

# The Attitudes of EFL Government College Students of Quetta, Pakistan towards Role-Play Activity as Task-Based Approach

*Language and Literature*

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## Abstract

*Since 1970s' communicative language teaching (CLT) has brought drastic resolution in language teaching approaches throughout the world. Role-play as task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a key component of CLT which help language learners to acquire target language (T L) effectively and efficiently. The aim of this study is to investigate the attitudes of Government intermediate students of Quetta, Balochistan towards the classroom activities of role-play as TBLT approach. Moreover, this study was carried out in two Government colleges of Quetta in which 150 boys and 145 girls EFL intermediate students participated in survey investigation. The researcher projected quantitative research method to answer two research questions in this survey investigation. In addition, to analyze the data descriptive statistic was performed in statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 20). Hence, the findings of this survey investigation clearly revealed that both boys and girls EFL learners showed positive attitudes towards role-play as task-based language teaching (TBLT) technique in EFL classroom.*

**Key Words:** Communicative language teaching (CLT), Task-based language teaching (TBLT), Role-play (RP). English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Target language (T L)

## 1. Introduction

Communicative language teaching method has been embraced by language teachers worldwide, it mainly focuses oral language exercises and drills to

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enhance communicative competence among language students. The prime goal of foreign language learning is to acquire oral sufficiency in order to master speaking skill compare to other language skills (Nunan, 2001). Hadley (2003) suggested to improve spoken skill of the language because written skill do not fulfill the projected demand of communicative competence. Moreover, speaking skill is a spontaneous process which creates stress, but on the other hand, writers have more time to edit their written work (Brown & Yule, 1983). According to Bygate (1987) stated that oral communication skill has superiority compare to other language skills because better spoken skill ensures proper communication in social gatherings and business meetings, therefore, oral language skill is the essential component of language learning process. However, this positive aspects of speaking skill was ignored in traditional Grammar Translation Method (GTM) where basic focus of language learning was emphasized on structure and literature of the language (Richards and Rodgers, 1986; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Chastain, 1988). Additionally, (Luchini, 2004) asserted that task-based language learning approach which was extensively accepted long before about twenty years ago (see, Carter and Nunan, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Long and Crooks, 1992; Nunan, 2001a, 2001b). According to Richards (1999) task-based tactics includes the practice of tasks which facilitates language students to communicative and interact in target language effectively. The fascinating quality of TBLT has proved superiority over preceding language teaching methods on account of investigations which resulted from theories from second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982; Long, 1981, 1983). Larsen-Freeman (2000) stated that role-play activity creates positive learning environment which motivates the language learners with feeling of joy and it also results in improving oral abilities of language learners.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Communicative language teaching (CLT)**

Language teaching techniques had a major shift in 1970s on the account of second language teaching and foreign language teaching approaches. Mori (2002) emphasized on two prominent theories of language acquisition i.e. (i) communicative competence by (Hymes, 1972), (ii) theory of second language acquisition by (Krashen, 1982), which has significantly changed language teaching ideology, it means that these theories emphasized more on oral communication which help language learners to communicate in target language but former widespread language teaching methods lay stress only on 'form' of the language. Nunan (1989) differentiates between two aspects of language teaching i.e. (i) knowledge of grammar rules which only focuses the 'form' of language, (ii) effective oral communication of language that

improves ‘fluency’ of the language . Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) flourished and became one of the approach (Ellis, 2000; Richards and Renandya, 2002; Widdowson, 1990). Fulcher (2000) mentioned three features of CLT i.e. (i) presentation, (ii) reality, and (iii) real-life situations. Additionally, investigation on CLT mostly endorsed communicative method in language teaching however, over the last two decades CLT stayed at the glassy of language teaching methods. Therefore, past research confirmed that task-based language teaching (TBLT) emerged as key component of CLT which enables language learners to become communicative competent.

## **2.2 Task-based language teaching (TBLT)**

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) emerged as one of the strongest branches of CLT, whereas ideal circumstances supported budding of learning and teaching of second language or foreign language in order to facilitate learners the real-life settings in language classrooms. According to Ellis (2003) TBLT appeared as a robust form of CLT which provides communicative language tasks in the syllabus to be accomplish in classroom settings. Additionally, Cook (2001) suggested that TBLT enables broad range of communicative activities in classroom. Accordingly, Macdonough and Chaikitmonkolo (2007) recommended that the progression of TBLT had motivated language students to develop spoken skill with the help of practical use of language and it also improves fluency. Furthermore, Lynch and Maclean (2000) described two main benefits of role-play as TBLT activities in EFL classrooms, i.e. (i) it provides an ideal classroom environment to language students in order to communicate in target language with their fellows and perform various role-play tasks, (ii) role-play activities through TBLT also enable students’ language to communicate and acquire second language in EFL and ESL classrooms. Richards and Rodgers (2001) concluded that TBLT activities develop interest among language learners, which provided input and output environment which is key to acquire second language. In the CLT model the task based activities include before task activity, throughout task activity, and after task activity (see, Beglar & Hunt, 1999; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 1989).

## **2.3 Role-play Activities**

The title ‘role’ represents the role-plays performed by the language learners who take part in different roles as tasks suggested by their teachers, therefore, the teachers act as adviser or initiator in CLT classrooms (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Platt and Brooks (1994) considered the clarification of role-play in two sets in an investigation, i.e. (i) one set that only provided verbal instructions, (ii) second set was advised to perform a task in classroom,

therefore, in the findings second group differed from the first group, as second set of learner started to communicate with each other and produced better results. In addition, Jalilifar (2005) encourages English educators to carry out drill and exercises of TBLT in language classroom to develop communicative competence among language learners. Similarly, Rashidi (2005) asserted that in role play activity tasks have a great deal significance is to improve learners speaking performance. In addition, Alavi (2005) suggests that through role-play activities with the guidelines of TBLT the learners at secondary schools improved fluency in target language. Furthermore, Baker (1989) emphasized that role play activities help learner to perform or act according to different situation and roles in order to improve the confidence level along with oral performance, therefore language instructors should provide adequate time to learners to comprehend the role-play situations.

#### **2.4 Past studies on Role-play Activities**

In China Huang and Hu (2016) carried out a survey study to explore EFL teacher and learners attitudes towards EFL class room activities. A total of 100 university students participated in this study. The author collected data using survey instrument which focused 21 EFL classroom activities and observational notes. The findings of this study uncovered that both EFL teachers and students showed positive attitude towards classroom activities and also showed most favorable response towards role-play activity in EFL classroom

Lajooee and Barimani (2013) conducted an experimental investigation in Iran to explore the effectiveness of role-play activities in learning vocabulary comparing traditional method. In this investigation 75 female undergraduate participated. The researcher only gave treatment to experimental group with role-play activities, on the other hand the control group was taught vocabulary by conventional method. Hence, the finding of this experimental study revealed that experimental showed better results compare to traditional method vocabulary teaching method.

Islam and Islam (2013) conducted survey study in Stamford University, Bangladesh to check the effect of role-play activities on fluency in large EFL classrooms. This study included 100 postgraduate students of English department. The researcher administered survey instrument and also carried out group interview from the participants. The results of this survey study unveiled that role-play exercises in EFL classrooms are very effective to improve English language fluency.

In Iran, Aliakbari and Jamalvandi (2010) employed an experimental study on role-play to examine learner Oral fluency in EFL classrooms. This study

included 60 EFL intermediate learners who were randomly selected. The measure the fluency of the intermediate learners IELTS speaking test was considered for pre-test and post-test. In addition, only experimental group received treatment by practicing role-play activities by performing different tasks in classroom. Thus, the results this study revealed the effectiveness of role-play as (TBLT) activities improved learners fluency in EFL classrooms.

In another study by Krashinsky and Sullivan's (1996) asserted that communication through role-play EFL students enables to interact in target language. Therefore, role-play as (TBLT) encourages self-learning process by the support of their teachers and it results in effective communication in target language.

### **3. Statement of the Problem**

In past several investigations were conducted in the same area to examine the effectiveness of task based teaching on Speaking, listening, reading skills. However, investigation on role-play proved the prominence in improving students' communication capabilities. While, the title role-play appeared a latest model to study because the situation in which task based was applied appeared different in TBLT, as role-play activities resulted in better language learning opportunities because it improved language acquisition process. Moreover, role-play activities in EFL classroom emerged as an effective language teaching strategy which provides positive language learning environment in order to enhance student to student communication in target language. Therefore, it is important to explore the attitude of Pakistani EFL intermediate students towards role-play as task based approach.

### **4. Objective of Research**

- To determine the attitudes of Government Boys intermediate of Quetta towards role-play as task-based language teaching (TBLT) technique.
- To determine the attitudes of Government girls intermediate of Quetta towards role-play as task-based language teaching (TBLT) technique.

### **5. Research Questions**

This present study is in pursuit to find the answers to the following questions:

- Q. No.1. "What are the attitudes of Government Boys intermediate of Quetta towards Role play as task-based language teaching (TBLT) technique?"

- Q. No.2. “What are the attitudes of Government girls intermediate of Quetta towards Role play as task-based language teaching (TBLT) technique?”

## 6. Methodology

### 6.1 Design

Taking in account the type of research questions in this investigation, “Q.1.What are the perceptions of Government Boys intermediate college of Quetta towards Role play as task-based language teaching (TBLT) technique?” and “ Q. 2. What are the perceptions of Government girls intermediate of Quetta towards Role play as task-based language teaching (TBLT) technique?” The researcher projected quantitative research design for survey research. Additionally, this type of survey research is carried out in past through the world in past survey investigation to determine the attitudes of EFL learners for different perspective of learning and teaching methods.

### 6.2 Participants

This study includes total of 295 two government EFL intermediate students from one boys and one girls intermediate college of Quetta, Balochistan Pakistan. Government intermediate Boys College Quetta included (150 participants) and Government Girls intermediate College, Quetta included (145 participants). The researcher adopted convenience sampling method so as all available EFL students could be surveyed at research site because random sample was impossible in such large classes in Government colleges of Quetta, Balochistan. The following Table 1.1 shows the information of the research participants as following;

*Table 1.1*

*Information of Participants*

Boys / Girls Government Colleges	Number of Participants	Total
Government Boys intermediate College Quetta	150	
Government Girls intermediate College, Quetta	145	
		295

## 6.4 Instrument

The researcher employed 5-points Likert scale instrument as survey questionnaire i.e. strongly disagree (5), disagree (4), neutral (3), agree (2), strongly agree (1). The survey questionnaire comprised of multi option choice on role-play to assess the attitudes of Government Boys and girls EFL students towards role play as task based approach.

## 6.5 Pilot Study of Survey Questionnaire

The pilot study of questionnaire was carried out on 15 students of Government Girls intermediate college Quetta and of 15 students Government Boys intermediate college students of Quetta for validity and reliability of survey questionnaire.

**Table 1.2**

### *Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.764	4

## 6.6 Procedure

After duly permission from both principals of respective colleges this survey was conducted. Consequently, in this survey study 150 boys and 145 girls EFL Government Intermediate EFL students participated. After pilot study and reliability statistics assurance the survey questionnaire was administered to EFL students along with Urdu version of translation of English survey questionnaire.

## 7. Data Collection and Analysis

This survey investigation intends to answer two research questions. “Q.No.1 What are the attitudes of Government Boys intermediate of Quetta towards Role play as task-based language teaching (TBLT) technique?” and “ Q.No.2 What are the attitudes of Government girls intermediate of Quetta towards technique?” Therefore, to analyze both research questions descriptive statistics was carried out in the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, version 20) so in items of role- play the mean and percentages were calculated.

**Table 1.3**

*Results of Government EFL Intermediate Girl students*

Construct	Girls Degree College				
	Mean	SD	T	df	P
Role play	14.10	2.00	1.88	307	0.242

It can be seen in the table 1.3 Government girls Intermediate EFL students [ $M=14.10.42$ ,  $SD=2.00$ ;  $t(307)=1.88$ ,  $p=.242$ ] and 88 % positive attitudes towards role-play as task-based language teaching (TBLT)

**Table 1.4**

*Overall Results of Government EFL Intermediate Boys students*

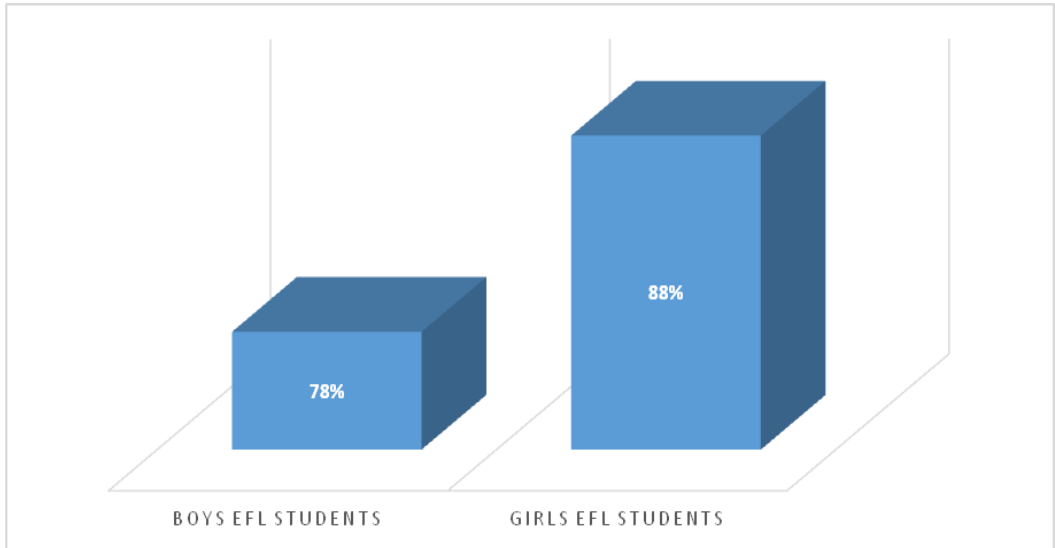
Construct	Boys Degree College				
	Mean	SD	T	df	p
Role play	14.61	2.15	1.13	307	0.231

It is evident in table 1.4 that Government boys Intermediate EFL students [ $M=14.61$ ,  $SD=2.15$ ;  $t(307)= -1.113$ ,  $p=0.231$ ] and 78 % positive attitudes towards Role play as task-based language teaching (TBLT).

## **8 Summary of overall Results**

*Figure 1. Shows overall results*





The Figure 1. summaries the overall results of Government Girls intermediate college Quetta and Government Boys intermediate college students of Quetta, the results 78 % and 88% results strongly reveals the positive attitudes of EFL students attitudes towards Role play as task-based language teaching (TBLT).

## 9. Discussion

In this survey study EFL students show favorable response towards role-play as (TBLT). The findings reveal that Government intermediate girls college students illustrates 88% and similarly Government intermediate girls college students showed 88 % positive response towards role-play activities.

The results of this survey study are in the same vein with the study of Huang and Hu (2016) who investigated both teachers' and students' attitudes towards role-play activities in EFL classroom. The finding showed positive perceptions of both students and teachers to use role-play activity in language class. Similarly, Lajooee and Barimani (2013) employed experimental study to check vocabulary learning through role-play activity. The findings clearly uncovered the effectiveness of role-play activities by facilitating EFL students to learn vocabulary effectively. The results of this study are also in line with the investigation of Islam and Islam (2013) who examined the perception of students towards the use of role-play activities. The finding revealed that EFL students showed a favorable response towards the use of role-play activity. Likewise, the findings of this study also privileges results of the study by Aliakbari and Jamalvandi (2010) employed an experimental

investigation to explore the effect of role-play activity compare to traditional teaching approaches. The results exhibited that role-play tasks improved learners' oral performance compared to traditional language teaching methods. The findings are also constant with the study carried out by Kramersch and Sullivan (1996) concluded that also role-play activities develop self-learning abilities in EFL students through interaction with fellow mates in EFL class.

## **9. Conclusions**

Communicative approaches in language teaching satisfies learners need in a healthy interactive environment to facilitate the use and practice of English language in the target language (T L), while previous language teaching methods like Grammar Translation Method (GTM), did not fulfil language learners requirement regarding communication in real life situation such as in the target language. The present survey study was designed to investigate the attitudes Government Girls intermediate college Quetta and Government Boys intermediate college students of Quetta towards of 'Role Play' as TBLT activities in EFL classrooms. The findings of this research paper can be generalized to the target population of the students because role-play activities enhance confidence level and oral abilities of EFL students and to furnish the needs of EFL students at the intermediate level of education. Moreover, the findings of study clearly reveal both gender EFL intermediate learners have highly positive attitudes towards role-play as (TBLT) is the key component of communicative language learning (CLT) approach. Hence, it is strongly recommended on the basis of this survey study that role-play activities as (TBLT) should be included in the syllabus of intermediate EFL learners to equip them modern day language teaching approaches in Pakistani EFL context.

### **9.1 Limitation of the study**

This survey study has numerous limitations as following;

First, this study only focused two Government intermediate colleges of Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan, so the findings cannot be generalized to the other colleges of the country. Second, the researcher only employed quantitative research design, interviews were not carried out in order to get in-depth views of the participants. The third limitation of this study is no treatment was given to participants to check the effectiveness of role-play activities. The fourth limitation i.e. EFL teachers attitudes towards role-play activity were not surveyed this study.

## **9.2 Implication of the study**

This survey study has various implications as following;

The activities of role-play designed by English class teachers or adopted from the internet it will improve students oral fluency and listening skills. In addition, the practice of role-play activities in EFL classroom will increase the confidence level of students, the EFL students will be able to communicate in real life conversation effectively. Moreover, students will be able to comprehend their daily classroom lectures with better understanding and interactive manner.

Additionally, past studies have revealed that with the help of role-play activities EFL students become confident in performing different roles in the classroom. The practice of different roles will improve students oral language proficiency and situational understanding, therefore, better fluency and listening skills of students can obtain a high score in ILETS and TOEFL test so students can also secure admission in well reputed universities abroad.

## **9.3 Suggestions for future Research**

The survey study only focused two Government intermediate colleges of Quetta city of Balochistan province, future researchers are suggested to conduct a survey study comparing private and Government colleges of other cities of Pakistan. In addition, mix method research design, qualitative and quantitative design is suggested which employs interview and open-ended questions in order to explore in-depth attitudes and perceptions of EFL students. Moreover, future researchers are suggested to investigate the attitudes of EFL teachers to explore the teachers' perception towards role-play as TBLT, in order to cross-validate both students and teachers attitudes and perceptions towards role-play activities. Lastly, future researchers are suggested to conduct experimental study to examine the effect of role-play activity in Pakistani context.

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