

Engaging in English Speaking Teaching Based on a Task-Based Approach: “Role-Play” with an Adult Syrian in an Experiential Learning

Ling Ding
Memorial University
lingd@mun.ca

Abstract

In this article, the author reports, in a narrative style, details of teaching speaking in experiential learning with a Syrian woman, and the author’s perceptions of applying a role play task-based approach. It has been widely acknowledged that second language learning can be more successful when learners were offered the opportunity to experiment with language. However, traditional teaching methods fail to allow students to engage in real-life communicative situations. A technique employed by the author is role-play based on Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT). The role-play task, informed by principles of TBLT, allows second language (L2) learners to engage with the language in meaningful ways to develop communication skills. The author uses this technique to help an L2 adult learner to practice English in real-life situations, to enrich her vocabulary, and to develop basic life skills. The author uses this experiential learning to explore problems of speaking teaching, and then provides recommendations for assisting teacher students to enhance their knowledge about English speaking teaching.

Keywords: Role play, Task-based language teaching, oral communication, speaking English, experiential learning, teacher’s and student’s perceptions.

Introduction

Acquisition of the host country’s language is an essential skill for newcomers when it comes to occupational and social purposes. English as a second language is of importance for immigrants, which enables them to “develop and attain empowerment in different social, historical, and cultural contexts” (Fereshteh & Ali, 2016, p. 130). Therefore, English as a second language (ESL) teachers are often deemed as critical role players to help refugees and other immigrants adapt to the new cultural and linguistic environment. The need for communication for non-native speakers, living in an English-speaking country requires them to use English extensively to achieve success (Fereshteh & Ali, 2016). Speaking skills are basic requirements for newcomers to build up interpersonal relationships with the natives. It is argued that speaking, being one of the traditional four language skills, is considered as the “most complex and difficult skill to master” (Tarone, 2005, p. 485) since effective communication requires the understanding of both words and emotions of speakers. Therefore, teaching speaking to ESL learners is more challenging than expected.

Because teaching speaking is not an easy task, extensive research has focused on helping teachers overcome the problem of teaching speaking (Albino, 2017; Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2010; Hendriani, 2016; Krebt, 2017; Magos & Politi, 2008; Malihah, 2010). Hinkel (2006) concludes that L2 learners who are immersed in real-life situations and communicate with a native speaker attain L2 speaking fluency. The term “speaking fluency” was referred to as “communication” in daily life (Harmer, 2007, p. 142). However, many approaches typically used in language teaching to teach speaking have taken little account of the nature of spoken language that emphasizes the free expression of thought, and have tended to put emphasis on grammar rules that are essentially based on the written text. The Grammar-Translation Method has lost popularity since the 1980s in ESL instruction due to its emphasis on reading, writing and grammar rules at the expense of listening and speaking skill (Li, Myles, & Robinson, 2012). Aliakbari & Jamalvandi (2010) criticize the Direct Method which focuses on the exclusive use of target language, because this approach aims to teach the language per se, while students are still not able to use the language effectively for communicative purposes.

Many researchers argued that the ultimate goal of speaking instruction is to enable learners to use English for communication, so role-play activities, that requires L2 learners to use the target language in an authentic context, can be an effective approach to teach speaking (Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2010; Krebt, 2017; Magos & Politi, 2008; Pérez & Patricia, 2016). TBLT is also recommended by researchers who claim that TBLT assigns students with appropriate tasks to integrate the four language skills so to solve the problems of the traditional teaching approach that only emphasizes on the fluency of speech without considering grammatical, lexical and pragma-linguistic errors (Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2010; Carrero, 2016; Córdoba Zúñiga, 2016; Ellis, 2003; Malihah, 2010). According to Aliakbari & Jamalvandi (2010), applying role-play as a Task-based Approach is effective in improving learners’ speaking skill.

The author uses a narrative approach to describe one-to-one English speaking tutoring to a Syrian woman. She applies the knowledge learned in class into practice to build up a strong theory-practice connection. Ur (1996) claims that theory learning cannot be separated from practicing; “the most important basis for learning is personal professional practice; knowledge is most useful when it either derives directly from such practice, or, while deriving originally from other sources, is tested and validated through it” (p. 7). The author firstly reviews the literature to understand the principles and factors of adult education for oral communication, then she determines a suitable approach to improve her client’s English speaking skill, i.e. role-play as a task-based language teaching approach (TBLT). She also gives a description of her client and explains the reason to apply this approach. The details of the instruction are included in the paper for a better understanding of applying the approach to teach an ESL learner. Finally, the author discusses the challenges and implications of experiential learning.

Theoretical Background

Principles of Adult Education

Adult learners are believed to have distinct and unique characteristics, and, as such, instructors should be aware of the principles behind teaching to help them. According to Li et al. (2012), adults should be treated as individuals in their own right; they need to be shown some respect. Adult learners are self-directed and capable of assuming the responsibility for their learning process, therefore, instructors are facilitators who help adult learners achieve their goal. Adult

learners are goal-oriented, and they learn for defined purposes, for example, survival, creativity, pleasure or personal growth. This is important for instructors to understand that fostering adult learners' motivation needs to align with their goals, needs and interests (Ushioda, 2008). Wlodkowski (2008) also adds: "If adults have a problem experiencing success or even expecting success, their motivation for learning will usually decline" (p. 100). The unsatisfying learning process and outcomes might have a negative impact on their motivation to learn. It seems clear that teachers need to develop certain strategies to keep L2 learners on track, such as setting concrete goals, giving feedback in time. Being aware of these principles can better help instructors teach effectively.

Factors Affecting Adult English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners' Oral Communication

Shumin (2002) suggests that in foreign language speaking learning, learners should not only know grammatical and semantic rules but also understand how to use the language appropriately in certain social contexts. Adult learners might find it difficult to achieve native-like proficiency in oral communication due to limited exposure to the target language and contact with native speakers. In addition, interpersonal interaction involves both "verbal communication" and "non-verbal communication", the paralinguistic elements such as pitch, stress, and intonation and nonlinguistic elements of speech such as gestures, body language and facial expression (p. 204). Knowing the suprasegmental features of spoken English is essential for L2 learners to better communicate with native speakers. For example, stress placement in sentences is important in carrying the important meaning in spoken language. However, if L2 learners are not taught about this suprasegmental feature of utterances, they will emphasize the stress of each word in an utterance.

Shumin (2002) then describes four factors that affect adult EFL learners' oral communication. The most frequently mentioned would be age; "adult learners do not have the same innate language-specific endowment or propensity as children for acquiring fluency and naturalness in spoken language" (p. 205). The role of listening comprehension in producing utterances is now well accepted. Learners must comprehend the speech of interlocutors firstly so that they can communicate effectively (Hinkel, 2006; Li et al., 2012; Shumin, 2002). The difficulty in understanding what is said can hinder the development of learners' speaking ability. It is noted that people share the same beliefs and values which can bind them together to better express and understand their ideas (Shumin, 2002). Speech happens within a certain social context. Thus, it is hard for non-native speakers who do not understand the culture of the target language to speak appropriately in certain situations. In addition, "the affective factors related to L2 or foreign language learning are emotions, self-esteem, empathy, anxiety, attitude, and motivation," all of which are considered important factors that affect language learning (Shumin, 2002). Adult learners are susceptible to others' taunt. When they are tongue-tied in front of the native speakers due to anxiety, they might feel humiliated and discouraged, which might result in the failure to learn the target language.

Suggestions for Adult Learners' English Speaking Teaching

According to Chaney and Burk (1998), speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts" (p. 13). Through speaking, one can express opinions, beliefs and personal feelings to others directly or indirectly.

Li et al. (2012) suggest that language learning beginners should be given enough time to prepare for the responses. Interlocutors cannot interact effectively with others without understanding what they expressed. Therefore, learners have to be taught to speak as well as to listen (Li et al., 2012; Peña & Onatra, 2009). Successful conversation requires good speakers as well as good listeners. The effective speaking instruction requires teachers to be aware of the factors, conditions, and components that underlie speaking effectiveness (Shumin, 2002). According to Brown and Yule (1983), there are two basic language functions; these functions are the transactional function, which is using the language primarily to transfer information, and the interactional function, which affirms that the purpose of using language is to maintain social relationships. Brown and Yule (1983) believe that a great deal of conventional language use in daily life is mostly interactional, rather than transactional. ESL teachers must encourage practicing dialogues and sentences in the class as well as the pragmatic use of the language.

The Effectiveness of the Task-based Approach in English Speaking Teaching

According to Nunan (2004), task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a “needs-based approach to content selection” (p. 1). TBLT strengthens the application of authentic texts in learning and focuses on the learner’s own personal experiences in classroom learning; TBLT promotes the use of the target language in real-life situations to learn effective communication. It also combines classroom language learning with the practical uses outside the classroom. (Córdoba Zúñiga, 2016; Nunan, 2004); TBLT “provides a non-threatening way of engaging beginner learners in meaning-centered activity” (Ellis, 2003, p. 37).

The ineffectiveness of traditional approaches in English speaking teaching points to plenty of room for improvements in language teaching approach. Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is an approach that emphasizes learning the language through the detailed analysis of grammatical rules; teachers translate sentences and texts into or out of the target language by applying the grammatical knowledge (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Moreover, GTM pays much attention to reading and writing, but gives little attention to speaking and listening. (Li et al., 2012; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The Direct Method (DM) was considered as a naturalistic way of language learning and was accepted by second language teachers. However, It overemphasized the monolingual instruction and advocated the exclusive use of target language in class. According to Richards and Rodgers’ explanation (2001), teachers were the main source of knowledge at the beginning level of learning and the new vocabulary could be taught by using the words learners’ know . The proponents of this trend argued that “a language could be taught without translation or the use of the learner's native tongue if meaning was conveyed directly through demonstration and action” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 9). However, Aliakbari & Jamalvandi (2010) commented that Direct Method and Audio-lingual Method are not suitable for second language learners because these learners turn out to be unable to use the language effectively and satisfy their needs. Therefore, TBLT approach was then proposed as an effective way to grant L2 learners opportunities to use language as if they were using it outside the classroom, because, as stated by Ellis (2009), this approach “need not be seen as an alternative to more traditional, form-focused approach but can be used alongside them” (p. 221).

The Task in Language Teaching

Richards; Platt & Weber (1986) explain that language tasks are :

actions carried out as the result of processing or understanding language. For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command, may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative (p. 289).

Task here is viewed a teaching tool that can enhance EFL learners' development of speaking fluency, and tasks are worth using to help ESL learners in learning real language. Therefore, in order to effectively design the task related to the authentic use of language, the criteria of language-teaching tasks are a crucial part of TBLT. Ellis (2009) notes the following points:

1. The primary focus should be on 'meaning'; i.e. learners should be mainly concerned with processing the semantic and pragmatic meaning of utterances.
2. There should be some kind of 'gap' i.e. a need to convey information, to express an opinion or to infer meaning.
3. Learners should largely rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity.
4. There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language; i.e. language serves as the means of achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right.

Classroom tasks involve learners in producing utterances without manipulation because the task is designed to mobilize learners' grammatical knowledge to express their opinions rather than to complete grammatical exercises. Learners are encouraged to use a range of unpredicted language structures to promote language learning.

Role-play in Foreign Language Teaching

In role-play task, students are assigned particular roles that represent different people according to the assigned situation (Robinson 1981). Role play gives learners the opportunity to be involved in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. Kostas & Foteini (2008) commented that the role-play technique involves the representation of a realistic situation by giving a real-life scenario. A vivid description of role-play made by Fadilah (2016), "role-play is any speaking activity when you either put yourself into somebody else's shoes, or when you stay in your own shoes but put yourself into an imaginary situation" (p. 211).

Role play is an important technique in teaching speaking. Learners can get motivated and become more confident because this activity is carried out in a secure environment (Raz, 1986; Kostas & Foteini, 2008). Role play is perceived by the learner as a rehearsal for real life and therefore as relevant to his aims in learning the language (Raz, 1986). Therefore, the language practiced through role-play is easily transferable to real-life situations (Kostas & Foteini, 2008; Raz, 1986; Robinson, 1981). Li et al. (2012) pointed out role play allows learners to escape the confines of their present situation.

According to Byrne (1986) and Harper-Whalen & Morris (2005), there are three types of role play: full-scripted role-play, semi-scripted role-play and unscripted role-play. Full-scripted role-

play relies on memorizing every word and provides a non-risk way for participants when they are not familiar with the topic (Harper-Whalen & Morris, 2005). Byrne (1986) indicates that full-scripted role play can be appropriate for low-level students who may not be familiar with the semi-scripted situation. Conversations in semi-scripted role-play delete some words but learners know how to fill in the blanks. This type of role-play is more appropriate to upper-beginner participants who have experience and are comfortable in the role activity and have prior knowledge of the assigned topic to assume the role (Harper-Whalen & Morris, 2005). The unscripted role-play is designed to give a few keywords or information, giving learners the opportunity to create their conversations. The improvisation requires learners to have sufficient vocabulary storage and be proficient in using the target language.

When applying role-play technique, the teacher firstly creates a story that reflects the situation to be experienced, then presents the scenario and gives clues for the character roles of the participants and gives clear instructions to the learners. Learners are usually given adequate time to prepare themselves before they start. During the actual role-play, elaborations and comments are not allowed; intervention is allowed when necessary to restore the story; for example, intervention is acceptable when the participant forgets a word, which might inhibit the pace of the speech. Finally, the class reflects on the role-play activity to confirm that the 'problematic situation' has been resolved (Magos & Politi, 2008, pp. 99-100).

Previous Research on Teaching Speaking

The study conducted by Albino in 2017 assesses how English as a foreign language (EFL) learners improve their speaking fluency using TBLT approach. The research investigated 40 ninth-grade learners at PUNIV-Cazenga, a high school in Luanda. Audio-recorded picture descriptions and audio-recorded interviews were used as research instruments in the study. "The findings revealed that learners improved in terms of their speaking fluency by maximizing their speed of speech production, increasing grammatical accuracy, elaborating on their utterances, and developing interactional language" (Albino, 2017, p. 8). Another finding indicated that after being taught with the TBLT approach, the learners felt encouraged to speak, believed in their potentials to use the target language, and expanded their vocabulary.

Carrero Pérez (2016) conducted a research that intended to find the effect of communicative tasks on students' spoken interaction in English and on the motivation towards speaking the foreign language in the classroom. The researcher involved thirty-five adolescent tenth-grade students from a public school in Bogota, Colombia, to participate in the study. Three qualitative techniques were applied: Test, Observation, and Interview to gather information. The findings reported a positive influence of tasks in participants' English oral interaction improvement as well as on their motivation towards speaking English in the classroom.

Raz conducted a research which lasted for 14 weeks in 1980 in six schools in Israel, involving 200 learners to investigate the potential effects of role-play on communicative competence. The results of the Communicative Competence Tests showed that the experimental group, who used role-playing approach, scored significantly higher than the Control Group on all parts of the test (Raz, 1985). Although the research involved intermediate and advanced learners only, Raz believed that role-play can be applied to learners with a minimal knowledge of the language. She suggests that it is important to pair up weak learners with more advanced ones (Raz, 1986).

Guilfoyle & Mistry applied an exploratory case study methodology to test the effectiveness of role play in supporting listening and speaking for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The participants were four pupils in a reception class who newly arrived to the country and spoke little English. Researchers distributed questionnaires to seven teaching staff, followed by one-month observations of four children to collect data. “The findings suggest that role play is effective in supporting language development and speaking and listening skills for pupils who have EAL in the Foundation Stage” (Guilfoyle & Mistry, 2013, p. 68).

Krebt conducted a quantitative research to investigate the impact of role-play on Iraqi EFL students’ speaking skills at the college level in 2017. The participants were 40 college language students, randomly selected in the University of Baghdad. The researcher divided the participants into two groups, experimental and control groups. The experimental group was taught English speaking by applying the role-play technique while the control group was taught in a technique other than role-play. Thirty questions were applied to both groups as a pre-test and post-test of speaking to examine the effectiveness of role-play. The results showed a significant improvement in the speaking skills of the experimental group. Krebt (2007) concluded that using role-play as classroom technique improve the performance in a speaking test, because it provides a interesting environment for students to actively participate in speaking activities.

Aliakbari and Jamalvandi (2010) examined the effects of TBLT-oriented role-play on 60 randomly selected ESL sophomores who were studying in different universities in Iran. Participants in the experimental group were given role-play cards that were played in the class, while the control-group participants were given materials to learn in a traditional method. The obtained IELTS speaking test results showed the claim that TBLT-oriented role-play approach was effective regarding enhancing learners’ speaking ability.

Role-play tasks are widely applied in ESL classroom. With this technique, linguistic teaching is no more a dull and mechanistic set of activities. On the contrary, it attempts to contain paralinguistic and linguistic elements in class in order to help students produce authentic speech.

Exploring Teaching with an Adult ESL Learner

The Background Information of the Author and the Learner

The author who is a graduate student whose major is Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning at Memorial University. The author is also a teacher student, who was born and grew up in China, speaking Mandarin as her first language, with an IELTS speaking score of Band 7 and 3 years of English as second language teaching experience China. She has also a B.A. in teaching English as a second language and a teaching qualification certificate in People's Republic of China (PRC).

The learner is a Syrian refugee woman who was sponsored by the Canadian government in Newfoundland and Labrador, and participated in the experimental learning in 2018. The learner grew up in Syria and had studied the Arabic language at university. Then, she and her families were forced to flee into Lebanon due to the war and were accepted by the government in St. John’s to refuge in 2015. The Syrian learner has been living in Canada for approximately 2 years and a half, and she can express some words in English but cannot speak a full sentence when the author first met her. The Syrian woman is also a mother of four children; the oldest son was 9

years old, who was enrolled in the second year in primary school in St. John's. The oldest daughter was 4 years old and attended to the kindergarten twice a week. The youngest son was almost 3 years old and the youngest daughter was only one month when the author visited in February. The Syrian woman was a full-time housewife and always busy with taking care of her kids and her husband and it was difficult for her to attend the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program. Therefore, when the author applied for a volunteer position in the Association for New Canadians (ANC), the author was matched with the Syrian woman and was required to tutor English to the client.

The Process of Tutoring

The author conducted a six-hour long tutoring with the Syrian woman to help with her English speaking. As the adult learner is a purposeful learner, the author planned the materials based on the learner's needs, the role-play cards were made and PowerPoint was designed before the tutoring. A carefully-designed lesson plan was prepared by the author as she is a non-native speaker and needs to pay much attention to the course preparation. The think-aloud protocols were audiotaped and later transcribed.

The first meeting was arranged by a "middleman" from ANC, who helped introduce the client to the author and translated the needs of the client. From the one-hour meeting, the author understood that the client wanted to improve English speaking so that she could communicate with the locals when she went out shopping. The second meeting lasted for one hour in which the learner learned how to introduce herself; the common way of greeting the locals and the way to open a dialogue with people met for the first time. Then the third meeting lasted for two hours, held 4 days after the second meeting. The Syrian woman was taught to learn how to do grocery shopping and clothes shopping in St. John's. The last meeting was two hours and was designed to help the Syrian woman know how to make a telephone conversation and how to order food from a restaurant.

Lesson 1 was about "learning to introduce yourself". The author designed the scenario about meeting new people in daily life. And the Syrian learner had to introduce herself to her "new friend". The introduction included five parts: greeting, name, country and residence, study or work, and interests. An example was first given by the author with the transcripts in the PowerPoint. (Example: Hello. My name is Ling. I am from China. I live in St. John's right now. And I am a graduate student at Memorial University. In my free time, I like running and playing basketball. It is nice to meet you.) Then in the practice, the expressions to ask questions were taught to the learner. In practice 2, the learner learned the best response to questions and the correct phrases of everyday activities. The sentences about "describing yourself and your family" were practiced afterwards (See appendix A). Finally, the learner was given time to practice what she had learned and the role play began.

Lesson 2 aimed to help the learner gained survival skills of grocery shopping and clothes shopping. Words that can be used in different shops were introduced to the learner in practice 1. In practice 2, the learner was asked to match the food with shops. Then the learner learned to express in full sentences in practice 3. Because the Sobeys is the second largest food retailer in Canada and people often shop there, the following shopping conversations 'happened' in Sobeys were practiced by assigning the role "customer" to the learner and role "cashier" to the author. The questions that the cashier would ask were presented in the PowerPoint. (Questions: Cash or

credit? Do you want any cash back? Do you have Air Miles? Do you have any coupons? Do you want your receipt with you or in the bag?) The customer tried to respond to each question. Then the learner learned the names and colors of clothing, the expressions of clothing size. The scripted role-play was designed to practice for clothes shopping (See appendix B).

Lesson 3 was about common expressions used in phone conversations and the skills to order food in the restaurant. The author and the learner played as the “caller” and the “receiver” on the phone. The full-scripted and semi-scripted role plays were presented in the worksheet (See Appendix C). Simulations of conversations between a waiter and a customer were presented in worksheets to the learner to acquire the skill of eating in the restaurant. The names of different types of food were also presented in worksheets (See Appendix C). And because of the religious constraints of the student, the author chose not to discuss ripeness of the steak in the lesson.

Implications and Conclusions

Teaching and Learning

In experiential learning, I applied my knowledge of English speaking education into practice. I attempted to use task-oriented role play approach to help a Syrian woman improve her oral communication, which allowed me, also as a teacher candidate to connect the theory to practice. This experiential learning prepared me to gradually participate in real-life teaching of learners without using my Mandarin-speaking linguistic background. Starting with risk-free activities in safe learning environments also enabled me to explore the appropriate way to teach in the future. This aligns with thoughts of Grossman et al. (2009) about training novice teachers; approximations of practice are “opportunities for novices to engage in practices that are more or less proximal to the practices of a profession” (p. 2058).

Reducing Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety in Class

This one-to-one English speaking training made me reflect on my formal teaching experience in China. Most of my students achieved a high score in reading and listening (input), but they experienced higher English anxiety levels when trying to express ideas in spoken language (output). According to Liu and Jackson’s research (2008), most Chinese students viewed speaking in a classroom in front of classmates and teachers as an anxiety-provoking activity. This speaking anxiety is probably a reason for their poor oral performance. I also experienced the speaking anxiety in class when I was required to answer questions as a second language learner. The accelerating heart rate, blushing face, trembling legs, and cold hands made me like a person with expressive language disorder. However, I know how to express myself if I feel relaxed and have more time to think about that question. The personal unhappy experience of speaking English in public allowed me to consider the environment of teaching speaking. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, in order to motivate L2 learners to engage in classroom learning, a safe learning environment should be built. The task-oriented role play allows L2 learners to build up a relationship with teachers and students and to learn English in a relaxed and learning-supportive situation. Mak (2011) also suggests that all language professionals need to respond to students by attempting to provide a secure and comfortable learning atmosphere, free from fear of speaking and conducive to risk taking in the target language.

Encouraging Students to Have Confidence

Self-confidence is extremely important in almost every aspect of our lives, yet some many people struggle to find it. Researches in language teaching have revealed that foreign language learners often seem passive and silent in language classrooms. Ghanbarpour (2016) also suggests that self-confidence significantly contributes to the L2 learners' willingness to communicate in a foreign language. As students are fearful of making errors or mistakes, teachers should encourage them to have confidence even when they make mistakes in order to improve their speaking skills. During the tutoring, my client kept asking me "Am I right?" or "Can I say this?", I told her to be tolerant towards her accent and some grammatical mistakes at the beginning. However, explicit instruction of grammatical rules can be followed when finishing the role-play activity. During this process, raising students' awareness of the slow progress of mastering a foreign language is also a key factor to reduce their concern about grammatical errors, accent, and pronunciation. Adult learners may feel a bit awkward when they speak English with a strong accent. I thought the accuracy in pronunciation was not so important as fluency in speech. As Tarone (2005) points out, the goal of teaching pronunciation has shifted from speaking in a native-like accent to aiming at intelligibility of utterances. The modification of drastic accent is not the objective of second language pronunciation teaching. Rather than constantly correcting second language learners' pronunciation, ESL instructors need to help learners to achieve overall fluency and build up their confidence in communication with other speakers of English.

Understanding the Significance of Culture in Language Teaching

Language learning is not the only major hurdle for L2 learners to overcome. When international students, refugees and immigrants are thrown into a new environment, many of them will experience a stage called cultural shock when adapting to a new culture and new language. According to Li (2012), cultural shock is characterized by "unexpected feelings of uncertainty, confusion, and sometimes even anxiety when people are overexposed to new language, ideas, and practices alien to those in their own culture" (p. 29). It can be hard to learn a language without knowing its culture because culture "both enables and impedes us in our effort to understand, communicate, and work with others" (p. 27). Considering the crucial role of L2 teachers in helping L2 learners adapt to a new cultural environment, ESL teachers need to teach both language and culture in class. If L2 teachers are not aware of the importance of culture in language learning, they might run the risk of being ill-prepared to help their learners to use the language in a cultural appropriate manner. For example, "Hey man" is a phrase frequently used by younger speakers in their circle of friends to express closeness. This phrase sometimes can be interpreted by non-native speakers, they might assume that they were called as "John Doe". Furthermore, L2 learners have their own cultures through upbringing, interaction with people in the community and education. Before class, L2 teachers should learn about the background of students to avoid cultural stereotypes. For example, A large number of Syrians are Sunni Muslims, so when teaching food-related vocabulary and habits in western countries, the rare steak is considered as prohibited food for them to eat. As suggested in Li et al., "appropriate intercultural communication helps us stay away from cultural stereotypes and embrace cultural diversity" (p. 40). It is also significant for ESL teachers to acquaint themselves with their students' culture.

Conclusions

The key point of teaching second language speaking is not to limit learners' ability. As Nunan

(2013) reveals, the traditional approach might teach students to parrot responses in a predicted situation but when it comes to using the language in an unpredicted situation beyond the classroom, learners were unable to communicate effectively. The task-oriented role-play approach that I adopt in this article is based on my client's requirements to achieve speaking fluency in daily life. Therefore, the task is set up to simulate of real-life scenarios and the learner can benefit by using authentic scenarios in class. However, the quality of my instruction was probably affected by other external factors, including the gap time between the first and second tutoring and the frequency of my client's practice. As an adult learner as well as a mother, my client found it hard to balance her life with the study. Sometimes it may be more pedagogically sound to decide what is appropriate for the adult learner, but the process of instruction can be impeded due to lack of time and other reasons. ESL teachers also need to be prepared for emerging issues that happen to adult learners.

The Author

Ling Ding is a Master student at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University, majoring in Second Language Education. Her research interests are in L2 writing, EAP, and teacher training.

References

- Albino, G. (2017). Improving speaking fluency in a task-based language teaching approach: The case of EFL learners at PUNIV-Cazenga. *SAGE Open*, 7(2), 1-11.
- Aliakbari, M., & Jamalvandi, B. (2010). The impact of 'role play' on fostering EFL learners' speaking ability: A task-based approach. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 14(1), 15-29.
- Brown, G. & Yule G. (1983). *Discourse analysis*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Carrero Pérez, N. P. (2016). Effects of tasks on spoken interaction and motivation in English language learners. *GIST Education and Learning Research Journal*, 13(1), 34-55.
- Chaney, A. L. & Burk T. L. (1998). *Teaching oral communication in grades K-8*. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon.
- Córdoba Zúñiga, E. (2016). Implementing task-based language teaching to integrate language skills in an EFL program at a Colombian university. *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 18(2). 13-27.
- Ellis, R., (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R., (2009). Task-based language teaching: Sorting out the misunderstandings. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 19(3), 221-246.
- Fadilah (2016). Teaching speaking by role-play activity. *Okara: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 10(2), 209-216.
- Fereshteh, T.; Ali, K. (2016). Empowerment of refugees by language: Can ESL learners affect the target culture? *TESL Canada Journal*. 33(10), 129-137.
- Galbraith, M.W. (2004). The teacher of adults. In Galbraith, M.W. (Ed), *Adult learning methods: A guide for effective instruction*, 3rd edition (pp.3-21). Malabar, FL: Kriegar.

- Ghanbarpour, M. (2016). Willingness to communicate, linguistic self-confidence, and language-use anxiety: The Iranian EFL context. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(12), 2265-2271
- Grossman, P., Compton, C., Igra, D., Ronfeldt, M., Shahan, E., & Williamson, P. (2009). Teaching practice: A cross-professional perspective. *Teachers College Record*, 111(9), 2055-2100.
- Guilfoyle, N. & Mistry M. (2013) How effective is role play in supporting speaking and listening for pupils with English as an additional language in the Foundation Stage? *Education 3-13*, 41(1), 63-70.
- Hinkel, E. (2006). Current perspectives on teaching the four skills. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 109-131.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). Edinburgh, UK: Pearson.
- Harper-Whalen, Susan & Morris, Sandra (2005): Using a role-play activity in training. *Training Solutions* 9, 1-4.
- Krebt, D. (2017). The effectiveness of role play techniques in teaching speaking for EFL college students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8(5), 863-870.
- Li, X., Myles, J., & Robinson, P. (2012). *Teaching ESL in Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Liu, M., & Jackson, J. (2008). An exploration of Chinese EFL learners' unwillingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(1), 71-86.
- Magos, K. & Politi, F., (2008). The creative second language lesson: The contribution of the role-play technique to the teaching of a second language in immigrant classes. *RELC Journal: A Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 39(1), 96-112.
- Mak, B. (2011). An exploration of speaking-in-class anxiety with Chinese ESL learners. *System*, 39, 202-214.
- Malihah, N. (2010). The effectiveness of speaking instruction through task-based language teaching. *Register Journal*, 3(1), 85-101.
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. New York: Cambridge university press.
- Nunan, D. (2013). *Learner-centered English language education: The selected works of David Nunan*. New York: Routledge.
- Tarone, E. (2005). Speaking in a second language. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 485-502). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hendriani, S. (2016). Implementing task-based language teaching to overcome the problems of teaching speaking. *Ta'dib*, 17(1), 75-80.
- Raz, H., (1985). Role-play in foreign language learning. *System*, 13(3), 225-229.
- Richards, J.C., Platt, J. & Weber, H. (1986). *A dictionary of applied linguistics*. London: Longman.
- Richards, J. C. & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, P. G., (1981). Role-playing and class participation. *ELT Journal*, Vol.XXXV(4), 384-386.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching, practice and theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ushioda, E. (2008) Motivation and good language learners. In: Griffiths, Carol, (Ed.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 19-34). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Wlodkowski, R. J. (2008). *Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shumin, K. (2002). Factors to consider: Developing adult EFL students' speaking abilities. In J. C. Richards & W. Renandya (Ed.), *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice* (pp. 204-211). New York: Cambridge University Press

Appendix A-worksheets for lesson 1

Practice 1:

Learning the correct words to questions:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| a) Where are you _____? | brothers |
| b) What's your _____? | for |
| c) Where do you _____? | do |
| d) Where do you come _____? | going |
| e) Who are you looking _____? | from |
| f) What do you _____? | live |
| g) Do you have any _____? | name |

Practice 2:

Learning the best response-

- 1) *I'm from China. Do you know it?*
 - a) *I'm from Syria.*
 - b) *Yes, I do.*
- 2) *I'm Chinese. How about you?*
 - a) *My name is Jane.*
 - b) *I'm from Syria.*
- 3) *Which part of Canada are you from?*
 - a) *St. John's.*
 - b) *I'm newcomer.*
- 4) *Where do you work?*
 - a) *I don't have a job.*
 - b) *I'm a housewife at home.*
- 5) *What do you do in your free time?*
 - a) *I do nothing.*
 - b) *I like cooking.*
- 6) *Where do you usually go on weekends?*
 - a) *I want to eat something spicy.*
 - b) *I just stay at home.*

Everyday activities :

Complete the everyday activities with the words in the box.
Underline them in the text.

breakfast the children clothes dinner home
supermarket the house the washing work up

Everyday activities

clean _____	get _____
come _____	go to _____
cook _____	go to the _____
do _____	iron _____
drive _____ to school	make _____

Describing yourself and your family:

Write true sentences about yourself and your family. Use the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

- 1 _____ (get up) at _____ .
My mum gets up at seven o'clock.
- 2 _____ (make) breakfast in my house.
- 3 _____ (go) to work at _____
in the morning.
- 4 _____ (come) home at _____
in the evening.
- 5 _____ (help) my parents with the housework.
- 6 _____ (cook) dinner in my house.
- 7 _____ (go) to the supermarket on
_____.
- 8 _____ (tidy and clean) the house.

Role play card for Lesson 1:

<p>You're Jane. You're a Chinese singer and you live in Beijing. You're traveling to Canada. You like music and fashion.</p>	<p>You're Kelly. You're a housewife. You're from Syria but now you live in St. John's. You're married and you have 2 kids. You like cooking.</p>
--	--

Appendix B-worksheets for lesson 2 (materials downloaded from British Council)

Practice 1 Name the shops

bakery café Post Office market chemist (pharmacy)



Practice 2 Sort the words into the right boxes.

fruit	tea	vegetables
coffee	sandwiches	clothes

	market
<i>fruit</i>	
	café

Practice 3 writing sentences

Complete the sentences with a shop.

1. I can buy magazines at the
2. I can buy fruit at the
3. I can buy a bag at the
4. I can buy stamps at the
5. I can buy bread at the
6. I can buy cake at the

Complete the sentences with different items.

1. I can buy at the market.
2. I can buyat the chemist.
3. I can buyat the Post Office.
4. I can buy at the bakery.
5. I can buyat the café.

Shopping for clothes

Conversation 1:

- Hello, Can I help you?
- No, I am just browsing (looking around).
- Let me know if you need any help.
- Actually, do you have any dresses in stock?
- Yes, let me show you.
- Hmm, I like this one, do you have in any color?
- Yes, this dress also comes in, red, blue, black and green.
- I like to try the blue one, please.
- Sure, the changing rooms are over there.
- Can I try this in a smaller size?
- Sorry, we don't have any in stock left in that color, would you like to try another color?
- Hmm, I really like the blue one.
- We have a special offer, buy one get one free.
- Really, that's a bargain.
- Yes, we have a lot of special deals in our clothing.
- In that case, I will take the red one and black one.
- Would you like anything else?
- No, thanks. I'll just get this, can I pay by card?
- Yes, please.
- Can I get a receipt?
- Of course, here you go.
- Thank you! Have a nice day!
- Thanks for shopping with us.

Appendix C-worksheets for lesson 3

Conversations on the phone

Is there, please?
This is calling for
Is.....in?
May I please speak to?
Speaking!
.....speaking, how can I help you?
This is
One moment please.
Just a moment please.
Hang on a second. I'll get.....
I am sorry, she is not here at the moment.
Would you like to leave a message?
I am afraid you have got the wrong number

Expressing telephone problems

Your voice is cracking/ jarring.
The line is very bad, could you repeat?
I am afraid I can't hear you.

Eating in the restaurant

Welcome to "the name of restaurant", party of how many?
Hi! Welcome to "the name of restaurant", party of 2?
Would you like a booth or a table?
Can I have no ice please?
What do you have on tap? / what kind of bottled beers do you have?
What's the most popular beer?
What kind of dressing do you want with your salad?
How would you like your eggs cooked?

Type of the table



a booth



a high top



at the bar

Salad dressing:



ranch dressing



blue cheese



thousand island

Eggs:



scrambled



hard boiled



sunny side up



over easy