DRAMA TECHNIQUES AS CONTRIBUTORS TO THIRD GRADERS' ENGLISH ORAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

TÉCNICAS DE DRAMA COMO CONTRIBUIDORAS PARA EL DESARROLLO DE LAS HABILIDADES ORALES DEL INGLÉS EN ESTUDIANTES DE TERCERO DE PRIMARIA

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Drama Techniques as Contributors to Third graders' English Oral Skills Development

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this action research study was to observe the impact of third grader's English as Foreign Language (EFL) oral skills through drama techniques to reinforce their fluency, motivation, confidence and pronunciation with audiovisual materials that integrate current cartoon series. To carry out this study, field notes and interviews were implemented to gather data and determine how drama techniques such as dialogue and improvisation with simulation and thought tracking contributed to the understanding and the improvement of third graders' EFL oral skills. During the study, it was observed that learners could understand the foreign language through the gradual analysis of expressions and vocabulary meanings by connecting these concepts to their real backgrounds and topics of interest. Moreover, collaborative listening and repeating exercises, along with the kinesthetic activities helped learners to be closer to EFL meanings, achieve better pronunciation, fluency and motivation. The conclusions of the study include the fact that learners gained more participation through collective construction knowledge work related to their real contexts. Thus, we made some recommendations to encourage the educational community to apply the techniques mentioned in this study as a new ELT method and to integrate them within their curriculum to help learners to obtain better English oral skills results.

Keywords: drama techniques, english as a foreign language (EFL), english language teaching *(ELT),* oral skills, audiovisual materials

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Técnicas de Drama como Contribuidoras para el Desarrollo de las Habilidades Orales del Inglés en Estudiantes de Tercero de Primaria

RESUMEN

El propósito de esta investigación-acción fue observar el impacto en las habilidades orales del inglés de los niños de grado tercero de primaria por medio de diversas técnicas de drama para reforzar su fluidez, motivación, confianza y pronunciación con materiales audiovisuales que integra series animadas conocidas en la actualidad. Para llevar a cabo este estudio, se implementaron diarios de campo y entrevistas para recolectar los datos y determinar cómo las técnicas de drama, tanto diálogo e improvisación con simulación y *thought tracking,* contribuyeron al entendimiento y mejoramiento de las habilidades orales de inglés de los niños de tercero de primaria. Durante este estudio se observó que los estudiantes pudieron comprender la lengua extranjera a través de análisis gradual de significados de expresiones y vocabulario de la lengua extranjera conectando los conceptos de sus entornos reales y temas de interés. Además, ejercicios colaborativos de escucha y repetición junto con la cinestesia ayudó a los aprendices a estar más cerca de esos significados del inglés, lograr una mejor pronunciación, fluidez y motivación. En este sentido, se concluyó que los aprendices ganaron más participación por medio del trabajo colaborativo de la construcción del conocimiento relacionado a sus contextos en la vida real. De este modo, se recomienda animar a la comunidad educativa a aplicar las técnicas mencionadas en este estudio como otro método de enseñanza del inglés e integrarlas dentro del currículo para ayudar a los aprendices a obtener mejores resultados en las habilidades orales del inglés como lengua extranjera.

Palabras claves: técnicas del drama, inglés como lengua extranjera, la enseñanza del lenguaje del inglés, habilidades orales, materiales audiovisuales

INTRODUCTION

In the last few years, a diverse number of schools in Colombia have started to promote intensive English as a foreign language (EFL) lessons, with the purpose of encouraging students to become fluent English speakers. Thus, from the first day of school, students are more exposed to the Foreign Language (FL) to graduate high school with an intermediate (B1) level in their English skills (Speaking, reading, writing, listening). In fact, one of the main requirements in diverse educational institutions is to obtain better results in the four EFL skills, since this can increase people's opportunities to obtain diverse jobs in international companies where English is required, or to obtain scholarships in universities abroad. As the Council of Europe (2001) stated, language is the way to overcome social, educational and line of work success and opportunity. Although the fur skills are necessary to achieve a high level of proficiency in the FL, most English students are concerned about raising their oral skills as they consider it the main skill for accomplishing proper communication and interaction. In addition, FL oral skills give learners the advantage to comprehend messages, points of view, beliefs, and feelings that other English speakers are sharing in their speech production. The Council of Europe. (2001) stated the following about the oral skills:

> The expression "oral comprehension" covers comprehension in live, face-to-face communication and its remote and/ or recorded equivalent. It thus includes visuo-gestural and audio-vocal modalities. The aspects of oral comprehension included here under reception are different kinds of one-way comprehension, excluding "Understanding an interlocutor" (as a participant in interaction), which is included under interaction. (p. 48)

Consequently, most of the students focus on improving their oral skills to acquire the foreign language. To support learners to accomplish their English oral skills efficiently, it is suggested the implementation of new English language teaching (ELT) methods centered on collaborative work, which can include simulated real scenarios and vocabulary. According to Díaz Ballen et al. (2023) the role of the new vocabulary teaching is to help learners to understand English when they do not have enough knowledge; otherwise, they will not comprehend themselves or what others are saying. In the same light, Díaz Ballen et al. (2023) argued that English teachers tend to focus on the grammar forms, but not on the vocabulary, causing learners to learn the structures by heart, and consequently feeling incapable of

being engaged in a conversation because of their vocabulary deficiency.

In order to address the issues presented above, the present research process took place in a rural school located in La Calera, where the ELT is being implemented intensively from preschool to secondary with 8 hours a week through *Teaching for understanding model* (EPC in Spanish). This method is being applied in all the subjects including English, to make the content closer to the students' realities. Thus, the comprehension of the topics is remarkable and meaningful (Costamagna & Manuale, 2005). However, FL students' oral skills are being affected because they do not understand what their teachers say when explaining the content and the instructions of the tasks. Hence, learners use their mother tongue to clarify the doubts. Consequently, students require more dynamic activities to feel closer to their real surrounding contexts.

Statement of the problem

To get to the research problem, we administered questionnaires and interviews for students and teachers. We also observed the lessons by carrying out field notes. Afterwards, we discussed the results obtained and determined that students had a deficiency in their English oral skills. They were not able to express their ideas due to lack of vocabulary, confidence and knowledge of some basic expressions of their daily lives. Hence, they have had issues to overcome the pronunciation and fluency to speak in English, and moreover, most of them considered that learning foreign language was unnecessary in their lives.

Research Question

▪ How do drama techniques contribute to the development of third graders' English oral skills?

▪ Main Objective

▪ To identify the impact of drama techniques in third graders' English oral skills.

Specific Objectives

▪ To describe the role of drama techniques in supporting the third graders' English oral skills.

▪ To determine whether or not cartoons as audiovisual materials are helpful for English learners to gain confidence, fluency and motivation in their oral skills.

Rationale

The purpose of our action research project was to help learners of third grade to gain the oral skills in the foreign language through drama techniques as a manner to comprehend and acquire the common

expressions and recall the vocabulary according to their real contexts. As Diaz Ballen et al. (2023) said, the involvement of nonverbal skills like self-confidence, cultural understanding, group work ability, and verbal skills such as fluency, pronunciation, listening, grammar and vocabulary within theater make the foreign language learning meaningful. Seeing that, we looked to compensate for the distrust, demotivation and miss pronunciation because of the lack of vocabulary and daily expressions knowledge. In fact, to implement drama techniques, we used current cartoon series with the purpose of enhancing students' EFL learning context. Accordingly, the integration of the cartoons in the classrooms allows learners in their learning to gain understanding, attitude, productivity, creativity and motivation (Bahrani & Soltari, 2011, as cited in Gamage, 2019). Indeed, this study highlights common challenges in ELT education, such as vocabulary gaps, mispronunciation, and low confidence, and emphasizes the need to develop oral proficiency through drama techniques, encouraging future research to explore their broader impact on other language skills (writing and reading) across diverse contexts.

Theoretical Framework

Oral skills

English learners' oral skills (speaking) ensure an effective communication to transmit messages, information, express feelings, get interactions with others and understand their surrounding world. As Uñate and Vega (2021) asserted, humans' communicative capacity allows us to exchange information and meanings with others. For that reason, oral skills are the vehicle to achieve the target FL through Micro and Macro skills. In the first instance, Micro skills pay attention to the small parts of the language such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocations and phrasal units' production (Brown & Lee, 2015, as cited in Krisdiana, 2021). In fact, Brown (2004, as cited in Yahya, 2019) affirms that learners require some small features in their basic English speaking that are the following: 1.make distinction of the phonemic and allophonic variants between English words; 2. produce the stress and unstress words by including the rhythm and intonation; 3. produce some straightforward words and phrases; 4. monitoring the oral production by making pauses among sentences, moderating the volume, and making self-corrections. In this way, the transmitted message is more understandable; 5. produce the constituent natural speech by creating a couple phrases, groups of pauses and breaths, and sentences; 6. using the basic vocabulary for pragmatic purposes; 7.use grammatical forms which integrate articles, nouns, and

verb tenses with the correct order; 8. and finally, the spoken discourse devised has to be cohesive. On the other hand, Macro skills center on the biggest parts of the language like fluency, discourse, communicative function, cohesion, nonverbal communication and strategic choices (Brown & Lee, 2015, as cited in Krisdiana, 2021). According to Brown (2004 As cited in Yahya, 2019), students must achieve characteristics such as: 1. convince the listeners by connecting events with ideas, feelings and information; 2. include discursive skills, styles, redundancies, sociolinguistic features and pragmatic conventions within conversations to convince the auditors; 3. they additionally, can use facial gestures, nonverbal cues with verbal languages, the kinesthetic and the body language are another form to convince auditors; 4. use speaking strategies which integrate keywords, rephrasing, and providing the context to interpret the words' meanings. Hence, the receptor makes it clearer in his transmitted message; 5. and at least, be focused on the specific participants, situations and goals. As a result, these skills should be integrated into one another instead of being separated (Yahya, 2019).

Drama Techniques

Drama techniques are a pedagogical tool within educational settings that permit educators to innovate in their ELT strategies and promote children's EFL oral skills development. Therefore, drama techniques permit FL learners to play through the scene as a form to comprehend the content taught in a subject like English without memorizing rules and words. Moreover, drama techniques in the educational context are fundamental to surpass the traditional method where the students' worlds are considered in the aspects of the make-believe and the creativity (Bailin, 2011; Hulse & Owens, 2017, as cited in Basaran, 2024). In fact, García Trujillo (2019) illustrated the creation of the scene, the alive art of theater, and the emotional or physical tasks within theater training are being lost because of the norms and formulas imposed in the academic environment. Alternatively, drama techniques allow students to play with different roles of characters, perspectives, see the world surrounding them in diverse angles and beliefs through role-plays and improvisation (Nilson, 2021, as cited in Basaran, 2024). Additionally, Korta (2022) said that drama techniques and improvisational games are helpful for English learners because they support them to develop multiliteracies in their pedagogical framework in a holistic way. In this way, drama techniques support the development of communicative skills through didactic activities such as mimicking, improvising, relaxing and observing while they make the

usage of their bodies, including simulating fictional scenarios (Uñate & Vega, 2021). As a result, the classroom environment becomes an enjoyable place for pupils to be prepared for their real lives with simulated scenarios that allow them to increase their imagination, teamwork, self-awareness, self-esteem, and interactions among them.

Audiovisual tools as materials

According to Cabrero (1999), audiovisual media is the complement of conventional media and other resources, which as a technological instrument helps to represent the information over sounds, images or mixing both (As cited in Ruiz Calderón, 2021). In fact, audiovisual materials or media help to make the learning process more effective and quite easy to understand the concepts taught within the subject. Hence, according to Cummin (2001), the inclusion of audiovisual materials permits pupils to find out ways to solve the problems by seeing them visually (As cited in Kwegyiriba et al., 2022). Moreover, audiovisual materials make the teaching interesting for teachers and students because they help to improve their relationships and increases communication. Additionally, these materials help learners to recall and retain what they have learned. As a result, they can understand what has been previously explained in the classroom (Dike, 1993; Natoli, 2011, as cited in Kwegyiriba et al., 2022). Taking this into consideration, the inclusion of cartoons as part of audiovisual materials enables the learners to comprehend their EFL environment, and also encourages them to use their oral skills through drama techniques. As Ruiz Calderón (2021) affirmed, audiovisual media as didactic resources recreate the real learning context by including authentic materials from English speaking countries. As a matter of fact, cartoons' humor element promises unforgettable learning experiences for learners, which in turn make their own interpretations by using their imaginative skills through visual resources like textual information, dialogue, gestures and animations (Kaur, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The present study poses a qualitative action research focused on fostering third graders' English oral skills development and thereafter proposing new ELT strategies for teachers. Action research has two constructs: action and research, which cannot be separated because they are unique and distinct to other conventional research forms (Hall & Keynes, 2005, as cited in Dharma Raja & Sasikala, 2020), since it incorporates the breach of theory and practice to solve day-to-day problems (Dharma Raja & Sasikala,

2020). In order to answer the research question and achieve the research objectives, we followed a cyclical process by following the next steps:1.Plan, was based on reflecting about the ELT problems found and proposing drama techniques as a solution for oral skills in English; 2. Action, was the application of 5 drama techniques sessions and collection of data; 3.Observe, was centered on discussing the information and explaining the categories obtained; and 4.Reflection, was focused on making our conclusions, recommendations, and limitations of this study. See figure 1

Figure 1 Action Research cycle.
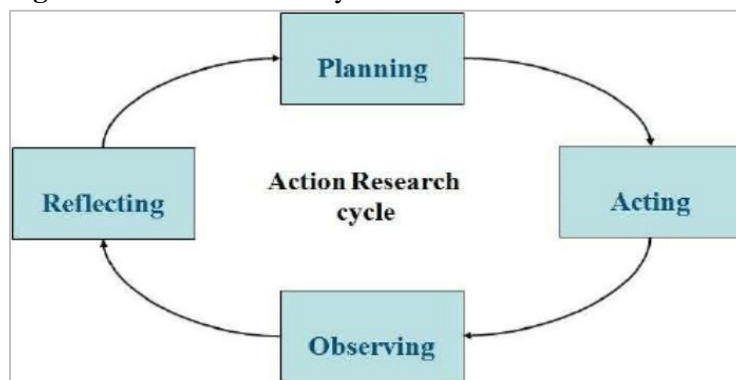
Da Silva et al., (2010), The four main phases of the Action Research cycle.

Context and participants

We selected a rural school located in La Calera, Colombia. Some students from this institution live near there, whereas others live in other towns or in Bogotá. Most parents live in rural regions. The school is not bilingual, although EFL is taught 8 hours a week to ensure the students' foreign language proficiency. Furthermore, this school applies EPC, that is a teaching method concerned with the students' content comprehension taught through didactic strategies that guarantees a better understanding of the world (Costamagna & Manuale, 2005). Therefore, the learner's process is useful to becoming a person who can contribute to their current society (Costamagna & Manuale, 2005). Because of the above, we used the EPC within drama techniques sessions to help to develop the students' English oral skills. As a matter of fact, we decided to carry out the implementation with a group of 19 third graders, whose ages range between 8 and 9 years old. However, we only selected 12 students who obtained their parents' consent to our data collection.

Ethical Considerations

In pursuit of an ethical research process, consent forms were sent to the school in order to inform the

community, the participants and their parents about the study and its corresponding procedures. The form was provided to the institutional community, explaining the pedagogical intervention process, including the number of sessions, and the proposed activities. This letter sought permission in accordance with the institution's ethical principles and norms, ensuring the anonymity of the institution and the privacy of the participants. For the parents of the third-graders, the consent form included a detailed explanation of the intervention process, its duration, objectives, and limitations. The consent guaranteed the anonymity and confidentiality of all data, the well-being and rights of the participants, and the privacy of the collected information. Transparency was ensured regarding students' names, which will not be revealed at any point during or after the research.

Data Collection

We used the field notes and interviews as instruments for our study. According to Corbetta (2003, as cited in Shin & Miller, 2022) researchers use their field notes to describe their observations and interpretations of a physical place, the formal or informal behaviors and relationships, the participants, events, roles, feelings and reactions. This instrument included brief descriptions of the classes, some observations, pictures and video recordings. In the last session, we implemented the final interview. The interviews included respondents to say their visions based on their own viewpoints and interpretations about a specific situation (Monday, 2020). The interview was semi structured and it involved 11 questions about how drama techniques contributed learners to improve in their English oral skills. Furthermore, we transcribed the answers to the interviews and the video recordings of the sessions in order to have a more systematic, thorough analysis of the data.

Pedagogical Intervention

We carried out the pedagogical intervention from March 5th to April 29th, 2024, each session had a duration between 30-60 minutes approximately. The first session was a diagnosis to determine the learners' needs, wants and lacks of their English oral skills. (see the syllabus in the APPENDIX A).

We implemented drama activities by including the following techniques:

Dialogue technique

During session 1, 2, and 4, we used dialogues taken from different episodes of the series "We Bare Bears", and we started analyzing the FL sentences and word meanings with learners. Afterwards, we

continued using the Dialogue technique by teaching them how to read their lines fluently, with the correct pronunciation and intonation through the listening and repeat exercise. Finally, we rehearsed the scenes together through step-by-step directions which included some action demonstrations that the characters did during these scenes.

Improvisation Technique

In session 3, we organized students in teams and asked them to plan and act spontaneously their school life situations assigned. For their scenes, they had to express their ideas and interact among them by applying the basic expressions, words and vocabulary explained in the presentation stage. At the same time, in session 5, we showed learners other expressions and vocabulary to help them to make their individual or collective introductions about the characters they created, while wearing costumes, accessories, and make-up.

Simulation Technique

In session 3, we asked learners in their teams to find a solution about the school life situations (cases or scenes) assigned from the presentation stage. Hence, they had to plan their scenes as a way to encourage them to make the correct decisions and prepare them to deal with the different real daily situations. In this way, they performed their simulation scenes in front of the class as if they were living these circumstances assigned by using their own resources.

Thought Tracking Technique

In session 5, learners had to walk, use a different tone of voice, create gestures and use different types of body movement. After that, we asked them to STOP and make their characters statues with a singular pose. The person we touched had to introduce themselves spontaneously, while the others stayed still until the person had finished their introduction.

Finally, we interviewed the participants and asked them about their impressions, likes, dislikes, achievements and challenges in their oral skills over drama techniques. Thus, we reflected upon the positive and negative aspects of third graders' FL oral skills.

Data Analysis

To determine the findings of our study we applied the grounded theory process to codify with colors the data gathered through field notes and the interview. As Bryman (2012) explained, coding is the most

important part of the grounded theory process. Moreover, Bryman (2012) asserts that this procedure is based on checking the field notes and transcriptions to give them labels (names) and break them into parts to be relevant for the theories that emerged, or sometimes are salient from social groups studied. In that way, we explained the main themes and sub-themes in terms of how drama techniques contributed third graders to improve their English oral skills over dialogue and improvisation activities by using audiovisual materials about topics related to their interests and backgrounds. Hence, two categories emerged:

How do drama techniques contribute to the development of third graders' English oral skills?

Table 1

Purposeful activities	- Increase of motivation - Collective work and understanding of structures - Relevance of cartoons in students' contexts.
Reinforcing English speech relevant aspects	- Collective and collaborative repetition - Fluency and pronunciation improvements - Kinesthetic learning

Purposeful activities

Drama techniques are pedagogical sources which give students great experiences in a classroom. According to Castellanos Monroy (2024), to get meaningful learning, it is necessary to change the methodology to be closer to the learners' experiences and interests. Accordingly, Gortaire et al. (2023) suggest that students require encouragement to put into practice their linguistic skills in their real contexts to use them outside of the classroom. Hence, we evidenced that by implementing these techniques students could better understand the topics and express the FL structures and vocabulary with more security. For that reason, learners felt encouraged to apply these expressions and words through simulated real-life scenarios that prepared them to face diverse contexts such as family, school, friends, among others.

Increase of motivation

We identified that integration of dialogues and improvisation techniques raised English students' motivation and participation, which enabled them to develop their creativity, imagination and wear

accessories, costumes, and make-up. As Gortaire et al. (2023) illustrated in their study, the integration of different language tasks and activities within the classroom promote their motivation, confidence and linguistic development. Taking this into consideration, we could notice that they reduced their anxiety, fear, nervousness and embarrassment to make mistakes in the EFL process. Also, they did not feel constantly evaluated because these activities were out of the academic rules.

Collective work and understanding of structures

During the sessions, our analysis of sentences, new vocabulary and actions were given collectively. Therefore, our given step-by-step directions were student-centered to collaborate with them on their construction of these structures' meanings and knowledge. According to Chavarría Mendoza et al. 's study (2024), communicative direction requires the analysis of the formal language elements to secure an effective learning process. In this manner, we highlighted in our study that supporting third graders to make associations of these structures' meanings helped them to connect their previous knowledge with the new ones. And, also, to understand their FL concepts in their L1 meaningfully.

Relevance of cartoons in students' contexts

We included digital videos like cartoon series and some visual slides that helped learners to get a better understanding of the target language and the topics taught to connect with their real lives contexts and interests in an enjoyable way. In this regard, Bsharat and Barahmed (2020) commented in their work that the video as presentation mode is one alternative to help learners to comprehend what they are learning at the moment. Likewise, Chavarría Mendoza et al. (2024) suggested the English activities focused on communication allow interchange information for a specific context and use the appropriate communicative functions for diverse scenarios. As a result, the study highlights that the usage of cartoon elements closer to the FL students' interests encouraged them to continue applying their oral skills as in their classrooms as their real backgrounds.

Reinforcing English speech relevant aspects

To reinforce fluency and pronunciation, we implemented collective repetition, which helped most of them to correct their own pronunciation, and also, to feel more confident in their FL speaking. According to Fatmawati et al. (2020), reading aloud when speaking English is the first way to gain self-confidence. Thus, the collective repetition over the script not only allowed students to practice

independently, but also fostered a sense of agency where we noticed great advancements in their fluency and pronunciation. In fact, learners tend to acquire agency when they take feelings of appropriation and control in their process of learning. Also, they start to be confident, engaged and functional when they believe that their learning is marking the difference (Larsen-Freeman et al., 2021). In the case of our students, they repeatedly engaged in reading aloud, and could immediately correct their mistakes and become more familiar with English pronunciation patterns. Consequently, this practice boosted their confidence in speaking English.

Collective and collaborative repetition

Collective repetition during the sessions allowed students to review materials and practice altogether their oral skills by asking to repeat what we have said in the script lines. Therefore, these activities took place in different ways, where they shared their thoughts over the gradual revision of sentences and word meanings within the script. Even collective learning benefited third graders from each other's insights, which consequently built a stronger sense of classroom community. In fact, Handelsman 's study (2022), suggested that the repetition or practice constructs the skills. Additionally, Handelsman (2022) expressed that reading repetition tasks are helpful for students to learn the theories and information given with more details. In this manner, group repetition activities, such as think-pair-share, not only improved retention of the information but also helped students feel more connected and engaged with their cartoon characters' situations.

Fluency and pronunciation improvements

We noticed that the effective method for developing third graders' self-confidence in speaking English is through reading aloud, which helped them to improve pronunciation and fluency significantly. According to Fatmawati et al. 's study (2020), this practice enables students to identify and correct mispronunciations immediately, leading to greater familiarity with English sounds. Additionally, Akwaree and Kulsirisawad's study (2018) illustrated that English students' usage of verbal and non-verbal communication while they are speaking increases their interactions with their partners, happiness and fluency. In this way, learners felt engaged in the dialogue activity being more accustomed to pronunciation, which boosted their confidence in their English oral skills. Our observations showed that they exhibited notable improvements in pronouncing challenging words, highlighting that regular

practice out loud aided in overcoming difficulties with specific pronunciations and accomplish a proper fluency. Both findings emphasize that reading aloud and pronunciation practice are key to enhancing both pronunciation skills and overall confidence in FL communication.

Kinesthetic learning

We encouraged our participants to read collectively a script which contained a story about cartoon characters causing them more enthusiasm and interest. Hence, they showed curiosity about what characters were going to interpret and what the activity was going to teach them. Afterwards, we asked students some unknown words meanings and made some gestures that allowed them to get a better comprehension of the FL. Also, we said the words out loud in order to ask them to repeat and pronounce them accurately. Thus, English students could recall better the vocabulary learned by doing movements related to the semantic aspects of the words during the improvisation activities. In fact, Muñoz Arboleda's study (2019) shows that a great number of students during the sessions improve in their speaking skills when they make use of kinesthetic activities like role plays, dramatizations, poems, body movement and so on. As a result, reading the dialogue and doing gestures that represent the meaning of a word, allowed students to pronounce and remember a word and its meaning, although some learners tended to forget them. However, they felt comfortable with themselves and their own process without any pressure to participate.

Excerpts

Excerpt 1. (Purposeful activities)

> **Student 1:** Yes, because what I felt was more confidence, that they taught me to trust myself to be able to speak when I travel to the United States. (Transcription of the interview. Date: 29/04/24)

Excerpt 1 illustrates that purposeful activities as a new ELT method enhance learners to prepare them to continue practicing their FL oral skills in other scenarios or environments with more confidence level.

Excerpt 2. (Increase of Motivation)

> "Students brought great ideas by making the usage of their objects (Markers, pen, papers, and others) surrounded, actions invented, and more, to carry out the scenes properly. Also, it was evident that they had fun presenting their scenes in public by speaking in FL." (observation found within the field notes. Date: 08/04/24)

Excerpt 2 illustrates that by integrating the simulation technique within the improvisation activity, third graders' enjoyment increased while developing their English oral skills, even though there was complexity to express something without requiring the script. However, their motivation grew up remarkably in their FL process taking into account that they used their classroom objects in an imaginative way to complement their scenes.

Excerpt 3. (collective work and understandings structures)

"Researchers analyzed the cases shown on the digital slides with the students in terms of meanings in a dynamic way, where they asked them what that sentence or word means gradually, and students responded according to their previous knowledge". (observation found within field notes. Date: 08/04/24)

The excerpt number 3 highlighted FL analysis of school life cases (proposed for the acting activity), which supported learners to understand the structure of sentences in terms of meanings to use during simulated and spontaneous improvisations with their teams.

Excerpt 4. (Relevance of cartoons in students' contexts)

At the beginning of the session, the researchers illustrate the examples of how to make the introduction with cartoon characters like "Sailor Moon" and "Joy" in order to explain to the learners what the activity is going to consist of. To illustrate those samples, the researchers and learners were analyzing the meanings of the sentences, words, and main expressions within the characters' introduction. After that, the researchers showed them the key expressions, verbs and vocabulary to help them to make their spontaneous introduction of their characters in FL during the activity. **(observation given within the field notes. Date: 23/04/24)**

Image 1

Excerpt 4 illustrates that explaining the FL basic expressions to introduce yourself by using cartoon characters helped learners to understand better before applying tracking activities. In that way, they could practice what they have learned in an enjoyable form. And also, focus their characters' creations based on their interests.

Excerpt 5. (Reinforce English speech relevant aspects)

Researcher: Did you feel more motivation at the moment to speak in English?

Student 6: Yes, because it helped me to be more confident to speak English more fluently and trust myself and it also made me less embarrassed. (transcription found within the Interview. Date: 29/03/24)

Excerpt 5 demonstrated that reinforcement of English oral skills through drama techniques helped pupils to feel motivated and gain confidence in themselves no matter the mistakes during their speaking practice.

Excerpt 6. (Collective and collaborative repetition)

Researcher: Which activities helped you to improve your oral skills?

Student 2: Repeating in group.

Student 3: Reading helped me to speak because I knew what to say.

Student 1: reading, because I forget, and reading helps me not to forget.

(Transcription of the interview. Date: 29/04/24)

Excerpt 6 highlighted that students improved their English oral skills when they read their lines together as a manner to recall words, structures and the language overall. In fact, the collective repetition allowed students to say their lines correctly.

Excerpt 7. (Fluency and Pronunciation)

Student 2: "I felt more secure when I was speaking and I felt that I pronounced better in English."

Researcher: "That means that your pronunciation improved."

Student 2:" Yes." (transcription of the interview. Date: 29/04/24)

Excerpt 7 illustrates that implementing dialogue within drama techniques contributed learners to improve pronunciation of their oral skills in FL because they gained more security and self-esteem to say each word correctly.

Excerpt 8. (Kinesthetic learning)

Researcher: "Baby Grizz says: Ice cream? that is not what I ordered! …

Teacher: What will that mean? (while making an ice cream gesture)

Most of the students: Ice cream, that's not what I ordered."

Teacher: Ice cream, that's not what I ordered." Very well. (transcription of the observation given

within the field notes. Date: 20/03/24)

Image 2

Excerpt 8 highlighted that the implementation of students' physical body and gestures were helpful to understand the sentences and new vocabulary through the script of "We Bare Bears".

Findings

To answer our research question, drama techniques contributed to third graders' English oral skills by integrating innovative and dynamic activities which made the classroom environment more friendly, affordable and secure for them. Therefore, learners increased their motivation to participate in their oral skills activities. In fact, we noticed a remarkable reduction of their shyness, fear, anxiety and embarrassment, although some of them tended to feel nervous or insecure to perform in public on occasions. Additionally, our directions step-by-step made the language structures and meanings clearer. Moreover, we took into consideration the students' knowledge. To help construct their knowledge, we made the usage of audiovisual materials to raise their interests and usefulness to acquire the FL. In fact, the cartoons were resourceful to connect to topics with pupils' experiences, since they were according to their interests. In this manner, they gained more comprehension of the FL because they felt identified

with the topics. On the other hand, their oral skills improved a lot over the listen and repeat exercise where we taught them how to say their lines fluently, how to pronounce properly while taking into account every single word stress and their syllables. Also, the use of the kinesthetic activities contributed to making the grammar forms and vocabulary meanings more comprehensible. Therefore, learners gained more agency and responsibility for their process where their fluency and pronunciation grew up remarkably. However, the involvement of improvisation activities with simulation and thought tracking were challenging for third graders to produce the FL speech because of the lack of the script where the only support was the screen to check the expressions, vocabulary and actions. As a result, they were unable to remember the expressions and new words at all. Moreover, some of them doubted how to express their ideas. Likewise, we highlighted how improvisation helped them to gain more comprehension of the target language through the presentation of the class topics, the situations and characters introductions because they connected to their surrounding backgrounds.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the use of drama techniques as pedagogical tools has proven effective in advancing students' proficiency in FL oral skills from the outset. These techniques fostered motivation, confidence, and a sense of security, which encouraged active participation and enhanced comprehension through collective knowledge construction. By aligning the learning experience with students' real contexts and interests, drama techniques facilitated notable improvements in pronunciation, fluency, and the reduction of fear and embarrassment.

Despite these achievements, some limitations were observed, particularly in students' vocabulary acquisition and tone of voice management. Additionally, the time proposed to carry out some acting activities was restricted because of unexpected institutional events where on occasions did not allow development of them with the duration expected. As a result, we had to make some unforeseen adjustments. Addressing these weaknesses will be essential for further optimizing the impact of drama techniques on developing comprehensive oral language skills.

Seeing that, we recommended some aspects to carry out drama techniques within the EFL classroom properly. Firstly, ELT educators should implement some kinesthetic exercises which allow learners to express their ideas by using gestures and body movements as a manner to lose their shyness of speaking

in public. Secondly, teach the speech techniques to guarantee a correct tone of voice, intonation and fluency in FL learners' oral performance. In fact, the involvement of the breathing, with a couple of pauses among oral reading sentences will show learners how to speak in FL properly. Thirdly, center on the phonological, morphological, stress and unstressed words and sentences through the collaborative repetition to secure them a better pronunciation. In this way, pupils are able to recognize forms and sounds patterns among English words and sentences. Fourthly, to make students closer to their real context, the usage topics about their Colombian culture support creating simulated scenarios which they can feel identified with.

Moreover, using series or movies of their interests that give some lessons increase their motivation and usefulness of learning the FL. Even applying more audiovisual materials to expand third graders' vocabulary, making their EFL learning environment more dynamic. Fifthly, for learners who are just starting their process, we suggest including scripts to help them to recall and learn FL expressions and vocabulary. Sixthly, apply improvisations exercises when English learners have accomplished a more advanced level. In this way, they are able to create their own scripts and have more spontaneous conversations with their peers. Having said that, we encouraged the institutional community to integrate drama techniques within the curriculum to obtain the EFL results in learners' oral skills. In fact, we suggested to include ELT lesson plans for each class which integrate the duration of the acting activities, the goals and objectives to make the classroom instructions clearer and more organized. Thus, these exercises can help to develop completely without interruptions of unexpected school events.

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APPENDIX

Name of researchers:

Maria Caicedo and Juliana Betancourt.

Description of the students (number of students, age, level of education, needs & interests in learning English)

We have third grade 19 students in the classroom where the most of them are interested in learning English. The students' ages are 8 to 9 years old who have A1 Level.

Taking into account the information given by the students, we found out that kids feel they do not understand when someone else speaks in English to them. Also, they are unsure of many words when speaking, this means they have a lack of vocabulary. Moreover, infants think they do not have fluency and most of them feel they do not have good pronunciation.

As a result, our students think they are going to learn more if they develop different activities such as Listening to music to learn the lyrics of a song, or learning scripts to prepare a small show or presentation, as well as, talk about their families is something that motivate them, since their contexts is all about families and school. (information given by the needs assessment process made at the beginning of this project)

Description of the pedagogical intervention

The research process will be directed by Maria Caicedo and Juliana Betancourt, who desire to apply drama techniques for English third graders with the purpose of collaborating them to raise in their oral skills in terms of gaining more vocabulary, confidence, motivation, creativity and best expressions to say their thoughts and ideas by linking with their contexts. Additionally, drama techniques will turn into resourceful tools that will help learners to deal with the real situations and as a form of preparation for those circumstances presented daily. In other words, the researchers will propose five sessions where the session number 1, 2 and 4 were centered on acting with a script about a series that kids watch nowadays and characters that they are interested in. On the other hand, children in the class 3 and 5 will have the space to improvise scenes and create characters in order to develop a better creativity, and feel more enhanced in the EFL process. And finally, learners will share their impressions, experiences and progress in EFL with the researchers through the final interview.

General objective of pedagogical intervention:

To describe third graders' motivation, confidence, pronunciation, fluency, and the expansion of their vocabulary experienced through drama techniques.

Date	Time	Topic	Specific Objectives of the class	Skills and Activities of the class
1. March 5th	30 min	Knowing about third graders English' oral skills	- To analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the third graders' English oral skills. -To discover the third graders' needs, wants and lack of English oral skills. -To identify the third graders' interests.	**(Speaking-listening)** Third graders will have to develop with the researcher's indications a questionnaire to express their strengths and weaknesses of the pronunciation, intonation and fluency within English oral skills. Additionally, they will express their activities and topics of interest to acquire the foreign language and expand their vocabulary. During the session, learners will mention their abilities and challenges to reach the FL proficiency level. On the other hand, we will apply for an interview for professors to determine their methodologies, goals, failures and difficulties for teaching the EFL for children.
2. March 15th	1h	Guessing Pronunciation (Piloting session)	-To connect family situations that happened in the episode cartoon with their contexts. -To comprehend the FL sentences and vocabulary meanings shown in the script. -To say the sentences and words with the correct pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. - To reflect the strengths and weaknesses in FL found through the dialogue activity.	**(Speaking)** The topic about the class is "My family" will be based on helping learners to connect the situations given throughout the chapter "Family Troubles" of the Cartoon serie "We Bare Bears" with their real life's families situations, as a form to understand the content, vocabulary, and structures in FL in a constructive way.

				Dialogue technique: Students will watch a video of "We bare bears" and they will understand the context of the daily life experienced at home with their family members. As soon as students finish watching the video, students are going to be assigned each character of the scene and organize in a team. Afterwards, students will practice their lines by themselves and with assistance in case of getting doubts. At the end of the session, students will perform the scenes in public. Baby Grizz's Sitcom | We Bar… ▶
3.March 21th	1h		Guessing Pronunciation (Real pedagogical intervention)	-To recognize the morphology and phonology of FL words and sentences over listen and repeat exercise. -To recall the FL characters' actions in terms of meanings. -To reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the FL found through the dialogue activity.	**(Speaking - Listening)** The topic about the class is "My family" will be based on helping learners to connect the situations given throughout the chapter "Family Troubles" of the cartoon serie "We Bare Bears" with their real life's families situations, as a form to understand the content, vocabulary, and structures in FL in a constructive way. Dialogue technique: Students will start studying the first scenes with the directions of the researchers through the exercise of listening and repeat. At the same time, they'll analyze the meanings of sentences of words to solve the doubts and understand the scenes. As soon as students finish studying scenes, they are going to perform the first scenes by saying the lines without any interruption, and develop the characters actions. Baby Grizz's Sitcom | We Bar… ▶

| 4.April 8th | 1h | Real life (Real Pedagogical Intervention) | - To connect school life situations presented through the audiovisual materials with their real contexts.
-To develop creativity, and imagination within the scenes assigned.
-To produce the spontaneous English oral skills with good pronunciation, intonation and accuracy through the public performances of their assigned cases.
-To reflect about their strengths and weaknesses in FL found through the improvisation exercise. | **(speaking - listening)**
The improvisation activity will be focused on the simulation technique where it expects that pupils learn how to deal with the problems of real situations to prepare them for their daily life. Also, encourage them to propose solutions and make decisions in front of those circumstances presented.
For this session, it will present a fragment of the video called "R.E.S.P.E.C.T " where it will be centered on situations that learners experience in their school life. Therefore, it will ask them which school situations they identified about characters. Hence, they can make the relationships with their environments. In addition, to be more familiar with"Real life" topic for the class. After that, it will introduce 3 cases to be assigned in each team. As a matter of fact, for this exercise, students will have to form teams of four people in order to plan the scene situation demanded. Afterwards, pupils will have to act out the scenes proposed in front of the class.

The situations proposed are the following:
"One person was waiting for the partner's birthday party invitation, however, the classmate on this occasion didn't invite him or her, while your best friend and other classmates received their invitation. What would you do?" (Will be assigned for group number 1 and 2)

"The teacher is going to start the class, but students aren't showing any interest in the session and started to play STOP among them, which creates a great interference for the teacher to carry on with the class. What would you do if |
| | | | | you were that teacher?"
(Will be assigned for group number 3 and 4)
"In September, students celebrate friendship and love. For this annual celebration it plays the secret friend. Everybody had to bring a present for the person assigned. However, one student forgot his or her gift at home, and their parents couldn't bring it to the school. What would you do? " (Will be assigned for group number 5)

Real life.pdf |

| 5.April 15th | 1h | Guessing Pronunciation (Real pedagogical intervention) | -To recap the vocabulary, sentences and characters learned in FL through the loud reading of the lines.

-To produce the English oral skills with good pronunciation, intonation, fluently and accuracy through the rehearsal of the scenes.

-To reflect about the students' achievements found through the practicing of characters' lines. | **(Speaking- listening)**

Dialogue technique:
The topic **"My family"** will be used in this session again to make the review of the **"We Bare Bears"**, chapter **"Family Trouble"** scenes. For this reason, students will make a recap to check meanings of the FL word and sentences, as well as saying the lines learned by heart. And then, they will start to study the next scenes until the end. Hence, students will practice their lines by themselves and with researchers' assistance for a couple of minutes, before starting to act on them without pause.

As soon as learners have finished, learners will act the scenes from the beginning until the end with actions, noises, and more, taking into account the character assigned two weeks ago.

Baby Grizz's Sitcom \| We Bar… |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. April 23th | 50 min | The cartoon world | -To produce the oral skills through the characterization of the cartoon characters. | **(Speaking)**
At the beginning of the session, it will illustrate the presentation of the cartoon characters' introductions |
| | | | -To gain motivation and confidence to express their characters' likes and dislikes in FL through verbal and non-verbal communication.

-To connect the introductions and the characters created with their interests and needs.
-To reflect about the challenges and achievements through the FL improvisation introductions. | such as **"Joy"** and **"Serena, Sailor Moon"** to give students examples of how to make their FL introductions. Additionally, it will analyze the meanings of the expressions, verbs and keywords to support them to make their introductions with more ideas. Hence, the class topic "The Cartoon world" is presented.
In this session, it will implement **thought tracking** with kids, in order to allow them to create their own cartoon character existing about a series or a movie that they like, even, an imaginary one. For this exercise, learners will start walking around the classroom by making the movement, posture, and tone of voice while they're walking. When researchers say STOP! Learners must be in a position which symbolizes the character. In that moment the chosen person will have to pass to make the introduction of the character with a duration no more than one minute.
To develop this activity, the researchers will touch randomly each character to permit them to introduce themselves with a great characterization.

Character's sample.pdf |

| 7. April 29th | 60 min | What I learned in my drama techniques classes? | -To determine students' FL progress through the final interview.

-To identify the strengths and weaknesses of third graders' oral skills in FL through drama techniques.

-To check the advantages and disadvantages of drama techniques to improve third graders' English oral skills. | **(Speaking- listening)**
At the end of the process, through an interview, learners will express their achievements and challenges through drama techniques.In addition, they will mention which activities that they loved the most and the least the most. And finally, which vocabulary and sentences that they learned.

The interview will be focused on the dialogue technique session: **"We Bare Bears"** and the improvisation technique sessions: simulation **"Real Life"** and thought tracking **"The Cartoon world"** |