

A ROLE-PLAY-BASED METHODOLOGY FOR ENHANCING THE LEXICAL
COMPETENCE OF PHILOLOGY STUDENTS

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Annotation: *This article explores the methodology of developing lexical competence in philology students through the use of role-playing activities. Various types of role plays—controlled, semi-controlled, free, episodic and long-term—are analyzed, along with their pedagogical functions and stages of implementation. The study highlights the effectiveness of role-playing in enhancing lexical, grammatical and communicative skills in foreign language learning. Examples based on the French language curriculum for 1st–4th year philology students demonstrate the practical application of marker-technology in interactive learning environments.*

Keywords: *lexical competence, role-playing activities, philological education, interactive methods, foreign language teaching, marker-technology.*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary foreign language education, developing students' lexical competence is one of the key components of communicative proficiency. Traditional teaching methods alone are not sufficient to form stable and active vocabulary usage skills. Therefore, interactive technologies—especially role-playing—are gaining increasing relevance in philological education.

Role-playing activities create a realistic communicative environment, allowing students to apply lexical units in context, develop spontaneity, and build linguistic creativity. Through adopting roles, students learn to select lexical-grammatical material independently, negotiate meaning, and engage in authentic discourse. Such an approach fosters not only vocabulary development, but also communicative, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences.

It is advisable to begin the use of role-playing from its controlled variant, and then move on to moderately controlled, free, episodic, and long-term role-plays. The controlled role-play usually consists of staging a ready-made dialogue and serves to practice pronunciation and lexical-grammatical skills in an interactive context. The task is often presented as follows: «Listen, read and act out!»

The moderately controlled role-play allows students to engage in communication closer to natural conditions by adopting a role; it teaches them to select the necessary language material to independently construct the character's lines in line with the temporarily adopted role. Example of a task: «Work in pairs. Develop the situation!»

In free role-play, linguo-communicative situations are offered, giving students greater initiative and creativity. This encourages them to decide independently which

lexical-grammatical material to use without external support or prior preparation (marker-knowledge, marker-experience).

The episodic role-play is dedicated to performing a specific episode, while the long-term role-play involves staging several episodes on a single topic over an extended period.

Regardless of which variant of role-play is chosen, its technological organization requires following these stages:

- Preparatory stage (developing the scenario and plan, describing roles and identifying key character traits, defining the functioning of axiological markers at all stages);
- Explanation stage (formulating the goal, instructing participants, distributing roles, working with or revising prepared language material, introducing the rules of the game);
- Implementation stage (conducting the role-play, staging the proposed situation, performing the roles);
- Analysis and summarizing stage (reflective analysis, recording achieved results, analyzing self- or peer-identified mistakes and correcting them, summarizing outcomes, rewarding the best participants).

For philology students of 1st–4th courses studying “The Practical Course of the Second Foreign Language (French)”, the use of role-playing can be implemented through the following topics:

- 1st year: “La famille”, “Les courses”
- 2nd year: “La santé et le soin du corps”, “Les voyages”, “Le sport”, “La météo”, “La vie universitaire”, “Choisir une carrière”
- 4th year: “L’homme et la nature”, “Les médias”

Below are examples of several role-plays used at the implementation stage of the marker-technology.

1. Role-play on the topic “Les voyages”

1st-year students work in pairs; they are asked to stage a dialogue between a client and a cashier (ticket seller). This role-play belongs to the controlled type. Students have supporting expressions that help them construct their dialogues, yet the activity encourages creativity and the use of additional language material (marker-goal).

Role 1: Passager

You came to the office to buy a ticket. Imagine where, with whom, and by what means of transport you want to travel.

Useful words: Excusez-moi, puis-je avoir... ? ...

Role 2: Caissier

Serve the client, but first ask the dispatcher whether tickets are available.

Useful words: Voici un billet... Oh, c’est dommage...

2. Moderately controlled role-play on “Les voyages” (control stage)

Participants are divided into groups of three, each group receives a city map (with landmarks marked). Players perform the following roles:

- Habitant local — explains to tourists where the museum and/or hotel is located.
- Touriste masculin — wants to visit the retro car museum.
- Son épouse fatiguée — tries to convince her husband to return to the hotel but does not know the location.

Students ask one another questions to determine the location of the museum and hotel and reach an agreement. With prior work on lexical-grammatical material through conditional speech and speech exercises, this role-play can be conducted as a moderately controlled one, meaning students independently construct their lines using the axiological marker system.

A moderately controlled group role-play on the topic “La famille” conducted with 1st-year students yielded positive results in forming linguistic competence and developing emotional-value attitudes toward others. Roles may be assigned by the teacher (marker-stimulator) or chosen based on students’ personal experience (marker-experience).

In this activity, participants must plan a weekend in nature or develop a travel route considering all conditions — financial expenses, places to visit, means of transport, games and entertainment, meals — and reach a common decision. The discussion is led by a strong student playing the main role (mother or father).

3. Role-play on “La vie universitaire”

A moderately controlled role-play titled “Scientific Thursday” was conducted with 2nd-year philology students.

Topic: “Pourquoi apprenons-nous les langues étrangères?” (Why do we learn foreign languages?)

Scenario: Guests are invited to a TV studio to discuss why people start learning foreign languages.

Students take on the following roles: host, experienced traveler, 7th-grade student, the student’s mother, grandfather, biologist, businessman, businessman’s wife, diplomat, linguist, host of the “Polyglot” program, translator, travel agency representative, a guest from Atlanta, English teacher.

Preparation stage: Necessary lexical-grammatical material is practiced. Students activate introductory phrases and constructions to express opinions and participate in conversation: *à mon avis, d’après moi, je suis absolument convaincu que..., je suis sûr que..., je crois fermement que..., je n’ai aucun doute que...*

Common fillers include: *eh bien, genre, en fait...*

Conditional-speech exercises help practice various types of questions (general, special, disjunctive, alternative, and subject questions) and develop grammatical competence. Correct pronunciation of country and language names is checked

(portugais, chinois, japonais, néerlandais, français, arabe, grec). Monologic speaking skills are also assessed.

Using only one technology, regardless of its effectiveness, does not fully reveal students' potential or support teachers' creative approaches. Therefore, integrating multiple methods and tools is essential. This ensures that instructional content, goals, and learning tasks correspond to the most appropriate teaching technology and foster comprehensive linguistic competence.

Conclusion

Role-playing activities significantly enhance the development of lexical competence among philology students. By simulating real-life communicative situations, role plays foster independence, creativity, and spontaneous use of vocabulary. Both controlled and free role-playing formats allow students to integrate lexical-grammatical material meaningfully, while marker-technology ensures structured development of communicative and cognitive skills. Integrating role play with other teaching methods creates a rich learning environment that supports linguistic, sociocultural, and personal development.

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