

Enhancing Arabic Speaking Skills: Pedagogical Strategies and Practical Approaches with special reference to Role-playing

K. M. A. Ahamed ZUBAIR

Associate Professor of Arabic, Postgraduate and Research Department of Arabic, The New College, Chennai, India.

*Corresponding author: ahamedzubair@thenewcollege.edu.in

Abstract

This research investigates the development and teaching of speaking skills in Arabic language education, emphasizing effective instructional methods and the importance of continuous practice beyond the classroom. It highlights that achieving proficiency in speaking requires dedicated effort from both teachers and students, utilizing tailored strategies to meet learners' needs. Drawing from extensive literature and pedagogical theories, the study underscores active participation, regular practice, and proper evaluation as key components for improving oral communication. At the New College, Chennai, under the University of Madras, Arabic teaching aims to enhance students' understanding of texts and their overall language skills-listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, traditional teaching methods, primarily lecture-based, limit student engagement and reduce motivation to communicate. To address this issue, the study explores the implementation of role-playing strategies, which are highly effective for developing speaking skills by fostering active participation and confidence. The research involved third-year Arabic students and followed two cycles, each with planning, implementation, observation, and reflection phases. Findings reveal that role-playing activities significantly boost students' speaking abilities, helping them feel less embarrassed and more fluent. Students also work collaboratively, gaining confidence through acting and active engagement in class. Overall, the study demonstrates that incorporating interactive methods like role-playing can substantially improve Arabic speaking skills, encouraging more dynamic and motivated language learning environments. The results suggest that adopting such strategies can lead to more effective language instruction and greater student success in oral proficiency.

Keywords: Role-playing; teaching speaking skills; teaching strategies; pedagogy; practice.

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Introduction

For an extended period, the new college has been dedicated to teaching the Arabic language to all its students, whether at the foundational or advanced level. Since Arabic is a foreign language for most students at this institution, teaching it necessitates ongoing effort and consistent practice. Education in this context is a continual process, requiring persistent attempts to achieve effective learning outcomes (Ulfah, 2022). The college's approach to teaching Arabic aims to enable students to comprehend texts and deepen their language proficiency, whether positive or negative, by creating a linguistic environment and delivering information in the classroom using Arabic. Additionally, the College strives diligently to develop and elevate the quality of education by fostering an Arabic environment and providing the necessary vocabulary to facilitate understanding of the Arabic language. However, the ongoing teaching process within the classroom has not been as effective as desired, as some students' speaking and conversational skills are weak, and their confidence in speaking is also lacking (Zubair, 2024). This negatively impacts their speaking skills, as their expression and the methods they use are not correct or proper. It has been observed that there is neglect in teaching the art of speaking or conversation. The methods used to teach speaking skills rely mainly on lecture and do not give students the freedom to speak, express themselves, or engage in discussions. As a result, oral expression has lost its substance and has become a form without real meaning, leading to boredom, as oral expression becomes a hollow form without content. This phenomenon requires a solution, such as seeking diverse and innovative teaching methods, especially those suitable for teaching speaking skills. This effort aims to create an engaging, lively, and enjoyable teaching and learning process inside the classroom, from which students benefit more than they did before. To achieve noble goals, Arabic language teachers are required to develop their teaching methods. Role play, also known as role-playing, is one of the effective and attractive teaching strategies that aid in the educational process, especially in developing speaking skills.

Role play is widely used in language teaching programs and makes the learning process enjoyable because it guides students to act freely, making them feel happy as if the classroom is a journey, and students are still engaged in their language programs (Ly, 2024). This type of teaching method maintains active classroom conditions and applies effective speech (Mabrurrosi et al., 2023), and that student activities are not boring (Palma Arzuaga, 2024). Siddiqui, (2024) stated that role play encourages students to practice skills through active participation in role-playing activities, allowing them to apply their language skills. This active participation aligns with the principles of active learning and the principles of quantitative learning and teaching (Quantum Learning and Teaching). All these indicate that the teaching and learning process is not merely about delivering information but also requires student participation physically and experientially (Karmila, 2023). If students excel in these language activities, they will become fond of them. As we have learned, teaching speaking skills cannot rely solely on lecture; this approach limits opportunities for students to engage in lively speaking activities and practice speaking through group interactions. This leads to boredom and fatigue among students participating in classroom activities. In this regard, Falah, (2023) emphasized that teaching should include opportunities that make learning Arabic a lively, practical process in programs designed for speakers of other languages. It should not be limited to memorizing rules or vocabulary and linguistic communication situations in the classroom but should be a training stage, similar to training in a small pool preparing students to navigate the seas.

This modest article presents a model of a teaching strategy for speaking skills that teachers can employ in the educational process to achieve desired objectives. Teaching speaking skills highlights its importance in a foreign language, just as speech itself is vital in the language. An-Opesemowo, (2024) confirmed that speech is considered a main part of the foreign language teaching curriculum and is regarded by educators in this field as one of the most important objectives of learning a foreign language. This is because speech often represents the practical and applied aspect of language learning; training students to speak correctly, articulate ideas in an organized and sequential manner with confidence and boldness, helps students avoid errors or fear of speaking. Such

self-confidence resolves speech anxiety and assists students in succeeding in their lessons and life: (Tawil, 2018). From these considerations, teaching speaking skills requires developing methods to make the educational process effective and not rigid. Therefore, role play, also called role-playing, is the proposed method in this field and in teaching speaking skills.

Methodology

The type of research in this study is classroom action research. This research describes ongoing activities in the classroom and attempts to improve and develop the teaching programs within it (Abdurrahman et al., 2022). The main goal of this research is to increase students' enthusiasm and desire for learning, as well as to improve their comprehension of the studied materials. Furthermore, the essence of classroom action planning: Teachers identify specific issues affecting student learning and develop targeted interventions. Action: Implement the planned strategies in the classroom. Observation: Collect data through observations, tests, and interviews to assess the impact of the intervention (Ramdhanian et al., 2022). Reflection: Analyze data to determine the effectiveness of the actions taken and make necessary adjustments for the next cycle (Susilowati, 2018). Professional Development: Engaging in CAR enhances teachers' skills and knowledge, contributing to their professional growth (Mariani et al., 2020). Improved learning outcomes: CAR has been shown to be effective in addressing specific learning issues, resulting in improved student performance (Rafiqie et al., 2023). Is to find the necessary actions to analyze the problems faced by the teacher in teaching. The objectives are not only to identify the causes of problems teachers encounter but also to provide solutions for them. In other words, Classroom Action Research is about experimenting with ideas to develop or improve conditions so that education becomes better than before. The sample for this research consists of students participating in the undergraduate Arabic program at the New College, Chennai, India. These students are from the Faculty of Arabic. The researcher selected these students because of their known low speaking skills in Arabic, and it is hoped that using role play will make teaching more effective.

Research Steps

The research methodology outlined by Kemmis and Taggart is a structured approach to action research, consisting of four key stages: Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection. This cyclical process is designed to facilitate continuous improvement in educational practices. In the planning stage, researchers identify specific goals and strategies to address educational challenges. For example, Wati Rahayu's research focused on improving teachers' competencies in lesson planning through academic supervision (Rahayu, 2019). Similarly, Rangga Mega Putra et al. emphasized the importance of planning in improving students' English speaking skills, ensuring that strategies align with desired outcomes (Putra et al., 2022). The action stage involves implementing the planned strategies. Ajat Sudrajat and Fitra Mulia Jaya implemented the Course Review Horay model to improve social studies learning outcomes, demonstrating the practical application of their planning (Sudrajat & Jaya, 2022). In another study, Andi Muhammad Ajiegoena used problem-solving methods to improve mathematics learning outcomes, demonstrating the effectiveness of action-oriented strategies (Ajiegoena, 2014). Observation is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of implemented actions. Researchers collect data through various methods, such as tests and observations, to evaluate student performance and engagement (Wicaksono, 2019). This research begins with a big question: "How effective is the role play method in developing speaking skills for students participating in the special Arabic language teaching program at the New College, Chennai?" Therefore, this research requires a preliminary study to diagnose the problems related to developing speaking skills in Arabic in the classroom and to find solutions. It also involves designing the steps the researcher will implement, observing these steps in the research field, and reflecting on the

phenomena faced-whether successes or failures-in applying the role play method.To clarify the procedures of this research, the researcher illustrates the steps as shown in the following diagram:

This research employed two cycles, each consisting of four stages

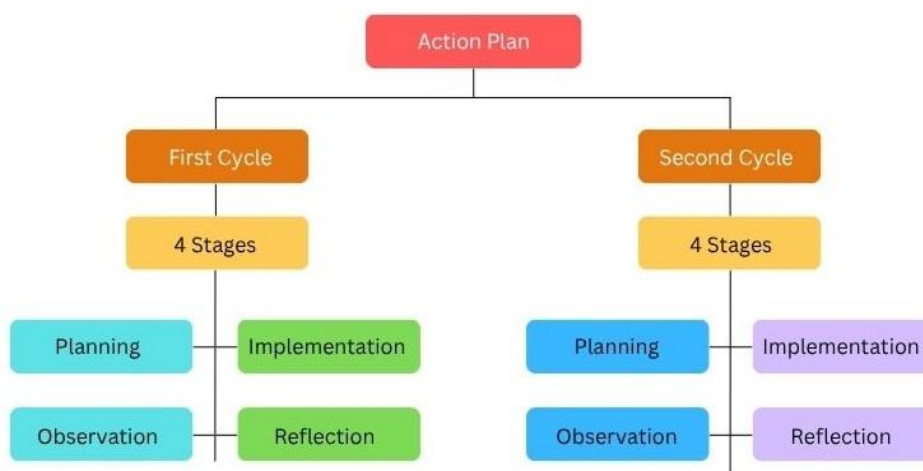


Figure 1. This research employed two cycles, each consisting of four stages

Work Planning and Evaluation or Reflection

Before assigning the work to improve teaching conditions in the classroom, the researcher conducts a preliminary study. This involves gathering data related to the problems faced in the teaching process. In this study, the researcher collects data through observation to diagnose teaching problems, especially those related to the method used in instruction. Additionally, the researcher conducts a pre-test, which is a language test to determine the students' level in speaking skills before participating in instruction using the role play method. The result of this pre-test serves as the initial indicator of students' linguistic proficiency in speaking. After this preliminary study, the researcher proceeds with appropriate steps based on action research. The process involves two cycles; the first cycle is the primary phase of conducting the research, and the second cycle continues until the researcher confirms that the role play method is an effective teaching approach. It also helps develop students' linguistic competence in speaking skills. And do not forget that the researcher, during the teaching process, also conducts reflection. Simultaneously, the researcher engages in the research and reflection activities, which involve analyzing the observation results. In this activity, the researcher analyzes and summarizes the data collected during observation, assessing the extent to which speaking skills develop using the role play method. After each teaching session, the researcher observes the implementation process, and this observation serves as a measurement in the reflection process. It helps improve procedures for the next cycle. The success of the application of the work carried out by the researcher, as well as the students' results in developing speaking skills, was evaluated using a ratio method with symbols, as indicated by (Wandira & Efendi, 2023), which is as follows:

$$P = (F : N) \times 100\%$$

Explanation:

- P: Success percentage
- F: Success degree of the item
- N: Number of items

The percentage and its interpretation can see in Table 1.

Table 1. Percentage range and evaluation

Percentage Range	Evaluation
100%	Excellent
80% - 79%	Good
66% - 56%	Moderate
55% - 40%	Acceptable
Below 39%	Weak

$$x = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

The explanation:

$\bar{x}$ = average

$\sum x$ = total results obtained from all students

n = number of students

Results and Discussion

After the researcher implemented teaching using the role play method, it appeared that teaching became more effective and engaging. Students became more motivated during lessons, especially regarding the development of their speaking skills, which significantly improved and advanced. In this classroom action research, there is a success criterion for the targeted objective, which is developing students' speaking skills using the role play method. This criterion is used to determine the success of the research in the first cycle, as well as to identify errors that require correction and completion in the next cycle. The research was conducted by assessing these three aspects:

1. Students achieved improvement in language skills, especially in speaking.
2. Students performed role plays without shyness or fear of making mistakes throughout the teaching process.
3. Students cooperated with their peers in performing the role plays.

To evaluate linguistic competence, the researcher used an assessment of speaking skills determined by measurement experts. This includes pronunciation and speaking skills as emphasized (Supriatnangsih et al., 2023). These encompass pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Table 2). The detailed results for each aspect consist of four levels: (1) Weak, (2) Insufficient, (3) Acceptable and (4) Good, and (5) Excellent Here, we present that the teaching process using the role play method shows an increase in students' linguistic competence. Students spoke and incorporated movements, events, and exciting conditions toward their peers. All these indicators improved after students performed their roles comfortably in the acting process. At the end of each teaching session, the researcher observes the implementation process. This observation serves as a measurement in reflection and in improving the procedures for the next teaching cycle. It also helps assess the success of the work carried out by the researcher throughout the teaching process using the role play method.

Table 2. Evaluate linguistic competence

Result	4	3	2	1
Pronunciation	Completely correct with a slight accent	Mostly correct with a noticeable accent	Some pronunciation errors leading to misunderstanding	Very difficult to understand due to numerous pronunciation errors
Grammar	Very few grammatical and morphological errors that do not affect understanding	Many grammatical errors, but the meaning can still be understood	Grammatical errors sometimes cause misunderstanding	Mostly incorrect grammar, making comprehension difficult or impossible
Vocabulary	Uses vocabulary preferred by native speakers	Uses some words incorrectly, but the meaning is generally clear	Uses some wrong words, causing lack of clarity	Uses limited vocabulary, often inappropriate, making speech unclear
Fluency	Speaks fluently like native speakers	Able to express what they want with some hesitation and repetition	Frequent hesitation and very slow speech, difficult to understand	Hesitant speech with long pauses, making comprehension difficult
Comprehension	Fully understands without difficulty	Understands normally, may need repetition	Understands with difficulty, especially if speech is slow and repetitive	Faces great difficulty understanding, especially if speech is slow and repetitive

To understand the students' speaking skill capabilities, the researcher conducted pre- and post-tests for each role. Below, we present the frequency distribution for one role based on the pre-test results. The results can be classified into five categories as shown in the following Table 3.

Table 3. The detailed results for each aspect consist of four levels

Result Range	Percentage	Number of Students	Evaluation
40.74%	14 students	14 students	Acceptable
51.85%	11 students	11 students	Good
99.99%	27 students	27 students	Excellent
20-25	2 students	2 students	Very Good
17-19	14 students	14 students	Weak
16-16	11 students	11 students	Insufficient
10-13	13 students	13 students	Poor

Source: Results of the pre-test in the first cycle

From this, we find that most students' speaking skills are at the "Acceptable" level, with 14 students achieving this level, and their average score is 14.33. To confirm this, the researcher uses the symbol for the average student skill as follows: =14.33. After conducting the pre-test, the researcher assesses students' speaking competence. The pre-test results provide important information for the researcher to carry out the teaching of speaking skills using the role play method. After completing the teaching of speaking skills using this method, the researcher conducts a post-test to measure students' speaking competence. The frequency distribution of students' speaking skill results in the post-test is shown in the following Table 4.

Table 4. Results of the post-test in the first cycle

Students' Results in the Post-Test	Percentage	Number of Students	Evaluation
62.96%	17 students	17 students	Excellent
11.11%	7 students	7 students	Good
99.99%	27 students	27 students	Acceptable
20-25	2 students	2 students	Very Good
17-19	11 students	11 students	Weak
16-16	3 students	3 students	Insufficient

Source: Results of the post-test in the first cycle

From this table, we observe an improvement in students' speaking skills, with an increase in the number of students achieving the "Good" level-from 2 students to 7 students-and the number of students at the "Acceptable" level increased from 14 to 17. The number of students at the "Insufficient" level decreased from 11 to 3 students, with an average score of 15.29. To confirm this, the researcher uses the symbol for the average student skill as follows: =15.29. Results should be clear and concise. The discussion should explore the significance of the results of the work, not repeat

them. A combined results and discussion section is often appropriate. Avoid extensive citations and discussion of published literature.

Conclusion

This research investigates the development and teaching of speaking skills in Arabic language education, emphasizing effective instructional methods and the importance of continuous practice beyond the classroom. It highlights that achieving proficiency in speaking requires dedicated effort from both teachers and students, utilizing tailored strategies to meet learners' needs. Drawing from extensive literature and pedagogical theories, the study underscores active participation, regular practice, and proper evaluation as key components for improving oral communication. At the New College, Chennai, under the University of Madras, Arabic teaching aims to enhance students' understanding of texts and their overall language skills-listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, traditional teaching methods, primarily lecture-based, limit student engagement and reduce motivation to communicate. Findings reveal that role-playing activities significantly boost students' speaking abilities, helping them feel less embarrassed and more fluent. Students also work collaboratively, gaining confidence through acting and active engagement in class. Overall, the study demonstrates that incorporating interactive methods like role-playing can substantially improve Arabic speaking skills, encouraging more dynamic and motivated language learning environments. The results suggest that adopting such strategies can lead to more effective language instruction and greater student success in oral proficiency. Based on the previous discussion and the data presented by the researcher, the following recommendations are offered: 1). Teaching the speaking skill should focus on employing proper and effective teaching methods. 2). Developing speaking skills requires considerable effort, as the teacher must engage in effective teaching processes that encourage student participation. 3). Practicing speaking is not sufficient within the classroom alone; it also requires continuous habituation, encouraging students to express their ideas confidently and boldly without fear of making mistakes.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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