



APPLICATION OF ROLE PLAY IN TEACHING BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

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ABSTRACT

As a teacher of English from a technical institute, belongs to rural region finds role play or situational dialogue productive, entertaining and interesting activity to teach writing business letters at the level of third year engineering. After learning the basic corpus of sentences, formal vocabulary and format of business letters, the major part of situation, context and case comprehension remains. For this, researcher finds that the cultivation of one's imagination and skill of giving embodiment to the same is the most important task.

Key Words: Role play, productive, entertaining and interesting, situation, business letters, context and case, imagination.

INTRODUCTION:

English is prescribed to the technical institutes under the department of Applied Sciences and Humanities. This department looks forward in teaching the subjects which will be used and be in practice in engineers' on-the-job life. Then the teaching of business correspondence in English and especially to that which belongs to the rural region becomes challenging to the teacher. The formal knowledge of English of students whom we receive for courses is up to the mark. They are well aware of vocabulary; Parts of Speech, Sentence corpus; Types and Tenses, Format of letters; Informal and Formal. In the first year of engineering this above content is refreshed with examples but students do not take it seriously and remain dependant. It happens due to either they are not aware of placement campus or the burden of rest technical subjects.

Nevertheless, teacher can find room and proper timing right before the final year where he finds students thinking of career and have two years experience of technical college. Here

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students take learning of business letter writing necessary and significant. In this article, learning of business letter is mainly focused with the method of creative writing. For this, after the keen study of Formal Letters, researcher comes to the finding that the format or the pattern of letter is not the problem but the framing of main body is. Even the students having better command over language are unable to compose the main body of letter as per the situation and context. As far as the situation and role, sender and receiver, are concerned, students feel impossible, fake and unrealistic to themselves. They do not treat themselves as manager, officer, supervisor, organizer etc. as per the demand of letter. They remain reluctant to compose and exchange ideas. It is here observed that it happens due to the lack of skill getting incorporated in the role and scene. After this attempt, missing things are enlisted and following things are expected from students so they can produce a lively letter.

- 1) **Imagination** – to get into the role
- 2) **Objectivity** – by forgetting themselves
- 3) **Situation** – case, context and scene
- 4) **Productivity** – result oriented communication
- 5) **Interest** – to achieve the effect.

The conversion of students in the role of sender and receiver is the major task. It is remarkably taken in consideration that one's imagination power could help a lot to understand the given situation like inquiry, complaint, order, invitation, events like accidents, meetings, progress etc. Thus, such a activity is required which can enable students to think, imagine and write business letters as manager, officer, supervisor, organizer, team leader do.

A Role Play:

In this article researcher tries the hand with a Role Play activity to meet above needs. It is one of the staples of English Language Teaching as a foreign language. As far as an application of role play as a class room activity is concerned, it is most of time dedicated for Spiking Skills to practice speaking in situation, build confidence and fluency but it is tried here with third year engineering class at experimental level to enable them to live the scene and role by boosting students imagination power. There are certain types of role plays which are linked with the certain types of business letters.

- 1) **The Conflict Role Play:** It's a problem resolving activity and can be used for complaint letter. It also tests their maturity and confidence in language.



- 2) **The Cooperative Role Play:** It requires participant to work for common good. It can be used for Inquiry Letters, Notices and circulars which are to seek and pass information.
- 3) **Information gap Role play:** Notices and circulars can be enlisted under information gap role play.
- 4) **Task based Role play:** To draft Invitation Letters, Manuals, Agenda of a program etc.

Simulation Structure:

In Role Play activity simulation is structured usually in three phases.

Phase 1: Situation, context and task are presented by the teacher to the participants. This is done by distributing Role Cards defining role to be played.

Phase 2: Teachers divides participants into groups (maximum 3 o 4 students in a group), representing different companies or departments. At this stage it is the job a teacher to be manager, monitor and informant. He constantly observes if students have taken the company life, role and scene realistically for boosting their imagination.

Phase3: It is a feedback stage. It is most valuable stage to find out errors and provide remedial work.

Activities in the Business Letter writing class:

In this paper the researcher is going to describe a simulation activity, practiced with third year engineering students leading to write a complaint letter. First of all, groups were formed, situation was described as a scene to an actor, roles were allotted as per cards, students were asked to think over the following case silently and treat themselves in roles (imagination is expected to take the charge).

As The Unit Manager in **L&T Cement**, receives a complaint letter from the Unit Supervisor of 18th Unit, complaining against improper supply of electricity from the Electrical Department of the same firm. Then, the Unit Manager forwards a complaint letter with reference to above concerned department and asks for the explanation in writing from the Distribution Manager.

**CARD I****(The Unit Supervisor)****(Intermediate level)**

You work in the **L&T Cement**, 18th Unit

Write a letter to the Unit Manager, writing about an improper electricity supply to the 18th unit which caused waste of time and loss in production.

Intermediate level**Letter plan:**

- say what has happened;
- request promising words to avoid same in future.

CARD II**(The Unit Manger)****(Advanced level)**

With reference to complaint letter from the Unit Supervisor write complaint letter to the Distribution Department, Asking for explanation in writing.

CARD III**(The Distribution Manager)****(Intermediate level)**

You write to The Unit Manager as a reply to his complaint letter. Show your regret for improper supply, explain the causes and promise to avoid it in future.

Letter plan

- say you are very sorry for the inconvenience caused
- it was mainly due to some technical issues;
- admit your mistake and add promising words.

GRADING CRITERIA (adapted from T. Hedge)

1. Organization of content (Clarity, Coherence, Paragraphing linking devices)	20
2. Sense of audience and style	15
3. Lexical and grammatical complexity	20
4. Accuracy of conventions (layout, formulas, etc)	20

- Grammar



- Sentence structure
- Spelling
- Punctuation

5. Creativity of solutions given (realistic, appropriate to the situations) 25

What is expected from students?

The researcher looks for the imagination skills involved in the process of composing with a sense of purpose, a sense of audience, a sense of direction, as well as skills connected with “crafting”.

CONCLUSION:

The experiment with the engineering students, using a Role Play activity for the sake of learning business letter writing gives very naïve experience to both teacher as well students. The fruit of role play is tested with impressive taste in writing skill. Students are found so deeply dived in scenes (situations) that their imagination was accelerated and creativity began to compose the main body of letter naturally with the help of teacher. In the final discussion, all the students found the activity very useful because it was ‘real’ in the sense they could see themselves doing this kind of work. The researcher concludes here with the positive result achieved in the above attempt.

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