



Enhancing ULIS 4th year students' speaking skills through using job search simulations

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OVERVIEW

- Introduction
 - Literature review on related studies
 - Research methodology
 - The job search simulations used for 4th-year ULIS students and initial feedback from students and teachers
 - Conclusion
- 



INTRODUCTION

- Heated discussions on how to teach speaking effectively
- The importance of being able to communicate effectively in English
- Activities are designed to help students “*to speak fluently, to listen carefully, and to do with and to use the language effectively in their oral communication*” (Chouldhary, 2013).
- Techniques and activities introduced to make the classroom activities more effective and more communicative or ‘real-life’: *dramas, discussions, problem-solving, role-plays and simulations*
- Implement simulation technique in their speaking classes so that ULIS students could use English language in the most meaningful way
- A job search one in which students had chance to experience all aspects of a job search process



LITERATURE REVIEW ON RELATED STUDIES



LITERATURE REVIEW ON RELATED STUDIES

- Definitions of simulation AND job search simulation
- **Benefits** of using simulations in language teaching
- Factors determining the success of a simulation
- Simulation design
- Related studies on simulations

Definitions of simulation

- ▶ Simulations were **originally** used as **a learning technique** in **business and military training** rather than in English language teaching (Sam, 1990)
- ▶ Simulations were just defined as a '**structured set of circumstances that mirror real life and participants act instructed**'
- ▶ Simulations have become **more and more familiar** to both **language learners and language instructors** thanks to their practical values.

Definition of Job Search Simulation

Simulation of interviews during which students act both as candidates searching for jobs and as hiring managers

Mock Job Interview
Activity: Students
Learn How
To Get A Job!



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Job search simulation



Interviewers

- Provide the job advertisement
- Provide job descriptions and requirements and skills
- Prepare a list of questions
- Write a report on the completion of the interview

Interviewees

- go through the application process, such as writing their own CVs and covering letters
- find information about the company so that they can get ready to answer questions at the interview
- Practise interviewing skills

Benefits of using simulations in language teaching

- ▶ In simulations, **behavior** is **not controlled**, so the participants bring their own skills, experience and knowledge → helps to **create a real life-like** situation → one of the fundamental conditions for **effective and efficient language learning**
- ▶ Simulation helps learners to **use language creatively** and **communicatively**
- ▶ This technique really '**stimulates authentic conversation**'
- ▶ The learners are forced to **behave in a natural atmosphere** that helps them overcome their fears and inhibitions.
- ▶ simulations **stimulate authentic** learner-to-learner conversational **interaction** (Chouldhary, 2013)

Benefits of using simulations in language teaching (cont.)

- A teaching technique which is '**useful and more suitable for consolidating and practicing** aspects of conversational proficiency than teaching new forms.
- Simulations **bring the real outside world** in the classroom.
- Simulations **initiate mental and bodily activity** and **ensure active participation** of all learners.
- Simulations make the **atmosphere** in the classroom **less formal** and, as a result, **reduces tension**.
- Simulations **prepare** language learners for **real life** and **handle real-life unpredictability** (Chouldhary, 2013).



Factors determining the success of a simulation

- *The roles of the teachers*
 - **designing or adapting** the simulation to fit the unique needs of a group of students
 - **teaching** content/skills necessary to participate in the simulation
 - **observing** student interactions, **monitoring and adjusting** the simulation as necessary
 - **assessing** student learning, **evaluating** the simulation as a learning experience
 - **presenting** the learning activity with great excitement and enthusiasm (Chilcott, 1996 as cited in Chouldhary, 2013).



Factors determining the success of a simulation

- *The roles of the learners:* decisive role in the success of the simulation throughout different stages, namely:
 - Forming groups
 - Preparing for the simulation
 - Conducting a simulation
 - Partially evaluating and assessing a simulation



Simulation design

- *Teaching goals*
 - *Simulation construction*
 - *Running the simulation*
 - *Debriefing*
- 



Related studies on simulations

- Sam (1990) has conducted a research on the use of drama in communicative language teaching.
- Tompkins (1998) also did a research on the effectiveness of role-playing and simulation in ELT.
- Cecile (2001) (as cited in Choudhary, 2013) has conducted a study to observe whether role-play is an interaction which can effectively trigger the learning process in learning a foreign language.
- *Simulations have been proved to be effective in English language teaching and should be used more frequently.*



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- *Identification of the problem*
 - *Aims of the study*
 - *Procedures of designing the simulation and feedback collection*
- 



Identification of the problem

- ▶ 4th year students still have to take another course titled Advanced Spoken Language in Use as a compulsory subject during their internship, right before their graduation from ULIS.
- ▶ There is no point in repeating the procedure of the earlier speaking skills courses because this would bring the boredom to the students.
- ▶ Students must really need something practical that may help them in their career.
- ▶ → *apply simulation techniques in this course for the fourth-year student at ULIS.*



Aims of the study

- **The present study aims at:**
 - introducing a model of teaching speaking skills through job search related simulations and
 - exploring both teachers' and students' feedback on the effectiveness of this model.



Procedures of designing the simulation and feedback collection

- ▶ a discussion with the Advanced Spoken Language Use course developer → the job search simulation would be allowed to use in the course
- ▶ a detailed syllabus including all the stages of the job search simulation
- ▶ running the simulation during the 15-week semester, including six weeks of student internship
- ▶ time for getting feedback and debriefing session



The job search simulation applied to 4th year students at ULIS

1

Theory: CV

- Classification
- Samples

Practice: Reading an authentic advert + Writing a CV.

cover letter and collect
at least one sample
(Remember to mention
the advertised job and
source(s) of sample, and
print your prepared
material)

2

Theory: Cover letter

Practice: Writing cover letter for the same post.

Collecting the questions
often asked in interviews
+ suggest answer (if
possible)
(Remember to print your
prepared material)

3

Practice:

Brainstorming interview questions

Interviewing each other within the same group.

Grouping: groups of 4

Each interviewer chooses
one company and the
position they want to
recruit.
(Remember to print your
prepared material)
Note: Interviewees are
allowed stay at home in
the next session.



Initial feedback from teachers and students



Initial feedback from teachers and students

- *Advantages of running the job-search simulation in Advanced Spoken Language Use*
 - *Drawbacks of running the job-search simulation in Advanced Spoken Language Use*
 - *Suggested ideas for improvement*
- 



Advantages of running the job-search simulation in Advanced Spoken Language Use

- Relaxed learning environment
- Practicality
- Students' increased confidence after running the job-search simulation
- Improvement in the use of gestures
- Appropriate postures in the interview
- A variety of subskills were embedded and reinforced when students carried out the simulation
- Really 'highly motivating'
- Helps the students 'to change their identities' from pure students to either job-seekers or interviewers



Drawbacks of running the job-search simulation in Advanced Spoken Language Use

- The simulation process was interrupted due to the six-week internship → the interruption between the group members.
- The heavy workload when teacher had to mark both students' writings (CVs and Covering letters) and speaking skills (presentations and interviews). But in general, they all felt this satisfactory.



Suggested ideas for improvement

- the simulation process would not be interrupted by the six-week internship
 - this simulation to be used at the earlier stage of their university study
 - integrate this job-search simulation in other speaking courses
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Conclusion

- The job-search simulation used for the Advanced Spoken English Use was appropriate and practical.
- The students' speaking skills have been improved through giving presentations, experiencing impromptu speaking, and dealing with negotiations.
- The teachers also felt motivated when applying this job-search simulation, despite some complaints about the too much workload for marking students' papers .
- Recommendations have also been made about separating the internship from this final semester to ensure the smooth flow of the simulation.
- Another suggested idea was about integrating the simulation in other speaking courses to give students chance to be exposed to job-search experience at an earlier stage of their student life.



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