Research Article

THE IMPACT OF PSYCHODRAMA (ROLE-PLAY) ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNER'S SPEAKING ABILITY

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the impact of psychodrama (role-play) on Iranian Intermediate EFL learner'sSpeaking Ability. For these purpose 100 learners of English at (ILI) Iran language institute participated in this study. Having being homogenized by an English Proficiency Test (MELAB), 40 learners were selected and they were randomly assigned into two groups, control and experimental. Then both groups sat for a pre-test, which was a speaking test. The purpose of this test was to measure the learner's initial subject knowledge of speaking ability. Then one group received treatment based on role-play. However, the other group received no treatment. The treatment procedure took 10 sessions. Finally, at the end of the course both groups sat for the post test of speaking ability. Then the statistical analysis was run through ANCOVA. It was explored from the study that learner's speaking ability improves more when they are provided with role-play. However, this study provides a significant contribution in curriculum innovation and policy with respect to the learner's speaking development.

Key Words: Role-Play, Speaking Ability

INTRODUCTION

Due to the influences of globalization and increased interactions between people who speak different languages, English has become the most recognized international language of communication. Throughout this century globalization has given rise to the dominance of English speaking. When people from countries where English is not the first language comes together, they must choose a language to speak. Often the language chosen is English. Today we refer to this language as International English, and Global English (Crystal, 2003). In this era of globalization, the ability to speak English is a huge asset in the increasingly local and global workplace (Gerrish and Lacey, 2010). Within any company in the modern world of open economy, being able to speak the English language is a requirement of stakeholders and customers. Thus, to meet the demands of the global economy, English speaking skill becomes the medium for ease of communication (Khamkhien, 2010).

A number of proven techniques of CLT can be applied in classrooms to dramatically improve the speaking levels amongst students. Role play is one of CLT and has been found through a number of studies to be an effective approach used in attempts to improve speaking skill of students and included in many books on EFL/ESL methodology as well as mass-market English textbooks (Bray, 2007). Richards (1985) confirmed that role play activities also develop conversational skill among students. Similarly, Stern (1983) also supported that role play helps students to become more flexible in many kinds of new situations in which they will use the language more easily. The strength of flexible role play forms new conversational practice and creates a positive environment in class. Students enjoy and relax while they are learning.

Purpose of the Study

As it is said earlier, the present study is an attempt to ameliorate the pedagogical and practical implication and application of the impact of psychodrama (role-play) on Iranian Intermediate EFL learner's speaking Ability. However, the study tries to answer the following question that might yield message to curriculum innovation and policy.

Does psychodrama (role-play) has effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learner's speaking ability?

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The present research can be useful for material designer and material selection and preparation, which might be a paradigm shift in curriculum innovation.

Research Question

In order to tackle the problem of the research in a very consolidated way, the following research question has been formulated as follows:

- Does using psychodrama (role-play) have effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learner's speaking ability?

Research Hypothesis

In order to answer the research question, the following null hypothesis has been formulated:

H0: using psychodrama (role-play) does not have any effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learner's speaking ability.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Introduction

This part introduces the method of the study. More specifically it details the design of the study, the subjects who participated in the experiment, the instrumentation, procedures and statistical analysis.

Design of the Study

The design of the study was quasi-experimental design, which is a pre-post test design.

Participants

The participants of the study were 100 intermediate students both male and female. After administration of English Proficiency Test (MELAB), 40 intermediate students whose scores were between 31 and 50 were selected. They were divided into 2 groups control and experimental group.

Both groups sat for the pre-test of speaking ability to take their initial knowledge of speaking ability. Then one group received treatment based on role-play. However, the other group received no treatment and finally both groups sat for the post-test, which was the same speaking test.

Materials

The following materials were employed throughout the course of this study. An English Proficiency Test (MELAB) was used for the purpose of homogenizing the proficiency of the learners. Another type of the test, which was used for the purpose of the study, was speaking test. This type of test was used as a pre-test to measure the learner's initial subject knowledge in two groups. And finally the same speaking test was used as a post-test based on which the efficacy of role-play was determined.
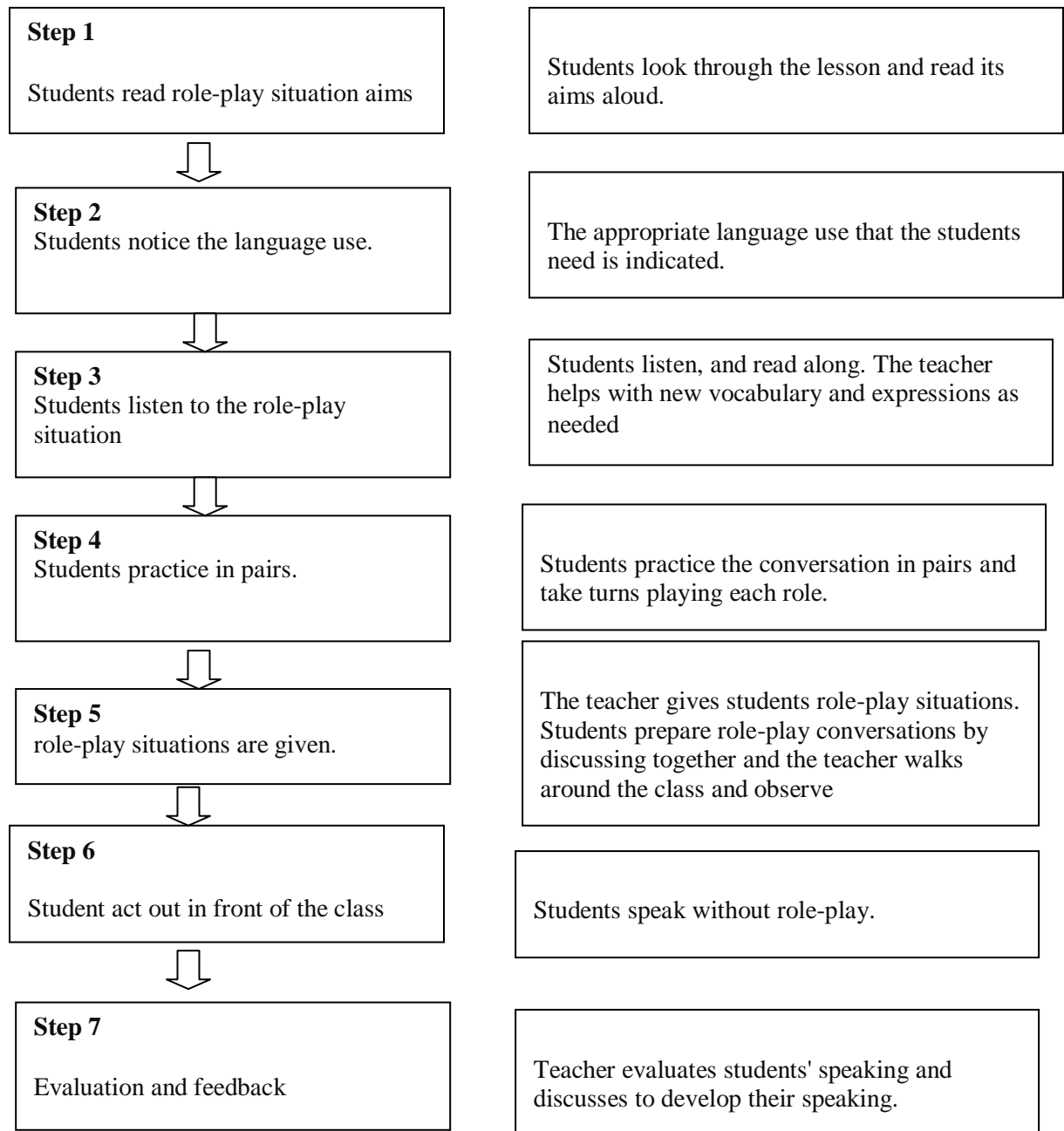
Procedure

The procedure through which this study is conducted includes different stages of application which embraces the selection of the subjects, instruments and materials. Basically three types of test were used in this study, an English Proficiency Test (MELAB) which was used to make the subjects homogeneous. Having being homogenized, they were randomly assigned into two groups, control and experimental. Both groups sat for a pre-test of speaking in order to take their initial subject knowledge of speaking ability.

The test consisted of 7 minutes of discussion or face-to-face interaction. They randomly chose a topic for the speaking test from their textbook such as all about you, my favorite people and celebrities, routines, and my free time and hobbies. The speaking test scores were based on the language points followed in the course outline of English 1.

The control group received no treatment an approached the traditional way of teaching speaking. However the experimental group received treatment based on role-play. During the treatment, ten role play situations were created.

The situations were decided from taking into account their real -life experiences and jobs. They were taught by a foreign teacher for one semester. The procedures adapted from "Touchstone Book" as teaching models for investigating the improvement of EFL Iranian students' English speaking ability. They are as follows:

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Step 1

Students read role-play situation aims

Students look through the lesson and read its aims aloud.

Step 2
Students notice the language use.

The appropriate language use that the students need is indicated.

Step 3
Students listen to the role-play situation

Students listen, and read along. The teacher helps with new vocabulary and expressions as needed

Step 4
Students practice in pairs.

Students practice the conversation in pairs and take turns playing each role.

Step 5
role-play situations are given.

The teacher gives students role-play situations. Students prepare role-play conversations by discussing together and the teacher walks around the class and observe

Step 6

Student act out in front of the class

Students speak without role-play.

Step 7

Evaluation and feedback

Teacher evaluates students' speaking and discusses to develop their speaking.

Finally, both groups sat for the post-test of speaking test to assess the effectiveness on the specific treatment program.

1.6. Statistical Analysis
The data was analyzed through SPSS an ANCOVA will be powerful enough to handle the significant of the study if there is any.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Introduction
This study investigates the impact of psychodrama (role-play) on Iranian Intermediate EFL learner's speaking Ability.

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The researcher tries to find out whether role-play has any effect on Iranian EFL Learner's speaking ability or not. In this part the descriptive statistics will be handled through measuring mean and standard deviation (SD). Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) will be used to test the hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics

Before starting the treatment, a test of English Proficiency Test (MELAB) was employed to establish the homogeneity of the subjects in terms of language proficiency. It consisted of three parts: Cloze tests, structure and vocabulary. Initially, 100 male and female students participated in the study.

After administration of English Proficiency Test (MELAB), 40 intermediate students whose scores were between 31 and 50 were selected. Then they were randomly classified into two groups. One of them was considered as the control group and the other one as the experimental group.

A descriptive statistical analysis was done on the collected data of English Proficiency Test (MELAB). The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Test

N	Mean	SD
100	32	10.32

Table 2 shows the number of students who took the pre-test and post-test. It should be mentioned that no one excluded.

Table 2: Number of Students Participated in Pre-test and Post-test

Cases

	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Pre-test*group	40	100%	0	0%	40	100%
Post-test*group	40	100%	0	0%	40	100%

The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in table 3.

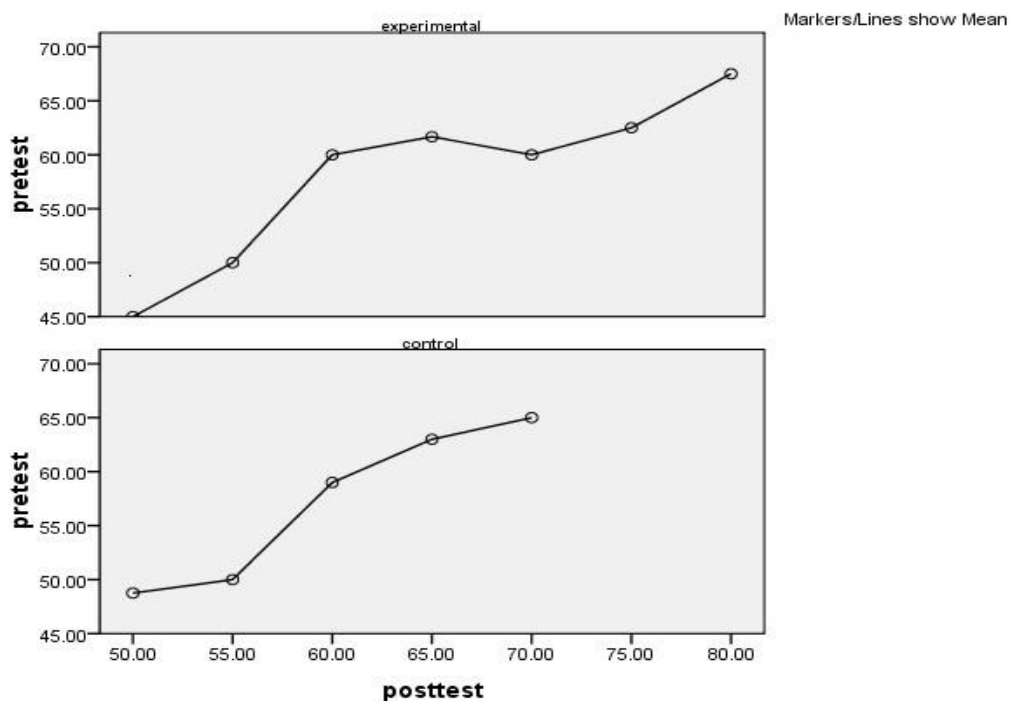| Group		Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental	Mean	59.9	68.4
	N	20	20
	SD	4.8	4.7
Control	Mean	58.45	58.1
	N	20	20
	SD	5.64	5.2
Total	Mean	59.15	63.25
	N	40	40
	SD	5.216	7.121

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Interpretive Statistics

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is particularly appropriate when subjects in two or more groups are found to differ on a pre-test or other initial variable. In this case the effects of the pre-test and/or other relevant variables are partialled out, and the resulting adjusted means of the post-test scores are compared. Through ANCOVA differences in the initial status of the groups can be removed statistically so that they can be compared as though their initial status had been equated.

In this study, in order to investigate the research hypothesis " using psychodrama (role-play) does not have any effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learner's speaking ability" , the differences between mean scores of pre-test and post-test of control and experimental group were calculated through ANCOVA. Before running ANCOVA, the following hypotheses were examined:

1. Linear relationship between variables (pre-test and post-test)
2. Equality of Variances
3. Homogeneity of regression

1.   The linear relationship between pre-test and post-test was examined through spread plot, graph 1:

As graph 1 shows, because the regression lines are parallel, so there is a linear relationship between the two variables, pre-test and post-test. It means that the relationship between the two variables in both groups is the same.

2.   In order to examine the equality of variances, Levin's Test of Equality of Error Variances was run. It tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Table 5: Levine's Test of Equality of Error Variances

F	df1	df2	Sig
.26	1	38	.61

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According to table 5, the calculated F is not meaningful. So there is equality of variances and ANCOVA can be run.

3.   The data in table 6 are related to test of homogeneity of regression. Before running covariance, between-subjects effects of pre-test-group should be investigated.

Table 6: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	TypeⅢ Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Corrected Model	1879.82	3	626.61	230.95	0.00
Group (a)	17.86	1	17.86	6.6	0 .015
Pretest(b)	802.97	1	802	295.95	0.00
Group*pretest (a*b)	0.41	1	0 .41	00 .15	0.7
Error	97.68	36	2.71		
Total	46200	40			

As table 6 shows, between –subjects effect (a*b) is not significance (F=0.15, Sig=0.7). It shows that the data supports homogeneity of regression. Therefore, covariance should be run just for between –subjects effect of post-test and group to show whether mean scores of two groups are the same or not. The results of this analysis are demonstrated in table 7.

Table 7: Mean and Corrected Mean of speaking ability

Source	Post-test		Corrected Mean	
	M	SD	M	SE
Experimental	38.4	4.7	37.77	.36
Control	28.1	5.11	28.72	.36

Table 7 shows the corrected means of dependent variable speaking ability. The data demonstrate that the means of experimental group are upper than control group.

Sum of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of speaking ability in experimental and control group after eliminating between-subjects effect is demonstrated in table 8:

Table 8: Sum of Analysis of Covariance

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1879.415	2	939.71	354.48	.00	.95
Pre – test	818.52	1	818.52	308.76	.00	.89
Group	805.48	1	805.48	303.84	.00	.89
Error	98.08	37	2.65			
Total	46200	40				

As it can be seen, the corrected model (f=00, F=354.48) is statistically significant. The results (F=303.84, f=.00, Eta=.89) shows that there is a difference between two groups. It means that there is significance difference between experimental and control group. As a result the null hypothesis "using psychodrama (role-play) does not have any effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learner's speaking ability" was rejected, so it can be concluded that role-play has an effect on Iranian EFL Learner's speaking ability.

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To clarify the result, the data will be demonstrated in graph 2. The vertical axis represents the post-test and the horizontal axis represent experimental and control group.
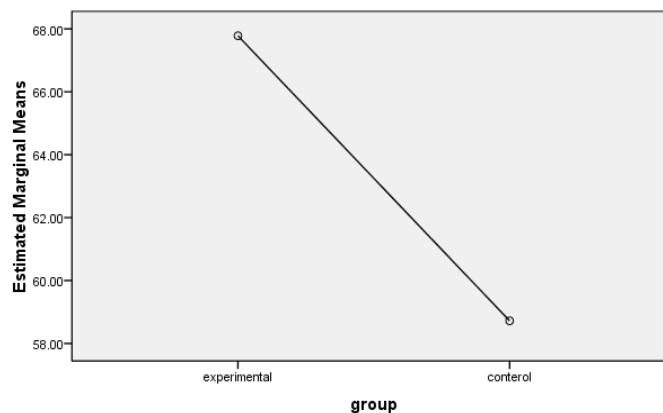
The graph shows that there is a significant difference between speaking ability of experimental and control group. It clearly shows that the experimental group who received treatment on the basis of role-play had better scores on post-test.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, the use of psychodrama (role- play) technique can improve speaking ability of EFL students. The study also revealed that the students were extremely satisfied with this technique. It enables the students to formulate their turns and give them a better opportunity to improve their English speaking. According to Ladousse (2004), stated that role play is a communicative technique developing fluency in language students. Stem (1983) suggested that role play helps students to be able to speak English in various daily life situations and promote active learning amongst undergraduate students. So the teacher should set the appropriate period to help learners to fulfill their potential about preparing role-play conversation and be patient since this technique employs a lot of time and activities at every stage.

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