Research Article

An Investigation into First-Year English-Majored Students' Perceptions of the Use of Role-Play Technique in English Speaking Classes at Dong Nai University

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Abstract: Developing speaking skills remains a major challenge for many first-year English majors, particularly in EFL contexts where real-life speaking opportunities are limited. This study explores the perceptions of first-year English-majored students at Dong Nai University regarding the use of the Role-Play technique in English speaking classes. The main aim of the study is to examine how Role-Play influences students' motivation, confidence, and overall speaking ability, as well as to identify the challenges they face when engaging in such activities. To achieve this, a quantitative approach was used, and data were collected from 75 students through structured questionnaires. The results show that most students found Role-Play to be enjoyable, motivating, and effective in improving their fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and creativity. Additionally, students appreciated the opportunities Role-Play provided for more natural and meaningful communication. However, some difficulties were also reported, including low confidence, limited vocabulary, and lack of preparation time. Despite these challenges, the findings suggest that Role-Play is a valuable technique in enhancing speaking skills when used with proper guidance and classroom support. The study concludes that incorporating Role-Play into English speaking lessons can create a more dynamic and student-centered learning environment that fosters greater participation and language development.

Keywords: speaking; Role-Play technique; students' attitudes

1. Introduction

Speaking is one of the most essential skills for students majoring in English, as it plays a key role in their overall language proficiency and future career opportunities. To become confident and effective communicators, language learners need consistent practice in speaking. However, for many first-year students, developing speaking skills poses a considerable challenge. This is often due to limited exposure to spoken English in high school and the restricted time available for speaking practice in university classrooms (Tuan & Mai, 2015; Zhang, 2009).

As an English language instructor at Dong Nai University, the author has observed that first-year English majors frequently struggle with classroom speaking activities. These difficulties point to the need for more engaging and supportive learning environments – ones that reduce learner anxiety and promote active participation. Prior research has shown that many learners experience anxiety, lack confidence, or fear making mistakes when speaking in a foreign language (Horwitz et al., 1986). It is therefore essential for instructors, particularly those in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, to adopt effective teaching strategies that help students build confidence and improve their speaking performance. One such method is the Role-Play technique, which has emerged as a valuable communicative approach in language education. By simulating real-life scenarios, Role-Play creates opportunities for learners to use English in meaningful, interactive, and dynamic ways. It encourages spontaneous speech, emotional expression, and confidence-building in a low-pressure setting.

Despite the recognized importance of speaking skills in English language learning, many first-year English majors continue to struggle with oral communication due to limited prior exposure, anxiety, and lack of confidence. Role-Play has been shown in studies by Fermawi

(2018), Ruslan (2020), Shamsudin, Hasmin, and Azmi (2023) to enhance speaking fluency, increase learner motivation, and support the development of real-life communication skills. However, its success depends heavily on learners' engagement and perception. Most existing research has focused on the implementation and outcomes of Role-Play technique, with comparatively few studies investigating students' own views and the challenges they face during these activities, particularly in Vietnamese university settings. Therefore, it is crucial to explore how students perceive the use of Role-Play in speaking classes and to identify the obstacles they encounter. Understanding these perceptions can help educators design more effective, student-centered speaking activities that address learners' needs and foster better communicative competence.

At Dong Nai University, where students begin their foundational English training in the first year, understanding how learners respond to and engage with such technique is essential. While Role-Play is widely regarded as beneficial, its success largely depends on students' attitudes, motivation, comfort, and level of involvement. The aim of this study is to explore how first-year English-majored students perceive the use of the Role-Play technique in their speaking classes and to investigate the challenges they encounter during its implementation. Through this investigation, the study seeks to provide insights that will support the development of more student-centered and effective speaking lessons.

To achieve this aim, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are English-majored students' perceptions of the use of Role-Play in their speaking classes?

2. What challenges do students face when Role-Play is used in their English speaking classes?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Defining Speaking: A Multidimensional Viewpoint on Language Acquisition

Speaking has been defined in various ways by scholars, particularly within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Hadfield and Hadfield (1999) describes speaking as a bridge between classroom learning and real-world communication, while Fulcher (2015) views speaking as the use of spoken language for interpersonal interaction.

Thornbury (2005) defines speaking as a real-life communicative activity through which individuals convey their ideas and engage in interaction with others. Kayi (2006) adds that speaking involves constructing and sharing meaning through both verbal and non-verbal symbols across different contexts. For the purposes of this study, speaking is defined as the ability to produce meaningful utterances or discourse in interaction with others, while applying accurate grammar and vocabulary.

The ability to use language fluently for communication is considered a fundamental goal of learning any foreign language. According to Bawanti and Arifani (2021), speaking skills refer to the ability to express thoughts and emotions verbally for communicative purposes. Similarly, Butler, Eignor, Jones, Mcnamara, and Suomi (2000) define speaking as the use of spoken language to interact directly and spontaneously with others. Interaction is essential not only in the development of speaking skills but also in daily and academic communication. This process involves the speaker generating speech to convey meaning and the listener actively receiving, interpreting, and responding to the information. Therefore, speaking requires not only linguistic competence but also the ability to engage effectively in interpersonal communication.

Based on the perspectives of various linguists, speaking can be interpreted as a complex and dynamic skill that goes beyond simply producing words. It involves the ability to construct meaningful messages using appropriate grammar and vocabulary, while also considering the context and the listener. Speaking is both a cognitive and social process, requiring mental processing and language knowledge as well as the ability to interact, express emotions, and respond in real time. It serves as a crucial bridge between language learning in the classroom and real-world communication, enabling learners to connect their ideas with others effectively through both verbal and non-verbal means.

2.2. Defining Role-Play: A Comprehensive Technique for Enhancing Language Skills through Simulation

Role-Play is a widely used technique in language classrooms, particularly for developing students' speaking skills. According to Littlewood (1981), Role-Play is an activity in which learners are encouraged to place themselves in situations that might occur in real life outside

the classroom. Within these contexts, they are assigned specific roles and are expected to act as if the situation were real. Similarly, Holden (1981) and Errington (1997) describe Role-Play as involving either acting as oneself or adopting the role of another person within an imagined scenario.

Harmer (1984) explains that Role-Play takes place when students simulate various social situations and assume different roles. In such activities, the teacher typically provides background information, such as the characters' identities and emotions. For example, a teacher might say, "You are David. You're visiting the doctor – explain what happened last night," prompting students to respond accordingly within the scenario.

Brown (2001) highlights that Role-Play involves participants collaborating toward a specific goal within a group setting. While this approach may present challenges, such as asking learners to take on unfamiliar roles, it is essential for developing speaking skills by providing opportunities for spontaneous communication in a structured environment.

Nunan (2003) also highlights the effectiveness of Role-Play as a classroom speaking activity. He notes that students are assigned specific roles and use the target language in simulated situations. For instance, one student might act as a tourist reporting a stolen wallet to the police, while another assumes the role of the officer responding to the report. These activities allow learners to rehearse language use in practical scenarios before applying it in real-life interactions.

As Ladousse (as cited in Rayhan, 2014) explains, the term "role" refers to a person's identity in a specific context, while "play" implies a safe and supportive environment that fosters student creativity. Role-play thus enables learners to immerse themselves in imaginative or realistic situations that encourage authentic language use.

Zulfah, Rasyid, Rahman, and Rahman (2015) argue that the Role-Play technique can serve as a shortcut for identifying, recognizing, and labeling specific behaviors and social norms. It is viewed as an effective way to express group dynamics and develop interpersonal communication skills. Similarly, Lowenstein (2016) defines Role-Play as a dramatic technique that encourages participants to improvise behaviors, illustrating the expected actions of individuals in clearly defined scenarios.

Based on the definitions above, Role-Play can be understood as a teaching technique where learners take on specific roles, whether real or imagined, to participate in simulated situations that represent real-life contexts. It allows students to practice language in a meaningful and interactive way, encouraging spontaneous communication, emotional expression, and social interaction. Through Role-Play, learners not only apply linguistic knowledge but also develop confidence, creativity, and interpersonal skills. This technique provides a safe and supportive environment where students can explore different perspectives, respond to unpredictable scenarios, and gradually improve their fluency and communicative competence.

2.3. Exploring Perception: Definitions and the Role of Students' Perspectives in the Learning Process

2.3.1. Defining Perception: A Dynamic and Individual Process in Learning

Perception has been defined in a number of ways, including as a conscious act of one's surroundings through physical sensations, which reveals the person's capacity for perception. According to Tubbs and Moss (1999), perception isn't just something that happens passively – it's an active process. People don't take in everything around them; instead, they choose what to focus on, organize the information, and then interpret it. The way someone interprets what they experience depends on many personal factors, like their past experiences, what they believe about how people act, what they know about the situation, their current mood or desires, and what they expect to happen. Basically, this means that perception is a personal and dynamic process shaped by both internal and external factors.

Unumeri (2009) asserts that "perception is defined in line with one's thoughts and perspectives." According to him, perception is shaped by an individual's thoughts and viewpoints. What a person perceives is influenced by what they believe in their mind. If they have positive thoughts about something, they are likely to view it in a favorable way. On the other hand, negative thinking can lead to a more negative perception of that same thing.

According to Sugihartono in Arifin, Fuady, and Kuswarno (2017), perception refers to how the senses interpret stimuli or how stimuli are processed into human understanding. Whether a perception is positive or negative can influence a person's behavior. This means that different individuals might perceive the same object in varying ways. Such differences stem from individual variations in values and personality traits. Based on this definition, it can be concluded that perception is shaped by each person's unique experiences and emotions.

2.3.2. Students' Perceptions: The Role They Play in Shaping Learning Outcomes and Classroom Dynamics

Sidhu (2003) defines students' perceptions as their individual viewpoints concerning specific events or experiences. These perceptions are commonly conveyed through feedback and suggestions, which serve as a means to support teachers and peers in improving the overall quality of the learning process.

According to Akande (2009), students' perception refers to their ability to form personal viewpoints and distinguish these from the content presented during classroom instruction. This suggests that students are not merely passive recipients of information but are actively engaged in thinking, analyzing, and constructing their own perspectives. Such perceptions play a vital role in the teaching and learning process. Educators, whether they are teachers, lecturers, or instructors, should take students' views and preferences into account when designing lessons or developing learning materials. By doing so, instruction becomes more responsive to learners' needs, thereby fostering greater engagement and improving learning outcomes.

In short, the way students think, respond to, and interact with classroom content reflects their perceptions. These perceptions are important for educators to understand, as they should guide the way lessons are designed and delivered. In other words, understanding students' perceptions helps teachers tailor instruction in a way that supports better engagement, motivation, and academic success.

2.4. Previous Studies on Role-Play in Language Learning

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of Role-Play in enhancing students' speaking skills. These studies are grounded in the theories of various researchers regarding the impact of Role-Play. Many findings suggest that Role-Play boosts students' motivation to participate in speaking activities. The benefits of Role-Play are highlighted in the works of van Ments (1999) and Littlewood (1981), who argue that Role-Play helps learners develop practical speaking skills for real-life situations. Some authors (van Ments, 1999; Littlewood, 1981; Swartz, 1985) agree that Role-Play increases student motivation and engagement in the learning process.

Ramos (2002) conducted a qualitative study on ESL students' perceptions of Role-Play activities. The study found that students saw Role-Play as beneficial for improving speaking skills, learning vocabulary, and practicing real-life communication, though they also noted some limitations, such as its artificial feel and challenges with vocabulary and ideas.

Fermawi (2018) studied the impact of Role-Play on improving conversational English speaking skills among remedial English students at Jinan University. The findings indicated that role-play significantly enhanced students' speaking abilities, with noticeable improvement in their performance after the implementation of Role-Play activities.

Ruslan (2020) reported that Role-Play boosts students' confidence in communicating with others, enhances their language competence, and increases their motivation. Wulandari, Pratolo, and Junianti (2019) identified some challenges in using Role-Play, such as students lacking confidence, struggling to master the material, feeling nervous, and having trouble memorizing.

Shamsudin, Hasmin, and Azmi (2023) investigated polytechnic students' perceptions of using role play to enhance their speaking skills. The study revealed that Role-Play activities positively influenced students' confidence, vocabulary expansion, and pronunciation improvement.

Most of the research has concentrated on implementing Role-Play in teaching speaking, with fewer studies addressing students' perceptions of Role-Play in speaking activities. As a result, this study focuses on examining students' perceptions of using Role-Play in speaking activities, specifically among students from Faculty of Foreign Languages.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were first-year students majoring in English Linguistics at Dong Nai University. At the time of the study, they were in their second semester and had completed the English Speaking 1 course offered by the Faculty of Foreign Languages. A total of 75 students from Classes A and B took part in the survey. These students were selected because they had experienced the use of Role-Play activities in their speaking course,

making them suitable for providing feedback on its implementation. Participation was voluntary, and all students were informed about the purpose of the study. Their responses were kept confidential, and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.2. Instruments

Questionnaire was the main tool to collect the data for my research. The questionnaire was adapted from Kadafie (2022), Anggrarini and Trianasari (2022), Hoang and Hoang (2023). The initial five items in the questionnaire examined students' general perceptions and challenges regarding the use of Role-Play in learning speaking. The remaining questions focused on their perceptions of Role-Play as a tool for improving speaking skills. This part of the questionnaire asked the participants to make scalar judgments on a five-point scale (5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree; 3=Neutral, 2= Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree).

3.3. Procedures

To collect the data, I distributed the questionnaires to students after class. The two classes completed the survey on separate days. When handing out the questionnaires, I provided guidance to help students complete them effectively. Clear instructions were given for each section to ensure they understood what was required. For some items, I translated the questions into Vietnamese to make it easier for participants to respond. The questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete. After collecting the responses, I reviewed each one to ensure all questions were answered. If any responses were incomplete, I asked the participants to fill in the missing answers.

The data was analyzed by calculating the percentage of students selecting each response. The findings were then presented and interpreted using tables to illustrate the results.

4. Results

This section presents the findings from the questionnaire distributed to 75 first-year English-majored students at Dong Nai University. The data are analyzed to address the research questions concerning students' perceptions of the Role-Play technique in English speaking classes, as well as the challenges they face when participating in such activities. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts. Part I explores students' general perceptions of Role-Play and the difficulties they encounter during its implementation. Part II provides a more detailed investigation into their attitudes toward the use of Role-Play in speaking lessons, measured using a five-point Likert scale. The results offer insights into students' engagement, motivation, confidence, and perceived language improvement through Role-Play, as well as areas where instructional support may be needed.

4.1. Questionnaire Result Part I: Students' General Perceptions and Challenges Regarding the Use of Role-Play in Learning Speaking

Question 1: How long have you studied English?

Table 1 shows that over half (50.7%) of the participants have been learning English for more than 10 years, suggesting that this group likely possesses a high level of proficiency. A further 41.3% of participants have had between 8 and 10 years of exposure, which also indicates strong familiarity with the language. These findings highlight that the majority of participants have an extensive history of English language learning.

Table 1 The total length of the students' exposure to English.

Length of exposure to English	Number of respondents	Percentage
4 -7 years	6	8%
8-10 years	31	41.3 %
Over 10 years	38	50.7%

Question 2: How often did your teacher use Role-Play activities in your speaking class?

Table 2 indicates that the majority of students (84%) reported their English teachers use Role-Play either often (72%) or always (12%) when teaching speaking skills. A small number of students (16%) selected "sometimes", and no students reported that their teachers rarely used Role-Play. These findings suggest that Role-Play is a commonly used technique in the classroom and is perceived by students as an integral part of English speaking instruction.

Table 2. Students' opinion about frequency with which their teacher uses the Role-Play technique to teach English speaking skills.

Frequency of using Role-Play	Number of respondents	Percentage
Always	9	12%
Often	54	72%
Sometimes	12	16%
Rarely	0	0%

Question 3: How effective is learning speaking through Role-Play?

According to Table 3, a large proportion of respondents acknowledged the benefits of Role-Play in learning English speaking skills. Over half (57.3%) described it as useful, while 28% of respondents rated it as very useful. A few students (14.7%) viewed it as slightly useful, and no respondents considered it not very useful. These results highlight a strong overall agreement on the effectiveness of Role-Play as a tool for developing speaking proficiency.

Table 3. Students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Role-Play in learning English speaking.

Effectiveness of Role-Play in learning English speaking	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very useful	21	28%
Useful	43	57.3%
Slightly useful	11	14.7 %
Not very useful	0	0%

Question 4: How successful was this technique in improving your speaking ability?

As it is displayed in Table 4, the majority of respondents perceived Role-Play as an effective technique for developing English speaking skills. Specifically, 69.3% of participants reported that it helped much, while 24% of respondents indicated it helped very much, resulting in a combined 93.3% expressing a positive perception. In contrast, only 6.7% of respondents stated that Role-Play helped not much. These findings suggest that the Role-Play technique is broadly regarded as a valuable pedagogical approach for enhancing students' spoken English proficiency.

Table 4. Students' perceptions of how much the Role-Play technique helps improve their speaking ability

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very much	18	24%
Much	52	69.3 %
Not much	5	6.7 %

Question 5: What difficulties did you experience while participating in Role-Play activities?

Table 5 highlights several challenges students face during Role-Play activities. The most significant challenge is a lack of self-confidence, reported by 80 % of participants, likely due to nervousness or fear of speaking in front of others. Furthermore, most students (73.3%) mentioned that limited language proficiency prevents them from fully engaging in the activities, pointing to the need for more targeted instruction in vocabulary and language development. 42.7 % of the respondents noted that insufficient time negatively affected their ability to prepare for their roles. This highlights the importance of providing adequate time for preparation. In addition, 30.6% of students identified weak peer interaction during Role-Play, which indicates issues with effective communication and teamwork. These results emphasize the need to address both individual and classroom-related challenges to enhance the Role-Play experience in language learning. Lastly, a small portion of students (9.3%) identified limited classroom space as an obstacle to effectively preparing for Role-Play activities.

Table 5. Students' difficulties when participating Role-Play activities.

Items	Number of students	Percentage
Do not feel confident to act out	60	80%
Lack of classroom space	7	9.3%
Limited vocabulary and grammar structures	55	73.3%
Lack of time to prepare the role	32	42.7%
Poor interaction among individuals	23	30.6%

4.2. Questionnaire Result Part II: Students' Perceptions On The Use Of Role-Play Technique In English Speaking Classes

This part of the questionnaire investigated students' perception of Role-Play implementation in speaking classes. The students of the two classes were asked to give their responses for 15 items. The measurement of their perceptions is based on a Likert scale with five ordered response levels namely: SA: Strongly agree; A: Agree; N: Neutral; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly disagree.

Table 6. Students' perceptions on the use of Role-Play technique in English speaking classes.

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. I am interested in the use of Role-Play.	15 (20%)	51 (68%)	9 (12%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0%)
2. I am more motivated to speak by using Role-Play.	17(22.7%)	50 (66.7%)	8 (10.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3. I become more creative in speaking by using the Role-Play technique given by the teacher.	16 (21.3%)	42 (56 %)	17(22.7%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0%)
4. I get more experience through Role-Play.	20 (26.7%)	40 (53.3%)	10 (13.3%)	5 (6.7%)	0 (0%)
5. I feel confident in presenting Role-Play.	12 (16 %)	35 (46.7%)	18 (24%)	10 (13.3%)	0 (0%)
6. My speaking fluency has improved through Role-Play.	9 (12%)	46 (61.3%)	20 (26.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7. My English pronunciation increased by Role-Play.	18 (24%)	42 (56 %)	15 (20%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0%)
8. I learn some new expressions used in my friends' play.	16 (21.3%)	40 (53.3%)	14 (18,7%)	5 (6.7%)	0 (0%)
9. I can enrich my vocabulary through Role-Play.	20 (26.7%)	39 (52%)	16 (21.3%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0%)
10. Role-Play allows students to speak naturally.	18 (24%)	36 (48 %)	15 (20 %)	6 (8 %)	0 (0%)
11. With the Role-Play, I feel that speaking lessons become more interesting and challenging.	19 (25.3%)	38 (50.7%)	18 (24 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
12. I believe that I can get a better progress in learning by having Role-Play.	11 (14.7%)	44 (58.7%)	20 (26.6%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0%)
13. Role-Play gives me the opportunity to speak up in front of the class.	24 (32%)	36 (48%)	15 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)
14. I prefer to do Role-Play when learning speaking rather than just read dialogue with the friends.	20 (26.7%)	38 (50.7%)	17 (22.6%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
15. I have more ideas to talk about the given topic in a Role-Play activity.	14 (18.7%)	39 (52%)	22 (29.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The analysis of Table 6 reveals a positive perception of Role-Play in English speaking classes. In **Statement 1**, the majority of students (88%) expressed interest in the use of Role-Play, showing strong enthusiasm for this method. In **Statement 2**, almost all students (89.4%) stated that Role-Play motivated them to speak more, suggesting that it is effective in engaging students. In **Statement 3**, most students (77.3%) felt more creative in speaking tasks as a

result of Role-Play, indicating its effectiveness in promoting creative thinking. In **Statement 4**, a large portion of students (80%) agreed that Role-Play provided them with more speaking experience, suggesting that it helps in practical language use.

In **Statement 5**, a smaller number of students (62.7%) felt confident in presenting Role-Play activities, while some reported neutral or negative feelings, highlighting that performance anxiety might still be an issue for some students. In **Statement 6**, a majority of students (73.3%) agreed that their speaking fluency improved through Role-Play, confirming its impact on helping students speak more clearly. In **Statement 7**, a large number of students (80%) reported that their pronunciation improved through Role-Play, suggesting that the technique benefits specific language skills.

The role of vocabulary enhancement and peer learning is also evident. In **Statement 8**, most students (74.7%) learned new expressions from their peers' performances, showing that Role-Play fosters peer learning. In **Statement 9**, the majority of students (78.7%) agreed that their vocabulary improved through Role-Play, highlighting its role in language acquisition. In **Statement 10**, a significant percentage of participants (72%) felt that Role-Play allowed them to speak more naturally, although some disagreed, possibly due to performance anxiety.

Finally, in **Statement 11**, a large number of students (76%) found speaking lessons more interesting and challenging with Role-Play. This finding indicates that the technique makes lessons more engaging. In **Statement 12**, most students (73.4%) believed they made better progress in English through Role-Play. This highlights its positive effect on language proficiency. In **Statement 13**, a substantial number of students (80%) said that Role-Play gave them more opportunities to speak in front of the class, which shows its contribution to student participation. In Statement 14, a large number of students (77.4%) preferred Role-Play to traditional dialogue reading, indicating a preference for interactive learning methods. In **Statement 15**, most students (70.7%) agreed that they had more ideas to discuss during Role-Play activities. This result shows that the technique encourages greater involvement and creativity.

5. Discussion

The findings based on data from the questionnaires show that most students have a positive perception of using the Role-Play technique in learning English speaking. Students generally have a long history of English language exposure and report that their teachers frequently incorporate Role-Play in speaking lessons. They perceive Role-Play as a useful and effective technique for improving their speaking abilities, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and creativity. It also increases their motivation, encourages natural language use, and helps them express more ideas during class activities. However, the findings also reveal several challenges. Many students experience a lack of confidence when performing Role-Plays, struggle with limited vocabulary and grammar, and feel that there is not enough time to prepare. Issues such as poor peer interaction and limited classroom space also affect the effectiveness of the activity. Despite these challenges, the overall responses reflect a strong preference for Role-Play over more traditional speaking exercises, highlighting its value in creating an engaging and interactive learning environment.

Based on the findings regarding the first-year English major students' responses to the Role-Play technique in English language learning at Dong Nai University, several recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness of this technique and address the areas of concern highlighted in the study.

Firstly, the Role-Play technique has proven to be highly effective in building student confidence. However, many students still lack the confidence needed to perform well in these activities. Teachers can address this by starting with small group exercises, encouraging peer feedback, and fostering a classroom environment where mistakes are seen as a natural part of the learning process. By offering positive reinforcement, teachers can gradually help students build more confidence in their speaking abilities.

Secondly, the effectiveness of Role-Play is often hindered when students struggle with vocabulary and grammar, which can impede their performance. To combat this, teachers should provide essential language support before the activity, offering useful words, expressions, and grammar tips. Additionally, incorporating practice tasks before Role-Play will give students the opportunity to become more comfortable and fluent in their speaking.

Thirdly, giving students adequate preparation time before Role-Play activities is essential for their success. Without enough time to prepare, students may feel unready and anxious. Allowing more time to plan their roles can enhance their confidence and help them feel more

prepared. Collaborative preparation also fosters teamwork and ensures a better understanding of the task.

Fourthly, encouraging peer collaboration is key to enhancing the effectiveness of Role-Play. Teachers can organize group activities and ask students to reflect on their experiences afterward. This not only strengthens teamwork but also improves learning outcomes by allowing students to share insights and provide constructive feedback to each other.

Lastly, diversifying speaking activities is necessary to cater to different learning styles. While Role-Play is highly beneficial, it should be combined with other speaking tasks such as debates, storytelling, and discussions to maintain students' interest. A varied approach ensures that all students have the chance to develop different speaking skills, keeping them engaged and improving their overall proficiency. By addressing these areas – building confidence, providing language support, ensuring preparation time, fostering collaboration, and diversifying activities – teachers can significantly enhance the effectiveness of the Role-Play technique in their classrooms.

5. Conclusions

This study explored first-year English major students' perceptions of using Role-Play in English speaking classes at Dong Nai University. The results showed that most students had a positive attitude toward the technique. They believed Role-Play helped improve their speaking skills, especially in terms of fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and creativity. It also made learning more interesting and encouraged more participation and interaction among students. However, some challenges were also reported. Many students said they lacked confidence when performing Role-Plays in front of the class. Others struggled with limited vocabulary and grammar, not having enough time to prepare, or poor interaction with classmates. These difficulties show that while Role-Play is useful, teachers need to plan and support it carefully to make sure all students benefit.

The present research includes unavoidable limitations that should be taken into consideration. First, it involved only 75 students from a single university, which means the findings may not reflect the experiences or opinions of students in other schools or regions. Second, the study relied solely on a questionnaire to gather data, focusing only on students' self-reported perceptions. It did not include classroom observations or input from teachers, which could have provided a more detailed and balanced understanding of how Role-Play is used and received in actual teaching practice.

For future research, it would be helpful to include more students from different schools or levels of English to get a broader view. Adding interviews, classroom observations, or teacher feedback would also give deeper insights into how Role-Play works in real classroom settings. Researchers could also explore how Role-Play affects students' speaking performance over a longer period, and how it can be combined with other techniques to support students who face challenges like low confidence or limited language skills.

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