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Implementing Role-Play Strategies to Reduce Foreign Language Anxiety in Oral Production

Tasks in a Group of Tenth Graders at Institución Educativa Centro Formativo de Antioquia

(CEFA)

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Abstract

This paper describes the way role-play reduces foreign language anxiety in oral production tasks in a tenth-grade group of students at a public school in Medellin. Seeking to promote oral production in students and reduce oral anxiety, the research deals with a common problem in foreign language learning which is speaking in the classroom in the target language. Data were collected through a research journal, one survey about student's context as well as another survey applied at the beginning and the end of the study regarding foreign language anxiety (FLA) in this group. The collection of data also included a teacher's interview and a focus group by the end of the study. Data were analyzed, categorized, and validated through triangulation. The results show improvement in oral production when implementing role-play strategies in the EFL classroom as well as the reduction of anxiety in students.

Keywords: Role-play Strategies, FLA, Oral production, Oral Production Anxiety

Título en español: Implementación de Estrategias de Juegos de Rol para Reducir la Ansiedad en la Lengua Extranjera en la Producción Oral en un Grupo de Décimo Grado en la Institución Educativa Centro Formativo de Antioquia (CEFA)

Degree Requirement

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

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Preface

Role-play has always been part of my process of learning a new language. When I faced the practicum context, I decided to work with, I never thought of the possibility of implementing it in the classroom. My decision was made after observing some of the classes and noticing that the students were not feeling comfortable enough with speaking. On many occasions, students were told to write and read, and they were very focused on "learning vocabulary", however, when it came to speaking in order to get a good grade on oral production, students would panic and even let out a shriek because they did not feel prepared nor good enough to participate. As expected, no one would participate voluntarily, and the teacher must create a dynamic to go on this evaluation system. For this purpose, I have always considered that working on not only one but several skills in the classroom can give better results than focusing on a couple of them such as reading and writing.

It is at the moment when *role-play* arrives in this research study, as a strategy that can be fully implemented for avoiding students to be focused on a couple of skills, while helping them to understand and work through their fears by creating a safe environment and letting their creativity and personality be part of the game. Furthermore, I preferred to create multi-dynamic interaction patterns such as group work, individual work, or full class work by making sure that students were learning what was required and that they were also interacting with each other and having fun.

Description of the Context

Founded in 1935, Centro Formativo de Antioquia (CEFA) is an all-girls school in downtown Medellín. With 2,250 students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, and aged between 12-18 years old (see Appendix A). This institution operates in two shifts from 6:15 am to 6:30 pm. CEFA offers extensive facilities, including a swimming pool, library, chapel, coliseum, classrooms, cafeterias, teacher lounges, auditoriums, computer rooms, and laboratories. Specializations in business, computer sciences, and food science are available for tenth and eleventh graders. CEFA emphasizes civic culture, academic competitiveness, and values like responsibility, honesty, and discipline. The English area follows a modified annual plan using the "Colombia bilingüe" material.

The Group

This research was conducted with forty tenth-grade students (aged 14-18) from diverse neighborhoods in Medellin. Initial surveys regarding student's context findings showed that 23.8% had a negative inclination towards learning English, while 38.1% maintained a neutral stance (see Appendix A). Notably, students displayed curiosity (28.6%), attraction (19%), fear (14.3%), worry (33.3%), or disinterest (4.8%) toward the language. Challenges encountered included speaking (14.3%), writing (28.6%), understanding spoken language (38.1%), and vocabulary (14.3%). In a second survey related to oral production and fear on foreign language anxiety, 61.9% stated they did not thoroughly enjoy learning English, while 38.1% perceived it positively (see Appendix B). All participants expressed an interest in learning English for improved job prospects, opportunities to leave the country, and aspirations to become air hostesses.

About the English classes

The English classes focused on improving students' reading, writing, and vocabulary skills in preparation for the ICFES test in eleventh grade. The classes took place in both the

language laboratory and a classroom, with teachers assigned to a classroom and students rotating between the two. The main textbook used was "English, please!" for 10th grade. Written tasks were emphasized, and students seemed more comfortable in this area compared to oral production. Most students were at a beginner level, although a few attended external classes for additional skill development as answered in the first survey performance (see Appendix A).

Cooperating Teacher

My cooperating teacher (CT) was the head of the "humanities department" and had a Bachelor's degree in Foreign Languages and International Business from the University of Tolima. She had five years of teaching experience at CEFA out of her total eighteen years as an English teacher. Her methodology depended on materials provided by the government and local city hall, focusing primarily on text writing and reading with evaluation of speaking skills. Deductive and inductive reasoning were incorporated, primarily in the mother tongue, Spanish, with translation playing a significant role in assessing class activities.

<div align="center">**Statement of the Problem**</div>

The English classes aimed to ensure students' success in national tests as the school prioritized maintaining quality standards. However, many participants felt comfortable with writing, reading, and vocabulary activities but hesitated to engage in oral production.

The initial classroom context survey (Appendix A) revealed varied perceptions of enjoying learning English, with approximately 47.6% expressing a somewhat positive perception and 23.8% holding a more negative viewpoint. Language anxiety was identified as a common factor through class observations, leading to a second survey with 23 participants, and containing 17 questions, adapted and translated from the survey proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986) about Foreign Language Anxiety or FLA. (Appendix B) Findings showed that while the majority of students felt confident speaking in class, less than half expressed

concern about making mistakes, and over half experienced anxiety even when adequately prepared. These findings highlight the need to address students' anxieties and implement strategies such as role-play to reduce speaking anxiety and create a supportive classroom environment.

During observations, the significant role of the native language in the classroom became apparent, hindering students' understanding of the teacher's instructions in English. This resulted in poor oral comprehension and vocabulary limitations, leading to hesitation in oral activities and difficulties in writing tasks. The journal entry from February 8th, 2023, described students' fears when asked to participate in oral production exercises, with some reading in a low voice tone, hesitating before reading, or only speaking for the teacher out of nervousness. These observations highlight the challenges students face in participating in oral activities and the need to address language anxiety in the classroom.

Anxiety has a significant impact on students' well-being in the language learning classroom. To address this, implementing role-play activities provides a platform for students to discuss and explore their emotions, attitudes, and values, gradually building comfort with oral activities and enhancing critical thinking skills. Incorporating role-play in the educational setting not only improves writing and reading abilities but also develops untapped skills, as suggested by Dewey (1938). By engaging in role-play activities, teachers can create an environment that reduces the pressure of standardized tests and fosters genuine enthusiasm for learning, effectively bridging the gap between students' perceptions and educational objectives. This approach not only allows for the exploration of students' untapped potential but also facilitates a more comprehensive development of their abilities, encompassing both cognitive and social-emotional aspects (Dewey, 1938). Through active participation in role-play, students are actively involved in the learning process, leading to enhanced academic outcomes and a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Dewey, 1938).

As noted by Joyce and Weil (2003), role-play allows students to explore human relation problems, enabling them to understand their own processes, feelings, and attitudes while reinforcing their willingness to learn. This strategy provides a gradual process of acclimating to oral activities, promoting critical thinking skills and creating a safe environment for students to develop their oral production skills.

Theoretical Framework

Looking to aim for appropriate conditions to reduce foreign language anxiety in oral production tasks through the use of role-play as a strategy in the classroom, some essential terms come to mind, among them, I identified: the use of role-play activities in the classroom, oral production and fear and anxiety about language speaking. For a better understanding of these topics, I will proceed to define the concepts.

Role-play

Role-play serves as a powerful tool within the classroom environment, fostering confidence and calmness among students. According to Ladousse (1987), the concept of "role" involves assuming either one's own persona or stepping into someone else's shoes within controlled and pre-planned situations. The element of "play" within role-play signifies a safe space that encourages creativity and joy during the learning process. By creating an atmosphere conducive to role-play, teachers can provide students with the opportunity to overcome fears, such as speaking out loud in a foreign language.

The main objectives of role-play encompass the development of creativity, spontaneity, and the enhancement of oral, cognitive, and social skills. As González (2020) suggests, it also aids in dispelling students' fear of making mistakes and immerses them in situations resembling real-life contexts, where they actively seek alternative solutions for problems. Additionally, role-play assists students in acquiring the correct use of language in

appropriate moments, as they constantly engage with authentic language usage rather than relying solely on textbook examples, which may not accurately reflect real-world scenarios.

As an extra, some authors expose that role-play has much to do with the foreign language process, according to its characteristics and possibilities, "role-play is one of the communicative techniques which develops fluency in language students, which promotes interaction in the classroom, and which increases motivation". (Sumpana, 2010, p.10). This method is presented by some authors as a natural solution for a foreign language class issue such as fear of oral production and the combining of many if not all skills in this process.

Role-play can also benefit students from getting immersed into real life situations and learning how to deal with them in a more improvised environment with the necessary tools regarding an FL course. According to Kaufman and Castellucci (1981), role-playing activities in the classroom can be based on either real-life situations or fictional examples that reflect real situations. These situations can arise from interpersonal issues within the classroom, external challenges faced by young individuals, or the need to present subject matter in a more impactful and dramatic manner. Regardless of the source, it is important for the problem situation to be specific and relatable to students, allowing them to grasp its relevance in their everyday lives. This way, highlighting to create a relevant aspect regarding the use of the everyday language in their personal contexts without forgetting the demands from the institutional requirements.

Strategies for Role Play in the L2 Classroom

In terms of role-play execution, various strategies have been proposed to ensure an effective and engaging classroom experience. Ladousse (1987) suggests incorporating everyday situations into role-play activities and provides a detailed framework for implementing these strategies. The framework includes determining difficulty level, setting activity duration, defining specific objectives and language focus, organizing groups,

preparing students with pre-class activities, initiating a warm-up to generate interest, following procedural steps, assigning follow-up tasks, addressing potential challenges through feedback, and exploring adaptations for different learner groups. These guidelines not only assist teachers in facilitating role-play activities but also serve as a valuable resource when integrating role-play in second language classrooms.

As a strategy it can be said that improvisation is one of the inherent strategies for role-play to apply in an EFL context regarding role-play's characteristics as well as producing and preparing performances. Bonwell & Eison, (1991) affirm that, role plays are usually short, spontaneous presentations, although they can be longer, more elaborate productions where participants have diligently researched their role's background before the presentation. (p. 47)

In the foreign language classroom, oral production should go beyond mechanical repetition and involve spontaneous reactions to real-life situations. Teaching students how to face and engage in authentic scenarios, such as scholarship interviews or vacation travel, can help alleviate fear and negative thoughts. While familiar activities have their place, it is important to provide a variety of immersive experiences for skill development, including oral production. Role-play serves as an effective method in language learning, allowing students to practice and apply their language skills while gaining confidence and overcoming challenges in a supportive classroom setting. By incorporating role-play, students can enhance their linguistic abilities in a meaningful and practical way.

Oral Production

As a compound of skills, the components of a language are individually a must in the process of foreign language learning. Oral production is considered one of the most important skills when learning a foreign language, according to Bygates (1991) as they also miss call "fluency" skill, the oral production is one of the fourth main skills in a language learning

process. Hence, oral production stands not only for communicating in educational environments but also on a daily life basis.

Speaking, as an integral component of oral production in second language acquisition, involves expressing ideas, opinions, and emotions through verbal communication. It plays a crucial role in informing, persuading, and entertaining others. According to Hotimah (2020), speaking is not only a skill to be developed in the L2 classroom but is also essential for effective language learning and overcoming students' fears in challenging situations. By honing their speaking abilities, students can experience positive improvements in various aspects of language acquisition.

Maintaining the relevance of oral tasks in the language learning process is crucial. As highlighted by McKay (2006, p. 204, cited in Szpotowicz, 2012), oral production tasks can range from simple question-and-answer tasks to oral interviews, dialogues, intro role-plays, and oral information gap tasks. One common characteristic of these activities, besides promoting oral production, is the potential for assessment during their execution. Whether these tasks are improvised or require preparation, they offer opportunities to integrate different language skills and competencies. It is important to acknowledge that while emphasizing oral production, we must not overlook the significance of other competencies such as reading and writing, which are essential in the context of this project.

Anxiety in foreign language learning

Anxiety is an emotion commonly perceived and conceived as one of the multiple ways to experience fear. This fear focuses on specific situations that can trigger insecurity or stress. As for this purpose, some authors add some definitions to this topic like

The term anxiety is most often used to describe an unpleasant emotional state or condition which is characterized by subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, and worry, and by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system. An anxiety state (A-State) is

evoked whenever a person perceives a particular stimulus or situation as potentially harmful, dangerous, or threatening to him. (Spielberg, 1972, p.482)

Foreign language anxiety (FLA), as a term coined by Horwitz and colleagues (1986), refers to a complex set of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that arise from the unique process of language learning in the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). This phenomenon is not uncommon in regular language classrooms, as various factors can contribute to students experiencing anxiety, ranging from negative language learning experiences to discomfort with their peers. To assess students' perceptions of FLA, a scale adapted from the original questionnaire proposed by Horwitz et als. (1985) was employed in the second survey mentioned earlier (see Appendix B). The survey questions were derived from Horwitz et al.'s (1986) scale, providing a direct reference for students experiencing symptoms of anxiety when learning a foreign language.

In the classroom, various aspects related to anxiety have been identified. These include students' fear of being compared to their apparently more proficient peers, perceiving mistakes as negative when asked to participate, and considering the English class itself as a stressful environment. Tello (2015) cites Bailey (1983) to emphasize the connection between anxiety and competitiveness among foreign language learners. In Tello's study, it is revealed that students who have a positive self-perception compared to their classmates experience reduced anxiety, while those who constantly compare themselves to others exhibit higher levels of anxiety. Given the tendency of teenagers to engage in comparisons and the institutional pressure to excel and compete, it is understandable that students feel the need to outperform their peers, leading to anxiety about making mistakes during participation and contributing to an insecure and competitive environment.

Anxiety emerges as a crucial factor to consider in the language classroom, significantly impacting students' interest in and avoidance of oral production activities.

Horwitz and Cope, as cited in Tsiplakides (2009), highlight three components in identifying foreign language anxiety: a) communication apprehension, b) fear of negative evaluation, and c) test anxiety. Tsiplakides (2009) further explains that students who experience communication apprehension feel uncomfortable communicating in the target language, while those with a fear of negative evaluation perceive mistakes as a personal threat and view evaluation as a problem rather than an opportunity for improvement. By understanding these factors, the reasons behind students' anxiety towards oral tasks can be identified, and I could relate these findings to the classrooms I observed.

Research Question

Upon careful analysis of the contextual factors and students' challenges regarding foreign language anxiety in oral production tasks, some questions emerged. Considering their specific context and the strategies proposed, the research question that arose was:

How can the use of role-plays contribute to the reduction of foreign language anxiety in oral production tasks in a group of tenth graders at the institution Centro Formativo de Antioquia (CEFA)?

Objectives

General objective

Describe the way role-plays contribute to reducing foreign language anxiety in oral production tasks among tenth graders at the institution Centro Formativo de Antioquia (CEFA).

Specific objectives

- To identify the role-play strategies that foster oral production in the L2 classroom.

- To define the classroom situations that triggered students' foreign language anxiety.

- To associate role-play activities with the reduction of foreign language anxiety in oral production tasks in the L2 class.

Action Plan

This action plan has been developed to address students' anxiety in language learning through role-plays focused on oral production activities. The plan consists of six classes designed to teach English in an alternative manner to the school's institutional methodology. The classes emphasize role-play activities, adapted from Gillian Ladousse's book, Role Play, which target all language skills and complement the existing curriculum with oral practice. The initial two classes, conducted on March 1st and 8th, aim to evaluate, and analyze students' oral production while fostering a comfortable and supportive environment. Activities such as "Do you like" and "Expressing Preferences" are introduced to engage students in speaking activities and utilize learned expressions. The subsequent classes, scheduled for March 15th and 22nd, focus on vocabulary expansion, using the "Art gallery" activity to describe characters and clothing. Dialogue writing based on the created characters follows, and students are encouraged to present their dialogues orally on the final day of the unit, April 20th. The action plan aims to create an enjoyable and secure setting for students to enhance their oral production skills.

Data Collection

To assess the impact of role-play strategies on students' language anxiety and oral production improvement, data was collected through surveys administered at the beginning and end of the action plan implementation, as well as individual interviews with three randomly selected students and the cooperating teacher. The journal entries served as additional evidence for data analysis and validation, following the triangulation method proposed by Altrichter et al. (2005). The results will be analyzed by the end of the research project, utilizing coding and categorization techniques to process the collected information.

Development of Actions

The implementation of role-play activities in the classroom aimed to address students' anxiety and fear of speaking English, with the goal of improving their oral production skills. In order to achieve this objective, various activities were conducted and modified based on student engagement and feedback.

In the first lesson on March 1st, a vocabulary practice activity called "Tingo Tango" was conducted, where students formed sentences related to hobbies and sports by passing a toy and answering questions structured as "Do you like + hobby/sport?" The game involved using "Tingo" while passing the toy and "Tango" to stop the passing, prompting the student holding the toy to answer the question. Time constraints allowed only the completion of the "Tingo Tango" activity. Challenges in oral production were observed, and students received feedback for improvement. They also added information about an invented character on a shared chart, following Ladousse (1987) "Character Identity Sheet." The chart included details like name, age, and special interests up to the "gender" feature.

Subsequent lessons on March 8th and 15th focused on teaching students how to express preferences to answer questions about preferences, using specific sentence structures previously introduced (e.g., "Expression + Verb + Hobby/Sport"). Some examples of the expressions are "I enjoy" and "I prefer." As well as phrases like "I would like to". After the explanation, a "Would you rather?" the game was introduced to reinforce sentence structures and encourage active participation. Question papers with "Would you rather?" prompts were provided, allowing students to write their responses before sharing them aloud. To address students' lack of interest, variations were introduced, including reintroducing the "Tingo Tango" activity as "Stop and Go" and proposing voluntary participation.

To accomplish the objective, the strategy proposed by Ladousse (1987) was implemented, which involved incorporating "Everyday Situations" to immerse students in

relevant contexts where they would encounter similar questions. This session then not only provided a wider vocabulary but also clarified previously taught language structures, enhancing their learning experience.

During the implementation of the activities, Ladousse's steps were followed. Activities matched student proficiency, had clear language focus, and concise planning. Warm-ups and institutional needs were considered.

On March 22nd, the "Art Gallery" activity was introduced and executed in the corridor of the classroom. The activity involved students passing in pairs to some stations to gather information about ten descriptions of some characters and ten pictures that could be related to likes and dislikes of those characters. They were needing to find the matching descriptions with the pictures and the intention was to encourage students to behave as if they were in an art gallery as proposed by Ladouse's (1987) pg. 126.

However, due to disruptions the activity was cut short. Student's fall into dispersion and lack of disposition to finish the activity, and only the exposure of the characters' features took place in an oral production setting. Nevertheless, it only took a couple of minutes as there were time constraints in the school.

On March 29th, students were allowed to utilize their cellphones where the document was sent to, in order to finish the "Art Gallery" activity and then proceed to individually create preferences for their characters. Three likes and three dislikes were added to the "interests" section of their character chart. While some students were focused and actively participated, others displayed disruptive behavior and lacked concentration. The teacher and I offered support and considered behavior and engagement when evaluating the activity, aiming to overcome challenges and foster a productive learning atmosphere.

The activities implemented during this phase aimed to prepare students for the subsequent sessions where they would start writing their own dialogues in pairs.

Improvisation as a strategy was initially considered but was avoided due to students' proficiency level. The activities were adjusted based on student engagement and feedback.

After the holy week break, the class scheduled for April 13th was rescheduled to April 10th by the school. However, this class faced several interruptions from the coordinator, resulting in a loss of approximately 25 minutes of instructional time. The students displayed a lack of interest, possibly due to it being the first class after the break. Throughout the session, there was significant noise and disorder, with many students unwilling to listen to instructions.

Despite these challenges, the activity planned for March 29th was carried out. However, it started with another "Plan de Mejoramiento" space in which students were asked to make a recovery test from previous activities some of them had lost with the cooperating teacher. Meanwhile, the couples that did not need to make the recovery activity were starting with the activity planned for the class, which involved students writing dialogues in pairs.

The dialogues created by the students were expected to feature the characters they had previously developed, incorporating essential details like age, gender, name, and their preferences for hobbies and sports. Additionally, the dialogues were required to include greetings, farewells, and basic conversational structures such as asking how someone is doing. To enhance their dialogues, students were encouraged to utilize the expressions learned from activities such as "Would you rather?", "Stop and Go," and the "Art Gallery."

During the activity, several students had to be reminded not to use their cellphones, despite the rule that had been established with the group. Unfortunately, the class was cut short to only forty minutes due to schedule changes and the recovery activity at the beginning of the class. As a result, the action plan of the study had to be extended by two more weeks in order to fully achieve the intended objective.

On April 17th, the first hour of class was dedicated to a school event called "Acto Cívico" celebrating "Water's Day" and emphasizing the importance of water. With limited time, only 50 minutes, the written dialogues were completed during this session. While some students managed to finish their dialogues, not all of them were able to do so. We provided students the option to work in the corridor or stay in the classroom, and dictionaries were allowed while cellphones were prohibited for this occasion. The rubric for the upcoming oral presentations was shared with the students in this class.

During the April 17th class, the first hour was dedicated to an institutional celebration called "Acto Cívico" focusing on the importance of water for "Water's Day." Despite having limited time, the students managed to complete their written dialogues during this session. While many students put in considerable effort, not everyone was able to finish their dialogue. To provide flexibility, students were given the option to work in the corridor or stay in the classroom, and they were encouraged to use dictionaries while cellphones were prohibited. The rubric for the upcoming oral presentations was also shared with the students during this class.

On April 24th, a Language Day celebration was initially planned for the first two hours of classes but was shortened to one hour and fifteen minutes. Despite the time constraints, efforts were made to complete the writing of the dialogues. However, during the revision of the written texts, it was discovered that some students were potentially engaged in cheating. As a result, it was decided to reschedule the presentation of the dialogues for Friday, April 28th, in an effort for having enough time to finish this study. The cooperating teacher joined the class later, and the remaining written dialogues were collected. During the oral production activity, four groups presented their dialogues, while three groups chose not to participate due to the cheating incident.

During the implementation phase a journal was maintained, documenting 12 observations from February 8th to May 8th, including class topics, purpose, agenda, resources used, and observations. Additionally, an initial survey about student's context was conducted (Appendix A). After that, another survey regarding FLA "Foreign Language Anxiety" was conducted on students at the beginning and the end of this study (see Appendix B). As mentioned earlier in this study, the FLA survey was adapted from the survey proposed by Horwitz et al. (1989). In this case, the survey was placed in a google forms document and shared with the students.

A focus group interview was conducted with four volunteer students to assess their achievements in oral production (see Appendix C). The interview followed a survey format with three sections. The first section included questions on vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation improvement, simple sentence construction, and speaking in class, especially for students who had never done so before. The second section focused on their learning experience, exploring their ability to express preferences, dislikes, and preparedness for the period exam. The final section consisted of an open-ended question, inviting students to share their personal conclusions about the class implementation and individual results. Additionally, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the cooperating teacher (CT) to gather their perception of students' oral production improvement resulting from the classroom activities. The interview included seven carefully prepared open-ended questions to gather comprehensive information (see Appendix D).

Before participating in the surveys and interviews, I orally informed the ethical considerations of the studies and received consent from every participant. I made sure that students were participating voluntarily and that each one was informed on how their information would be handled.

Data Analysis

For this project, action research was carried out, and this methodology was intended to have the teacher not only as an observant but as an active participant in the process of the research. According to Burns et al. (2005) in an academic context, the action research purpose is identifying problems that might be improved with a solution brought by the researcher. As an extra, regarding data collection, I codified the journals previously done through observation, the oral activities were conducted along the classes as well as the final presentation checking on the improvement of oral production on students, two interviews and three surveys, two initials, and a final one. After the gathering of data, I followed Creswell's (1999) principles through the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, then I made a categorization process with a data matrix analyzing the coding found earlier in the process. Finally, I proceed with a triangulation process intending to find patterns in the gathered data and having my findings corroborate.

Findings and Interpretations

The objective of this study is to describe the way role-play fosters the development of oral production in a group of tenth graders by reducing foreign language anxiety. After the analysis of the data collected, the findings and interpretations of two main categories were found, the categories are: Anxiety Triggers in Students and Role-Play Strategies.

Anxiety Triggers

The data analyzed showed that regarding the anxiety, some factors could be identified in the classroom regarding the anxiety and its triggers. During the analysis of data, some sub-categories arose. Those categories are evaluations and tests anxiety triggers, Preparation for Oral Presentations and the importance of Passing Grades over Knowledge. In this section, the previously mentioned categories will be discussed.

Test Anxiety

The finding of the research revealed that students exhibited negative attitudes towards the English class, including reluctance to participate in oral production activities and instances of cheating. These behaviors were influenced by the pressure to perform well academically. As documented in the journal entry dated April 17th, it was observed that a majority of students resorted to using apps or Google Translate instead of utilizing the provided dictionaries to complete their written dialogues. This indicates a lack of comfort with tests and a tendency to seek external assistance. The findings suggest that evaluations contribute significantly to students' anxiety levels.

What is more, during the student's interview, when asked about the evaluative processes in the institution, one student exposed not to be fond of exams because of the multiple factors that hinder her ability to perform the exam, generating nervousness and making things to be forget. (Student #2, Student's Interview). This anxiety stems from the school's emphasis on maintaining high standards and achieving good results in the ICFES test. According to Sarita (2015), educational anxiety, including academic anxiety, can arise due to pressure from parents and schools, which generate expectations for better results. These external factors contribute to increased stress levels among students.

Oral Presentations

Concerning the participation in oral tests, several students expressed feeling more comfortable not making any presentations in the class whenever they are asked to do so, moreover, if those activities are oral presentations with the purpose of getting a grade it can become a direct no-answer for performing these activities, as mentioned in my journal entry when students were confronted for cheating and asked to present their oral dialogues:

As documented in the journal entry dated April 28th, students who were confronted for cheating refused to present their oral dialogues, demonstrating their reluctance and anxiety towards oral tasks. Another journal entry from March 15th highlights students'

nervousness and restlessness during oral presentations, indicating their discomfort in such situations. Additionally, survey results show that a significant percentage of students consistently reported feeling panicked when asked to speak without preparation. Regarding the initial and the final results, it was noticeable that participants agree with the statement went from 78,3% (18/23 students) to 71,4% (10/14 students) not showing much improvement in their feelings towards feeling panicked when speaking affirming that the oral tasks in the class can provoke some anxious feeling on students. As for anxiety regarding oral tasks, Horwitz (1989) explains that testing situations might be the place where FLA takes place through presenting figures that might contain grammatical structures and explaining to the teacher that they had forgotten structures they might "know" when the oral tasks are taking place.

Passing Grades

Another factor that can be recognized from the data that was gathered during the research process is the importance of the grades for students over the knowledge they should be acquiring. As mentioned earlier, some students decided to use the Internet to approve one of the tasks expecting to obtain good grades and pass the course. As a matter of fact, during the activities performed during the implementation of this research, it was very common that students had concerns about the activities having a grade or not expecting to not be obligated to participate. As mentioned in my journal entry during the "art gallery" activity, several students approach me to ask if the activity will be giving them a positive grade, and once I let them know that the activity was not exactly graded, their attitude and behavior will change regarding their interest and contribution. After being given the information, students directly took a bad attitude during the rest of the activity, speaking loudly, using their cell phones, and even laying on the floor instead of participating in the activity. (Journal Entry, 22 March 2023). In this case, students were not interested in participating in the activities if they were

earning any positive grades in exchange. The importance of grades and their influence on student motivation aligns with the concept of extrinsic motivation proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985). According to their self-determination theory, external rewards, such as grades, can overshadow the intrinsic motivation to learn, resulting in reduced engagement and interest in activities.

Role-Play Strategies

The strategies employed in this study aimed to enhance oral production skills. The "Stop and Go" game, "Tingo Tango," and "Art Gallery" were introduced as preparatory activities. Subsequently, the final strategy, the "Dialogue" activity, was implemented. The findings indicated that these strategies positively influenced oral production. To provide a comprehensive overview, this section is divided into "Role-Play Strategies to Foster Oral Production" and "Side-Effects of the Role-Play Strategies facilitating the development of oral production skills with features such as the slow progression between not talking at all, and creating a slowly increased opportunity to speak in the classroom. Those features also include setting the path for students to feel more comfortable when asked about performing the same exercises worked previously, orally in front of the classroom.

Role-Play Strategies to Foster Oral Production

The findings indicate that the strategies and activities implemented in the English class, such as "Stop and Go," "Would you rather?" and "Art Gallery," were beneficial for students' oral production skills. This was supported by students' perceptions, as expressed in the Student's Interview. For instance, one student mentioned, "One steps out of their comfort zone, sometimes being able to express what you explained and so on." (Student #1, Student's Interview) Expressing that the strategies implemented were not only perceived as part of another class but were beneficial for the students to change the regular environment in which they are usually immersed.

According to the teacher's perspective, when asked about the strategies and their impact on the classroom dynamic, she stated, the "The dynamic was worth it. Implementing other strategies and different activities adds diversity to the classroom. Students have a variety of activities which eliminates the monotony of the regular class" (Teacher's Interview). These findings support the notion that using these strategies can be beneficial for students by encouraging them to step out of their comfort zones and creating a more dynamic learning environment while still maintaining focus on the curriculum. According to Sumpana (2010), role-play is a communicative technique that enhances language fluency, encourages classroom interaction, and boosts motivation (p. 10).

The final activities in the study consisted of a dialogue component aimed at developing both oral production skills and fulfilling the school's requirement for a written component. Some students showed interest in participating, while others felt uncomfortable or unprepared. However, when it came to the written dialogue activity, many students displayed a negative attitude by resorting to cheating. Journal entries from April 17th revealed that most students cheated by using apps or Google Translate instead of utilizing the provided dictionaries. The discrepancy between students' proficiency levels and the structures used in their dialogues was evident. Cheating in the classroom can be attributed to the pressure for good grades from parents and teachers, as well as poor time management. Diego (2017) supports the idea that external pressure and inadequate supervision contribute to cheating.

Side-Effects of the Role-Play Strategies

The findings of this research indicate that the role-play-based activities implemented in the classroom had certain side effects. During interviews conducted on May 16th, two students expressed their opinions about the activities. Student #2 expressed: "I did like it because it is a different way to learn, but it looks to me that it is very scattered, it is like many

students are left not understanding. While student #3 added that: "I liked the didactic way to learn, but I agree with "the two", that there were some students that were very scattered, and they were not attentive." (Students #2 and #3, Interview to Students, May 16, 2023). Furthermore, Journal entries from March 22nd and May 8th documented instances of students displaying a lack of interest and engaging in disruptive behaviors, such as using cell phones instead of participating in the activities.

Based on the gathered evidence, it can be interpreted that role-play activities may result in dispersion and lack of attention among students. The use of cell phones during activities poses a significant challenge to maintaining a focused and productive learning environment. Furthermore, the cooperating teacher also provided insights during an interview. The teacher's interview suggests that certain students, particularly those motivated solely by grades or accustomed to strategies not evaluating English performance, may not show significant improvement in oral production skills. Observations from the data collection sources used in this study suggest that role-play activities may not be suitable for larger groups due to misbehavior, lack of motivation, and engagement challenges.

Conclusions

Based on the research questions and objectives outlined in this paper, the integration of role-play strategies in the EFL classroom has been found to be effective in reducing foreign language anxiety in oral production tasks by the promotion of participation, engagement, and cooperation. The findings indicate that the strategies employed in this context successfully increased students' interest in English speaking and learning, while also bolstering their confidence during oral presentations. The study further revealed that integrating role-play strategies with a focus on addressing foreign language anxiety can help alleviate this feeling among students, thereby creating more opportunities for oral expression in the English classroom.

Specific strategies such as "Stop and Go" and "Would you Rather?" based on role-play proved particularly beneficial for both less participative students and highly engaged students, providing opportunities for oral production activities. Notably, even students who had previously been fewer active participants in class were able to become more involved and engaged through the role-play activities, regardless of their initial proficiency level. This demonstrated the transformative potential of the strategies in fostering genuine engagement and enhancing the learning experience.

In terms of anxiety in the classroom, the study concluded that the pressure to obtain good grades and the expectations of the school and parents can trigger increased anxiety when speaking in class. Social exposure during oral presentations also contributed to anxiety among students. However, the implemented role-play strategies were effective in reducing certain anxiety features in specific students. Additionally, it was observed that students often resorted to memorization as a coping mechanism in situations that triggered anxiety. The study suggests that creating a non-judgmental learning environment and providing feedback can help alleviate students' fear of speaking and foster a calm atmosphere.

The study acknowledges certain limitations within the research context. The progression of the class may be hindered by cultural celebrations and commemorations, as well as some students' general disposition towards their educational process. Implementing role-play strategies may be challenging if students are not receptive or if disruptions in the schedule disrupt the continuity of the activities.

In conclusion, based on the experiences and insights gained from this study, several recommendations for further research can be made. Role-play strategies are identified as effective confidence boosters and enhancers of oral production, making them a valuable approach to address foreign language anxiety. It is crucial to create a safe and supportive environment that encourages student participation, cooperation, and confidence in oral

production while avoiding judgment. These recommendations provide a starting point for future investigations in this field.

Reflections

Becoming a teacher is a complex process that goes beyond theoretical preparation. My own experience has taught me that true readiness can only be achieved through actual teaching. The intervention and study conducted at my alma mater, CEFA, have provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by teachers in their professional journey. This realization has shaped my perspective on teaching, fostering a deep commitment to continuous learning. Throughout this project, my belief in the transformative power of role-play has been a driving force, making the study an enriching and rewarding experience. I hope that both the students who participated and my cooperating teacher will also find it fulfilling. This journey has deepened my understanding of the importance of context and has empowered me to become a resourceful and effective educator.

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Appendix A

Survey for context

1. ¿Está usted de acuerdo en utilizar la información contenida en este cuestionario para propósitos investigativos?

2. ¿Cuál es tu nombre?

3. ¿Cuántos años tienes?

4. ¿Con quién vives?

5. ¿Tienes hermanos?

6. ¿De qué ciudad eres?

7. ¿Dónde vives?

8. ¿En qué barrio vives?

9. ¿Te gusta el inglés?, de 1 a 10 (1 siendo nada y 10 mucho, puntúa cuánto)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	1	3	2	2	1	4	3	2	1

10. ¿Disfrutas aprender el inglés?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
x	x	3	2	6	2	1	4	1	2

11. ¿Qué sientes con respecto al inglés? (Marca tantas opciones con las que te identifiques)

Curiosa	Atraída	Asustada	Preocupada	Tranquila
6	4	3	7	1

12. Si se te dificulta algo en la clase de inglés, ¿Qué se te dificulta más durante las clases?

Entender lo que dice	Hablar	Escribir	El vocabulario	No se me dificulta el inglés
8	3	6	3	1

13. ¿Te interesa aprender el inglés?

14. Si marcaste que sí, ¿para qué te interesa aprender el inglés?

15. ¿Practicas el inglés por fuera de las clases?, si la respuesta es sí, ¿Cómo lo haces? (15 respuestas)

Appendix B

Formulario sobre la ansiedad en el aprendizaje en el aula de clase de lenguas

Preguntas	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Ni deacuerdo ni en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo
1. Nunca me siento muy seguro de mí mismo cuando estoy hablando en mi clase de inglés.	12	4	7	x	x
2. No me preocupo de cometer errores en mi clase de inglés.	1	5	3	6	8
3. Tiemblo cuando sé que me van a llamar en clase de inglés.	7	7	7	2	x
4. Me asusta cuando no entiendo lo que la profe está diciendo en inglés.	9	7	6	1	x
5. No me molestaría en absoluto tomar más clases (extra) de inglés.	7	9	6	x	1
6. Durante la clase de inglés, me encuentro a mí mismo pensando en cosas que no tienen nada que ver con la clase.	3	5	7	6	2
7. Sigo pensando que otras estudiantes son mejores en inglés que yo.	15	4	3	1	x
8. Me da pánico cuando tengo que hablar sin preparación en las clases de "speaking".	14	4	4	1	x
9. Me preocupo por las consecuencias de fallar mi clase de speaking.	9	12	2	x	x
10. No entiendo por qué algunas personas se molestan tanto con las clases inglés.	4	4	12	2	x
11. En clase de inglés, me puedo poner tan nervioso que olvido las cosas que sé.	6	14	6	1	1
12. Me avergüenza ofrecerme voluntaria para responder en clase de inglés.	12	2	4	3	2
13. No me sentiría nervioso hablando inglés con un hablante nativo.	2	2	6	7	5
14. Me molesto cuando no entiendo lo que el profesor está corrigiendo.	3	6	8	4	1
15. Incluso si estoy bien preparado para la clase. Me siento ansioso al respecto.	10	8	4	1	x
16. A menudo no siento ganas de ir a clase de inglés.	2	9	8	3	1
17. Me siento confiado cuando hablo en clase de inglés.	2	x	9	5	7

Appendix C

Survey 10 C 03 - Oral Production Improvement

Este cuestionario fue diseñado para recolectar información sobre las actividades relacionadas durante el tiempo que la practicante trabajó como profesora del curso de inglés. Durante este periodo, se implementaron varias actividades y estrategias donde se trabajó la producción oral del inglés en la clase, corrigiendo errores de pronunciación y animando a las estudiantes a tener una mejor participación durante la clase. Este cuestionario no evaluará tus conocimientos ni tu proceso de aprendizaje, por lo que se les pide a las estudiantes sinceridad y honestidad en la resolución de este cuestionario. En una escala de 1 a 5 donde 1 es Muy en desacuerdo y 5 Muy de acuerdo, responde las siguientes preguntas:

Preguntas 1 a 3

Durante las primeras actividades desarrolladas en clase, entre ella el Tingo Tango con la actividad de "Do you like", la actividad de preferencias con el "Would you rather" y el diálogo final, la finalidad era promover y mejorar la pronunciación y producción oral de las estudiantes durante las clases. Teniendo en cuenta este contexto:

1) Logré hablar en clase a pesar de que nunca lo había hecho antes.
   a) Muy en desacuerdo
   b) En desacuerdo
   c) Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
   d) De acuerdo
   e) Muy de acuerdo
   f) NA /No aplica

2) Logré formar frases simples con la descripción de hobbies y actividades que hago en mi tiempo libre.
   a. Muy en desacuerdo
   b. En desacuerdo
   c. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
   d. De acuerdo
   e. Muy de acuerdo
   f. NA /No aplica

3) Obtuve vocabulario y mejor pronunciación en las actividades durante las socializaciones con la profesora. Pude usar este vocabulario para actividades futuras como el diálogo escrito y oral.
   a. Muy en desacuerdo
   b. En desacuerdo
   c. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
   d. De acuerdo
   e. Muy de acuerdo
   f. NA /No aplica

Preguntas 4 a 5

Las actividades como la "Art Gallery" o la escritura de los "Likes and Dislikes" de tu personaje fueron parte de la producción escrita, con el fin no solo de utilizar lo ya trabajado en clase, sino de mantener los objetivos de la institución en concordancia con la clase. De acuerdo con el contexto mencionado:

4) Considero que aprendí lo suficiente como para decir algunas frases de lo que me gusta y me disgusta con respecto a un hobby o a un deporte.
   a. Muy en desacuerdo
   b. En desacuerdo
   c. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
   d. De acuerdo
   e. Muy de acuerdo
   f. NA /No aplica

5) Pienso que aprendí lo suficiente para defenderme en el tema, podría desenvolverme con facilidad en la prueba de periodo si los temas trabajados con la practicante fueran presentados en dicho examen.
   a. Muy en desacuerdo
   b. En desacuerdo
   c. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
   d. De acuerdo
   e. Muy de acuerdo
   f. NA /No aplica

6) ¿Cuál es su conclusión sobre la implementación y sus resultados?

Appendix D

CT INTERVIEW

Objective: During the period I was working as the teacher of the group 10 Comercio 3, a research project was carried out, having some actions planned for the unit that was worked out during the period March the 1st and April the 28t|h. The objective of this interview is to gather information seeking to describe if the objective of research was accomplished regarding the way role-play fosters the development of oral production in tenth graders at the institution Centro Formativo de Antioquia (CEFA) in order to answer the research question proposed for this research project: "How can the implementation of role plays increase oral production in a group of tenth graders at the institution Centro Formativo de Antioquia (CEFA)?"

1. Taking into consideration the observations I made along the past two months and according to your interaction with the classroom:
    a. How would you describe the proficiency on the students in the group 10 Comercio 3 at the Institución Educativa Centro Formativo de Antioquia?
2. Taking into consideration the development of the unit created for the six planned lessons to implement with the group 10 Comercio 3, some role-play strategies such as the "Art Gallery" socialization activity, the dialogues and the creation of the characters were brought into the classroom. According to this context:
    a. Do you think students have increased their oral production skills over the implementation of those strategies in the classroom? Why?
3. The strategies implemented were mainly planned to keep the school curriculum on the road, most of the activities were brought to maintain students connected with their previous lessons. According to this statement:
    a. The activities proposed in the classroom along the unit accomplish the four skill criteria meaning writing, reading, speaking and listening?, Why?
4. The performance criteria mentioned on the English area school plan for the section planned in the unit was to present orally and in written their hobbies and their free time activities along with the comprehension of short texts identifying free time activities. Having the last statement into consideration:
    a. Do you consider that the performance criteria: " present orally and in written their hobbies and their free time activities" was successfully achieved with the group? Why?
    b. Do you consider that the Role-Play activities were appropriate to achieve the performance criteria objective: "the comprehension of short texts identifying free time activities." ?, Why
5. What is your point of view towards the implementation of this unit with its modifications into the classroom? Would it be something that was worth it or would you discard the activities and strategies that were brought and presented in the classroom since the didactics of languages teaching? Why?
6. Would you consider since your pedagogical studies, that the role plays proposed in the class along with the activities presented in the unit had increased oral production on the 10 Comercio 03 group of students?
7. As the final activity implemented on the unit, the oral dialogue was brought after the creation of a character that might have been interesting for students to represent, this activity was intended to be the final oral production of students about the unit. According with the information mentioned previously:
    a. Do you consider that the activities planned before the presentation were enough support for the final presentation?, Why?