

# USING ROLE-PLAYS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CLASSROOM

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## ABSTRACT

*This article outlines the meaning of role-play, types of role-play, role-play and simulation, the organisation of a role-play activity, advantages and disadvantages of role-play. It also focused on pair work and group work as patterns of classroom interaction in role-play.*

**KEYWORDS:** *description of role-play, Role cards, Role-playing game types, Role-playing and simulation, Realia;*

## Introduction

When used properly, role-playing can be a very effective teaching tool. Teachers should remember to include such a speaking activity because its main objective is to increase student participation in the classroom and to demonstrate learners' theoretical language understanding in practice.

The beginning of this chapter deals with three distinct explanations of this speaking exercise because there is no single, specific definition of role-play and different authors see it in different ways.

As stated by Porter-Ladousse, "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." The author of these statements emphasizes the importance of engaging in a variety of role-playing exercises. In contrast, role-playing may be an activity where pupils would rather improvise than rely on the practiced dialogue. Such a speaking assignment may be constrained and aided by prepared cues, such as dialogues. Porter-Ladousse also notes that the intricacy of role play can vary, with some performances being extremely brief and straightforward and others being highly organized. Therefore, the activity's level of difficulty is determined by language proficiency. [1, 51-60 pp.]

Another description put out by Scrivener reads as follows: "In role-play, learners are typically provided with some knowledge about a "role" (e.g., a person or a job title). Frequently, these are printed on "role cards." Students gather with other students after spending some time preparing to act out brief scenes utilizing both their own ideas and any information from the role cards. A straightforward role card could only describe the role, such as "mother" or "detective," or it could provide instructions on what to do rather than the position itself, such as "purchase a train ticket to Brighton". [2, pp. 10-15]

It is made very obvious that kids are given specific responsibilities to play. Role cards, according to Scrivener, also serve a significant purpose, providing learners with vital details about their duties. These cards' instructions aid students in communicating key details about the personas

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they will portray and give speakers more confidence because they provide simple cues. While the strong students use role cards as prompts, the lesser students may only use a card as a basis for their statements. The participants may have contrasting viewpoints and blatant conflicts in a good set of role cards. The author also advocates giving kids enough time to prepare their thoughts and vocabulary before to acting out their roles. Additionally, he claims that students try to add any language they know to the ideas on the role cards in addition to using them.

According to Gobiowska, in a role-play, pupils are given a task to do while being told who they are, what they think, and what they know that the other students don't. She emphasizes that students be informed of who they are, i.e., that they take on the part of someone else. As it is not the speakers who make mistakes, but the characters they portray, being cast in a different role may help to reduce speaking anxiety. The main benefit of role-playing is that students can temporarily assume the identity of anyone they choose. They must pretend to be someone else; this might be a millionaire, a doctor, a pop star, a parent, etc.

Role-playing game types - It has been noted that game types can vary in length and level of difficulty. Additionally, there are two different kinds of role-playing, namely real-plays and surreal-plays. Real-play is a role-playing activity that serves as a practice for the real world. As a result, textual content should be real; realia may be used in the classroom. [3, 339p]

Additionally, as it allows students to practice actions they would presumably take in real life, such as ordering meals in a restaurant, introducing themselves, getting directions, organizing travel arrangements, etc., real-playing satisfies the craving for realism. This type of role-playing gives students the chance to practice these activities, and since they have done so in the classroom, they may experience fewer difficulties in the future. Still, when it comes to real-playing, Scrivener predicts that one of the students would act out their own role, but outside of the classroom. It's interesting that the author seems to imply that professionals can benefit most from this kind of role-playing. Then, Scrivener says, speakers have the option of creating their own real-play cards rather than receiving a set of pre-made ones.

Surreal play, in stark contrast to real play, should foster imaginative self-expression of each student's inner world. Surreal play asks for encouraging the expression of each student's thoughts and feelings, whereas real play seeks permission for the idea that a classroom might resemble the genuine world. Imaginative role-playing is another name for this hobby. According to Doff, not only do kids have fantasies, but teens and adults also frequently envision themselves in various scenarios. Here, teachers let pupils engage in activities that they naturally find enjoyable. [4, p.206]

Role-playing and simulation – The difference between the two is sometimes overlooked or even ignored. Despite the fact that these speaking exercises frequently overlap in practice and that different authors provide different definitions, it is important to keep in mind that role-playing and simulations differ from one another.

The difference between these two speaking acts is a question of degree, according to Dakowska. Students are typically invited to take part in an activity that simulates a real-world situation during simulations.

Simulations give students the opportunity to reply as they see fit, in contrast to role-plays where role cards dictate what to say and what point of view to take. The author makes it abundantly obvious that in a simulation, players are not constrained in what they can say. The second suggestion made by Dummett is for pupils to imagine themselves existing in various scenarios rather than taking on roles. In a similar vein, Harmer describes simulation as "a chance to practice real-life encounters. For

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instance, we may rearrange the classroom setup to resemble a station office with a ticket counter. In this scenario, it is necessary for one learner to play both the role of a passenger and the position of a travel clerk during role-playing.

As was stated above, the distinction is hazy and can only be proposed as follows: in role-plays, students are assigned to the parts of various characters, whereas in simulations, players don't take on any roles and act out real-life scenarios as themselves.

Setting up a role-playing activity - Knowing some fundamental organizing concepts is helpful for making a role-play an effective speaking exercise. This chapter's subchapter offers suggestions for running role-plays. [5]

First off, it's crucial to note that the activity itself "will fall flat on its face just as you expected it to" if a teacher is not convinced of the efficacy of using role-playing. The teacher must be persuaded that role-playing is an engaging practice with lots of advantages. The pupils will not be as excited about the play if the teacher is not.

The engage stage, study stage, and activate stage are three essential components that must be included in every educational sequence. The teacher's job during the engage stage of the first phase is to draw and hold students' interest in a session. A class needs to emotionally engage students' thoughts, perhaps through a pleasant scenario or lovely image. The next step is for learners to practice their new language through exercises in grammar or vocabulary. Students are given the chance to use both the new and previously learned languages after learning the new item. When learners speak openly, they learn.

Learners attempt to activate the new language after being engaged, exposed to it, and given practice using it. Harmer draws attention to the fact that some lesson plans, like PPP, adhere to the ESA cycle. The new language is introduced to the class, they practice it, and then they try to speak it or any other language. The author suggests that role-playing is a fantastic method to use the language.

If a role-play is not based on a dialogue from a textbook or other source, according to Doff, students must choose the language to use and the direction in which a conversation should go. As a result, meticulous planning would be required for role play to be a profitable hobby. The teacher could encourage class discussion about what the speakers might say. Students may be guided during role-playing by writing questions on a board and language that is needed. According to Budden, practicing the structures that players will need to employ is particularly beneficial because learners will have the necessary language.

Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that before the activity starts, the teacher should make sure the students comprehend both the role-playing scenario and the information on the role cards. Therefore, if students follow the task, they won't have any trouble conducting it correctly. Role cards should, of course, be readable and appropriate for the kids' language level.

Additionally, until kids are accustomed to this type of activity, teachers shouldn't employ role-plays that are excessively challenging or emotionally taxing. It is better to begin with extremely basic information-gap role-plays. Learners may be somewhat constrained during the first role-play, but they will quickly become acclimated to it.

It goes without saying that students will require some time to practice their roles before a presentation. The amount of planning time may vary depending on the language proficiency of the learners. At this point in an activity, participants collaborate in pairs or groups to consider potential responses. Students at higher levels won't require as much assistance with the language, but they will need some time to settle into their jobs.

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Realia can also assist in bringing role-playing to life, which is crucial. For instance, when acting out the parts of a waiter and a customer, students may be requested to complete or bring in menus and aprons to class. The class may remember the process more as a result of these straightforward props. Rearranging the furniture, according to the author, facilitates acting out the roles. She cites the example of having students act out the parts of a travel agent and a customer, including having them leave the room and then enter by knocking on the door to make it seem more realistic. To play the part of a travel agency, one desk can be placed in the middle of the classroom.

The importance of role-play demonstration is then explained by Doff. In addition to explaining the scenario to the class, the teacher also needs to complete the activity. Some of the structures that might be employed in an activity may also be elicited by the teacher. The instructor splits the class into pairs or groups after explaining the entire assignment. She or he establishes a rigorous time restriction at the very end and makes every attempt to adhere to it.

Last but not least, Huang suggests that the teacher evaluate the role-play activity's effectiveness and determine whether students have successfully understood the meaning of the terminology, sentences, and dialogues. There are numerous techniques to check students' evaluations, the author continues. She recommends that exams for oral and listening comprehension be administered to students in relation to the role-plays. The participants may be requested to respond to some questions about their characters, to repeat certain phrases, or to translate the role-play into their native tongue. In addition, the teacher's job is to assess students' learning and comprehension while keeping an eye on how they perform in role-playing exercises.

Benefits of role-playing - Some educators are not aware of the benefits of role-playing. They could think that role-playing will be chaotic and that such an activity is inappropriate for classes that have discipline issues. Additionally, they assert that pupils can find it difficult to act a different part or that their language proficiency is inadequate. The section that follows tries to explain why role-playing exercises should be used in classes of English as a foreign language.

Kowalska thinks that role-playing helps students become more fluent speakers. More than in any other activity, language is used for a variety of purposes, such as welcomes and apologies. Focus is placed on meaning communication rather than on proper language usage with learners. Consequently, teachers can teach students how to talk in a variety of social contexts through role-playing. It means that learners are put in conditions which require speech that is used to communicate socially more than the language necessitated by teaching syllabuses. The author takes the view that thanks to role-playing learners have the possibility to develop the language which is necessary in social relationships, but which is neglected in teaching syllabuses. He also observes that many pupils in foreign language classes think that language is only employed to transmit specific information from one person to another.

The fact that certain students learn for particular roles in life is the second justification for including role-playing in EFL sessions. They could like to work or travel internationally. It is quite beneficial for these pupils to have practiced using the language they will probably use in a pleasant and safe atmosphere like a classroom. Role-playing is an effective practice for these students, and it also teaches them how to behave in a range of social situations.

According to Kowalska, role-playing helps students' imaginations grow. Players' imaginations are in high demand since the roles assigned to learners may call for original thought. Additionally, the capacity for inventive thought may prove to be a useful skill in the future. Some careers require creative problem-solving, and the easiest way to practice it is simply by role-playing and book reading.

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The opportunity for learners to assume another person's identity is a further benefit of role-playing. Such a method might aid shy students in getting over their fear of public speaking. Students that are reserved have a hard time talking about themselves or their experiences. They believe that their own identity is not at issue because they are someone else.

However, role-playing may also have drawbacks. According to Thornbury learners who feel self-conscious performing in front of their peers, especially if this involves a degree of improvisation, and care has to be exercised in choosing and setting up such activities so as not to make even more demands on them than speaking in another language normally requires" To put it another way, the author mentions that for certain pupils, a public performance in and of itself could be a major issue. He continues by saying that overcoming speaking anxiety may be aided by the preparation stage. During role-playing, teachers must take care to avoid making any students feel uncomfortable.

Role-playing in the classroom as a pattern of interaction includes pair and group work. As was previously noted, role-playing calls for the participation of at least two students. The patterns of classroom interaction that are the focus of this section of chapter two include pair work and group work, regardless of the number of students taking part in the activity.

Students who work in pairs can either study a text together or practice their language skills. Working in pairs significantly increases the amount of speaking time each student can get in class. Additionally, it encourages student autonomy by allowing students to work and engage freely without needing teacher assistance.

When students work in pairs, the teacher has the opportunity to work with one couple while the other students' converse. Additionally, this type of classroom engagement encourages cooperation, which makes the classroom a more pleasant place to be. Students also learn to share responsibility.

Pair work can have certain drawbacks, though. According to Harmer, many professors and even students may not enjoy it. To make matters worse, working with a partner might be noisy. In order to avoid losing control of their class, teachers refrain from allowing students to work in pairs too frequently. The disadvantage of transitioning to L1 is another. Students may speak in their mother tongue rather than the target language because there is no teacher supervision and they are working independently.

Many different teaching methods make extensive use of group-based learning. First off, it alters the dynamics of classroom engagement and extends students' speaking time. The interaction in the classroom needs to be changed since it keeps students from getting bored when they are working alone. In contrast to pair work, there is also more room for diverse viewpoints and involvements, and it promotes learner autonomy by letting students decide for themselves what to do in the group without being instructed what to do.

In summary, Role-play seems to be an important tool in teaching speaking skills. Although there is no one definition of role-play and there are some weak points about that activity, its" numerous advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. The activity gives a chance of having a rehearsal for the language one day students may be exposed to, for example ordering food at a restaurant.

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