Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

Role-playing as a technique to promote oral expression in elementary school students

Juego de roles como técnica para fomentar la expresión oral en estudiantes de educación básica

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís
jenifer.quinteros.88@est.ucacue.edu.ec
Universidad Católica de Cuenca, Cuenca, Cuenca
Ecuador
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5447-6037

Tammy Fajardo-Dack
tammy.fajardo@ucacue.edu.ec
Universidad Católica de Cuenca, Cuenca, Cuenca
Ecuador
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9330-4622

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to present role-playing techniques as a means to promote oral expression in eighth, ninth and tenth grade students in a public school in Cañar-Ecuador. This research demonstrates the advantages of using the role-playing technique to improve oral expression skills, as well as the student's perceptions about its use. Both quantitative and qualitative instruments were applied. The researcher employed pre- and post-tests, surveys, classroom observations, and a teacher diary to collect data. The pre- and post-tests were scored using a speech assessment rubric, which assessed students' grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension. Findings revealed that students enjoyed the role-play exercises and were motivated to perform dialogues in English.

Descriptors: Verbal learning; practical work (learning method); student projects. (UNESCO Thesaurus).

RESUMEN

El propósito principal de este estudio es dar a conocer las técnicas de juego de roles como medio para fomentar la expresión oral en los estudiantes de octavo, noveno y décimo grado en una escuela pública en Cañar-Ecuador. Esta investigación demuestra las ventajas de utilizar la técnica del juego de roles para mejorar las habilidades de expresión oral, así como las percepciones del alumno sobre su uso. Se aplicaron instrumentos tanto cuantitativos como cualitativos. El investigador empleó pruebas previas y posteriores, encuestas, observaciones de clase y un diario del maestro para recopilar datos. Las pruebas previas y posteriores se calificaron utilizando una rúbrica de evaluación del habla, que evaluó la gramática, el vocabulario, la fluidez, la pronunciación y la comprensión de los estudiantes. Los hallazgos revelaron que los estudiantes disfrutaron de los ejercicios de juego de roles y estaban motivados para realizar diálogos en inglés.

Descriptores: Aprendizaje verbal; trabajos prácticos; proyecto del alumno. (Tesauro UNESCO).

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a second language has become one of the keys to succeed in any field for everyone. Being able to use the world`s lingua franca has become a necessity thus it is part of education processes since very early stages. In Ecuador, it is not different; the national curriculum has shifted in recent years, emphasizing the process of teaching English. One of the main principles of the Ecuadorian curriculum is the communicative language approach (Ministerio de Educacion, 2016), in which language is best learned as a method to connect and convey thoughts, rather than as a body of knowledge to be memorized. From this point of view, this curriculum stresses developing the four communicative skills, rather than linguistic content learning. Its goal is to equip people to communicate effectively in a second language, both orally and in writing.

However, in Ecuadorian classrooms, learners face some issues when they have to convey their ideas using the target language, but are not ready to do so. In order to foster speaking skills, teachers must build a scenario to teach the target language in a vivid, energetic, and fascinating manner to increase learners' communicative capacity (Mavlonova, 2020). For instance, many English teachers are experimenting with innovative techniques, such as dialogues, open-ended situations, and role-plays that have been used to encourage learners' communicative skills (Kuśnierek, 2015).

The purpose of this study is to know if the role playing technique can be a useful way to improve speaking abilities in a public school with eighth, ninth, and tenth grade learners. In order to conduct this study, the following research instruments were used to gather data: pre and post-tests, surveys, class observations, and a teacher's journal, which provided information about the students' speaking level and learners' perceptions before and after the intervention. This is done by identifying students' speaking level before the implementation of the role playing technique, and ascertaining any change in the speaking skill score after the application of the role playing technique. Additionally, students' perceptions of the use of role playing were analyzed.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

Theoretical Framework

Everyone needs communication to share their ideas, feelings, and thoughts with the world. There are many reasons for integrating communicative activities into an English classroom, (Kumaran, 2017) states in her research that learners are more productive when they participate in a dynamic educational environment that encourages them to practice vivid activities with their peers.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has played a significant role in the learning-teaching process. CLT is the most popular style of student-centered instruction through which learners can acquire a language. CLT includes the kind of classroom activities that best support learning. This approach to communicative language learning includes real life communication characterized by authentic materials, real simulations, and meaningful tasks (Richard, 2006).

The Communicative Approach does not only consist of communication and relationship between students and teachers or peers to peers. It also can be understood as the goal of learning and the process used in this approach. This approach began in the 1970s as an alternative to the universal systems-oriented approaches, for instance, the audio-lingual procedure (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The Communicative Approach's purpose is to develop the learners' competence to express their ideas and feelings in the target language (communicative competence in real-life situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Thus, Communicative Language Teaching can be understood as a collection of principles concerning the goals of language teaching, how students acquire a new language, the sorts of classrooms that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and students in the process. Furthermore, language learning does not only mean training and language skills, it also focuses on the function of communicating (Krashen, 1982).

According to (Richards, 2006), a learner can develop communicative competence by using language for different purposes and functions, varying the use of language according to the setting and participants, producing and understanding different types of

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

text, and maintaining communication despite linguistic limitations through the use of different strategies.

According to (Hadi, 2017), the CLT approach has had a significant impact on classroom resources such as books, teaching techniques, the role of the teacher in the classroom, and in the teaching and learning process today. In the Communicative Approach, students talk a lot as they begin to realize how words emerge naturally in authentic communication without using arcane grammar conventions (Rahmatillah , 2019). They do not just sit in the classroom and listen to the teacher's explanation. Learners are asked to interact with each other. Guided by their teacher, they engage in role playing activities and pretend to have a conversation about real-life situations. This learning experience is quite different from filling in the blanks or drilling activities. With the Communicative Approach, learners' interactions become both the procedure and the goal of education (Derakhshan et al. 2016).

The Communicative Aim

The principal purpose of CLT is to communicate meaning through language which is considered a tool for learners to achieve this goal. As a result, courses that use a Communicative Approach prioritize students' practice and enhancement of their language competence over their grammatical ability (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). To this end, various types of syllabi have been developed, one of which is the functional-notional syllabus, which allows students to focus on the meaning (function) of language and practice it for realistic purposes, such as introducing themselves, giving directions, ordering food in a restaurant, and so on (Richard, 2006).

According to (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) is vital to provide a variety of practice exercises to assist students in enhancing their communication ability. Although actual conversation is the ultimate goal, further activities and exercises can provide pupils language practice in a more controlled manner, with an emphasis on accuracy growth. For instance, role playing allows students to picture themselves in actual scenarios and practice using

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

English before they have to use it in real life. Furthermore, for some students, these kinds of activities are also enjoyable and encouraging (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Role playing: a tool to foster learners' communication

(Richards, 2006) states that role playing is a fundamental key to enhancing communicative skills in English learners. It allows students to use the target language in a safe environment where errors are not a big issue. They will have the opportunity to deal with language in different situations and environments; settings, roles, and scripts will change according to learners' levels.

With advanced learners, the teacher would assign roles or a situation to learners and let them try. Therefore, the teacher's role will be to provide live feedback about their scripts (Nafiatun et al. 2017). For beginners, things will be different. The teacher will have to offer them dialogues from easy situations or help them to write the entire dialogue. This will be quite effective in letting these students know what the dialogue is about (Ladousse, 1987), (Richards, 2006) states that learning a new language will be meaningful for students if they have opportunities to practice in a realistic context. This is one of the emphases of the Communicative Approach.

Types of Role playing

There are three types of role playing according to (Byrne, 1986), completely scripted role playing, semi-scripted role playing, and non-scripted role playing. In the first variety, each word is provided in a fully scripted, completely planned role playing, and each pupil should comprehend or recall his or her role. The main goal of the conversation, after all, is to make each item of the language intelligible and easy to remember. Therefore, this form of role playing involves explaining the model conversation in the recommended textbook. According to (Byrne, 1986), this sort of role playing is appropriate for low-level pupils who are unfamiliar with the setting in the more advanced semi-scripted role playing.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

The semi-scripted role playing provides a model discussion with some missing words, and students should be able to fill in the blanks with appropriate terms for these situations (Livingstone, 1983). As a result, students can manage the main conversation in a specific direction and start their own. Students should come up with linguistic material based on a frame that supplies the situations to establish a real-life context. This type of role playing may be referred to as semi-controlled because the teacher or a textbook will determine how language is acquired (Neupane, 2019). Semi-scripted role playing will be useful for students with upper-beginner to intermediate levels of competency, this can be employed for students who are comfortable with basic procedures and want to progress to higher levels (Fadilah, 2016).

In the non-scripted role playing, students design mini conversations based on keywords, materials, or contexts. In this type of role playing, students are given keywords and dialogues, keywords and information, or contexts and aims. This sort of role playing is less controlled and structured since students have more opportunities to apply their previous knowledge in real-life settings (Byrne, 1986).

According to (Neupane's, 2019) research, pupils can act out in some situations based on their comprehension by building on their beliefs and thoughts and establishing language on their level. Non-scripted role playing can be helpful to students from middle to advanced levels because it allows them to engage in free and organized role playing, which sometimes necessitates the use of unique abilities such as problem-solving.

(Rashid & Qaisar, 2017) support that the teacher must consider some key points to avoid learner misunderstanding, when using role playing. Firstly, the teacher will craft a tale that mirrors the situation to be experienced, then present the scenario and provide hints for the players' character roles as well as clear directions. Before learners begin their performance, they will have enough time to prepare the plot, scenery, and their basic costuming. While learners are acting, comments are not permitted since interruptions could distract learners. However, teacher interventions are allowed to restore the flow of

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

the role playing. For instance, a good teacher can intervene when the participant forgets a word, which may slow the tempo of the speech (Rashid & Qaisar, 2017).

By the end of learners' presentations, students will have the opportunity to share their feelings about their productions. Furthermore, the class discusses the role playing exercise to ensure that the "situation plot" has been handled (Ding, 2018).

Literature Review

Researchers such as (Rahimy, 2012), (Juvrianto, 2018), (Alabsi, 2016), and (Kumaran, 2017), among others, have considered role playing as an effective technique to improve speaking skills in EFL classrooms. Although the published literature covers a wide variety of studies in favor of the role playing technique, this section focuses on three main topics that emerged from the reviewed studies: advantages, disadvantages, and students' perceptions about the role playing technique. Even though the literature presents these topics in several levels of education, this article focuses on the effectiveness of role playing in secondary students.

Derakhshan (Ai et al. 2016), postulated that learning speaking skills through the role playing technique is the favorite activity among young learners compared to other activities such as drill or fill in the blank worksheets. Moreover, role playing encourages students to speak in English because they can practice with their peers freely and safely. So, teachers have to consider their students' needs and interests, plus the teaching context. Furthermore, effective classroom management is required to provide learners with the necessary conditions to achieve their fluency and accuracy speaking goals.

A study conducted with Malaysian secondary school students on the use of role playing to improve their speaking skills showed that students found it easier and more comfortable to work in pairs (Shangeetha, 2017). Half of the students, the ones with a high level of proficiency to participate freely in the activities, enjoyed the free role playing because it was interesting and motivating. Moreover, these students thought that role playing offered

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

them the opportunity to speak in English, as opposed to drill and rote memorization (Shangeetha, 2017).

Similar research reveals that role playing seems more appealing to learners when they have to practice speaking skills because they find it fun to take on another person (Fadilah, 2016). As a result, they feel more motivated to practice the target language and less intimidated during a role playing performance, (Rashid & Qaisar, 2017) indicates in their study that role playing technique was successful and beneficial in the development of communicative abilities among students. Moreover, role playing activity helped students naturally acquire complex information since these active experiences not only improve their learning but also their attitudes toward peers and teachers.

(Juvrianto, 2018) in his research, selected two classes from the population to represent the experimental and control groups using cluster random sampling. Whereas the experimental class was treated using a role playing technique, and the control class was treated using a traditional method. The total number of samples was 43, with 23 students in the experimental class and 20 in the control class.

The researcher collected pupils speaking examinations to determine the efficiency of teaching speaking through the use of role playing activity. There were two tests: a pre-test and a post-test, where students were requested to speak about their remarkable experiences in each one. The researcher divided the evaluation criteria into three categories: fluency, correctness, and comprehensibility. The researcher concluded that the students' speaking skills improved greatly by comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test, as well as the process of role playing in the teaching process. After using the role playing technique with the tenth-grade students, (Juvrianto, 2018) found that learners who were struggling with speaking activities could produce better dialogue than before.

(Rashid & Qaisar, 2017) conducted a teaching experiment about the usefulness of the role playing technique in the development of critical thinking among elementary students. The role playing technique was investigated as a realistic and effective teaching tool for encouraging critical thinking among Pakistani fourth-grade pupils. The research revealed

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

that the intervention encouraged critical thinking among students. In the beginning, pupils looked afraid to speak up in front of the teacher and their classmates. Researchers believed that there might be a variety of causes for this, including a lack of verbal confidence, poor self-esteem, and a lack of role-playing experience. After applying the role playing technique, students demonstrated moderate to good critical thinking abilities. Prior to this, students appeared more invested in finishing their assignments than in practicing speaking activities. However, in the role playing exercises, students seemed more confident and engaged in demonstrating their speaking abilities. Additionally, learners appeared to be highly engaged since they demonstrated strong communication skills when preparing for their presentations.

Learning vocabulary is necessary for EFL learners, but knowing it isn't enough; what counts is using it in diverse situational circumstances. In research with teachers in Saudi Arabia, (Thuraya, 2016) used various strategies, including role playing activities and drills to familiarize students with new words, their meanings, and grammatical and social usage to enable them to use vocabulary appropriately and effectively in real situations. In this context, the role playing technique becomes a new way for students to use a wide range of vocabulary by exposing them to a variety of scenarios that they may encounter in the future.

(Rojas & Villafuerte, 2018) explored the importance of the role playing as a complementary technique to improve English speaking abilities in EFL learners. The origins, definitions, contributions, and supporting methods of role playing were investigated to better understand the advantages of this strategy for improving speaking abilities. The findings revealed that dramatic methods are among the features of role playing. Furthermore, role playing aids in the development of communication skills by providing opportunities for students to practice a foreign language with their classmates in a social setting. In addition, role playing provides appropriate learning venues in which students may practice English in a more supportive atmosphere. Furthermore, even if it increases chaos among pupils, role playing enhances learners' speaking abilities.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

A study conducted by (Kuśnierek, 2015) sought to verify whether or not role playing technique could improve students' speaking abilities. Sixteen pupils from a secondary school participated in this research. During the classes, students did their best to get into the roles and tried to use only English. The study found that including role playing exercises improved students' speaking abilities because learners were more interested largely because it was fun to play a different role. The bulk of the learners stated that their speaking abilities improved.

 What is more noteworthy is that several of the students reported that when they used English in a regular class, they felt worried and frightened. According to the findings of this study, several students claimed to have overcome their fear of speaking since they spent a significant amount of time practicing dialogues in the target language. Moreover, the students appreciated working in pairs and groups because it allowed them to overcome their apprehension about speaking in front of people with whom they did not have a personal relationship (Kuśnierek, 2015).

(Ruslan, 2020) research examined students' views of learning activities when the teacher used role playing during the learning process. The information was gathered through interviews with students who had participated in role playing events. The findings revealed that role playing can increased students' confidence in their communication with others, their capacity to gain linguistic competence, their motivation, their eagerness to learn, and their willingness to participate actively in the learning process. These results indicate that students' impressions of learning through role playing are positive. In the beginning, most of the students were apprehensive, but after some time, they were able to adjust to the situation. As a result, it could be stated that employing role playing as a teaching technique can help learners to gain confidence.

(Budy, 2019) examined in his study how students progressed in theme-based role-play performances over a year and how it affected their performance on the final speaking test. The results revealed that students' success in theme-based role playing predicts their communicative skill growth. Given that the major purpose of language instruction is to

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

build communicative competence, theme-based role playing allows teachers to increase oral language production and authentic conversational exchanges in a variety of social circumstances and roles.

METHOD

This research was conducted through the use of a mixed-method approach. This research is a quasi-experimental study with a pre- and post-test design.

Qualitative and quantitative instruments were applied to collect data during three weeks. Before data collection started, the researcher met with the school principal, parents, and students to provide information about the study.

Participants

The study was conducted in a public school located in a rural area in Cañar province. Participants were selected by using a convenience sample (Mackey & Gass, 2005), because they were the researcher´s assigned students. Thirty-one students from eighth, ninth, and tenth grade, whose mother tongue is Spanish, participated in the study.

The group was comprised of 18 males (58.1%) and 13 females (41.9%) distributed in eighth grade (n=6; 19.4%), ninth grade (n=12; 38.7%), and tenth grade (n=13; 41.9%), the years of higher basic education. Participants' ages were between 11 and 16 years old with a mean age of 13.6 years (SD=1.25)

Prior to starting the data collection process, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the students and their parents at an informational meeting. Parents granted permission for their children to participate in the research.

Instruments

To collect the data, the researcher used pre and posttests, surveys, class observations, and a teacher's journal.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

Pre and post tests

Pre and post tests were carried out in the form of structured interviews which are similar to verbal surveys in that they allow researchers to compare replies from different participants (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

The tests included 20 questions about personal information, hobbies, likes and dislikes, family, and others. Participants were asked questions that ranged from easy to difficult in order to assess their speaking skills. A rubric was used to score student speaking skills; possible scores ranged from zero to five in five categories: grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation and comprehension.

Survey

The survey, which is usually in the form of a questionnaire, is one of the most frequent means of gathering data on attitudes and opinions from a group of participants; as such, it has been used to study a wide range of questions in the second language research (Mackey & Gass, 2005). A short survey was applied to collect students' perceptions about the use of role playing activity.

Observations

Over a three-week period, observations were done in eighth, ninth, and tenth grade.

The principal of the school attended English lessons and observed students' performance during role-playing activities, taking field notes to record her perceptions and assessments of student and the teacher performance.

The principal provided meaningful and thorough information regarding learners' behaviors and instructor performance in the use of the role-playing technique.

Teacher's Journal

Also, a teacher journal was kept to keep a running record of all the activities performed by learners during the role-playing presentations.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

RESULTS

Data Analysis

Data from the tests were statistically analyzed. The results are expressed through measures of central tendency and dispersion. In addition, classifications are presented through measures of absolute frequency. The behavior of the data was normal according to the Shapiro Wilk test ($p > .05$), so the T-Student parametric test was applied for related samples. Furthermore, in order to establish the changes in the students' perception, the Chi-Square test was applied. A significance of 5% ($p < .05$) was considered.

To assess the level of students' speaking skills, 20 questions were considered, which were scored according to the rubric with a possible final score of 100 points.

In the pre-test students' results fell between 6 and 47 points, with a mean of 35.19 (SD=12.43) as can be seen in Figure 1. A score below the midpoint of the scale (M=50) indicates that the student did not complete half of the test items. Taking into consideration the expectations stipulated by the Ministry of Education of Ecuador (MINEDUC), which maximum score is 10, participants earned low grades ranging from 0.6 to 4.47. This means that participants did not earn minimum state-mandated learning scores.
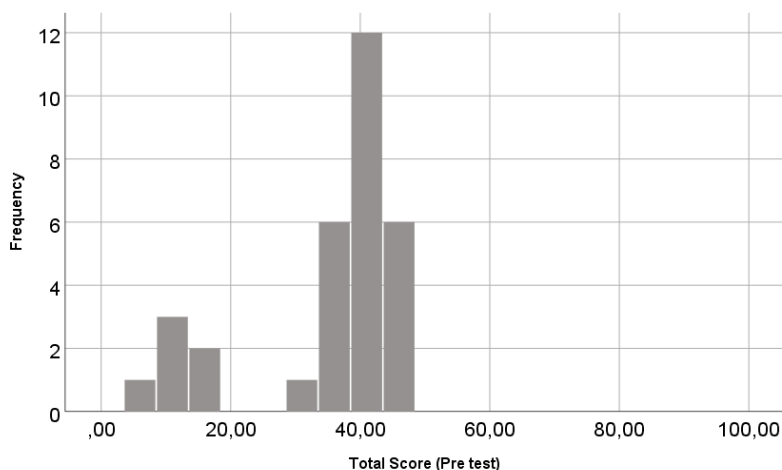

Figure 1. Pretest scores.
Source: Field research.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

Those students who did not achieve the state-mandated learning score and those who were close to achieving it had a relative ratio of one-to-one. That is to say, for each student who did not reach the required learning, there was one who was close to achieving it.
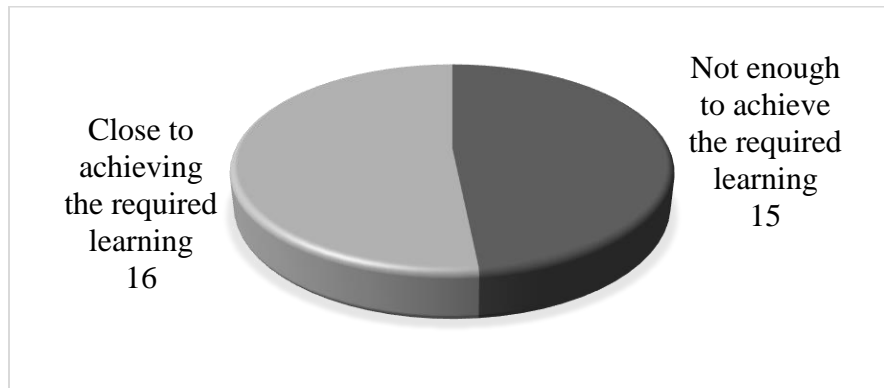

Figure 2. Level of learning scope according to MINEDUC in the pre test.
Source: Field research.

The following box-and-whisker plot (Figure 3) shows the behavior of the score obtained by the students before and after the intervention. After employing the role-play strategy, learners' scores appeared to fluctuate between 52 and 87 points, with a mean of 75.8 (SD=9.4), registering scores above the midpoint of the scale (M=50) and low data dispersion.

The external asterisks represent outlying cases with significantly lower scores than the rest of the group, but all students showed significant positive changes (z=-4.86; p=0.00).
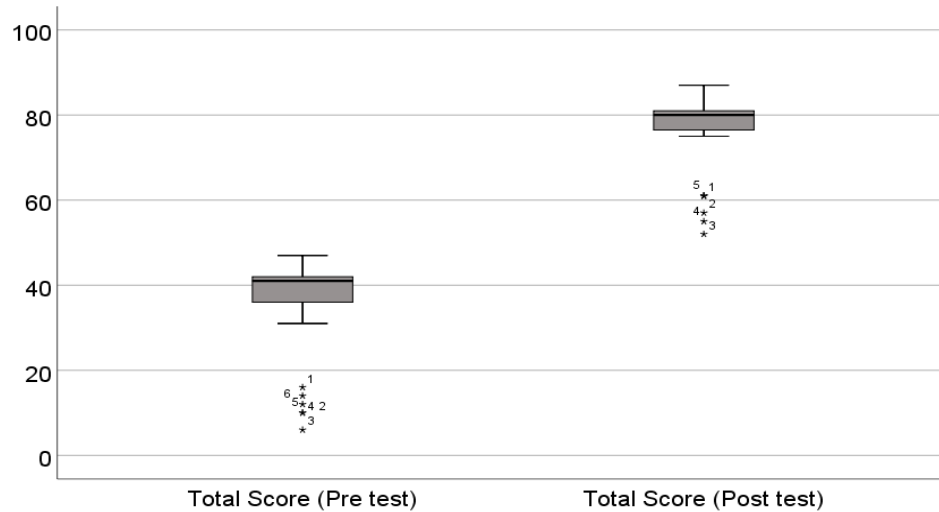
Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

Figure 3. Total score pre and post test.
Source: Field research.

The results show that learners had a substantial improvement of 31 to 51 points, with an average improvement of 40.48 points (SD=5.18). These findings are statistically significant (p<.05), showing a low dispersion of data, implying a consistent rise in speaking skill development. Figure 4 depicts how many points learners gained as a consequence of the use of the role playing technique.

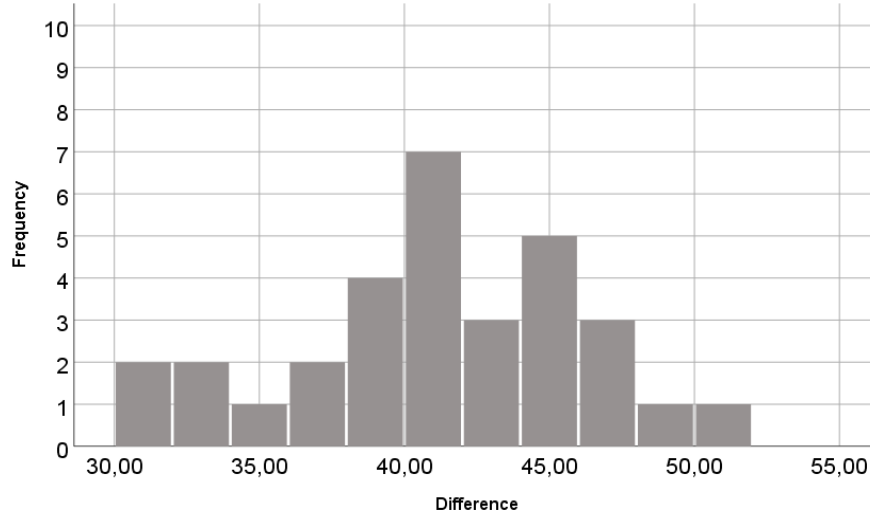Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

Figure 4. Reported difference (post test – pre test).
Source: Field research.

At the end of the intervention, only six students registered lower scores than seven. This means that they were close to achieving the required learning. On the other hand, 25 students got higher scores, which means that they achieved the required learning (figure 5).
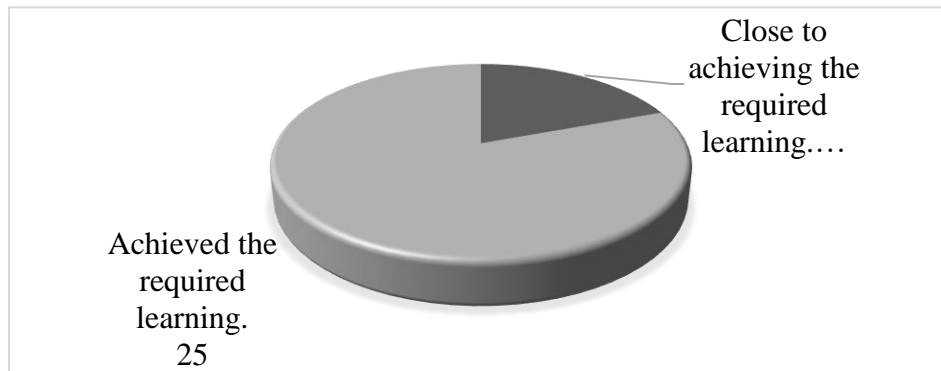

Figure 5. Level of learning scope, according to MINEDUC – post test.
Source: Field research.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

An item analysis of the pre-test helped to demonstrate that personal questions (from questions 1 to 8) were higher than the scale's midpoint (pm=3).   As a result, the learners' performance was satisfactory. On the other hand, results of questions 9 through question 20 evidenced poor learner scores. Meanwhile, in the post-test results, all the questions revealed scores above the midpoint of the scale (pm) except for the favorite sport (M=2.74). All the items showed significant improvements ($p < 0.001$ as it can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics: Results of the survey applied to students.

	Pre test		Post test		T	p
	Media	DE	Media	DE		
1.What is your name?	3,32	0,599	4,39	0,667	-7,283	0,000
2.Where do you live?	3,03	1,080	4,68	0,541	-10,015	0,000
3.Where are you from?	3,26	1,237	4,29	0,739	-6,062	0,000
4.Where were you born?	2,52	1,262	4,52	0,677	-11,526	0,000
5.What do you do?	2,58	1,232	4,32	0,702	-11,898	0,000

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

6.When is your birthday?	2,77	1,334	4,03	0,795	-5,925	0,000
7.What is your favorite color	3,16	0,969	4,16	0,735	-5,230	0,000
8.How many people are in your family?	2,42	1,205	3,84	0,638	-5,808	0,000
9.Do you have any brothers or sisters?	1,97	1,080	3,71	0,643	-8,625	0,000
10.What does your dad do?	1,48	1,029	3,97	0,706	-12,330	0,000
11.What does your mum do?	1,39	0,955	3,84	0,934	-10,205	0,000
12.Describe your brother/sister.	0,61	0,667	3,42	0,720	-19,718	0,000
13.What time do you go to school every day?	1,16	0,820	3,42	1,025	-10,205	0,000
14.What do you like to do in your free time?	0,42	0,564	3,42	0,923	-17,942	0,000
15.What sport do you do?	0,94	0,727	3,45	0,810	-13,210	0,000

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

16.What is your favorite sport?	0,77	0,717	2,74	0,999	-10,451	0,000
17.Do you like listening to music?	0,45	0,506	3,26	0,682	-17,909	0,000
18.Do you have a hobby? Tell about it.	0,74	0,729	3,23	0,845	-14,381	0,000
19.How often do you watch T.V.	0,39	0,495	3,10	1,012	-15,510	0,000
20.Describe the picture	1,81	1,108	4,00	0,856	-13,998	0,000

Source: Field research.

Finally, Table 2 presents the outcomes obtained from the pre- and post-tests based on students' grades where they were enrolled. Only in the first question, learners from eighth grade had good outcomes on average, above the midpoint of the scale (pm). Learners from ninth and tenth grade managed to answer up to question 9 satisfactorily, which included personal questions and items about relatives also evidencing low performance in some answers about the description of a picture.

On the post-test, eighth-grade students were able to answer fluently up to question 12. They achieved scores above the midpoint of the rubric scale whereas learners from ninth and tenth grades could answer all the questions. Personal information was the focus of

INGENIUM ET POTENTIA
Revista Electrónica Multidisciplinaria de Ciencias Básicas, Ingeniería y Arquitectura
Año IV. Vol IV. N°1. Edición Especial 2022
Hecho el depósito de Ley: FA2019000052
FUNDACIÓN KOINONIA (F.K).
Santa Ana de Coro, Venezuela.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

questions 1 through 7, with the question about where they live receiving particularly high marks. Due to the small number of the groups, statistical tests were not used.

Table 2.
Results obtained from the pre-and post-tests based on students' grades.

	Pre test			Post test		
	8vo	9no	10mo	8vo	9no	10mo
1.What is your name?	3,2	3,0	3,7	3,5	4,4	4,8
2.Where do you live?	1,3	3,2	3,7	3,8	4,9	4,8
3.Where are you from?	1,2	3,6	3,9	3,2	4,3	4,8
4.Where were you born?	0,3	2,6	3,5	3,5	4,8	4,8
5.What do you do?	0,5	2,9	3,2	3,3	4,5	4,6
6.Whn is your birthday?	0,3	3,5	3,2	3,3	4,0	4,4
7.What is your favorite color	1,5	3,5	3,6	3,7	4,7	3,9
8.How many people are in your family?	0,3	2,9	2,9	3,5	4,2	3,7
9.Do you have any brothers or sisters?	0,3	2,1	2,6	3,5	3,8	3,7
10.What does your dad do?	0,3	1,8	1,7	3,0	3,9	4,5
11.What does your mum do?	0,3	1,5	1,8	3,2	4,6	3,5
12.Describe your brother/sister.	0,0	0,6	0,9	3,0	3,3	3,7
13.What time do you go to school every day?	0,3	1,8	0,9	2,5	3,8	3,5
14.What do you like to do in your free time?	0,0	0,4	0,6	2,2	3,7	3,8
15.What sport do you do?	0,5	1,4	0,7	2,3	3,7	3,8
16.What is your favorite sport?	0,5	1,0	0,7	1,7	3,5	2,5
17.Do you like listening to music?	0,2	0,5	0,5	2,7	3,4	3,4
18.Do you have a hobby? Tell about it.	0,2	1,0	0,8	2,0	3,5	3,5
19.How often do you watch T.V.	0,0	0,6	0,4	1,3	3,6	3,5

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

20.Describe the picture	0,0	2,1	2,4	2,7	4,3	4,4

Source: Field research.

Students' Perceptions

The surveys were analyzed to gain a sense of how students felt about speaking activities, they were asked to fill out a short survey about their concerns.

The majority of their responses were negative prior to the intervention, showing that students were hesitant to participate in speaking activities because they were unsure of their ability to perform a role playing activity. The results are presented in this section:
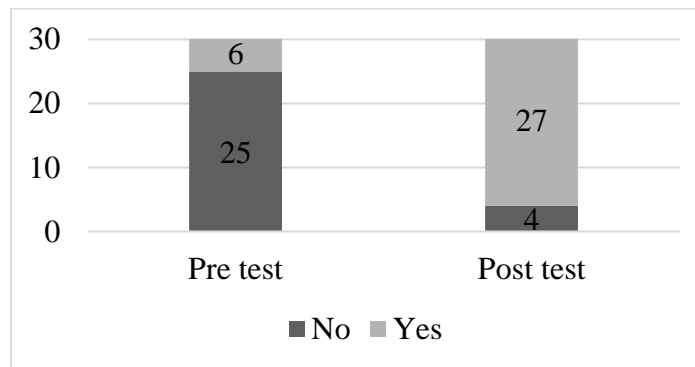
Figure 6. Do you feel relaxed speaking English in class?
Source: Field Research.

Participants gave positive feedback on role playing activities following the intervention. This technique received the best possible score from 23 learners (74.2percent); the findings indicate that participants had a favorable opinion of this activity.

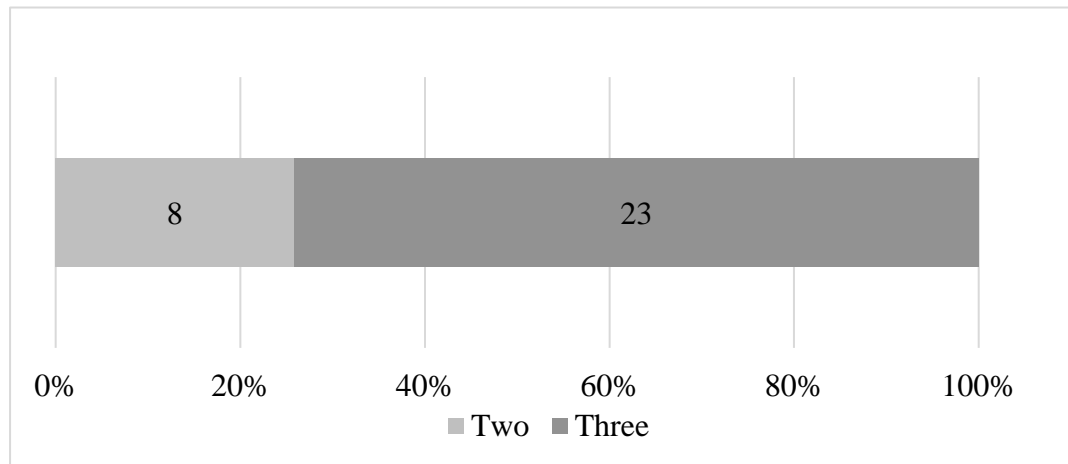Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

Figure 7. How would you grade role-playing activity? (One, two, Three).

Qualitative analysis

The teacher's journal and observations went through content analysis in order to find common themes or patterns on students' reactions when using role plays.

Firstly, the teacher's journal was analyzed to get the most relevant information about students' behavior and their reactions to the role playing activity. Before the intervention started, students were concerned about the new activity they would have to do because they had never done it before. Some of them refused to take part in the activity because they were embarrassed by their capacity to communicate in English. Different reactions were observed in each of the three courses under examination. Students in the eighth grade were more engaged in their participation. They did not mind if they made mistakes. On the other hand, students from ninth and tenth grades were uneasy and tried to practice their roles more to improve their performance.

When the intervention began, students took part in a process of learning new vocabulary, learning about the situation they had to perform, and they watched short videos about how

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

to play their roles, with all these activities students gained confidence. As a result, they were able to get right into their roles without doubts. This previous process gave them a positive attitude toward the role playing activity. During the intervention, students were hesitant at first, which can be considered a normal attitude for the first time participating in a role-playing activity as (Ramin & Samaneh, 2012) state in their reseach. Students from tenth grade found it difficult to imagine the situation in which they were asked to act. On the other hand, eighth-grade students did it easily and their roles flowed more naturally; they showed interest in participating in the role playing activity. Meanwhile, in the ninth and tenth grades, students hesitated a lot because it seemed they were afraid to make mistakes while playing the role.

However, after two interventions, their fears appeared to have vanished and they did better than the first time. In the last intervention, students were more confident in playing the role, even though some of them could create their scripts to act. They easily played their role because they had a clear idea of the plot. In some instances, when they forgot a word, they replaced it by themselves. In this way, they demonstrated increased confidence to speak in front of their classmates. All of this indicates that the role playing technique was effective in improving speaking skills in students.

In addition, role playing also motivated them to participate in the activity. Put another way, students were eager to participate in the teaching-learning process. Secondly, the principal's evaluation focused on student engagement, the teacher's ability to manage the class, and the structure of the lesson plan. According to the principal's notes, the teacher had a positive interaction with students.

As a result, the teacher and pupils developed a climate of trust and communication. So, the teacher could help students to overcome some issues during the production of the foreign language. Another noteworthy aspect of the observation was the teacher's concern in assisting students who were having trouble carrying out the exercise that had been given to them. Furthermore, the observer emphasized the teacher's thorough

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

knowledge of the subject that was being taught to the students, as indicated by the material presented and the explanation of it.

One key component of the class's development was that the teacher kept the students as the focus of learning; hence, students were the protagonists in the teaching-learning process.

In addition, the principal's view of the role-playing technique yielded the following assertions. At first, students were ashamed to speak in English in front of the class. Eventually, this attitude changed during the second week of the intervention. Students were motivated to learn and participate.

A sequence was followed in each activity, which promoted students' confidence to develop the role-playing activity. Besides, students enjoyed the whole process from the beginning when they were taught vocabulary, watched videos, read, and then carried out their roles. All this process was successfully guided by the teacher, the students at the end had a good performance in the production of the English language with their classmates.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on data analysis, the researchers gained insights that the use of role playing techniques can improve students' speaking skills which resembles the results, where roleplaying activities helped students strengthen their language abilities, including speaking, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and most importantly, it enabled them to communicate in real-life settings. Moreover, it is important to consider is that Ecuadorian English teachers should give stronger emphasis on speaking skills rather than exam-oriented education because students are studying not only to pass tests but also to prepare for future real-life situations,

Furthermore, role-playing activities assisted students in organically acquiring complex material because these active experiences not only improved their learning but also their attitudes toward peers and teachers.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

As a future viewpoint on the current study, researchers are advised to expand the scope of this research from elementary to high school students to find out how students from different levels would perform role playing activities, role playing was a beneficial technique to implement with secondary students; however, there have been few studies on the effectiveness of the role playing activity with young learners. Aside from that, future studies could be replicated in terms of participants' perspectives, such as students and teachers or across male and female participants. It would be interesting to know how gender influences perception of the role playing activity. In addition, the sample size in this research study may be translated to a greater number of participants to see if the results are comparable with the current study. Moreover, it will be helpful to perform roleplaying activities about a variety of topics including values, which is an important key in the Ecuadorian National Curriculum. Finally, Ecuadorian English teachers who want to improve their pupils' speaking skills should consider training on the role playing technique. The limitations discovered in this study were attributable to the lack of time to complete all of the role playing exercises that were initially intended since face-to-face lessons were disrupted owing to the COVID pandemic. So, the final role playing activity was conducted by zoom; it was distinct from the previous ones since students spent a significant amount of time practicing their roles in breakout rooms, despite the fact that their speaking performance remained at a high level among the participants. Aside from that, all role playing activities progressed normally.

Furthermore, the principal advised the teacher to continue applying this technique with whole grades in the school because it was possible to demonstrate that the students stayed motivated, engaged, and willing to participate throughout the teaching-learning process. She underlined that using this technique will help students improve their public speaking skills.

To summarize, role-playing had a favorable impact on learners' feelings. Initially, most of the learners who were apprehensive to do the activity changed their attitude, so they were able to adjust to the situation, and feel more relaxed, and self-confident with their

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

performance. Without a doubt, role playing is pedagogical technique that Ecuadorian English teachers should integrate in the teaching process since it allows students to engage and practice the target language through vivid and realistic dialogues.

FINANCING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES CONSULTED

Alabsi, T. A. (2016). The Effectiveness of Role Play Strategy in Teaching Vocabulary. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, *231*, 232, 233.

Ali , D., Beheshti, F., & Khalili, N. (2016). Developing EFL Learner's Speaking Ability, Accuracy and Fluency. *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 6(2), 183-184. https://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ells/article/view/60070

Byrne, D. (1986). *Teaching oral English.* London: Longman.

Budi, W. "Task-Based Language Teaching and Theme-Based Role-Play: Developing EFL Learners' Communicative Competence." *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 2019.

Derakhshan, A., Khalili, A., & Beheshti, F. (2016). Developing EFL Learner's Speaking Ability, Accuracy and Fluency. *Canadian Center of Science and Education* , *6*(2), 178-183.

Ding, L. (2018). Engaging in English Speaking Teaching Based on a Task-Based Approach: "Role-Play" with an Adult Syrian in an Experiential Learning. *The Morning Watch: Educational and Social Analysis*, 46(1-2), 6,7.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

Fadilah, F. (2016). Teaching Speaking by Role-Play Activity. *OKARA Journal of Languages and Literature*, 214,215.

Hadi, I. (2017). Communicative Language Teaching Techniques and Learning Styles on the Students's Speaking Skill at Private Vocational School. *Journal of English Language Teaching, 1*(2), 140-142. http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/scope.v1i02.1271

Harmer, J. (1991). *The practice of English Language Teaching .* New Edition Harlow: Logman.

Juvrianto, C. (2018). Improving the Students' Speaking Ability Through Role-Play. *The World's Largerst Collection of Open Access Research Papers*, *8*(1), 331-339. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/294833845.pdf

Krashen, S. D. (1982). Principles and practice in second language acquisition. . Oxford UK: Pergamon.

Kumaran, S. R. (2017). Benefits and Shortcomins of Role-Play. Semantic schoolar, 78,79,80

Kuśnierek, A. (2015). Developing students' speaking skills through Role-Play. World Scientific News, 7, 73-111.

Ladousse, G. (1987). Role-Play. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Livingstone. (1983). Role play in language learning. Singapore London: Longman

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). Methodology and Design . New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Mavlonova, K. (2020). Role Play as a Method of Developing Speaking Skills . *Scientific reports of Bukhara State University* , 3(1), 253-257. DOI: 10.52297/2181-1466/2019/3/1/13

Ministerio de Educacion. (2016). Curriculum of Obligatory Education Levels Superior Sub-. Quito. Retrieved from Recursos Educativos: https://educacion.gob.ec/wpcontent/uploads/downloads/2016/03/EFL1.pdf

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack

Nafiatun , A., Erfan, & Sukmaantara, P. (2017). Using Role Play to Foster the Eighth Grade Students' Speaking Achievement in an EFL (English as Foreign Language) Context. *EFL Education Journal*, 977,978.979.

Neupane, B. (2019). Effectiveness of Role Play in Improving Speaking Skill. *Journal of NELTA Gandaki*, *1*, 11–18. https://doi.org/10.3126/jong.v1i0.24454

Rahimy, R., & Safarpour, S. (2012). The Effect of Using Role-Play on Iranian EFL Learners' Speaking Ability. *Department of English Language,*, 153,154,155,156,157.

Rahmatillah , K. (2019). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) through Role Play. *Script Journal* , 161-163.

Ramin, R., & Samaneh , S. (2012). The Effect of Using Role-Play on Iranian EFL Learners. *Asian Journal of Social Science and Humanities, 1*(3), 53-57. https://n9.cl/2gdkc

Rashid, S., & Qaisar, S. (2017). Role Play: A Productive Teaching Strategy to Promote Critical Thinking. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, *39*(2), 198-210.

Richard, J. (2006). *Communicative Language Teaching Today.* 32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2014). Approaches and methods in language teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge.

Rojas , M., & Villafuerte, J. (2018). The Influence of Implementing Role-play as an Educational Technique on EFL Speaking. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies,* 8(7), 727-730. https://n9.cl/6vz3j

Ruslan, A. (2020). Students' Perception on the Use of Role-Play by the Teacher in EFL Classroom. *Journal of Teaching and Learning English in Municulatural Contexts*, *51*,52,53.

Shangeetha, R. (2017). Benefits and Short Comings of Role-Play as a Speaking Activity in English Language. Semantic Schoolar, *78*,79,80.

Thuraya, A. (2016). The Effectiveness of Role Play Strategy in Teaching Vocabulary. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, *231*, 232, 233.

Jenifer Marianela Quinteros-Villacís; Tammy Fajardo-Dack