



UTMACH

FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES

**CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y
EXTRANJEROS**

Role play as an active technique to improve speaking

**VILLAMAR GAVILANES MIRIAM JACQUELINE
LICENCIADA EN PEDAGOGIA DEL IDIOMA INGLES**

**SUÁREZ GALARZA DANIELA MAHELY
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ROLE PLAY AS AN ACTIVE TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE SPEAKING

por DANIELA MAHELY SUÁREZ GALARZA

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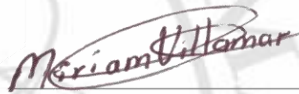
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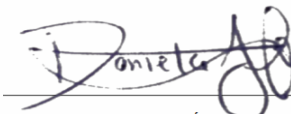
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family because they have been a fundamental pillar in this process, I also dedicate it to my co-worker Daniela Suárez, because without her it would not have been possible to complete it and, finally I dedicate it to all the teachers involved who patiently guided us throughout the project.

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Resumen

Actualmente, el idioma inglés es una herramienta fundamental para comunicarse en el mundo y a menudo, en el sistema educativo ecuatoriano, las oportunidades de los estudiantes de practicar un segundo idioma dentro del aula, son muy limitadas debido a la escasa cantidad de horas de clase, por lo tanto los docentes deben brindar opciones a sus estudiantes para mejorar su competencia oral. Es por eso, que el estudio que se presenta tuvo como objetivo elaborar un sistema de actividades utilizando la técnica activa de enseñanza - aprendizaje *role play* para el mejoramiento de las habilidades orales del idioma inglés. Se desarrolló desde una perspectiva cuantitativa de tipo experimental en un nivel pre-experimental con una población de 30 estudiantes del sexto semestre paralelo “A” de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales Extranjeros periodo 2023-1. Durante la investigación se consideró el uso de métodos de nivel teórico como el método histórico-lógico, analítico-sintético, e hipotético-deductivo y sistémico; como también métodos de nivel empírico entre los cuales se incluyen la observación, la experimentación, la medición y la prueba pedagógica. Finalmente, los resultados de la verificación de la hipótesis evidencian que al aplicar el sistema de actividades, efectivamente existe un progreso notorio en la habilidad oral de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: expresión oral, role play, idioma inglés, fluency

ABSTRACT

Currently, the English Language is a fundamental tool for communication around the world and in the Ecuadorian educational system, opportunities for students to practice a second language within the classroom are often very limited. This limitation is because of the lack of class hours, hence teachers must provide their students with options to improve their oral skills. For this reason, the current study aims to develop a system of activities using the active teaching-learning role-play technique to enhance English oral skills. This research was

conducted within a quantitative paradigm, employing an experimental design with a sample of 30 students enrolled in the sixth semester “A” of Pedagogy in National and Foreign Language for the 2023-1 period. During the investigation, it was considered to use theoretical methods such as historical-logical, analytical-synthetic, hypothetical-deductive, and systematic methods, as well as empiric methods such as observation, experimentation, measurement, and pedagogical testing. Finally, the results of the hypothesis verification manifest that when applying a system of activities, there is indeed evident progress in the student’s oral skills.

Keywords: oral skill, role-play, English language, fluency

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Introduction

Nowadays, many studies have proved that English is considered as a universal language. A study conducted by the German online statistics portal, Fernández (2023) argues that “el inglés es el idioma más hablado a nivel mundial del 2023, con más de 1.400 millones de hablantes.” This quotation underlines the global importance of the English language.

Moreover, English is widely recognized as the language of science, as Ramírez Castañeda (2019) stated ‘over 90% of scientific publications are authored in English in English, even among non-native English-speaking researchers.’ Thus, this pervasive use of English significantly impacts the realms of scientific knowledge and education.

Nevertheless, acquiring proficiency in a new language involves the mastery of the four language skills such as: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A study conducted by Chamorro Ortega et al. (2020) supports the idea that among these skills, the least developed and most challenging English skills are speaking and listening.

On the other hand, this research proposes that role play serves as an active teaching-learning technique for enhancing speaking skills. In Ecuador, different authors have employed role play as a strategy in various academic domains. For instance, Crespo Rosales (2021) in her thesis highlights its use as a playful strategy in social studies classes, while other authors consider it a motivational tool to improve reading skills and as a technique to evaluate the student’s speaking skills. Furthermore, another study by Asuncion Rojas & Villafuerte (2019) explored the influence of role play as a technique to enhance the speaking skills of English Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

Based on the above, some college students from the sixth level 'A', in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages at the Technical University of Machala during the term 2023-1, showed important difficulties as follows:

- Students do not have the English level required for the semester they are enrolled in.
- Students do not have good pronunciation. They read exactly as it is written.
- Some students do not understand what the teacher is explaining.
- The classroom is noisy.
- Some students are nervous when participating in classroom activities.
- They do not trust themselves to participate actively in the classroom activities.
- Cell phones are a very common distraction for learners in class.

Considering the previous manifestations, the deficiency in the development of oral skills in English is undoubtable. Therefore, the following **scientific problem** arises: How to improve students' speaking skills at their sixth level in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages (PNFL) during the term 2022-2?

The **object** of study of this research is the teaching-learning process at a higher education level.

On the other hand, the possible causes that led us to formulate the scientific problem of this research were:

- Online classes due to the pandemic.
- Demotivation for studying.
- Lack of vocabulary.
- Lack of appropriate teaching resources.
- Students feel insecure.
- Students feel embarrassed to speak English to their classmates.
- Lack of responsibility from students.

Consequently, the following **overall aim** has been established: To develop a class system while using the active teaching-learning role play technique to the improvement of students' speaking skills in their sixth semester in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages (PNFL) at the Technical University of Machala during the term 2023-1.

This aim is achieved within the action field and activation techniques.

In order to carry out this research, it is proposed the following **specific aims**:

- To lay the foundations for the use of the activation techniques to the development of student English speaking skills.
- To recognize the current level of students' speaking skills in students at sixth semester.
- To implement a class system using the role play activation technique to the improvement of students' speaking skills.
- To analyze the results reached after the application of the class system with the role play activation technique in the students' speaking skills.

The current research raises the following scientific hypothesis: If a system of activities based on the use of the active role-play technique is applied, then speaking skills will improve satisfactorily in college students at their sixth level 'A' in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages (PNFL) during the term 2023-1.

Therefore, this hypothesis studies the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The independent variable: activity system based on the use of role-play, defined as a set of carefully planned teaching activities incorporated into didactic games in order to achieve specific learning aims.

The dependent variable pertains to the development of speaking skills in the students at the first level of the PNFL major. In this context, speaking skill refers to the use of speech that includes aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation.

Consequently, this study is carried out from a quantitative paradigm based on an experimental design.

In terms of population, the current study comprises “30” students at the sixth-semester level “A” of the PNFL major during the term 2022-2.

In terms of the methods employed at this theoretical level, they consist of:

- Historical-logical method: It was employed in elaborating the background for this research.
- Analytical-synthetic method: this method facilitated the analysis of the data and theories applied in this study.
- Hypothetical-deductive method: this method helped us to formulate the scientific hypothesis of this research.
- Systemic method: it helped us to elaborate the class system.

Additionally, the methods and techniques of the empirical level describe the following:

- Observation: it enabled us to identify the challenges that students face in the classroom in the English class. These techniques were applied both at the beginning and end of this research.
- Pedagogical test: this technique was used at the beginning and end of the research to assess the proficiency of students in their English speaking skills.
- Experimentation: this technique was applied during the manipulation of variables in order to test the scientific hypothesis.

This research is essential since speaking forms an integral part of daily communication for individuals. Therefore, the value lies in the practical application of role play as a valuable tool for students to improve their speaking skills, fostering interaction with their peers and ultimately reducing barriers to effective oral expression.

The practical contribution to this current research provides a class system using the role-play technique to enhance the learners' English speaking skills that have difficulties in the skill mentioned.

The current research comprises an introduction and four chapters. The first chapter explains the theoretical framework that lies in the description of concepts and definitions of the terms associated with the topic which consist of 3 frameworks such as historical, conceptual, and contextual. The second chapter includes the methodology. The third chapter argues for the practical contribution to this research work. Finally, the fourth chapter deals with the results, and conclusions followed by recommendations, a bibliography, and annexes.

Chapter 1. Theoretical basis of the active role play technique

This section provides a theoretical description of role play as an active teaching-learning technique, in addition to a conceptualization and historical detail. Then, it explains the different techniques used according to the educational needs of the students.

1.1 Historical description of activation techniques in the teaching-learning process of the English language in higher education.

During ancient times, the earliest to incorporate the learning of a new language were the Romans. Their motivation stemmed from the necessity to read cultured works and learn about Greek culture, in other words, they were led to learn Greek (G.M., 2020).

In the Middle Age, in Europe, the Renaissance era refers to the time when “el mundo asiste al «despertar» de la cultura, del arte, de la ciencia, después de una época cerrada de pocos avances culturales, científicos y sociales que durante muchos años representó esta edad” (Sánchez, 2010, págs. 138-139).

Afterward, Humanism emerged during the Renaissance era, which is directly linked to education. This movement brought about a significant transformation in the field of pedagogy. Regarding the study of languages, Latin became the exclusive language taught and learned across all of Europe during this period (Corvo Sanchez, 2007, p.154).

However, classical languages such as Greek and Hebrew were very popular since the former provided access to the vast repository of knowledge in the ancient library, while the latter was considered indispensable for religious people searching for primary source material (Martin Sanchez, 2009, p.56).

The first notions of structured teaching took place in the Christian system of instruction, according to Corvo Sanchez (2007):

El aprendizaje básico inicia a la edad de seis o siete años e implica actividades como la enseñanza de la lectura, siguiendo el enfoque metodológico adoptado en las escuelas romanas, que abarca desde la enseñanza de las letras, sílabas, palabras y frases. También incluye la práctica del canto y del cálculo. Este proceso educativo continúa con la memorización de salmos y textos en latín, a través de la repetición oral en grupo o la copia escrita en latín. Es importante destacar que todo esto se realiza en una lengua que, desde los primeros siglos de la Edad Media, se ha vuelto desconocida en toda Europa, incluso en las regiones de habla romance, y todo esto ocurre antes de que los estudiantes tengan conocimiento de la existencia de una gramática (p. 158).

Therefore, the basic teaching-learning process and the beginnings of organized teaching originated in the middle Ages. This process focused on different skills, such as reading and repetition of words and phrases, occurring before the formal understanding of grammar.

In 1492, the publication of the humanist Elio Antonio de Nebrija called "Gramática de la Lengua Castellana" was published, which is considered the first grammar of a Romance language. As Martin Sanchez (2009) explains, this publication can be considered as "la historia de la enseñanza del español como lengua extranjera" since it describes the rules and value of that language (p. 57). However, the humanists set education as a method and content, which resulted in a repetitive education based only on grammar; this form of teaching was later called the grammar-translation method.

In the same context, Pedro Simón Abril an author who dedicated himself to reflecting on the teaching of language, highlighted in his book called "*Apuntamientos de cómo se deben reformar las doctrinas y la manera de enseñarlas*" the use of language and grammar and the

main problems present in teaching, such as the fact of teaching the sciences of foreign languages and not contextualizing them to the common use in the town (Sanchez & Fuentes, 2009, p.8)

On the other hand, in the 17th century, an important fact emerged, known as pedagogical realism, which set the stage for a transformation in the instruction of foreign languages. As Sanchez & Fuentes (2009) explain, "No se limita sólo de transmitir el conocimiento de las cosas, sino que trata de asegurar que esas cosas aprendidas sean aplicadas" (p. 12). Thus, the teaching-learning process of the time seeks the put into practice what has been learned, in other words, meaningful learning.

During this century, according to Miller (1990), "English instruction at the college level began in the academies founded by English Dissenters due to their expulsion from universities following the institution of religious tests in 1662". This marked the beginnings of English teaching at an advanced level in the academies, despite not being universities, and maintained an educational standard comparable to prestigious institutions like Oxford and Cambridge.

Later, throughout the XVIII century, the "Siglo de las luces" also known as the Enlightenment or Illuminism, emerged in Europe, the authors Sanchez & Fuentes (2009) mention that: "Supone una crítica hacia el sistema educativo convencional.. Marca el comienzo de una evaluación crítica de nuestra cultura, educación y formas de pensamiento tradicionales, al mismo tiempo que se adoptan gradualmente las perspectivas racionalistas, empiristas y utilitarias que caracterizan la Ilustración" (p. 11).

It was in that same century when for the first time the teaching of foreign languages was included as part of the academic curriculum. It is necessary to emphasize that the Latin language teaching did not diminish. It is also important to highlight that the same teaching

techniques of this language are a reference for the first methods of teaching foreign languages (Martin Sanchez, 2009).

Several methods can contribute to developing active teaching techniques to enhance English speaking and listening skills: thus, for the XIX century and early and mid-XX century, methods such as Grammar-Translation, The Direct Method, and the Audiolingual Method appear. On the other hand, in the mid to late XX century, methods such as the Silent Method, the Suggestopedia, and the Communicative Method emerged (Sánchez, 2021).

According to Bueno Velazco & Martinez Herrera (2002) during the 1950s, the "Grammar Translation" method, also known as "traditional", involved students translating texts, building their reading skills silently. Also, within this method, English was considered a set of rules to be memorized, while oral expression received little attention.

Moreover, Orosz et al. (2018) point out that subsequently, the audiolingual method appeared. This method focused on listening, speaking, and pronunciation, but in a passive, monotonous, and repetitive way, based on repetition and memorization. For instance, students would engage in dialogues and repeat them word for word until it was memorized.

After that, by 1980, the primary goal of teaching was communication. This approach involved teachers facilitating opportunities for their students to communicate with their classmates within the classroom environment, a method commonly referred to as the communicative approach (Orosz et al., 2018).

Finally, each approach incorporates its own set of techniques. For instance, in his thesis, Collaguazo Ochoa (2016) classifies these techniques into several groups: Motivational Techniques, Debate Techniques, Simulation Games Techniques, Question Techniques, and Techniques related to ICT's. In addition, he categorizes them within the context of speaking

skills, encompassing techniques such as speech, discussions, group work, choral drills, and role plays and dialogues.

1.2 Theoretical characteristics of the use of activation techniques in the teaching-learning process

1.2.1 Characteristics of the teaching-learning process in Higher Education.

The teaching-learning process can be described as “the space and the number of procedures that facilitate the specific or general knowledge transmission.” In essence, it represents the time and location where information is shared in order to be acquired by the learner, who, in this context, is the student (Limachi, 2022).

Nevertheless, Valladares et al. (2022) mention that the teaching-learning process becomes considerably complex at a higher level of education since its main function is to prepare well-qualified professionals. Similarly, a variety of methods, techniques, and strategies are incorporated to significantly enhance meaningful learning and foster cognitive autonomy.

The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador establishes that the state guarantees freedom in higher education (Asamblea Nacional, 2008, Artículo 29). Consequently, the Organic Law of Higher Education in Article 4 clearly establishes equal access to higher education for all Ecuadorians (Consejo de Educación Superior, 2013).

Likewise, according to Article 31 of the Academic Regime Regulations, it is stipulated that the acquisition of a foreign language is a mandatory requirement for all students. They are required to attain an intermediate high B2 level in order to graduate from the University (Consejo de Educación Superior, 2013). Additionally, the National Curriculum mandates that students who are in their third year of high school must achieve a B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CFRE).

This implies that English is crucial in the teaching process of higher education and for this reason, English is included in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools as well as Latin American universities.

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), created in 2002, offers an integrated description of what language students should be able to do with the purpose of communicating in their target language and developing the necessary knowledge and skills for practical use. This framework also defines language proficiency levels to assess students' progress at each stage of their learning journey and throughout their lives (*Marco Común Europeo De Referencia Para Las Lenguas: Aprendizaje, Enseñanza, Evaluación*, 2002, p.1).

1.2.2 Activation Teaching Techniques

Anthony (1963), as cited by Calero & Criollo (2018), defines a teaching technique as a specialized trick, strategy, or artifice that can be applied in the classroom in order to achieve immediate educational objectives. It's worth noting that a technique is encompassed within a teaching method, which in turn, is a component of an overall approach.

In addition, activation techniques, as described Gomez y Perez (1983), cited by Collaguazo Ochoa (2016), emphasize that these are used to: "... precisamente, para enriquecer la labor docente educativo y fomentar una mayor participación de los estudiantes en la adquisición de los contenidos..." (p. 48) and can be developed within the classroom as instruments that facilitate the active engagement of both teachers and students.

Certainly, after a brief description of what a technique is, we will address the definition of an active methodology. As pointed out by Silva & Maturana (2017), cited by Peralta Lara (2020), these methodologies place greater emphasis on student activity than on content. They break with orthodox approaches and assign new roles to both the teacher and the student, where the former becomes a mediator, facilitator, and guide to support the

learning process. This promotes active participation, and cooperative relationships, and stimulates creativity, critical thinking, and student reflection through didactic tasks designed to address real-world problems.

Therefore, the importance of using these techniques in the classroom becomes evident as they contribute to facilitating the teacher's work, enhancing its effectiveness, and empowering students to become analytical, critical thinkers, and aware of their learning. It's worth noting that these techniques are flexible according to the teacher's reality and encourage students to actively and autonomously build knowledge (Collaguazo Ochoa, 2016).

Additionally, active learning strategies and techniques in English teaching serve as effective tools that promote meaningful and enduring learning experiences for students and teachers. Orosz et al. (2018) also emphasize that these techniques strengthen both student and teacher, foster mutual learning, develop student's intrinsic motivation (motivation to perform a behavior that comes from within the person and not from the outside), and finally, enhance the overall classroom atmosphere (p.3).

On the other hand, there are different techniques and their selection should align with the specific class topic assigned to the teacher. These techniques should consistently be put into practice to facilitate meaningful learning, captivate students' attention, and consequently, achieve the set learning objectives.

Activation teaching techniques for speaking

It is stated that various teaching and learning techniques are applicable not only in foreign language education but also in numerous other disciplines. However, this research exclusively focuses on techniques related to developing English-speaking skills.

According to Collaguazo Ochoa (2016), there are several techniques for practicing oral production, which are outlined as follows:

Speech

Discussions

Choral Drill

Role play-dialogues

Speech

According to Murillo (2019), the speech technique is described as “una narración oral sobre un tema en específico que busca persuadir al oyente y emite un mensaje de manera coherente y clara” (p. 4). Furthermore, Barruansyah (2018), in his article, demonstrated that this particular technique has the potential to improve students' speaking skills. This is attributed to the fact that through speaking, students are able to make decisions effectively, organize ideas quickly, and communicate with confidence on a wide range of subjects.

Discussions

The discussion technique involves forming small groups, each assigned a specific topic with several important points. Subsequently, participants in these groups are given 10 minutes to collaborate on the assigned topic and record their findings. According to Antono et al. (2020), teaching speaking through the discussion technique proves to be quietly effective for students, resulting in notable enhancements in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, fluency, and overall motivation.

Choral drill

Clandfield & Tennant (n.d.) define choral drill as a technique in which the teacher presents a word or phrase, and the whole class repeats it in unison. This technique not only adds an element of enjoyment to the learning process but also enhances the memorization of specific language components. Yuwanda (2017), in her thesis, found out that using choral drill is the most appropriate technique to improve students' oral skills.

Role play

Byrne (1986), cited by Suryani (2015) characterizes role play as a technique in which individuals engage in simulated interactions with others within imaginary scenarios. For instance, students can simulate a medical appointment in which student A can be the doctor and student B the patient.

According to Ladousse (1987), as cited by Calero & Criollo (2018), role play can be divided into two parts: 'role', representing someone's place, and 'play' creating an engaging and enjoyable environment for learning. Furthermore, Ladousse highlights several advantages associated with using role-play in the classroom. These benefits include allowing students to share their experiences, helping them to express real-life situations, and even assisting shy students by enabling them to assume different roles.

According to what is stated below, the authors conclude that role play constitutes an effective technique for students to both learn and apply speech, vocabulary, and grammatical rules. The primary aim of employing role play is to provide the chance to practice real-life situations, engage in uninhibited and creative oral exercises (like playing another person's role), and develop communicative competence. For these reasons, activities incorporating role play can make a substantial contribution to improving students' speaking skills.

Mani, as cited by Calero & Criollo (2018) affirms that role can be used as a teaching tool applicable even in large classes, with role plays could be based on themes and activities

found in the coursebook. For example, student A can imagine that he is going on a trip and B asks him where he will go and what he will do.

In this context, Ladousse (1987) mentions the crucial role of a teacher, particularly with beginners. They should provide dialogues based on simple situations or help students write the entire dialogue, ensuring that students grasp the context. As for the student's role, it involves actively and directly participating as a communicator in the learning process (as cited in Calero & Criollo, 2018).

Types of Role-play

Role-play can be categorized into three different types: fully scripted role-play (SRP), semi-scripted role-play (SSRP), and non-scripted role-play (NSRP).

In a fully scripted role-play (SRP), according to Harper-Whalen & Morris (2005), the teacher is the one who provides each word that the students are required to memorize. Furthermore, this type fosters the development of student confidence and creativity by encouraging their active engagement in activities that require the use of speaking skills (Tshering, 2022).

The second type of role-play, as described by Yusuf and Setyamardani (2020), can improve learners' English speaking ability. They characterize it as a conversational model in which several missing words allow the learner to determine how to fill those blanks. This type empowers students to modify the conversation's meaning and create one of their own (p. 330).

Finally, the non-scripted role-play, as explained by Dickson (1989), involves teachers providing just keywords to the students' dialogue (as cited in Neupane, 2019). In this sense, non-scripted role-play can be practical for intermediate and advanced students as it demands specific abilities like critical thinking and the ability to resolve issues. Furthermore, his

research revealed a favorable effect on students' speaking skills. non-scripted role play can be practical for intermediate and advanced students since they require special skills such as problem-solving. Furthermore, that research revealed a positive effect on the students' speaking skills (Neupane, 2019).

1.2.3 English speaking skill

Speaking is widely considered the most sought skill for an individual to be accepted as proficient in a foreign language. In this context, the concept of oral expression has been defined by numerous authors, including

Bygate (1987) asserts that speaking is the primary means of fostering social cohesion, determining social ranking, facilitating career progression, and conducting professional business. Moreover, it is a medium through which a significant portion of language acquisition occurs and is especially conducive to learning for many individuals.

In addition, Thornbury (2005), as cited by Calero & Criollo (2018), describes speaking as an everyday action granted to people. Some individuals utter tens of thousands of words daily, while others such as politicians or auctioneers, produce even more. It is worth noting that speaking is the most essential skill taught in many if not all, foreign language courses because when two people meet each other for the first time, speaking is the immediate means of communication.

Based on the definitions above, the writers of this research infer that speaking is considered the most crucial skill among the four language skills for effective communication in this globalized world. Furthermore, speaking involves both the ability to listen comprehensively (being attentive and receptive to all cues that can help interpret the message) and the skill of expressing or speaking in the same language.

Finally, mastering speaking skills is essential for second language and foreign language learners, and there are some forms to assess the student's performance in language courses. One of these methods involves evaluating whether they have achieved the expected level of proficiency in speaking skills.

To evaluate students' speaking skills, the assessor awards marks for three individual criteria:

Grammar and Vocabulary: students must have control of simple grammatical forms and use of appropriate vocabulary about everyday situations (*KET for Schools*, 2019).

Pronunciation: students must be intelligible and have control of phonological features (*KET for Schools*, 2019).

Fluency: Skehan (1996) suggests that fluency entails the ability to spontaneously produce spoken language without unnecessary interruptions or hesitations (as cited in Shahini & Shahamirian, 2021).

1.3 Contextual description of the English language teaching-learning process and activation techniques for the improvement of speaking skills in Ecuador.

The following section offers an overview of the contextual properties of the action field and its subject matter, starting from higher education and relevant research within the Ecuadorian context, and concluding with the current status of the students who will be the subjects of the study.

1.3.1 Contextual description of the English language teaching-learning process in higher education and the active learning techniques for speaking skills.

When addressing the issue of higher education, it is important to note that it has faced significant challenges in the past, what some might call a "crisis". In the 1990s, specifically with the onset of banking deregulation and dollarization, problems were generated in the field of higher education (Ayala Mora, 2015). This period was characterized by a rapid proliferation of universities and, unfortunately, a deterioration in the academic level.

The situation reached a critical point in 1998, when the Constitution introduced a new legal regulation establishing that education was guaranteed by the State under equal conditions and opportunities, considering it an inalienable right of all people. This measure was an attempt to address the problems that had arisen due to uncontrolled growth and the deterioration of educational quality (Ayala Mora, 2015).

Years later, specifically in 2007, significant transformations began to be seen in the educational process. During this period, according to Ayala Mora (2015), a new national curriculum was introduced (2008 Constitution). In this context, education was conceived as a duty of the State and free of charge up to the third level of higher education.

This new curriculum proposed the implementation of activities based on real-life situations and problems, as well as the use of participatory learning methods. The main

objective of these reforms was to train students to meet the established exit profile (Ayala Mora, 2015). In other words, students were expected to be able to analyze, reflect, and provide solutions to the circumstances they would face in their lives.

On the other hand, in Ecuador, Cifuentes Rojas et al. (2019), mention that the teaching of the English language in secondary schools was entirely unfamiliar before 1912. However, in 1950, English became mandatory under the Government of Galo Plaza but there were not enough teachers.

Fortunately, in 1992, according to the British Council (2015), the Department of Foreign Language was established, making English mandatory in schools. The Minister of Education of Ecuador implemented a project called Curriculum Reform Aimed at the Development of the Learning of English (CRADLE). This project was applied in the country's high schools with the objective of elevating the overall English proficiency of high school students and ensuring that students graduating from high school reached a B2 level of proficiency (Cifuentes Rojas et al., 2019).

Based on the above, in 2012, the Ministry of Education launched a new National English Curriculum aimed at improving the quality of English language teaching in the public sector. Under Ministerial Agreement No. 306-1, it was established that English was not a mandatory subject from 2nd to 7th grade of General Basic Education (EGB). However, starting from 8th grade and beyond, it became a mandatory subject with five weekly classes, each lasting around 45 minutes. Regarding English proficiency objectives from the 8th grade onward, they were based on the reference levels of the Common European Framework (CEFR): A1 (beginner) for the 8th-9th grades, A2 (elementary) for the 10th grade, and B1 (intermediate) for the 11th-12th grades (British Council, 2015).

Later, the Higher Education Council, in the Higher Education Regulation, article 31, established that university students must reach at least a B2 level of the Common European

Framework to graduate. Likewise, it was established that their language proficiency must be evaluated before the student enrolls in the last period of the degree program.

According to the latest English Proficiency Index report, which assesses the English level of 111 countries in the world, reveals that Ecuador ranks 82nd, indicating a relatively low level of English level. (*EF English Proficiency Index, 2022*). Consequently, most Ecuadorian students from public schools graduate with a poor knowledge of the English language, and one of the most likely reasons is the teaching method used.

On the other hand, there are several studies conducted within the Ecuadorian context related to the topic investigated in this report:

Calero & Criollo (2018), conducted a study titled "Roleplaying in the English speaking skill development" in which they implemented a role play treatment with students from the Soldier Training School in the city of Pastaza. The results of the study were positive, demonstrating that the use of role-play significantly enhanced the students' speaking skills.

In the same way, Romero Mejía (2020) in his study titled "Improving Speaking through Self-assessment of Role-Play Facilitated by Padlet." This study involved twenty third-year high school students on San Cristobal Island, Galapagos Islands, and obtained positive results in terms of student speaking skills. The author emphasizes that this improvement was significantly influenced thanks to the self-assessment and the innovative strategy proposed in the study.

Finally, in her study titled 'Self-Assessment of Students' Role Play to Enhance Speaking Skills,' Salazar Zhunio (2023) conducted with 34 students in the city of Cuenca. The findings indicated that students' confidence increased, resulting in an enhancement in their oral skills.

The presented research shows that several projects that incorporate the role play variable as a means to improve oral skills have achieved positive outcomes. Consequently, the authors of this project also opted to apply a variation of such projects..

1.3.2 Diagnostic "of the current state of speaking skills in students at their sixth level 'A' in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages at the Technical University of Machala."

This section presents the results obtained from the pretest conducted with students in the 6th "a" semester of Pedagogy in National and Foreign Languages at the Technical University of Machala. Two instruments were applied for data collection in this research: the observation guide (see ANNEX 1) and the pedagogical test called pre-test (see ANNEX 2).

Analysis of results

The initial instrument was the Observation Guide and it demonstrated the following outcomes:

1. Some students demonstrate a deficiency in pronouncing words written in the book, i.e., when students read a text aloud, they pronounce words as they are written.
2. The teacher assigned several exercises about different skills and it was observed that most students were inhibited from participating specifically in the oral skill.
3. Even though the teacher was going to evaluate with a quantitative approach, some students did not have the confidence to answer simple vocabulary questions seen earlier.
4. Although nerves were a factor, a small number of students showed an interest in communicating regardless of pronunciation errors.

A pedagogical test was applied as a second instrument in order to assess the current state of the specific dimensions within the oral skill in the students from the sixth semester 'A'

in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages at the Technical University of Machala. After that, an analysis of the results obtained from the dimensions and indicator proceeds.

Dimensión: Grammar

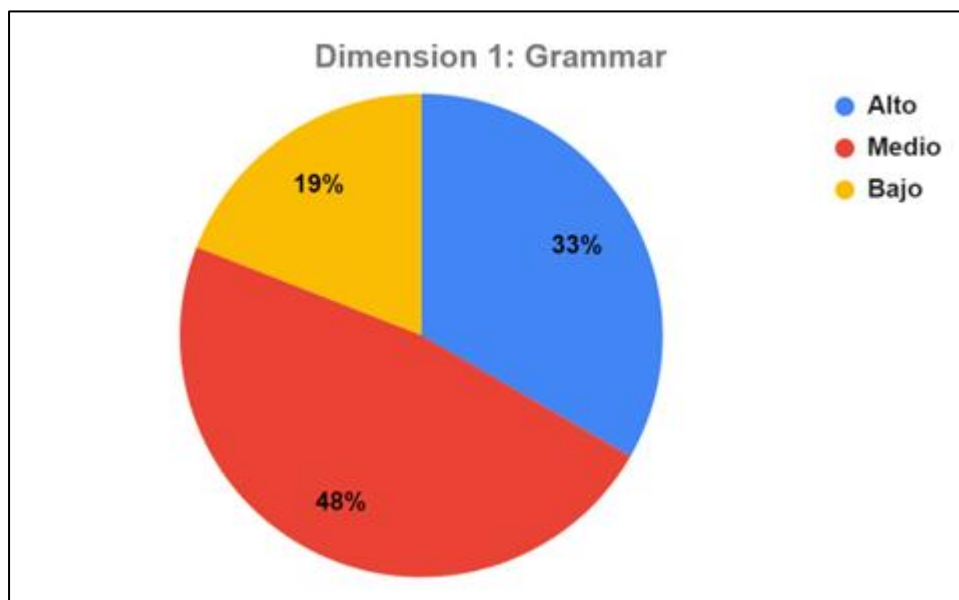


Ilustración 1. Dimension Grammar (Pre-test). Prepared by the authors.

Richard Nordquist asserts that there are two common interpretations of grammar: one as the systematic study and description of a language, and the other as a set of regulations and illustrations that relate to the syntax and word patterns of a language, usually designed to facilitate the learning of that language (Nordquist, 2020).

Considering this concept, and based on the results obtained in the pre-test, it can be observed that 33% of the students place themselves at a high level, while 48% exhibit an intermediate knowledge of grammar, thus representing the majority of the students. Finally, only 19% showed a low level.

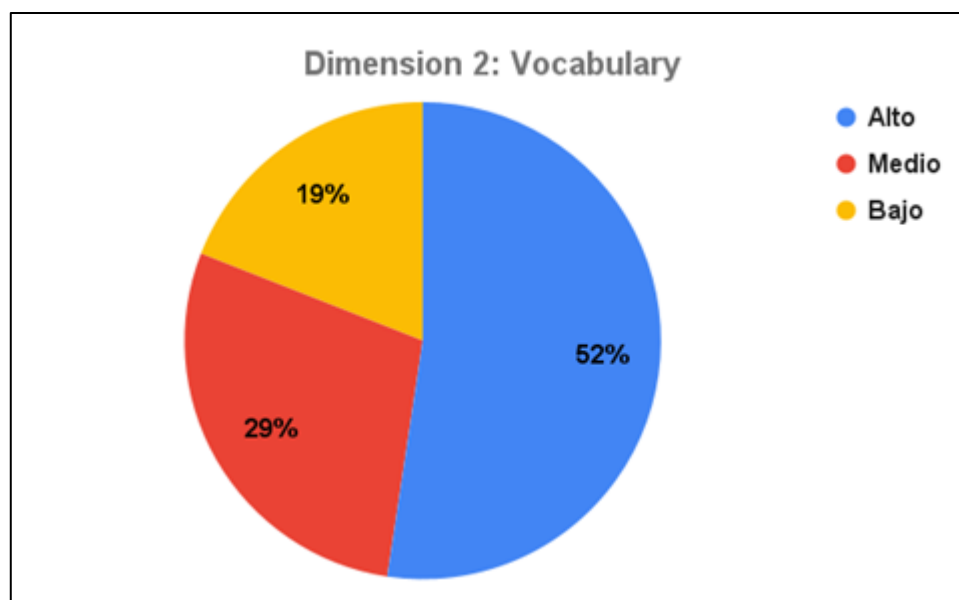
Dimensión: Vocabulary

Ilustración 2. Dimension Vocabulary (Pre-test). Prepared by the authors.

According to Nation and Waring (2008), vocabulary refers to the set of words and expressions that a person knows and uses in a specific language or context. Its importance lies in its role in effective communication and cognitive development, as it facilitates the understanding and expression of complex ideas. Vocabulary is an essential part of any curriculum and should be taught regularly and systematically.

According to the data collected, it was found that 52% of students, which represents more than half, have a high level of vocabulary, while 29% have a medium level of knowledge, and only 19% have a low level.

Dimensión: Pronunciation

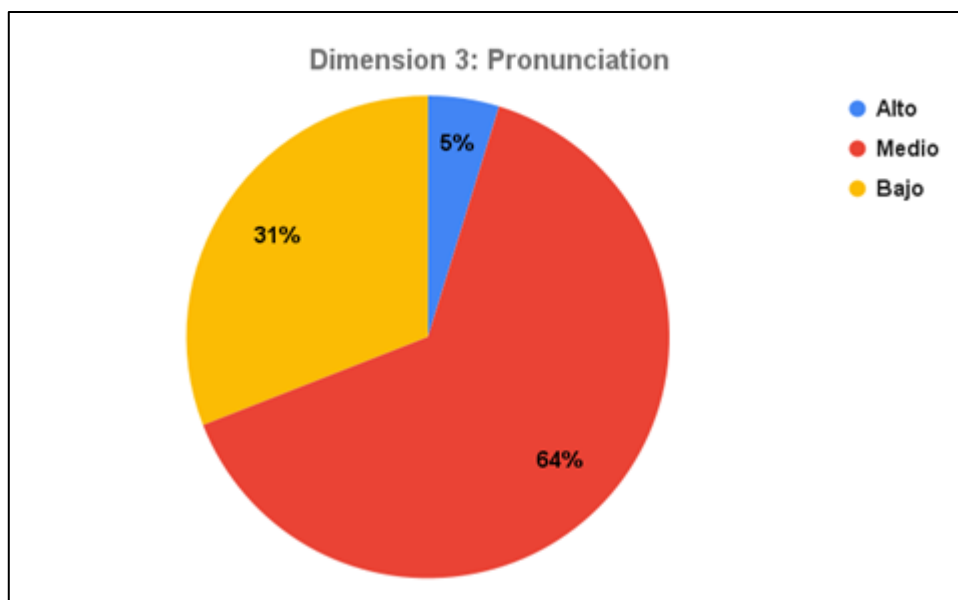


Ilustración 3 Dimension Pronunciation (Pre-test). Prepared by the authors.

Pronunciation is defined as “the way in which a word or letter is said, or said correctly, or the way in which a language is spoken.” (*Pronunciation - Grammar - Cambridge Dictionary*, 2023). In other words, it refers to how words are pronounced. Furthermore, it includes aspects such as spoken stress and rhythm, which are also important parts of pronunciation.

The test results show that only 5% of the students have a high level of proficiency in pronunciation, while 64% of the students, which represents the majority, have an intermediate level, and 31% have a low level.

Dimensión: Fluency

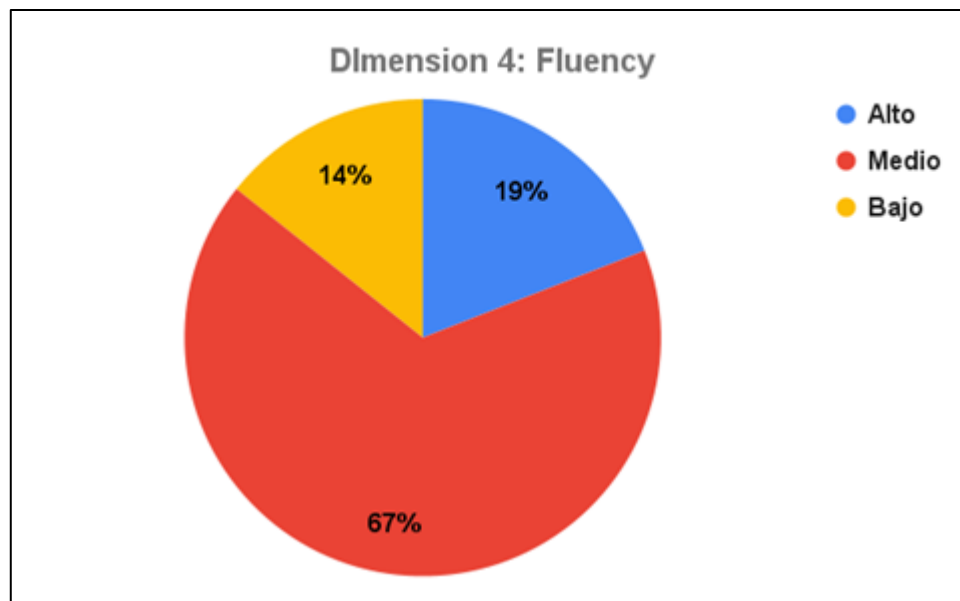


Ilustración 4 Dimension Fluency (Pre-test). Prepared by the authors.

This dimension refers to the flow and effectiveness of conveying your thoughts, especially when speaking. While occasional grammar mistakes may occur, the information should be presented in a way that is easy to understand and reflects how comfortable you are with the language (*Fluency Vs Accuracy / British Council Foundation Indonesia, n.d.*).

The data collected show that 19% of the students present a high level of mastery in the fluency dimension, while the majority, 67%, are at a medium level. Only 14% are at a low level.

General diagnosis

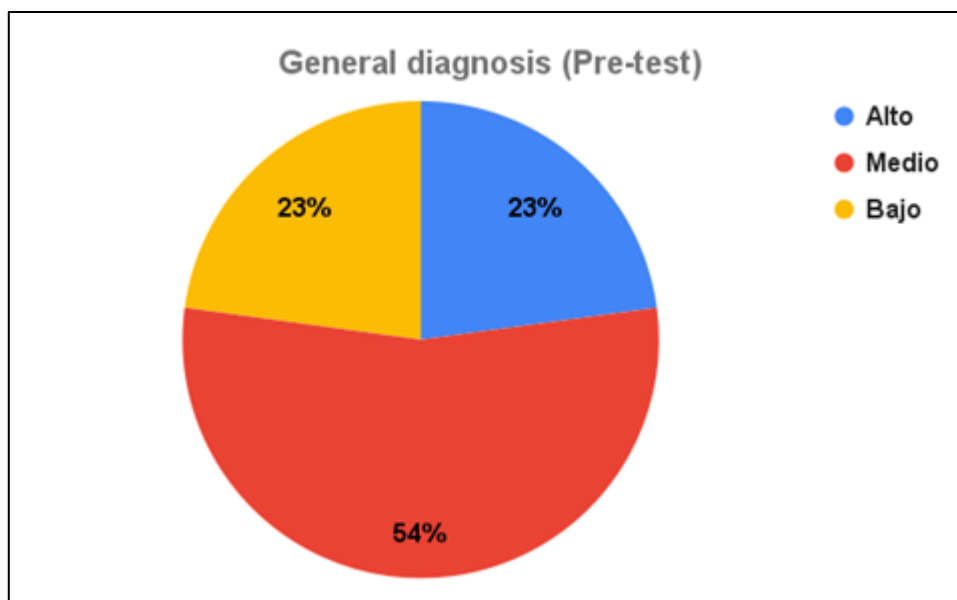


Ilustración 5. General diagnosis (Pre-test). Prepared by the authors.

Through all the graphs shown, it can be summarized that the majority of the students, specifically 54%, are at an intermediate level. Furthermore, it is evident that the remaining 46% is divided between the other two levels. Where 23% of the students are located at a high level and the other 23% at a low level.

It was determined that the pedagogical test instrument, as a pre-test, reflected the students' level of oral ability. This supports the need to intervene in the pedagogical practice through a system of activities based on the active teaching-learning technique known as 'role play', in order to improve the oral skill of the English language, in the students from the sixth level 'A' in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages at the Technical University of Machala during the term 2023-1.

Chapter 2. Methodological framework

In this section, the research methodology and paradigm implemented in this project are described. Furthermore, the population in which the interventions were conducted will be introduced. Finally, the intervention proposal and instruments used are mentioned.

2.1 Methodological Approach

This research project is framed under a quantitative paradigm. It involves following an orderly and systematic sequence that encompasses the identification of a problem, an exhaustive review of the existing literature, the establishment of a theoretical basis, the formulation of hypotheses, and the definition of a methodology. The methodology encompasses the research design, the target population, the selection of the sample, the data collection methods, and the use of instruments that must meet technical standards of validity and reliability, as detailed by de Franco and Vera Solórzano (2020, p. 7).

2.2. Methodological design

This research has an explanatory approach since it seeks to test the hypothesis through an experimental design, specifically at a pre-experimental level. In the design, variables are manipulated to obtain measurements before and after the application of a given treatment in a specific group.

In other words, the explanatory approach is oriented towards the understanding and definition of the phenomena. This implies the formulation of a research hypothesis, in order to identify the cause-and-effect elements of the phenomena that the researcher considers fundamental (Ramos Galarza, 2020).

2.3 Population

The population refers to a group of individuals or elements with specific characteristics that are intended to be analyzed or studied (Ventura León, 2017, p.1). Thus, in this research, the target population comprises 30 students, consisting of 13 females and 11 males, aged between 19 to 22 years old. All of them are enrolled in the sixth level 'A' in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages at the Technical University of Machala during

the term 2023-1.

2.4 Methods

The method is the element that lends credibility to scientific research and supports the results presented by the researcher. Its application, aimed at acquiring knowledge, enables academic and scientific publications to introduce effective frameworks that ensure an organized and sequential research process, starting from the planning of the problem, the methods for its resolution, the obtained data, and the project's conclusions (De Hoyos Benítez, 2020, p. 244). These methods are categorized into theoretical and empirical levels.

2.4.1 Theoretical methods

In the present project, theoretical methods play a fundamental role as they allow for the conceptual description and theoretical underpinning of the different aspects presented. In other words, Del Sol Fabregat et al. (2017) state that these methods facilitate uncovering relevant connections in the research object, thus allowing the interpretation of the concepts presented in the empirical approach, as well as the development and improvement of theories, thus providing the suitable environment for interpreting phenomena (p.252).

Historical-logical method

This method is vital since it goes beyond observing the phenomenon's behavior during the analyzed period or considering its economic, political, and social conditions, which cause changes in the object of study. Additionally, it enables us to understand the logic or essence that influences the visible alterations at each stage of the study object (Torres Miranda, 2020).

Analytical-synthetic method

These methods enable the exploration and manipulation of empirical, theoretical, and methodological evidence facilitating the analysis of essential data related to the study object. Furthermore, synthesis guides the researcher towards general insights and the necessary studies, gradually contributing to the resolution of the scientific problem (Rodríguez Jiménez & Pérez Jacinto, 2017, p.187).

Hypothetical-deductive method

This method uses hypotheses as the initial foundation for making new deductions. Generally speaking, this method seeks to enhance the quality of knowledge acquired by moving from induction (specific to general) to deduction (general to specific). It is particularly useful for studying issues rooted in overarching principles or laws (Marfull Pujadas, 2019).

Systemic method

This approach offers a holistic perspective, viewing systems not as individual entities but as interconnected wholes. It emphasizes that the combined effect of elements and their connection produces outcomes greater than those of individual components (Espinoza Bautista et al., 2020, p. 34). In other words, the term refers not only to an organized set of components but also includes their connections between them.

2.4.2 Empirical Methods

These methods are employed to identify and collect factual information and data that serve as a basis for testing hypotheses, answering research questions, supporting arguments, or following a thematic line. However, it is important to note that these methods alone do not provide a deep understanding of the fundamental relationships present in pedagogical processes.(Rodríguez Jiménez & Pérez Jacinto, 2017, p. 184).

In this research, we have decided to use observation and pedagogical tests as methods to obtain the necessary data to implement and evaluate the system of activities.

Observation

López Falcón & Ramos Serpa (2021) explain that the empirical method is the one in which the researcher obtains information directly through the perception of the object or phenomenon studied. This method is used for the formulation of the problem, can become the central procedure of the method used in the testing of the hypothesis, and has the ability to foresee trends and the development of phenomena of a more generalized level (p. 26).

Experimentation

The experiment stands out as the most complex and effective. This method originates from the advance of technology and human knowledge, as a result of the human being's effort to enter into the unknown through his transforming activity (Ramos Chagoya, 2018).

Measurement

Hernández Sampieri et al. (2014) mention that this instrument is used by the researcher to record information or data on the variables under study. Any measurement method or data collection instrument must meet three essential requirements: reliability, validity, and objectivity (p. 199).

Pedagogical test

This instrument consists of measuring in a meaningful way during the research process in order to diagnose the state of a current problem or to verify the level of change or improvement of an educational phenomenon. It is also used to compare an initial state with a final state in the research process (López Falcón & Ramos Serpa, 2021).

2.5 Data collection

2.5.1 Research Instruments

The research considers "Speaking ability" as the variable under study, for which the following consistency matrix was elaborated:

Scientific problem	Objectives	Research variables	Hypotheses	Measurement indicators	ITEMS
How to improve the speaking skills of 30 students enrolled in the sixth semester "A" of Pedagogy in National and Foreign Language for the 2023-1 period?	Overall aim: To develop a class system while using the active teaching-learning role play technique to the improvement of students speaking skills at their sixth semester in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages (PNFL) at the Technical University of Machala during the	1. Activity system based on role play 2. Development of speaking skills	Scientific hypothesis: If a class system based on the use of role-play is applied, then college students' speaking skills will improve satisfactorily in their sixth semester in the major of Pedagogy of	1. Grammar and Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● simple grammatical forms ● appropriate daily vocabulary 2. Pronunciation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● utterances clear ● control of word and sentence stress ● individual sounds clear 3. Fluency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● speaker maintains simple exchanges with the interlocutor ● speaker reacts 	1,2,3 4,5 6

	term 2023-1.		National and Foreign Languages (PNFL) during the term 2023-1.	appropriately <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaker requires prompting or support 	
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Tabla 1. Consistency matrix. Prepared by the authors.

2.6 Description of the information analysis processes

The information for each indicator is analyzed using the proportion (%) as a measure. For the synthesis of the information about the development of speaking skills, three levels were considered: excellent, good, and needs improvement, which results from the analysis of the state of the dimensions, as shown in the following table:

Indicator	Analysis
Grammar	<p>High 3 Uses the structures learned in class depending on the context with few grammatical errors</p> <p>Medium 2 Uses the structures learned in class with several errors.</p> <p>Low 1 Does not use the structures learned in class.</p>
Indicator	Analysis
Vocabulario	<p>High 3 Uses appropriate phrases and expressions, and includes a wide range of vocabulary learned in and outside of class.</p> <p>Medium 2 Uses vocabulary, phrases, and expressions learned in class and makes few errors in word choice.</p> <p>Low 1 Uses limited vocabulary and expressions and makes frequent errors in word choice. Do not attempt to use new words learned in class or expand vocabulary.</p>
Indicator	Analysis
Pronunciación	<p>High 3 Pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation are almost always clear and accurate. All words were understood by listeners.</p> <p>Medium 2 Pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation are almost clear and accurate but occasionally difficult to understand. One to three words could not be understood by listeners.</p> <p>Low 1</p>

	Errors in pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation made it difficult to understand the student. More than 5 words could not be understood by listeners.
Indicator	Análisis
Fluency	<p>High 3</p> <p>Speaks without hesitation and does not interrupt the thread of the conversation.</p> <p>Medium 2</p> <p>Speaks with confidence, and low hesitation, but does not interrupt the conversation thread.</p> <p>Low 1</p> <p>Speaks with hesitation, which interferes with communication.</p>

Tabla 2. Dimensions and analysis. Prepared by the authors.

Scale	Analysis
High	3
Medium	2
Low	1

Tabla 3. Indicator matrix (General diagnosis). Prepared by the authors

Chapter 3. System of activities based on the active teaching-learning role play technique for improvement of speaking skills in the English language.

This chapter provides a detailed description of the system of activities and their characteristics, as well as the necessary guidelines for the teacher to apply the appropriate teaching-learning process for improving speaking skills.

3.1 Theoretical foundation

The chosen tool is a system of activities since authors such as Guapisaca Yanza and Núñez Zeas (2019) define it as a set of planned tasks executed sequentially with a shared common purpose. In this way, it is possible to describe clearly and concisely, as well as step by step, all the details necessary for each of the classes.

It is also necessary to emphasize that those activities mentioned above enable learning and the acquisition or construction of knowledge and are not only the means to verify it (Penzo Giacca et al., 2010, p.9). This statement is evidenced by presenting the activities with an ascending difficulty level, which allows students to practice and learn starting with the simplest, such as "repeating" (Fully scripted role-play), continuing with "filling in" (Semi-scripted role-play), and ending with "applying" (Non-scripted role-play) the acquired knowledge, without leaving aside the intertwined elements such as the continuous presentation of vocabulary and grammatical structure, as well as pronunciation.

Jerez Naranjo & Barroso Osuna (2021) state that this system of activities should contain a general structure composed of four main parts:

Introduction: it consists of a brief description of the topic to be covered.

Objectives: they have to be described clearly and concisely in order to orient the students.

Task/Actions: these are tasks in the form of exercises, as well as concrete actions to be performed by the students.

Evaluation: This stage is found throughout the process of the activity and contains a set of criteria that assess the execution of the activity (p.90).

3.2 Description of the system of activities

After this brief description, a system of activities is presented with the purpose of improving the oral skills of 6th-semester students. These activities are based on the active teaching-learning role-play technique and are characterized by a systematic approach. Marino Jiménez et al. (2020), consider it as an approach that takes into account how one part of the activities affects the others in different ways.

The following are system of activities corresponding to units 4 and 5 of the Think combo B2 book, used by the students in their sixth semester in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages (PNFL) at the Technical University of Machala during the term 2023-1.

Activity#1

Theme: Expressing frustration

Unit: 4

Time: 30 min

Objective:

Functions: expressing frustration

Grammar: be/get used to (doing) vs. used to (do); adverbs and adverbial phrases

Vocabulary: personality adjectives; common adverbial phrases

Resources: Books, markers

Introduction (6 minutes)

The session began with a reading of a dialogue and an image; after that, students expressed their opinions regarding the emotional state of the person in the image. During the activity, one student accurately identified the emotion with the word "FRUSTRATED."

Development (19 minutes)

1. Introduction of basic vocabulary: a student provided a keyword, from which the "phrases for fluency and functions for expressing frustration" were presented and explained. During this part of the lesson, the students learned the proper meaning of the phrases and their correct intonation.

2. Association activity: Fully scripted role-play

Evaluation (5 minutes)

To conclude the activity, the students participate in an interactive activity where two perform the dialogue read at the beginning of the class with the respective intonation and pronunciation of the phrases learned. Finally, for a proper evaluation of all participants, an asynchronous task is sent where everyone records an audio exposing the same dialogue.

Then, the teacher is allowed to continue with the class.

Activity#2

Theme: Technology

Unit: 5

Time: 35 min

Objective:

Functions: advice and obligation

Grammar: didn't need to/ needn't have

Vocabulary: Technology

Resources: Books, markers and flashcards.

Introduction (6 minutes)

Elicitation: in this stage, students brainstormed words related to the vocabulary seen in the previous class, followed by a request for synonyms for each word to extend the student's vocabulary.

Development (19 minutes)

1. Each student received a flashcard on which they had to fill in the blanks of a dialogue with the vocabulary and grammar previously reviewed. Afterward, the answers were checked with the students, and two volunteers performed the role play.

2. Association activity: Semi-scripted role play

Evaluation (5 minutes)

After the presentation, students received feedback regarding their pronunciation errors. Afterward, the presentation addressed the elision of "not," connected speech, and the rules for pronouncing the "ed" ending in regular verbs in the past tense. Finally, a drilling exercise was performed to verify what was understood, evidencing notable enhancement.

Finally, the students received instructions for the upcoming role-play in the next class, and then the class started.

Activity#3

Theme: Final role-play

Unit: 5

Time: 38 min

Objective:

To assess the knowledge acquired through the classes seen before.

Resources: Rubric

Introduction (5 minutes)

Despite sending instructions for the final role-play, it was necessary to reiterate them. Then, students received the rubric for their evaluation.

Development (30minutes)

1. Each group began with its interpretation, having four minutes.
2. Association activity: Non-scripted role play

Evaluación (5 minutes)

To conclude the activity, the rubric is handed out with the respective grades and a small feedback on the pronunciation of words previously seen.

Finally, the teacher is given the opportunity to continue with the class.

Chapter 4. Application of the system of activities based on the active role-play teaching-learning technique for the improvement of speaking skills in the English language.

This chapter provides an overview of the results achieved through the implementation of the activities system aimed at improving the speaking skills of students from the sixth-semester level "A" of the PNFL major during the term 2022-2. These activities were carried out on August 21, 28, and 30, employing an experimental design.

4.1 Description of the application of the system of activities using role play as an active teaching-learning technique to improve speaking skills in English.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the use of role-play as a technique to improve students' speaking skills at the sixth-semester level "A" of the PNFL major at the Technical University of Machala, the following system of activities was applied:

Activity 1

The first activity was carried out on August 21, from 9:30 to 10:00, involving 19 students and 11 absences, 6th-semester PINE students. First, it began by observing a picture to elicit the dialogue key term from the students, to proceed with the explanation about the meaning and intonation of the phrases found in the dialogue, later, three students were nominated to interpret the role-play. Finally, as an activity, all students were sent to perform the same role-play through an audio recording.

Activity 2

The second activity was performed on August 29, from 10:30 to 11:00, with the participation of 28 students and 2 absences, 6th semester PINE students. First, the students

recalled vocabulary from the previous class, then handed the Semi-scripted role-play, which they had to solve with the appropriate answers. Proceeding with the answers review and the volunteer's dramatization of the role-play, preceded with pronunciation correction, followed by drilling (individual and group repetition) to consolidate the learning during the activity."

Activity 3 (Annex 4 – 5)

The third activity was implemented on September 4, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., with the participation of the 30 6th-semester PINE students. First, the students listened to the instructions for the final role-play and simultaneously read the rubric with the points to review in their presentations. Each group made its presentation within the established time. Finally, the activity concluded by handing out the rubrics with their corresponding grades.

4.2 Results obtained after applying the system of activities using role play as an active teaching-learning technique to improve speaking skills in English.

The results obtained in the pre-test revealed the need to implement the mentioned intervention proposal, which consisted of applying a system of activities using role play as an active teaching-learning technique to improve speaking skills in English. The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were acquired and compared by empirical methods, which use rubrics with measurement scales. In the same way as the pre-test, dimensions focused on assessing the improvement of speaking skills were used for hypothesis testing, obtaining the following data:

Dimension 1: Grammar

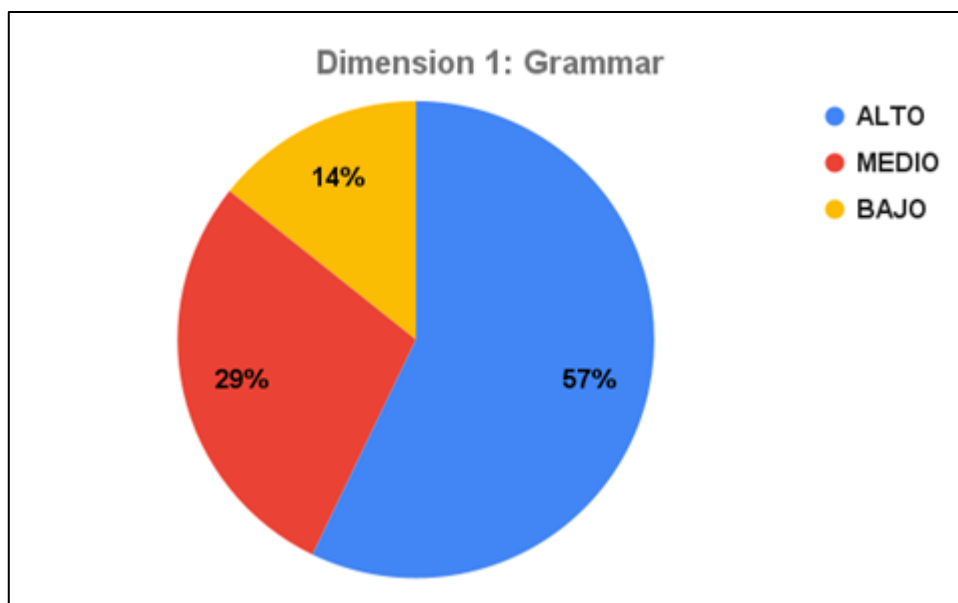


Ilustración 6. Dimension Grammar (Post-test). Prepared by the authors.

In this grammar domain, there was a slight reduction in the **low** level, a moderate decrease concerning in the **medium** level, and a significant increase of 57% in the **high** level.

Dimension 2: Vocabulary

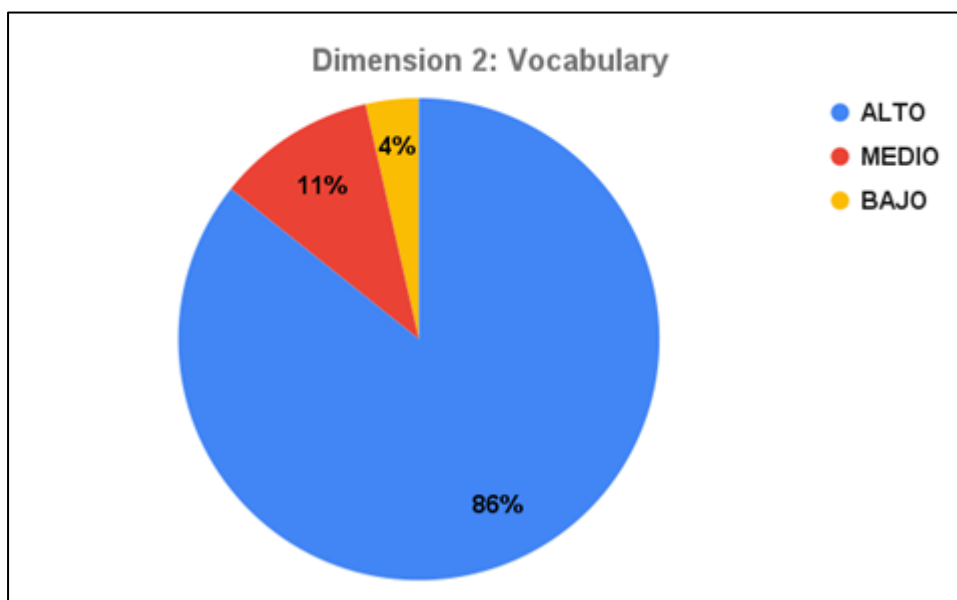


Ilustración 7. Dimension Vocabulary (Post-test). Prepared by the authors.

In this dimension, there is a 15% reduction in the **low** level, with only 4% of students. The **medium** level shows a significant decrease, representing only 11% of 29%. In contrast, vocabulary mastery at the **high** level has considerably increased by 30%.

Dimension 3: Pronunciation

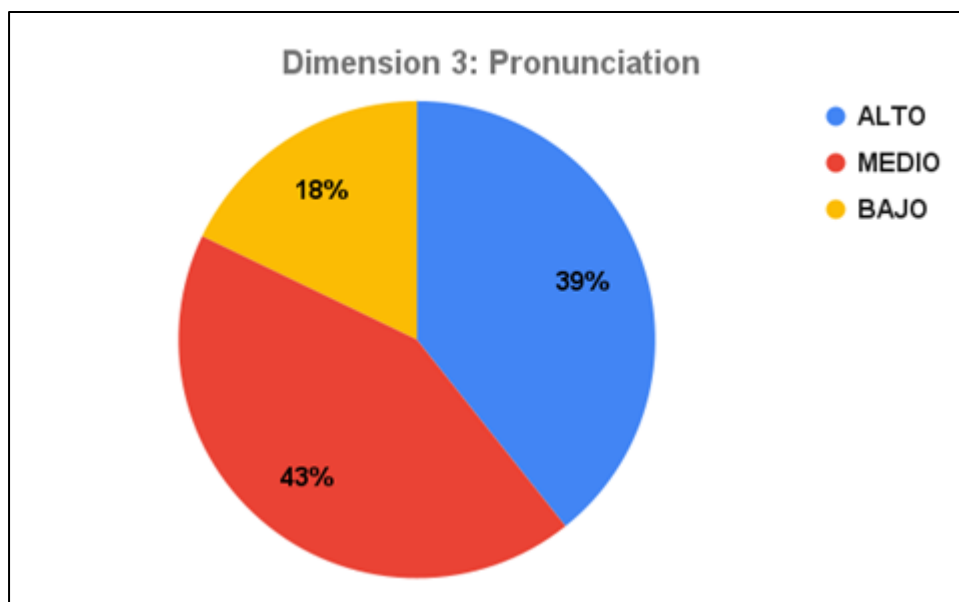


Ilustración 8. Dimension Pronunciation (Post-test). Prepared by the authors.

The pronunciation dimension shows a simple reduction in students at the **low** level, similar to the **medium** level; on the other hand, a significant improvement is evidenced at the **high** level since it increases with a difference of 34% of students.

Dimension 4: Fluency

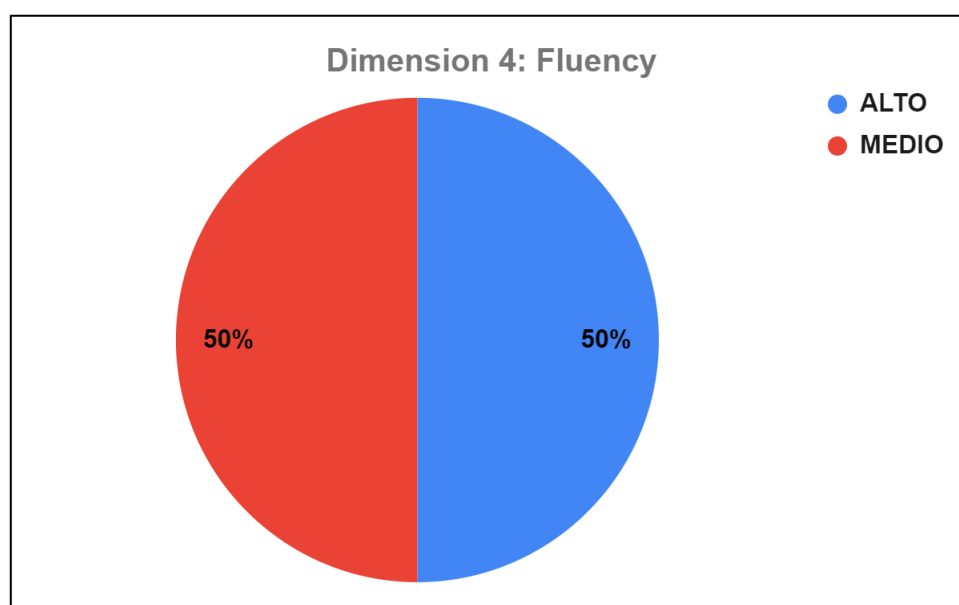


Ilustración 9. Dimension Fluency (Post-test). Prepared by the authors.

In the fluency dimension, there is significant improvement across all levels. No students are at a **low** level, and the number of students with medium fluency performance has

decreased to 17%. Moreover, the percentage of students achieving a high level has increased from 19% to 50%.

Diagnóstico General

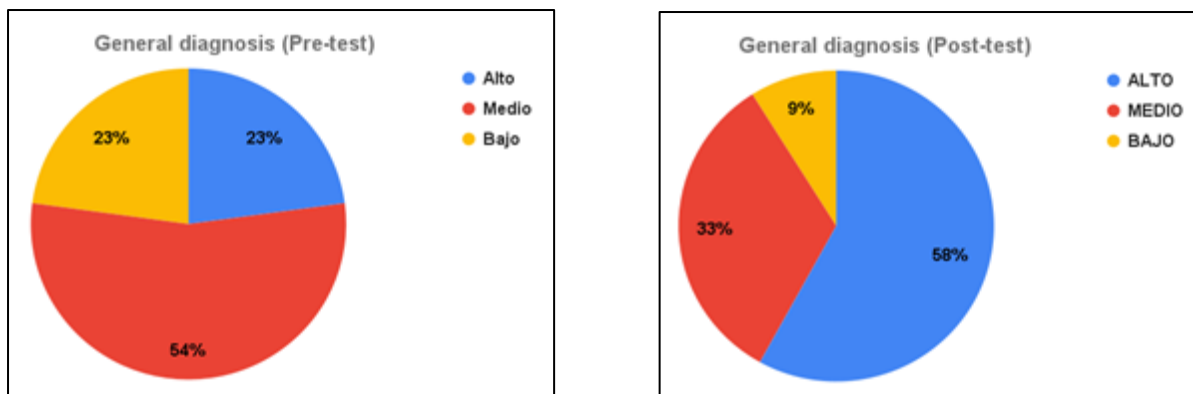


Ilustración 10. General diagnosis (Post-test). Prepared by the authors.

The general diagnosis after the application of the system of activities shows a marked improvement since 35% of the students located in the medium and low levels moved to the high level with 58% of the total number of students.

4.3 Hypothesis testing

Scientific hypothesis: If a system of activities based on the use of the active role-play technique is applied, then speaking skills will improve satisfactorily in college students at their sixth level 'A' in the major of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages (PNFL) during the term 2023-1.

Statistical hypothesis

H0: There is no relationship between the improvement of speaking skills in English and the application of a system of activities based on the use of role-play.

H1: There is a relationship between the improvement of speaking skills in English and the application of a system of activities based on the use of role-play.

To determine the chis-squared statistic value it was used the following formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

χ^2 : Estadístico Chi cuadrado.
 O_i : frecuencias observadas.
 E_i : frecuencias esperadas.
 $E_i = \frac{n_{i.} * n_{.j}}{n}$

Ilustración 11. Chi-squared formula. Prepared by the authors.

The critical value for the chi-squared statistic is determined by:

$$\chi^2 (1-\alpha) * (r-1) (c-1)$$

Degree of freedom:

$$DF = (r-1) (c-1) = 2$$

Margin of error

$$\alpha = 0,05$$

4.3.1 Value scale for students on the Pre-test and Post-test.

Instruments	High	Medium	Low	Total
Pre-test	5	12	5	22
Post-test	16	9	3	28

Tabla 4. Value scale for students on the pre-test and post-test. Prepared by the authors.

4.3.2 Chi-squared calculator (X2)

Observed frequencies.

Observed	High	Medium	Low	Total
Pre-test	5	12	5	22
Post-test	16	9	3	28
Total	21	21	8	50

Tabla 5. Observed frequencies. Prepared by the authors.

Expected Frequencies

Expected	High	Medium	Low	Total
Pre-test	$21 * 22 / 50 = 9$	$21 * 22 / 50 = 8.6$	$8 * 21 / 50 = 3.4$	22
Post-test	$21 * 28 / 50 = 12$	$21 * 28 / 50 = 11.4$	$8 * 28 / 50 = 4.6$	28
Total	21	21	8	50

Tabla 6. Expected frequencies. Prepared by the authors.

Chi-squared

Chi-squared	High	Medium	Low
Pre-test	1.9	0.8	0.6
Post-test	1.5	0.6	0.5
Total (X^2)	6.1		

Tabla 7. Chi-squared. Prepared by the authors.

4.3.3 Hypothesis testing

Chi-squared	Critical value
6.1	5.991464547

Tabla 8. Hypothesis testing values. Prepared by the authors.

Hypothesis testing involves comparing the results obtained from the chi-square and the critical value. According to the theory, if the chi-square contains a higher value than the critical value, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. Thus, there is a relationship between the improvement of speaking skills in English and the application of a system of activities based on the use of role-play in college students at their sixth level 'A' in the PINE major at the Technical University of Machala.

4.4 Analysis and Discussion of results

In this section, the results obtained from the instruments applied in the research are analyzed and discussed to determine whether they positively influence the dependent variable. The initial state of the population consisted of a group of five students with problems in speaking skills, i.e., they struggled when communicating in English. Regarding the students, according to the observations of the teachers, they concluded that there was a lack of motivation on the part of the students to learn, and it is worth noting that approximately one-third of the population was absent or did not attend classes punctually.

After implementing the system of activities and analyzing the data from the post-test, it is evident that all dimensions show significant improvements in speaking skills. As an illustration, in the grammar and vocabulary dimension, there is a notable improvement with the students using the structures and vocabulary appropriate to the context. On the other hand, students' pronunciation showed significant progress because the intonation and rhythm of the words were clear and precise. Finally, more than half of the population was able to communicate fluently.

The system of activities based on the active role-play technique is presented as a viable option for teachers who need to improve their students' speaking skills. This technique also allows the improvement of the teacher-student relationship due to the higher interaction between them, as well as influencing the students' self-confidence to communicate and the confidence to work as a team.

In this chapter, the activity system was described, and the data were verified through mathematical analysis, including the chi-square formula. The results confirmed a relationship between the improvement of speaking skills in the English language and the application of a

system of activities based on role-play in students of sixth semester parallel "A" of Pedagogy of Foreign National Languages period 2023-1.

4.5 Conclusions

Based on the reviewed bibliography and the theoretical foundation, the active role-play technique was theoretically described and defined as an opportunity for students to practice real-life situations, practice speaking in a free and creative way, and have the opportunity to develop communicative competence.

The application of the pedagogical test called the pre-test objectively identified a deficiency in the students' speaking skills in the English language. These results served as a basis for implementing the intervention in the pedagogical practice, aiming to improve this deficiency.

According to the pre-test results, it was appropriate to implement a system of activities based on the use of the active teaching-learning technique of role play, which aimed to improve the students' speaking skills in the English language. During the intervention period, not only improvement in speaking skills was noted, but also remarkable progress in areas such as confidence and motivation.

Finally, the data obtained from the pedagogical post-test, applied after the pedagogical intervention, showed that implementation of the system of activities resulted in a high level of efficacy in all the dimensions evaluated in speaking skills.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

OBSERVATION GUIDE

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Población: 30 estudiantes	Fecha de aplicación: 21-08-2023

CARACTERÍSTICAS	SI CUMPLE	NO CUMPLE	OBSERVACIONES
El estudiante siente confianza al momento de hablar el segundo idioma			
El estudiante tiene conocimientos de los idioms y sus equivalentes en español			
El estudiante conoce sobre reglas gramaticales			
El estudiante tiene mejoras de pronunciación			
El estudiante tiene dificultades al comunicarse			

Annex 2

Pre-test

1.- Match the words with the correct definition

Look through	recordar
Look up to	Investigar
Look after	revisar
Look back	buscar
Look into	admirar
Look up	cuidar

2.- Choose the correct option for the word in bold: I don't **feel like** going swimming today.

- To seem to be something
- To have a wish for something
- To have feelings for something

3.- Choose the correct option:

- I'm feeling a bit ill, I wish I hadn't eaten all that cake.
- I'm feeling a bit ill, I wish I haven't eaten all that cake.
- I'm feeling a bit ill, I wish I wasn't eating all that cake.

4.- Complete with the correct option:

I know where I'll be ten years from now. I _____ (work) 50 hours a week in a small office

- will have worked
- won't be working
- will work

5.- ¿Ha enfrentado dificultades al intentar mantener conversaciones con un interlocutor en inglés?

- Si
- A veces
- Nunca

6.- How many hours do you spend practicing your English pronunciation?

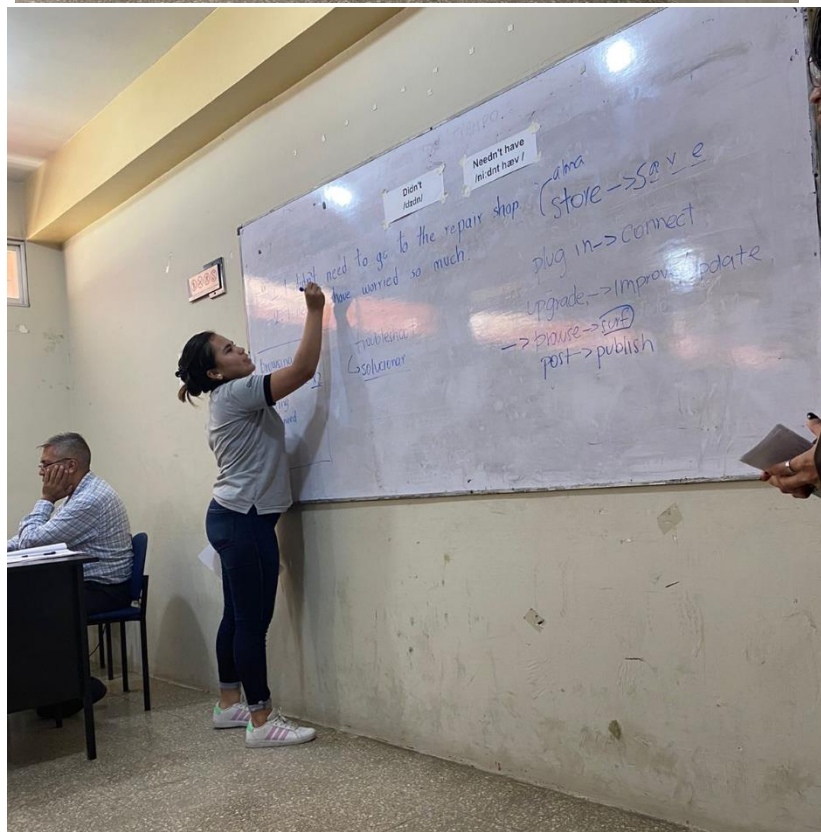
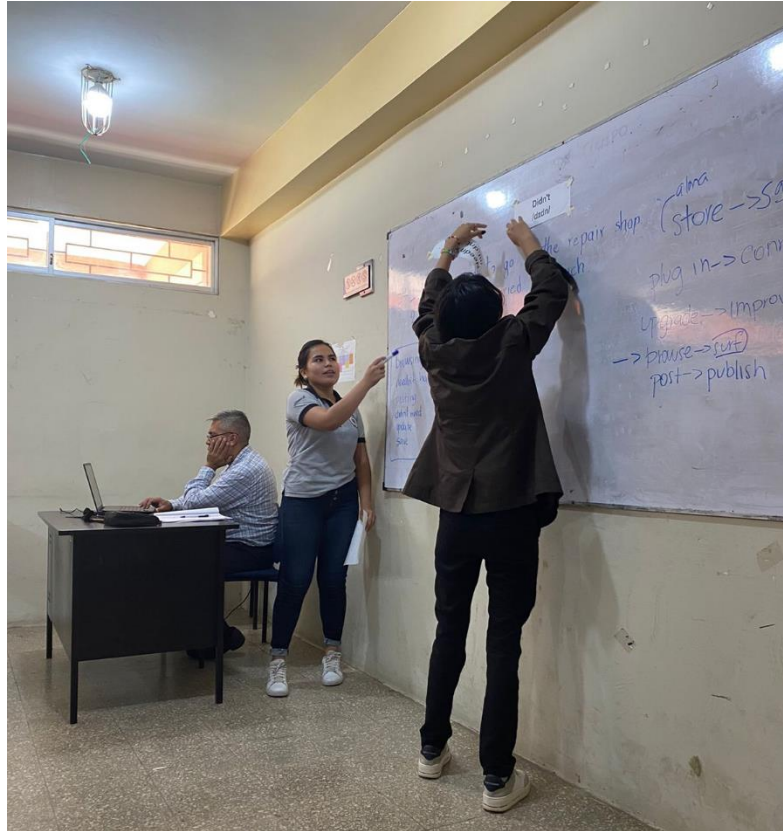
- 3-6 hours
- 1-3 hours
- Less than 1 hour

7.- En una escala del 0-10, cuando tiene que comunicarse en inglés, ¿Qué tan confiado se siente?

- 8-10
- 5-7
- 0-4

Annex 3

Application of the pedagogical proposal



Annex 4

SPEAKING ACTIVITY



Role plays

To do the role play, students must:

- Form groups of 6 people (only 6 people)
- Create a dialogue which the characters (you) are located at the airport
- Record a video including phrases that you have seen before:
- expressing frustration:
 - I can't(do that),
 - Im hopeless (at...),
 - This is hopeless!,
 - No chance,
 - I give up,
 - I'll never (come up with anything(
 - (It 's) pointless.
- Phrases for fluency
 - Calm down,
 - That's just it,
 - Give it a rest,
 - Out of order,
 - ...again,
 - can't be serious
- vocabulary about technology
 - posting
 - update
 - save
 - browsing
- And grammar about
 - "needn't have"
 - "didn't have"
- video length: 4-6 minutes
- Everyone has to participate

Note: teacher is going to assess with a speaking rubric

Annex 5

RUBRIC	EXCELLENT	GOOD	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
GRAMMAR	Uses the structures learned in class depending on contexts with only a few grammatical errors.	Uses the structures learned in class but makes some errors.	Does not use the structures learned in class.
VOCABULARY	Uses appropriate expressions and a wide range of vocabulary learned in and out class.	Uses varied vocabulary and expressions learned in class, and makes only a few errors in word choice	Uses limited vocabulary and expressions and makes frequent errors in word choice. Does not try to use new words learned in class or expand vocabulary and expressions.
PRONUNCIATION	Pronunciation, rhythm and intonation are almost always clear and accurate. Every word was understood by the listener.	Pronunciation, rhythm and intonation are almost clear and accurate, but only occasionally difficult to understand. 1 to 3 words couldn't be understood by the listener	Pronunciation, rhythm and intonation errors sometimes make it difficult to understand the student. More than 5 words couldn't be understood by the listener
FLUENCY	Speaks smoothly with little hesitation and doesn't interrupt the flow of conversation. Speaks with confidence.	Speaks with some hesitation, but it doesn't usually interrupt the flow of conversation.	Speaks with some hesitation, which sometimes interferes with communication.

Annex 6

Post-test

1.- Match with the correct answer

She _____ study for the test because she had already mastered the material	didn't need to
I _____ buy groceries today because I already had everything I needed at home.	
She _____ worried about the weather; the sun is shining brightly all day.	needn't have
They _____ stayed up so late to finish the project; the deadline was extended until next week.	

2.- Match with the correct synonym

surf	update
publish	browse
upgrade	post
save	plug
connect	store

3.- Match with the correct meaning:

which phrase means "ya bájale"?	out of order
which phrase means "ahí está!"?	give it a rest
which phrase means "estás fuera de lugar"?	that's just it

3.- Choose the correct answer

In this sentence: **Did you go to school yesterday? No I didn't.** Is the /t/ sound pronounced?

- s. True
- t. False

4.- Choose the correct pronunciation of the word in bold according connected speech:

He **needn't have** rushed to the airport; his flight was delayed by two hours.

- u. /ni:dnt hæv/
- v. /ni:dntæv/
- w. /ni:dnthæv/

6.- According to the performed dialogs in class, do you consider yourself to have improved your fluency?

- x. Yes, I do
- y. Perhaps
- z. No, I don't