The effects of role-play based activities on the levels of student spoken production in a large EFL 10th grade

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THE EFFECTS OF ROLE-PLAY BASED ACTIVITIES ON THE LEVELS OF STUDENT SPOKEN PRODUCTION IN A LARGE EFL 10TH GRADE

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Abstract

The objective of this action was to explore the effects of role-play-based activities on the levels of student spoken production in a large EFL grade. The study was undertaken in a subsidized school in Puente Alto in a 10th class consisting of 46 students. The primary focus for this action research was centred on the relatively low levels of spoken production during the English class which has been a problem for students. To begin with, the researcher commenced investigating the nature spoken production identifying common mistakes that occur during speaking. Later, investigation on large classes was undertaking to understand common problems and useful strategies that could augment students to speak in English. In addition, role-plays research was also revised to seek for a strategy that can effectively contribute the enhancement of speaking in large classes. Finally, a holistic approach that could help in the design of the intervention was researched to teach speaking. This concern led to a qualitative research design as an action study consisted of two role-play interventions. The methods used to collect data where implemented during the first and the second intervention and consisted of questionnaires answered by students, observations and artifacts analysis. The findings indicated that role-play-based activities had an overall positive impact on the student spoken production especially on pronunciation and also on the levels of students’ engagement. In addition, role-play-based activities contributed to a higher collaborative learning as learners felt more confident when creating their role plays and speaking in the target language.
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*Key words*: spoken production, large classes, role-play based activities, teaching speaking cycle
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Introduction

This study had the objective of investigating the effects of role-play-based activities in the levels of student spoken production in a large EFL 10\textsuperscript{th} grade. The study was undertaken in a subsidized school in Puente Alto in a 10\textsuperscript{th}class, consisting of 46 students. This grade has four hours of English per week and the syllabus is aligned with \textit{Bases Curriculares}. The level of English of the students was varied and difficult to label in a single category because they had not taken any test that could firmly establish the level of English of the group. Consequently, the group was described as a mixed heterogeneous group that contains student of different levels English. The information about the students’ performance was collected from the available results in the school such as previous assessments of the first term.

In analysing the form in which the English course was developed, it was apparent that classes were primarily centred on using the book “\textit{teens in motion I}”, which was developed by Ministerio de Educación. The book is divided in 4 units and was designed according to \textit{Bases Curriculares Ingles} using a task-based and communicative approach. Even though the book presents a syllabus to accomplish the objectives in \textit{Bases Curriculares}, the teacher of English decided to combine it additional activities such as grammar activities and reading worksheets because the implementation of speaking activities, for example, took much time. In terms of learning design, the teacher planned the classes taking into consideration the practice of grammar structures, lexical learning and the development of reading and listening skills. This decision made the teacher leave little time for students to practice speaking. When this research commenced, speaking activities had only been worked
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in presentations of different topics, such as public speaking presentations. For instance, during the first term students had to present about different social issues in the world. This was the only task in which students undertook specific speaking tasks and most of the students were not able to speak naturally and fluently. In fact, most students memorized a script that was the basis of their spoken production and felt nervous when speaking in front of the class because they were afraid of making pronunciation mistakes. In addition, during the classes, students interacted in Spanish most of the time, limiting the spoken production to isolated answers to participate in the classroom. The previously described scene created a context that was not favourable to foster effectively speaking production in the classroom. An additional factor that made the teacher to discard speaking activities during the class was the large number of students. It was demanding to monitor and assess 46 students in the classroom. This belief made the teacher focus on written activities leaving students with few opportunities to speak in English.

As a result of the previously mentioned context, the primary focus for this action research was centred on the relatively low levels of spoken production during the English class which has been a problem for students. For this reason, the challenge of this study was to investigate a strategy that could potentially improve student spoken production in a large class context. As a result, literature regarding to spoken production and large classes was used to primarily understand the focus of this action research. As it was stated before, this research started by investigating the nature of spoken production and large classes. Understanding these two concepts was fundamental to explore the context in which this study would be undertaken. After
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researching literature related to these concepts, it was relevant to search for a strategy that could be implemented in a context involving a limited spoken production in a large EFL setting. The strategy chosen was role-play based activities, which was implemented using a teaching speaking cycle. These two last concepts were investigated as well in order to introduce the guiding research question for this study in order to respond to the challenge of improving the levels of spoken production in the students. For the same reason, the central literature review for this action research was distributed into four major topics: Spoken production, large classes, role-plays and teaching speaking cycle.

Literature review

Spoken production

The challenge for this study was to enhance the levels of spoken production inside a large class where students occasionally spoke English. One of the reasons for this was the over reliance on overuse of written activities that gave no time to develop and practice this skill. Given the context that students did not effectively speak during English classes is that exploring the nature of spoken production was investigated. Doing research on this subject contributed not only to understand the underlying processes that affect students’ speaking but also to search for strategies that could enhance the skill in large classes. In this respect, Levelt (1989) was one of the first researchers who investigated the development of a model to understand spoken production. Levelt (1989) asserts that when a speaker generates words, they are involved in underlying processes that are incredibly complex because these expresses
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form and meaning at the same time. After having investigated this phenomenon, Levelt (1989) proposed a model that consists of three interrelated stages that are implicated in spoken production. The first stage is characterized as conceptualization and is described as where speech production begins and where speakers select the information they want to express depending on the speaker’s background knowledge. This stage may cause problems when the speaker tries to produce speech, but does not know what to say due to insufficient background. Formulation, which is the second stage of the model, is the process which the ideas that exist in the speaker’s mind during the conceptual preparation are connected and ordered in specific words and phrases making the learners create a number of lexico-grammatical choices. This stage is usually described as the most challenging stage in level’s model since speakers have to make decisions in terms of tense, mood, number, etc. Some of the usual problems that may arise in this stage are that learners do not know how to express their meaning grammatically (Goh & Burns, 2012). Articulation is the final stage and is produced when the message is carried out in the forms of sound waves to the listener and deals with pronunciation. These three concepts contributed to the understanding of the core processes that may affect the student spoken production during classes and also helped understand determined problems that may arise in each of these three stages. For instance, a typical problem that may occur during the articulation stage is that learners do not know how to pronounce words in the target language. This particular example means that although students can effectively conceptualize and formulate the message, he will not able to transform these ideas into sounds. The three concepts were relevant to anticipate problems and mistakes
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when students spoke. Additionally, Bock & Levelt (1994) states that these stages interact simultaneously and this process is key to how individuals access words that are stored mentally when they speak (As cited in Goh & Burns, 2012).

Goh & Burns (2012) point out that these processes can help understand that language learners do not all produce speech at the same rate because some of them can be able to speak fluently whereas other learners may produce unclear speech. A factor that influences this is the degree of automatization. Shiffrin & Schneider (as cited in Goh & Burns, 2012) asserts that automatization is produced when skills and knowledge are well-learned through constant use and rehearsal. This fact describes why some students are able to speak more fluently than other learners and was a reason to involve more speaking activities in the classroom. Automatization would be a desired performance for students during the English class, however finding strategies that promoted this element was another challenge of this research.

As described previously, spoken production is considered a cognitive process; however it is also influenced by affective factors (Wang, 2014). Consequently, spoken production is a process influenced by the interplay of cognitive and emotional factors which exert heavy demands in language learners during speech production which can have a direct impact on the quality of their spoken language (Goh & Burns 2012). Understanding of emotional factors that may affect student speaking was also relevant since some students may not be affected by a cognitive process, but an emotional feature. For the same reason, distinguishing cognitive from emotional factors that interfere with students’ spoken production was also a positive contribution for this study. In addition, O’Malley & Valdez (1996) adds that oral
production is a process where people have to take into consideration the conversations’ context. Correspondingly, Goh & Burns (2012) coincide with the idea that spoken production is also influenced by social factors. This third dimension of speaking involved social factors, which contributed in the understanding that speaking was influenced by a specific context.

Analysing all these factors was relevant when selecting a strategy that could help learners to improve their spoken production because understanding the cognitive, affective and social features of speaking production allowed the researcher to search for a strategy that could accomplish with the demands of the group. It was also useful for developing the data collection tools strategies because by understanding the nature of spoken production the data analysis could be focused on the factors previously mentioned.

Large classes

One of the characteristics of this study was that it was undertaken in the context of a large class cohort. This important feature was one of the main focuses of the research because spoken production activities were not recurrent among the usual practices of this class. The large number of students created the need for the decision of implementing written activities instead of spoken tasks. For the same reason, this was a pedagogical challenge for the design of the intervention which needed to search for a strategy that could enhance the levels of students’ spoken production in a large class. As a result, the researcher of this study understood that research on large
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classes would be relevant to understand how the object of this study would be influenced by the number of students in the class and to search for a strategy that could accomplish the requirements of the context.

In relation to this topic, Todd (2012) observes that in most educational contexts around the world, classes of 40, 50 or even more students are common. In Chile, research has reported the average number of students per class to be over 38 students, in which teachers are overloaded and constantly concerned about classroom management, which interferes with the effectiveness of the learning process (Inostroza, 2015). One of the recurrent difficulties confronting language educators is the low levels of students’ involvement in the lesson, because teachers are not able to ensure higher levels of students’ participation in the class due to the large number of students per class (Inostroza, 2011). This reality is reflected in spoken production in the language classroom because students cannot be easily engaged in speaking tasks and therefore become reluctant to speak English during classes. In relation to this point, Cross (1995) argues that it is usually difficult to teach speaking in a large class because of the number of students and the limited time to check their speaking (as cited in Sze, 2016). In reaction to this, Sze (2016) used podcasts to reduce anxiety in students and to provide them with more opportunities to interact. A different vision of teaching speaking in large classes is addressed by Forero Rocha and Nakabugo, Opolot-Okurut, Ssbbunga, Maani & Byamugisha (as cited in Inostroza, 2015) advocate the view that large classes can also be an opportunity to create meaningful interaction and cooperation among students. For instance, it is suggested that one form of creating meaningful interaction and cooperation among students in large
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class settings is through pair work and group work. Forero Rocha (as cited in Inostroza, 2015) argues that these strategies have the advantage that they encourage learners work cooperatively, and students are less likely to become bored or lose interest because they are actively involved. Due to this last point, a strategy that fostered cooperative learning and that motivated students to participate in speaking activities was chosen.

**Role-play-based pedagogical activities**

Role-play-based pedagogical activities were the strategy chosen to assess the influence of the object on this approach. As it was previously described, it was necessary to search for a strategy that could accomplish the requirements of the context, that enhance spoken production and that could be use cooperatively among students. For the same reason, before implementing role-play based activities were to understand some its main characteristics and contributions to spoken production and large classes.

Porter-Ladousse (1987) suggest that role-play activities can range from highly-controlled guided conversations at one end of the scale, to improvised drama activities at the other; from simple rehearsed dialogue performance, to highly complex simulated scenarios. Role-play-based pedagogical strategy can potentially contribute to highly motivated students and a more creative learning environment (Alabsi, 2016) and is a technique that give learners the opportunity to practice improving a range of real-life spoken language in the classroom (Chen-jun, 2006). As a result of a research involving EFL students that used role-play activities, Islam &
Islam (2012) conclude that role play techniques can have a positive impact in improving speaking skills, as it gives students and opportunity to speak in different situations of real life and in a large classroom can offer a potentially effective technique to use to observe the performance of a number of students when time is constrained. Due to the nature of role-play to provide multiple forms of activities that enhance spoken production and to contribute to highly motivated students was that role-play-based activities was the strategy chosen to be implemented. Role-play was a strategy that could respond to a large class in order to enhance speech production. Additionally, in order to implement this strategy, it was essential to look into an approach to teach speaking that took into consideration the nature of spoken production. After researching different approaches, Goh & Burns (2012) proposed a cycle to teach speaking holistically taking into account the different stages to produce spoken speech.

**Teaching speaking cycle**

As stated earlier, role-played-based activities was the strategy chosen to enhance spoken production, however it was necessary to search for an approach that could guide the implementation of this strategy. In this respect, searching for an approach that could adapt to the challenges to enhance spoken production in a large EFL context was necessary. For this reason, Goh & Burns (2012) propose a teaching speaking cycle that responds to cognitive, affective and social factors of the students that takes into consideration the different stages of spoken production. The researchers suggest a holistic methodological framework that comprises knowledge
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of the language and discourse, core speaking skills and communication and discourse strategies. This methodological framework develops students’ speaking enhancing pre-task planning and task repetition (task-based approach). Additionally, activities focus learners’ attention on language, skills and strategies and develop metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation of their speaking and learning. All these factors could be used when implementing role-play-based activities through the use of a series of tasks, reflection and metacognitive strategies. A teaching-speaking cycle provides a cycle of seven steps in which the learner is involved in a learning cycle of speaking where he not only speaks in the target language but also reflects on their own learning. This approach responds to the nature of spoken production because it takes into consideration all the dimensions that influence the speaking process. For the same reason, a teaching speaking cycle provided a coherent response to role-play-based strategies in a large class because gave students a consistent cycle to practice speaking in a systematic structure. This cycle helped influence the design of the intervention in similar stages to the cycle proposed by Goh & Burns (2012).

Research question

As a consequence of having analysed not only the context in which this research was undertaken, but also the problem that spoken production was not being fostered in the English classes, is that this study investigated four main concepts to efficiently understand that the problem. To begin with, the researcher commenced investigating some of the common features of spoken production identifying common mistakes that could occur during speaking. Later, investigation on large classes was
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undertaking to understand useful strategies that could enhance students to increase spoken production. After this, Role-plays research was also revised in order to seek for positive elements that can effectively contribute the enhancement of speaking in large classes. Finally, a holistic approach that could help in the design of the intervention was researched to teach speaking. All these factors led the researcher to reflect on a question that could respond to the challenge of improving speaking skills in a large classroom. Given the context provided and the literature research investigated, the research question defined to guide this study was:

What effects do role-play-based pedagogical activities that use a teaching speaking cycle have on the levels of student spoken production in a large EFL 10th grade?

This question was designed taking into account all the factors that could influence the object of study for this research project. In order to respond the question, the researcher designed a methodological strategy to collect data in two stages that could collect rich data. This strategy will be described in the next section of this thesis. All the tools selected pointed to understand the influence of role-play-based strategies in the levels of students spoken production in a large classroom. For the same reason, the data collection tools were selected according to the literature studied the design of the intervention

Methodology

Burns (2009) proposes that action research is framed by the interaction of action and research that involve developmental interventions to bring about improvement and change bridging the gap between the ideal and the real in social
situations. For this reason, the data collection tools strategy was implemented in order to understand the effects of the intervention on the level of student spoken production. This research was implemented in two distinct stages of data collection that were divided into pre-intervention and post intervention data collection stages. The data collection strategy outlined three data collection tools that were used during the first and second stage for this action research project. The data collection tools chosen were questionnaires, observations and an artefact analysis.

**Data Collection strategy**

Throughout this stage, the teacher-researcher undertook an intervention for this action research project to explore how the object can be influenced by the use of a specific strategy. At this stage, all the data collection tools were aligned to the understanding of the object and the context, since role-play-based pedagogical strategies that use a teaching speaking cycle had not implemented yet, for the same reason, the data collection strategy was implemented into two stages. The first was implemented to explore the current situation. The second was implemented after the implementation of the intervention of this study.

**Questionnaires**

The first data collection chosen was questionnaires which according to Mertler (2014) are described as the administration of a set of written or verbally questions or statements to a sample of people who respond them and then return their answers to the researcher. Questionnaires were useful in large contexts because they
allowed the teacher-researcher to ask several questions to the whole class in a specific period of time. In addition, questionnaires are divided into two categories: Simple, composed of closed-response rating scales, or complex, open-ended questions. While the first type questionnaires is more a quantitative tool to collect information, since it gives numeral information, the second type is more qualitative in design because they may reveal unexpected thoughts and feelings from students and is narrative, which is a characteristic of qualitative data. The kind of questionnaire that was implemented in this study was a combination of both methods. The questionnaire was oriented to understanding student learning preferences. The students were asked to respond a written questionnaire whose first section made them rank 6 strategies commonly used to learn English with a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The strategies that they had to rank were: doing grammar exercises, listening to different types of audios, reading different types of texts, doing role-played-based activities, writing different kind of texts and doing projects that involve English. The second stage of the questionnaire was focused on 3 open-ended questions:

1. What strategy do you prefer the most to learn English? Why
2. What strategy do you prefer the least to learn English? Why?
3. The last question asks students to explain why they ranked the strategies with certain number.

The reason for implementing this data collection tool was to observe and analyse how students perceive the use of role-plays inside the classroom and to obtain data on what they know and they do not know about the strategy. In the same way, the relation between role-plays and other strategies to learn English could be
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established using the narrative of the students. During the second stage of data collection, a second, different questionnaire was used. This time the questions were more related to the role that played the strategy during the weeks it was implemented. This time a questionnaire with open-ended questions was designed to understand student responses to the strategy in their levels of spoken production.

Observation

A second source of data was classroom observation through video-recording. According to Burns (2010), this data collection method has the advantage of capturing oral interactions exactly as they were said, which was beneficial for the research project as the object of the study is the levels of student spoken production. The observation was undertaken when students had to perform a first role-played-based activity. In order to do this, a protocol that allows the identification of significant issues during a role-play-based activity was used to obtain data from the recordings. This type of observation was used during the two stages of data collection, in the pre and post intervention, and the main objective for doing this, was to visualize effects after the intervention on the levels of students production. For the same reason, the same observation protocol was used in both stages.

An additional advantage of observation is that provides data that can be viewed repeatedly which was beneficial for further interpretation (Mertler, 2014). Although video-recording offers some benefits, it has its limitations as well. Background noises can prevent the researcher from hearing what is being sought and video cameras can only capture what is happening in a given direction (Mertler,
THE EFFECTS OF ROLE-PLAY BASED ACTIVITIES ON THE LEVELS OF STUDENT SPOKEN PRODUCTION IN A LARGE EFL 10TH GRADE 2014). These factors prevented the researcher from observing what happened with some students when doing the role-play activities and prevented the researcher from listening to some interactions that occurred in the class.

In order to implement this type of observation, a camera was set up several days in advance of the recording in order for both the researcher and the students to be more comfortable when being videotaped because students were able to become more accustomed to seeing the camera in the classroom (Mertler, 2014).

**Artifacts analysis**

The last data collection tool for this stage was based on an analysis of artefacts. Mills (as cited in Mertler, 2014) defines these are any written or visual sources of data contained within the classroom that contribute to the understanding of what is occurring in the classroom. In this case, the artifacts that were subject to analysis were student’s performance in different role plays, analysis of text books, Bases Curriculares Inglés and lesson plans. During the pre-intervention stage, students were recorded in their first performances with a video camera. During this stage, students had to perform a role-play activity. Before doing their first role-play students were presented with different expressions, in the form of formulaic expressions that are normally used in a restaurant. After that, they had time to prepare their role-plays in pairs or groups of three students to finally present their role-play. This data collection tool provided rich data of the levels of student spoken production because it can give data about the current nature of the object and the effects that can be seen after the post intervention.
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The other artifacts chosen were implemented to analyze the ideal role of spoken production in terms of lesson plans and how role-played-based activities are conceived not only in the Chilean 12th English syllabus, but also in the classroom context.

In order to analyse the data collected during the two stages, time triangulation was undertaken, as data was collected at different points in time. Burns (2010) suggests that triangulation means collecting more than one type of data in order to compare, contrast and cross-check the data against the research question. This research triangulated data from 3 types of sources (questionnaires, observation and artifacts) analysing the main codes and themes presented in these tools.

Data Analysis strategy

After the first and second stage of data collection, data was systematically collected searching for patterns and codes that data suggested to be meaningful to understand the research question. For this reason, a data-driven approach of analysis was implemented to organize the understanding of the research question. Thomas (2006) asserts that the outcome of an inductive analysis is the development of categories into a model or framework that summarizes the raw data and conveys key themes and processes (Gibbs, 2007). In order to accomplish this, coding was fundamental in the process to make sense of data. Consequently, a coding process proposed by Creswell (2002) was implemented. Creswell (2002) suggests that, in order to make sense of data, we should divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy and collapse the
codes into broad themes. In practical terms, the data collected during the two stages was themed and labelled into common patterns with the use of codes. At the beginning many codes could arise, however all those codes could be conducted to different categories and subcategories until saturation was achieved; this meant that no more categories could arise from this process. These final categories taken from the data allowed the researcher to understand the question for this action research and guided the development of a hypothesis. After all this process, data allowed creation of a grounded theory for the research question.

**Data Interpretation strategy**

After reaching a hypothesis through the analysis of data, the researcher contrasted the effects that role-play-based pedagogical strategies had on the levels of student spoken production with the existing literature on the effectiveness of role-play to enhance the speaking skills in the classroom. For instance, Islam & Islam (2012) concludes that role play techniques can have a positive impact in improving speaking skills and Chen-jun(2006) argues that role play can improve a range of real-life spoken language in the classroom. Altun (2015) supports the notion that role play activities improve learners’ speaking skills. After this process, the teacher-researcher was able to triangulate the information that emerged from the data to establish his own hypothesis about the use of role-played-based activities in the levels of student spoken production, hypothesis that could be compared to the existing research.
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Research Findings

The aim of this research study was to understand the effects of role-play based activities that use a teaching speaking cycle on the levels of student spoken production. As a consequence of the analysis of three data collection sources used during the pre and post intervention of the strategy (Questionnaires, observation and artefact), eight major findings emerged from the analysis. Next, these eight findings are presented.

A key initial finding was that role-play-based activities had a generally positive impact on levels of correct pronunciation demonstrated by students. However, equally the data suggested that when students practiced their spoken performance, they tended to become anxious about the form of their pronunciation. This action caused learners to focus their attention on producing correct pronunciation. As it could be observed in the first intervention students had to perform as if they were at the restaurant. In order to do this, they received expressions commonly used in this context. The data suggested that students tended to write a script which they repeated and memorized for a final presentation. Through the process of repetition students tended to improve their pronunciation mistakes asking the teacher or a student with a better level of English for correction of specific words. Students were worried about speaking with a good pronunciation instead of achieving a real communication. The data revealed that students tended to speak less during the preparation of the role-play in the pre-intervention. During the post intervention, students tended to speak more during the preparation of the role-play practicing more what they were going to say than during the pre-intervention. Although students had
the same amount of time during the two interventions, it was during the last one
where they practiced and spoke more in English. During this stage, students corrected
their pronunciation mistakes using the same strategies that were applied in the pre-
tervention. Additionally, the data suggested that the pronunciation observed in the
final performances of the post-intervention demonstrated to be better and more
understandable. When analyzing the students’ responses in the questionnaires, one
important finding was related to pronunciation. Students wrote that “doing role-play
based activities were beneficial for pronunciation” (translated from Spanish) and that
they “helped to improve pronunciation” (translated from Spanish). They also added
that role-plays “allow you to speak English better” (translated from Spanish) and that
“after practicing the role-play your pronunciation is better” (translated from Spanish).
Consequently, the data emphasized that role-plays helped to improve pronunciation
as the observation revealed the same results in the majority of the students. As a
result, data suggested that practicing and repetition were key factors to effectively
improve students’ pronunciation.

A Second finding that the data revealed was that role-play-based activities
tended to encourage higher levels of student engagement with participation in role-
plays. When students felt more confident performing a role, they tended to be more
engaged and productive to interact in role-plays and to speak in English. However,
the production of a minority of students suggested that even higher engagement levels
did not necessarily improve the levels of spoken production. According to the data,
the significant majority of students agreed that it was a “fun activity to learn”
(translated from Spanish), other students mentioned that it was entertaining because
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“doing role-play-based activities was different from the usual activities done in the classroom” (translated from Spanish). This last point can be contrasted with the analysis of lesson plans that the teacher implemented before the intervention. In this analysis, the data obtained revealed that classes did not include the use of role-plays or other activities where students could interact using the target language. On the contrary, most of the activities were focused on written activities where students wrote their answers into a worksheet. The data from Bases Curriculares Inglés suggested that communication was more meaningful when the message was relevant and motivating for students, this made them feel engaged with their learning process.

After the intervention of the strategy, students reported that they enjoyed role-play based activities because most of them were having fun creating their role-plays. The majority of the students also mentioned that role-play based activities motivated them to participate in the class. In addition, the observation revealed that students were engaged during the elaboration and implementation of role-plays because they interacted with their peers, laughed and gave ideas to construct the role-played based activity. Consequently, not only the observation, but also questionnaires suggested that students enjoyed undertaking role-plays. Engagement was crucial for most of students who participated and spoke in activities; however data suggested that this level of engagement did not improve the levels of spoken production in a small number of students because even though they participated in the activity, they were not able to communicate simple oral sentences.

Another finding was that students tended to actively participate and speak when performing a role; however most of the students needed to write and memorize
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a script when speaking to achieve this outcome. However, a minority of students was able to speak more spontaneously and did not need to use a script. Data suggested that when students previously planned their role-plays, they felt more confident to participate in them. The data revealed that when students became more familiar with role-play-based activities, they interacted more in English speaking with their peers. The data from the observation revealed that during the first intervention, students tended to not interact in English until they presented their role-play. The data suggested that after the implementation of the strategy, students tended to interact more speaking in English and practicing their presentations because, according to the data from the observation and questionnaires, the majority of the students felt more confident when they previously planned their speaking. The data also revealed that most students participated in the activities because they role-plays were highly interactive for them. The data from questionnaires revealed that students described role plays as “more interactive than the traditional activities” (translated from Spanish) and as “interactive because you can share experiences with your peers” (translated from Spanish).

As a result of implementing the strategy, students tended to be more spontaneous, this means not to plan what they had to say, when speaking in English. It was apparent from the classroom observation of the first intervention that, students tended to be more rigid in the elaboration of their role-plays. The first action that students did was to start writing a script during the preparation of the role-play. Although they were presented with a speaking activity, most students wrote what they were going to say. This aspect could be explained with the analysis of lesson
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plans. Data from lesson plans suggested that most of the activities planned by the teacher were focused on writing and reading. This source of data allowed understanding the students’ behaviour during the first intervention. As it was previously mentioned, most students wrote a script which some of them memorized. As a result, some students memorized their scripts and were able to present it whereas other students simply read what they had written. Although most students were able to speak in English, they were not able to continue speaking if they forgot a phrase. For this reason, during the implementation of the strategy, the students were told that for preparing their role-plays, they were not going to be allowed to write a script. They were told that they had to speak instead of writing to prepare their presentations. What could be observed from this change was that students started to practice in a more spontaneously and oral form. Consequently, students were able to perform the role-plays in front of the class spontaneously and using more gestures. This time there were no students who read a script and the conversations were more fluent. When students made mistakes, they immediately corrected these by saying something that corrected this error. In addition to this data, a small number of students’ opinion about memorization was critical after the post intervention questionnaire because they wrote that “when you memorize everything, you do not know what you are talking about” (translated from Spanish). This suggested that some students’ opinion changed after the implementation of the strategy giving more importance to spontaneity and fluency in the conversations. In addition, the data from the observation also revealed that a small number of students did not write their scripts and practiced their performance orally. However, the data also suggested that
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there were some students who did not respond positively to spontaneity because they admitted that speaking without a script was difficult ("it was difficult without the script"). Additionally, this could be observed during the observation when a small number of students used a script to participate in role-plays.

Role-play-based activities also had a positive impact on students’ usage of expressions and vocabulary in specific contexts when speaking. The data demonstrated that when using contextualized expressions, students tended to more easily produce oral language, seemingly because it facilitated both an understanding and the application of specific expressions. However, a minority of students did not use the pre-determined expressions and preferred to use their own language repertoire. Furthermore, the data revealed that students “learned new expressions that are better understand in context” (translated from Spanish). Although not a majority of students mentioned these, one student mentioned that when using the expressions in a context that is similar to real life, the learning and production of the expressions was more significant. Another student declared that “role-plays were useful because they took places in real situations” (translated from Spanish). Data from observation suggested that when students had to present their role-plays in the last intervention, they had to perform as if they were at the cinema. For this reason, all the expressions given to students were focused on inviting to the cinema, discussing about the film or buying something to eat. What was relevant from this perspective was that students used the expressions correctly in accordance to the context. During the preparation of role-plays some students said that there were too many words, expressions or questions that they did not know. When associating this finding to the research
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questions of this Action Research project, it can be said that role-plays foster the production of expressions in real context. When analyzing Bases Curriculares Inglés Segundo Medio, the data suggested that it was important to take into consideration the particularities of the context. This means that language must be used according to a context, a situation, a function and specific participants. The data revealed that most students were able to effectively understand and apply the use of expressions while participating in role-plays.

Another finding was that after practise, students tended to performed more confidently in their role-plays because they had received feedback to correct mistakes and had the opportunity to repeat their performances several times. When students felt more confident, they tended to be able to perform more effectively in front of the class with a voice volume that made their speaking comprehensible for the audience. The data also suggested that they felt more secure of what they were saying after several practises of their role-plays. The data revealed that during the first stage, students felt confused and insecure with the activity and it took them much time to prepare their role-plays. During the preparation of the role-play, data revealed that students tended to speak low and most of their time was used writing the script of the role-play. The data from the observation suggested that when they played their roles, most of them used a prompt to perform their role-plays, action that was derived from questionnaires where most students affirmed that using prompts or scripts helped them feel more confident when presenting. In addition, the data from lesson plans and questionnaires revealed that students had not participated in role-played based activities previously, although some of them reported that they enjoyed participating
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in these types of activities. Furthermore, the observation from the pre-intervention section suggested that most students were not able to perform a role-play without writing a script, the majority wrote a script because, according to data derived from questionnaires, writing a script helped them memorize the dialogues. The data also suggested that after the creation of the script, most students tended to practiced several times before the final presentation of the role-play. Moreover, data from the observation revealed that most students tended to ask the teacher and other students for help when pronouncing words to check if what they were say was correct or incorrect. An example derived from the observation revealed that one student wanted to pronounce the expression “What would you like to start with?” The data from observation suggested that the student felt very complicated because she could not pronounce the expression correctly, so she asked the teacher to help her. After the teacher’s feedback, the student continued practicing until she felt more confident. The data also suggested that the majority of students tended to practice several times their role-plays before presenting; however there were a small number of students that did not practice during the preparation stage. This group of students read the script in front of the class.

The observation also suggested that practice helped most students feel more confident during the final stage of the implementation of the strategy. The data revealed that students tended to feel more confident during the preparation of the second role-play than during the first role-play because students tended to practice more times, there were some groups that started practicing immediately before the instructions, before the final presentations; in fact many groups recreated a cinema
with chairs, the whiteboard and created tickets, money and even popcorn during the preparation stage. The data from observation revealed that when they had to present their role-plays, many groups wanted to be the first in presenting because they had previously practiced and felt confident. Students were able to speak using the given expressions and they created different elements that were part of the cinema. During the presentation of the role-plays students did not read any prompts and they made mistakes that were immediately corrected. According to the final questionnaires, some students commented that doing role-plays “helped to improve self-confidence” (translated from Spanish) and that “after repeating the role-plays they felt more confident” (translated from Spanish).

Role-play-based activities did not contribute to enhance the levels of spoken production on introverted students. Although role-plays appeared to generally provide more motivating contexts for students to create a conversation, it could be observed that introvert students felt awkward at different stages of the intervention. Data demonstrated that introverted students tended to speak less than confident and extrovert students. Although role-plays provided motivating contexts for students to create a conversation, the data revealed that introverted students felt awkward at different stages of the intervention and demonstrated that these students tended to speak less than confident and extroverted students. Although the perception of students towards the use of role-plays as a useful strategy was positive because many students described it as an interactive and motivating strategy, the data revealed that there were many students who admitted that they did not like role-plays because they were shy and felt embarrassed when presenting in English in front of the class. In
The effects of role-play based activities on the levels of student spoken production in a large EFL 10th grade addition, the data suggested that a small group of students labelled role-play based activities as “stressful because they felt embarrassed speaking in front of the class” (translated from Spanish) or because they “did not know how to pronounce correctly” (translated from Spanish). The data from the observation also revealed that there were students who felt embarrassed when they did not remember the dialogues or did not know how to pronounce words. Data from the last questionnaire and observation of the implementation of role-plays suggested that “doing role-plays was an uncomfortable experience because the person is exposed to the rest of the class” (translated from Spanish). A minority of students admitted that role-plays were a strategy not designed for introverted students because “there were students who were shyer than the other classmates and that felt embarrassed” (translated from Spanish). Data revealed that Embarrassment was a word that was mentioned by these students to explain what they did not like doing role-play, as the following learner described: this strategy “was not for shy students because they tended to be embarrassed” (translated from Spanish). Furthermore, the data from observation and an analysis of students’ performances suggested that embarrassment occurred when students felt nervous pronouncing words or they did not remember what they had to say. As a final consideration for this finding, during the observation of the pre and post intervention, the data from observation revealed that introverted students tended to speak less limiting their speaking to short sentences. Data from Bases Curriculares Inglés suggested that one of the objectives for the level is that students should be able to demonstrate a confident and positive attitude towards English.
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Role-play-based activities had a generally positive impact on students’ creativity, because they created a context and a specific conversation centred on previously studied expressions. Data demonstrated that when students had the freedom to create their own role-plays, they were more able to effectively speak in the target language and to include new vocabulary expressions to their repertoire. Furthermore data from questionnaires suggested that most students described role-plays as a creative strategy to learn English and to practice speaking. Some of the responses were that role-plays “develops creativity” (translated from Spanish) and that “when you play a role you use your creativity to create a scene” (translated from Spanish). Data suggested that most students tended described role-plays as a creative form of learning English because they “had the freedom to choose what to say or what was going to happen in the presentations” (translated from Spanish). In addition, data from observation revealed that creativity was a present element during different stages of role-plays. For instance, data demonstrated that a majority of the groups used the given context to re-create possible real life situation where the previously studied expressions could be used because students not only create a scenario, but also to plan a spoken conversation that had to be performed. Additionally, data suggested that these elements allowed students to enhance the levels of spoken production, taking them from a passive state where they wrote to an active state where they actively spoke during the role-plays. This aspect can be seen both in the pre and the post intervention. During the first intervention, data demonstrated that all the students were able to design different situations in a restaurant. Some students even created money made of pieces of papers. Students were able to use the language
to create a situation in a particular context. This characteristic of role play made that all the presentations were different, even though they were using the same expressions. Furthermore, data revealed that during the post intervention creativity was still more visible. This time all the groups designed their own materials to support their role play. For example, there was a group that created costumes with glasses, hats and a moustache that was made of paper. Almost all the groups created money made of paper. One group created popcorn and the tickets for the cinema and a cinema screen. Moreover, data suggested that creativity was not only seen in the artifacts that students created, but also in the stories that they designed. There were stories where the participants performed the complete experience of going to the cinema, including the invitation to watch a movie, a discussion of what movie to watch, buying popcorn and juice, deciding where to sit, discussing the film once this finished.

A final finding of this study was that role-play-based activities tended to have a positive impact on student levels of collaboration, because students were able to create different situations taking into considerations all the members’ ideas. The data suggested that when students worked collaboratively, they felt more confident, not only when creating their role-plays, but also when performing and speaking in the target language. As a result of the intervention, data revealed that role-play-based activities promoted collaborative learning. According to students’ responses in the final questionnaire, it could be observed that most students agreed that role-plays fostered team work. This claim was supported with some of the students’ responses where they said that “role-plays contributed to a better team work (translated from
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Spanish). Other student said that “they helped each other being in groups” (translated from Spanish), this response was very similar to this other response where a student mentioned that “he could receive help and support from their classmates” (translated from Spanish). In addition, data from observation also demonstrated that role-plays were a strategy where students could work together in order to accomplish the same goal. Data revealed that when students needed help, they received this help from their peers. An example from the observation revealed that when a student forgot his or her dialogue, their peers helped him or her to remember. Moreover, when student did not know how to pronounce a word, their peers helped him or her to correctly pronounce. Additionally, data suggested that as students did not have a specific script to reproduce, they had to work in teams to create a role-play that involved the work of all the member of the group to create not only the situation but also the conversation because, during the planning of the role-plays, all the students participated giving ideas that could be useful for the elaboration of their role-plays.

All the members played an important role. Furthermore, Bases Curricular suggested that collaborative learning is an important factor in learning English, since “collaborative learning offers students different opportunities to interact in the target language” (translated from Spanish).

Research Implications

This study investigated the effects of role play-based activities in the levels of student spoken production in a large EFL 10th grade. Next, the implications of this study will be interpreted in order to understand the effects that role-play based
activities that use a teaching speaking cycle have on the levels of the student spoken production comparing the outcomes of relevant literature with this study.

One of the findings from this study was that role-play-based activities had a generally positive impact on levels of correct pronunciation demonstrated by students. However, equally the data suggested that when students practiced their spoken performance, they tended to become anxious about the form of their pronunciation. This action caused learners to focus their attention on producing correct pronunciation. In relation to this, Islam & Islam (2013) undertook a research involving EFL students that used role-play activities and concluded that role play techniques can have a positive impact in improving speaking skills, as it gives students and opportunity to speak in different situations of real life. One of the similarities the this study with the present study is that both looked at enhancing speaking through the use of role-plays, nevertheless Islam & Islam (2013) undertook their research in a tertiary level in Stamford University in Bangladesh with about one-hundred twenty students. Although the difference in the participants between both researches, both demonstrated learners’ improvements related to the speaking skills. Similarly, Aliakbari & Jamalvandi (2010) studied the impact of role-play on fostering EFL learners’ speaking ability and concluded that role-play techniques were effective in helping learners to upgrade their oral ability at the Iranian EFL context. This research coincides with the findings of this study in improvements in learners’ pronunciation in an EFL context. Correspondingly, Soraya, Sofian & Salam (2018) implemented role-play technique to improve students’ speaking skill on eleventh grade students in an EFL context with 33 participants. After the implementation of
three cycles of role-plays, the researchers found that the students demonstrated some improvements in speaking, especially in pronunciation. They observed that this improvement was due to the last step of role-play that is practicing (Soraya et al, 2018). One of the differences with this action research is the number of role-plays implemented because students in this research were able to participate only in two role-plays demonstrating also some improvements in pronunciation. One of the major significances of both studies is that they were undertaken in EFL contexts with students from similar ages. This research is more consistent with this study since it revealed that through the use of role-play-based activities EFL learners can improve their pronunciation. However, Soraya et al (2018) also suggested that not only pronunciation can improve, but also the whole speaking skill such as fluency and accuracy. In addition, Alwahibee (2004) investigated the results of using role-play activities to improve a group of Saudi Arabian students’ speaking ability. In this research, the participants spent eight weeks studying the target language before performing role-plays in pair. After the participating in role-plays, it was found that students improved their speaking proficiency. Klanrit (2007) agrees with the finding of Alwahibee (2004), establishing that implementing role-plays can contribute to the improvement of participants’ speaking skills in different ways. Additionally, Rodpradit (2012) conducted a study where he implemented two types of role-plays: scripted and non-scripted role-plays. According to Davies (1990) in scripted role-plays, students work in pair or small groups and they are given prompts related to the target scenarios. Then, they have to use the prompts as the model to form the target dialogue. After this, the students rehearse the dialogue before performing in front of
the class. In non-scripted role-play, the students perform the role-play in front of the class based on the prompts given without preparation or a previously written script. Taking into consideration these two elements, Rodpradit (2012) concluded that learners who participated in both scripted and non-scripted role-plays did help to develop their overall speaking performance significantly. The study revealed that some aspects of speaking performances such as accent, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension were significantly improved in non-scripted role-plays, whereas scripted ones improved only the participants’ vocabulary to a significant degree (Rodpradit, 2012). Both scripted and non-scripted role-plays were implicitly implemented in this research suggesting similar outcomes in relation to pronunciation. One of the main differences of this study was the form of implementing scripted and non-scripted role-plays because students chose inductively one of the two types of role-plays. The majority of groups chose scripted role-plays since allowed them to better organize their conversations during the first intervention. This number was slightly minor during the second intervention because students felt more confident. However, further research is needed to investigate the effects in other dimensions of overall speaking skills such as fluency, accent and accuracy.

Rodpradit (2012) concluded significant improvements in the overall speaking performance when students worked with scripted and non-scripted role-plays. In contrast, one of the findings of this current study suggested a positive impact on pronunciation but also on students’ participation when they used scripted role-play. The data from this study revealed that students actively participated and spoke when they wrote and memorized a script. However, a minority of students was able to
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speak more spontaneously and did not need to use a script. The finding suggested that role-plays could enhance speaking when students previously planned their conversations. In addition, data from this study also suggested that role-play-based activities did not contribute to enhance the levels of spoken production on introverted students. Although role-plays appeared to generally provide more motivating contexts for students to create a conversation, it could be observed that introvert students felt awkward. As a result, introverted students tended to produce less speaking than confident and extroverted students. In this respect, literature describes self-confidence as one of the most important factors involved in L2 willingness to communicate (Khajavy, Ghonsoonly, Hosseini Fatemi & Choi, 2016), for the same reason students must be self-confident if they want to communicate in the target language (Nunan, 1999). Some of the similarities with this study were that students who felt more confident tended to spoke more than introverted students. In addition, one of the conclusions of the study of Islam & Islam (2013) was that role-play-based activities were potentially effective in improving learners speaking skills because they enabled learners to speak more accurately and confidently in the target language. They also observed that students became confident enough to speak in the created situation. Similarly, Nurbaya, Salam & Arifin (2016) concludes that role-play-based activities help shy students to speak in the target language providing an opportunity for students with difficulty to feel liberated and have a conversation. Therefore, role-play-based activities are an effective tool for students, especially in teaching some introverted students (Nurbaya et al, 2016). Nurbaya et al (2016) and Islam & Islam (2013) agrees that role-played based activities provide opportunities for learns feel
confident to speak in the target language, Nurbaya emphasizes that is a good tool especially for introverted students, however these points differs with the findings of this current study. In regard to this relationship, literature is not consistent with the findings of this research. While literature suggests that role-plays gave learners an opportunity to interact in the target language, the findings of this study suggest that introverted students who participated during the role-play-based activities tended to feel awkward and speak less during presentations. This suggests that more research is needed in relation to the effects of role-play-based activities on the level of introverted student’s production.

Existing literature has found that a role-play-based pedagogical strategy can potentially contribute to highly motivated students (Alasbi, 2016). In addition, Islam & Islam (2013) concludes that students were enthusiastic about role-play as it was different from other activities. Similarly, students that participated in this action research were enthusiastic to participate in activities that were different and interactive. Additionally, Alzboun, Khalaf, Smadi & Baniabdulrahman (2017) observe that students were positively motivated to participate and interact with their colleagues even if they had low level of proficiency in English during the implementation of role-play-based activities. A similar panorama could be observed during the implementation of role-played based activities in this research, students that had a low level of proficiency tended to participate and interact with their peers, even though the level of their spoken production was low. in the same way, Soraya et al (2018) found that role-plays worked well on students as it helped attract students attention in an eleventh grade and Nurbaya et al (2016) suggest that the
implementation of role-play-based activities can make speaking and learning activity more enjoyable and interesting. This point highlights one of the similarities of this action research because role-play-based activities tended to encourage higher levels of student engagement with participation in role-plays. When students felt more confident performing a role, they tended to be more engaged and productive to interact in role-plays and to speak in English. However, the production of a minority of students suggested that even higher engagement levels did not necessarily improve the levels of spoken production. Role-play-based activities encourage higher levels of students’ engagement, however literature related to the factor that even higher engagement levels did not necessarily improve the levels of spoken production could not be found. Therefore this suggests that further research is required in this area.

Other of the potential findings of this study was that role-plays contribute to promote a positive environment to speak in English. In relation to this, Rahimy & Safarpur (2012) investigate the effect of using role-play on Iranian EFL learners’ ability and conclude that a role-play-based activity “seems to provide a sort of enjoyable environment for learners to flourish in. This claim is supported by Krebt (2017) whose results confirms that role-play techniques provide a kind of interesting environment for students to flourish in and he also adds that such environment “leads to better attention in learning and stimulate them to participate in role-play techniques” (Krebt, 2017, p.368). More recent research undertaken in the Iranian EFL context by Moslehi & Rahimi (2018), found that role-play practice can provide an atmosphere for language learners to act out and practise speaking. Similarly, this research suggested that role-play-based activities provided a positive environment for
students to participate in simple interactions and to practise their oral production in
the target language. This environment made students felt more confident and
enthusiastic to speak in English because students not only chose the language that
would be used during their performances, but also chose a situation that would
happen in a specific context. These two actions made students use the target
language in a context that re-created a real life experience, which tended to make it
more meaningful. Role-plays can potentially contribute to promote positive
environments to enhance learners to speak in English in large EFL classroom as is an
enjoyable activity for students and foster communication in a positive learning
atmosphere.

Role-play-based activities also had a positive impact on students’ usage of
expressions and vocabulary in specific contexts when speaking. The data
demonstrated that when using contextualized expressions, students tended to more
easily produce oral language, seemingly because it facilitated both an understanding
and the application of specific expressions. However, a minority of students did not
use the pre-determined expressions and preferred to use their own language
repertoire. In relation to this finding, Klanrit (2007) reported from their research in an
EFL context that students, “slightly gained new elements of the target language or
language use such as new vocabulary and useful expressions both scripted and non-
scripted role-plays slight” (In Rodpradit, 2012,p.8). In addition, Moslehi & Rahimi
(2018) and Rodpradit (2012) and demonstrates that role-play-based activities
increased learners’ vocabulary knowledge. As it can be stated through the comparison
of the findings of the current study and the existing literature is that role-play-based
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activities did have a positive impact on students’ usage of expressions and vocabulary, especially in scripted role-plays, as this type of activities allowed them to use pre-determined expressions and felt more confident. For the same reason, this implication is associated with the existing relationship between role-play-based activities and the students’ creativity because one of the findings of this study demonstrated that role-play-based activities had a generally positive impact on students’ creativity, since learners created a context and a specific conversation centred on previously studied expressions. When students had the freedom to create their own role-plays, they were more able to effectively speak in the target language and to include new vocabulary expressions to their repertoire. In relation to creativity and role-plays, Nurbaya et al (2016) mentions that role-play-based activities are a chance for students to be very creative and develop interesting conversations. Role-play based activities can contribute to enhance creative opportunities for students to speak in the class promoting not only their creativity in terms of contexts or materials, but also challenging the students’ skill to speak in different situations and using new expressions.

Davies (1990) suggests that when students are familiar with their roles and the play’s action, they can start to learn the words, and the play can be practiced until the performance stage is accomplished. David (1990) emphasizes on the importance of rehearsals and repetitions. In addition, Soraya et al (2018) implemented three cycles of role-plays where she concludes that practicing was a key element to improve students’ pronunciation. She observes how pronunciation improved after the three cycles of role-play-based activities and concludes that “by practicing the role play
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and dialogue frequently, the students made better improvement in speaking” (p.7). Consequently, not only pronunciation, but speaking can be improved after several rehearsals. In contrast with this literature, another finding of this research suggests that after practise, students tended to performed more confidently in their role-plays because they had received feedback to correct mistakes and had the opportunity to repeat their performances several times. When students felt more confident, they tended to be able to perform more effectively in front of the class with a voice volume that made their speaking comprehensible for the audience and they felt more secure of what they were saying after several practises of their role-plays. As it can be noted, both literature and the findings of this current research highlight the importance of practise. Although literature emphasizes the importance of practice on improving pronunciation not mentions the impact of rehearsal on confidence as the current study does. Role-plays contribute to practice conversation that could occur in real life communication.

Collaborative learning was a central theme in this research, Alwahibee (2004) stresses that role-play-based activities create, “the collaborative learning atmosphere in the classroom which has been claimed to be one of the factors that creates successful communication of the students in the classroom” (in Rodpradit, 2012, p.19). Rahimy & Safarpur (2012) also claims that learners who participated in role-plays “seemed to succeed because of getting involved in role-plays activities such as group work” (p.56). They recall that when the class is framed as a community to work together they will have more opportunities to work for the same aims. Rodpradit (2012) similarly highlights the importance of collaborative learning
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atmosphere to encourage learners to develop strategies to overcome problems that happen when performing a role-play. Finally, a more recent study undertaken by Soraya et al (2018) states that students got interested to learn and get involved in speaking by working in groups, practicing and performing a role.

Similarly, one of the findings of this study was that role-play-based activities tended to have a positive impact on student levels of collaboration, because students were able to create different situations taking into considerations all the members’ ideas. When students worked collaboratively, they felt more confident, not only when creating their role-plays, but also when performing and speaking in the target language. In relation to collaborative learning, role-play based activities can potentially contribute students to speak in English in large classroom because working in teams provide students with more opportunities to interact inside the classroom.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was the implementation of the teaching-speaking cycle to implement role-play-based activities. In order to implement this cycle time is a fundamental factor which was a constraint in this study. This was a clear limitation that did not allow students to reflect on their own speaking learning. It is highly recommended that researchers have time and more hours per class for further research.
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The study could apply two interventions with the students. The original number of interventions was 6; however, this second term was extremely abnormal at the school. The classes with this grade were on Thursdays and Fridays, which was not positive for this research. Many of the classes with this grade were suspended because of national holidays, celebration of national holidays and public holidays, activities to celebrate the school anniversary, there was a complete week with these activities and as this is a 12\textsuperscript{th} grade they had to take SIMCE, for this reason classes were suspended as well. All these factors influenced the findings of the research. It would have been very useful to have at least one intervention more in order to have richer data to analyse. In spite of doing two interventions, students showed interesting changes not only in their spoken production but also in their opinions about the use of the strategy to improve their spoken production. In order to avoid these problems, it is suggested for future research to check all these days that could limit the research and the number of interventions for the class.

Conclusions

This research explored the potential effects that role-play-based activities pedagogical activities that use a teaching speaking cycle have on the levels of student spoken production in a large EFL 10\textsuperscript{th} grade. The findings from this study in contrast with the existing literature suggested that role-play-based activities had an overall positive impact on the student spoken production especially on pronunciation. Role-played based activities demonstrated to effectively improve pronunciation on
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students because they focused on the correct form of pronouncing words. It would also be pertinent to mention that practice made learners to become anxious about the form of their spoken production making them focused on producing correct pronunciation. In addition, this research found that students tended to actively participate and speak when performing a role that was previously planned and rehearsed. Role-play based activities provoked significant effects not only in pronunciation, but also in students’ confidence which was significant for students to increase their spoken production. This study found that role-played based activities positively increased the level of confidence which means higher levels of spoken production in some students. It would be recommended to explore the relationship among confidence, role-play-based activities and the levels of student spoken production can be investigated in further research.

Another key finding from this inquiry was that role-play-based activities did not have a positive impact on introvert students as it they felt awkward at different stages of the implementation of role-plays in the classroom and tended to speak less during classes. A major difference of this study in contrast with literature was that most references tended to claim that role-plays give introvert students to participate in oral interactions (Nurbaya et al, 2012). In contrast, this study found that although introverted students actively participated during the implementation of role-plays, this not necessarily meant that students increased their levels of spoken production. For the same reason it is highly recommended to explore a deeper relationship among introverted learners and the use of role-plays as a strategy that can effectively contribute to enhance speaking in introverted learners.
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In relation to collaborative learning, this research found that role-play-based activities incited students to participate collaboratively and confidently in the target language. Students had to perform during the implementation of role-play-based activities creating not only the context but also conversation using pre-determined expressions. In addition, role-play-based activities contributed to a higher collaborative learning as learners felt more confident when creating their role plays and speaking in the target language. This finding coincides with the fact that literature suggests that role-plays promote a positive environment and collaborative learning among students which are beneficial to speak in the target language (Krebt, 2017). Consequently, implementing role-plays in large classrooms may enhance more opportunities for students to speak in the target language and it would be recommended to include them in the syllabus.

Another major finding was related to the highly increased levels of learners’ engagement when implementing role-plays because it was motivating activity for students to speak in English and increased the levels of participation during the English. However some findings from this research suggested that these levels of engagement did not mean higher levels of spoken production. For the same reason, it is highly recommended to investigate the relationship between high level of production and spoken production.

As a final outcome, role-play-based activities had a positive effect on students’ usage of new vocabulary since students could use pre-determined expressions in a context that recreates a real scenario. The findings of this study demonstrated that not only the understanding was effectively acquired but also the
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correct application of these expressions was a key finding to implement role-plays in a large EFL context.

As final remark, it would be recommended to implement more cycles of role-plays in future research in order to explore the effects of role-play based activities on the levels of spoken production and other possible improvements.

References


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Appendices

Appendix 1

Estimado Equipo directivo,

Junto con saludar, les escribo como estudiante del Magíster en inglés como idioma extranjero (TEFL) de la Universidad Alberto Hurtado, ya que estoy llevando a cabo una investigación-acción que busca mejorar la producción oral del inglés en grupos con gran cantidad de estudiantes a través de actividades basadas en role-plays, la cuál será realizada con segundo año medio.

Con el fin de aplicar esta investigación, quien escribe esta carta aplicará 3 herramientas para recolectar datos dentro del curso. La primera herramienta consiste en un cuestionario anónimo sobre la preferencia de los estudiantes para aprender inglés. La segunda herramienta consiste en una observación confidencial y grabada de algunas de las clases donde la estrategia será aplicada. Finalmente, la última herramienta consistirá en la revisión de los trabajos de los estudiantes, como del programa de implementación de inglés en segundo medio.
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Due to the information mentioned earlier, I am requesting authorization to carry out this research using observations, resources and results that occur in the classroom in my thesis. It is important to mention that the identity of the students will be completely confidential and will never be revealed.

In case of any doubt or question, you can contact my research supervisor Dr. Stephen Darwin by email at stephen.darwin@gmail.com.

Yours sincerely,

Esteban Vélez Aceituno
Student in the Master of English as a Foreign Language
Universidad Alberto Hurtado
+569-94368615
Teacher.veliz@gmail.com

Appendix 2

In the following table you will observe different common strategies used to learn English. In this, you can observe a scale of numbers that allows classifying the learning strategies according to the experience of the students. By marking the number 5 you are indicating that that strategy is completely of your preference while marking the number 1 you are indicating that that strategy is not of your preference and therefore you do not like to use it. In other words, 5 corresponds to the maximum score and 1 to the minimum.

It is important to mention that all this information is completely anonymous and confidential.

In continuation you must assign to each strategy a determined number. You can assign the value you decide to each strategy regardless if the number assigned is repeated. Remember to answer all fields marking them with an X.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Realizar ejercicios de gramática</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Escuchar distintos tipos de audio para identificar información específica y general</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE EFFECTS OF ROLE-PLAY BASED ACTIVITIES ON THE LEVELS OF STUDENT SPOKEN PRODUCTION IN A LARGE EFL 10TH GRADE

C | Leer distintos tipos de textos
D | Realizar juego de roles (role-plays) para practicar speaking
E | Escribir distintos tipos de textos como cuentos, correos electrónicos, artículos, folletos, rimas, descripciones, biografías, instrucciones, cartas, Resúmenes, diario personal, poemas o canciones.
F | Realizar proyectos donde se involucre el uso del inglés

SECCIÓN 1: De acuerdo a las respuestas que marcaste responde las siguientes preguntas:

En relación a las estrategias vistas, ¿Cuál es la estrategia que más prefieres para aprender inglés? ¿Por qué? Justifica tu respuesta en las siguientes líneas.

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____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

En relación a las estrategias vistas, ¿Cuál es la estrategia que menos prefieres para aprender inglés? ¿Por qué? Justifica tu respuesta en las siguientes líneas.

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____________________________________________________________________
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SECCIÓN 2: Responde las siguientes preguntas.

En relación a las estrategias que clasificaste anteriormente, escribe una reflexión
donde analices y expliques cada uno de los rangos asignados a cada estrategia en
profundidad. Intenta considerar todos los aspectos, detalles y relaciones que
puedas relacionar con el valor que asignaste.
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Appendix 3

Evaluación de tu experiencia participando en role-plays

El siguiente cuestionario tiene como objetivo conocer tu experiencia al participar en la estrategia de role-plays dentro de la sala de clase. Por esta razón, es de suma importancia que respondas tus percepciones y opiniones relacionadas al uso de esta estrategia. Recuerda que toda la información que brindes es totalmente confidencial y anónima, siendo solamente utilizada para fines investigativos.

1. ¿Cómo describirías tu experiencia al participar en actividades de role-plays?

____________________________________________________________________

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____________________________________________________________________
THE EFFECTS OF ROLE-PLAY BASED ACTIVITIES ON THE LEVELS OF STUDENT SPOKEN PRODUCTION IN A LARGE EFL 10TH GRADE

2. ¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre las actividades de role plays después de haber participado en estas? ¿Ha cambiado? ¿Es la misma? Justifica tu respuesta.

3. Después de haber participado en actividades de role-plays ¿Crees que esta estrategia es de utilidad para practicar la producción oral del inglés? ¿Por qué? Justifica tu respuesta
II. En la siguiente tabla encontrarás las mismas estrategias que tuviste que clasificar en el primer cuestionario. Esta vez debes volver a clasificarlas. Recuerda que al marcar el número 5 estás indicando que aquella estrategia es totalmente de tu preferencia mientras que al marcar el número 1 estás indicando
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que aquella estrategia no es de tu preferencia y por lo tanto no te gusta utilizarla. En otras palabras, 5 corresponde al máximo puntaje y 1 al mínimo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estrategias</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Realizar ejercicios de gramática</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Escuchar distintos tipos de audio para identificar información específica y general</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Leer distintos tipos de textos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Realizar juego de roles (role-plays) para practicar speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E Escribir distintos tipos de textos como cuentos, correos electrónicos, artículos, folletos, rimas, descripciones, biografías, instrucciones, cartas, Resúmenes, diario personal, poemas o canciones.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Realizar proyectos donde se involucre el uso del inglés</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

En base a lo que respondiste ¿Crees que cambió tu percepción de las estrategias? ¿Por qué?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
### Appendix 4

**Observation sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention:</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Number in group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESOURCES:**

**PREPARATION OF ROLE PLAY:**
THE EFFECTS OF ROLE-PLAY BASED ACTIVITIES ON THE LEVELS OF STUDENT SPOKEN PRODUCTION IN A LARGE EFL 10TH GRADE

PRACTICE OF THE ROLE PLAY:

PRESENTATION OF THE ROLE PLAY

EMERGING QUESTIONS:

relevant aspects from the intervention
Appendix 5

Role-Play

- A You are a costumer that enters a popular restaurant. There is something bad with your food.
- B You are a waiter in a very popular restaurant. You have to attend costumers.
- C You are the restaurant’s owner.
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Appendix 6

Restaurant expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I. Read the following expressions that are commonly used in a restaurant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The guest</th>
<th>The waiter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A table for two, please.</td>
<td>• Hi, I'm Sue, I'll be your server for tonight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May we sit at this table?</td>
<td>• What can I do for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The menu, please.</td>
<td>• Can I help you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What's on the menu?</td>
<td>• Can I take your coat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What's Irish Stew like?</td>
<td>• Have you booked a table?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We're not ready yet.</td>
<td>• How many are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The steak for me, please.</td>
<td>• Would you follow me, please?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you bring me the ketchup, please?</td>
<td>• Can I take your order, sir/madam?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A salad, please.</td>
<td>• What would you like to start with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I'll have the same.</td>
<td>• What would you like to drink?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• That's all, thank you.</td>
<td>• What would you like for dessert?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can I have the bill (AE: check), please?</td>
<td>• How would you like your steak?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This is on me.</td>
<td>(rare, medium, well done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Here you are.</td>
<td>• Do you want a salad with it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The rest is for you.</td>
<td>• What kind of dressing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you have wine by the glass?</td>
<td>• Anything to drink?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I'd prefer red wine.</td>
<td>• Do you want a dessert?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Please bring us another beer.</td>
<td>• The burgers are very good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Could I have chips (AE: French Fries) instead of salad?</td>
<td>• Sorry, the hamburgers are off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What can you recommend?</td>
<td>• Is everything all right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Please bring me the bill (AE: check)</td>
<td>• Did you enjoy your meal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are you paying together?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• May I show you to a table?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If you wait, there'll be a table for you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE EFFECTS OF ROLE-PLAY BASED ACTIVITIES ON THE LEVELS OF STUDENT SPOKEN PRODUCTION IN A LARGE EFL 10TH GRADE

- I think you've made a mistake.
- Do you want vegetables with it?
- Why don't you try the pizza?
- It'll take about 20 minutes.

II. Read the following dialogue and identify useful language to use in a restaurant

**Waiter:** Hello, here are your menus. I’ll be back to take your order in a few minutes.

**Peter:** Yes, please.

**Waiter:** Are you ready to order?

**Peter:** Yes, I’d like a vegetable soup.

**Waiter:** And what would you like for a main course?

**Peter:** I’ll have the grilled salmon.

**Waiter:** Would you like anything to drink?

**Peter:** Yes, I’d like a glass of white wine, please.

**Waiter:** (After Peter has his meal) Can I bring you anything else?

**Peter:** May I see the dessert menu?

**Waiter:** Certainly.

**Peter:** What do you recommend?

**Waiter:** The chocolate cake. It’s delicious.

**Peter:** Okay, I’ll have the cake. Also, may I have the bill please?

**Waiter:** Certainly
Appendix 7

Role-Play

- A: You invite a friend to the cinema
- B: A friend invite you to watch a movie. You should propose some movies to watch
- C: You work in the cinema.
Appendix 8

Cinema expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: __________________________________________</th>
<th>Grade: 2°M</th>
<th>Date: __________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Objectives:**
1. Identificar expresiones y vocabulario utilizado al invitar e ir al cine

### Choosing a film
1. What's on at the cinema?
2. Is there anything good on at the cinema?
3. What's this film about?
4. Have you seen it?
5. Who's in it?
6. It's ...
   - a thriller
   - a comedy
   - a romantic comedy
   - a horror film
   - a documentary
   - an animation
   - a war film
   - a western
   - a science fiction film
   - a foreign film
7. It's in ...
   - French
   - Spanish
   - With English subtitles
8. It's just been released
9. It's been out for about two months
10. It's meant to be good

### At the cinema
1. Shall we get some popcorn?
2. Salted or sweet?
3. Do you want anything to drink?
4. Where do you want to sit?
5. Near the back
6. Near the front
7. In the middle

### Discussing about the film
What did you think about the film?
- I enjoyed it
- It was great
- It was really good
- It wasn't bad
- I thought it was rubbish
- It was one of the best films I've seen for ages
- It had a good plot
- The plot was quite complex
- It was too slow-moving
- It was very fast-moving

The acting was ...
- excellent
- good
- poor
- terrible
- He's a very good actor
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I like watching films.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I prefer going to</strong> the cinema <strong>because</strong> it's more interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What movie would you like to watch?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Would you like to buy something</strong> to buy/drink?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Would you like to go</strong> to the cinema with us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How much is</strong> the ticket?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are there any tickets</strong> for Saturday?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I'm interested in</strong> crime and adventure films.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last week I watched &quot;Independence Day&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is your favorite actor/actress?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My favourite actor/actress is</strong> ......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What about going to</strong> the cinema together?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The film was exciting, not boring.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>