



THE IMPORTANCE OF ROLE PLAYS IN DEVELOPING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

Shoyunusova Arofat
English Language Teacher, Wise School

Abstract: This article analyzes the theoretical and practical aspects of using role plays in foreign language teaching, particularly in teaching English. The study highlights the significance of the role play method in developing students' speaking skills, forming communicative competence, and enhancing their creative thinking and ability to express their ideas freely. Moreover, the article examines the effectiveness of role play models integrated with modern digital technologies in the educational process and provides reflections and insights regarding their importance in contemporary teaching practice.

Keywords: foreign language, English language, role play, communicative competence, speaking skills, interactive method, creative thinking, digital educational technology.

In the modern world, especially in Uzbekistan, the demand for learning foreign languages has become more urgent than ever, leading to an increasing need for professionals with strong foreign language proficiency. The importance of this demand is clearly reflected in the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-5117 dated May 19, 2021, "On measures to bring activities for promoting foreign language learning in the Republic of Uzbekistan to a qualitatively new stage", as well as in the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 312 of the same date, "On measures to effectively organize the promotion of foreign language learning". These documents aim to effectively implement organizational measures to popularize foreign language learning nationwide. They also emphasize that in order to elevate the teaching of major foreign languages to a new stage, it is essential to apply modern interactive methods within the education system.

The use of role plays in foreign language teaching is of great significance, as role play is an interactive method that develops students' real-life communication skills by engaging them in various communicative situations. Through role play activities, learners practice using language actively within the context of proposed topics. The methodology of role play developed in close connection with the communicative approach in the second half of the twentieth century. According to linguist W.

Littlewood, “the learner should acquire the language not on the basis of grammatical rules, but as a means of real communication”.

The role-play technique was first introduced into the educational system in the 1950s–1960s by the English methodologist H. Brown. According to him, “play-based activities bring learners closer to a natural communicative environment and enhance their motivation for language learning”. During this period, the concept of “Situational Language Teaching” emerged in the process of foreign language instruction, which later served as a theoretical foundation for the role-play methodology. By the 1970s, the communicative approach had become the main direction in foreign language teaching. Within this approach, role-playing was recognized as an important tool for developing communicative competence. In 1972, the methodologist D. Hymes introduced the concept of “communicative competence” into linguistics, emphasizing that a language learner should not only possess grammatical knowledge but also be able to communicate appropriately in various social situations. Based on these theoretical principles, W. Littlewood, in his work “Communicative Language Teaching,” recommended role-playing as one of the most effective forms of interactive classroom activities.

By the 1980s and 1990s, several methodologists such as D. Byrne, J. Harmer, Larsen, and Nunan identified role-play as a key strategy that enhances motivation, communication, and independent thinking in foreign language classrooms. According to D. Byrne, “role-playing provides learners with the opportunity to use the language in meaningful and realistic contexts, which in turn increases their fluency and confidence in speaking”. J. Harmer defines the role-play method as “a creative approach that allows learners to bring their own experiences and emotions into the learning process”.

In the 21st century, with the development of interactive teaching methods, role-playing has also been adapted to digital environments. In 2018, L. Yan and a group of researchers developed the concept of “Technology-Enhanced Role Play,” which promotes language learning through communication simulations in online settings. They note that role-play lesson models integrated with task-based learning (TBL) and blended learning approaches are producing highly effective results in contemporary education.

In today’s globalized world, mastering foreign languages—particularly English—has become an essential skill for specialists in every field. From this perspective, the use of interactive methods, especially role play, plays a crucial role in developing learners’ communicative competence. Role plays bring learners closer to real-life

communicative situations, teaching them to express their thoughts freely, fluently, and confidently.

From a methodological standpoint, role play emerged as one of the most effective forms of language teaching during the transition from the grammatical approach to the communicative approach. Scholars such as H. Brown, D. Hymes, W. Littlewood, D. Byrne, and J. Harmer have provided the theoretical foundations for this methodology. According to their views, role play allows learners to use language in a meaningful, natural, and contextualized way, thereby enhancing their fluency and confidence in speech.

Moreover, role play fosters active participation in verbal communication, analytical thinking, and creative engagement. Through this method, learners do not merely memorize ready-made speech patterns; instead, they learn to construct new utterances that are appropriate to the topic, purpose, and context, thereby acquiring real communicative competence.

In modern education, role play has become even more effective through integration with digital technologies. This enables learners to interact in online environments and expands their experience in virtual communication. Consequently, role play contributes significantly to the development of 21st-century skills-including creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration.

Thus, role play proves to be an effective method for developing speaking skills in English, as it activates learners, encourages free thinking and communication, and enhances not only linguistic but also psychological and social competences. Therefore, the regular use of role play in English language lessons is a key condition for increasing the communicative effectiveness of language teaching.

References

1. O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2021-yil 19-maydagi "O'zbekiston Respublikasida xorijiy tillarni o'rganishni ommalashtirish faoliyatini sifat juhatdan yangi bosqichga olib chiqish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida"gi PQ-5117-son qarori. www.lex.uz
2. O'zbekiston Respublikasi Vazirlar Mahkamasining 312-son "Xorijiy tillarni o'rganishni ommalashtirishni samarali tashkil etish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida" gi qarori. 2021 yil 19-may
3. Littlewood W. Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction. Cambridge University Press. 1981. –P. 245.
4. Brown H. Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. Prentice Hall. 1972.



5. Hymes D. On Communicative Competence. Penguin Books. 1972.
6. Byrne D. Teaching Oral English. Longman. 1990.
7. Harmer J. The Practice of English Language Teaching. Longman. 1991.
8. Lan, Y.-J., Botha, A., Shang, J., & Jong, M. S.-Y. (2018). Guest Editorial: Technology Enhanced Contextual Game-Based Language Learning. Educational Technology & Society, 21 (3), 86–89.