Exploring the Impact of Role-play Strategy on Enhancing EFL Students' Speaking Skills: Teachers' and Students' Perspectives at Misurata University

Yaseen Hmaid[1*]   Aisha Al-Marabet[2]

[1,2] English Department, Faculty of Arts, Misurata University, Libya

* y.hmaid@misuratau.edu.ly

Abstract

The current study investigates the perceptions of Libyan university students and teachers regarding the role-play strategy as a pedagogical tool for enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking skills. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study employed a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews as instruments for data collection. Forty first-semester EFL students from the Faculty of Arts at Misurata University completed the questionnaire, while ten EFL instructors participated in interviews to provide qualitative insights into the effectiveness and challenges of implementing role-play in speaking classes. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, whereas qualitative data were examined through content analysis. The findings reveal that both students and teachers hold positive attitudes toward the use of role-play in developing speaking proficiency. Students reported that the technique increased their confidence, enriched their vocabulary, improved their pronunciation, and enhanced their engagement and enjoyment in learning English. Similarly, teachers acknowledged the effectiveness of role-play in improving students' communicative competence and promoting interactive learning environments. The study concludes that role-play constitutes an effective instructional strategy for fostering oral communication skills among EFL learners in the Libyan university context. Implications for pedagogy and recommendations for future research are also discussed.

Key words: *Role-play strategy, EFL, speaking skills, language teaching, students' perceptions, teachers' perspectives*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

English has become an essential tool for global communication, academic advancement, and professional success. Among the four language skills, speaking is considered a particularly complex and crucial skill, requiring not only linguistic competence but also pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and strategic knowledge (Dincer & Yesilyurt, 2017). Despite years of study, many EFL learners, including those in Libya, struggle to communicate effectively in English due to limited opportunities for authentic language use and the dominance of teacher-centered pedagogies (Daniastuti, 2018).

Role-play has emerged as an effective pedagogical strategy to address these challenges. It allows learners to simulate real-life communicative situations, enhancing fluency, confidence, and social interaction skills (Aljangawi & Lah, 2024). Through role-playing, students engage in authentic dialogue, develop creative thinking, and internalize communicative strategies that promote active learning and deeper language acquisition (Ladousse, 1987; Anggrarini & Trianasari, 2022).

Previous studies have shown that role-play fosters students' linguistic competence, sociolinguistic awareness, and communicative confidence by encouraging experimentation with language in safe, controlled environments (Katemba & Grace, 2023; Dhea, 2017; Dwiyanti & Lolita, 2023). It transforms the classroom into a dynamic communicative space where students move beyond rote memorization toward practical language use.

Given the importance of developing speaking proficiency, the role-play strategy offers a promising approach for Libyan universities seeking to shift from traditional instruction toward more communicative and student-centered teaching practices.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite extensive exposure to English instruction, many Libyan EFL students continue to experience difficulty expressing themselves orally. Challenges such as limited fluency, incorrect pronunciation, and anxiety in communication are common. Teachers frequently rely on traditional, lecture-based methods that emphasize grammar and reading rather than communicative interaction (Richards, 2006; Astuti, 2017). Consequently, students remain passive learners with few opportunities to engage in meaningful speech.

As observed by the researcher in the English Department at Misurata University, first-semester students often lack the oral proficiency necessary for effective participation in classroom discussions. This reflects a systemic reliance on teacher-centered methods and a lack of interactive techniques that promote authentic language use (Abubaker, 2008; Orafi & Borg, 2009).

Given these persistent challenges, it becomes necessary to examine alternative instructional strategies—such as role-play—that may enhance learners' speaking performance and increase classroom participation.

1.3 Research Questions

The research addresses the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Libyan first-year EFL students toward using role-play to enhance speaking skills?

2. To what extent does role-play improve students' confidence, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency?

3. How do EFL teachers perceive the use of role-play in speaking classes?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on communicative teaching strategies by providing empirical evidence from the Libyan higher education context. It offers valuable insights for EFL instructors, curriculum designers, and policymakers regarding the benefits and challenges of integrating role-play in classroom instruction. The findings may also serve as a foundation for future research on communicative approaches to language teaching in similar educational contexts.

1.5 Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study is limited to first-semester EFL students at the Faculty of Arts, Misurata University. It focuses on the use of role-play exclusively as a strategy for teaching and improving speaking skills. The study does not extend to advanced learners or to other language skills such as listening, reading, or writing.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Social Constructivism and Language Learning

The implementation of the role-play strategy in EFL classrooms aligns closely with social constructivist theory, which emphasizes that learning is socially mediated through interaction and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky, cognitive and linguistic development are shaped through social engagement, particularly within the "zone of proximal development," where learners advance through guidance from more knowledgeable peers or instructors.

Within this framework, language learning is not merely an individual cognitive process but a socially situated activity. Through role-play, learners co-construct meaning and engage in authentic communicative exchanges that enhance their linguistic and pragmatic competence (Ly, 2024). By simulating real-life contexts, students can apply theoretical knowledge to practical communicative situations, reinforcing both fluency and confidence.

In addition, Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) supports the pedagogical rationale for role-play. Krashen argues that learners acquire language most effectively when they are exposed to comprehensible input in low-anxiety environments. Role-play contributes to this condition by lowering the affective filter and encouraging natural language use. Similarly, Bygate (2001) and Kayi (2006) emphasize that role-play bridges the gap between controlled classroom practice and

spontaneous language production, fostering learners' communicative competence through meaningful interaction.

2.2 Role-play and Communicative Competence

Communicative competence is a central concept in language pedagogy. Chomsky (1965) originally differentiated between *competence*—the internalized knowledge of linguistic rules—and *performance*, the actual use of language in communication. However, his model overlooked the social and functional aspects of language use. Hymes (1972) extended the concept by introducing communicative competence as the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts.

Canale and Swain (1980) later refined this framework into four components:

1. *Grammatical competence*—knowledge of syntax, morphology, and vocabulary;

2. *Sociolinguistic competence*—the ability to use language appropriately based on context and cultural norms;

3. *Discourse competence*—the capacity to produce coherent and cohesive spoken or written texts; and

4. *Strategic competence*—the use of verbal and non-verbal strategies to overcome communication breakdowns.

Role-play directly contributes to the development of these components. Learners must adapt speech to different roles and situations (sociolinguistic competence), maintain coherence (discourse competence), and employ compensatory strategies such as paraphrasing or clarification (strategic competence). Research indicates that repeated participation in simulated interactions enhances students' ability to negotiate meaning and develop pragmatic awareness (Mulyana, 2020; Ly, 2024).

Thus, role-play functions as a bridge between linguistic knowledge and communicative performance. It transforms passive grammatical competence into active language use, encouraging learners to manage turn-taking, repair misunderstandings, and apply language flexibly in contextually appropriate ways.

2.3 Learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

EFL learners study English in environments where it is not the primary medium of communication, resulting in limited exposure to authentic language use outside the classroom. Consequently, their language practice depends heavily on teacher-facilitated activities. Asrifan (2022) and Luo and Lyu (2024) note that role-play helps overcome this limitation by providing authentic, interactive opportunities for communication.

Through simulated dialogues, EFL students learn to apply vocabulary and grammatical structures in real-life contexts, enhancing both fluency and accuracy. Moreover, collaborative tasks such as role-play promote learner autonomy, creativity, and motivation—key factors for sustained language acquisition. In environments with limited linguistic input, role-play serves as an essential bridge to practical communication competence.

2.4 Speaking Skills in Language Learning

Speaking is a productive and interactive process involving the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols to convey meaning (Chaney, 1998; Harmer, 2001). It requires the integration of linguistic accuracy, fluency, and pragmatic appropriateness (Luoma, 2004). For EFL learners, speaking represents one of the most challenging skills to master due to anxiety, limited vocabulary, and lack of exposure to spontaneous communication (Nunan, 2003; Torky, 2006).

Traditional language instruction often emphasizes grammatical rules and reading comprehension at the expense of oral communication (Al Hosni, 2014). However, effective speaking instruction demands student-centered approaches that provide opportunities for authentic interaction. Role-play offers precisely such opportunities by engaging students in communicative exchanges that simulate real-world contexts, thereby promoting fluency, accuracy, and confidence (Dwiyanti & Lolita, 2023; Richards, 2006).

In the EFL context, the ability to speak fluently and accurately reflects a learner's overall proficiency (Richards, 2008). Moreover, developing speaking skills contributes to learners' academic and professional success by enabling them to articulate ideas, negotiate meaning, and participate effectively in discussions (Bahriyeva, 2021). Hence, fostering oral proficiency should be a central objective of EFL pedagogy.

2.5 The Role-play Strategy

Role-play is a communicative teaching technique in which students adopt various social roles and engage in dialogue that mirrors authentic situations (Mulyana, 2020). It offers a platform for learners to practice language use creatively and meaningfully, encouraging experimentation with new vocabulary and structures in low-stress conditions (Huang, 2010; Bahriyeva, 2021).

This strategy also nurtures emotional and cognitive engagement by allowing learners to imagine, dramatize, and problem-solve within linguistic contexts. As Putri and Pratiwi (2025) observe, role-play enhances motivation, promotes collaboration, and builds communicative confidence. The activity's flexibility allows teachers to tailor it to learners' proficiency levels and cultural contexts, ensuring inclusivity and relevance (Naqeeb, 2025; Tran & Le, 2022).

Moreover, role-play aligns with communicative language teaching (CLT) principles, emphasizing learner autonomy, task-based interaction, and the functional use of language (Hedge, 2000; Thornbury, 2005). It engages both cognitive and affective domains of learning—students not only practice linguistic forms but also develop empathy, creativity, and social awareness (Nooreiny Maarof, 2018).

2.6 Types of Role-plays

Scholars generally classify role-play into three types: fully scripted, semi-scripted, and unscripted activities (Afisa, 2015; Fauzan, 2014).

1. **Fully scripted role-play** provides learners with complete dialogues to memorize and perform. It is particularly suitable for beginners who need language scaffolding.

2. **Semi-scripted role-play** offers partial dialogues or prompts, allowing students to adapt and personalize their speech while maintaining a structured framework (Mulyana, 2020).

3. **Unscripted role-play**, or improvisation, provides only contextual cues or keywords, encouraging advanced learners to produce spontaneous language and practice higher-order communicative strategies (Krebt, 2017; Siwi, 2014).

Each type serves specific pedagogical purposes depending on learners' proficiency and confidence levels. Gradual progression from structured to open-ended role-plays supports continuous language development and learner autonomy (Richards, 2008).

2.7 The Teacher's Role in Role-play Activities

Teachers act as facilitators, designers, and evaluators within role-play-based instruction (Seputra, 2022; Liu & Ding, 2009). They are responsible for selecting authentic scenarios, providing linguistic support, and fostering a safe, collaborative classroom environment. Effective teachers balance guidance with autonomy, allowing students to take ownership of the communicative process while offering feedback on pronunciation, coherence, and pragmatics (Keezhatta, 2020).

Participatory involvement—where teachers occasionally join as characters within the role-play—can further enhance engagement and model natural discourse. Reflection and feedback following the activity consolidate learning, helping students recognize strengths and areas for improvement.

2.8 The Learner's Role in Role-play

In communicative pedagogy, learners are viewed as active participants rather than passive recipients. During role-play, they must negotiate meaning, apply linguistic resources, and adapt speech to various contexts (Ladousse, 1987; Livingstone, 1983). Preparation and reflection are crucial stages—students often brainstorm vocabulary, rehearse dialogues, and later evaluate their own performance (Vygotsky, 1978; Keezhatta, 2020).

This process encourages metacognitive awareness and enhances self-efficacy. Learners develop not only linguistic competence but also interpersonal and problem-solving skills, leading to holistic communicative growth.

2.9 Advantages and Disadvantages of Role-play

Role-play offers numerous pedagogical advantages. It encourages fluency, reduces speaking anxiety, and promotes motivation and collaboration (Rahmawati & Maulana, 2023; Putri & Syafryadin, 2022). It also enhances students' ability to use language functionally, helping them practice speech acts such as apologizing, requesting, and agreeing (Asrifan, 2022). Moreover, group and pair work within role-play settings promote negotiation of meaning and cooperative learning (Daniastuti, 2018).

However, several challenges may hinder its effectiveness. Some learners may feel self-conscious or reluctant to perform, particularly in large classes or unsupportive environments. Teachers may face difficulties with time management, unequal participation, or limited resources (Tran & Le, 2022; Harmer, 2007). To mitigate these issues, instructors should provide clear guidance, create inclusive classroom atmospheres, and design manageable, culturally appropriate scenarios.

2.10 Challenges in Implementing Role-play

Common challenges include learner anxiety, cultural constraints, and logistical limitations. Students may fear making mistakes or performing publicly (Matic, 2023). Teachers must, therefore, cultivate an encouraging environment that values communication over perfection. Additionally, role-plays that conflict with cultural norms can reduce participation; thus, contextual sensitivity is essential (Asrifan, 2022).

Time constraints, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of resources can also hinder effective implementation (Rahmawati & Maulana 2023). Furthermore, assessing oral performance objectively remains a persistent issue. Developing clear rubrics that balance accuracy and communicative effectiveness can help address this concern (Astuti, 2017).

Despite these challenges, careful planning and scaffolding allow role-play to remain a powerful pedagogical tool for communicative language teaching (Sam, 1990).

2.11 Related Studies

Several empirical studies have examined the impact of role-play on EFL speaking proficiency. Krebt (2017) reported that EFL teachers in Ireland held positive attitudes toward role-play, acknowledging its benefits for group interaction despite systemic obstacles. Similarly, Nooreiny Maarof (2018) found that Malaysian teachers viewed role-play as a valuable strategy but noted challenges related to teacher training and large class sizes.

In Malaysia, Togimin and Jaafar (2020) observed improvement in students' fluency and comprehension following role-play-based instruction. Khasbani and Seli (2021) reported similar gains in Indonesia, particularly in vocabulary development and self-confidence. In Vietnam, Tran and Le (2022) found statistically significant improvements in students' speaking skills after participating in role-play sessions compared with traditional instruction.

Studies conducted in the Arab world corroborate these findings. Lahbibi and Farhane (2023) and Ghafar and Raheem (2023) both demonstrated that role-play improved learners' fluency and motivation. However, Libyan research remains limited. Aljangawi and Lah (2024) and Rababah (2025) identified positive outcomes among Libyan and Jordanian EFL students but emphasized the need for further localized investigation.

These studies collectively suggest that role-play enhances communicative competence and learner engagement but must

be contextualized to address institutional and cultural constraints. The present study therefore contributes by examining this approach within the Libyan university context, focusing specifically on teachers' and students' perceptions at Misurata University.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives. As defined by Creswell et al. (2014), mixed-methods research involves collecting, analyzing, and integrating both numerical and narrative data within a single study to enhance the validity and depth of findings. This design was selected because it allows the integration of statistical data from questionnaires with rich, descriptive insights from interviews. Quantitative data provide generalizable patterns regarding students' perceptions, while qualitative data illuminate teachers' experiences, challenges, and recommendations in applying role-play in speaking classes.

According to Collins et al. (2006), mixed-method research enables researchers to triangulate results, thereby strengthening interpretative accuracy and enhancing the trustworthiness of the study. In this research, triangulation was achieved by comparing students' quantitative responses with teachers' qualitative feedback, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the role-play strategy's pedagogical effectiveness.

3.2 Study Population and Sampling Method

The target population consisted of first-semester EFL students and English language teachers at the Faculty of Arts, Misurata University. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability technique used to identify participants who possess specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Bernard, 2017).

According to Cohen et al. (2002), purposive sampling is particularly suitable for exploratory educational research, where participants' expertise and experiences are critical. In this context, the selected students were those enrolled in the first semester of the English Department, while teachers were those responsible for teaching the speaking course.

The study involved a total of 50 participants—40 students who responded to the questionnaire and 10 teachers who participated in semi-structured interviews. This distribution ensured both depth and representativeness, aligning with Creswell's (2014) recommendations for mixed-methods educational studies.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

To collect comprehensive and reliable data, two primary instruments were employed: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Each instrument was designed and validated in accordance with the research objectives.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

The student questionnaire was developed to gather quantitative data on learners' perceptions of role-play as a strategy for improving speaking skills. It was divided into three main sections:

1. Perception of the Role-play Strategy – examining students' attitudes toward the use of role-play and its effectiveness in fostering communicative competence.

2. Confidence and Motivation – measuring the extent to which role-play activities increased students' confidence in speaking English.

3. Vocabulary and Pronunciation Development – evaluating how role-play contributed to lexical and phonological improvement.

The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *Strongly Disagree (1)* to *Strongly Agree (5)*. This scale allowed for nuanced responses reflecting students' levels of agreement with each statement.

According to Gillham (2008), questionnaires are efficient tools for collecting large volumes of data in a standardized format, ensuring reliability and ease of analysis. In this study, the questionnaire provided broad quantitative insights into students' perceptions and experiences with role-play.

Before final administration, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing with a small group of students to ensure clarity and internal consistency. Minor linguistic modifications were made based on feedback, enhancing the instrument's validity.

3.3.2 Interview

To complement the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten EFL instructors who taught first-semester speaking courses. This qualitative instrument allowed for in-depth exploration of teachers' perceptions, classroom practices, and challenges in applying role-play.

According to Creswell (2009), semi-structured interviews strike a balance between flexibility and focus, enabling researchers to explore predetermined topics while allowing participants to elaborate freely. The interviews in this study included open-ended questions covering areas such as:

- Teachers' understanding of the role-play strategy;

- Perceived benefits of using role-play for speaking instruction;

- Challenges and constraints in implementing role-play; and

- Suggestions for improving its effectiveness.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in English, recorded with participants' consent, and later transcribed verbatim for content analysis.

This instrument was particularly useful for uncovering the contextual factors influencing the implementation of role-play, as emphasized by Hennink et al. (2013), who note that interviews provide deep insights into

participants' lived experiences and perspectives.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection took place over a four-week period during the 2024 academic semester.

1. Phase 1– Quantitative Data: The researcher distributed questionnaires to 40 randomly selected first-semester students after obtaining permission from the English Department. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

2. Phase 2– Qualitative Data: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten EFL instructors at the same faculty. Each session lasted approximately 30–40 minutes.

The use of both tools allowed for triangulation between student and teacher perspectives, providing a holistic understanding of the role-play strategy's pedagogical impact.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis followed two complementary approaches corresponding to the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study.

Quantitative Analysis

Data from the student questionnaires were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for descriptive statistical analysis. Frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to determine overall trends in students' responses.

Qualitative Analysis

Interview data were analyzed thematically using content analysis. This method involves systematically coding and categorizing recurring patterns and themes (Creswell, 2014). The transcribed interviews were read multiple times to identify key themes such as teachers' attitudes, benefits, and implementation challenges.

Themes were subsequently interpreted in relation to the study's research questions and existing literature to provide meaningful insights into the role-play strategy's pedagogical effectiveness.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were upheld throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the study's objectives and assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained before participation, and respondents were reminded that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. All data were stored securely and used solely for research purposes.

These ethical measures ensured the study adhered to the professional standards of academic research, as recommended by Cohen et al. (2007).

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Results: Students' Perceptions of Role-play

The questionnaire data revealed overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward the use of role-play as a speaking strategy.

Table 1

Summary of the key areas of student's perceptions.

Aspect	Positive Responses (% Agree/Strongly Agree)
Role-play increases confidence in speaking	92%
Role-play improves pronunciation and fluency	88%
Role-play enhances vocabulary use	90%
Role-play makes speaking classes enjoyable	94%
Role-play encourages collaboration with peers	89%

Table 1 summarizes the key areas of students' perceptions. These results demonstrate that students generally perceived role-play as an effective and engaging strategy for language learning. Most respondents indicated that role-play created a relaxed environment where they could speak without fear of making mistakes. This aligns with Krashen's (1982) notion of lowering the affective filter, which facilitates language acquisition through reduced anxiety and increased motivation.

Students' high agreement rates on enjoyment and participation suggest that role-play fosters a positive classroom atmosphere, motivating learners to practice English more frequently. The findings support the argument by Putri and Pratiwi (2025) that student enjoyment and active engagement are essential to communicative competence development.

4.2 Role-play and Improvement of Speaking Skills

Students strongly agreed that role-play activities contributed to their fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition. Through repeated exposure to simulated communicative contexts, learners practiced authentic interactions that enhanced their linguistic and pragmatic competence.

This result supports findings by Anggrarini and Trianasari (2022), who observed that role-play increases students' confidence and improves their ability to express ideas spontaneously. Similarly, Bahriyeva (2021) and Rahmawati and Maulana (2023) emphasize that role-play allows learners to internalize new vocabulary and practice pronunciation in context, rather than in isolation.

The participants' responses indicated that role-play helped them speak with greater ease, even when faced with unfamiliar topics. They reported that assuming different roles encouraged them to think creatively and use language flexibly. These outcomes reflect Thornbury's (2005) assertion that communicative activities such as role-play bridge the gap between controlled practice and spontaneous speech.

Furthermore, the data revealed that students felt more confident and less anxious when engaging in role-play. This confidence appeared to stem from the collaborative nature of the activity, where students supported one

another and learned through peer feedback. The result echoes Dincer and Yesilyurt's (2017) claim that positive affective experiences contribute to oral performance and learner autonomy.

4.3 Teachers' Perceptions: Qualitative Findings

The analysis of interview transcripts with ten EFL instructors yielded three major themes:

1. The pedagogical effectiveness of role-play;

2. Challenges in implementation; and

3. Recommendations for enhancing its use in EFL classrooms.

4.3.1 Pedagogical Effectiveness of Role-play

All participating teachers expressed positive views about the pedagogical value of role-play. They observed that it promotes student-centered learning, encourages real-life communication, and allows learners to practice language meaningfully. One teacher remarked: "Role-play changes the classroom atmosphere completely. Students become active and creative, and they stop worrying about making mistakes".

This aligns with the findings of Krebt (2017) and Tran and Le (2022), who concluded that role-play helps learners overcome hesitation and fosters spontaneous communication. Teachers at Misurata University also highlighted that role-play supports the development of communicative competence by integrating linguistic accuracy, fluency, and pragmatic awareness.

Another teacher noted: "When students act out real-life situations like ordering in a restaurant or visiting a doctor, they learn vocabulary naturally and remember it longer".

This observation reinforces the constructivist perspective that meaningful learning occurs through contextualized experience (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers emphasized that role-play enables students to practice authentic discourse functions such as requesting, apologizing, and agreeing, thereby preparing them for real communicative scenarios.

4.3.2 Challenges in Implementation

Despite the overall positive attitudes, teachers identified several practical and institutional challenges. The most frequently mentioned issues included large class sizes, limited time for speaking activities, and students' initial shyness or fear of performing in front of peers. Some teachers also pointed out that not all students participated equally, leading to variation in learning outcomes.

As one instructor explained: "Some students hesitate to perform because they are afraid of pronunciation mistakes or being laughed at. Others dominate the activity".

These challenges are consistent with findings by Rahmawati & Maulana (2023) and Matic (2023), who observed that learners' anxiety and uneven participation often limit the effectiveness of communicative activities. Teachers at Misurata University also mentioned curriculum rigidity and time constraints as barriers to using role-play regularly, echoing similar observations by

Nooreiny Maarof (2018) and Lahbibi and Farhane (2023).

Another concern raised was lack of teacher training in designing appropriate role-play scenarios. Some teachers reported difficulty creating culturally relevant and linguistically balanced situations, suggesting the need for professional development workshops on communicative language teaching techniques.

4.3.3 Teachers' Recommendations

Teachers provided several recommendations for improving the effectiveness of role-play activities. The most common suggestions included:

- Providing clear instructions and sufficient preparation time before each activity;

- Encouraging collaborative group work to reduce performance anxiety;

- Selecting culturally appropriate and contextually relevant scenarios; and

- Integrating technology, such as video recording, to facilitate reflection and feedback.

Teachers also emphasized that institutional support, including smaller class sizes and flexible syllabi, would allow more consistent integration of communicative activities. These recommendations reflect a growing recognition of the importance of active, student-centered pedagogy in EFL instruction (Richards, 2008; Tran & Le, 2022).

5. Discussion

The integration of student and teacher data reveals converging evidence that role-play enhances students' speaking proficiency, confidence, and engagement. Quantitative results showed strong agreement among students regarding the benefits of role-play, while qualitative insights from teachers confirmed its effectiveness in creating interactive learning environments.

However, both groups acknowledged challenges such as time limitations, unequal participation, and the need for teacher preparation. This convergence highlights the importance of adequate planning, classroom management, and professional training to maximize the benefits of role-play.

The findings corroborate global research emphasizing the role of communicative strategies in promoting fluency and learner autonomy (Kayi, 2006; Dwiyanti & Lolita, 2023). In particular, they underscore the significance of contextual adaptation—ensuring that activities align with learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Overall, the study confirms that role-play serves as an effective bridge between theoretical language knowledge and real communicative use, aligning with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and social constructivist learning theory.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study investigated how English language instructors at the University of Misurata employ role-play activities in speaking classes and examined their perceived

impact on first-semester students' oral performance. Data from teacher interviews and student questionnaires showed that role-play is widely regarded as an engaging, learner-centered strategy that promotes fluency, confidence, and active participation. Although teachers strongly support the approach, several barriers hinder effective implementation, including large classes, limited time, insufficient resources, and inadequate methodological training. These interconnected challenges indicate the need for comprehensive institutional support, curriculum enhancement, and sustained teacher development. Despite limitations related to sample size and the absence of classroom observations, the study provides valuable insights into the role of interactive techniques in EFL instruction in Libya. It recommends broader future research and emphasizes the importance of equipping teachers with the skills and conditions necessary to integrate role-play effectively into speaking instruction.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Declaration of AI Use

The authors declare that they did not use any AI tools in the preparation of this manuscript.

References

Abubaker, A. (2008). Influence of Core Cultural Values on the Communication Behaviour of Staff in Libyan Organization [Unpublished manuscript]. Retrieved from http://research.ncl.ac.uk/ARECLS/vol4_documents/ABUBAKER.pdf

Afisa, P. Y. S. (2015). The Students' Difficulties in Speaking at the Tenth Grade of SMA Negeri Sine in 2014/2015 academic year [Publication Article].

Retrieved from http://eprints.ums.ac.id/34624/

Al Hosni, S. (2014). Speaking Difficulties Encountered by Young EFL Learners. International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL), 2(6), 22-30.

Aljangawi, R. S. M., & Lah, S. C. (2024). Libyan EFL Undergraduates' Motivation Toward Integrating Improve Cards with Role-Play Technique in English Speaking Classes. International Journal of Language, Literacy and Translation, 7(2), 16-33. https://doi.org/10.36777/ijollt2024.7.2.101

Anggrarini, N., & Trianasari, I. (2022). Undergraduate Students' Perception on The Use of Role-Play in Speaking Class. In National Conference on Language, Education, and Technology Proceeding (Vol. 2, No. 1).

Asrifan, A. (2022). Role-Playing to improve student speaking. Available at SSRN 4184046.

Astuti, E. S. (2017). Students' Perception Toward Role Play Activity in The ESP Class Room. Paradigma: Jurnal Filsafat, Sains, Teknologi, dan Sosial Budaya, 23(2), 29-32.

Bahriyeva, N. (2021). Teaching a Language through Role-play. Linguistics and Culture Review, 5(S1), 1582–1587. https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5nS1.1745.

Bernard, H. R. (2017). Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (6th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.

Bygate, M. (2001). Effects of Task Repetition on the Structure and control

of oral language. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds.), Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching, and testing (pp. 23–48). Longman. (Corrected)

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing. Applied Linguistics, 1(1), 1-47.

Chaney, A. L., & Burk, T. L. (1998). Teaching Oral Communication in Grades K-8. Allyn and Bacon.

Chomsky, N. (1965). Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. MIT Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2002). Research Methods in Education (5th ed.). Routledge Falmer.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). Research Methods in Education (6th ed.). Routledge.

Collins, K. M. T., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Sutton, I. L. (2006). A Model Incorporating the Rationale and Purpose for Conducting Mixed Methods Research in Special Education and Beyond. Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal, (4), 67-100.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Daniastuti, M. A. (2018). The effectiveness of Simulation and Role Play Technique to Teach Speaking for High and Low Motivation Students. Leksika: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra dan Pengajarannya, 12(1), 30–36.

Dhea, M. K. (2017). The Effectiveness of Role-Play Technique in Teaching Speaking for EFL College Students. Journal of language Teaching and Research, 8(5), 863-870.

Dincer, A., & Yesilyurt, S. (2017). Motivation to Speak English: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective. PASAA, 53(1), 1-25.

Dwiyanti, A., & Lolita, Y. (2023). The Effectiveness of Role Play in Improving Speaking Skill of EFL Students. Jurnal ILmu Bahasa dan Sastra, 17(2), 138-148. https://doi.org/10.21107/prosodi.v17i2.17064.

Fauzan, U. (2014). The Use of Improvisations Technique to Improve the Speaking Ability of EFL students. Dinamika Ilmu, 14(2), 264-287.

Ghafar, Z. N., & Raheem, B. R. (2023). Factors Affecting Speaking Proficiency in English Language Learning: A general Overview of the Speaking Skill. Journal of Social Science (JoSS), 2(6), 507-518. https://doi.org/10.57185/joss.v2i6.107.

Gillham, B. (2008). Developing a Questionnaire (2nd ed.). Continuum International Publishing Group.

Harmer, J. (2001). The Practice of English language teaching. London/New York.

Harmer, J. (2007). The Practice of English Language Teaching (4th ed.). Longman Ltd.

Hedge, T. (2000). Teaching and learning on the language classroom. Oxford University Press.

Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2013). Qualitative Research Methods. Sage Publications.

Huang, C. P. (2010). Exploring Factors Affecting the Use of Oral Communication Strategies. LongHua Technology University Journal, 30(1), 85-104.

Hymes, D. (1972). On Communicative Competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), Sociolinguistics: Selected Readings (pp. 269–293). Penguin Books. (Corrected)

Katemba, C. V., & Grace, R. M. (2023). Role-Playing Improves Speaking Proficiency Skills. Acuity: Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature and Culture, 8(2), 244-268. https://doi.org/10.35974/acuity.

Kayi, H. (2006). Teaching speaking: Activities to Promote Speaking in a Second Language. The Internet TESL journal, 12(11), 1-6.

Keezhatta, M. S. (2020). Efficacy of Role-Play in Teaching and Formative Assessment for Undergraduate English-Major students in Saudi Arabia. Arab World English Journal, 11(3), 549–566.

Khasbani, I., & Seli, F. Y. (2021). the Impact of Role-Play on Students' Speaking Performance. Linguists: Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching, 7(1), 1-9.

Krashen, S. (1982). Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. OUP.

Krebt, D. M. (2017). The effectiveness of role play techniques in teaching speaking for EFL college Students. Journal of language Teaching and Research, 8(5), 863-870.

Ladousse, G. P. (1987). Role-Play: Resources Book for the Teacher Series. Oxford University Press.

Lahbibi, K., & Farhane, H. (2023). The Impact of Role Play on Enhancing Learners' interaction in speaking. International Journal of Language and Literary Studies, 5(1), 28-51. https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v4i4.1146.

Liu, F., & Ding, Y. (2009). Role-Play in English Language Teaching. Asian Social Science, 5(10), 140–143.

Livingstone, C. (1983). Role Play in Language Learning. Longman.

Luoma, S. (2004). Assessing speaking. Cambridge University Press.

Luo, Q., & Lyu, J. (2024). The Effectiveness of Role-Play Activity in Practicing EFL Learner's Communicative Skills. Journal of Education and Educational Research, 7(3), 2957-9465.

Ly, C. K. (2024). Applying Role-Play Technique on Improving EFL Students' Language Learning: A Case Study at a Vietnamese University. Journal of Knowledge Learning and Science Technology, 3(4), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.60087/jklst.v3.n4.p1.

Matic, M. D. (2023). Benefits and Challenges When Using the Technique of Role-Playing in Speaking Exercises in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Mulyana, A. (2020). Students' Perspective of Using Role Play to Develop Speaking Skill. Journal of English Teaching, Applied Linguistics and Literatures (JETALL), 3(1), 1-8.

Naqeeb, H. (2025). Intercultural Communicative Competence: Definition, Models, Measurement Instruments, and Empirical Practice in the EFL Classroom. Discourse and Journal of English, 1(1), 45–59.

Nooreiny Maarof. (2018). The Effect of Role-Play and Simulation Approach on Enhancing ESL Oral Communication Skills. International Journal of Research in English Education, 3(3), 63-71.

Nunan, D. (2003). Practical English Language Teaching. McGraw-Hill.

Orafi, S. M. S., & Borg, S. (2009). Intentions and Realities in Implementing Communicative Curriculum Reform. System, 37(2), 243-253. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.11.004.

Putri, M., & Syafryadin, S. (2022). Role-Play Technique to Improve Students' Speaking Skills: A Case Study of EFL Learners. JELE (Journal of English Language Education), 8(1), 14–25.

Putri, R. T., & Pratiwi, E. (2025). The Influence of the Role Play Method in Teaching English Speaking Skill to the Tenth Grade Students at SMA Negeri 4 Palembang. Esteem Journal of English Education Study Programme, 8(1), 186-192.

Rababah, L. M. (2025). An Experimental Study of the Effectiveness of Role-play in Improving Fluency in Jordanian EFL Students' Speaking Skills. World Journal of English Language, 15(4), 1-30. https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v15n4p30.

Rahmawati, L., & Maulana, R. (2023). Investigating students' Perspectives on Role-Play as a Learning Strategy in Speaking Classes. ELT Worldwide: Journal of English Language Teaching, 10(1), 88–96.

Richards, J. C. (2006). Communicative Language Teaching Today. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2008). Teaching Listening and Speaking: From Theory to Practice. Cambridge University Press.

Sam, W. Y. (1990). Drama in Teaching English as a Second Language-a Communicative Approach. The English Teacher, 19(1).

Seputra, G. D. (2022). Improving the Students Speaking Skill Using Role Play At X Culinary 1 Class of SMKN 8 Surabaya. JOEEL (Journal of English Education and Literature), 3(2), 201-208.

Siwi, F. (2014). The Use of Role-Play Technique to Improve Class VIII D Students' Speaking Confidence in SMP N 1 Merbau Mataram [Unpublished Thesis]. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1051509.pdf.

Thornbury, S. (2005). How to Teach Speaking. Pearson Education Limited.

Togimin, N., & Jaafar, H. (2020). Role Play Activities: An Innovative Approach to Teaching Speaking Skills in an ESL Classroom. LSP International Journal, 7(2), 19-36.

Torky, S. A. E. (2006). The Effectiveness of a Task-Based Instruction Program in Developing the English Language Speaking Skills of Secondary Stage Students [Online Submission].

Tran, T. H., & Le, T. N. (2022). Learners` perceptions of Role Play in English Speaking Lessons in Vietnam. International Journal of TESOL Studies, 4(3), 45-56.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes. Harvard University Press.

استكشاف تأثير استراتيجية لعب الأدوار في تعزيز مهارات التحدث لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية: وجهات نظر المعلمين والطلاب في جامعة مصراتة

ياسين عبد القادر أحميد [1]،* **عائشة مختار المرابط**[2]

[1,2]جامعة مصراته، كلية الآداب، قسم اللغة الانجليزية، ليبيا

* y.hmaid@misuratau.edu.ly

ملخص البحث:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في تصورات طلاب وأساتذة الجامعات الليبية حول استراتيجية لعب الأدوار في تعزيز مهارات التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وقد استُخدم نهج متعدد الأساليب، باستخدام كل من الاستبيانات والمقابلات شبه المنظمة كأدوات لجمع البيانات. أُجري الاستبيان على 40 طالبًا من السنة الأولى في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية الآداب بجامعة مصراتة. كما شارك عشرة أساتذة من القسم نفسه في مقابلات شبه منظمة لاكتساب رؤى أعمق حول تصوراتهم لاستراتيجية لعب الأدوار وتطبيقها في الفصل الدراسي. وقد حُللت البيانات الكمية باستخدام الإحصاء الوصفي، بما في ذلك التكرار والنسبة المئوية والمتوسط والانحراف المعياري، بينما حُللت البيانات النوعية باستخدام تحليل المحتوى. وقد كشفت النتائج أن غالبية الطلاب اتفقوا على أن لعب الأدوار عزز مهاراتهم في التحدث بشكل ملحوظ، بما في ذلك زيادة الثقة، وتوسيع المفردات، وتحسين النطق، وزيادة المشاركة والمتعة في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. علاوة على ذلك، أشارت النتائج إلى أن المعلمين يستخدمون لعب الأدوار بشكل متكرر كأسلوب تدريس، معتبرين إياه استراتيجية فعالة لتطوير مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب. وتؤكد الدراسة على إمكانات لعب الأدوار كاستراتيجية فعالة لتحسين مهارات التحدث لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية الآداب، جامعة مصراتة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: *استراتيجية لعب الأدوار، مهارات التحدث، الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وجهات نظر الطلاب والمعلمين.*