



**UNIVERSIDAD
DE ANTIOQUIA**

Trabajo de investigación presentado como requisito
parcial para optar al título de:
Licenciada en Lenguas Extranjeras

Liseth Vallejo Castaño

Universidad de Antioquia

Escuela de Idiomas

El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia

2021



How can Dance and Drama in the English Class Promote Fourth Graders' Oral Production?

Liseth Vallejo Castaño

Thesis, Research and Thesis Advisor

Natalia Arias Patiño

Magister in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

El Carmen de Viboral

December, 2021

Abstract

This paper reports a teaching and action research experience focused on improving students' oral production by involving experience and reason in the English lessons. The experiences were mainly provided through dance and drama exercises. The project was implemented with fourth graders of a Colombian public school. As results suggest, students easily acquired target language vocabulary and simple structures through the experiences offered by dance and drama; students improved in grammar components by repeating, singing and combining words with movements, and gestures; students conveyed their messages better when they managed body language and the speed of speech; and students felt confident to speak since dance and drama promoted a comfortable class environment.

Keywords: Oral production, Experiences, Reason, Dance, Drama.

Degree Requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement of the Bachelor of Education in Teaching Foreign Languages (English-French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, in El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia.

Acknowledgments

First of all I would like to thank God for giving me the gift of life during all this process, and his support to work and keep the focus on this project despite difficult personal situations.

I would also like to express my huge gratitude to all the earthly angels who helped me and made this study possible. My family, they were always there for me by motivating me and giving me hugs and encouraging words, they were loyal believers of me and of all I planned; my boyfriend, Alejandro Arce Gonzalez, my principal motivator. He was very supportive and enthusiastic with my project. Alejandro was like another thesis advisor for me. He has guided me and accompanied me in this important path with all his intelligence and philosophical knowledge. Also, our serious readings and conversations helped to nurture this project with strong bases.

I also have a lot to be grateful for to my practicum, research and thesis advisor Natalia Arias Patiño. She was an ideal person for this demanding process, mostly in the hard circumstances where it was developed (Covid-19 pandemic and personal issues). She patiently gave me the time I needed to organize my ideas and write. I appreciated it so much, she provided me with comprehension, and peacefulness.

Last but not least, thanks to my practicum site, students, and Cooperating Teacher for opening the door of their classroom. Specially, thanks to the students for being so kind, participative, and cheerful, and for allowing me to contribute to their English learning process.

Table of Contents

Preface	6
Context	7
Statement of the Problem	8
Research Question	11
Research Objective	11
Specific Objectives	11
Theoretical Framework	12
Epistemology	12
Language	13
Performing Arts	14
Speaking Language Skill	15
Research Plan	16
Development of Teaching Actions	18
Findings and Interpretations	22
Dance and Drama Offered Experiences to Students to Acquire Vocabulary and Simple Structures of the Target Language	22
Repetition, Movements, Gestures, and Singing Helped Students to Improve in Grammar Components	24
Body Language and the Speed of Speech Supported Students to Convey Their Messages Easily	27
The Choreographies and Performances Promoted a Comfortable Class Environment where Students Feel More Confident to Speak	28
Conclusions and Implications	30
Reflection	31
References	34

Preface

Frankantly, I did not want to be a teacher. I liked to be an artist. But, I also wanted to study at the university, and mainly at the University of Antioquia. So, I looked at the careers offered in El Carmen de Viboral and my favorite was “the Bachelor of Education in Teaching Foreign Languages (English-French)”. I thought that learning new languages would be a great tool to become an international artist. I was especially focused on Dance and Drama arts. So, during my whole career, I was always thinking about the way to involve these performing arts with the teaching of languages.

Then, studying philosophy with my boyfriend, and constantly reflecting on this final research project, we realized that the involvement of the performing arts such as Dance and Drama into the English lessons had a deeper and more serious justification than just because I liked them. These performing arts can contribute to the process of learning a target language more naturally and efficiently. This is possible since Dance and Drama can offer experiences on the uses of the target language. But, just Dance and Drama are not enough for efficient learning; teachers need to also include exercises where students train their reason and analyze in detail the language topics involved in the experiences.

It is also important to mention that Dance and Drama are not the only tools to offer experiences. There are language topics that can be better addressed by bringing realia, or taking advantage of the daily and real situations which happen in the classroom. Unfortunately, there are thousands of real-world situations that do not take part inside the classroom. For these cases, teachers can profit from the magic of fictional situations and stories we can create through the arts.

Context

This project was developed in a co-educational public school called “Institución Educativa Técnico Industrial Simona Duque”. It is located in Marinilla, Antioquia (Colombia). There are two headquarters: one for the basic secondary and middle and another one for primary. The school is authorized to provide preschool and technical education. It is important to clarify that at the time of the study, the school’s institutional educational project was under construction. Yet, I used the information from the previous one to describe the institution where this study took place.

The institution's mission was to be an inclusive technical educational institution, committed to the training of integral, competitive and innovative people, capable of researching and responsibly integrating ICTs in all fields and thus transforming their reality and interacting successfully in the social context. As for the vision, in the year 2020, the school wanted to be recognized for its leadership in the training of excellent technical high school graduates capable of responding to the demands of a society in permanent change and interacting ethically in the different fields of society. The institution syllabus had technical and fundamental areas (Manual de Convivencia IETISD, 2009). The English subject was part of the fundamentals. “Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje” with some adaptations was followed by the school to design the English classes (Personal Communication with CT, April 7th, 2021).

Concerning the class, it was a fourth D grade. The class was divided into two subgroups of students due to Covid 19 sanitary emergency. This was taught twice every week, on Tuesday two hours and on Friday one hour. One of the subgroups attended the school for a week, and then

the other subgroup attended the other week. Everytime students were not attending the school, they should work independently using the guide designed by the teachers. The methodology followed in the guides was grammar and translation based, which involved activities such as fill in the blanks, matchings and construction of simple sentences. The face-to-face lessons were often developed in a big classroom with a board.

Participants in this study included 29 students, my Cooperating Teacher (CT), and me. Students' ages ranged between 9 and 13. They lived in Marinilla, some in the urban area and others in the rural area. Most of them belonged to strata 2 or 3. The students liked the English class, especially the questions, the pronunciations and speaking activities. Students perceived that the purposes for learning English were to communicate with others, to travel, to work and to have better job opportunities ([Questionnaire](#), March 13th, 2021). My CT held a Bachelor of Preschool with Emphasis in English and did a diploma in English granted by the Secretary of Education of Antioquia. She had taught for twenty five years. As for me, the teacher-researcher, I was a pre-service teacher in the last semester of an undergraduate degree program in foreign language teaching at Universidad de Antioquia. I was also a dancer and actress. I had participated in some international dance championships and short films, theater plays, and song videos.

Statement of the Problem

“One of the [language] students' needs is to communicate orally in a real situation given that in everyday life, oral communication occupies 80% of the time of human activity” (Hernández & Hugo, 2019, p. 8). The English class I observed in the first cycle of the research

process followed a grammar-translation methodology. There, oral production was limited to the repetition of short phrases or sentences learned by heart without a harmonic connection with grammar. There were not sufficient sensory aids that allowed students to infer grammatical rules. As a result, there was a lack of integration of four skills, students displayed a passive role in class and students were neglected chances to apply what they have learned.

Firstly, learners' speaking skill was segregated since the main activities developed in the synchronous classes were focused on writing and literal translation of words from English into Spanish. This segregation was hindering students' main purpose to learn English which was communicating, both orally and written with other people. During the observations, I noticed that most of the class time was used to read the Spanish explanation of the topic in the guide and develop the activities in it. Most of them were about matching, filling in the blank, and translation (Journal, February 25th, March 11th and 25th, 2021). Thus, students' speaking skill rehearsal was neglected. According to Rebecca (2001), students do not learn to use the foreign language in everyday life with this type of segregated-skill approach; in contrast, with the integrated-skill approach students perceive English as a means for interacting with other people and learning real content (pp. 1-2). In this way, dance and drama may help to integrate speaking skills along with other language skills. For instance, when teaching a dance "dancers necessarily exhibit linguistic intelligence in listening to teacher or choreographer instruction (...)" (Hanna, 2008, p. 5). Moreover, interpreting a song implies reading and singing the lyrics later, and we can also write similar sentences following the models found in the song lyrics. Thus, the four language skills are integrated by fostering students' expressive capacity.

Secondly, students had a passive role in the class since the teacher was the only one who spoke the most of the class and students' participation was focused on the repetition of predetermined answers. For instance, during the first observation, the students participated in translating into English the phrases: "buenos días", "buenas tardes", "adiós", among others (Journal, February 25th, 2021). Hence, according to Cameron (2001), we as teachers could not be aware of students' real knowledge since they could "repeat key words from the teacher's language giving an illusion of understanding" (p. 21). To avoid this illusion, it was important to give students a more active role in their learning process. An indispensable condition of active learning is interaction since "the development of learning could not happen without social interaction" (Kuyumcu, 2012, p. 7). Drama exercises persuade learners to interact with classmates (Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1999, p. 30). In this performing art, the participants should communicate their ideas and carefully listen to their scene-partners' ideas to present an excellent performance. In other words, students are required to interact and have an active participation.

And thirdly, there was not an application of what students learned due to the lack of demand for them to produce orally. For instance, in the first observation, the teacher taught the greetings and farewells; however, in the following classes the teacher greeted students in Spanish (Journal, February 2nd and March 11th, 2019). This can be frustrating and unmotivating for students to notice that they do not use what they learned in English class, neither outside the classroom nor in the proper English class. According to Davies and Pearse (2000, as cited by Permata, 2018) "real success in English teaching and learning was achieved when the learners can actually communicate in English inside and outside the classroom" (p.3). In this way, dance

and drama rehearsal can offer students opportunities to speak in different contexts and we as teachers should encourage them to do it by using the target language as much as possible.

In conclusion, for the purpose of offering students more opportunities to practice oral production, I planned to implement Dance and Drama to teach some specific English topics. These performing arts can contribute to increasing students' opportunities for producing orally thanks to their active and social nature. On one hand, Dance prompted students to easily acquire simple English vocabulary and grammar structures through the association of words with movements, which implies the use of the language orally. On another side, Drama promoted students' oral production through the interactions that emerged in fictional situations among students. This research puts forward the use of arts to stimulate an environment in which students express their ideas not only speaking, but also performing what they say. Additionally, the study also had the intention of sharing pedagogical ideas inspired by Kant's theory of knowledge that can be useful for any language teacher and learner.

Research Question

How can Dance and Drama in the English class promote fourth graders' oral production in a public institution located in Marinilla, Antioquia?

Research Objective

To assess how Dance and Drama in the English class can contribute to the promotion of students' oral production.

Specific Objectives

- To determine how the implementation of Dance and Drama to teach English promotes students' oral production
- To evidence and evaluate students' promotion of oral production through dance and drama exercises
- To analyze students' perspectives and attitudes during the implementation of drama and dance practices in the English class.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will present the theoretical bases of my implementation. Firstly, I will present relevant aspects of epistemology (theory of knowledge) and language. I will focus on the language topics of “the time”, “the subject pronouns” and the verb “to be”. Secondly, inspired by epistemology, I will explain how the performing arts such as Dance and Drama usefully fit to teach the specific language topics mentioned above. Finally, I will provide some parameters of the speaking language skill to analyze how Dance and Drama in the English class can contribute to the promotion of students' oral production.

Epistemology

Kantian epistemology or theory of knowledge describes how we know the physical world which is perceived through our senses. Kant (1787) clarifies we do not get to know how the objects are themselves due to human beings' limitations concerning their senses and reason. So, we can only know how the material world is for us (p. 95). According to Kant, the human being

knows through an interaction between experience and reason. “All knowledge starts from experience, because the faculty of knowing is activated to act through the objects that our senses appreciate” (Kant, 1787, p. 65). Then, the experience provides the data while reason structures this data and interprets it. Therefore, the human being is not a passive receiver of stimuli that come from the world, but an active interpreter.

Language

Wittgenstein (1949) studied the language for a long time. In his book “philosophical investigations”, he expressed the language is not a similar unity since there are many and different topics within the language (p. 142). Each topic can be completely different to another one or can share similarities. These differences or similarities are not logical; however, we cannot talk in any way we want. In his study, Wittgenstein also compared language with a game, because although the rules of the games are not logical, you cannot do whatever you want in it (p. 6). In the same way, each language topic has its own rules, which do not depend on logic; but on its respective uses. Some uses of the language can be “following a rule, making a report, giving an order, playing a game of chess” (Wittgenstein, 1949, p. 54).

Bringing together epistemology and language, we can provide an experience on the language topics which belong to the physical world such as “the fruits”, “the colors”, “house and classroom objects”, some verbs and commands, among others, since we have the opportunity to teach them to students involving their senses. However, there are other language topics which do not belong to the material world; some examples of these are the ones I had to teach during my practicum: “the time”, “the subject pronouns”, and “the verb to be”. We cannot bring or do

anything physical into the classroom that is directly associated with those topics. In this case, inspired by Kantian epistemology, I planned to offer experiences on the uses of these intangible language topics.

Performing Arts

Dance and Drama are appropriate tools for providing the experiences related to the uses of the language topics mentioned above. These arts are “social historical phenomena which embody man’s expressive capacity at each moment of his development” (Lihamba, 1985, p. 2). According to Savic (2014), the involvement of language alongside movements and gestures makes “language acquisition more natural and memorable” (p. 447). Savic also mentioned that “this method is especially useful in the initial stages of instruction since its main aim is “to teach basic speaking and communication skills” (p. 448).

Focusing on Dance, Judith Lynne Hanna (2008) offers many insights on the relation between dance and language teaching and learning. For instance, in both languages (dance and verbal language), their speakers need to convey concepts. Hanna (2008) pointed out that “directly embodied concepts include basic-level concepts [...]” (p. 497). In this sense, Dance is useful for the teaching of basic language topics such as “the subject pronouns”. Furthermore, Lynn McIntyre (2005), realized that students’ kinesthetic and listening skills became better; and most children were able to express themselves and to understand instructional information more often and readily once Dance and Drama were integrated into their curriculum areas of schooling.

According to Zuengler and Miller (2006), participation in real- world situations “is both the product and the process of learning” (p. 37-38). A sentence that well summaries this idea is

“learning by doing”. In a Colombian context, we cannot usually use the English language in real-world situations outside the classroom, nor can we have all real-world situations inside the English class. For this case, Drama is an appropriate solution since

The model for drama in teacher education is based on combining the learning power of fictional situations [...] which enable students to take on characters in situations and stories “as if” they were real to them. Using roles turns the situations and stories into a living experience for students. (Tapio et al, 2011, p. 4)

These experiences will help students to better understand the uses of a complex target language topic such as the verb “to be” and “the time”.

In summary, students can acquire and internalize different uses of English words or sentences while they are dancing and acting. Also, the implementation of these arts creates a comfortable and enjoyable class environment since learners are prompted to learn and speak while they have fun.

Speaking Language Skill

Finally, I will provide some parameters of the speaking skill to analyze changes in students’ oral production after the experiences provided by Dance and Drama. The Council of Europe explained “speaking (...) may involve reading a written text aloud, speaking from notes, acting out a rehearsed role, speaking spontaneously, improvising or singing” (CEF, 2001, p. 58). Considering that the school follows “Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje”, students in fourth grade are required to have a level A1. According to the CEF:

Students in the level A1 can initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics; ask and answer simple questions; interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. (2001, as cited in Hernández & Hugo, 2019, p. 31)

Hernandez and Hugo (2019), mentioned the four aspects of oral skill defined by the Institutional English Language Testing System IELTS (2007): Fluency, lexical, accuracy and pronunciation. They also offer some teaching tips to help students to develop their oral production: Focus on language aspects as well as on students' needs to speak in different settings; design activities where students interact with their classmates; stimulate them "to express orally their desires and needs", avoid forcing students to talk, let students have time to process what they want to say, and focus on speaking activities (Jorda, 2002; Hernandez & Hugo, 2019, p. 26).

Research Plan

After identifying that students' oral production was not fostered in the English class, I decided to implement Dance and Drama arts into the classes to approach the issue of concern. This implementation was based on some principles of TPR (Total Physical Response) method; some tips proposed by Jorda (2002) for teachers to make oral production easier (as cited in Hernandez & Hugo, 2019), and the features of oral production that students must develop in the level A1 presented by the Common European Framework (CEF) in 2001. With this implementation, my main purpose was to promote students' oral production.

In order to assess the development and outcomes of the implementation, I had planned to use different data collection instruments that would allow me to have enough information about the situation being explored. In the first place, I decided to develop a questionnaire in class to be aware about students' technological devices, and to identify if students liked dance. Then, I had planned to analyze students' answers to better prepare and adapt the activities and material for following lessons.

In the second place, I designed a diagnosis exercise to check how students were in oral production before my project. In this diagnosis, I planned to pick up the students' scripts to check their comprehension of vocabulary and grammatical structures learned in class. With this task, I could also register and analyze students' interaction and oral production in pairs.

In the third place, I recorded the classes with the purpose of checking students' performances in dance and drama exercises, and registering students' evolution in oral production. Later, I transcribed these students' performances and oral production in journals where I described them and reflected on them. Burns (2010) expresses that "journal writing (...) allows you to record the events and happenings in your location, (...) your ideas and insights about your practice (...)" (p. 89).

Finally, I planned to conduct interviews to know spontaneous and specific students' perceptions of their progress in oral production through Dance and Drama exercises. Altricher, H et al (2005) refer to interviews as "communications that aim at getting to know points of view, interpretations and meanings in order to gain greater understanding of a situation" (p.100). For doing so, I purposefully selected students: the most committed, and the least committed with the

project, and another one in the middle of both. I intended to have a first interview in the middle of the project, and a second one at the end of it. Also, these interviews were going to be guided by semi-structured questions (see [here](#)), audio recorded and transcribed for classification and analyses of how the performing arts helped to improve students' oral production.

Development of Teaching Actions

Throughout the second semester of the school year, I was able to implement only three lessons out of the ten that I had planned at the beginning. One of the reasons was that there was a change in the modality of education. In the first part of the project students had only virtual classes, every week; in the second part, the data collection, students had to change to Hybrid Education, which meant that the initial group of students was divided into two, each one attending the school every other week. As a consequence, I had to teach the same lesson for two weeks. Another reason was the unexpected loss of classes due to school duties; for instance, administrative meetings, parent conferences, vacation, holiday celebrations, academic make-up weeks, and a ceremony commemorating the 60th anniversary of the institution. A third reason was that the class time was reduced to 50 minutes per class, twice a week. That having been said, I proceed to describe the actions that I could implement.

One of the teaching actions I could develop was providing experiences to students through Dance and Drama. These experiences involved the language topics to teach: “the time”, “the subject pronouns” and verb “to be”. The idea was that students were exposed to an experience where they had contact with the use of the specific language topics through their senses. Students were asked to use their sight and hearing senses to participate well in these

experiences. In this way, the children were already listening and speaking the target language almost without realizing it. The main ingredients of this implementation were these experiences through Dance and Drama since they gave a living meaning to what students learned. I also involved students' reason in the teaching process since it is the reason that structures all the data obtained through the senses to make it intelligible and able to interpret it and finally create an idea of the respective uses of the language topics in their minds.

The other action that I carried out was fostering students' reason through deduction and induction processes. The deduction part consisted of asking students to derive the corresponding use in Spanish of the target language topic involved in Dance or performance. The induction part consisted of taking each part of the English sentences used in the experiences for asking students for their meaning and then explaining or clarifying the grammatical rules and use of each part according to students' answers. Mainly, students were involved in the rational processes of deduction and induction to get an idea of the uses of the language topics taught. The development of these two actions was inspired by Kantian epistemology- theory of knowledge. According to Kant, the human being knows through an interaction between experience and reason (1787). Moreover, during the lessons, there were visual aids to support children's reading of the target language. Students were also promoted to orally and writtenly produce sentences in the target language. In the following paragraphs I will describe the experiences that prompted students to use their senses and reasoning to induct and deduce how some English language topics work.

In the first lesson, I asked each student to give their personal information in English to review and practice previous knowledge of the past term. Then, I started with a choreography

related to the lesson topic (the time) to expose students to new vocabulary through Dance, keeping in mind the TPR principle that “comprehension comes before speaking” (Savic, 2014, p. 448). On the second day of this lesson, I applied a questionnaire to know if students liked to dance and to know students’ perception about Dance. Then, I implicitly taught them some basic African steps through [the clock strategy](#) to activate students’ energy and review “the time” topic. Later, I did a Drama exercise where first each student wrote any time and reviewed how to ask for the time to apply Jorda’s tip: “Let students have time to process what they want to say” and do (Hernández & Hugo, 2019, pp. 26-27); and then, in pairs, students performed a fictional situation where both students were siblings and their mother punished them for playing for up to an specific time. Additionally, the spectators were asked to write on a piece of paper every time their classmates mentioned.

In the second lesson, I presented a [poster](#) with the list of subject pronouns to students. I read the list once and later asked students to pronounce them one by one after me. Then, I translated this [choreography](#) into English to teach the subject pronouns. I gave students the instruction to do and say all I did and said after me, following the TPR method where “children are involved in listening, responding to commands, and doing actions with a song” (Savic, 2014, p. 448). After many tries, students and I did the choreography, and sang at the same time. When they felt more confident, students did it alone, and sang and did the movements faster. After dancing and singing, I asked students to deduct the meaning and functions of the words previously sung. I clarified and broadened the topic by taking into account each subject pronoun.

In the third lesson, we did a performance involving the movements of the previous choreography about the subject pronouns. First, I wrote on the board the sentences we would sing in the performance. These sentences contained subject pronouns and “the verb to be” which was the specific language topic for that class. We rehearsed the pronunciation of the sentences. Second, I divided the group between boys and girls, and explained to each subgroup what movement they should do and what they should say. After the performance, I asked students to deduce the meaning of the sentences we had sung, which were also written on the board. Taking into account students’ answers, I demanded students to tell me what specific words in the sentences meant “somos” and “son”. They needed to analyze each word of the sentence to find out.

Additionally, in the classes, I also did articulation and vocal warm up exercises, which is very important in drama, and I used it to help students to project their voices. For the final activity of the project, students, in pairs or individually, designed a conversation taking into account the language topics covered in the third term (the time, subject pronouns, and the verb “to be”), and they should act their own conversations. For helping them with the creation and acting of the conversation, students answered some questions about the characters involved in the conversation such as who they were, what relationship the characters had, where they were and what they were doing while the conversation happened. Because of time limitations, students wrote and did videos of their performances at home, and I was attentive through WhatsApp to students’ doubts.

Findings and Interpretations

The findings of this project, whose purpose was to promote the students' oral production in English through Dance and Drama exercises, were identified after a process of data collection and analysis. I collected data from my journals, students' questionnaires and interviews, a diagnosis and a final exercise. As I was collecting data, I was analyzing and interpreting this information by creating codes with the attempt "to reduce the large amount of data that may be collected to more manageable categories of concepts, themes, or types" (Burns, 2009, p. 157). With the categories established, I analyzed their relationship and its repetitions (number of appearances) in an excel file. In the triangulation of the data, the emerging results were (a) Dance and drama offered experiences to students to acquire vocabulary and simple structures of the target language, (b) Repetition, movements, gestures, and singing helped students to improve in grammar components, (c) Body language, and the speed of speech supported students to convey their messages easily, and (d) The choreographies and performances promoted a comfortable class environment where students felt more confident to speak. In the following sections, I provide further explanations of each of these findings.

Dance and Drama Offered Experiences to Students to Acquire Vocabulary and Simple Structures of the Target Language

Data showed that students were easily remembering the vocabulary and structures we have studied through the experiences I offered implementing Dance and Drama. For instance, in

the second class, I did a general checking of the comprehension of the previous class topic (the time) and

Students were able to answer all the questions about what the topic was, what we learned about telling the time, the way we ask for the time in English, the parts of the clock, and the structure to answer the question ‘what time it is?’. (1st journal, September 8th, 2021)

Hence, the students showed reminiscence of vocabulary and structures of what they were singing and dancing in the previous lesson. Also, in an interview a student mentioned how the performances and choreographies done in class have helped him to acquire new words: “esas actividades [eee] nos ha ayudado mucho porque esas palabras yo nunca las he, no las había escuchado hasta ahora, con esas actividades me ayudó, me las aprendí de una y nos enseñan, nos enseñan palabras nuevas” ¹(Interview, November 11th, 2021). Another evidence was when I took advantage of a student’s spontaneous intervention to check his understanding in the topic explained (subject pronouns and the verb “to be”) and covered through performing arts:

When I was calling the roll, a student told me “profe, profe, él es Miguel Angel” pointing at the student. (...) I asked him to say “él es Miguel Angel” in English. The student did not know how to say it immediately so I started to ask him in parts: ¿cómo se dice “él”? And I again sang the part of “she she he he” and the student answered it well, then I asked him ¿cómo sería “es”? But he did not know. I gave the floor to another student to say it, and he pronounced it very well in the correct order. (2nd journal, September 25th, 2021)

¹ [These activities [eee] have helped us a lot because I have never heard those words, I had not heard them until now, those activities helped me, I learned the words *fast*, *the activities* teach us new words]

The student had difficulties figuring out the answer quickly, but I danced and sang a part of the performance we have done for that language topic and this helped the learner to remember the respective word while another student remembered the vocabulary and structure studied in class. According to Bolton (1993), considering the students' spontaneous performances, teachers could check if learners really have understood or not the content of the topic taught in class (pp. 39-50). In the students' performance, I could also notice their understanding and what they really did not understand of the language topic taught.

Repetition, Movements, Gestures, and Singing Helped Students to Improve in Grammar Components

Data revealed how Dance and Drama experiences helped students to improve in grammar components such as lexical, fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. Below, I provide further details regarding these components.

Lexical. Data from this study revealed that Dance and Drama offered experiences to students to understand and acquire vocabulary about the time, the subject pronouns, and the verb to be, as illustrated in the students' answers to my question about the activities that helped them to recall more words in English than five months before. All the four students that I interviewed said the choreographies had helped them to broaden their vocabulary repertoire. In students' own words "la mayoría de las veces los bailes y las coreografías", "los bailes en inglés que hemos hecho porque ahí se dice palabras en inglés como 'we' [and the student did the respective movement taught for this subject pronoun]". ²(Interview, November 3rd, 2021), "el del baile del

² [[Most of the time the dances and choreographies], [the dances in English that we have done because there we say words in English like 'we']]

tiempo que nos ayuda a saber, a decir la hora bien y a saber las agujas que tiene el reloj:

segundero, hora, y minuterero”³(Interview, November 11th, 2021). These answers showed how the use of Dance helped students in learning vocabulary by combining words with movements.

According to Savic (2014), the involvement of language alongside movements and gestures makes “language acquisition more natural and memorable” (p. 447). Dance allowed students to link English words with steps facilitating their acquisition and retention.

Pronunciation and fluency. By students’ reactions and performance through Dance and Drama, I could see they easily and excellently pronounced the English words in a comprehensible tone. This was evidenced in my journals of the second and third lessons, as it is visible in the following excerpts: “while students were dancing, they pronounced the subject's pronouns in English very well”, “the students projected their voice very well in the performance” (2nd journal, September 25th, 2021), “In the new dance students were also pronouncing all the subject pronouns well” (3rd journal, October 23rd, 2021). Students also identified an improvement in their pronunciation through the performing arts exercises: “Hace cinco meses no sabía decir ni el tiempo, ni los pronombres, porque con Liseth (hemos) las actividades que ella hace son muy buenas para la pronunciación (...)”⁴(Interview, November 11th, 2021). Another student mentioned:

La pronunciación mía las decía igual a como se escribía, las actividades que ha hecho

Liseth de exagerar la boca nos ayuda a relajarla, a mejorar la pronunciación, y por

³ [the dance of time that helps us to know, to tell the time well and to know the clock hands : second hand, hour hand, and minute hand]

⁴ [Five months ago I did not know how to say the time or the pronouns, Liseth’s activities are very good for pronunciation (...)]

ejemplo en una palabra que yo decía que era ‘we’ (la pronuncia bien ‘wi’) la decía ‘we’ (la pronuncia como se lee) y ahora sé que no se dice ‘we’ sino que se dice ‘wi’”.⁵

(Interview, November 11th, 2021)

Given that students were constantly listening and repeating the English words and sentences, they easily and well pronounced the words and sentences related since the choreographies and performances involved the specific language topics covered in classes.

Accuracy. In the part of deduction where students interpreted the meaning and structures of the sentences we sang, they had well derived the meaning of some pronouns, and the verb to be. An excerpt from my journal illustrates this situation.

They have well deduced the meaning of the pronouns we, and they. (...) I called a student to highlight the verb to be in the sentences written on the board which were the same we had sung. I gave the opportunity to the student who was very enthusiastic to participate, and he highlighted the correct word “are”. I asked another student to do the same in the other two sentences, and he also did it well. (3rd journal, October 23rd, 2021)

In the students' interview, they also recognized the help of deduction exercises to improve their syntax. A student said “cuando usted nos saca al tablero, y nos pone a encerrar el adjetivo o el verbo, eso nos ha ayudado mucho, porque ahí usted nos enseña a saber a diferenciar cuál es de cuál, cuál se acompaña con uno, cuál se acompaña con otro”⁶(Interview, November 11th, 2021).

⁵ [I pronounced the words as they were written. The activities that Liseth has done to exaggerate the mouth help us to relax it, and to improve the pronunciation. For example, the word 'we', I pronounced it as it was written, but now, I know that it is not pronounced in that way but rather 'wi']

⁶ [When you ask us to circle the adjective or the verb, that has helped us a lot, because there you teach us to know how to differentiate which is each of them, and which is accompanied by one or another]

Body Language and the Speed of Speech Supported Students to Convey Their Messages Easily

Data have suggested that students had good pronunciation when they repeated or said the sentences slowly. However, their pronunciation and intelligibility were affected when they danced and performed fast. There were many situations where this condition was proved: “In the singing and dancing faster, few students were confused in the part of ‘She she he he’ since they sang ‘she she you you’” (2nd journal, September 25th, 2021); “I accepted a student’s proposal to do it even faster, but in this case, they were a little uncoordinated and some words were unintelligible. This time, they danced faster; there were some parts where what they were singing was incomprehensible” (3rd journal, October 23rd, 2021). This information suggested that students needed to speak slowly still to be comprehensible. In this way, students’ speed of speech was crucial to convey their messages.

Another strategy which students used to convey their messages was body language. For instance, in the diagnostic exercise:

Two of the students had great body language. Their eyes were very expressive. There were three very creative conversations. They had a really good body language. They seemed very comfortable speaking and acting. One of them even sang. Another student created a funny conversation and changed her voice by interpreting both characters involved in the conversation. (Diagnosis, October 29th, 2021)

Also, students’ body language were presented in the final activity. Even, “the students used more body language in this video than in the diagnosis. They used clothes and did voice changes to represent their characters. They vocalized and projected better this time” (Final

activity, November 19th, 2021). Students' facial expressions, movements and vocal changes help them better transmit their ideas.

The Choreographies and Performances Promoted a Comfortable Class Environment where Students Feel More Confident to Speak

Through data collection and analysis, I could also observe that Dance and Drama provided a funny and comfortable environment which prompted students' oral production. In my journals, I found considerable evidence of this:

Students enjoyed dancing, they did the movements with energy and had happy faces (...)

They also had a lot of fun with our vocal warm up. They laughed every time they finished to produce the lazy A (which is like a yawn producing the sound of a Spanish A) and they wanted to do it many times. (2nd journal, September 25th, 2021)

Moreover, in a questionnaire I did to know students' perceptions about the final activity, some answers were "lo más divertido fue imitar, y hacerlo, me divertí mucho", "lo más divertido fue hacer los dos personajes, e hablarlos"⁷ (Questionnaire, November 11th, 2021). In these exercises students were having fun while they were also orally producing English words and sentences. Another example of this funny and communicative environment was found in my third journal where "I changed my voice to imitate the boys (I used a husky voice). The students had a lot of fun with my voice changes and the boys did the same with their voices doing the performance" (3rd journal, October 23rd, 2021). In this performance, students sung affirmative

⁷ [[the funniest thing was imitating, and doing it, I had a lot of fun], [the funniest thing was doing the two characters, and talking]]

English sentences with the verb to be. Students' attitude during these activities demonstrated that the implementation of Dance and Drama provided an enjoyable environment in class allowing students to confidently speak. According to Savic (2014) "as affective factors are very important in learning, teachers should create a comfortable learning atmosphere to lower the affective filter and to help learning" (p. 448).

I also could evidence this appropriate learning environment in a Drama evaluative exercise, when students had to ask and say a time based on a fictional situation. "There was a student who wanted to participate a lot of times even if he did not know the numbers well in English" (1st journal, September 8th, 2021). Even though that activity was evaluative and graded, I did not perceive students worried about it. In contrast, they seemed excited, and cheerful to participate and repeat the performance. Mine Atas (2015) found in his study that Drama reduces students' nervousness in English classes since they can have fun and learn at the same time.

Additionally, data collected about students' reactions and performances also helped me to evidence how students supported each other, they corrected each other, and made fun of their own mistakes. This was specially evidenced in the following happening:

Once a boy sang "you are boys" pointing at girls, and another student surprised saw him and said to him "¡ayy!". Then I told him "ay sí, ¿cómo así que nosotras somos niños?" and the students laughed, including the one who was wrong. The same student who realized the mistake said to him "sí usted dijo "boys" and then danced and sang the part "we are boys." (3rd journal, October 23rd, 2021)

Dancing and performing actions prompted students to do cooperative work and to have an active oral participation since the performing arts constantly offered opportunities for students to speak with others. According to Hernández and Hugo (2019) “Oral production is developed easier when people interact with others, creating and participating in conversations, and communicative situations” (p. 28).

Conclusions and Implications

This research had the purpose of analyzing how the implementation of Dance and Drama could improve students’ Oral Production. From the data analysis, I concluded that the involvement of movements, gestures, repetition, fictional situations and signing in the English class could help students in my particular EFL classroom to improve their oral production by acquiring easily the target vocabulary and structures, by being more exposed to listen and speak constantly English words and sentences, and by providing a funny and safe environment to practice their speaking skill without fear and pressure to fail.

In addition, this research project entailed some implications for teachers’ practice. A first implication is that teachers should have knowledge and love for these performing arts to include them in their lessons. It is important that the teachers enjoy and feel confident dancing and/or performing a fictional situation or a song to enhance the benefits of these arts in the learning of a language. Another implication to take into account is the language topics to be taught to know if these can be addressed through Dance and Drama or if there are other ways to provide an experience that better match with the specific language topic characteristics.

Regarding suggestions for teachers who want to implement Dance and Drama in their English class, one of them is to combine the experiences provided through Dance and Drama with exercises which promote students' reason such as deduction and induction activities, where students can analyze and reflect on the specific language topics involved in the choreographies and/or performances. Another suggestion is to be aware of students' interests and likes of Dance and Drama styles to include them in the activities and increase students' motivation and participation.

This project provided rationale on the implementation of the Dance and Drama for the specific topics taught and an understanding of their benefits on students' oral production in an EFL classroom. It also contributed to identifying relevant aspects related to the language and Kantian epistemology that can influence students' target language acquisition process. Nevertheless, further research on these issues needs to be conducted involving different language topics and the all four language skills to elucidate to what extent Dance and Drama can be implemented to improve students' target language learning in general.

Reflection

All this work and experience has shown me first-hand some of the challenges and big problems of Colombian public education. Also, the importance of teachers to face these challenges. In a system that has so many problems and in which a quick solution is not in sight, teachers must be excellent to contribute to the solution and not be part of the problem. It is needed that teachers are well prepared in their specific subjects to help students to have a more efficient and meaningful learning process. One of the challenges I faced was the reduction of the

time to teach, since several institutional events were presented at the same time of the English classes, such as holiday celebrations, academic make-up weeks, among others. In addition, due to Covid-19 pandemic, the group was divided into two subgroups and each subgroup only attended classes every fifteen days. Another challenge was the imposed methodology (grammar-translation), and its intention that the children read and write in a foreign language that they barely knew, while they did not even know how to read and write well in their mother tongue. This method perceives the individual as a loner, as if the teacher could deposit the knowledge he or she has of the target language on the children's brains. In this methodology, we are losing the experience, the possibility of living the language based on culture, practice, thoughts and feelings before studying it in detail.

This work mixed with all the learnings and experiences that I have acquired from observations, practices and discussions in the courses along the career have taught me that the language needs to be lived. We need to have an experience with the language, as we did with our mother tongue, pointing at objects, mispronouncing words related to those objects and repeating them until we pronounce them right, with the real objective of communicating or trying to do it. It is also important to know how to use the words and phrases of a foreign language since the limit of a foreign language is not only the knowledge of the correct word for each object, but the knowledge of the rules and the uses of each word. That is why many times people know what they want to say, but do not know how to say it.

In this way, this work has also led me to question the traditional methodologies for language learning. I observed that those methodologies largely focus on the students using reason, relegating experience; while fascinating post-traditional methodologies regarding the use

of the senses and teaching according to practice give so much emphasis to the experience, relegating reason. Those methodologies by themselves are not enough to teach a target language. The language has many different topics which should be taught in different ways by its nature; but these methodologies propose just one way, which ties teachers. Not everything can be taught by creating projects, debating, watching movies or talking, as well as dancing or acting, there are times when you must study the language in detail, be aware of its grammar but in the same way you will not learn the target language well by carefully studying the language, or only reading, and writing all the time. There is already an eclectic approach which emerged from the same idea that we cannot teach all language topics in the same way. However, this is not well "founded" or "reasoned" yet since this approach does not clearly establish the methodologies nor the specific situations where use each one.

Therefore, one of my future goals is to analyze the language teaching methodologies in more depth, and make a systematization of them, having in mind the units of progression, going from the simplest to more complex topics, and the ideas of the post-traditional methodologies to provide experiences. This future plan is without the intention of depriving the teacher's autonomy, but giving him the freedom to adapt what I propose in their respective contexts or even to propose another methodology, but with fundamentals. Also, the idea is to study, analyze and arrange which form of experience would be better implemented according to each specific language topic. Then, expose the possible ways to exercise the students' reason for developing and storing in their minds a clearer and more precise idea of each language topic.

References

- Altricher, H., Feldman, A., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (2005). *Teachers investigate their work: An introduction to action research across the professions*. Routledge.
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Catterall, J., Chapleau, R., & Iwanaga, J. (1999). Involvement in the arts and human development: General involvement and intensive involvement in music and theater arts. *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning, 1*, 1-18. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED435581.pdf>
- Cameron, L. (2001). Learning language through tasks and activities. *Teaching Languages to Young Learners* (pp. 21-35).
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Illustrated ed., Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press.
- Hernández, J. & Hugo, V. (2019). *Strengthening Oral Production in English of Students with Basic Level by means of Project-Based Learning*. Universidad Libre. Retrieved from <https://repository.unilibre.edu.co/bitstream/handle/10901/17715/Strengthening%20Oral%20Production.pdf?sequence=1>
- Hanna, J. L. (2008). A nonverbal language for imagining and learning: Dance education in K–12 curriculum. *Educational Researcher*, 37(8), 491-506. Retrieved from <http://www.philadelphiadance.org/articles/NonverbalLanguage.pdf>
- Kant, I., 1787. *Crítica de la razón pura*. [ebook] Königsberg, pp.27-28. Retrieved from <http://www.unizar.es/departamentos/filosofia/documents/kant-critica-de-la-razon-pura-ribas.pdf>

- Kuyumcu, Nihal. (2012). Using theatre techniques in foreign language education: A study on Molière's plays. *Procedia-social and behavioral sciences*, 70(2013), 6-10. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.032
- Lihamba, A. (1985). The Performing Arts And Development. *African e-Journals Projects*, 7.
- Manual de Convivencia IETISD . (2009). <https://es.slideshare.net/alilopez/manual-de-coviencia-ietisd>
- McIntyre, K. L. (2005). Cultural Dances and Stories from Around the World: A Discovery of World Cultures through Dance and Drama, Curriculum Designed for Grades K-5. Center for Learning through the Arts.
- Neta, M., 2020. Epistemology. In: *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 20th ed. p.1.
- Permata, M. (2018). *Integrating Language Skills in the TEFL*. Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto. Retrieved from <https://classroom.google.com/u/0/w/MTk2NjYwODc0Njk2/t/all>
- Rebecca. (2001, September). Integrated Skills in the ESL/EFL Classroom. ERIC, Vol. 6. Retrieved from <https://classroom.google.com/u/0/w/MTk2NjYwODc0Njk2/t/all>
- Savic, V. (2014). TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS. ResearchGate.
- Tapio, T., Kauko, K., & Heikki, R. (2015). Drama education and improvisation as a resource of teacher student's creativity. *Procedia social and behavioral sciences*, 12(2011), 60–69. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.02.010
- Wittgenstein, L., 1949. *Investigaciones filosóficas*. 3rd ed. [ebook] Cambridge, pp.12-54. Retrieved from <https://www.uv.mx/rmipe/files/2015/05/Investigaciones-filosoficas.pdf>
- Zuengler, J. & Miller, E., 2006. Cognitive and Sociocultural Perspectives: Two Parallel SLA Worlds?. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), pp.37-38.