: 1) claims that the main purpose of foreign language teaching is to achieve communicative ability. Similarly, Kara (1992:62) states that language is learned so people can interact with one another. Rivers (1981:8) mentions that the aim of learning a language is to provide learners with the skills that will help them to communicate orally. This study explores the possibility of creating communicative situations in the classroom in order to help the learners overcome their nervousness and hesitation to speak English. The researcher attempted to involve role-play activities in a speaking class for many reasons:

It allows the use of language in natural situations of turn taking.

It helps the development of questions and overlapping based on participant expectations.

It links controlled language learning and real- life situations.

Ur Penny (1996:120) states that teachers should try to create an environment where learners use real-life language and engage the learners into useful activities that provide language interaction. He (Ibid.) says that by using this technique in teaching English as a foreign language classes, students will get the opportunity to communicate in English with each other.

## 2. The Problem of the Study

Most of the teaching staff as well as the researcher at the Libyan Academy classes have noticed that most students at pre-intermediate level face problems in speaking. These students can fairly read or to write in English but their ability in speaking this language is very poor. They prefer to use Arabic language instead of English in the speaking classroom, and prefer that the teacher does so. They feel shy and hesitate much when they try to speak in the presence of others. Moreover, the textbook (English File/ Pre-Intermediate level) chosen by the administration of the English Language Centre of the Libyan Academy, is designed to develop students' understanding of the grammatical system and to extend their ability in the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Although speaking skills are included in the textbook, most students are reluctant to engage in a conversation test for fear of making mistakes and prefer to keep silent. This skill is relatively neglected by teachers at the English Language Centre in the classroom. Most of them focus more on teaching other areas of the textbook such as grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing than teaching the speaking part. The students do not have serious problems neither in understanding the grammatical rules nor reading or writing in English, but their ability in speaking this language is relatively poor.

It is also noticeable that most students get low marks in speaking examinations. Scott et al. (1990:33) suggests that the best way in teaching oral skills is to make a balance between giving lessons and practicing them by using different activities. In this case, language will be practiced and taught through natural talk.

### 3. Significance of the Study

Role-play is a suitable activity for students to practice and learn the language easily in a specific situation. (Stocker, 2000:1) Scott et al. (1990:34) mention that the role-play technique is an active way of organizing not only in small number of classes but also in large number of classes. Larsen Freeman (2000:68) proposes that role-play technique has an important role in the communicative approach because it gives the learners the opportunity to use the language in different situations. So this study aims to investigate the beneficial impact of role-play techniques in improving students' oral skills.

According to the researcher's experience through teaching at the English Language Centre of the Libyan Academy, it has been noticed that students face a big problem in interacting in English as well as they lack the confidence in speaking this language. The results of this work may highlight the problems that Libyan learners encounter when communicating in English. So then teachers will think to find suitable techniques to use in speaking classes in order to create real environment which can help learners to communicate more freely and easily. Especially those who are concerned with the progress and development of their students during the process of learning. Therefore, it is hoped that:

- A) It will help teachers and researchers involved in the educational system get insights into the benefit of using role-play and work to develop it over time.
- B) It may help teachers and researchers in the future and lead them to develop the field of speaking activities in general as well as foreign language learning in particular.
- C) It will help teachers to merge the use of role-play technique into their speaking classroom programme.

### 4. Objective of the Study

The study highlights the importance of using role-play technique in teaching oral practice at the English Language Centre of the Libyan Academy in Janzour, Tripoli and its impact on the

students' communicative competence. This study also attempts to show that the responsibilities in the English classroom are not only the concern of the teacher's role but the students as well. The teacher should not act as the classroom controller of all the learning process, but the students have to share the responsibilities and try to become more independent on themselves to interact with each other in the classroom.

## 5. Hypothesis of the Study

This study was conducted on the Libyan students at the English Language Centre of the Libyan Academy to highlight the significance of using role-play and to prove that this activity would help those students to improve their speaking ability according to their oral and written tests. It is also hypothesized that if the students were given the opportunities to use this tool with the teacher's guidance, this could help them to increase their confidence, desire and ability to use the target language appropriately and effectively.

## 6. Research Questions

In order to carry out this research, the following research questions were involved:-

Do teachers focus on teaching the oral skill and give their effort and time as they do on teaching the other skills of English language?

Do teachers use activities in teaching the oral skill in order to give the students the opportunity to practice and learn English language?

Are the students able to express their ideas, feelings and communicate with others in the classroom?

Do students have difficulties when they speak?

Do teachers give enough time to their students to practice the language in the classroom?

## 7. Literature Review

Role- play technique is very effective in the Communicative Approach because it provides students with an opportunity to practice language in real and different situations. The researcher reviewed some of the most related studies to the use of role-play in teaching speaking classes.

One of the importance of using role-play technique in the classroom is that it provides students with the opportunities to speak English in front of the whole class, and to help them overcome their nervousness and reluctance to speak the language.

According to Ladousse (1987:7) " Role-play is one of a whole gamut of communication techniques which develops fluency in languages, which promotes interaction in the classroom, and which increases motivation. Not only in peer learning encouraged by it, but also the sharing between teacher and students' responsibility for the learning process".

Funess (1976:59) states that students can enjoy role-play and gain the benefit at the same time in terms of improved interaction, creativity and being involved in independent thinking and so on.

Livingstone (1986:6) illustrates that role-play technique can be utilized as a classroom activity because it allows the learners to practice the language in natural situations and adds that role-play aspects and its roles may be practiced outside the classroom as well.

Role play is a problem solving technique in which students are asked to act out a role, one that they would not normally be in (Shaftel et al. ,1982:42)

It is also a significant method for the teachers in testing students' oral ability. The candidate is tested by giving a role-play in a certain hypothetical situation, then s/he plays the turn given. (Underhill, 1987:51-52)

A reviewing of studies on the effect of role-play technique will show that researchers unanimously agree that using role-play technique in speaking classes has a positive impact on most students' speaking abilities. The present study concurs with the reviewed studies in the general aim of investigating the effect of role-play technique on the students' communication. However, the effect of role-play technique on basic stage students' speaking has not received adequate attention. Therefore, this fact has impelled the researcher to focus the attention of the study on the role role-play technique on the Libyan pre-intermediate stage students' speaking classes.

## **8. Instruments, participants and procedure**

The data of this study consisted of two instruments: students' pre-/ post written tests and students' oral test.

## 9. Students' Pre-Test and Post-Test

Different questions were prepared and used by the researcher in pre- and post-tests. Pre-test was conducted for the control group and the experimental group before using different teaching methods (traditional method & role-play technique). Whereas post-test was done after teaching both group through traditional method and role-play. The time period for pre-test and post- test was about ninety minutes and the total marks for both tests was out of (25). The results of both tests were collected and compared before and after using the role play technique in teaching speaking. The purpose of these tests was to show the importance of using role play in teaching/learning speaking as well as to see if there was any improvement in the students' communicative competence .

## 10. Students' Oral Test

The test consisted of three different questions which were prepared by the researcher in advance in order to avoid constant repetition. However, there were several topics raised in the oral test which allowed the learners to develop them and to show their oral competence, rather than just giving a straight answer to a question. Forty students were tested orally and individually. The oral test was conducted at English Language Centre of the Libyan Academy in Janzour, Tripoli and lasted for (10-15 minutes) for each student. The total mark was out of (100) divided by (4) according to the four elements of a speaking test (Grammatical accuracy, fluency, pronunciation and content). Twenty-five marks were given for each element and each one had five degree of levels from (1 to 5). This test was prepared to show the difference between using the traditional method of teaching and role-play activity in speaking classrooms in order to help students improve their speaking ability.

As illustrated in the following table, the numbers from 1-5 show the degrees of student' ability level for each element. The numbers under these five levels are the scores assigned in advance for each level. For example, if a student got level (2) in grammatical accuracy, level (4) in fluency, level (3) in pronunciation and level (4) in content, then the student will score 18, 5, 12 and 5 and the total mark will be (40%).

The scoring the oral test is shown in the following table:

|                         | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1..... |    |                    |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|--------|----|--------------------|
| Grammatical accuracy... |   |   | 0 | 5 | 12     | 18 | 25                 |
| Fluency.....            |   |   | 0 | 5 | 12     | 18 | 25                 |
| Pronunciation.....      |   |   | 0 | 5 | 12     | 18 | 25                 |
| Content.....            |   |   | 0 | 5 | 12     | 18 | 25                 |
|                         |   |   |   |   |        |    | Total Mark: .....% |

Adapted from (Adams & Frith 1979:35-8 in Hughes 1999:113)

### 11. The Students' Background

Forty Libyan students were chosen from the English Center of the Libyan Academy. They were 21 females and 19 males aged between 25-44 years old. They have undergone a placement test and the result showed that most students were approximately at the same level (Pre- Intermediate) and they have been living in Libya since birth. The students were taught for five weeks. They had English speaking class three times a week and the class time period was about 90 minutes.

### 12. The Teachers' Background

In order to conduct this study, two Libyan teachers were selected randomly from the administration of the English Center of the Libyan Academy. Both of them were females and their ages were 35 and 40. These teachers were holders of M.A Degree in English Language Teaching and their experience in this field was at least seven years. One has been living in Libya since she was born, whereas the other one has lived in the UK for twelve years. The teachers were chosen to teach both groups (the Experimental Group and the Control Group) for five weeks.

### 13. The Procedure

Four lessons were given to both groups (the Control Group and the Experimental Group) within five weeks for about ninety minutes in each class (three lectures a week). All topics

included a wide range of vocabulary, expressions and different exercises like multiple choices, fill in the gaps cloze and so on.

The following are titles of the four topics which were taught to both groups:

- (A) At the Airport
- (B) At the Conference
- (C) Ordering A Meal in A Restaurant
- (D) Asking for Directions

The Control Group was taught speaking by using the traditional way of teaching (following the textbook instructions) focusing on teaching grammar and providing them with linguistic forms as well as lexical items. The main focus was on giving language forms rather than on using language. The teacher asked the students to read the dialogues in front of the class and made sure that the whole class read them as well. After that, exercises were answered with the teacher's guidance.

The Experimental Group was taught speaking by using the role-play technique where the participants found opportunity to practice English and learned more about the use of language than the language itself. The teacher asked the students some questions in order to prepare them for the new subject as well as to link between the topic and their background. The teacher also asked the students to read the dialogues alone ,then they listened to the dialogues by a CD player or a computer to give them a chance to listen to the conversation by native speakers. The topic was then divided into two parts (student A and a student B). The teacher asked the students to read the topics in front of the class and gave the opportunity to the whole class to take their turns as well. Some real objects were brought in the classroom such as (pictures, telephone, dishes and flowers,...etc.) to create a real life-situation. Once the students comprehended the given topic, they were provided with different activities that allowed them to communicate as well as to have enjoyable times with each other in order to overcome the problem of feeling shy, nervous or hesitant. The students were also taught to say the same thing in different ways in order to expand their vocabulary.

At the end of five weeks of teaching both groups, two types of tests were conducted: students' pre-test, post written tests and students' oral test. All types of tests were out of 25. The results of the data were analyzed and compared to see the students' scores in both tests in order to see if the role-play technique has a positive impact on the development of students' oral ability or both teaching methods (using role-play technique and traditional method) led to the same measure.



#### 14. What is Role Play?

#### 15. Definitions of Role Play

In this research, role-play is defined as an activity used as a problem-solving technique to deal with students who have difficulties to act out a role. (Shaftel et al., 1982:42). It is also defined by Biddle (1979:61) as " ...when someone correctly imitates the role of another". Students are engaged in a problem-solving process where it is important for them to communicate with the other role players involved.

According to Porter-Ladousse (1987:3) "role play activities range from highly-controlled guided conversations at one end of the scale, to improvised drama activities at the other, from simple rehearsed dialogue performance, to highly complex simulated scenarios."

Harmer (1998:92) offers this definition, " Role play activities are those where students are asked to imagine that they are in different situations and act accordingly".

As mentioned above, there are several definitions of role play technique given by different writers, the researcher adapted Harmer's (1998:92) definition of role play because he clearly says that role play allows students to imagine about giving roles gather ideas, create it then perform it in certain situations.

#### 16. Types of Role-Play

Al-Arishi, et.al (1994:339) state that there are two types of role-play activity, real-plays and also surreal-plays. They (ibid.) say that real-play activity gives an opportunity to students to learn and practise English in real situations but inside classroom; such as inviting someone to your birthday through a phone, asking for directions, making phone calls, asking for medicine and so on. Surreal-play activity is called imaginative role-play. According to Al-Arishi,et. al (1994:337) "Surreal-play activity encourages an imaginative self-expression of the inner world of each student's mind. While real-play seeks approval for believing that a classroom can become the real world, surreal-playing calls for promoting an expression of thoughts and feelings of each student's mind". This activity helps students to create different situations in the classroom and the teacher needs to encourage them to do those roles which they find useful and enjoyable.

### 17. Advantages of Using Role Play in the Classroom

Kowalska (1991:133-134) argues that students practice the wide range of language through role play activity. She adds that, this activity leads learners to improve their speaking, for example greeting, ordering food, asking for directions is practiced by role play more than other activities. Moreover, it provides opportunities to use natural conversations without concentrating on the suitable use of language itself. Kowalska (ibid.) also mentions that role-play technique activates students' mind to think and create pictures about the roles play activities given. In addition, when the students practise well and use their imagination, they might have ample opportunities to get better jobs in the future. Some jobs depend on obtaining useful skills such as creativity and imagination so role-paly activity allows students to think inventively.

Another advantage of using role play activity in English as a foreign language classrooms is that some students learn English for different purposes such as (travel, work), so role play is a good activity because it gives students chances to practice language and learn it inside the classroom. It also helps them to learn phrases, expressions, language chunks, idioms and so on. (Porter-Ladousse,1987:7)

When students practise their roles, they act according to their characters. They help each other to perform the turns, laugh, and overlap. Role-play activity adds element of enjoyment and excitement in foreign language classes. Students have great time together when they play the roles given. (Budden,2004:7)

### 18. Disadvantages of Using Role Play in the Classroom

As mentioned above, there are useful uses of role play in order to help students improve their communication performance. But there is no doubt that there are also some practical drawbacks of this activity in teaching and learning.

These are some of the disadvantages of role play:

Curriculums are taught and examined according to specific time given by administrations of schools and universities. If teachers would focus more on preparing and using role play activities in speaking classes, this might take a lot of classroom time. Teachers might not also be able to finish other areas of the curriculums on the right time.

When the role play takes place in large numbers of students, different actions happen; for example, interaction, overlapping, discussion and sometimes moving from a desk to another. This may make noise in the class and the teacher becomes unable to control the roles or even listen to them. Some students are unable to identify with the characters or situations given. This activity may be difficult for students who are shy or those who have speech problems.  
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## 19. Results of Study

## 20. Results of the Experimental Group and the Control Group in the Pre-written test:

| Group            | Control Group      |               |       | Experimental Group  |       |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| Method           | Traditional Method |               |       | Role-Play Technique |       |
| No. of Questions | No. of Items       | Right Answers | Ratio | Right Answers       | Ratio |
| Q1               | 1                  | 16            | 80%   | 15                  | 75%   |
|                  | 2                  | 14            | 70%   | 16                  | 80%   |
|                  | 3                  | 13            | 65%   | 12                  | 60%   |
|                  | 4                  | 10            | 50%   | 8                   | 40%   |
|                  | 5                  | 11            | 55%   | 14                  | 60%   |
|                  | 6                  | 15            | 75%   | 15                  | 75%   |
|                  | 7                  | 9             | 45%   | 16                  | 80%   |
|                  | 8                  | 11            | 55%   | 11                  | 55%   |
|                  | 9                  | 17            | 85%   | 17                  | 85%   |
|                  | 10                 | 12            | 60%   | 13                  | 65%   |
| Q2               | 1                  | 15            | 75%   | 14                  | 70%   |
|                  | 2                  | 13            | 65%   | 12                  | 60%   |
|                  | 3                  | 10            | 50%   | 13                  | 65%   |
|                  | 4                  | 11            | 55%   | 9                   | 45%   |
|                  | 5                  | 8             | 40%   | 15                  | 75%   |
| Q3               | 1                  | 15            | 75%   | 12                  | 60%   |
|                  | 2                  | 16            | 80%   | 13                  | 65%   |
|                  | 3                  | 13            | 65%   | 16                  | 80%   |
|                  | 4                  | 12            | 60%   | 10                  | 50%   |
|                  | 5                  | 11            | 55%   | 15                  | 75%   |

Table (1)

As is apparent from table (1), in question one (Choose the correct responses between brackets to complete the dialogue between the receptionist and Sally), the results of the control group and experimental group are nearly similar. The control group scored 16 and 17 for the items 1 and 9, whereas low marks 10, 11, 9, 11 and 12 are scored for items 4,5,7,8 and 10.

On the other hand, the experimental group has scored 16, 16 and 17 for the items 2, 7 and 9, but the low marks 8, 11 and 13 are scored for the items 4,8 and 10. This indicates that the two groups are more or less the same, because some questions can be answered easily by the students who just read the sentences then they chose the answers from the choices.

In question two (How do you say.....????), the students are asked to say something in different ways. The result of both groups are also similar, the students have scored low marks in this question. The control group scored 15 which is the highest mark for item 1 and the lowest mark 8 for item 5, whereas the experimental group has scored 14 which is the highest mark for item 1 and the lowest mark 9 for item 4. The result of both groups indicates that students did not practise well to do such task.

In question three (Match the sentences from 1-5 with their responses from a-g). The highest marks which has been scored by the control group are 15 and 16 for items 1 and 2, while the experimental group has scored the highest marks for items 3 and 5.

Although most of the questions given in this test were similar to those exercises included in the students' textbook, no one has scored above 20 marks in the three questions. This means that the students did not prepare and practise to do such tasks.

**21. Results of the Experimental Group and the Control Group in the Post-written test:**

| Group            | Control Group      |               |       | Experimental Group  |       |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| Method           | Traditional Method |               |       | Role-Play Technique |       |
| No. of Questions | No. of Items       | Right Answers | Ratio | Right Answers       | Ratio |
| Q1               | 1                  | 15            | 75%   | 18                  | 90%   |
|                  | 2                  | 12            | 60%   | 16                  | 80%   |
|                  | 3                  | 15            | 75%   | 19                  | 95%   |
|                  | 4                  | 14            | 60%   | 17                  | 85%   |
|                  | 5                  | 11            | 50%   | 18                  | 90%   |
|                  | 6                  | 13            | 65%   | 16                  | 80%   |
|                  | 7                  | 10            | 50%   | 15                  | 75%   |
|                  | 8                  | 16            | 80%   | 18                  | 90%   |
|                  | 9                  | 13            | 65%   | 19                  | 95%   |
|                  | 10                 | 15            | 75%   | 20                  | 100%  |
| Q2               | 1                  | 12            | 60%   | 16                  | 80%   |
|                  | 2                  | 12            | 60%   | 18                  | 90%   |
|                  | 3                  | 16            | 80%   | 17                  | 85%   |
|                  | 4                  | 15            | 75%   | 19                  | 95%   |
|                  | 5                  | 14            | 70%   | 17                  | 85%   |
| Q3               | 1                  | 13            | 65%   | 19                  | 95%   |
|                  | 2                  | 15            | 75%   | 17                  | 85%   |
|                  | 3                  | 16            | 80%   | 16                  | 80%   |
|                  | 4                  | 14            | 70%   | 16                  | 80%   |
|                  | 5                  | 13            | 65%   | 20                  | 100%  |

Table (2)

The data in table (2) show different performance levels on the post-test between the control group and the experimental group. The result shows that when the students were exposed to the role-play technique, they scored better marks than the students who were exposed to the

traditional method of teaching. The control group has scored 15, 15 and 16 which can be considered the highest marks for items 3, 8 and 10, whereas the experimental group has scored the highest marks 19,18, 18, 19 and 100 for items 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10.

Conversely, in question two (How do you say.....????), the students' level in the control group does not fluctuate. Although this task was given in pre-test as well as in their textbook, students got low marks. This means that these students did not prepare to do this task.

In question three (Match the sentences from 1-5 with the appropriate responses from a-h to complete the telephone conversation), the table shows a clear difference between two groups. The experimental group scored higher marks than the control group. The control group scored 13, 15, 16, 14 and 13 for items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, while the experimental group scored 19,17,16,16 and 20 for items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The result illustrates that the students who were taught by role-play technique performed better in this exercise than those who were taught by traditional methods.

## 22. Results of the Students' Oral Test

### 23. Results of the Control Group in the Oral Test:

| Student No. | Grammatical Accuracy | Fluency | Pronunciation | Content | General Level |
|-------------|----------------------|---------|---------------|---------|---------------|
| 1           | 14                   | 12      | 12            | 14      | 52%           |
| 2           | 12                   | 13      | 10            | 15      | 50%           |
| 3           | 19                   | 17      | 15            | 18      | 69%           |
| 4           | 13                   | 11      | 10            | 16      | 50%           |
| 5           | 17                   | 12      | 10            | 14      | 53%           |
| 6           | 14                   | 12      | 14            | 17      | 57%           |
| 7           | 19                   | 16      | 18            | 16      | 69%           |
| 8           | 14                   | 13      | 14            | 12      | 53%           |
| 9           | 19                   | 13      | 11            | 13      | 58%           |
| 10          | 17                   | 15      | 16            | 19      | 67%           |
| 11          | 22                   | 16      | 15            | 23      | 64%           |
| 12          | 19                   | 16      | 14            | 18      | 67%           |
| 13          | 16                   | 13      | 12            | 15      | 56%           |

|                    |       |       |       |       |        |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 14                 | 15    | 12    | 15    | 11    | 53%    |
| 15                 | 12    | 8     | 6     | 10    | 36%    |
| 16                 | 20    | 16    | 16    | 18    | 70%    |
| 17                 | 20    | 16    | 15    | 18    | 69%    |
| 18                 | 15    | 13    | 10    | 15    | 53%    |
| 19                 | 22    | 21    | 18    | 17    | 78%    |
| 20                 | 19    | 20    | 18    | 16    | 73%    |
| Total Achievements | 70.2% | 58.4% | 55.6% | 64.6% | 49.76% |

Table (3)

As shown in table (2) above the students' ability in the control group to produce grammatically correct sentences was good (i.e.70.2%).This percentage means that many of those students did not commit many serious errors when they spoke. The students' fluency was at an average level (58%). It seems those students had some problems in producing complete sentences because they could not express their ideas easily in speaking. The students' level reached (55.6%) in the pronunciation component. This level means that many students pronounced words incorrectly. They also scored 64.6% in content. Simply the majority of the students were unable to organize their words and ideas to form a specific content, whereas the students' general level was 49.76%.

### 3.2.2 Results of the Experimental Group in the Oral Test:

| Student No. | Grammatical Accuracy | Fluency | Pronunciation | Content | General Level |
|-------------|----------------------|---------|---------------|---------|---------------|
| 1           | 19                   | 16      | 157           | 19      | 71%           |
| 2           | 22                   | 17      | 18            | 20      | 64%           |
| 3           | 17                   | 15      | 17            | 19      | 68%           |
| 4           | 15                   | 10      | 12            | 15      | 52%           |
| 5           | 19                   | 17      | 18            | 23      | 77%           |
| 6           | 21                   | 16      | 19            | 24      | 80%           |
| 7           | 16                   | 14      | 14            | 17      | 61%           |
| 8           | 20                   | 17      | 19            | 23      | 79%           |
| 9           | 17                   | 15      | 16            | 18      | 66%           |

|                           |     |       |       |       |        |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| <b>10</b>                 | 23  | 20    | 22    | 24    | 89%    |
| <b>11</b>                 | 24  | 23    | 23    | 24    | 94%    |
| <b>12</b>                 | 17  | 14    | 13    | 16    | 60%    |
| <b>13</b>                 | 21  | 19    | 20    | 23    | 83%    |
| <b>14</b>                 | 20  | 17    | 18    | 20    | 75%    |
| <b>15</b>                 | 14  | 10    | 12    | 13    | 49%    |
| <b>16</b>                 | 24  | 20    | 24    | 23    | 91%    |
| <b>17</b>                 | 18  | 16    | 17    | 20    | 71%    |
| <b>18</b>                 | 14  | 12    | 14    | 16    | 56%    |
| <b>19</b>                 | 21  | 17    | 19    | 22    | 79%    |
| <b>20</b>                 | 23  | 19    | 20    | 22    | 89%    |
| <b>Total Achievements</b> | 77% | 64.8% | 70.4% | 80.4% | 58.52% |

Table (4)

As table (3) shows the students' ability in the experimental group to produce grammatically correct sentences was very good (i.e.77%), whereas their level in fluency was (64.8%). The students' level was (70.4%) in the pronunciation component. This level means that many students were good and they did not have that serious phonological problems. They also scored very good marks in content (80.4%), which suggests that these students practiced a lot in speaking classes. The students' general level in speaking skill was 58.52%.

#### 24. Discussion of Findings

The results obtained from the experimental group results support the hypotheses of the study that the pre and post written tests of the participants as well as their oral test have proved that students' speaking skills is developed through using role-play technique. They were able to use English language orally. In other words, they also were able to express their ideas and feelings as well as they could produce meaningful utterances in the English language. On the other hand, the control group results showed that students were unable to produce complete sentences. They also had problems when they asked to express themselves. Consequently, the findings of the present study are the following:



1. The present situation of teaching/learning the speaking skill is not a perfect one. Most teachers use traditional methods of teaching such as the Grammar-Translation Method neglecting the practical and functional methods such as the Communicative Approach in teaching English in general and the speaking skill in particular
2. The students have difficulties when they try to produce long utterances or long answers that contain explanation, details, definitions orally....etc. Moreover, most of them, specially "the control group", showed poor abilities in the oral test when they were asked different topics and issues.
3. The important reason behind the students' incompetence in speaking is:
  - (a) Shyness and lack of self-confidence when speaking in front of others or in the presence of the teacher which may be the result of:
    - Teachers and colleagues' criticism.
    - Students' prior awareness of their inabilities in the English language.
    - Teachers' spontaneous correction of the students' errors and mistakes in oral production.
4. Features of English language such as stress patterns, intonation,...etc. are not given an adequate emphasis during teaching the new vocabulary. The students did not know where the stressed syllable in a word or the stressed word in a sentence was.
5. Teachers' excessive use of L1 in explaining new vocabulary and giving meaning for saving time is a strategy adopted by many students. This leads them to be stuck when they are in actual communication.
6. Testing the students' oral abilities is carried out in an unacceptable way. The way used depended mainly on written achievements which is, in many ways, different from immediate oral production. In other words, written examinations were administered even when testing the students' oral performance. In addition, most teachers did not make oral tests from time to time to induce the students to speak. This made the students ignore the oral skill and focus more on other aspects of English language like grammar, writing....etc.
7. Teachers have the main role in the speaking classes. If they are not well-trained in teaching the oral skill, they will not realize the use of good techniques used to increase the students' ability in speaking such as role-play, pair and group work techniques or playing games such as gap-filling, matching,....etc.

## 25. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 26. Conclusion

Teaching/learning speaking which used to be a neglected aspect of foreign language instruction has been receiving more attention in research in applied linguistics in the last decades .

This study was intended to investigate the effectiveness of using role-play technique in teaching speaking to improve the oral skill of the students at the English language Centre of the Libyan Academy in Janzour, Tripoli. In addition, the syllabus implemented at this Centre is based on teaching the four skills of language and the oral skill is one of these skills. It has set out to find advantages for developing speaking when teachers focus more on using activities such as role-play.

The findings of this study have shown that the two ways of teaching (traditional method, role-play technique) that were followed with both groups had different effects on the students' speaking abilities.

Many causes seem to be behind the difficulties encountered by the students in learning the speaking skill including:

- The teaching system adopted made the students work only for the exams to get good marks discouraging the students from making real developments regarding their communicative abilities. In other words, the students were taught and guided to memorize materials to be able to pass the exams more than to master the language and show abilities at using it .

### 27. Recommendations

In the light of the findings obtained from this study, the following recommendations are made. These recommendations, if taken into consideration, would make the use of role-play technique more effective for developing the oral skill:

- 1- Teachers should insert some activities in the speaking curriculum in order to create real situations in the classroom.

- 2- The achievement of good results using role-play technique requires small classes, therefore, the school administrations or training centres should limit the number of students in classes to 20-25 as maximum.
- 3- Teachers should use different techniques and activities which provide natural communication practice. They should speak in English as much as possible and encourage the students to communicate in English too.
- 4- Teachers should give their learners enough opportunities to practise speaking in the classroom.
- 5- Speaking classes should be given in a place that is already provided with different types of teaching aids, devices and equipment, such as record players, computers, laboratories, videos, smart boards,...etc.
- 6- Teachers play the main part in the learning process, so they must have the suitable in-service training in the methods and techniques of foreign language teaching and learning. It will be also a great benefit to arrange several courses to teachers in English speaking countries. Such courses could provide teachers an intensive exposure to the language and its culture.

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