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Lights, Camera and Action: Using Creative Drama to Improve Speaking Skill in a Group of Fifth

Graders in a Private Institution

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Abstract

This action research study was carried out at Instituto Salesiano Pedro Justo Berrio in Medellin, which intended to describe how creative drama activities foster the students' communicative speaking skills in a group of 5th graders. There were 14 participants with a basic level of English who participated in activities such as mimics, improvisation, frozen image, imitation, role-play, and theatrical exercises. Some school's extracurricular activities influenced the application of the project. The data was collected with a survey and personal observations. The results gathered from this research showed how students' willingness to communicate was increasing, which positively affected their communicative speaking skills; moreover, during the research, the teacher and classmates' influence was crucial when supporting students' learning processes.

Key words: Speaking communicative skill, drama techniques, willingness to communicate

Degree Requirement

This action research project was conducted between July 2021 and June 2022 at a private institution in Medellin in order to obtain the degree of Bachelor in Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Antioquia.

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To my brother for his silent love and endless laughter in this new life.

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Preface

With the aim to obtain a degree in Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Antioquia, it is required to carry out an academic practicum in an educational institution, preferably a public one. However, this practicum was carried out in a private Catholic school where I work. The practicum was conducted from August 2021 to June 2022.

This academic work involves a research project divided into two main parts; first, to identify the needs of the students concerning their foreign language training and bearing in mind our knowledge in didactics, pedagogy, and linguistics to present a proposal. Second, implement the proposed work through classroom interventions while collecting data that are finally analysed to reach conclusions that could be useful for the educational community.

Context

The Instituto Salesiano Pedro Justo Berrio, located in Medellin, is a private school part of a large worldwide Catholic organization. The school offers formal education at preschool, elementary, middle school, and technical high school for children, teenagers, and adults. Its mission is to evangelize and educate – through Education for Work and Human Development, Parochial Mission, and Formal Education – integrally to be good Christians and honest citizens, based on Don Bosco's preventive system in a context of sustainability.

On the other hand, by 2026, the school is projected to be a certified institution in current quality standards where the educative innovation, research, technical training, and autonomous and inclusive education will be encouraged, following the provincial orientation and faithful to Don Bosco's charisma. The school has a national and international projection in exchanging innovative pedagogical experiences, supported by information and communication technologies. Moreover, the institution is on the path toward bilingualism for the whole community (students, teachers, and administrators) as its purpose is to appropriate English as its foreign language (Instituto Salesiano Pedro Justo Berrio, 2021).

The school has various facilities, including two basketball courts, one football field, and a coliseum. There is also a chapel, laboratory rooms, two computer rooms, a library, a theatre, a cafeteria, two playgrounds, three teachers' rooms, and a large country area where recreational and institutional activities occur. These facilities allow the students to be involved in different extracurricular activities.

Regarding the English classes, students receive 5 hours of English per week; from 4th to 11th grade, the English department divides each course into two levels: English I and English II. According to the English department, English II classes follow the Content and Language

Integrated Learning (CLIL) while Grammar Based approach for the English I classes. Moreover, the whole community has English classes led by some of the 15 teachers in the English department.

Regarding the English II on 5th grades, the course is based on a guidebook called English Code 5 published by Pearson. This guidebook must be acquired by students to answer the activities proposed in the classes. As a support tool, students pay for access to MyOn, which is a student-centred library that has more than 6,000 enhanced digital books. Each term, students must read four books chosen by the teacher and they can develop some pre design projects that the platform suggests.

Class 5-3, English II, comprises fourteen students: twelve boys and two girls. Students have a basic level of English in which they can understand words and some simple sentences. In terms of oral production, most students have difficulty articulating sentences, expressing themselves almost entirely with isolated words. On the other hand, most of them have a good attitude toward English since they are responsible and attentive to the class development.

The cooperative teacher is a young-adult teacher who has been working at the school for six months. She has a degree in Teaching Foreign Languages obtained in 2022 from the University of Antioquia. She believes that people (adults and children) should discover that learning a foreign language can be the easiest, funniest, and friendliest experience. The methodology she employs in her classes is using games, stories, and music.

Finally, I am a student researcher from the school of languages at the University of Antioquia. I have worked as a teacher in some private English institutions for four years, where I have taught adults and young adults. I have worked at this school for a year; I oversee five courses and am a homeroom teacher. This job has been a big challenge because I have never

worked with more than six students nor in this kind of context. My main concern is that the students find the English class an enjoyable learning space that allows them to make mistakes and learn without fear or embarrassment.

Statement of the Problem

The class observation was conducted for four weeks, and it was clear that the lessons were focused only on grammar, reading, and writing. The dynamic of the classes involved a wide use of Spanish, short and specific participation from the students, and repetitive activities as the students must answer grammar workshops and write short texts according to the teacher's guidance (Journal entries, September 8th, 15th, 22nd; October 6th, 2021).

The lack of use of the target language caught my attention since it was clear in the school's vision that it is intended to become a bilingual school and the number of English classes is higher than in most schools. Furthermore, when I started to use a bit more English, the students struggled to understand and express themselves in the foreign language; in fact, the students used only isolated words in English during the development of the class. Although they were excited about speaking it, they did not find the words or seemed to feel insecure or shy when speaking the foreign language.

Learning a language requires the student to develop the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking; therefore, the English class must incorporate them effectively to achieve the expected outcome from the students (Sadiku, 2015). In the case of the class observed, students did not have the opportunity to practice their oral communicative skills. Hence, it was necessary to propose activities that helped them improve their speaking skill while they enjoyed practicing the target language.

As their entitled English teacher, I had the chance to observe not only the English class but other learning environments. During some weeks, it was noticeable that students from different courses were significantly engaged in preparing a play for the Spanish course. Therefore, I requested the teacher's permission to observe one of the Spanish lessons where the students presented short plays following the teachers' guidance. The whole class was really into this activity. They seemed to enjoy it, and there were very talented students in the class.

After this exciting finding, a survey was conducted regarding their opinions about language and classroom activities. The results showed that regarding language, 60% of the students believe that speaking is an essential skill when learning English, while 30 % think it is listening. Concerning the type of activities proposed in the class, 83.3% of the students consider that group work allows them to learn more in the course, while 16.6% believe it is individual work. In addition, students were asked about the kind of activities they would like in the class; the learners suggested group work, activities outside the classroom, pronunciation activities, and activities related to music and movies.

Thus, considering the survey results and the class observations, I decided to explore a different approach that allows the students to enhance their speaking skills, work in groups and expand their creativity outside the classroom. A drama-based approach is a learning tool involving pantomime, improvisation, cooperative work, and creativity, which simultaneously develop intellectual, physical, social, and emotional skills (Caldwell, 2011; Galante, 2018). With this approach, I wanted to understand how drama can help the students overcome their difficulties in expressing themselves in a foreign language.

Theoretical Framework

Bearing in mind the observations, the context, and the students' needs, it is paramount to establish the three key concepts that guided this project. First, I provide definitions of the Communicative Speaking Skill followed by this research; second, I address the concept of Willingness to Communicate; and finally, I explore the approach implemented, Drama-Based Pedagogy. The objective of this section is precisely to deepen and clarify these concepts in the light of the academic project carried out.

Communicative speaking skill

Learning a language requires developing four primary skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening; this study will focus on one of the productive skills: speaking. Husain (2015) states, "speaking and writing are called productive skills because while using these skills, a learner/user is not only active but also produces sounds in speaking and symbols in writing" (p.3). However, this production is not only about sounds but meaning, as when users speak, they share opinions, thoughts, ideas, and feelings.

Speaking as an active and productive skill requires different elements, and it entails producing the appropriate sound, selecting the right words, and making grammatically acceptable structures (Chastain, 1998). In this regard, Chaney (1998) describes three aspects as the basis of oral production. Firstly, mechanics are related to pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and the use of the right words. Secondly, the functions of speaking deal with transaction and interaction. Finally, the sociocultural ability emerges as a crucial element in speaking associated with the context and culture the speaker belongs to.

Consequently, it is evident that the communicative speaking skill involves verbal and non-verbal communication to convey the message. In this sense, Brown and Yule (1983) assert that "the speaker has available to him the full range of voice quality effects (as well as facial expressions, postural and gestural systems). Armed with these he can always override the effect of the words he speaks." (p.4). It means that when the learner produces the language, the intention of the message changes according to his/her emotions, voice, expressions, and body language. This non-verbal communication makes it a bit of a challenge for the students, as they are required to know the language and to feel it.

Willingness to communicate

Oxford (1997) defines Willingness to Communicate (WTC) "as a student's intention to interact with others in the target language, given the chance to do so" (p. 449). It indicates that WTC is strongly connected to the development of the learner's speaking skills, since if there is no desire to communicate on the part of the student, there will hardly be an improvement in this skill.

The student's unwillingness to communicate (i.e., communication apprehension) is related to discomfort, low self-esteem, introversion, high anxiety, and perceived incompetence (Mc- Croskey, 1984). In the case of the class observed, the learners seem to feel shy, unsecure, and not prepared to interact in the target language when the space is provided. It means that there is currently no interaction in the classroom through the foreign language.

Therefore, it is necessary to apply new strategies in order to persuade learners to communicate more in the foreign language. As Yashima (2002) declares "EFL lessons should be designed to enhance students' interest in different cultures and international affairs and activities,

as well as to reduce anxiety and build confidence in communication" (p. 63). This study tackled the last two elements to increase the students' WTC by implementing a different approach and learning the students' interests and perceptions towards the language.

Drama-Based approach

The Drama-Based approach refers to a set of drama-based teaching and learning practices for involving pupils in their learning process (Lee et al., 2015). It means that this pedagogy can be used in different contexts to facilitate and improve learning.

Some of the techniques used for the creative drama are pantomimes, role playing, lypsinc, simulations and role play with puppets. Those activities are aimed to help students express themselves, feel comfortable sharing their emotions, and raise their creativity (Gabitova et al.,2018). Applying creative drama in an English class requires bearing in mind not only the different drama techniques but also the vocabulary and grammar structures seen in class that allow the students to express themselves.

Finally, Side (1969) asserts that when using creative drama "pupils are given encouragement to become both more aware, and more capable of using effectively: concentration, imagination, the senses, the voice, emotion, and intellect. "(p. 431). Those elements are favourable when the students are required to speak in the target language.

Research Question

Bearing in mind the school vision regarding bilingualism and the lack of use of the language among the students, the research question that leads this research project is: *How*

can the implementation of creative drama activities foster the speaking skill in a group of fifth graders?

Objectives

Main Objective:

To describe the way creative drama activities, foster the students' communicative speaking skills in a private institution.

Specific Objectives:

- To identify creative drama activities that foster the students' communicative speaking skills.

- To define students' communicative skills through creative drama activities.

- To compare the students' speaking performance with their willingness to communicate.

Action plan

During the first part of the research project, from August to November 2021, I observed a group of sixth graders, and an action plan was designed considering the topics to be addressed during the first and second term for sixth grade, English I. The action plan was built for 16 weeks, from February until the end of May, in consideration of the academic curriculum and implementing different theatre tools, such as role-playing, improvisation, frozen imagen, pantomime, and imitation. Those activities would help to reach the final activity regarding the creation and presentation of a short play. (See Appendix A)

In the second part of the project's development, which corresponded to the first semester of 2022, the administration assigned me English II in the 5th and 6th-grade levels. Since English I and II have different approaches and topics according to their guidebooks, I had to modify the action plan so that the topics of English II were included. Moreover, it was necessary to select a new group with similar characteristics to those observed in the first part of the practicum and with whom to work on the proposed activities.

When designing the action plan, I received informal advice from the teacher in charge of theatre in elementary school, who joined the school at the beginning of the year. This new action plan focused on working with 5th grade English II students who, during the first and second terms had, to learn topics related to school, landscapes, leisure activities, and movies. Additionally, some other activities focused on the physical and mental preparation of the student-actors were included as part of the suggestions made by the drama teacher. (See Appendix B)

Development of actions

I was told to oversee English II for 5th and 6th graders at the beginning of the year. However, during the first two weeks, it was unclear whom the students belonged to English level 2. This administrative inconvenience, in a way, represented a slight delay in the development of the project activities. On the other hand, the institution has some classrooms intended for English II; therefore, I had to wait for the students to come. However, my classroom was located in the high school section, and the elementary students had to make a 5-minute walk to get to the English classroom, which reduced the class time by 10 minutes.

Since I was in charge of 5 new groups, and I did not know the students, I started the action plan for the first week with all the groups, which helped me to know the students and

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identify two things: (1) their attitude towards English and (2) their language needs. This information was fundamental as I planned the proposal bearing in mind these two main aspects when I observed the group during the last semester of 2021.

Once I selected the class 5-3 English II, I socialized the proposal with the students and the activities I would implement once a week during the semester. We all defined that those activities would be carried out on Wednesday sessions, which means one hour class. Students were enthusiastic and attentive to the information; they wondered if theatre activities would be used in all the classes I led. They felt privileged to know they would be the only group working in those activities.

During weeks 3, 4, and 5, some drama activities were used to practice the first unit of the term called "Time for school." Those activities involved mimics, improvisation, and role-play. When developing those activities, I beard in mind four main aspects: first, I had to put myself as an example by performing in front of the students; second, I could not force students to participate under any circumstances, either through a grade or punishment; third, I should provide every time positive feedback to encourage students' participation; and fourth, I should appreciate all the effort made by students and should not assume they would have excellent acting skills (Dougill, 1987, as cited in Torrico, 2015)

In weeks 6, 7, and 8, more theatrical work was carried out in which activities and games played an important role in strengthening body expression and group work. These activities were led by the theater teacher and with my constant support. At the beginning of each activity, a warm-up prepared the body and mind for the activity to follow. Walking barefoot through the space allowed the students to consciously engage with the place, connecting with the floor, temperature, and texture. Color coding and the balloon in the classroom tested participants'

concentration. The growing gum activity was a warm-up aimed at improving vocalization and pronunciation of words. The drama teacher guided the exercise, in which the students imagined that they were chewing a piece of gum in their mouths, and little by little the gum changed its size, flavour, and texture. All this allowed them to exercise their tongue, mouth, and face, which simultaneously awakened their imagination and creativity.

The activities of human rock, paper, scissors, and group counting with eyes closed worked on group connection and teamwork. The game of rock, paper, and scissors required them to agree on how to embody the chosen object; simultaneously, the participants warmed up their bodies and put them at the disposal of the game. The group counting game worked on connection, concentration, and group breathing. Students had their eyes closed, so they had to concentrate on not repeating or saying a number simultaneously with another classmate; they had to be connected to the here and now of the classroom.

At the end of the first term, two significant events occurred. First, students visited me more often, asking about the drama activities and suggesting that their time be extended. Second, parents extended their gratitude through the homeroom teacher as they felt that the English class had provided a joyful learning space for their children.

During weeks 9, 10, and 11, I implemented theatrical activities that included frozen images, interpretation, and imitation. With the frozen image, it was possible to merge the theme corresponding to that week which was telling time. The students were able to practice telling time through the theatrical activity. For the interpretation, a dialogue from the guidebook was used as a reference. This exercise allowed them to delve into the performance and INTENT of a text. By saying the same dialogue with different emotions, it was possible to find stories,

meanings, or contexts of the character, giving life to the text and understanding the reason for the text. Each emotion implied a different intention and a different purpose.

For the imitation exercise, students watched a video in which four people played rock-paper-scissors. The students had to pay attention to the characters' body expressions and to what they were saying. To help them, the dialogue was written on the board so that students could visibly relate the sounds to the words. After several rehearsals, the students performed their interpretation; this brought them even closer to the acting work.

The theatrical activities had to be suspended for at least two weeks due to a delay in developing the topics indicated week by week in the study plan. This delay had to be addressed urgently since the institution was undergoing audits that demanded compliance with the study plan. Additionally, during April and May, many extracurricular activities affected the fulfilment of the stipulated class hours.

Once the theatre activities were back on track, the initial instructions for creating the play were carried out. Students made two groups; the students decided on the play's theme, the type of play, the number of scenes, and the setting. However, no further progress was made as the academic calendar for the first semester of the year ended, and the students went on holiday.

To explore and describe the effects on the students' speaking performance, this study employed some data sources. These sources included observations and journals, and a questionnaire to students.

The observations and journals were carried out during the whole research process which allow to see in real time how the DBP is applied. The main purpose of these was to have information of how the students face this approach. Similarly, these sources enabled the

identification of not only how this learning approach was implemented, but also how students reacted towards it; and the influence it had on the learners' speaking skill.

This research used a qualitative and quantitative design through the action research methodology. This methodology allowed to in-depth explore, collect data, identify an issue with the main objective to improve the learning and teaching practice (Creswell, 2012). Correspondingly, this research explored the impact that Drama-Based Pedagogy had on the students' communicative skill in a private school in Medellin, Colombia. Furthermore, it described the outcomes that this approach brings.

As a second source of information from the hand of those involved in the scenario, a questionnaire was implemented to understand the perspectives towards the Drama-Based approach implemented in the classroom. Most importantly, this questionnaire allowed to identify the students' opinion regarding how this approach can offer an improvement of their speaking skill. (See Appendix C)

Initially a third source of information was planned which corresponded to an interview for the CT; however, due to massive resignations in the English department during the first semester of the year, the cooperating teacher changed 3 times which affected the observation and analysis process. Therefore, this interview was not made.

Data analysis

This research project followed the action research design. Following Burns (2009) stages, I started by collecting data through journals and a survey. Then I coded the information in the research journals and the survey, resulting in categories. Once the information was categorized, I found common patterns in the data collection. After that, I wrote the findings and the

interpretations supported by the theory that guided this research. Finally, I wrote the conclusions and reflections that may help further research on the topic and the school community where the project was carried out.

Findings and interpretations

The data analysis of this research showed that the implementation of drama activities in the classroom significantly impacts students' willingness to communicate in a foreign language. However, this outcome responds to the proposed drama activities and the teacher's role in promoting language use. Additionally, the analysis revealed that the students' collaborative learning was crucial when improving their linguistic communicative skills among the students.

Willingness to communicate

This category was the most present in all data collected, primarily through all journals, which registered a gradual increase in language use. In the beginning, students were reluctant to use English, as stated in Journal 1:

"*The teacher asked them the reason for their choice. At first, the students did not express their reasons; however, the teacher told them they could use Spanish and English to express their opinion. Most of the students spoke only in Spanish*" (Journal entry extract, January 27th, 2022)

This apprehension to communicate in the target language might be caused by two main factors: perceived communication competence and anxiety (MacIntyr, 1994, as cited in Yashima, 2002). Nevertheless, through this research, some activities and strategies were implemented to provide a class environment where students feel free to initiate communication among their

classmates. To accomplish that, it was necessary to create a language immersion atmosphere so students could hear English as much as possible, "*la profe nos ayuda hablando Siempre en inglés en las clases*" (Survey, student C); "*Todas las indicaciones era en inglés*" (Survey, student H).

As time went on, it became evident that students increased their use of English and switched from one language to another to express themselves in class. An important aspect was that the students related the use of English with the classroom and expressed it clearly as evidenced in the journal 6:

> "*The teacher arrived and greeted the students who were waiting outside the classroom; they answered in Spanish, so the teacher repeated her greeting, and the students insisted on speaking Spanish. One of the students said they could use their mother tongue as they were outside the English classroom.*" (Journal entry extract, March 3rd , 2022)

Although this might seem negative, it turned out to be very positive for this research. Nevertheless, I emphasized using the language constantly in all scenarios to improve their language proficiency. In addition, they were reminded of the institutional bilingualism project in which they are the most important population to achieve this objective.

Drama activities

The proposed drama activities helped the students in different ways; in the case of mimics, students could become increasingly comfortable when making a presentation since they did not have to focus their attention on the language. On the other hand, when they did improvisations, students had a greater degree of freedom which could allow them to gain self-confidence and, at the same time, improved their performance in their ability to communicate in a foreign language (Trivedi, 2013, as cited in Torrico, 2015).

Moreover, students enjoyed the theatre activities; especially those which implied physical movement like running around, screaming, walking barefoot, and those things that actively engaged their minds. This was evident in the survey when it was asked "*2.¿Cuál fue la actividad que más te gustó? ¿por qué?",* some of the answers were:

Student B: "me gustó mucho la actividad que era decir colores como rosado gritar"

Student I: "mi actividad favorita fue la de que teníamos que hacer lo que la profe diga descalzos me gusto porque me divirtió mucho."

Student M: "La de contar hasta 20 con los ojos cerrados porque fue muy divertida."

On the other hand, these activities were very innovative and appealing to the students; as they argued, the activities allowed them to get out of the routine. Furthermore, they saw the English lessons as a different way of learning from what they were used to. Their increased interest in these activities was also evident, as when the theatre activities were suspended due to extracurricular activities, the students demanded the return of these activities "*before this class, students started to come during the breaks asking about the theatre activities*" (Journal entry extract, May 12th). In the survey was asked "*6.¿Qué es lo que más te gusta de las actividades de teatro?*" some of the answers were:

Student A: "Que son muy divertidas y me ayudan a distraerme."

Student H: "Que nos salimos del hábito de siempre estar sentados recibiendo clase."

Student J: "la rareza y lo interesantes."

Teacher's role

This category arose considering that in most current pedagogical proposals regarding the teaching of foreign language, the role of the student is marked with a great precision, but to a

certain extent the teacher is likely to leave her aside. However, it was evident during the implementation that the teacher was a role model and, above all, a supporter of the students. The teacher used three main strategies when proposing the activities; first, she used her body and facial gestures to communicate the instructions and even exemplify the activity to be carried out; as evidenced in the journals: "*The teacher gave an example; the wheel selected the activity 'help each other' and she represented in front of the class. The students smiled and laughed as they watched their teacher mime, then one student tried to guess the action. Seeing this, more students were encouraged to participate.*" (Journal entry extract, February 9th)

Second, she served as a phonetic model by repeating in English what the student said in such a way that the student linked what he wanted to express with its form in the foreign language as recorded in the journals: "*A student said: 'teacher, si we have question, te decimos,' so the teacher said, 'Ok, that's right. If you have a question, you will tell me. Perfect.'*" (Journal entry estract, February 16th). Third, she expressed constant support to the students, understanding them when they did not feel confident to participate; she also generated an atmosphere of trust and a good student-teacher relationship, "*Student C: la profe nos ayuda hablando siempre en inglés en las clases,*" "*Student H: si las disfruto ya que la profe edna siempre las hace divertidas.*"

Collaborative learning

This category emerged as most of the activities proposed required pair or group work which allowed the students to work together while they give and receive feedback, exchange ideas, and relate with different classmates. Moreover, in this category, I found that students

enjoyed class activities that promoted peer interaction, collaboration and caring for others. As stated in the survey when they were asked "7.¿Disfrutas la clase de inglés? ¿qué es lo que más disfrutas de la clase de inglés?" some of the answers were:

> *Student E: "lo que más disfruto es hablar en inglés y disfrutar con mis amigos en actividades."*
>
> *Student F: "Cuando todos compartimos entre todos"*
>
> *Student G: "si la disfruto mucho lo que más me gusta es convivir con la profe y mis compañeros"*

Through time it was noticeable how students increasingly support each other when performing any of the activities proposed as registered in the journals "*However, the student did not want to participate. The teacher told him it was fine. His classmates said to him that he could join in the next activity."* (Journal entry extract, February 16th) and "*students enthusiastically applaud, especially one of the students who seems to be the most shy of the class*" (Journal entry extract, April 21st)

Conclusions and reflections

The development of this research study had some limitations regarding schedule and administrative matters. Firstly, school has a plethora of activities to do and as it was the first year after the pandemic lock-down and restrictions; all the activities that the institution used to do returned. Those activities encompass secular celebrations such as children's day, teacher's day, Salesian teacher's day and the institution's birthday. Religious celebrations such as the month of Virgin Mary and the month of Don Bosco; these celebrations included competitions and novenas. In addition, institutional events such as school debates, the election of the school

ombudsman, and sports competitions returned. Similarly, activities were carried out in teacher training institutions and national standardized assessments.

Secondly, there were a few administrative issues due to mass resignations in the English department, which directly affected the research as the cooperating teacher was changed three times. In addition, general audits were carried out internally and from the bilingualism program to which the institution was attached; this required strict compliance with the school study plan designed at the beginning of the year.

Although the action plan was designed with the 5th-grade themes in mind, other purely theatrical activities were also proposed that did not allow the use or practice of a particular theme during their execution; this caused a delay in the development of the institutional curriculum. Despite the constraints mentioned above, most of the theatre activities were applied, which progressively helped students feel more comfortable in the English class. In this regard, it was pleasant to witness the joy in the students when they came to the English classroom and the evident interest in the theater activities.

Feeling increasingly at ease in the English class, the students gradually overcame their shyness and fear of speaking in the target language. This progress was evident considering that at the beginning of the year, the students mainly used Spanish to ask, answer and talk during the class; in contrast to the end of the action plan implementation, when students were more likely to use English with some words in Spanish. In fact, during the implementation of the drama activities, the students showed a positive attitude toward them, which made the process run smoothly.

Finally, the findings showed that the teacher has a crucial role as a promoter and a model for students to use the target language during class activities. The teacher is the one who

generates a space of respect and mutual support so that the student can participate in the proposed activities, accepting mistakes as part of learning; this makes the student feel more comfortable in class and speaks the foreign language without fear of ridicule. At the same time, by creating this supportive environment, it became evident that collaborative learning played an essential role as teamwork is highlighted in the theatre as an essential structure for communication between individuals and teams and as a means to inspire creativity. This teamwork allowed them to see themselves as active agents of teaching and learning.

Suggestions

For those interested in applying these theatre activities in the classroom, I suggest bearing in mind four main aspects: first, scheduling a fixed time to develop the activities in such a way that there is continuity in the process. Second, the activities should have a purpose, and students should know it. Third, it is essential to receive advice from a person with theatrical skills who can guide this process since, in this way, significant results can be achieved. Fourth, it is paramount to the teacher's role as a facilitator of the development of theatrical activities since the activities should be bodily represented by the teacher to help students feel more comfortable participating. It is vital to remember that through art, students achieve academic and formative goals as it fosters creativity, teamwork, and self-confidence.

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Appendix A

Action plan (2021)

Week	Topic	Purpose	Activity
1	Thoughts about English. What have we learnt?	Identify students' perceptions towards English classes. Identify the students' speaking proficiency	Questionnaire Memory challenge
2	Creative drama Weather	Give information about some techniques of creative drama. Use pantomimes to represent the vocabulary weather and related to feelings. Explain the different expressions used to talk about weather.	Presentation Pantomimes Video
3	Creative drama Weather forecast	Prepare and recreate the weather news.	Role-play
4	Creative drama Weekend activities	Introduce new vocabulary related to activities to do during the weekend. Use the body to represent the actions.	Frozen image
5	Creative drama Invite and make arrangements	Identify the expressions used to make arrangements for the weekend. Practice and recreate the dialogues	Listening – practice - Lipsync
6	Creative drama Invite and make arrangements	Create short dialogues in pairs to invite and make arrangements. Discuss what to do, where to go and with who.	Improvisation
7	Creative drama Audio blog and emotions	Analyze and identify the details express in a blog called "Are you ready to get muddy?" Create an audio blog taking into account different feelings and emotions	Reading (Skimming) Audio blog - feelings
8	Creative drama Habits and facts	Watch some videos of different Tik Tokers to learn about the content their habits. Impersonate one of the Tik Tokers and answer some questions about his/her life.	Hot seating - Impersonation
9	Creative drama Habits and facts	Recreate an interview where one of the students take the role of a famous person.	Impersonation - Interview
10	Creative drama	Each student will read out loud a random description and will identify the classmate. Use pantomimes to represent a personality description.	Guessing Pantomime

	Physical and personality Descriptions		
11	Creative drama	Read three fairy tales, identify the main events and characters.	Reading
12	Creative drama	Divide the class into 3 groups and adapt the fairy tale to our context.	Reading
13	Creative drama	Create a script for Act I To practice the dialogues bearing in mind gestures, body posture and voice tone.	Script Rehearsal
14	Creative drama	Create a script for Act II To practice the dialogues bearing in mind gestures, body posture and voice tone.	Script Rehearsal
15	Creative drama	Present the plays. Second video	Plays
16	Feedback	Reflect on how the activities implemented in the class impact their communicative speaking skill. Provide comments and suggestions to future implementations.	Group work

Appendix B

Action plan (2022)

Week	Topic	Purpose	Activity
1	Getting to know each other	Identify students' perceptions towards English classes.	Introducing themselves (name and age)
	Stablishing the classroom rules	Identify the students' speaking proficiency	Circle of memory
	Topics of the term	Explain the topics to tackle in the first term	Present the topics and make the cover
2	Evaluative activities	Explain the evaluative activities proposed for the first term.	Conversation
	MyOn	Explain the use of MyOn project.	
	Theatre techniques	Introduce the research project.	
3	School activities	Practice the vocabulary about school activities	Mimics
4	Rules	Practice and create dialogues about rules (must/mustn't)	Improvisation
5	My ideal school	Present a proposal to a business board about "My ideal school"	Role-play
6	Theater	Recognise and connect to the place. Focus their attention	Walking barefoot Colors code Balloon
7	Theater	Work on the presence, attention, and strategy. Work on facial expressions and imagination.	Game: Catch the tissue The chewing gum
8	Theater	Work on group connection, cooperative work, and concentration.	Rock, paper, scissors human. Group counting
9	Theater	Practice telling time by creating a human clock.	Frozen image
10	Theater	Incorporate random emotions to a fix dialogue	Acting
11	Theater	Recreate a dialogue from a TikTok video.	Imitation

12	Theater	Divide the class into 2 groups and define the topic and the type of the play	Setting of the play
13	Theater	Define the number of scenes, the costumes, and the script for scene 1.	Script
14	Theater	Create a script for scene 2 and 3 To practice the dialogues bearing in mind gestures, body posture and voice tone.	Script Rehearsal
15	Theater	To practice the dialogues bearing in mind gestures, body posture and voice tone.	Rehearsal
16	Theater	Presentation of the play.	Theater play

Appendix C

Encuesta sobre actividades de teatro

Este cuestionario se realiza para recolectar datos sobre la opinión que se tiene sobre las actividades de teatro realizadas en clase de inglés II y sus apreciaciones acerca de la clase. Recuerde que no existe respuesta buena o malo. La información proporcionada es confidencial por lo que su nombre no será mencionado.

1. ¿Qué piensas de las actividades de teatro propuestas por la docente?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. ¿Cuál fue la actividad que más te gustó? ¿Por qué?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. ¿Cuál fue la actividad que menos te gustó? ¿Por qué?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. ¿Crees que las actividades de teatro te han ayudado a hablar más en inglés? ¿por qué?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. ¿Crees que tu capacidad de hablar en inglés durante las clases ha mejorado?
   a. Si, mucho.
   b. Si, un poco.
   c. Mas o menos.
   d. No.

6. ¿Qué es lo que más te gusta de las actividades de teatro?

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. ¿Disfrutas la clase de inglés? ¿Qué es lo que más disfrutas de la clase de inglés?

_____
_____
_____
_____