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## Technology and Role-Play Task to Improve Students' Speaking Performance

Jotiram Gaikwad<sup>1</sup>  
Tripti Karekatti<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstract

The main purpose of teaching English language is to drive learners to communicate effectively in real life situations. Teaching to communicate in real life situations is often challenging as students get little chance to practice the target language in class. The aim of the present research is to find the effectiveness of technology and role-play to improve students' speaking performance. The present experimental research was conducted on forty students of First Year of Bachelor of Commerce (F.Y.B.COM.) course. These selected forty students were randomly divided into two groups – the Controlled Group (CG) and the Experimental Group (EG). English was taught to both the groups over a period of one academic year as per the designed teaching/learning module (TLM) developed by the present researcher. The students in the experimental group received technology enhanced training on the module where as the controlled group just had the usual classroom training on the module. Data was collected through role-play task at the end of the teaching to assess, evaluate and compare their performance. The findings of the study show positive impact of technology based activities and role-play on the performance of the Experimental Group.

**Keywords:** Technology, Role-Play, Experimental Research, Controlled Group (CG), Experimental Group (EG), Teaching/Learning Module (TLM)

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<sup>1</sup> Dr., Assistant Professor, St. Xavier's College-Autonomous, 5, Mahaplika Marg, Fort, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India 400 001  
Cell phone number: 08850478223/09221220114. email: [jotirmag274@gmail.com](mailto:jotirmag274@gmail.com)/[jotiram.gaikwad@xaviers.edu](mailto:jotiram.gaikwad@xaviers.edu)

<sup>2</sup> Department of English, Shivaji University, Vidyanagar, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India 416 004. Cell phone number: 09822340859  
email: [triptikarekatti@gmail.com](mailto:triptikarekatti@gmail.com)

## **Introduction**

This paper discusses the use of technology and the role-play activity in ELT classroom to improve students' speaking performance. In the present study, the term 'technology' is used to refer to 'information and communication technology'. It includes technological tools such as radio, telephone, television, cellular phones, computer, Internet and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning.

Role play is a classroom activity which gives the learners an opportunity to practice the language and the actual roles they perform outside the classroom. It is an activity in which persons are involved in spontaneous interactions to complete a task. It insists on learners to communicate as per the given role. It is a very important technique in teaching English as it gives students an opportunity to practice language in different social contexts and roles.

The aim of the present research was to find out the extent to which technology enhanced English language teaching and role-play task can help undergraduate students in language learning. Effectiveness of technological tools such as computer assisted language learning, language lab, multi-media classrooms as well as that of role-play in English Language Teaching (ELT) was assessed through a study spread over an academic year. The students were given training using a teaching/learning module specifically designed for the purpose and taught in the multi-media classroom and in the language lab.

## **Role-Play**

The role-play is defined by various authors in different ways. According to Ladousse (1987), "Role play is one of a whole gamut of communicative techniques which develops fluency in language students, which promotes interaction in the classroom and which increases motivation" (p. 7). Gołębiowska (1987) describes the activity thus: in role-play learners are given a task to complete and in order to do it, they are told who they are, what their opinions are, and what they know that is unknown to the other students (p. 13). Thus, the key feature of role-play is that learners can play different roles – a businessman, a lawyer, a doctor or a politician for a short period of time.

Role plays can be very short or open-ended. They can be used as a follow-up or reinforcement activity. It is flexible and helps improve fluency more than accuracy. It puts the emphasis on practicing communication. It is a technique that allows free flow of imagination.

There are two different types of role-plays – real-plays and surreal-plays. A role-play activity which is a rehearsal for the real world is called real-play (Al-Arishi, 1994, p. 339). It gives students the chance to practice the activities that they have to perform in real life such as offering a notebook, greetings, asking for directions, booking a room in hotel, etc. In contrast to real-play, surreal-play is an imaginative self-expression of the inner world of each student's mind (Al-Arishi, 1994, p. 337). In the present study, real-play was used to teach English, to provide practice of English and to collect data.

## **Research design**

This section describes the subjects of the study, technological devices used for teaching English, and technology enhanced TLM used teaching for one academic year. The techniques employed for data collection and data analysis are also described.

## **Subjects of the Study**

The present research was conducted on forty students of First Year of Bachelor of Commerce (F.Y.B.Com.) class of St. Xavier's College - Autonomous, Mumbai, during the academic year 2013-2014. The number of students (40 students) couldn't have been further increased as they

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were to be intensively trained over a period of one academic year. These forty students were randomly divided into two groups – the Controlled Group (CG) and the Experimental Group (EG). The twenty subjects of CG had different regional languages of India as their L1 (eight had Kannada, six had Marathi, two had Hindi, two had Bhojpuri and one each had Tulu and Assamese). The twenty subjects of EG too had different first language (nine had Marathi, three had Hindi, three had Kannada, two had Bhojpuri and one each had Malayalam, Oriya, Telugu as their L1).

Most of the students had moved from their native village/tehsil to the district or to the metropolitan city at junior college level. The medium of instruction was regional language at school level for all the subjects but it was English at junior college level for the majority of students.

These students are working students and attend classes in evening. Their parents are either educated upto primary or secondary level, or uneducated. In the case of most of the students, their mothers are homemakers and fathers are blue-collar workers – drivers, tailors, servicemen, farmers, or small businessmen.

### **Technological devices used for teaching English**

In the present study, technological devices were selected considering availability, requirement and applicability. Technological devices such as language lab, computer, CALL/CMC, CD ROM/DVD ROM, CD/DVD player, LCD projector, internet, and audio system were used for teaching English. Language lab was used to teach selected grammar components and to provide practice. It was also used to conduct some lectures of speaking activity as well as to provide practice. The computer and laptop was used in language lab, multi-media room and classroom for running CALL/CMC programme, CD-ROMS and DVD-ROMS; playing audios; and showing audio-videos. Computer was used for all activities. CALL/CMC was used for teaching some components of grammar. CDs and DVDs were used as per the requirement and availability. CD/DVD player was used to run CDs and DVDs. LCD projector was used in language lab, multi-media room, as well as in classroom to present computer or laptop display on the big screen. Internet was used to download and show various videos available online as well as to collect information. Audio system was used for playing audios and videos in multi-media room, in regular classroom and in the language lab.

### **Technology enhanced teaching for one academic year using TLM**

English was taught using teaching/learning module (TLM) by the present researcher for one academic year. It was taught in regular classroom for the common components of the TLM and the regular syllabus of 'Communication Skills in English' of the said college. TLM consisted of four parts – refreshing grammar, speaking activities, conversational (situational) activities and professional activities. Grammar and some components of speaking and professional activities were taught to the selected students with chalk and talk in regular classroom along with the other students of F.Y.B.COM. Extra classes were conducted for teaching additional components of TLM and to provide training using technology and role-play.

### **Data Elicitation Tools**

To test the oral proficiency of participants, data was collected through role-play. The role-play task attempts to create real life like situations to engage subjects in meaningful conversation. The twenty students of each group were divided into ten pairs. Each pair was given a particular situation and had to engage in real life-like conversation through role-play activities. These pairs had to use English for certain functions such as giving directions, offering help, placing an order, making complaint, making requests, making enquiry, asking and giving permission and introducing each other at work place. This test, however, was conducted only after the students were given training according to the designed TLM as the participants were afraid of using English for actual conversation in English before undergoing the training.

## **Data Analysis Tools**

Analysis of role-plays is done qualitatively using the framework of communicative competence model developed by Cannale and Swain (1980), and further elaborated by Cannale (1983) to see the qualitative improvement in the performance of the participants. It is done on the basis of the ability to perform the role-play activity according to the given situation, the ability to use cohesion and coherence, the number of grammatical correct sentences, and the use of communication strategies to overcome communication problems.

In addition to qualitative analysis, the data is also analysed quantitatively using techniques like the use of – the number of words, the number of appropriate responses, cohesion and coherence, the error frequency and the error rate in the selected grammar categories, and the communication strategies by each participant. The main aim of the qualitative and quantitative analysis is to see to what extent the designed teaching module, technology enhanced teaching and the role-play task could improve the performance of the students in English.

### **Analysis**

The present section presents the qualitative and quantitative analysis of role-play tasks on the basis of the ability to perform the role-play according to the given situation. It also presents an analysis of the use of cohesion and coherence, the proportion of grammatical correct sentences, the use of communication strategies to overcome communication problems, and the use of the number of words. In the analysis presented below, to identify and quote some expert from the answers of the students, the following abbreviations are used.

- a. CG01, CG02, CG03, etc. for participants 01, 02, 03, etc. of the Controlled Group
- b. EG01, EG02, EG03, etc. for participants 01, 02, 03, etc. of the Experimental Group

#### **1. Ability to perform the role-play task as per the given situation**

Most of the role-plays of both the groups are as per the given situation. Even if the grammar is not correct, these role-plays are situationally appropriate. For instance, the role-play between an Estate Agent (CG02) and a Customer (CG19) is on 'offering help for purchasing a new office'.

\* Customer: I come to know that ... you are help in ... purchasing a new office

\* Agent: yeah ... I also er ... (??) ... er help in such a works ... but what is you from me

\* Customer: because I want to er office ... new office ... ... can you help me

\* Agent: yeah ... er ... er can er but er which type of office you want

The role-play between a Contractor (EG06) and Building Owner (EG02) is on the topic 'to make request for giving a contract'.

\* Contractor: sir I had making er ... many more ... lifts in ... many places like er ... Ghatkoper ... and er ... then I see ... see seen seen you ... seen your advertisement ... then I came know er ... er ... would you please give me a chance ... for making a lift

\* Building Owner: ok I'll give you ... but show me your prospectus

\* Contractor: yes sir ... sure sir ... this is my prospectus

Some role-plays are not as per the given situation. For example, the pair of the CG while playing roles as a Company Representative (CG14) and a Hotel Manager (CG10) could not perform the function of 'making request to organize a conference'.

\* Company Representative: er sir ... er we are launching er new ... new product in er market ... and er ... er ... (??) ... (??) (??) ... conference ... which ... conference which is ...

\* Hotel Manager: what type of conference

\* Company Representative: conference ... er conference ... which is er ... er ... er ... about our produce ... erer we want ... about ... our ... product ... we want ... we ... we want ... sir ... we want ... conference ... basically ... about our product ... we want ... about ... all ... other ... business ... (??) ... about our product

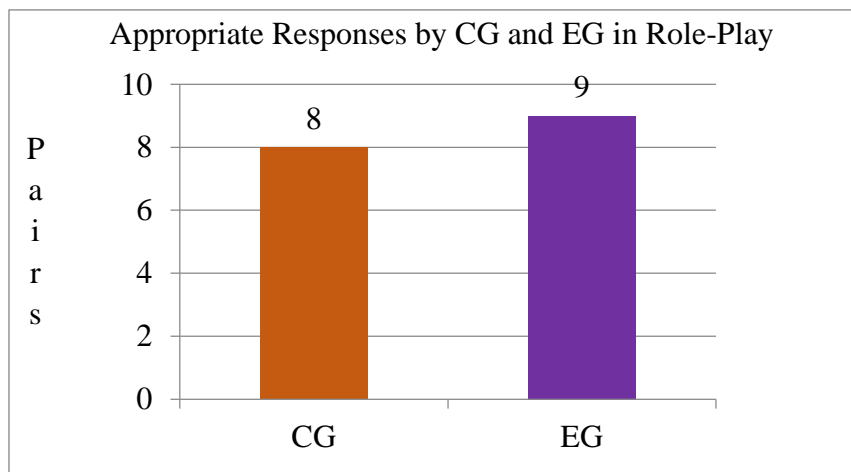
In this role-play, company representative talks about the conference itself instead of making request to the hotel manager to make necessary arrangement to organize the conference. He states the reason behind organizing the conference but fails to make an actual request to organize the conference.

The following role-play task of the EG is not as per the given situation. It lacks proper formality marker:

\* Student: madam ... I am sorry to disturb you ... er ... yesterday I fail to give ... my presentation because that day I ... I was ill ... so ... would you mind ... to give er ... er presentation

\* Teacher: I have mind because ... yesterday you are not came ... that's your problem ... today I don't have time ... and ... if you want to give presentation then er ... er ... where is your er ... er ... doctors certificate

Thus, the participants of both the groups have succeeded in many role-play activities according to the given situation. Figure-1 below presents a comparison of the appropriate responses given by the CG and the EG in role-play task.



*Figure-1: Appropriate responses by the CG and the EG in Role-Play*

Appropriateness was satisfactory as most of the role-play tasks were as per the given situation – only one pair of students from the EG and two from the CG could not give appropriate speech for the given role-play topics. Though the sociolinguistic competence of the role-play tasks is satisfactory in case of both the groups, their grammatical competence is so low that it spoils their speech extremely and affects other competencies as well.

## **2. Cohesion and Coherence**

All the ten pairs of both the groups have used cohesion and coherence. For example, in the role-play activity involving a Contractor (CG01) and Supervisor (CG15) on the topic 'giving instruction and direction for completing the task', the pair has used cohesion and coherence devices:

\* Contractor: XYZ ... I got one er ... road contract ... in my er ... village ... I want to finish that contract ... within six months

\* Supervisor: Sir it is not possible sir

\* Contractor: why it is

\* Supervisor: er ... because of ... er er got er ... er ... er ... that er ... that ... er ... labour force and that er ... many person er supported that ... er so it is not possible

This role-play has cohesion as third person personal pronoun is used for anaphoric reference. The third person personal pronoun 'it' is used in act-2 and 3 to refer to the word 'contract' already mentioned in act-1 and replacement is used in act-4 to refer to the statement 'it is not possible' mentioned in act-2. The conversation has coherence as act-1 is demand, act-2 is response to demand, act-3 is response to act -2 and act-4 is as per the response of act-3.

The EG pair in the role-play between two employees [Employee-2 (EG01) and Employee-1 (EG07)] on the topic 'getting introduced to each other at the workplace' has cohesion and coherence.

\* Employee-1: er I don't think ... so ... we have met ... before

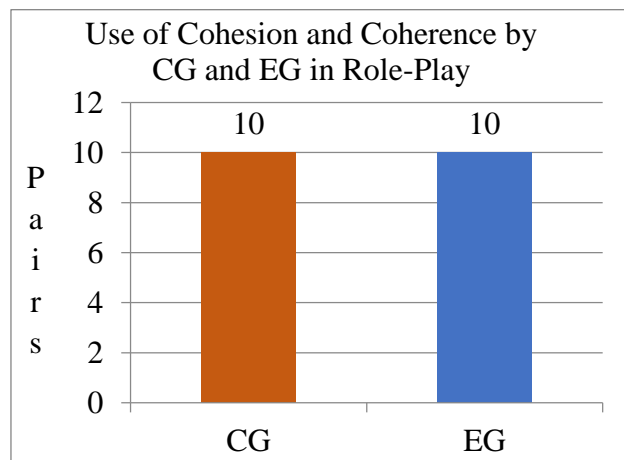
\* Employee-2: yes yes ... we have not met before

\* Employee-1: let me introduce myself ... I am XYZ.

\* Employee-2: ok ... and my name is XYZ

The cohesive devices such as repetition in act-2 and conjunction 'and' in act-4 are used to connect the sentences. The conversation has coherence as act-2 is a response to an enquiry of act-1, and act-3 and 4 are interlinked.

The level of cohesion and coherence in the role-play task was analysed and found to be similar in both the groups. This is reflected in the Figure-2 below.



*Figure-2: Use of cohesion and coherence by the CG and the EG in Role-Play*

Though both the groups were not ready for the role-play activity in the pre-test, the use of cohesion and coherence by both the groups in the post-test is remarkable. It indicates that the use of technology and the role play task helped the participants to improve their performance. Despite the fact that the sociolinguistic and discourse competence of the participants of the both the groups is satisfactory, their performance suffers due to low grammatical competence.

### **3. Grammatical Correctness**

Grammatical competence was assessed using error analysis technique. The errors were analysed using the steps given by Corder (1967) in the selected grammar categories – noun, pronoun (Pron.), verb phrase (VP), adverb (Adv.), adjective (Adj.), preposition (Prep.), coordinating conjunction (Cor. Conj.), subordinating conjunction (Sub. Conj.) and articles. A detailed error analysis found the following things:

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a. Errors in the use of noun have occurred mainly due to omission, addition and incorrect use of nouns. For example, in the following excerpt participant used noun 'company' unnecessarily when noun 'industry' is already used.

\* hello ... this is er Britania industry company (CG17)

In the following example, noun 'order' is omitted when it is needed.

\* ok I'll give you ... but show me your prospectus (EG02)

Noun 'product' is used instead 'project' in this example:

\* I want to ... complete my product sir ... that's why (EG19)

Often singular forms of nouns are used instead of plural and vice versa. Plural form of noun is used instead of singular when the entire sentence demands noun in singular form.

\* I come here ... asking your permissions ... for conducting meeting (EG18)

Noun 'permission' is used with inflection '-s' when it is not needed.

b. Like nouns, errors in the use of pronouns have occurred due to omission, addition and incorrect use. For example, Most of the students omitted subjective pronoun 'I'.

\* yeah ... er ... er can er but er which type of office you want (CG02)

First person singular pronoun is used instead of plural and vice versa as in the following examples.

\* ok ... that's good idea ... er er I had ... I had ... big ... big hall (CG10)

Pronoun 'I' (CG10) is used instead of 'we' when speaker is a manager who speaks on behalf of the management.

Subjective pronoun is used instead of possessive pronoun and vice versa. Most of the participants have used subjective pronoun 'you' instead of possessive pronoun 'your' as in the following examples.

\* you ... you bank give me loan (EG13)

c. Most of the participants have made errors in using verb phrase as stated.

i. Auxiliary 'do' is omitted while making wh-question in the present tense as in the following examples.

\* ok ... madam which product you want (CG11)

\* you know ... (??) Gandhi circle (CG20)

ii. Forms of auxiliary 'be' are omitted when they function as the main verb.

\* yes sir ... today here problem sir ... (EG18)

iii. Modals are omitted when they are needed as in the following example wherein modal 'can' is omitted when it is needed.

\* ... your bank give me loan (EG13)

iv. Students seem to have formed the hypothesis that some form of 'be' is essential to mark the tense and insert it everywhere. In the following example, present tense form of 'be' – 'am' is used when the verb 'like' is already marked for tense.

\* ok ... I am like to hear from you ... ok you go (CG13)

v. Students have formed wrong assumptions about indicating future time and end up using sometimes two markers, etc. In the following example 'shall' is used before verb in past form.

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\* its ok ... er I'll got it (CG07)

vi. Even auxiliaries are used unnecessarily as in the following example wherein 'is' is used in NP when it is not required.

\* then you see the gmail ... gmail is instruction (EG09)

vii. There are numerous errors regarding tense markers. Even 'am', 'is', 'are' and 'was' are not used correctly. For example, in the following example auxiliary form 'was' is used instead of 'are'.

\* I have er ... some products that ... that was ... famous in market (CG11)

viii. Errors in aspect are due to the omission of auxiliaries. Auxiliaries 'have' and 'are' are omitted.

\* I am ... I gone ... bank ... but er ... my ATM er ... card ... not ... there (CG09)

\* what e-mail id you creating gmail ... yahoo (EG09)

d. Errors in the use of adverbs are due to omission, addition and incorrect use. For example, in the following examples adverb 'ahead' (CG13) and 'so' (EG16) are omitted when they are required.

\* ok ... I am like to hear from you ... ok you go (CG13)

\* shopkeeper will take more price from you for...for the customer satisfaction we are selling in online (EG16)

Adverbs are used when they are not required as in the following examples wherein adverb 'so' is used when it is not required.

\* the first one which you told ... increase the condition of sale ... so I think is better ... (CG13)

\* er I don't think ... so ... we have met ... before (EG07)

Incorrect adverbs are used as in the following examples wherein adverb 'if' (CG20), 'ok' (EG02) and 'then' (EG06) are used instead of 'when', 'so', and 'recently'.

\* if you in the Gandhi circle ... you take left turn ... go straight (CG20)

\* your company ... also provided ... provided nice ... quality of lift ... ok I'll give this contract ... (EG02)

\* sir I had making er ... many more ... lifts in ... many places like er ... Ghatkoper ... and er ... then I see ... see seen seen you ... seen your advertisement ... (EG06)

e. Errors in the use of adjectives are mainly due to omission and incorrect use. For example, adjective 'good' is omitted when it is needed.

\* sir ... er ... er today ... today market condition ... is ... er ... market ... market share ... (CG18)

Incorrect adjectives are used as in the following example wherein adjective 'well' is used instead of 'good'.

\* ... your prospectus is very nice ... and your company also done very well job (EG02)

f. Errors in the use of prepositions are mainly due to omission and incorrect use. For example, preposition 'with' is used when it is not required.

\* I want er ... with ... one ... one shop ... (CG16)

Prepositions 'of' and 'on' are used instead of 'about' and 'of'.

\* I am from er ... big seven ... I want to enquiry of your product (CG17)



\* erer I..I.I would like to ... discuss ... the matter ... on the share (CG18).

g. Most of the errors in the use of coordinating conjunction have occurred due to the omission of 'and'. For example,

\* I have some ideas sir ... I hope ... you will ... like it (CG12)

\* if you in the Gandhi circle ... you take left turn ... go straight (CG20)

h. Some students have used incorrect subordinate conjunctions. For example, subordinating conjunction 'because' is used instead of 'that'.

\* yeah ... I will tell you becu... we are the first company who selling in online the reason behind this is because er ... the shopkeeper ... shopkeeper will take more price from you for ... (EG16)

i. The students have not properly learnt the rules regarding use of definite and indefinite article and this is reflected in the confusion they make in their use. For example, Indefinite article is omitted.

\* sir I want to place order for pizza (CG03)

\* I come here ... asking your permissions ... for conducting meeting (EG18)

then definite article is omitted, as in:

\* yes ... I have er ... some products that ... that was ... famous in market ... (CG11)

\* ... er we are launching er new ... new product in er market (CG14)

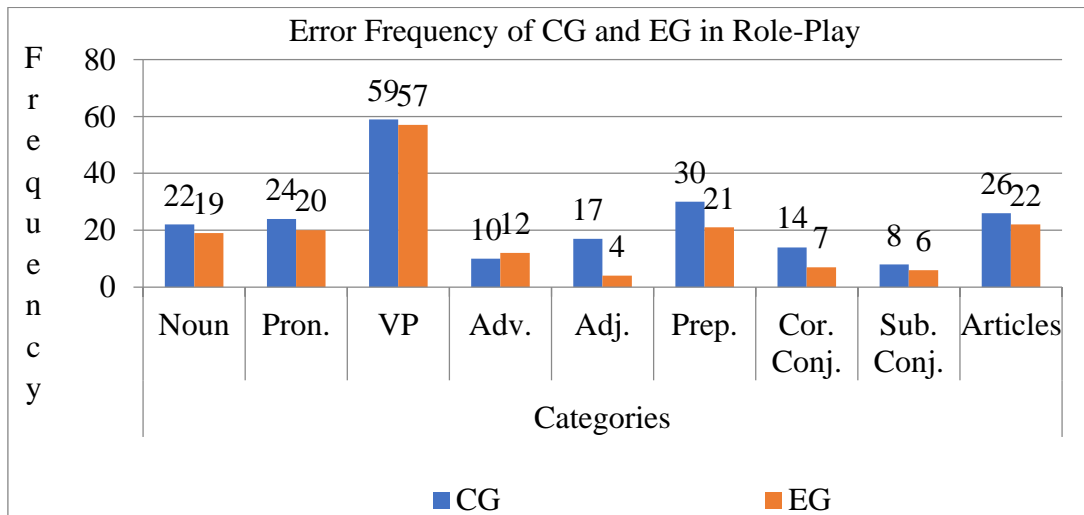
Articles are inserted incorrectly as the following examples.

\* yeah ... I also er ... (??) ... er help in such a works (CG02)

\* you read the your information (EG09)

### Error Frequency

Error frequency is the total number of errors. The aim of calculating error frequency is to see the impact of training on the error frequency. Figure-3 presents the error frequency of both the groups in role-play task.



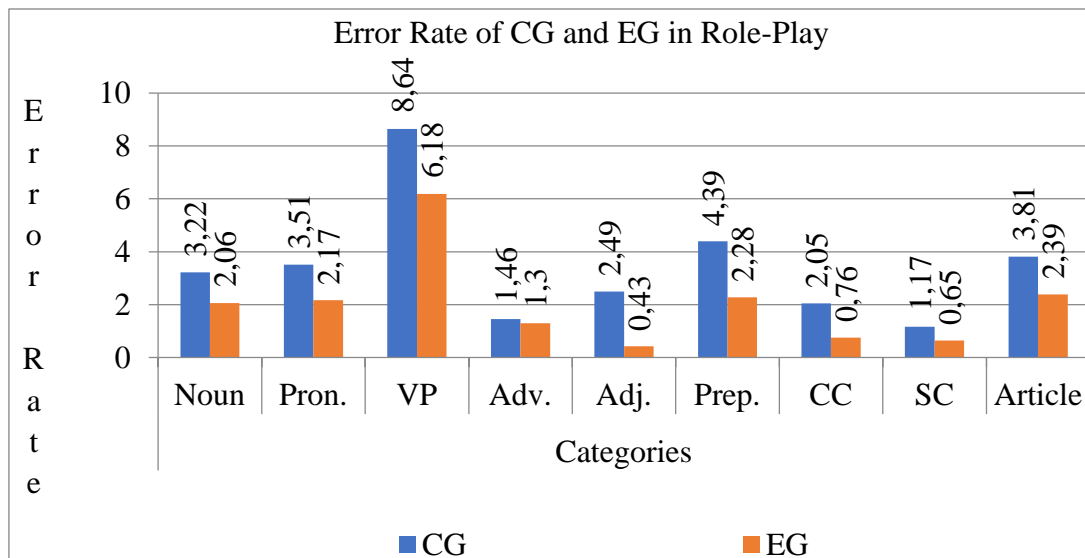
*Figure-3: Error frequency of the CG and the EG in Role-Play*

Figure-3 shows the error frequency in the selected grammar categories. It shows that the error frequency of the CG and the EG is greater in the use of verb phrases, prepositions, articles,

nouns and pronouns, and lower in subordinating conjunctions, adverbs, coordinating conjunctions and adjectives. Error frequency in all grammar categories is more in the CG than the EG. The average error frequency in the selected grammar categories is 23.33 errors in the CG and 18.67 errors in the EG. The error frequency is slightly greater in the case of the CG than the EG and it can be the result of teaching module and technology used for teaching English.

**Error Rate**

Like error frequency, the error rate is also calculated. The error rate is obtained by dividing the total number of errors by the total number of words. The aim of calculating error rate is to compare the total number of errors with the total number of words used. The following figure (Figure-4) presents the error rate of nouns, pronouns, verb phrases, prepositions, coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions and articles.



*Figure-4: Error rate of the CG and the EG in Role-Play*

Figure-4 shows that, like error frequency, error rate of both the groups is greater in the use of verb phrases, prepositions, articles, pronouns and nouns, and lower in subordinating conjunctions, adverbs, coordinating conjunctions and adjectives. Error rate in all grammar categories is more in the CG than the EG. The average error rate in the selected grammar categories is 3.42 errors in the CG and 2.02 errors in the EG. The results of error frequency and error rate in the selected grammar categories show slight improvement in the performance of the EG than the CG as the average error frequency and error rate in all grammar categories is more in the CG than the EG.

**4. Strategies used to overcome communication problem**

To overcome the problems faced when using English for communication, students sometimes used different communication strategies. They used formal reduction strategies to avoid difficult L2 rules, functional reduction strategies to give up the message and achievement strategies to use an alternative plan to continue communication in difficult situations. A detailed analysis of communication strategies used by the CG and the EG in role-play is as stated.

a. Formal reduction strategy is used when the participants failed to apply a particular rule of English. Most of the time students used this strategy when they failed to make proper interrogative sentences. They formed interrogative sentences without using reporting verb 'do' as in the following examples.

\* which type of office you want (CG02)

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- \* you know ... (??) Gandhi circle (CG20)

Participants formed interrogative sentences without using modals in interrogative sentence.

- \* you ... your bank give me loan (EG13)

As in the following examples, sentences have been constructed without using forms of auxiliary 'be'.

- \* Many things in my mind. (EG11)

b. Message abandonment is another functional reduction strategy used very commonly by the participants of both the groups. Most of the students have used this strategy to leave the message incomplete when they failed to recollect exact word or term or rules or forms of English language as in the following example.

- \* ok ... I am like to hear from you ... ok you go ... (CG13)

- \* if you want to give presentation then er ... er ... where is your er ... er ... doctors certificate (EG08)

- \* I will tell you ab ... features of E-fifty three Motorola (EG16)

c. Restructuring strategy is used when learners realize that they cannot complete a sentence the way in which they have already begun and develop an alternative plan. Participants have used this strategy to modify and correct subsequent utterances. It is used to give better expression.

- \* today is er ... Saturday therefore ... er one order is going ... one offer is going..going on ... (CG04)

It is used to express the content in a better way.

- \* I have many products ... many branch of products I have (CG11)

It is used to modify the subsequent action.

- \* ... why satisfied er ... er ... why er ... why not satisfied consumer (EG04)

It is used to get time to think about next utterance.

- \* then I see ... see seen seen you ... seen your advertisement (EG06)

- \* what are you doing here while sitt ... while sitting alone (EG17)

d. Repetition is a strategy where learner repeats words, phrases or sentences uttered already with the intention to gain time to recollect some word or to think about the next part for communication. For example,

- \* we..we ... we will not get the ... much..much..much profit ... from the ... from the ... share (CG18)

- \* I come here er ... I come here ... asking your permissions (EG18)

Though above-mentioned examples show that the repetition strategy helps to retrieve an appropriate word or form for communication, this is not always possible, as is clear in the following utterances:

- \* I am having so much work ... er ... so much er ... work ... (EG15)

In this example (EG15) participant repeats words and parts of sentence to gain time to recollect some item but fails to do so and has to leave the message unfinished.

e. In role-play task, it is natural for the L2 learner to use fillers. So, this strategy is used by the participants as in the following examples.

- \* I am also fine ... er ... I call you this ... this ... (CG13)
- \* ... .. er er I.I.I would like to ... discuss ... the matter ... on the share (CG18)
- \* I have mind because ... yesterday you are not came ... that's your problem ... today I don't have time ... and ... if you want to give presentation then er ... er ... where is your er ... er ... doctors certificate (EG08)
- \* yes sir ... today here problem sir ... business has going on losses ... and er ... er ... er consumer are not satisfied ... for product ... so er ... .. today er ... er I come here er ... I come here ... asking your permissions ... for conducting meeting (EG18)

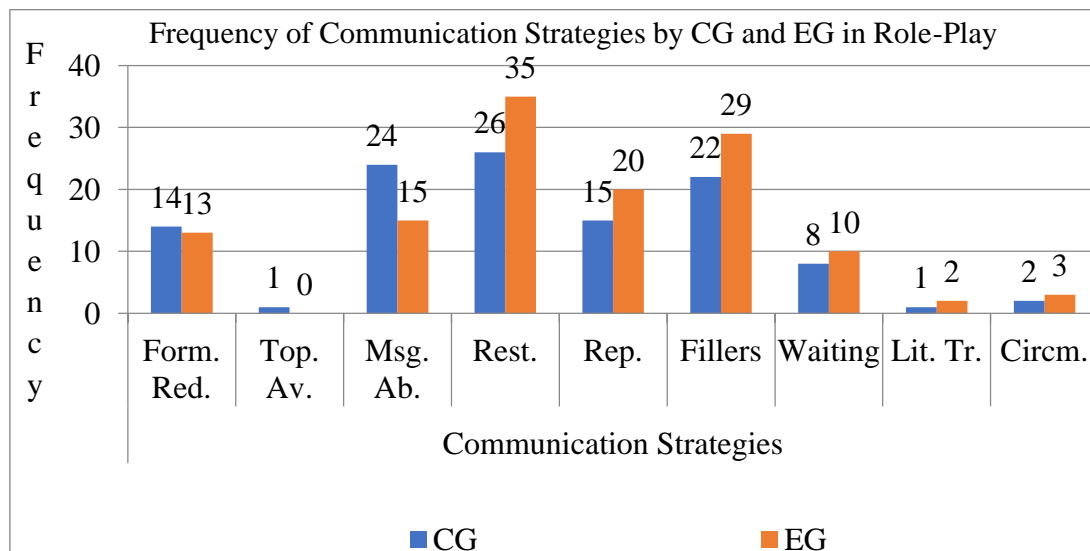
In the cited examples, fillers give time to the learner to think and construct next utterance appropriately.

f. Waiting is a strategy in which the learner waits to retrieve the next word or concept or message of communication. In this strategy learner starts communication but after some words takes a halt to gain more time to think about the next words and items. For example,

- \* conference ... er conference ... which is er ... er ... er ... about our produce ... er er we want ... about ... our ... product ... .. we want ... we ... we want ... sir ... .. we want ... .. conference ... (CG14)
- \* er ... then you ... you go to the ... er ... explorer ... internet explorer (EG09)
- \* why you ... er ... do you not complete the work (EG19)

The pauses taken in the cited examples helped the participants to construct the next part of communication in a better way.

The following figure charts the frequency of the use of communication strategies – formal reduction (Form. Red.), topic avoidance (Top. Av.), message abandonment (Msg. Ab.), restructuring (Rest.), repetition (Rep.), waiting, and use of fillers (Fillers) by the Controlled Group and the Experimental Group.



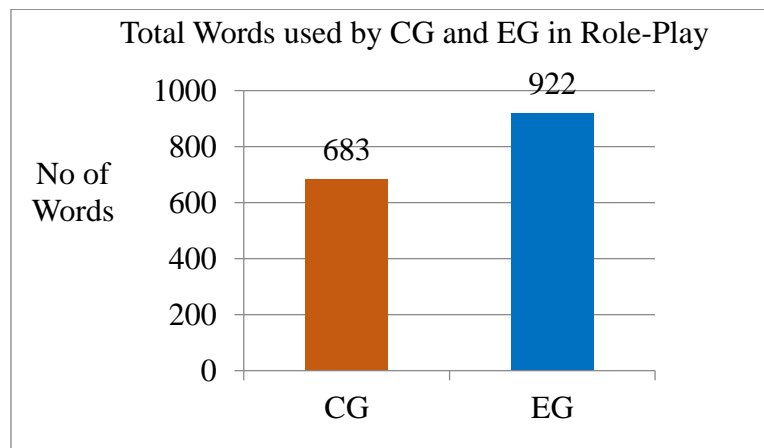
*Figure-5: Frequency of communication strategies by the CG and the EG in Role-Play*

Figure-5 shows that the frequency of restructuring, fillers, message abandonment, repetition, formal reduction and waiting is more; use of circumlocution, literal translation and topic

avoidance in both the groups is low. Both the groups have used reduction strategies as well as achievement strategies, but the EG has used less reduction strategies and more achievement strategies than the CG. The greater use of achievement strategies by the EG than the CG indicates that the students preferred to reach their communicative goal by keeping communication channel open even in difficult situations rather than withdrawing oneself from communication.

### **5. Number of words used**

The data collected is also analysed to check the number of words used by both the groups. The following figure (Figure-6) presents the total number of words used by both the groups in the role-play task.



*Figure-6: Total words used by the CG and the EG in Role-Play*

Figure-5 shows that the EG has used more words than the CG. The better performance of the EG might be the result of the teaching module, technology and the role-play task used for teaching English.

### **Findings**

The analysis and comparison of the language data collected through the role-play task helped the researcher to reach the following findings.

The ability to use sociolinguistically appropriate language was satisfactory as most of the role-play tasks were as per the given situation. It shows that the participants were better in shaping their utterances/sentences in accordance with the given situation even if the grammar is not correct.

Considerable progress is noted in the use of cohesion and coherence. Both the groups were not ready for this task in the pre-test, but in the post-test they exhibited remarkable cohesion and coherence.

Though the sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence is satisfactory in the case of both the groups, their grammatical competence is so low that it spoils their speech extremely and affects other competencies as well.

Higher error frequency and error rates are observed in the use of verb phrase in both the groups. This reveals that the verb phrase is the most difficult component of grammar for the learners. Verb phrase is the core of a sentence and as the participants faced difficulties in its use, it affected their overall performance.

Error frequency and error rate are considerably great in the use of prepositions and articles in both the groups. It reveals that after the verb phrase, participants find the use of prepositions and articles difficult.

The error frequency and error rate in the use of nouns and pronouns is also considerable. Nouns are omitted when they are needed and used when they are not needed. Sometimes incorrect noun and noun forms are used. Often singular forms of nouns are used instead of the plural form and vice versa. Most of the times pronouns are omitted when they are needed, used when they are not needed and often used incorrectly. Most of the subjects have used subjective pronoun 'you' instead of possessive pronoun 'your'.

Error frequencies and error rates regarding the use of adverbs, adjectives, coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions were not negligible. It points out that the learners encounter difficulties while connecting the parts of a sentence or that of sentences together. Errors in the use of adverbs and adjectives are due to omission and incorrect use. Most of the errors in the use of coordinating conjunction have occurred due to the omission of 'and'. Errors in the use of subordinate conjunction are mainly due to incorrect use.

Reduction strategies such as formal reduction and message abandonment are used by the participants to overcome the problems in communication. Among achievement strategies, most of the participants have used restructuring, repetition, use of fillers and waiting.

Achievement strategies have been used more than the formal and functional reduction strategies. The teaching module did not provide any training on effective use of communication strategies. The researcher feels that including strategy training in the teaching module could have helped the learners become more aware of their metacognitive process and helped them take control of their learning process in the long run.

Often the learners use a great number of words to accomplish a simple task. This use reveals their inability to use particular patterns, structures and expressions. Some positive changes were also observed which prove that the training boosted their confidence to use English and this is reflected in their longer sentence strings. However, their grammatical competence doesn't show the same level of improvement. The researcher concludes that the training was not sufficient in terms of the length of the course to improve their grammatical competence. It also could be possible that it takes longer time for the improvement in the grammatical competence to get reflected in their language use.

The teaching/learning module (TLM), technology and role-play task used for teaching English have had a positive impact and this is confirmed by the following observations:

1. The number of socially appropriate responses are more in case of the EG than the CG.
2. The average error frequency and error rate is more in CG than the EG.
3. Achievement strategies have been used more than the formal and functional reduction strategies by the EG than the CG.
4. The EG has used more number of words than the CG.

### **Conclusion**

The discussion and results show an improvement in the performance of the EG more than the CG as the EG has used more number of words, appropriate responses, achievement strategies, and managed less error frequency and error rate than the CG. The progress indicates that the technology based teaching activities conducted throughout the academic year using the role-play task and teaching/learning module (TLM) developed by the present researcher has had a positive impact in teaching English.

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**APPENDIX-1**

**LIST OF THE SYMBOLS USED**

...	: Short Pause (approximately of five seconds)
... ...	: Long Pause (approximately of five to ten seconds)
... ... ...	: Very Long Pause (more than ten seconds)
er	: Filler
um	: Filler
hm	: Filler
word..word	: repetition of word
(??)	: Inaudible words
*	: Indicates sentence is grammatically incorrect
XYZ	: For replacing the name or identity of the subject