

## Información Importante

La Universidad de La Sabana informa que el(los) autor(es) ha(n) autorizado a usuarios internos y externos de la institución a consultar el contenido de este documento a través del Catálogo en línea de la Biblioteca y el Repositorio Institucional en la página Web de la Biblioteca, así como en las redes de información del país y del exterior con las cuales tenga convenio la Universidad de La Sabana.

Se permite la consulta a los usuarios interesados en el contenido de este documento para todos los usos que tengan finalidad académica, nunca para usos comerciales, siempre y cuando mediante la correspondiente cita bibliográfica se le de crédito al documento y a su autor.

De conformidad con lo establecido en el artículo 30 de la Ley 23 de 1982 y el artículo 11 de la Decisión Andina 351 de 1993, La Universidad de La Sabana informa que los derechos sobre los documentos son propiedad de los autores y tienen sobre su obra, entre otros, los derechos morales a que hacen referencia los mencionados artículos.

**BIBLIOTECA OCTAVIO ARIZMENDI POSADA**  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA SABANA  
Chía - Cundinamarca

The Implementation of Role-playing to Improve Grammar Accuracy for Sentence  
Structure in Oral Utterances

Yonh ESCOBAR CASTELLANOS

Paola Milena SONZA HERNANDEZ

Research Report submitted

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in English Language Teaching – Autonomous Learning Environments

Directed by Hope Goodwin

Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures

Universidad de La Sabana

Chía, Colombia

July 2016

Declaration


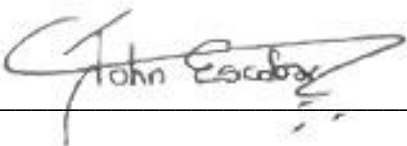
I hereby declare that my research report entitled:

The Implementation of Role-playing to Improve Grammar Accuracy for Sentence  
Structure in Oral Utterances

- is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared and specified in the text;
- is neither substantially the same as nor contains substantial portions of any similar work submitted or that is being concurrently submitted for any degree or diploma or other qualification at the Universidad de La Sabana or any other university or similar institution except as declared and specified in the text;
- complies with the word limits and other requirements stipulated by the Research Subcommittee of the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures;
- has been submitted by or on the required submission date.

Date: July 2016

Full Name: Yohn Escobar Castellanos, Paola Milena Sonza Hernández

Signature:  

### **Acknowledgements**

Our sincere gratitude to our thesis director Hope Goodwin, her help throughout this research project has been valuable. She has been an excellent tutor and a great support for us along the process. We would like to show our gratitude to Liliana Cuesta and Carl Anderson, their guidance and example have been a motivation for us to do action research in our classrooms for us to improve our teaching practices and to grow professionally. Likewise, we would like to thank the principal and the students at Emilio Valenzuela School for their insightful contribution for the development of this study. Our deepest appreciation goes to our families who have prayed for us to conclude this project successfully; they have been understanding and supporting although we could not spend much time with them. Our deepest thanks to God, for giving us the courageousness, the energy, and the strength to keep going during this journey

### **Abstract**

This qualitative action research arose as a necessity to help students communicate accurately while speaking in English. The project is aimed at observing how a group of 20 male students between 11-14 years old from a private school in Bogota, Colombia use role-playing in class in order to promote grammatical accuracy for sentence structure in oral utterances, and also to observe any impact in their perception of their self-confidence when using the language in class. This research project was conducted in English classes using role-play; it was used as a means of enhancing participation, teaching communication skills and analyzing the different merits this strategy offers in the language classroom. Nonetheless, it should be stated that this research work aimed mainly to observe the students' grammatical accuracy in spoken language. The researchers gathered data through a questionnaire, a teacher journal, semi-structured interviews, and audio recordings. Methodological and investigator triangulation were used to analyze the data collected. The findings of the research suggest that the use of role-play in class increased the students' perception of their self-confidence level when speaking in English with their classmates. In addition, such students showed that their grammatical accuracy slightly improved given that the aforementioned strategy helped them improve word order in sentences and questions.

*Key words:* Role-playing, grammatical accuracy, speaking skill, self-confidence

### **Resumen**

Esta investigación acción cualitativa surgió como una necesidad de ayudar a los estudiantes a comunicarse adecuadamente mientras hablan en Inglés. El proyecto está dirigido a la observación de cómo un grupo de 20 niños estudiantes entre los 11 y 14 años de edad de un colegio privado en Bogotá, Colombia usa los juegos de rol en clase con el fin de promover su precisión gramatical en cuanto a la estructura de las frases en expresiones orales, así como observar algún impacto en la percepción de su auto-confianza cuando usan el idioma en clase. Este proyecto de investigación fue conducido en las clases de Inglés usando juego de roles; ellos se han usado como un medio para aumentar la participación, para enseñar habilidades de comunicación, así como para analizar los diferentes beneficios que esta estrategia tiene en el salón de clase. No obstante, debe ser mencionado que este proyecto de investigación ha tenido como objetivo principal observar la exactitud de la estructura gramatical de los estudiantes en el lenguaje hablado. Los investigadores recogemos los datos por medio de un cuestionario, un diario de docente, unas entrevistas semi-estructuradas, y grabaciones de audio. La triangulación metodológica e investigativa fueron usadas para analizar los datos recolectados. Los hallazgos de esta investigación sugieren que el uso de los juegos de rol en clase incrementó la percepción de los estudiantes acerca de su nivel de autoconfianza cuando hablan en Inglés con sus compañeros de clase. Además, dichos estudiantes mostraron que la exactitud de la estructura gramatical mejoró ligeramente dado que la estrategia ayudó a los estudiantes a mejorar la forma en la que ellos organizan las palabras en oraciones y preguntas.

Palabras claves: Juego de rol, precisión gramatical, habilidad oral, auto-confianza.

**Table of content**

Acknowledgements.....	3
Abstract.....	4
Resumen.....	5
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	10
<b>1.1 Introduction to the study .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.2 Rationale of the study .....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.2.1 Needs analysis and problem statement.....	12
1.2.2 Justification of problem’s significance .....	13
1.2.3 Strategy selected to address problem .....	15
<b>1.3 Research question(s) and objective(s) .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.4 Conclusion.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework & State of the Art .....	18
<b>2.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.2 Theoretical framework .....</b>	<b>19</b>
2.2.1 Speaking skills.....	19
2.2.2 Role-playing .....	21
2.2.3 Accuracy.....	24
<b>2.3 State of the art .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2.4 Conclusion.....</b>	<b>30</b>
Chapter 3: Research Design.....	32
<b>3.1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>3.2 Type of study .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>3.3 Context .....</b>	<b>33</b>
3.3.1 Participants .....	34
3.3.2 Researcher’s role .....	34
3.3.3 Ethical considerations .....	35

<b>3.4</b>	<b>Data collection instruments .....</b>	<b>36</b>
3.4.1	Descriptions and justifications .....	36
3.4.1.1	<b>Questionnaire.....</b>	<b>36</b>
3.4.1.2	<b>Teacher’s journal .....</b>	<b>37</b>
3.4.1.3	<b>Semi-structured interview .....</b>	<b>37</b>
3.4.1.4	<b>Audio recordings .....</b>	<b>38</b>
3.4.2	Validation and piloting.....	39
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>40</b>
Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation.....		41
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Visions of language, learning, and curriculum .....</b>	<b>41</b>
4.2.1	Vision of language .....	41
4.2.2	Vision of learning.....	43
4.2.3	Vision of curriculum .....	44
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Instructional design .....</b>	<b>46</b>
4.3.1	Lesson planning.....	46
4.3.2	Implementation.....	47
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>49</b>
Chapter 5: Results and Data Analysis.....		50
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Data management procedures .....</b>	<b>50</b>
5.2.1	Validation .....	52
5.2.2	Data analysis methodology .....	52
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Categories.....</b>	<b>54</b>
5.3.1	Overall category mapping .....	54
5.3.2	Discussion of categories.....	55
5.3.2.1	<b>Core Category 1: The students’ insights about the teacher’s methodology and their own learning process .....</b>	<b>55</b>
5.3.2.2	<b>Core Category 2: Skills development.....</b>	<b>64</b>
5.3.3	Core category.....	68
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications.....		79
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Comparison of results with previous studies’ results .....</b>	<b>81</b>



<b>6.3</b>	<b>Significance of the results .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Limitations of the present study .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>6.5</b>	<b>Further research.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>6.6</b>	<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>88</b>
References.....		90
Appendix A: Questionnaire 1 .....		1
Appendix B: Parents’ consent letter .....		4
Appendix C: Principal’s Consent Letter .....		5
Appendix D: Student’s rubric .....		1
Appendix E: Questionnaire 2.....		1
Appendix F: Teacher’s journal format.....		3
Appendix G: Semi-structured interview .....		4
Appendix H: Lesson plan example .....		1

Table of figures

Figure 1 Illustration Soft-landing techniques.....	22
--	----

Table of tables

Table 1 Unit color-coding .....	51
Table 2 Final subcategories and categories after the selective coding procedure.....	54
Table 3 Omission and misordering frequent errors.....	65
Table 4 Beginning of the implementation.....	70
Table 5 Mid-way through implementation .....	73

Table 6 Final part of the implementation.....75

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction to the study

Observation and active participation seem to be the worthiest pathway to gain experience. Nevertheless, the researchers' experiences in different educational institutions reveal that when students are called to speak spontaneously in English in the presence of their classmates, they tend to react differently from when they speak in a private conversation. Taking this into account, we as teachers observed that students did not feel comfortable nor motivated to participate in a productive speaking activity in the classroom. Furthermore, it was also observed that the students at the school did not have ample opportunities to utilize the language skills in the classroom. Based on these reasons, one fundamental aim of schools should be to promote meaningful opportunities to use the language to foster accuracy and competence when using English.

In connection to accuracy and competence, the roles of communicative competences, that deals with the tacit knowledge of a language and the ability to use it, in the English classes for students to communicate successfully with their classmates using the second language (L2) cannot be underestimated at Emilio Valenzuela School, as Kamiya (2006) claimed "[...] in learning an L2, it is necessary for students to acquire, in addition to phonological and lexico-grammatical knowledge, ways to communicate with others using their target language" (p.63).

Nevertheless, it has been observed that this lack of successful communication is an impediment teachers tend to encounter to successfully execute classes regularly. This obstacle has been systematically ignored because the school director erroneously believed that being competent in the language means to manage the grammar accurately. We further

corroborated our observation with the viewpoints of Jang, Yoon, Lee, Park, Kim, Ko, and Park (2013) as stated below:

One must understand not only syntactic and semantic aspects of an utterance, but also pragmatic aspects as well—the social settings, the characteristics of relationships between the speaker and the listener, and so on, or every arena of language use (p. 61).

We equally understood that the ability to understand the social setting, the characteristics of relations between speakers and listeners while interacting in the English classes taught at this school, may enrich grammatical aspects that students should manage to communicate successfully.

## **1.2 Rationale of the study**

This research project emerged as an approach to tackle students' speaking difficulties with English language in terms of grammar accuracy. The students are aware of the importance of using appropriate grammar structures, but they find it difficult producing accurate sentences when speaking. These difficulties are related to the students' lack of awareness of the English language system, the use of grammar, and lack of practice.

Although the students are proficient enough to have short conversations in English with their classmates and the teacher (like greeting, asking for clarification, and asking for permission) they evidence low grammar accuracy when speaking in longer conversations. Despite this condition, they have shown a positive attitude towards the class, the language, and their classmates.

### 1.2.1 Needs analysis and problem statement

This project was conducted with twenty-four students from a private school in Bogotá, Colombia. The school expects students from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to acquire A2 level at the end of the school year. However, in order to achieve those expectations other communicative activities must be implemented. According to the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001), students at level A2 are expected to

[...] understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). [At this level the students are expected to] [...] communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. [Besides, the students are expected to] [...] describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate Basic need (p. 24).

However, the school standards have not explicitly included the development of the speaking skills in class and the learners' grammatical accuracy when using the L2.

Two of the most common difficulties for students in our classrooms were to take part in everyday conversations and to be able to speak fluently and accurately. Based on these observations and our perceptions as teachers toward the students' performance in class, we conducted a needs analysis using: a questionnaire ([Appendix A](#)) and a student's rubric ([Appendix D](#)). Due to the students' English level, we considered to design the rubric in Spanish for better understanding.

The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions based on the type of the population we were to evaluate. This instrument was to collect information about the students' perceptions and experiences about studying English. The rubric was to gather evidence about students' confidence when speaking with others. There was a diagnostic activity before starting the project. After the analysis of the results, the teachers concluded that although the students had had some difficulties when interacting with their classmates, they felt the need of having more oral participative classes.

The needs analysis also indicated that the students did not trust themselves when speaking in English because they realized they had not had a solid foundation in English grammar; they also showed difficulties when selecting the appropriate vocabulary to express complex ideas. Consequently, they hesitated when they spoke to their partners and teacher. This needs analysis evidenced that students struggled to communicate spontaneously in English with others because they lack self-confidence. In addition, students showed difficulties with the use of word order, and using the appropriate subject and auxiliary verb when speaking.

### **1.2.2 Justification of problem's significance**

We have observed that interactional and transactional use of the English language among students has proved difficult. Nonetheless, interactive activities that encourage students to participate and improve their oral performance should be implemented in the classroom. Moreover, the lack of interactive activities in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom might impact the students' oral performance in most classes. As cited in Harmer (2001), pair work might represent a significant amount of talking time available for students to interact in class. We must, then, provide opportunities for using the target

language as a natural way of practicing meaningful input given to them from the first part of the lessons.

The concepts of the *meaningful language use* have made us believe that the role-plays may be used to fill in the loopholes and gaps in speaking activities that other methodologies could not utilize. Thus, role-plays help students to interact more logically and meaningfully inside and outside the classroom. In Bill and Olaison's project (2009) "A role-play has a script with rules and constraints, but it also leaves room for the group's decision-making abilities, analytical acumen and most importantly, the experience, emotions and imagination of its members" (p. 88). Judging from this position, we understood that there are some benefits of role-playing in class. Role-play, as an authentic interactive activity, must be recognized and integrated as an authentic part of communicative skills and student-centered activities carried out by students while guided by teachers. As a result, teachers and school directors will be enabled to create suitable opportunities for students to speak and improve their accuracy considering the "input, interaction and output during conversation" as suggested by Gass and Mackey (2006).

Input, interaction and output during conversation should be considered fundamental aspects, as they might become part of meaningful communication to be aimed at and emphasized in the classroom. Role-playing may allow students use the language by modeling real situations, pretending to be someone else, or just inventing the characters and story as the best example to use the target language spontaneously (Jackson & Back, 2011). In the same vein, role-playing may also help students to feel engaged with the language. Thus, by the implementation of these role-plays in these 8<sup>th</sup> graders' English classes, they will be able to communicate more spontaneously taking advantage of their self-confidence.

### 1.2.3 Strategy selected to address problem

The last two decades have witnessed methods and approaches carried out to help learners speak accurately and fluently. For example, the Audio-lingual Method, grounded on Behaviorism, is a method that is implemented by teachers who believe that automaticity and habit formation is the main goal students must achieve. However, we consider that there should be a method that holistically engages students in meaningful interaction to foster the use of the target language during the classes. Therefore, role-playing might successfully fulfill that need at least within the classroom.

Role-playing might help and empower students to act naturally in this learning activity. Students might feel comfortable being the “actors” who can become whoever they prefer and speak spontaneously with others. These encouraging activities promote group work, discipline, and interest towards the language. Additionally, role-playing encourages students to increase the times they use the language in class (Morales, 2003). Therefore, students’ grammar accuracy may be improved by the trail and error dynamic among students when talking. Wang (2014) argued that learners who are not given opportunities to use English inside the classrooms might not improve their accuracy and fluency.

As suggested, accuracy deals with “the extent to which the language produced conforms to target language norms” (Wang, 2014, p.110) while fluency is related to the “ability to produce the spoken language ‘without undue pausing or hesitation’” (Wang, 2014, p. 110). Likewise, accuracy was not expected to improve per se unless these face-to-face activities were carried out systematically. In regards to practicing and using the language meaningfully, Nair and Alwee (2012) argue “To increase the amount of practice of each student, the class needs to be divided into groups and given ample practice through relevant and realistic language activities” (p. 4). Thus, role-playing might also enhance the students’ self-confidence, encouraging them to practice. As a result, it is thought that by using role-



plays as an icebreaker in conversation, natural communication might take place giving students enough opportunities to commit mistakes and being corrected by their classmates to improve grammatical accuracy while speaking.

### **1.3 Research question(s) and objective(s)**

As a concrete strategy, two main objectives and our main inquiry are stated. As our research question we considered, *to what extent does the use of role-plays in EFL classes at A2 level promote grammatical accuracy for sentence structure in oral utterances?*

To respond to this question, data will be established by analyzing the general and specific objectives.

As our general objective suggests, *“to observe how the role-playing implementation in the EFL classes promote grammatical accuracy for sentence structure in oral utterances in an A2 group at a private institution in Bogotá”*, it is indispensable to obtain reliable and verifiable findings after performing the implementation process. Therefore, these specific actions or objectives should be achieved

- To analyze the possible improvement in terms of the students' self-confidence when implementing role-playing.
- To identify the changes, if any, in students' grammatical accuracy for sentence structure when implementing role-playing.

We believe role-playing is an educational trend utilized to explore students' linguistic competence. Therefore, we are tempted to consider that grammatical accuracy for sentence structure might represent an important aspect as part of the process of becoming an effective and efficient speaker.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

Teacher' main objective should be giving their students the needed opportunities to improve English consciously at every aspect as a second language (L2). Valuable and communicative activities might be considered to avoid students' reluctance to participate in spoken interactions with others. Based on that, we believe we must enhance learners' ability to express themselves accurately in front of an audience. Role-playing could offer us hints on how to make students able enough to make mistakes and learn from them, to learn to speak accurately in common conversational circumstances, and finally communicate successfully with their peers. We explain relevant learning aspects such as the importance of being willing to participate, teacher-students' rapport, and students' confidence, that we consider must be put together to highlight other possible enriching outcomes after the implementation of our project. In sum, we identify and analyze the significant concepts on which our research project is based and consolidated.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework & State of the Art

### 2.1 Introduction

Certain studies have shown how communicative activities in the classroom facilitate spontaneous conversation that results in successful communication. This chapter presents the constructs: speaking skills, role-playing and grammatical accuracy, which will serve as the basis for analyzing, discussing, and concluding this research project.

In regards to the speaking skill, teachers have involved students in the activities developed in the classroom to promote active and interactive participation (Tsou, 2005) to ensure a more active role of the students with their classmates. Communication inside the classroom has become an essential action that might affect students' participation and interest positively. Therefore, students' interaction the students' expectations should be addressed by the English teachers as the students might set unrealistic goals regarding what their English level would be in a short period of time. Teachers must consider the fact that this population would not be prepared as native speakers would in terms of fluency and accuracy (Isil & Ayfer, 2012), or not in the limited amount of English classes they have at school.

Role-play must be seen as a way to express meaning communication through body language, or socio-linguistic part of communicative competence (Rogers & Evans, 2008). Similarly, Budden (2006) argued that role-play gives the students the opportunity of either put themselves in somebody else's shoes, or being a different person (as cited in Susanti, 2007). This opportunity encourages thinking and creativity because students can practice the language they have learned in context (Huang, 2008).

In terms of accuracy, Hedge (2000) gives us insights about relevant input the students would acquire as a first step, then, they should be able to use it for their own communicative purposes. In addition, Regan, Howard, and Lemee (2009) suggest that accuracy is not

necessarily acquired inside the classroom only, but it is also acquired as the interaction between learners and teachers increases outside the classroom.

Self-confidence, although not included as a construct, is thought as an essential learning ingredient due to its effect on classroom communication among language learners. When a learner lacks self-confidence, his or her communication with others while using the L2 might be affected. This circumstance may not allow them to participate in a given task (Brown, 2007). In conclusion, to foster students' grammatical accuracy inside the classroom by means of role-playing, we will mention relevant studies and their findings' relevance to the field in general and for the purpose of this project. Equally important, we have observed that role-playing helps students identify important aspects related to their grammatical accuracy, self-confidence, through the correction of their own mistakes, and by suggesting new words, expressions and utterances geared towards speaking accurately in the presence of their peers.

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

### **2.2.1 Speaking skills**

Activities like role-plays, based on Yardley-Matwiejczuk (1997), should simulate real life and common situations as much as possible. Therefore, teachers could train learners regarding vocabulary, keywords, useful expressions, rising and falling intonation, and the pronunciation of patterns as in content words. This training can take certain time, but it could encourage learners to speak often in class, especially when low self-esteem, extreme anxiety and lack of confidence impede them to participate.

Thus, the teacher's rapport between him and the students might boost learners' confidence to put elements trained into practice. However, boosting learners' confidence is

unlikely to occur among this group of students because some of them do not like to talk about their private lives and personal experiences. On the contrary, they prefer to talk about other circumstances in which they feel free to act in a different context and about different socio-cultural aspects pertaining to their lifestyle. Therefore, anxiety would not be affected as they speak about others rather than themselves. Consequently, teacher's rapport between students and him might play a crucial starting point to foster confidence among students, as seen during the role-plays performed in the implementation stage.

Students who are learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are able to understand that there is a level of accuracy and fluency required to communicate successfully. We agree with Isil and Ayfer (2012) who suggest that "this kind of study will help us to be aware of the importance of students' expectations towards some specific features of the language" (p. 3666). Students' expected improvements towards pronunciation, as a particular feature of the language, might increase through the development of the role-playing process. The teachers acted, essentially, as advisors or facilitators who are willing to help, but not to do the students' job.

With the time, educators, advisors and learning facilitators have implemented communicative methods in English classes to promote speaking skills among students. However, those methods, sometimes, seek, mainly, for results without paying special attention to the student's motivation to participate. Tsou (2005) suggests that "teacher's necessity to engage students into classroom practices such as active participation" (p. 6) might increase. That suggestion unveils the unquestionable need to ask students participate actively. Therefore, this speaking practice, role-playing, deals with the learning and cognitive strategies that must be implemented in the classroom for students to feel involved. This intrinsic learning engagement allows teachers to confirm how relevant modeling our instructions is to improve students' communicative skills and, could also, encourage students

to interact with their peers to see how oral efficacy works. Likewise, peer-assessment might eventually stand as a significant feature to build a cohesive relationship among students to face any challenge within the classroom.

Oral competence, as argued by Tillitt and Newton (1985), deals with possible ways in which interaction could be the main vehicle to communicate something with a specific purpose. Relevant features such as language function, systematized exercises, pair or small groups of role-plays, and cultural rules to express an idea naturally and effectively, are some of the several possibilities to accomplish an effective oral competence. Thus, to think about “speaking naturally” as our final outcome, we should think of speaking skills as the variety of abilities students develop in the different contexts in which students are involved (p.7).

### **2.2.2 Role-playing**

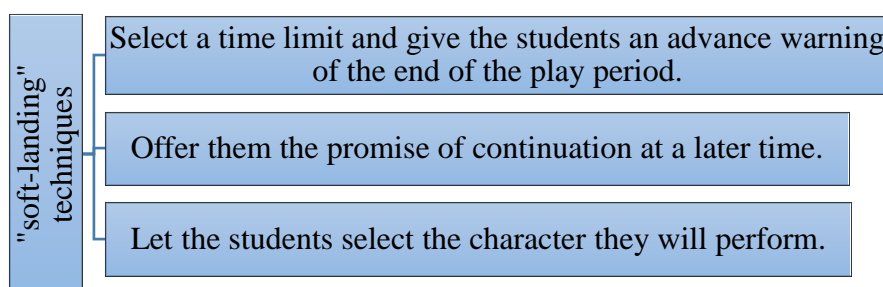
Several authors, Yardley-Matwiejczuk (1997), Featherstone and Cummings (2009), Rogers and Evans (2008), Yusuke (2010) and Rubiano (2013), have referred to role-playing as a fundamental part of language learning for the last two decades. According to Yardley-Matwiejczuk (1997), role-play activities are those that involve students in classroom actions that simulate real situations (p. 1). These activities allow, “above all, the infinite manipulation of time and space, restricted only by pragmatic considerations” (Yardley-Matwiejczuk, 1997, p. 2). Thus, time and space represent key elements to be used actively in the classroom by students when preparing and performing their role-plays.

As role-playing is a simulated activity, Featherstone and Cummings (2009) complement Yardley-Matwiejczuk’s (1997) definition by claiming that when the students are immersed in the imitation activity, they can experience what it feels to be another person (p. 8). In agreement to this statement, Rogers and Evans (2008) state that role-playing can help learners in two different manners: “to develop insights into the perspectives of others and to

confirm or challenge their own perspective on phenomena” (p. 22) which means they can build perceptions by being another person while they test their own perspectives of those different situations. Thus, teachers are able to control the simulated activity in terms of the role that each student plays in the exercise, its length, and the place or physical space in which the activity is developed.

Based on the assertions mentioned, we could assume that students are able to enrich the role-play through the use of their imagination, background knowledge and incorporation of new elements gained while following the teacher’s recommendations on how to perform actions successfully.

Featherstone and Cummings (2009) proposed some “soft-landing” techniques for students who participate in role-play activities in the English as a Foreign Language classroom. This technique represents the opportunity students need to have concrete time allotted to prepare and perform their role-play during their English classes. As well, students might see the possibility to continue working on the preparation of a better role-play next time, perhaps out of the classroom, having in mind that students will be able to decide who they want to be or perform. These classes, in which English as a foreign language is the main vehicle, seem to be the best scenario for students to take advantage of a communicative activity where interested students in practicing the target language might be involved



**Figure 1 Illustration Soft-landing techniques**

However, the main concern regarding role-playing is the interactional competence that students nurture among them as Yusuke (2010) suggests. Interactional competence, which is related to the way the students interrelate with others, may foster feasible competitive learning situations they might experience while interacting. Moreover, role-playing may eventually be an opportunity to communicate spontaneously, not only through speaking, but also by means of body language, which includes gestures, the body movements, the person's attitudes and facial expressions; those are specific features being communicated or expressed during the role-play activity (Rogers & Evans, 2008).

It is a strategy in which there is collaboration from the participants to live interpersonal experiences through communication as suggested in Yardley-Matwiejczuk (1997). At the same time, however, it also means to be "more deeply immersed in what they are doing than at any other time" (Featherstone & Cummings, 2009, p. 8).

In a more recent definition of role-playing Rubiano (2013) argues, "role-plays are quite demanding foreign language situations in which the players have to use the foreign language correctly and adequately both concerning the foreign language itself and the particular role that is acted out" (p. 122). However, although the students are asked to use the language correctly, teachers may also have the main aim of having them interacting with their classmates. Feeling distant or close to the use of the language will certainly depend on how willing students are towards participation. For MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Donovan (2002), willingness to communicate is defined as "an underlying continuum representing the predisposition toward or away from communicating, given the choice". Similarly, our group of students willing to participate in this project might feel predisposed towards communication.

Therefore, it was difficult to untie the deep relation between self-confidence without taking into consideration self-efficacy. If students feel they are able or capable of carrying out



any given task inside the classroom, their self-confidence might increase as well (Brown, 2007). We observed that social support represented by classmates' performances, might play a decisive role in the students' minds who might be willing to communicate spontaneously as MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Conrod (2001) mention.

The students may participate in the role-play they are assigned to act out if the role-play fulfills their expectations, otherwise, their confidence may be affected in the moment of performing it. To be successful in terms of speaking spontaneously and accurately is basically regarded to willingness and motivation of students when being someone else, as Hedge (2000) states.

We consider that role-playing is an essential communicative strategy that can underpin oral skills, although there are many extrinsic and intrinsic factors that could affect learners' attitudes towards sharing what they think or believe. Students should develop oral skills to express feelings and points of view, which might also nurture student's self-confidence. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary [1] self-confidence stands for "confidence in oneself and in one's powers and abilities", thus students should trust themselves and their own abilities and capacities to perform any task required, speaking in a natural way as part of communication's main goal.

### **2.2.3 Accuracy**

Accuracy refers to the precision of the students' use of the language system, including their grammar use, and their vocabulary (Brand & Götz, 2011). Developing grammatical accuracy is a process and we expected them to improve their accuracy at the end of the research. This project aimed to analyze the impact of role-playing on their grammatical accuracy when speaking. Ebsworth (1998) claims in his paper that a chunk or stream of speech should be accurate regarding pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax in order to fulfill

comprehension. This research project does not aim to observe and analyze the students' pronunciation and vocabulary, but the importance of word order, and using the appropriate subject and auxiliary verb when speaking.

In order to make communication possible among learners, the students should receive comprehensible input and proportionally be allowed to produce their own output (Hedge, 2000). That output production might become a pattern for boosting communication. Moreover, Gardner (1985) explains that qualities that might enrich students' accuracy in the L2 are the integrity, the attitudes towards the learning situation, and the students' motivation. Likewise, the students are equipped with knowledge and skills to speak accurately after performing some role-plays in their English classes. In other words, through the implementation of role-plays, the students were immersed in activities in which they simulated situations of their daily live using the language seen in class (Olaison, 2014). Consequently, the situations in which the students are immersed during the role-plays are ambiguous; there is not a correct decision and there are not borders limiting the participants' choices. The students experience the situations as they would probably do in the real life.

Building awareness of the social use of the language as well as practicing the most relevant features is required to ensure students' understanding and future correct use of the language practiced indoors and outdoors (Hedge, 2000). Therefore, students may have significant benefits in terms of accuracy when being exposed to real life circumstances: funny situations, allowing learners to be more direct in their opinions, and broadening the world of the classroom to involve the world outside (Harmer, 2001). These benefits lead us as researchers to consider accuracy as part of a particular competence achieved not necessarily within the classroom only; as Regan, Howard and Lemee (2009) suggest, sociolinguistic competence deals with the increasing contact among learners and native speakers in the foreign language classroom. However, they did not offer clear evidence on how non-foreign

language classroom attains a higher accuracy standard in a context which is not represented by native speakers. Therefore, our non-foreign language classroom students should receive daily meaningful communicative input to encourage them to use the language accurately.

### **2.3 State of the art**

Diverse projects have been carried out through the last two decades in regards to speaking skills. Some projects have considered exceptional features of learning a foreign language. For example, they have considered communicative strategies (Lopera, 2013), self-esteem, fluency and accuracy (Orozco, 2013), and anxiety and socio-affective activities, (Lemos, 2010).

These projects have given us some insights about the existing knowledge towards role-playing and speaking skills; however, there were some aspects that they did not analyze that are necessary in this research. For example, they did not analyze the students' self-confidence and its relationship with the grammar accuracy when speaking.

Lopera (2013) aimed to enhance participation through the implementation of role-playing. According to Lopera (2013), group work should be an essential aspect of the English classes so that students feel free to talk using the L2 and act without being criticized; "some of the students were very self-aware and self-critical, which made them easily embarrassed in front of the others, and therefore, anxious [about participating] [...] in the speaking activities in the English class" (p. 22). Although Lopera did not consider how grammatical accuracy could be improved while role-plays are developed, he found that the interaction motivated the students to speak in English and participate in class. This suggests that using role-play in the language-learning classroom is a reasonable choice for addressing the students' grammatical accuracy when interacting in English.

Equally important, Jackson and Back (2011) outlined an approach to teach communication skills to advanced students through the use of different kinds of role-playing and feedback. This study found that the key aspects to teach communication skills in the classroom are: the learner's assessment, the group's assessment, the classroom environment, the ability of the teacher to provide assertive feedback, and the students' reflection on the processes of communication. These aspects, although enriching for our project do not represent any critical or valuable information in regards to students' anxiety, confidence or self-confidence. This research recommended giving students a timeout to organize their ideas better when interacting with their classmates. Nonetheless, they did not examine how the role-play activities enhance the students' spoken accuracy while their self-confidence is promoted in the class. Our project, however, is aimed at accomplishing that.

Aliakbari and Jamalvandi (2010) conducted a research project in Iran. They divided 60 university students into a control group and an experimental group. They aimed to “determine to what extent role play activity based on task-based language teaching would influence EFL learners' speaking ability and whether they would be able to improve this skill” (p. 21). In the experimental group, they found that role-plays were an effective activity for English learning courses. Their results suggest that the current strategy may be used in the English classes in order to enhance the students' speaking skills. Thus, role-play may be a positive strategy to address the problem Iranian students had.

A study conducted in Colombia by Orozco (2013) with fourth and fifth grade students was fundamental for our project. His main goal was to promote the oral use of English and the students' confidence when speaking, through the implementation of games, icebreakers and interviews. The researcher found that these activities promoted the use of new vocabulary and the expected accuracy in pronunciation and grammar. These results are relevant for the current research because they evidenced that grammatical accuracy and

pronunciation could be fostered through the use of activities in which the students were encouraged to interact actively. Similarly, Lemos (2010) developed a study in Colombia that aimed to enhance the confidence among eighth grade students when speaking in English through the application of cooperative learning strategies. They created a radio show on the Internet which helped the students gain confidence with the language. Although the author did not consider the role-playing activities, the results obtained suggest that activities that engage students into cooperative work are significant for the students' confidence when speaking in English. Students feel supported by their classmates when pursuing a common goal. However, the results did not suggest what they could have learned by using role-plays in class to contribute to the students' confidence when using the L2, since it demands interaction.

Alike, Bonella (2002) carried out a research project at West Virginia University. This study found that the students perceived that role-plays have several benefits when learning a second language: they improve oral proficiency, promote the acquisition of vocabulary, and rehearse for real-life communication. In effect, results let us observe this strategy as a tool to encourage learners to carry out more accurate conversations with their partners and their teacher. Nonetheless, Bonella's research did not examine how accuracy, in terms of grammar and syntax, might be enhanced through these simulation experiences. This is one of the key concepts that might be enriched by different or complementary findings.

Likewise, Rubiano (2013) developed a research project in a public school in San Martín de Loba, a town in the Bolivar department in Colombia, about the students' performance in class while using role-playing. Although the study did not examine the students' spoken accuracy in terms of grammar, it found that the students improved their speaking performance, specifically their pronunciation and the number of vocabulary words they used through the use of role-play activities in the EFL classroom. As a result, we

inferred that role-play could have helped students increase the amount of vocabulary they knew, and perhaps, it could have helped them clarify the grammar structures after interacting with their classmates. However, Rubiano's work did not include self-confidence to boost students' motivation to participate while performing the role-plays as proposed by our research work.

In regards to speaking accuracy, Ojeda (2011) has considered that the use of voice boards (they are applications in which teachers and students can include discussions, and debates, among others) might improve students' accuracy by means of a series of steps or methodology in which time for feedback might raise awareness among students. He also claimed that there is no time for students to correct their mistakes while speaking about events which occurred in the past since they were concerned about getting the message rather than speaking accurately (as cited in Krashen, 2003). On the contrary, our students could correct their own mistakes while role-playing as a way to improve their grammatical accuracy.

Ojeda's (2011) research gave us some insights about the importance of self-correction in the face-to-face encounters among students, and how peer-correction was more meaningful while writing comments to classmates in the forum proposed. Consequently, based on Ojeda's results and the population of this current research, we looked peer-correction as a meaningful way to raise awareness into the correct use of the grammar the students are using in the role-play. Moreover, the results suggest that the strategy proposed, due to its communicative characteristic, may be appropriate for the current research project since the students would be able to use the language without total control from the teacher.

On the other hand, Ojeda's (2011) research did not examine the interaction provided in the face-to-face encounters among students and teachers while discussing, preparing and performing a role-play based on their context. Likewise, it did not examine how this

interaction helped students improve their grammar accuracy when using English. Drobot (2013), who also used the role-play as a strategy to help the students in their learning process, has found that role-play fosters interactive oral communication. Such results suggest that role-play could foster the student's knowledge of the grammar structures they had seen in class, since they were able to use them in a simulated real-life situation. Thus, students may understand the importance of using the appropriate grammar structures when speaking to facilitate the communication among them.

But, given that Drobot's (2013) research did not find any evidence to prove the existence of grammar patterns concerning grammatical accuracy to promote students' self-confidence when speaking, it nurtures our idea of face-to-face communication as a way for helping improve students' accuracy in several aspects such as intonation, grammar, fluency and peer-correction.

Finally, Brand and Götz's (2011) study has found that fluency and accuracy seemed to be related. They claim that fluency is the "naturalness in the learners' speech" (p. 257). This assertion is established by how the native English speakers "set the speech management strategies" (p. 257). These strategies are the repetitions, the automatic correction of the mistakes, the hesitation, the use of discourse markers (E.g. So, right, okay), among others. On the contrary, accuracy is the grammatical, lexical and phonological correctness (p. 257). This shows that fluency is not dependent on a proper use of grammatical structures. Consequently, students can speak a few phrases of English accurately, but they might not be fluent.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

These previous studies have found that accuracy deals with grammar and its connection to correctness (Stephen, 2001). Moreover, they showed that it is important to use peer-correction when using role-play activities in class as it would enrich the interaction

among the students and among them with the teacher (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2003). These studies also demonstrated that role-plays could be carried out inside and outside the classroom as a means of understanding the roles of communication.

According to Budden (2006) role-playing can be considered from different perspectives, a multiple way to face real daily-life situations and fictitious, or prepared, activities or events (as cited in Susanti, 2007).

However, current research has not addressed the connection between role-playing activities and increased accuracy in EFL classrooms. Current research did not mention the intrinsic relation that seems to exist between the role-plays and the grammar accuracy when speaking. It did not mention the way spoken accuracy would be impacted after fostering, enhancing and enriching students' group work and teachers' guidance neither.

The following chapter describes the instruments used to obtain and analyze the data. It also discusses the context, the design of the project, the type of research and the application of these instruments to the target population.



## **Chapter 3: Research Design**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Research studies on this topic show the importance of motivating the students to use the second language in the English class by the implementation of role-playing. Consequently, this study used role-playing to encourage students to use the language accurately.

To analyze the effectiveness and the possible changes in the students' spoken accuracy, the researchers designed a questionnaire, a teacher's journal, a semi-structured interview, and collected audio recordings from the students. Subsequently, the researchers piloted the instruments and applied them before, during and after the implementation of role-playing in the English classes.

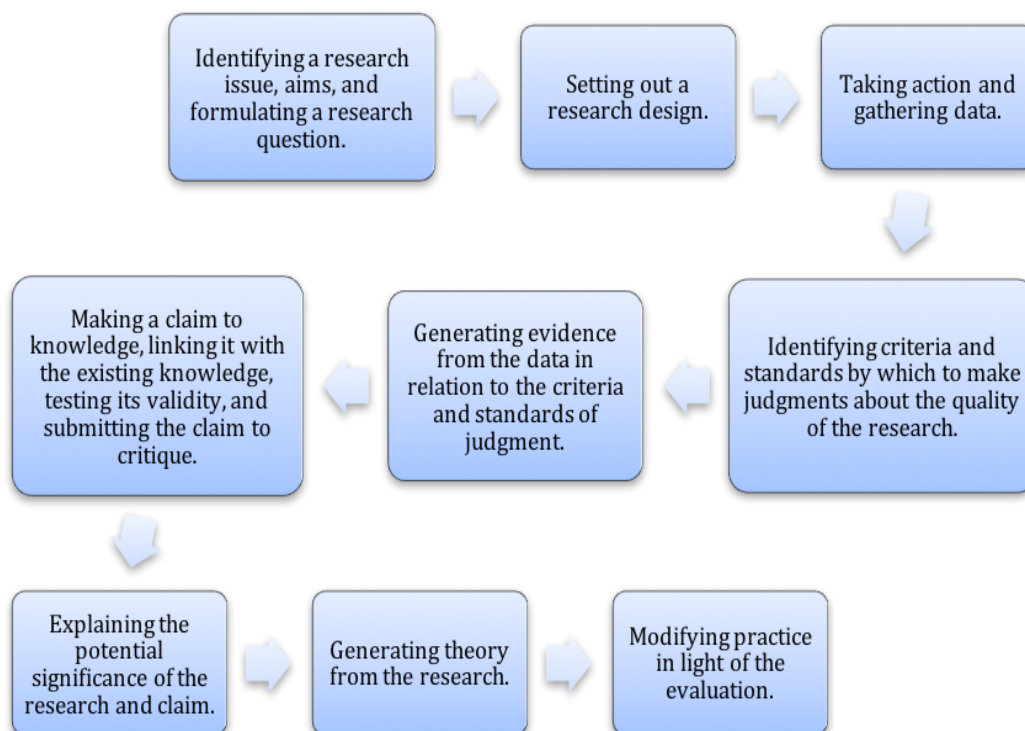
This chapter describes the approach and method employed in conducting the study. It begins with the type of study, then, it describes the context, population, or participants, the researchers' role, crucial ethical considerations, data collection instruments and their corresponding description, and finally it explains the validity, reliability and triangulation process achieved throughout and by the end of the research.

### **3.2 Type of study**

This is a qualitative research project, which according to Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer (2012) focuses on the participants' experiences, thoughts and perceptions (p. 5). This study is an action plan where the researchers are immersed in the context. Being immersed in the context makes the meanings directly related to a specific background and time that cannot be generalized in most cases (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer, 2012). Steps such as planning,

acting, observing and reflecting are some of the general stages of this cyclical process. The sub-stages and key aspects presented in figure 2 are:

Key aspects of action research.



(McNiff & Whitehead, 2009, p. 10)

### 3.3 Context

This project was executed in a private bilingual school in Bogotá. At Emilio Valenzuela School, the students have 10 hours of class per week. The syllabus of the course is based on the course book and other resources suggested by the language department. Various interactive extra-curricular activities are carried out to monitor students' performance because the students do not have the same level of English. This is why this population needs a task-based learning approach at the beginning to try to awake their interest in communicating with others.

### 3.3.1 Participants

This group is composed of twenty-two students, ages eleven to fifteen years. They come from different social strata in Bogotá. According to the English level observed at Emilio Valenzuela School, students are supposed to be between an A1 to A2 level, which is a Basic English level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). Regarding the students' abilities, they are able to produce isolated sentences using the vocabulary and grammar seen in class. These sentences are related to their personal information. However, the needs analysis showed students had difficulties speaking accurately in front of others because of their low grammatical accuracy awareness.

With regards to students' emotional/affective needs, they show a lack of confidence when using the language. The questionnaire applied in the needs analysis showed that students do not feel confident using English because their classmates notice their inaccuracies. Additionally, students may know grammar previously studied, but they do not identify where and when to use it. Concerning the participants' cognitive needs, they need to advance from simple isolated sentences to accomplish a real and simple conversation by using the target language.

### 3.3.2 Researcher's role

The role of the researchers was "participants-observers", and the relationship between the researchers and the participants was collaborative. This role as participants was demonstrated when we supported students with examples, explanations, comments and advice in general, in the pre, while and post role-playing activities. Likewise, as researchers we behaved as participants when we modeled instructions, role-play part or any other oral interaction. Our role as observers took place when we decided to move aside and allow students to be the main characters in the play. Observers' main goal was to have students

behave naturally inside the classroom. Therefore, researchers must not interrupt or persuade the students to perform as they expect. These roles and these relationships, as stated in Somekh (2006), are “sufficiently fluent to maximize mutual support and sufficiently differentiated to allow individuals to make appropriate contributions” (p. 7).

### **3.3.3 Ethical considerations**

It is critical to understand the principles of action research projects before the implementation (O'Brien, 2001). These principles are: the reflexive critique, the dialectical critique, the collaborative resource, the risk, the plural structure and the theory, practice and transformation. Similarly, Kliem (2011) argues “Ethics covers character, integrity, honesty, fairness, and trust, to name just a few topics manifested through the decisions and actions involved in a given project” (p. 5). Consequently, teachers, students and researchers involved in this research process were sincere when planning, executing and triangulating the data collected. This concept gives us a perspective regarding what ethics is about, all the decisions that the researchers made and what they considered was best for the project, without violating the moral or physical integrity of the participants. In sum, principles and values observed for the development of this study must be accomplished through the project and shown by students and researchers at the end of the implementation.

Also, it is necessary to have the participants' permission (Appendix B) and the principal's letter (Appendix C) before starting the project to avoid the infringement of the data collected. Therefore, it was mandatory to ask students and teachers to sign a consent form in which they accepted their participation in the study.

### **3.4 Data collection instruments**

We used four instruments during this study as part of an action research method and qualitative approach: a questionnaire, teachers' journal, semi-structured interviews, and audio recordings. They provided different perspectives about the role-playing implementation to encourage confidence and enhance spoken grammatical accuracy among English A2 students. In this section their application and purpose are explained. Finally, the instruments applied were designed in Spanish because the researchers considered that students might feel uncomfortable, and grammatically limited, when writing and speaking in English.

#### **3.4.1 Descriptions and justifications**

##### **3.4.1.1 Questionnaire**

After considering the importance of questionnaires (Siniscalco & Auriat, 2005, p.3) and their efficiency (Gillham, 2007, p.6), we decided to use them because it allowed researches collect reliable data. The two questionnaires in this research project included closed and open questions so that participants could explain their responses providing important information for the study.

For validation purposes, our research tutor at the university, classmates and colleagues at work saw the questionnaire and provided comments about it applied at the end of the implementation ([Appendix E](#)). Consequently, the questionnaire was piloted first with the participants to check if it was easy to use, and that it asked for relevant information. By implementing this questionnaire at the beginning of the needs analysis, we wanted to know the kind of mistakes students considered were impeding their progress, the benefits and the results from being part of role-playing as a communicative strategy.

### **3.4.1.2 Teacher's journal**

Teachers' journals are "sequential, dated chronicle of events and ideas, which include the personal responses and reflections of the writer(s) on those events and ideas" (Stevens & Cooper, 2009, p .5). Journals are written, dated, informal, flexible, private, and useful to record any event that takes place during the students' performances. For validating this tool, we followed the same procedure as we did for the questionnaire to demonstrate evidence that it was reliable, that it did not interfere with the class or had an impact on students' performance.

The journal, filled after each role-play, (Appendix F) helps the teacher to record events during the class and his insights in a clearer way: stages of the class, class activity, teacher's comments and insights are some of the key points observed by applying this journal.

### **3.4.1.3 Semi-structured interview**

Researchers conduct semi-structured interviews when they need to understand the participants' insights about a specific problem, and also when these responses provided by the students can be used to answer partially the research question (Castle, 2012, p. 80). We designed a semi-structured interview (Appendix G) because of its flexibility: the questions in this type of interviews are pre-formulated and the answers are open-ended; they can be "fully expanded at the discretion of the interviewer and the interviewee, and can be enhanced by probes" (S. Schensul, J. Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p. 149).

Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to expand the questions without the restriction of only asking the questions planned. According to Schensul et al. (1999) semi-structured interviews served for the following purposes: further clarify the central domains and factors in the study, operationalizing factors into variables, and developing preliminary hypotheses (p. 150). Since these semi-structured interviews allow researchers to know more in detail about students' background, perception and expectations in regards to using role-playing to improve their grammatical accuracy, every factor might be seen as a variable that would eventually enrich data collected. Finally, by the development of these preliminary hypotheses we expect to learn to what extent the use of role-playing may foster students' self-confidence in this context.

#### **3.4.1.4 Audio recordings**

The audio recordings are connected directly to the semi-structured interviews and the role-plays the students performed in class. This is because it is necessary to record the participants' answers about the different questions of the semi-structured interview, and also to record the students' role-plays for further analysis. Audio recording role-plays may be difficult because students might feel intimidated when being recorded. As a result, the percentage of natural and spontaneous answers might decrease (Seale, Gobo, Gubrium & Silverman, 2004, p. 549). However, if they permit researchers to record their voices, the participants would take some time to speak freely, which may guarantee real and natural pieces of information (Pope & Mays, 2006, p. 18). It is necessary to transcribe the role-plays and the interviews after recording. Although this is a time-consuming process, they must be aware of the importance of it due to the nature of the information that is being processed.

### 3.4.2 Validation and piloting

The validity, reliability, and triangulation processes started by setting the research questions, the general and the specific objectives for the project. Then, we selected, designed, piloted, modified, and applied the instruments at School. Moreover,

The instruments were piloted with twenty-two students at Emilio Valenzuela School. These instruments were modified because they were incomplete and unsuitable for the students' English level (they were originally designed in English). The questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were translated, modified, and applied on the same students that participated in the first piloting to validate their usefulness. The teachers' journal demonstrated to be useful and not time consuming. In regards to the audio recordings, we designed a rubric ([Appendix D](#)) to evaluate students' performance in compliance and performance, communication, grammar and vocabulary. In addition, the audio recordings were transcribed and analyzed in order to identify the changes, if any, in the students' spoken grammatical accuracy when implementing the role-playing.

Validity is achieved when the information collected is reliable, legitimate, and reflects its appropriateness to our research question and the directness and strength of its association with the concepts under scrutiny. This information was taken from students enrolled in the school. Then, researchers tabulate the information collected. After that, researchers classified what was appropriate to answer the research question, and finally researchers observed what they had found in the light of theory.

Data and investigator triangulation, operating as the types of strategies necessary to corroborate any relevant research issue, use three perspectives that serve the purpose of



allowing researchers to collect, observe and analyze data that come from the audio-recordings, the semi-structured interviews and the teachers' journals.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This research project design considered the students' needs towards their speaking skills when using English in class. Reliability took place since the permission of the institutions and students were taken into account; the researchers' role in the implementation was clear, planning the instruments was concrete, and the different stages for collecting data were well prepared.

## **Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the pedagogical intervention and implementation applied. Likewise, it deals with the pedagogical activities we designed to determine how the role-playing implementation in the English classes fosters students' grammar accuracy for sentence structure in oral utterances among A2 English students. This chapter also includes the objectives planned, the topics seen, the materials, the methodology used through the process, the instruments used, and the individual and group tasks.

### **4.2 Visions of language, learning, and curriculum**

#### **4.2.1 Vision of language**

This research is based on the premise that students are learning a foreign language in a non-native environment. Therefore, teachers should be conscious of the type of activities proposed to the students in the classroom so that they consider them feasible. Likewise, demanding task-based activities might challenge students' language and enhance their results. In doing so, interactive activities are aimed to allow students to share their background knowledge, as well as their ideas, feelings and thoughts by using the L2.

Task-based learning (TBL) provides a significant number of tasks, such as problem-solving exercises and role-plays. These tasks offer a "great deal of flexibility in this model and should lead to more motivating activities for the learners" (Bowen, 2004, para. 4). TBL is used to promote real communication between the students because they have to use the target language to fulfill the outcome of the task (Bowen, 2004). Moreover, this approach provides

an environment which “promotes the natural language learning process” (Foster, 1999, p. 69) through the immersion of the students in meaningful activities, in which they could practice the grammar seen and evaluate their performance.

According to Franke (cited in Richards, 2014), having an explicit explanation of the grammar rules is not necessary when learning English, however, the direct and spontaneous use of the grammar is necessary when mastering this language. This approach, known as the Direct Method, allowed us see the crucial benefits of learning a new language in a way in which the students deduced the grammar rules at the same time they were using the language. In this research, they analyzed word order in specific sentences, as well as how the auxiliaries were used and the subjects that were included.

Moreover, meaningful communication should be based on the communicative approach, the useful input represented in the role-play performances, the outcomes, and the confidence revealed during the interactional learning circumstances in the EFL classroom (Noraini and Bahasa, 2009). Noraini and Bahasa (2009) explain that in order to acquire a language, the students must communicate, and in order to communicate, the students must acquire language. Thus, learners can negotiate meaning after modifying their speech and requests while interacting every day in the classroom.

Consequently, as argued by Savignon (2009), communicative language teaching deals with meaningful communication, personal relations, as well as curricular innovations, to foster communication with the rest of the learning environment participants. Ideally, teachers’ techniques and strategies might be focused on meaning.

Moreover, useful input deals with assisting students when fostering their foreign language acquisition as far as it is supported on interaction (Schwartz, 1993). Thus, role-playing could fulfill students' and teachers' expectations as they might convey successful communication. Students' self-confidence, as mentioned by Bondie, Gaughran and Zusho (2014) is highlighted by the way students learn to trust themselves whilst facing a *discussion routine* (oral interaction without any presence of the teacher) as something enriching to learn and help others to learn how to speak in a more confident way.

#### 4.2.2 Vision of learning

This vision of learning, for the purpose of having ideal communication scenarios, takes into consideration that the teacher realizes the importance of compassion as a quality to nurture students' interaction, as well as promoting learning to happen as in the active teaching and learning approach within the classroom. As Dewey (1938), Barr and Tagg (1995) explain:

It [...active teaching and learning approach...] allows students' interaction, role-plays performances, and participating in a more natural way, and is conceived of as a holistic, student-centered approach designed to produce learning, develop critical-thinking skills, and elicit discovery and the construction of knowledge (p. 116).

As mentioned by Richard-Amato (1988) instructional approaches have changed from grammar-based to communicative approach. Thus, learning should be interactive and collaborative as the communicative approach suggests. Affective features should also be considered as the students might obtain better results when the teacher is positive,

respectful and kind. Moreover, learning should have a purpose, and by using the problem-based learning approach, the students are empowered to investigate, integrate what they know, and apply those skills to find a possible solution to a specific problem. Learning is a conscious process in which the progress will be seen (Lamy (2007), and in this approach, the students might show a progress in regards to the communicative skills they use (Savery, 2006).

### **4.2.3 Vision of curriculum**

Curriculum is a set of organized instructions based on content the teachers must implement in the classrooms that facilitate students' communication with others. A product-oriented curriculum emphasizes how the learner's knowledge advances and how the learner communicates in the target language after following the teacher's instruction (Wette, 2010).

Hence, the communicative approach according to Menking (2002) and Qinghong (2009) fosters learners' participation by means of classroom interaction to negotiate meaning in pairs or groups. As well, this communicative approach enhances students' confidence when performing fluency-based activities. Thus, interactive communication through the language in which socio-cultural aspects boost meaningful outcomes among the participants seems to nurture learners' motivation. Likewise, according to this approach, students are exposed to content-based instructions following institutional guidelines; additionally, classroom instruction is student-centered, meaning that students do most of the talking rather than the teacher. For the most part, the communicative approach will benefit students from this population, as their participation will increase.

Moreover, according to Wette (2010), the type of curriculums offered in the institutions (process-oriented curricula), should allow students to be actively involved in the decision-making process while those institutions take into consideration students' needs and demands. On the other hand, product-oriented curricula usually follow a thorough pre-planning curriculum design in order to create guides necessary for the implementation stages, fostering teacher's decisions on what to learn and how to teach it without using methodological procedures on learners' favor. For this project, however, teachers think of curriculum, as a way to promote students' individual and group needs into a varied learning context.

Curricula at our institution try to foster students' interests in communicative activities by giving teachers the opportunity to select the topic of the lesson while complying with the outcomes suggested at the beginning of the course. This type of curriculum helps teachers to cope with the content suggested without imposing or segregating students' interests neither avoiding their learning styles to learn the target language in a more dynamic way. For this reason, several types of strategies must be intertwined so that curricula develop and enhance students' skills. As argued by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies development are necessary for a student to acquire successfully another language. After all, students' skills such as speaking, listening and writing are the most relevant abilities strengthened during the lessons taken.

### **4.3 Instructional design**

#### **4.3.1 Lesson planning**

The lesson planning was designed to give students enough input so they could do the role-play activities being aware of the tenses and the vocabulary they should use in each of the situations they are performing. The teaching approach used was the communicative approach, which is based on the premise that “what we do in the classroom should have some real-life communicative value” (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005, p. 12).

Each of the lessons, which were two hours long, started with a warm up activity that reviewed the grammar or vocabulary taught in the previous class, or the vocabulary the students would be able to use during that specific lesson ([Appendix H](#)). After this, the teacher introduced the new topic that the students would see in class later; the teacher presented the class objective and students brainstormed what they knew about the proposed topic. In this stage of the lesson, the students could activate their background knowledge.

As mentioned above, the topic of each lesson was introduced by asking the students to complete a short activity from the course book related to the vocabulary they saw in class. Grammatical aspects were explained for the whole group first, but then individual questions were answered to clear doubts and give clear guidelines on the grammar seen.

After the students were familiar with the topic, grammar, and vocabulary of the lesson, they practiced the new language by means of completing one or two activities from the course book. This was done to identify the possible difficulties or doubts the students might have towards the language, as there was a short explicit grammar explanation from the

teacher. The teacher clarified these doubts through this stage so the students could be ready to continue with the speaking practice that was the role-play activity which was 20 minutes long (Application stage).

The role-play activities were planned considering the students' English level, the topic, the grammar and vocabulary of the lesson, and the most common situations in which they could use the language for real communicative purposes. These role-play activities had two sections; 1). The students did the activity in pairs and then, they repeated it with three different classmates to practice more the language. 2). The students stood in front of the classroom in pairs (they were selected at random) to show what they have practiced with their classmates. These role-plays were audio recorded and peer-assessed as an opportunity to improve further presentations.

Peer and self-assessment were done through some questions. The teacher showed them a slide at the end of the class with 2 or 3 questions related to their partners' performance or their own; Example: Did I use the appropriate auxiliary verb when asking my partner about his daily routine? Moreover, they were asked to create an action plan to overcome these difficulties.

### **4.3.2 Implementation**

The pedagogical intervention process was conducted during April, May and June 2015. It was carried out in 25 hours which were 12 lessons. They were planned and carried out considering specific topics appropriate for the A2 level, like the *daily routines*, among others, and a set of activities focused on preparing the students sufficiently so that those activities could be practiced during the role-play.



Before the implementation, the students were interviewed to collect their insights about the activities they experienced in their previous English classes, mainly, if they have participated in role-play activities before. At the end of the implementation, the second part of the semi-structured interview was applied to collect their experiences based on the role-play activities developed in the classroom.

The implementation was developed bearing in mind the different stages of the lesson plan structure proposed by Universidad de la Sabana in its English courses; this format was adapted from California Department of Education, Staff development Institute. This lesson plan template ([Appendix H](#)) was used in this research due to its detailed structure. In general, these were the stages outlined in the lesson plan template:

- *Lesson Objectives:* Based on the topic, the grammar and the vocabulary of each lesson.
- *Skills:* The main abilities the students will use in class.
- *Learning strategies:* The learning strategies they will use in the class. E.g. listening for specific information.
- *Warm up/Review.*
- *Presentation:* The introduction of the new topic.
- *Introduction:* Calling the students' attention to the new topic.

- *Practice:* Different opportunities to practice the new language by using a guide or the textbook (Speak out level pre-intermediate).
  
- *Application:* Role-play activity.
  
- *Evaluation of the lesson objectives:* Questions planned to check the accomplishment of the lesson objective (self or peer-assessment)
  
- *Independent work:* Homework.

These lessons were organized according to the school's syllabus for the English courses in order to have students develop their oral skills through their participation in role-play activities ([Appendix H](#)).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the pedagogical intervention and implementation aimed to present a clear viewpoint regarding the steps and processes followed to: address the topic, analyze the students' performance in class and obtain some of the expected results. The lesson plan sample shows the dynamic routine followed during the implementation of the role-plays as the main communicative strategy.

Chapter five will give account of the results and data analysis. It will present some of the findings and the way they were obtained. Further discussion and questions will also be addressed.

## **Chapter 5: Results and Data Analysis**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on the presentation of the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data collected from the teacher's journal, the questionnaire, the semi-structured interview, and the audios of the role-plays regarding the implementation of the role plays. In essence, this chapter presents the analysis and the categories that emerged from it, bearing in mind the research question of this proposal.

### **5.2 Data management procedures**

The analysis of the data of this study is based on the grounded theory approach, which according to Glaser and Strauss (2012) is when "Theory is derived from data and then illustrated by characteristic examples of data" (p. 5). They also say that this kind of theory cannot be totally disproved by more data or replaced by another theory since this theory is very connected to the data.

The process of analyzing data started with the transcription of the students' answers found in the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. We also transcribed the journals as well as the 158 audios of the role-plays performed by the students in class. This process was simplified in codes by using an open coding procedure, which is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Once common patterns started to emerge, they were grouped into concepts to reduce the number of codes that the researchers had to work with. Then, the concepts that seemed to pertain to the same phenomena were also grouped, this process is called categorizing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In order to analyze the students' answers regarding the possible improvement in terms of grammatical accuracy when implementing role-playing, it was necessary to assign each

code (kind of grammatical mistake) a different color. The unit codes identified related to the students' grammar mistakes when speaking were:

**Table 1 Unit color-coding**

Unit codes	Color
Wrong word order	Red
Countable/uncountable mix-ups	Orange
Wrong word	Yellow
Repetition of the subject	Dark green
Subject-Verb agreement	Blue
Wrong preposition	Dark blue
Confusing pronouns	Purple
L1 interference	Pink
Inappropriate language (formal/informal)	Light green
Lack of subject	Fuchsia
Incoherent statements	Black

These codes were identified and organized considering the data gathered from the instruments: The teacher's journal and the audio recordings of the role-plays executed in class. Subsequently, we read and analyzed the data to identify more important information related to the possible impact of role-plays on the students' self-confidence when using the language in class.

Lastly, the selective coding process was carried out in order to identify the core categories in the analysis. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) selective coding is “The process of integrating and refining the theory” (as cited in Brown & Remeny, 2005 p. 329). The different codes that emerged were grouped seeking to support common issues identified after analyzing the data and to prove their validity. In this specific case, the researchers carefully read the aspects that the students mentioned in the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview, as well as the grammatical issues identified in the transcription of the audios, to find the possible connections between the emerging categories.

### **5.2.1 Validation**

In regards to validation, using the aforementioned instruments increased the probability to prove that results found through the process were correct, complete and transparent. Triangulating the teacher’s journal notes with the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews allowed us see that there exists a close relationship between what students perceived and believed about the use of role-plays in the classroom and the results.

Results presented here are valid because the process took the needs analysis into utmost consideration from the very first moment to the analysis of the data. It also brought some aspects that we have not considered to light, and finally a small number of students did not improve significantly as expected.

### **5.2.2 Data analysis methodology**

As part of the methodology used for collecting and analyzing data, we applied a questionnaire to determine the students’ initial perceptions and opinions about role-playing. We used the teacher’s journal to register students’ behavior in the face-to-face sessions and performances. In the case of the semi-structured interview, we conducted two at different points, one mid-way through the implementation and the other at the end. Although students

noticed that they were being recorded, there were not any difficulties. Finally, we triangulated data using the audios taken from the role-plays that students performed.

Although affective predispositions in class appeared, as suggested by Clement, Noels, and Dornyei (1994), instruments such as the teacher's journal allowed us to observe students' reaction towards group-work. Although some students encountered problems working with a partner, several positive reactions were noticed: opportunities to practice with other partners, drafts to outline their role-plays recording their previous performances, possibilities to ask questions among themselves about word choice, spelling, meaning and synonyms.

Likewise, Clement (1986) considered that "attitudinal factors" played a significant role for acquisition and behavior. Based on the semi-structured interviews, we observed that aspects such as discipline, attitude and disposition to participate were key features while having their role-plays. Those attitudinal factors empowered them to practice more complex conversations.

Role-playing was an instrument students benefitted from due to the experiences students lived through the process. As argued by Clement, Noels and Dornyei (1994):

Upon noting the results obtained with groups of students who were in more direct contact with the L2 group, however, they suggested that in such contexts a self-confidence process becomes the most important determinant of attitude and effort expended toward L2 learning (p. 422).

Finally, the selective coding process was carried out in order to identify the core categories in the analysis. Based on Babchuk's (1997) definition, selective coding can be described as the process by which different categories are related to the core category becoming the basis for the grounded theory.

### 5.3 Categories

#### 5.3.1 Overall category mapping

Three stages of analysis were used to create the category mapping. These stages were the open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. After the data was collected, it was organized in four matrices based on the instruments used during the implementation stage. In the open coding stage, the phenomena were named and categorized. For this, the data was broken down into small parts, observed, examined, compared, and questioned (Punch, 2005). The axial coding was used to refine the categories that resulted from the open coding; allowing the researchers to relate the subcategories that emerged to a category (Klenke, 2008).

Finally, during the selective coding, the core categories were identified. It was a crucial stage in which the researchers identified, explored and articulated the core concepts with the theory previously consulted while grounded theory was created (Mills, Eurepos & Wiebe, 2010). Thus, the aforementioned stages, open, axial and selective coding were used to undertake a grounded theory foundation in regards to the students' grammar accuracy. These are the core categories and subcategories that were identified from the analysis:

**Table 2 Final subcategories and categories after the selective coding procedure**

<p><b><i>Research Question</i></b></p> <p><i>To what extent does the use of role-plays in EFL classes at A2 level promote grammatical accuracy for sentence structure in oral utterances?</i></p>	
<p><b><i>Main category 1:</i></b></p> <p>Students' insights about the</p>	<p><b><i>Subcategories:</i></b></p> <p>A. Interaction, methodology and didactics.</p>

teacher's methodology and their own learning process.	<p>B. The students and the language.</p> <p>C. Conversations.</p> <p>D. Students' feelings and fears.</p>
<b>Main category 2:</b>  Skills development.	<p><b>Subcategories:</b></p> <p>E. Omission.</p> <p>F. Misordering.</p>

### 5.3.2 Discussion of categories

As a result of the data analysis, two core categories were identified. The first category *Inside the classroom: The students' insights about the teacher's methodology and their own learning process* was created as the students talked frequently about the classroom dynamism (the activities they have done in class), the teachers' methodology, the interaction they have had with their teachers and their classmates, and their feelings while using the language. The second category *Skills development* was created after identifying the two most frequent mistakes in the students' role-plays: The omission of the subject and the auxiliary, and the misordering of the words in the questions and sentences. The students' use of the language when speaking is discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### 5.3.2.1 Core Category 1: The students' insights about the teacher's methodology and their own learning process

This first main category deals with the possible impact, in terms of the students' self-confidence, that the strategy could have had when it was implemented in the English classes. From this core category, four subcategories emerged. The first subcategory, *interaction*,



*methodology and didactics*, refers to aspects taken into consideration when students participated in the different role-plays proposed.

*Interaction*, a common classroom feature among students, was fostered from the very moment of proposing a specific topic for each conversation. Some of the students' opinions allowed us to see that interaction among them played a crucial role when later talking in public or maintaining a more *dynamic* conversation with others:

<p>“I feel good, because we could say that, I have improved in English classes, and I have prepared for it, to speak well, and do not feel intimidated when talking”</p>	<p>“Me siento bien, porque digamos en las clases de inglés he mejorado y me he preparado para eso, para hablar bien y no me intimide hablando inglés” (Student 4, audio recording interview, June 15th, 2015).</p>
--	--

This student claimed he has improved his participation, and consequently, he does not feel intimidated when interacting with others. For him, feeling confident when using the language orally is essential. Moreover, the student 6 claimed his experience having conversations in English has been positive since they have allowed him to interact with his classmates. He claimed:

<p>“They have been very good because it has allowed me to maintain conversations for some time with some friends in English. It helps me to talk about different things in life like contexts and roles”</p>	<p>“Han sido muy buenas porque me ha permitido lograr mantener conversaciones de cierto determinado tiempo con unos amigos en inglés. Me ayuda a conversar sobre diferentes cosas</p>
--	---

	<p>de la vida como contextos y roles”</p> <p>(Student 6, audio recording interview, June 15th, 2015).</p>
--	---

As mentioned by Lopera (2013), *interaction* deals with motivating students’ participation in order to increase and improve their performance in oral tasks. Students from the school showed an interest in interacting with their classmates, most of the times to express their opinions and experiences in regards to a concrete aspect of their daily life. The Student 1 in the audio recording interview said it was positive for him to have more dynamic conversations based on the topic the teacher proposes. For him, it was better to have these unprompted conversations rather than preparing a conversation. His words are:

<p>“It is very good, simply because it is not to do the same activity again ...when the teacher says: have a conversation, but that I have a methodological conversation, depending on the topic you mention, then I think it’s cool”</p>	<p>“Es muy bueno, simplemente por el hecho de que no es otra vez hacer lo mismo de... lo que dice el profesor hagan una conversación, sino que con los compañeros hacemos una conversación metodológica, dependiendo del tema que tú nos digas, entonces me parece chévere”</p> <p>(audio recording interview, June 15th, 2015).</p>
---	--

In regards to the *methodology* used to scaffold students’ progress, the student 1, in the semi-structured interview, claimed that the teacher’s previous explanation of the topic, the

vocabulary suggested for the real role-play, as well as the amount of time to resolve problems, ask questions and practice, with or without a script, enabled him to feel comfortable and sure of what he intended to say. The student 1 claimed:

<p>“Yes, because, you tell us what words to use, with the corresponding verbs, if it’s past or present. Then, you are learning what the difference between them is”</p>	<p>“Sí porque, tú nos dices qué palabras usar, con qué verbos, si es pasado o presente. Entonces uno ahí va aprendiendo cuál es la diferencia de cada una”</p> <p>Student 1, audio recording interview, May 18th, 2015</p>
---	--

Students also improved other aspects of the language; the student 4 (audio recording interview, May 25th, 2015) argued that he has learned new vocabulary when participating in the role-plays due to the frequent practice these words:

<p>“It has influenced the words I use. Before doing the role-plays I used to forget basic words because I did not practice frequently. With the role-plays, I think that I remember more words because I practice them everyday”</p>	<p>“Ha influido en las palabras que uso. Antes de hacer los role-play se me olvidaban palabras elementales porque no lo practicaba frecuentemente. Con los role-play, yo creo que se me quedan más las palabras porque casi todos los días practico las palabras”.</p>
--	--

This student's statement also implies that the repetition drill, as well as the short and middle memory range, have also benefited from implementing the role-plays as part of their daily learning activities.

As mentioned in Jackson and Black (2011), the ability of the teacher to provide effective and assertive feedback traces a crucial path towards the completion of the established goals. This group of students, as seen through the comment made by student 10 in the audio recording interview (June 8th, 2015) supports the idea of achieving the objectives due to the methodology used, before and during, the exposition of these students to assertive feedback that helped and encouraged them to carefully decide how to work collaboratively, he said:

<p>“Because we can interact with classmates, you can interact with classmates, doing homework, and simultaneously thinking I’m going to improve my vocabulary, see new things, improve fluency. That’s very good because you always improve your English level, fluency and interact with my classmates who have no idea what to do in their lives, not at all, and can’t interact among themselves”</p>	<p>“Porque lo que podemos interactuar con otros compañeros, hacer trabajos, a la vez estar pensando en voy a mejorar mi vocabulario, voy a ver nuevas cosas, voy a mejorar la fluidez”. Eso es muy bueno porque siempre mejora el nivel de inglés, la fluidez e interactuar con mis compañeros que no tienen ni siquiera idea de que en su vida, nada de eso, y no puede interactuar sí”</p>
--	--

Likewise, *didactics* was reflected in the way students felt participating in the role-plays. They felt this was an activity rarely implemented in the English classrooms, which made them feel part of a different type of instruction, as registered in the teacher's journal:

“Many students are happy because this looks like an activity that is out of the common type of class” (June 4th, 2015). Moreover, the student considered relevant to make a better performance: “Some students ask for the chance to switch their partner so that practicing with other classmates is possible”. This way of behaving allowed students observe several skills they may possess and practice them with other classmates. Thus, didactics acquired its relevance when *learning through role-plays* enriched several unknown abilities.

*The students and the language*, as a second subcategory, has to do with the students’ experiences when learning English in previous courses. The students talked about the improvements they have obtained regarding the vocabulary they use, their speaking production, pronunciation, and the use of grammar structures. Several learners expressed their progress in terms of accurate vocabulary and better understanding while speaking in English, according to the questionnaires administered to students 8, 10, as their interventions show:

<p>“Yes, because it improved my vocabulary, and improved my pronunciation when I speak in English”</p>	<p>“Si porque mejoraba mi vocabulario y mejoraba la pronunciación cuando hablo en Ingles” (Student 8, audio recording interview, June 15th, 2015).</p>
--	--

and,

<p>“Yes, because they (role-plays) helped me acquire enough vocabulary to present it”.</p> <p>“Yes, they helped”</p>	<p>“Si me ayudaron a tener el suficiente vocabulario para presentarlo. Si ayudaron”. (Student 10, audio recording interview, June 15th, 2015).</p>
--	--

Most importantly, we could observe that there was a student who was able to observe his improvement when reading and listening, he said:

<p>“Somehow, every aspect (listening, writing, speaking, reading) helps me have a better reading comprehension, listen better the talks”</p>	<p>“En cierta manera en cada hábito (listening, writing, speaking, reading) me ayuda a tener mejor comprensión lectora, escuchar mejor las charlas”, (Questionnaires 12, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015).</p>
--	--

Although these students manifested having obtained positive results when participating in role-plays in the past, at the beginning of the implementation, they still showed errors when selecting the vocabulary and when organizing the words in a sentence in the first role-plays implemented. In the second role-play, the student 8 committed 1 vocabulary mistake and 2 word-order mistakes:

<p><i>Vocabulary:</i></p> <p><i>He said:</i> “Old? Ahhh, yes, I’m not <b>recording</b>”.</p> <p><i>Instead of saying:</i> “Old? Ahhh, yes, I don’t <b>remember</b>”.</p>
<p><i>Word order:</i></p> <p><i>He said:</i> “Ok, you, you are in Bogota, <b>you can visit Monserrate?</b>”</p> <p><i>Instead of saying:</i> Ok, you, you are in Bogota. <b>Can you can visit Monserrate?</b>”</p> <p><i>He said:</i> “[...] Anyway, <b>you can go to Salitre Mágico Park?</b>”</p> <p><i>Instead of saying:</i> “[...] Anyway, <b>can you go to Salitre Mágico Park?</b>”</p>

However, from the role play 10 until the end of the implementation, this student did not commit any vocabulary mistake and he decreased the word order mistakes to only 1.

Moreover, *The conversations* subcategory showed that the strategy helped students to engage into the language as they faced real life situations. This subcategory also showed relevant information in terms of the mistakes and less articulated talks students performed during the process. The mistakes found were in terms of subject-verb agreement, wrong word order, countable/uncountable errors, word choice, repetition of the subject, wrong preposition, confusing pronouns, L1 interference, use of inappropriate language (formal-informal), lack of subject, lack of auxiliaries, and also incoherent statements which were sentences that were not accurate and not connected to the topic.

It is noticeable that throughout the observation of these conversations or role-plays, we found and analyzed three frequent mistakes: subject-verb agreement, lack of auxiliaries, and wrong-order word. Around thirteen students showed the disposition to take risks to speak naturally even when they knew they were going to commit mistakes in their interventions. This is the main reason why some students hesitated and replaced parts of their speech using catchwords to mean they did not know what else to say or how to answer, but they wanted to continue (Role-plays 5, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

There was a case, for instance, in which the student 1 in the role-play 12 did not know how to say an adjective and he used Spanish, but he found out the correct expression in English almost immediately; he said “I choose Camo because he is a, he is a *unico* student, jeje *unique* student”.

Finally, the category called *Students' feelings and fears* allowed teachers/researchers to be aware of the importance of having a good rapport with students. Students' feelings towards the language, the subject, even towards the teacher and the type of activities done in

those classes are as crucial as the fears that might arise in students' minds. As recorded in the teacher's journal, students in role-play 2 considered that: "Many students are happy because this looks like an activity that is out of the common type of class".

Their feeling of happiness and their anxieties are shown in the sense that they do not consider role-plays as a boring activity carried out as part of the topics proposed for this school year. However, there were some students who did not feel comfortable with the activity and preferred not to participate. There is evidence that shows this situation in the teacher's journal 3 as this example shows: "Some students do not like their partners so they refuse to participate, just three of them". After all, the teacher encouraged students to take advantage of the role-play in order to discover skills in their classmates. Students were receptive and decided to keep working collaboratively.

In addition, students showed some positive perceptions, in our opinion, in regards to time, switching partners, about their feelings towards the role-play implementation and final results. The following excerpts are taken from the teacher's journal in role-play 4: "Students look pleased to have the time to work in the role play when the time comes", "Some students ask for the chance to switch his partner so that practicing with other classmates is possible". Similarly, in role-play 5, the excerpts taken showed students interests to present a well practiced and structured recording: "While practicing before recording their role play, some learners ask for a dictionary in order to solve some vocabulary questions", "Some students made two recordings because they considered that the first is not "good" enough". This situation may be considered as an achievement for us since the students were witnessing that they were gaining awareness of the grammar structures they were using when interacting in the role-plays.

Furthermore, some students showed a great risk-taking attitude even without knowing the right construction of the statements. These two excerpts were taken from the teacher's



journal 7: “Some students try to include different questions from the ones suggested” and “There are two couples who consider it is much better to ‘play’ with the topic of the role play and decide to mention other aspects involved in a normal conversation”. Nevertheless, some students considered there were boring topics proposed as part of the role-plays, then they showed attitudes like the ones described here in teacher’s journal 8: “Learners feel more excited to keep talking about complementary topics out of the official topic proposed”

### **5.3.2.2 Core Category 2: Skills development.**

The second main category, *skills development* is divided into two main error categories: omission and misordering. Each error category describes the most frequent errors committed by the students; it also provides an explanation about why this happened and how the teacher managed to apply the strategy in order to overcome these inaccuracies.

Understanding the definition of ‘error’ is fundamental for conducting the analysis of the students’ language samples. As we selected grammaticality according to James (1998) “appeal to grammaticality is an attempt to be objective, to take decision such as whether some bit of language is erroneous or not out of the orbit of human whim” (p. 65) as the criterion for conducting the error analysis, the definition of ‘error’ provided by Corder (1971) may be the most appropriate. He claims it is a “breach of the rule of the code” (cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 56). This may be considered as the safest definition of error, consequently we may define it also considering whether the errors were overt or covert. An overt error is detected by just observing the utterance in which it occurs, while a covert error is only detected when we consider a larger section of the students’ dialogues, as it is in this case.

Based on Corder’s (1974) steps to conduct an error analysis, we considered following these steps: Collection of samples of learner language (from the role-plays), identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and error evaluation. In each role-play, we

identified twelve recurrent errors but we decided to analyze the two most relevant bearing in mind the students' English level (A2) and what the teacher has emphasized during the course:

1). Omission: lack of subject and lack of auxiliary. 2). Misordering: Wrong word order.

*Omission* and *misordering* are two of the ways in which learners modify target forms according to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982). Omission is when the student skips, deletes, or forgets to say a word in a sentence. In this research, we decided to analyze the samples in which the students did not mention the subject and the auxiliary in a sentence or in a question. In contrast, misordering is when there are errors characterized "by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance" (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982, p. 61). We collected and identified the totality of the students' mistakes regarding these two ways of modifying the target forms.

Moreover, through the analysis of these errors they committed, we were able to design and apply an action plan after each stage (three) of the implementation. The action plans were a series of strategies used to mitigate the difficulties the students were experiencing during each step of the implementation. To describe what these action plans were, it is necessary to explain the students' errors.

The following chart shows the frequency of the errors (omission and misordering) the students committed in each stage of the implementation. The frequency of the errors was taken by identifying and counting the times each error appeared in each of the 3 stages.

**Table 3 Omission and misordering frequent errors**

Stages	Surface structure description	Frequency
<b>Stage 1: Beginning of the implementation.</b>	Omission of the subject	8
	Omission of the	4

	auxiliary (and preposition)	
	Misordering	6
<b>Stage 2. Mid-way through the implementation</b>	Omission of the subject	6
	Omission of the auxiliary (and the subject)	6
	Misordering	4
<b>Stage 3. Final part of the implementation</b>	Omission of the subject	17
	Omission of the auxiliary	9
	Misordering	3

As it could be seen in this chart, the frequency of the students' errors regarding the *omission of the subject* has decreased from eight to six times in stage two. However, there is an increase in the final part of the implementation up to seventeen times. These results may be due to the complexity of the role-plays performed at this final stage of the implementation as they implied longer conversations with a more complex use of varied grammar structures. Moreover, the students may have omitted the subjects in their statements frequently because this is common in their mother tongue, sometimes they seem to be translating word-by-word. Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1983) claimed that:

[...]The assumption of word-for-word translation equivalence or 'thinking in the mother tongue (L1)' is the only way a learner can begin to communicate in a second language (as cited in Bhela, 1999, p. 30).

Bhela's (1999) case study showed a similar situation in which her students had several difficulties when writing in their L2. Then, she mentioned Blum-Kulka and Leveston (1983) to explain why her students' written texts showed a significant influence of their L1. As it was mentioned, she noticed how her students translated every word in English without following an accurate grammatical structure of the language.

Similar to Bhela's study, another frequent error was omission of the auxiliary. Although the results were not similar to the previous error (omission of the subject), the frequency in which these errors were committed increased in each of the stages. In the first stage (Role-plays 2, 3 and 4), the students omitted the auxiliary four times, while in the second stage they omitted it six times, and in the final stage nine times. This issue was common between the students since they confused the structure of the yes/no questions in English with the structure of the yes/no questions in Spanish; in their L1, the auxiliaries *do* and *does* are not used. Furthermore, the simple present tense was new for some students who had not had much contact with this language aspect before, so they seemed to struggle a little bit more than those who have had more contact with the language.

Finally, the results about misordering were significantly different from the other two errors mentioned above. In the first stage of the implementation, this issue appeared six times in contrast to the four times it appeared in the second stage, and the three times in the final stage. It could be observed how the frequency of this error decreased while they were advancing in the process, presumably because of classmates' feedback and support, as well as the amount of role-plays performed by that time.

Although the analysis of the results showed there was not an improvement in the first two errors mentioned, we must value these errors since they foster effective language production on the students. From the behavioristic point of view, there is no progress without errors. This error-as-progress appreciation is based on the Chomsky's idea that "A child

generates language through innate universal structures. Then, using this symbolic code one can have access to different pieces of knowledge not as something mechanically [learned] but as mentally constructed through try and error” (as cited in Maicusi, Maicusi, & Carrillo, 2000, p. 169). To complement Chomsky’s conception, Dulay and Burt (1974), cited in Maicusi et al. (2000), classify errors into three types that could describe the students’ errors in this research: the developmental errors, which are similar to the errors made in L1 acquisition, interference errors and unique errors.

### 5.3.3 Core category

The first main category, *students’ insights about the teacher’s methodology and their own learning Process* represents an approximation to prove that enhancing students’ self-confidence might be possible while implementing an appealing strategy in their classes. Four subcategories found: “*interaction, methodology and didactics*”, “*the students and the language*”, “*conversations*”, and “*students’ feelings and fears*” have shown that students’ participation in the role-plays planned was evident as they devoted time and effort to accomplish with the main goal proposed. As the second main category we observed that *skills development* was subdivided into: omission and misordering. Students’ mistakes were analyzed and the teacher’s methodology to help students was demonstrated. These core categories allowed researchers to analyze crucial features of classroom activities to be done with them.

Based on the discussion of the main two aforementioned categories, we could conclude that by committing errors, the students could gain experience in the language, reflect why they committed them, and what they could do to avoid them.

The following Tables 5, 6 and 7 explain the errors committed by the students per stage in a more detailed way. These tables describe the appropriate reconstruction, the linguistic

description, the surface structure description, the factors affecting the learner errors in the samples and the frequency of these mistakes per stage.

**Table 4 Beginning of the implementation**

Error	Reconstruction	Linguistic description	Surface structure description	Factors affecting learner errors	Frequency	Overt	Covert	
<p>“Aaaa, but, I don’t think is very good to cook hamburger. I think is better to prepare a Salmon”.</p> <p><b>(Role-play 3, S3 and S4)</b></p>	<p><b>Aaaa, but, I don’t think it is very good to cook hamburgers.</b> I think it is better to prepare a Salmon.</p>	<p>Verb phrase</p> <p>Simple present- to be</p> <p>Affirmative statement</p>	<b>Omission-</b> subject	<p><b>LEARNER:</b> Other languages (L1).</p> <p>-proficiency level: elementary.</p> <p><b>PRODUCTION:</b></p> <p>-Unplanned.</p>	8	x		
<p>B: “you can go to Simon Bolivar.”</p> <p>A: <b>“Is a good place?”</b></p> <p><b>(Role-play 2, S3 and S4)</b></p>	<p>Is <b>it</b> a good place?</p>	<p>Verb phrase</p> <p>Simple present- to be</p> <p>Yes/no question</p>	<b>Omission-</b> subject	<p><b>LEARNER:</b></p> <p>-Other languages (L1)</p> <p>-proficiency level: elementary.</p> <p><b>PRODUCTION:</b></p> <p>-Unplanned.</p>			x	
<p>A: “[...]Anyway you can go to</p>	<p>Yes, <b>it</b> is so fun.</p>	<p>Verb phrase</p>	<b>Omission-</b> subject	<p><b>LEARNER:</b> Other</p>			x	

<p>Salitre Magico Park?” B: “Yes, is so fun.” <b>(Role-play 2, S7 and S8)</b></p>		<p>Simple present- to be Affirmative statement</p>		<p>languages (L1) -proficiency level: elementary. <b>PRODUCTION:</b> -Unplanned.</p>			
<p>“Hey, what country you come?” <b>(Role-play 2, S1 and S2)</b></p>	<p>What country do you come from?</p>	<p>Verb phrase Simple present tense Information question</p>	<p><b>Omission-</b> auxiliary (and preposition)</p>	<p><b>LEARNER:</b> -proficiency level: elementary <b>LANGUAGE:</b> -Genre: conversation <b>PRODUCTION:</b> -Unplanned.</p>	4	x	
<p>“You know a good centro commercial?” <b>(Role-play 2 , S3 and S4)</b></p>	<p>Do you know a good shopping center?</p>	<p>Yes/no question Simple present tense</p>	<p><b>Omission-</b> Auxiliary <b>Addition</b></p>	<p><b>LEARNER:</b> -Other languages (L1). -proficiency level: elementary. <b>PRODUCTION:</b></p>			



				-Unplanned.			
<p>“aaaa, thanks. Can I, <b>can I get a map free for the hotel?</b> <b>(Role-play 3 , S1 and S2)</b></p>	<p>Aaaa. Thanks, can I, can I get a free map at the hotel?</p>	<p>Simple present tense Yes/no question Modal: Can.</p>	<p><b>Misordering-</b> adjective</p>	<p><b>PRODUCTION:</b> -Unplanned. <b>LANGUAGE:</b> -Genre: conversation -Medium: oral. <b>LEARNER:</b> -Other languages (L1).</p>	6	x	
<p>“Ok, this restaurant is very interesting <b>because it’s a restaurant Colombian in New York.</b> <b>(Role-play 4 , S3 and S4)</b></p>	<p>... because it’s a Colombian restaurant in New York.</p>	<p>Simple present tense Affirmative statement</p>	<p><b>Misordering-</b> nationality/adjective. ve.</p>	<p><b>LEARNER:</b> -Other languages (L1).</p>		x	

Adapted from: Ellis, R., Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing learner language*. (p. 63-64). Oxford. England: Oxford University Press.

**Table 5 Mid-way through implementation**

Error	Reconstruction	Linguistic description	Surface structure description	Factors affecting learner errors	Frequency	Overt	Overt
B: At what hour you start the class?  <b>(Role-play 8, S9 and S10)</b>	What time does your class start?	Simple present tense  Information question	<b>Omission-</b>  Auxiliary	<b>LEARNER:</b> Other languages (L1)  <b>LEARNER:</b> -proficiency level: elementary.	6	x	
B: <b>And, you have family there?</b>  A: Eee, only my pet.  <b>(Role-play 6 , S1 and S2)</b>	And, do you have family there?	Simple present tense  Yes/no question	<b>Omission-</b>  Auxiliary	<b>LEARNER:</b> Other languages (L1)  -proficiency level: elementary.		x	
A: and you are going to dedicate a goal for me?  B: <b>Yes, is for you. Is for all the fans in the world.</b>	Yes, it is for you. It is for all the fans in the world.	Verb phrase  Simple present- to be  Affirmative statement	<b>Omission-subject</b>	<b>LEARNER:</b> -Other languages (L1).  -proficiency level: elementary.	6	x	

<b>(Role-play 8 , S1 and S2)</b>							
A: <b>and you are going to dedicate a goal for me?</b> B: Yes, is for you. Is for all the fans in the world. <b>(Role-play 8 , S1 and S2)</b>	And, are you going to dedicate a goal to me?	Future-going to Yes/no question	<b>Misordering-</b> subject and auxiliary verb	<b>LEARNER:</b> -Other languages (L1) -proficiency level: elementary.	4	x	
B: Aaaa ok, and, <b>you are going to travel to Bogota?</b> <b>(Role-play 6 , S1 and S2)</b>	Aaaa ok, and, are you going to travel to Bogotá?	Future-going to Yes/no question	<b>Misordering-</b> subject and auxiliary verb	<b>LEARNER:</b> -Other languages (L1). -proficiency level: elementary.		x	
B: My first class is eeeem, is mathematics, me too. A: <b>Ohh man, and you are good in that class?</b> <b>(Role-play 8 , S5 and S6)</b>	Ohh man, and are you good in that class?	Simple present- to be Yes/no question	<b>Misordering-</b> subject and auxiliary verb	<b>LEARNER:</b> -Other languages (L1). -proficiency level: elementary.		x	

Adapted from: Ellis, R., Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing learner language*. (p. 63-64). Oxford. England: Oxford University Press.

**Table 6 Final part of the implementation**

Error	Reconstruction	Linguistic description	Surface structure description	Factors affecting learner errors	Frequency	Overt	Covert
<p>“And you like to play football in your house?” (Role-play 11 , S1 and S2)</p>	And, do you like to play football in your house?	Simple present tense Yes/no question	Omission-Auxiliary	<p><b>LEARNER:</b> -Other languages (L1). -proficiency level: elementary.</p>	9	X	
<p>“But you help your mother in your room?” (Role-play 11 , S7 and S8)</p>	But, do you help your mother with your room?	Simple present tense Yes/no question	Omission-Auxiliary	<p><b>LEARNER:</b> -proficiency level: elementary. - Other languages (L1)</p>		X	
<p>A: “You like watch your dishes?” B: “Yes, I like it.” A: “Why?” B: “Is interesting.”</p>	Do you like to wash your dishes? Is it interesting?	Simple present tense Yes/no question Simple present tense-to be. Yes/no question	<p>Omission-Auxiliary Omission-Subject</p>	<p><b>LEARNER:</b> -proficiency level: elementary. - Other languages (L1)</p>		17	X

<b>(Role-play 11 , S3 and S4)</b>							
<p>A: “yes, I online play online because the campaign I didn’t like it.”</p> <p><b>(Role-play 10 , S5 and S6)</b></p>	<p>Yes, I play online because I didn’t like the campaign.</p>	<p>Simple present tense- Affirmative statement. Simple past tense -negative statement.</p>	<p><b>Misordering</b></p>	<p><b>LEARNER:</b> -proficiency level: elementary. <b>LANGUAGE:</b> -Genre: conversation <b>PRODUCTION:</b> -Unplanned.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>“...he is really funny because always he stay to eee jokes of to the class and are really, really great.”</p> <p><b>(Role-play 10, S1 and S2)</b></p>	<p>... he is really funny because he always tells jokes to the class. They are really funny.</p>	<p>Simple present Adverbs of frequency</p>	<p><b>Misordering</b></p>	<p><b>LEARNER:</b> -proficiency level: elementary. <b>LANGUAGE:</b> -Genre: conversation <b>PRODUCTION:</b> -Unplanned.</p>		<p>x</p>	

Adapted from: Ellis, R., Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing learner language*. (p. 63-64). Oxford. England: Oxford University Press

#### 5.4 Conclusion

After analyzing the frequency of the students' errors mentioned above, the teachers allotted more time to practice the language before participating in the different role-plays. The students had short conversations in pairs in which they used the grammar of the lesson and peer-assessed their classmates' performance. By using peer-assessment, the students were able to correct their classmates' inaccuracies when speaking (Stage 2: Omission of the auxiliary and the subject. Stage 3: Misordering). Although the teacher emphasized peer-assessing their performance after doing the role-plays, the students' fossilized inaccuracies. The fact that they did not have enough time to plan exactly what they were going to say in the role-play, and the interference of their first language (Spanish), made it difficult to achieve improvements in order to form sentences and questions accurately in English.

Based on the frequency of the errors, the students experienced a slight improvement in regards to the *omission of the subject*. However, the third stage called "Final part of the implementation" decreased considerably. It went from six errors up to seventeen errors in stage two. Although some students continued omitting the subject in sentences and questions, we noticed they interacted more in class using the second language.

However, the omission of the auxiliary also increased throughout the three stages. It shows that the students' attention focused on having conversations with their classmates to use the vocabulary seen in class, as the student 4, audio recording interview, May 25th, 2015 argued "With the role-plays I think words are easy to remember because I practice them everyday". Consequently, the samples taken witnessed a continuous improvement in the way the students organized the words in sentences and questions; as they went from six errors in the stage one to three errors in the stage three.

In this process, the students have shown that even though there were moments when several variables appeared, having role-plays in class could become a great opportunity to

exploit their communicative skills with those friendly partners, regular and new-pairs, they worked with during the lessons. These subcategories seem to become a useful approach to enhance learners' strengths as well as to promote the use of the language to improve grammatical accuracy in spoken utterances.

Chapter six will present a more concrete view of those results, their relevance, the limitations encountered, and the further investigations suggested.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

### 6.1 Introduction

Through the implementation of the role-plays, the analysis of the results, and in comparison to Lopera's (2013) results, we concluded that both studies were similar in regards to the collaborative work as a means of increasing the students' opportunities to use the language in class. The incorporation of collaborative activities in the current research was due to the characteristics of many learning environments including Lopera's and our research, in which there is a lack of meaningful opportunities to produce language within the classroom. However, these two projects have enhanced those learning chances when promoting pair-work, small group work and role-playing.

Similarly to Rubiano (2013) our results demonstrated that role-plays could help students to improve their speaking performance concerning pronunciation and vocabulary due to the collaborative aspect of this strategy. The students perceived sharing and learning new pieces of vocabulary as a meaningful strategy each time they worked collaboratively. Peer-feedback during conversation has increased and helped students nurture this specific skill as they can give and receive suggestions on how to make peer-feedback better among them. This kind of feedback also decreases anxiety and fear when making pronunciation mistakes.

The amount of time the researchers invested implementing this project, the role-plays implemented, the students' motivation to participate, among others, contributed to the results. On the other hand, the students' low participation in the role-plays, the frequency of the school's special events, the time constraints at the university that impeded the implementation there, the fact that the topics chosen had to follow the syllabus, and the students' previous experience with the language were some of the limitations that impacted



the results as not was not possible to implement the strategy in every class and with all the students. These results were significant because they led the researchers to reflect on the importance of involving the students in this kind of activity in class. Although the strategy did not provide the expected results, and grammatical improvement was limited to word order and use of auxiliary verbs in sentences and questions, the students' perceived levels of self-confidence increased significantly when using the L2 in class.

Although the topics of the role-plays implemented were selected in regards to the main theme of each lesson, the students had to follow the teacher's instructions and the situations of the role-play assigned. Nonetheless, they were in charge of creating and expanding each of the conversations, being autonomous and showing an active role in their learning process. The interactions evidenced a primary use of the language taking into account that they belong to the A2 level according to the CEFR.

Moreover, further research might be addressed to overcome these limitations. Future researchers might gain additional insight into the value of role-plays as a classroom strategy to improve student performance and self-confidence. By doing a deeper analysis of the students' grammar accuracy when speaking to observe how the strategy may impact other grammar aspects helped us realize that not only word order and the omission of the auxiliary verb and the subject should be taken into consideration in further researcher projects. Besides this, researchers and teachers may study the students' self-confidence in class when interacting with their classmates using the L2. This further research might offer valuable insights about the use of role-plays in class that teachers could take into account when using this strategy inside their classrooms.

We concluded that the students increased the grammatical aspect for sentence structure when speaking through the use of role-playing. Students showed a slight

improvement regarding the order of the words in a sentence. However, they continued omitting the subject and the auxiliaries in negative sentences and questions, but there was a slight improvement in the second stage regarding the omission of the subject.

## **6.2 Comparison of results with previous studies' results**

Results found at the end of this implementation have shown that this group of students from high school had the opportunity to increase their self-confidence to use the foreign language while speaking in English. Students had also the opportunity to work collaboratively to share their previous knowledge as an essential part of the role-plays performed. Thus, feeling free and not misjudged while performing an oral activity, using L2, in front of other classmates was a similar feeling Lopera's (2013) students also experienced.

As observed previously, the students participated dynamically proving that role-playing might become a relaxing way to nurture their self-confidence. Lopera's work was also successful at presenting that a crucial feature of being able to communicate spontaneously, as group work is, might eventually increase students' confidence to express themselves in the target language. However, grammatical accuracy improvement seems to appear as part of the misordering feature mentioned above in the previous chapter. Lopera's group did not experience these changes as our group of students did. In sum, misordering was the key aspect in which advancements were made.

Orozco (2013) in comparison to our research obtained similar results. His participants showed improvement in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation through the use of games, icebreakers and interviews. Although Orozco (2013) did not use the role-plays as a means to improve spoken grammar accuracy, his study leads the researchers to think about the different strategies they could use to obtain more comprehensive results, considering role-

play as a means of improving in the language. This research project showed that role-play could obtain similar results to the ones Orozco (2013) found out in his study.

In addition, although Rubiano (2013) used role-plays in his classes and improved the students' speaking performance regarding vocabulary and pronunciation, he did not focus on the implementation of his research on observing if the students enhance their grammar accuracy as we did. Grammar accuracy became our main goal to be tackled by taking advantage of that interaction promoted among students. Rubiano's students and our students improved vocabulary as they adjusted some pronunciation problems and, finally, they realized how to accurately use word order and auxiliaries in negative sentences and questions.

Moreover, we obtained similar results to Ojeda (2011) regarding grammatical improvements with some face-to-face activities; he did not use role-plays in particular. However, his proposal helped students improve accuracy when speaking as a result of having students interacting in real time. Similarly, we found out that self-correction was effective when the students were using the language orally in the face-to-face classes as it allowed the students to improve the grammar they used. Even with a different tool, role-plays in our case, results seem to coincide. A face-to-face activity was performed, students' participation was notable and grammatical improvements were observed. The tools here showed clearly that results can vary depending on several issues, but they occurred ultimately.

These two concepts, accuracy and fluency seem to be intertwined. As Brand and Götz (2011) research results showed, fluency and accuracy are related. Although our students did not improve their accuracy to the same degree Brand and Götz (2011) did, we conclude that our students were able to improve to a certain extent their grammatical accuracy through the use of role-plays in the class. Our students were able to practice the target language in a more

natural way because they found it easier to talk about something they might face in a real life situation than participating in other classroom activities. This type of interaction allowed them to use and improve, eventually, grammatical aspects such as the use of singular and plural nouns, the correct and complete structure; and the students, sometimes, use present simple better.

Nonetheless, they had difficulties using the auxiliaries *do* and *does* correctly; nor could they organize a *wh*-question using the required elements in the perfect place, as they did not participate in all the role-plays in the implementation stage, but grammatical accuracy might be held as long as their interaction increases.

Our results obtained are similar to the one Aliakbary, and Jamalvandi (2010) obtained in their study. They showed that role-play activities influence English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking ability improving their use of the language oral ability. In our research, role-plays fostered speaking even when the students were preparing what they needed to perform the main role-play in the class. Similar to the results obtained in this research, Lopera (2013) in his study showed that meaningful communicative strategies might increase communication significantly.

Thus, role-plays could be considered as a strategy to increase the exchange of information using English as the vehicle to communicate ideas. However, some grammatical elements, previously discussed, were handled by some students who found easy to correct themselves in the preparation stage or even at the moment of performing their role-plays.

Moreover, Jackson and Back (2011) used the role-plays and feedback to teach communication skills. They found that the classroom environment, the ability of the teacher to provide positive feedback, and the students' reflection on the processes of communication, among others, are the key aspects to teaching communication skills in the classroom. The

aforementioned is similar to what we found through the analysis of the data collected; it showed that although it was important to plan meaningful role-plays for them to do, the teacher's feedback and the classroom environment were key aspects of the development of this strategy in class. In other words, rapport among students and with the teacher also played a crucial role.

Additionally, we observed and assessed the students in groups, or pairs, even in small groups sometimes at the end of the introduction of the topic or instructions. Thus, teachers provided meaningful positive feedback. Students were also aware of the importance of following a process in which the implementation of the semi-structure interview prepared for them helped them reflect on their learning process in the classroom. The students involved in this project admitted in the interview that the relationship among them while having the role-plays was boosted, which in turn enabled them to take more risks. Aliakbari and Jamalvandi (2010) also wanted to prove that role-plays might increase students' participation and use of English during the role-plays proposed. In the current study the researchers also proved that three grammatical aspects were improved as the practice of the role-plays took place for a considerable time.

Likewise, Lemos and Consuelo (2010) found that role-play activities have more benefits besides the improvement of the grammar accuracy when speaking. The students could also improve their oral proficiency, promote the acquisition of vocabulary, and rehearse for real life communication. Although in our research the strategy promoted an improvement in some aspects related to the students' grammar accuracy when speaking, we did not analyze nor collect information regarding the students' acquisition of vocabulary and the students' oral proficiency specifically. However, we found out that the collaborative characteristic of the role-plays helped students to feel more comfortable using the language in

a real life situation with a real outcome, and at the same time, it helped them improve their perception of their self-confidence levels when speaking in English with their classmates and the teacher.

In sum, comparing our results to previous studies has shown that students at the School became aware of and used grammatical aspects such as singular and plural nouns and present simple complete structures (subject + verb + complement). However, students might continue developing the correct use of auxiliaries “do” and “does”, as well as the organization of questions (yes-no and information questions) through their learning process.

### **6.3 Significance of the results**

After analyzing the results obtained, we found out there are several aspects we should highlight. First of all, the students improved word ordering in sentences, and also they omitted the auxiliary verbs and subjects less frequently in sentences and questions. Secondly, role-plays performance allowed students to become more active participants of the EFL classroom and dynamism. Like Orozco (2013), we found that two of the goals achieved were the promotion of the oral use of English and the increase of the the students’ self-confidence levels, which, in our case suggests that our students could become more natural risk-takers in the classroom from now on. Therefore, they will have acquired a better understanding on the importance of committing mistakes as an essential part of the learning process. Consequently, students not only understood that working collaboratively might represent common learning and support, but also that students’ self-confidence would increase progressively.

Thirdly, as Lemos (2010) suggest, having students involved in certain activities that they find appealing represents a great advantage for practicing the language and having them feeling interested and engaged. According to the kind of role-play that students perform in

their English class, they might pretend to be another person they know, a new character they invent or themselves. Thus, even with the several differences these types of roles might pose, students might be able to perform them accordingly. This means that students who spent time preparing and discussing how to present them enjoyed the role-plays because they decided to participate frequently.

As in the case of Bonella's project (2002), we realized that benefits such as improving oral proficiency, acquiring vocabulary, and rehearsing for real-life communication became key aspects to draw relevant conclusions about students' behaviors. We observed that promoting role-plays to cope with our students' self-esteem and confidence was an assertive decision. We should not forget that before teaching content we should teach students life-long learning strategies.

The limitations also influenced the results we obtained because the amount of time the students participated in the role-plays, for instance, was limited. The reduced number of participants, for example, permitted us to observe and analyze only twelve students of the twenty-two students who originally planned to participate in the activities. Taking these variables into account, we consider it is important to implement this strategy in a more varied way to observe whether the results are similar or not. Language teachers should use this strategy inside their classrooms because it encourages the students to use the language in real life situations, it helps the students to improve their grammar accuracy and it increases the students' perception of their self-confidence levels.

#### **6.4 Limitations of the present study**

The limitations of this research project are related to the number of participants, the frequency the students participated in the research, time constraints, and the different activities which did not allow us to implement our research at the university. The time that

the students participated in the research was a huge limitation because it impacted the amount of information we collected from them. Although the students and their parents agreed to participate in the research project, every student decided whether they wanted to participate in one of the role-plays or not. This happened because they were sick or just because they did not want to do it. We had to analyze only the students who participated more actively, leaving out of the project students who participated in only two or three of the thirteen role-plays implemented. In consequence, the number of the participants was reduced from twenty-two to twelve students.

Time constraint was also a limitation in the study due to the academic activities that the school planned while the research was conducted. This impacted the schedule organized to develop the thirteen role-plays. At the same time, the students declared they would have liked to have more time to practice the role-plays in class, demanding the teacher to continue planning these role-playing activities when the implementation was finished. Further research must be done considering this limitation; researchers should assign more time to the development of the role-play activities in class.

The last limitation dealt with the places where the research project was originally planned to be conducted. Emilio Valenzuela School and Universidad de la Sabana were the two educational institutions where the research was going to be conducted in, but because of the amount of hours of class they had left in that semester, the implementation was going to exceed the time limits assigned by the Master program to conduct it and finish it. Therefore, the researchers decided to do the research taking into account only the school. However, this research might have yielded more reliable results if it had been conducted in more than one institution.



## **6.5 Further research**

Future researchers and language teachers should focus on the improvement of the grammatical accuracy through the use of the role-play as the main strategy. This because this current research focused on three grammar issues only, further research ought to consider observing and analyzing some other aspects and, if possible, most mistakes made by students. Identifying most of the students' mistakes could help language teachers to design an action plan for students to overcome those issues.

We advise teachers and researchers to promote students' oral skills within the classroom at the same time that they nurture grammatical accuracy. Additionally, self-confidence should be analyzed and evaluated periodically in a deeper way, giving students the opportunity to receive peer-feedback and formative assessment. In other words, scaffolding should be present during the whole project from the very beginning.

To sum up, we invite all Foreign Language teachers of English to consider role-plays as a mean of engaging the students to practice new language, their own learning process, and to increase their self-confidence at the same time. Role-plays may become a useful strategy to bring meaningful outcomes, but they should be planned considering the students' likes and current situations in their context.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

The study was about tackling the students' speaking difficulties with the language in terms of grammar accuracy through the use of role-plays. We decided to carry out this research because we found out that the students did not feel comfortable nor motivated to participate in speaking activities in class although they did not have ample opportunities to

practice the language. We also found out they had some difficulties when providing accurate sentences when interacting with their partners using the L2.

However, after the implementation of this research, one of the major results was that the students felt engaged and encouraged to perform better role-plays as a way to show themselves that their efforts were going to be fruitful. As researchers, we have realized that the teacher's role was relevant as long as he/she acts as a model and facilitator who provides positive feedback on the work done. In addition, the implementation of role-plays has led students to know how enriching working collaboratively is while supporting each other. Although their grammar mistakes regarding word order, and the omission of the subject and the auxiliary verbs were not improved significantly, the students learned that the mistakes can be improved through a dynamic practice of the language within the use of role-plays. Students' self-confidence changed positively as they enjoyed participating in the role-plays while learning and practicing the language. This experience has shown the importance of involving students into a more appealing and demanding type of communicative activities, activities like role-playing in the classroom should be considered by most teachers nowadays in our institutions as a strategy to guarantee an ensure participation and improvement in our students' oral skills.

### References

- Aliakbari, M., & Jamalvandi, B. (2010). The impact of 'Role Play' on fostering EFL learners' speaking ability: A task-based approach. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 14(1), 15-29. Retrieved from [http://paal.kr/download/14\\_1\\_02\\_Mohammad%20Aliakbari%20Behroz%20Jamalvandi.pdf](http://paal.kr/download/14_1_02_Mohammad%20Aliakbari%20Behroz%20Jamalvandi.pdf)
- Barr, R., & Tagg, J. (1995). *From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education*. Retrieved from [http://cet.usc.edu/resources/teaching\\_learning/docs/teaching\\_to\\_learning.pdf](http://cet.usc.edu/resources/teaching_learning/docs/teaching_to_learning.pdf)
- Bhela, B. (1999). Native language interference in learning a second language: Exploratory case studies of native language interference with target language usage. *International Education Journal*, 1(1), 22-31. Retrieved from <http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/iej/articles/v1n1/bhela/bhela.pdf>
- Bill, F., & Olaison, L. (2009). The indirect approach of semi-focused groups: Expanding focus group research through role-playing. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 4(1), 7-26. doi: 10.1108/17465640910951426
- Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & William, D. (2003). *Formative and summative assessment: Can they serve learning together?*. Chicago, IL: AERA. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258423110\\_Formative\\_and\\_summative\\_assessment\\_Can\\_they\\_serve\\_learning\\_together](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258423110_Formative_and_summative_assessment_Can_they_serve_learning_together)
- Bondie, R., Gaughran, L., & Zusho, A. (2014). Fostering English Learners' confidence. *Educational Leadership*. 72(3), 42-46. Retrieved from

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.unisabana.edu.co/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=38f65615-56b0-46e4-bda0-9cc12a805d59%40sessionmgr111&vid=2&hid=118>

- Bonella, F. (2002). *ESL students' perceptions of role-play activities*. Retrieved from [http://www.ibrarian.net/navon/paper/ESL\\_Students\\_\\_Perceptions\\_of\\_Role\\_play\\_Activities.pdf?paperid=3644958](http://www.ibrarian.net/navon/paper/ESL_Students__Perceptions_of_Role_play_Activities.pdf?paperid=3644958)
- Bowen, T. (2004). *Task-based learning*. Retrieved from [www.onestopenglish.com/News/Magszine/Archive/taskbased.htm-15k](http://www.onestopenglish.com/News/Magszine/Archive/taskbased.htm-15k).
- Brand, C., & Götz, S. (2011). Fluency versus accuracy in advanced spoken learner language: A multi-method approach. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 16(2), 255-275. doi: 10.1075/ijcl.16.2.05bra
- Brown, A., & Remeny, D. (2005). *4th European conference on research methodology for business and management studies*. Paris: Academic Conferences Limited.
- Brown, H. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Education.
- Castle, K. (2012). *Early childhood teacher research: from questions to results*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Clement, R. (1986). Second language proficiency and acculturation: An investigation of the effects of language status and individual characteristics. *Journal of Language & Social Psychology*, 5, 271-290. Retrieved from <http://jls.sagepub.com/content/5/4/271.abstract>
- Clement, R., Noels, K., & Dornyei, Z. (1994). Motivation, Self-Confidence, and Group Cohesion in the Foreign Language Classroom. *Language learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.zoltandornyei.co.uk/uploads/1994-clement-dornyei-noels-ll.pdf>

Common European framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment.

(2001). Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.

Corder, S. (1974). *Error analysis*. (Vol.3). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Corder, S. (1971). Describing the language learner's language. *CILT Reports and Papers*, 6, 57-64.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. New York, NY: Collier Books.

Drobot, I. (2013). Using language and cultural aspects in teaching role play. *The Scientific Journal of Humanistic Studies*, 5(9), 114-115. Retrieved from <http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.unisabana.edu.co/ehost/detail/detail?vid=3&sid=c43943f8-bf96-47cb-81f3-c3fdbcbbf74%40sessionmgr4002&hid=4114&bdata=Jmxhbmc9ZXMmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZlJnNjb3BIPXNpdGU%3d#db=aph&AN=92763060>

Dulay, H., Burt, M., & Krashen, S. (1982). *Language two*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Ebsworth, M. E. (1998). Accuracy & fluency: Which comes first in ESL instruction?. *ESL Magazine*, 1(2), 24-26. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ584012>

Ellis, R., & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing learner language*. Oxford, England: Oxford university press.

Featherstone, S., & Cummings, A. (2009). *Role-play in the early years: Developing children's language and creativity*. London: Featherstone Education Limited.

Foster, P. (1999). Task-based learning and pedagogy. *ELT journal*, 53(1). Retrieved from <http://esatc.hutc.zj.cn/jpkc/om/wx/Task-based%20learning%20and%20pedagogy.pdf>

Flowerdew, J., & Miller, L. (2005). *Second language listening: Theory and practice*. New York, NY: Cambridge Language Education.

- Gass, S., & Mackey, A. (2006). Input, interaction and output: an overview. *Themes in SLA research*, 19(3), 3-17. doi: 10.1075/aila.19.03gas
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitude and motivation*. London, UK: Edward Arnold.
- Gillham, B. (2007). *Real world research: Developing a questionnaire*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). London, England: Continuum International publishing group.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (2012). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Harmer, J. (1983). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *Mistakes and feedback?: The practice of English language teaching*. UK: Pearson Education Limited.
- Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Huang, I. (2008). Role play for ESL/EFL children in the English classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 14(2). Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Huang-RolePlay.html>
- Isil, A., & Ayfer, B. (2012). The effect of pronunciation instruction on students' overall speaking skills. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 3665-3671. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042812018605>
- Jackson, V., & Back, A. (2011). Teaching Communication Skills Using Role-Play: An Experience-Based Guide for Educators. *Journal Of Palliative Medicine*, 14(6), 775-780. doi:10.1089/jpm.2010.0493
- James, C. (1998). *Errors in language learning and use: exploring error analysis*. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.

- Kamiya, M. (2006). The role of communicative competence in second language learning. *Sophia Junior College Faculty Bulletin*, 26, 63-87. Retrieved from <https://www.jrc.sophia.ac.jp/pdf/research/bulletin/ki26/kamiya.pdf>
- Kliem, R. (2008). *Effective communications for project management*. Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Kliem, R. (2011). *Ethics and project management*. Florida, FL: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Klenke, K. (2008). *Qualitative research in the study of leadership*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Krashen, S. (2003). *Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use*. Alexandria, VA: Heinemann
- Lamy, S. (2007). Challenging Hegemonic Paradigms and Practices: Critical Thinking and Active Learning Strategies for International Relations. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 40 (1), 112–116. doi: 10.1017/S1049096507250279
- Lapan, S., Quartaroli, M., & Riemer, F. (2012). *Qualitative research, an introduction to methods and designs*. California, CA: Jossey- Bass.
- Lemos, N. (2010). *Cooperative Learning-based strategies to foster speaking confidence through the participation in an online radio show*. (Master Thesis). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10818/5188>
- Lopera, E. (2013). *Enhancing speaking skills through the application of collaborative Learning strategies in a Colombian public*. (Master Thesis). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10818/9274>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Baker, S. C., Clément, R., & Conrod, S. (2001). Willingness to communicate, social support, and language learning orientations of immersion students. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 23, 369-388. Retrieved from:

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.542.9753&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

MacIntyre, P. D., Baker, S. C., Clément, R., & Donovan, L. A. (2002). Sex and age effects on willingness to communicate, anxiety, perceived competence, and L2 motivation among junior high school French immersion students. *Language Learning*, 52(3), 537-564. doi: 10.1111/1467-9922.00226

Maicusi, T., Maicusi, P., & Carrillo, M, J. (2000). The error in the second language acquisition. *Encuentro: Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas*, 11, 168-173. Retrieved from <http://www.encuentrojournal.org/textos/11.17.pdf>

McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2009). *You and your action research project*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). New York, NY: Routledge

Menking, S. (2002). Language classroom considerations using the communicative approach. *Paper presented at the Annual JALT International Conference held at Granship Centre*. Retrieved from <http://jalt-publications.org/archive/proceedings/2002/225.pdf>

Mills, A., Eurepos, G., & Wiebe, E. (Eds.). (2010). *Encyclopedia of case study research* (Vol 2). California, CA: SAGE publications Ltd.

Morales, R. (2003). *Empowering your pupils through role-play: Exploring emotions and building resilience*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Nair, G, K., Rahim, R. A., Adam, A, F., Setia, R, H., Husin, N., Sabapathy, E., Mohamad, R., so'od, S, M., Yusoff, N, I., Razian, R, M., Jalil, N, A., Alwee, U., & Seman, N, A. (2012). Group work in the secondary ESL classroom. *Asian Social Science*, 8(10), 3. Retrieved from <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/79171244/group-work-secondary-esl-classroom>



Noraini, A. R. & Bahasa, J. (2009). Interaction is the key to second language learning.

*Journal IPBA*, 3(2), 110-114. Retrieved from

<http://languagelinks2006.wikispaces.com/file/view/interaction+in+language+learnin+g.PDF>

O'Brien, R. (2001). An overview of the methodological approach of action research.

Retrieved from <http://www.web.ca/~robrien/papers/arfinal.html>

Ojeda, J. (2011). *The use of voice message boards to improve accuracy in the simple past*

*tense through awareness-raising in A2 learners*. Retrieved from DSpace Digital Dissertations.

Olaison, L. (2014). *Entrepreneurship at the limits*. (Doctoral Dissertation) Retrieved from

[http://openarchive.cbs.dk/bitstream/handle/10398/8917/Lena\\_Olaison.pdf?sequence=1](http://openarchive.cbs.dk/bitstream/handle/10398/8917/Lena_Olaison.pdf?sequence=1)

O'Malley, J., & Chamot, A. (1990). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*.

Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Orozco, D. (2013). *Communicative Activities as a Way to Foster the Oral use of English and*

*confidence in the Oral Expression*. (Master thesis). Retrieved from DSpace Digital Dissertations.

Pope, C., & Mays, N. (2006). *Qualitative research in health care*. (3rd ed.). Massachusetts,

MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Punch, K. (2005). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*

(2nd ed). London, UK: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Qinghong, M. (2009). *Key elements in conducting communicative approach to language*

*teaching*. *Canadian Social Science*, 5(2), 46-55. Retrieved from:

<http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/viewFile/110/113>

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd

ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Richard-Amato, P. A. (1988). *Making it happen: Interaction in the second language classroom*. New York, NY: Longman Inc.
- Regan, V., Howard, M., & Lemee, I. (2009). *The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in a study abroad context*. Salisbury, UK: Short Run Press.
- Rivers, W. M. (Ed.). (1987). *Interactive language teaching*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Rogers, S., & Evans, J. (2008). *Inside role-play in early childhood education: Researching young children's perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Rubiano, L. (2013). *Role-play: a way to improve Speaking performance among students of English as a foreign language*. (Master thesis). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10818/9290>
- Savery, J. R. (2006). Overview of Problem Based Learning: Definitions and Distinctions. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning*, 1(1), 9–20. Retrieved from: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=ijpbl>
- Savignon, S. (2009). Communicative language teaching. *Theory Into Practice*, 26(4), 235-242.
- Schensul, S., Schensul, J., & LeCompte, M. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods: Observations, interviews, and questionnaires*. Oxford: Altamira Press.
- Schwartz, B. D. (1993). On Explicit and Negative Data Effecting and Affecting Competence and Linguistic Behavior. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 15, 147-163. doi: 10.1017/S0272263100011931.
- Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J., & Silverman, D. (ed.). (2004). *Qualitative research practice*. London: Sage Publications.

- Siniscalco, M., & Auriat, N. (2005). *Questionnaire design: Quantitative research methods in educational planning*. Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Somekh, B. (2006). *Action research: A methodology for change and development*. New York, NY: Open University Press.
- Stevens, D., & Cooper, J. (2009). *Journal keeping: How to use reflective journals for effective teaching and learning, professional insight & positive change*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Stephen, A. (2001). The language awareness of the L2 teacher: its impact upon pedagogical practice. *Taylor & Francis Online*, 10, 2-3. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09658410108667027#preview>
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *The basics of qualitative research: Grounded Theory procedures and techniques*. London: Sage publications.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Procedures and techniques for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Susanti, A. (2007). Using role play in teaching speaking. Retrieved from <http://luluvicar.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/skripsi-using-role-play-in-teaching-speaking.pdf>
- Tillitt, B., & Newton, M. (1985). *Speaking Naturally: Communication skills in American English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tsou, W. (2005). Improving speaking skills through instruction in oral classroom participation. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 46-55. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/216021040?accountid=45375>

- Wang, Z. (2014). Developing accuracy and fluency in spoken English of Chinese EFL learners. *English Language Teaching*, 7(2), 110-118. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1503078583?accountid=45375>
- Wette, R. (2010). Product-process distinctions in ELT curriculum theory and practice, *ELT Journal*, 65(2), 136-144. doi:10.1093/elt/ccq022
- Yardley-Matwiejczuk, K. (1997). *Role play: Theory and practice*. California, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Yusuke, O. (2010). Role-play in oral proficiency interviews: interactive footing and interactional competences. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(6), 1647-1668. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2009.11.002

**Appendix A: Questionnaire 1**

**THE USE OF INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES IN ENGLISH CLASSES TO FOSTER  
STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS**

Speaking skills are a very difficult issue to achieve, in order to improve this ability we have designed a plan. This is the first activity in which you will be involved as part of the whole process. We appreciate your honest and clear answers to each item.

This is a questionnaire to be answer as honest as possible. Read the instruction carefully in each point, if you have any doubts ask the teacher. This will not have any repercussions in your grades; it is just to collect data/information in order to analyze the main factors within an English class.

1. How old are you?

- a.** 15-17      **b.** 18-19      **c.** 20-21      **d.** other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Write a tick (☐) on the genre you belong to.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Masculine	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feminine
--------------------------	-----------	--------------------------	----------

3. Write a tick (☐) on the place or places you are studying English in this moment.

<input type="checkbox"/>	School	<input type="checkbox"/>	English institute	<input type="checkbox"/>	University	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____
--------------------------	--------	--------------------------	-------------------	--------------------------	------------	--------------------------	----------------

## Role-playing to Improve Grammatical Accuracy

4. Does anybody in your family speak English? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_. No: \_\_\_\_\_ Who?
5. Do you speak English with someone else? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ Who: \_\_\_\_\_? No: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why are you studying English?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Check a mark (x) on the space YES or NO according to your answer.

	YES	NO
Do you think speaking English is important?		
Do you want to have interactive activities in class? (Role-play, discussions, debates, conversations in pairs or in groups).		
Do you feel confident when you have to speak in English?		
Do you like to evaluate yourself (your own process)?		
Do you like to evaluate your partners' improvement?		

8. Select from 1 to 6 how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements, here you will find the scores:

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

## Role-playing to Improve Grammatical Accuracy

	1	2	3	4	5	6
I evaluate my own performance in the English class.						
I feel confident with my speaking skills.						
I want to have interactive activities in the English class.						
English is an important language to communicate with people around the world.						
Evaluation is very important for my learning process.						
I practice and study English in my free time.						
I do extra activities to improve my speaking skills.						

**Appendix B: Parents' consent letter**

Bogotá, Abril 08 2014

Colegio Emilio Valenzuela

Motivo: Autorización

Teniendo en cuenta el énfasis de la institución en la enseñanza de la lengua Inglesa y los múltiples beneficios que está tiene en el futuro de los estudiantes, así como en el prestigio del colegio, me permito solicitar su autorización para aplicar dos instrumentos relacionados con mi proyecto de investigación de la maestría en “Didáctica del Inglés con Énfasis en Ambientes de Aprendizaje Autónomos” que actualmente curso en la Universidad de la Sabana.

Los instrumentos, un cuestionario y una rúbrica de desempeño, tienen como objeto hacer un diagnóstico con respecto al nivel de lengua de los jóvenes. Este diagnóstico no tiene repercusiones en las notas de los estudiantes pero sí busca analizar el desempeño de ellos con el fin de generar estrategias que permitan un mejoramiento continuo en esta habilidad en especial.

De antemano agradezco su atención.

Cordialmente,

Yonh Escobar

English Teacher

Yo \_\_\_\_\_ con C.C \_\_\_\_\_

autorizo al docente del área de idiomas Yonh Escobar para la aplicación de un cuestionario y una rúbrica de desempeño sobre mi hijo \_\_\_\_\_ Firma:

\_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix C: Principal's Consent Letter**

Bogotá, Abril 08 2014

Colegio Emilio Valenzuela

Respetado Manuel Samper,

Teniendo en cuenta el énfasis de la institución en la enseñanza de la lengua Inglesa y los múltiples beneficios que está tiene en el futuro de los estudiantes, así como en el prestigio del colegio, me permito solicitar su autorización para aplicar dos instrumentos relacionados con mi proyecto de investigación de la maestría en “Didáctica del Inglés con Énfasis en Ambientes de Aprendizaje Autónomos” que actualmente curso en la Universidad de la Sabana.

Los instrumentos tienen como objetivo verificar si el problema de aprendizaje descrito en el proyecto llamado “The implementation of role-playing to improve grammar accuracy for sentence structure in oral utterances” es efectivamente reflejado por los estudiantes del grupo 10C. Dichos instrumentos son: un cuestionario y una rúbrica de evaluación los cuales se encuentran adjunto a esta carta.

De antemano le agradezco su atención

Atentamente,

Yonh Escobar

**Appendix D: Student's rubric**

**RUBRICA EVALUACIÓN DEL ESTUDIANTE**

Nombre del estudiante:

Institución Educativa:

Curso:

Profesor:

<b>Cumplimiento y Desempeño</b>	El estudiante tiene dificultad para atender y seguir las instrucciones y no logra los objetivos de las actividades. No demuestra interés por interactuar o cooperar con sus compañeros para realizar las actividades.	El estudiante entiende y sigue las instrucciones pero no participa activamente. Logra la mayoría de objetivos de las actividades. En ocasiones el profesor lo debe animar para que interactúe con sus compañeros para realizar las actividades	El estudiante entiende y sigue las instrucciones. Logra la mayoría de objetivos de las actividades. Demuestra interés por interactuar o cooperar con sus compañeros para realizar las actividades. El profesor le debe pedir muy pocas veces que lo haga.	El estudiante entiende y sigue las instrucciones fácilmente. Logra los objetivos de las actividades. Y los resultados obtenidos superan lo esperado. Muestra interés por interactuar o cooperar con sus compañeros todo el tiempo.	<b>VALORACION</b>
<b>Comunicación</b>	El estudiante no toma la iniciativa para comunicarse con sus compañeros en inglés. Se limita a contestar las preguntas de los demás con respuestas como "yes", "no", o "I don't Know", o palabras sueltas. No se esfuerza para utilizar Inglés para entender o hacerse	El estudiante no se muestra muy seguro, sin embargo pregunta y responde siguiendo el modelo dado por el profesor. Se esfuerza muy poco en utilizar Inglés para hacerse entender o entender a sus compañeros; por lo tanto el estudiante depende del profesor	El estudiante se muestra seguro al hablar en inglés. Pregunta y responde utilizando ideas completas aunque todavía necesita seguir un modelo. Utiliza el idioma inglés satisfactoriamente para hacerse entender. Todavía necesita del profesor cuando no sabe le <small>vocabulario</small> o cuando no puede seguir la	El estudiante se muestra seguro al hablar en inglés, se comunica de manera espontánea y natural de acuerdo al curso en el que se encuentra. Utilizar inglés satisfactoriamente para hacerse entender o entender a los compañeros. Cuando no sabe le <small>vocabulario</small> busca maneras de hacerse entender por medio de sinónimos, antónimos,	

Role-playing to Improve Grammatical Accuracy

	entender de sus compañeros. Solo participa y/o habla en Inglés cuando el profesor se lo exige.	cuando no sabe le vocabulario o cuando no puede seguir la conversación. Habla en Español para expresar ideas o expresiones que debería mencionar en Inglés teniendo el curso en el que está.	conversación. Participa activamente en las actividades y utiliza español solo cuando es necesario.	definiciones, ejemplos, etc. Participa activamente en las actividades y trata de hablar en Inglés todo el tiempo.	
<b>Gramática y vocabulario</b>	El uso de la gramática y el vocabulario está por debajo del nivel esperado. La mayoría del tiempo comete errores que dificultan lo que quiere decir	El estudiante comete errores frecuentemente y el vocabulario es muy imitado para el curso en el que está A veces los errores que comete dificultan la comprensión de lo que quiere decir	El estudiante utiliza el vocabulario la gramática aprendices en cursos o unidades anteriores, pero tiene dificultad para utilizar la gramática y el vocabulario de la presente unidad	El estudiante utiliza el vocabulario la gramática aprendices en cursos anteriores y el de la presente unidad adecuadamente	
<b>Pronunciación</b>	El estudiante comete errores de pronunciación que generalmente dificultan la comprensión de lo que quiere decir	El estudiante comete errores de pronunciación que algunas veces dificultan la comprensión de lo que quiere decir	El estudiante comete errores mínimos que no afectan la comprensión de lo que quiere decir	El estudiante sigue los modelos básicos de pronunciación en cuanto a sonidos, acento y entonación de acuerdo con el curso en el que esta	
	<b>Criterio 1:</b> Absolutamente en desacuerdo	<b>Criterio 2:</b> De alguna manera de acuerdo	<b>Criterio 3:</b> De acuerdo	<b>Criterio 4:</b> Totalmente de acuerdo	<b>Total:</b>

**Appendix E: Questionnaire 2.**

This research study aims to observe how the Role-playing implementation in the English classes encourages confidence to enhance grammatical accuracy among English A2 teenagers in a private school in Colombia. Therefore, The aim of this questionnaire is to collect concrete information about student's experiences at studying English, using role-playing, and about their confidence when speaking in English in front of the class.

It is recommended to answer all questions and to write complete answers. The questions are written in Spanish for your complete understanding, feel free to answer them in Spanish.

Student's name:

Educational institution:

\_\_\_\_\_.

1. ¿Cómo se sintió usted en las diferentes clases de inglés que tuvo en los años anteriores?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. ¿Qué tipo de actividades usted recuerda haber sido partícipe en aquellas clases de inglés?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Role-playing to Improve Grammatical Accuracy

---

3. ¿Influyeron de alguna manera aquellas actividades desarrolladas por el docente en su uso del idioma inglés? por favor explique.

---

---

---

---

---

4. ¿Cómo se siente usted a la hora de hablar en inglés en clase? Por favor explique.

---

---

---

---

---

5. ¿Conoce usted en qué consisten las actividades de “juego de roles” o en inglés “role-play”? por favor explique.

---

---

---

---

---

6. ¿Ha participado en alguna actividad de juego de roles en las clases de inglés? en caso de ser afirmativa su respuesta, Cuál es su experiencia y opinión frente a este tipo de actividades? Por favor explique.

---

---

---

---

**Appendix F: Teacher's journal format**

<b>Class N°</b>		<b>Date:</b>	<b>Teacher:</b>
<b>Institution:</b>			
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Procedure</b>		<b>Teacher's comments</b>

### **Appendix G: Semi-structured interview**

#### ***Questions: Before the implementation***

Perceptions and previous experience at studying English.

Sin tener en cuenta esta institución educativa, ¿En qué otra institución educativa usted estudió inglés? ¿Cómo fue su experiencia en aquel lugar?

¿Cómo se sintió usted en las diferentes clases de inglés que tuvo en los años anteriores?

¿Qué tipo de actividades usted recuerda haber sido partícipe en aquellas clases de inglés?

¿Cómo fue su experiencia participando en las actividades que usted mencionó anteriormente?

¿Influyeron de alguna manera aquellas actividades desarrolladas por el docente en su uso del idioma inglés? por favor explique.

¿Qué le motiva a estudiar el idioma?

¿Cómo se siente usted a la hora de hablar en inglés en clase? Por favor explique.

¿Conoce usted en qué consisten las actividades de “juego de roles” o en inglés “role-play”? por favor explique.

¿Ha participado en alguna actividad de juego de roles en las clases de inglés?

¿Cuál es su experiencia y opinión frente a este tipo de actividades?

#### ***Questions: After the implementation***

¿Cómo se siente usted en la clase de inglés?

¿Ha cambiado en algún sentido su nivel de inglés? ¿De qué manera? Por favor explique.

¿Cómo se siente usted a la hora de hablar en inglés en clase? Por favor explique.

¿Qué opina usted de las actividades de juego de rol desarrolladas en clase?

¿Han influido este tipo de actividades en su aprendizaje del idioma? Por favor explique.

¿Cuál es su opinión frente al desarrollo de este tipo de actividades en clase?

**Appendix H: Lesson plan example**

Class N°		Date:	
<b>Lesson objectives:</b>	<p><b>Main Aim(s):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the end of this lesson, the students will be able to describe their daily routines by using simple present; affirmative statements.</li> <li>• At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to ask yes/no questions using the simple present tense about their daily routines.</li> </ul> <p><b>Subsidiary Aims:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will be able to practice their speaking skills while they ask and answer questions about their daily routines by asking yes/no questions and giving short answers.</li> <li>• The students will be able to use the time expressions with the simple present tense, this in order to be more specific when describing their daily routines.</li> </ul> <p>To personalize the grammar and vocabulary of the lesson.</p>		
<b>Skills</b>	Speaking		
<b>Learning Strategies</b>	Personalizing, Grammar analysis, taking notes.		
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Procedure Teacher and student activity</b>	<b>Time and interaction</b>
<u>Warm up</u>	To allow students to gradually adapt to the English class and the specific topic they will study.	The teacher asks the students to tell the person next to them the activities they do in their daily routines (ex. Have breakfast). Then, the teacher will ask them to tell her the daily routines they shared previously with their classmates.	5 minutes  T-Ss Ss-T
<u>Introduction of the class objectives</u>	<p>To make students aware of the communicative and language objective they will have to achieve at the end of the lesson.</p> <p>To make students aware of the learning strategy they will use during the class to learn the grammar and</p>	<p>As they brainstormed the activities they do daily, the teacher will ask them to read the class objectives and find connections between the current and the previous lesson (simple present affirmative sentences).</p> <p>The students read the class objectives aloud. After each</p>	5 minutes  T-Ss Ss-T



## Role-playing to Improve Grammatical Accuracy

	vocabulary more easily.	objective the teacher will ask them for examples (ex. The grammar of the lesson is simple present yes/no questions, therefore the teacher will encourage the students to take the risk and give an example of a question).	
<u>First activity:</u> <u>Building</u> <u>vocabulary</u> <u>(page 36)</u>	To introduce the students to more vocabulary related to daily routines.	<p>The teacher will ask the students to tell her if the activities from the brainstorm were similar to the ones in the first activity (Building vocabulary, A). The students may find some similar activities.</p> <p>The teacher will check the students' pronunciation of the vocabulary by asking them to read them one by one in pairs. If there is a mistake, the teacher will ask for volunteers to write the IPA of the mispronounced words on the poster next to the board. Finally, the students analyze the symbols and come up with the right pronunciation.</p>	10 minutes  T-Ss
<u>Activity B</u> <u>(page 36)</u>	To make the students aware of the days of the week, so they can work on the task of the lesson (My English schedule)	<p>The teacher will ask them: Do you take a class on Sundays? Then, she will ask the students, if the activities they do on Sundays are similar to the ones they do on Mondays. Then, the students will ask each other about the activities they do on Mondays, and the activities they do on Sundays. They will share with the class the similarities</p> <p>The students will read the days of the week aloud, and the teacher checks pronunciation if</p>	10 minutes  T-ss s-s  S-S

## Role-playing to Improve Grammatical Accuracy

		<p>it is necessary by asking them to look for their IPA of these words.</p> <p>The teacher asks them to write one activity they do each day of the week, and after the students finish doing the activity, they will compare the exercise in pairs. They will use the conversation strategy “how about you to return the question”.</p> <p>A. On Mondays, I play soccer. How about you?</p> <p>The interaction model is on the book, activity B.</p>	
<u>TASK</u>	To make students aware of the next step of the unit task, in this sense they can do it as a homework activity.	The teacher will tell the students that they have to complement activity B, and to do that, they will design their schedule to study English; they will have to write sentences of the activities they do each day of the week, and the time they do it.	3 minutes T-ss
<u>Second activity: A. Building language.</u>	To introduce the students to the simple present yes/no questions and short answers.	<p><b>TRANSITION:</b> The teacher will ask: “so, tell me, do you play sports every week?” The students answer.</p> <p>Then the teacher asks them to complete questions 5 and 6, and to check the answers that are true for them.</p> <p>When they finish the activity, they will ask each other the questions by throwing a foamy ball. One student will ask the first question from the</p>	5 minutes. T-ss 5 minutes Ss-ss

## Role-playing to Improve Grammatical Accuracy

		questionnaire, then he/she throws the ball, and the person who receives the ball has to answer the question (short answer). This is repeated 6 times.															
<u>Students' pair-assessment</u>	To identify the pronunciation mistakes, in order to correct them after they finish the activity.	While the students throw and receive the ball, they must pay attention to the pronunciation mistakes they commit during the activity. The teacher clarifies the pronunciation mistakes by asking the students to repeat.	2 minutes ss-T T-ss														
<u>Grammar analysis</u>	The students use the learning strategy called "grammar analysis" in order to identify the title, the sections, and the differences of those sections in the grammar chart. (page 37)	The teacher will ask them to analyze the grammar chart in pairs, they will ask each other. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The title of the grammar chart.</li> <li>2. The number of sections it has.</li> <li>3. The differences between sections</li> <li>4. The time expressions.</li> </ol> After the students analyze the grammar she will elicit the grammatical structure from them, and then, the teacher will stick the grammar structure of the yes/no questions on a wall for students to have it visually while they do the communicative event. <div style="text-align: center;"> <table style="border: none; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">DO</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">I YOU WE THEY</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">VERB</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">COMPLEME</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">DOES</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">SHE HE IT</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">VERB</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">COMPLEME</td> </tr> </table> </div>	DO	+	I YOU WE THEY	+	VERB	+	COMPLEME	DOES	+	SHE HE IT	+	VERB	+	COMPLEME	10 minutes s-s
DO	+	I YOU WE THEY	+	VERB	+	COMPLEME											
DOES	+	SHE HE IT	+	VERB	+	COMPLEME											
<u>Third activity: fill up the gaps.</u>	To provide students written grammar practice.	The teacher asks them to complete activity 2 A. She asks for the activity's instructions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete</li> <li>2. Compare with a partner.</li> </ol> The students complete the activity, and after, the students															

## Role-playing to Improve Grammatical Accuracy

		<p>compare the questions in pairs. They will use these two strategies to interact “What do you have for number 1? I have_____.” And “how about you?”</p> <p>The teacher asks them to tell her the differences they found in their answers. She clarifies doubts.</p>	
<u>Students’ self-assessment</u>	The students identify their weaknesses and strengths, and will select an action plan to overcome their difficulties.	The students will tell the class what their mistakes were during the previous activity, also they will comment about the problems they had while doing it. The teacher answers questions.	5 minutes ss-T
<u>Communicative event: Role play</u>	To have students use the grammatical structure saw in class while they ask and answer questions about their daily routines.	<p>The students imagine they are reporters. They are interviewing an American student who came to the school. They will ask this student for his/her daily routines back in America in order to compare both routines.</p> <p>The students are organized in pairs, one person is A and the other one is B. The As will be the American student, and the Bs will be themselves (they will use their real information). As and Bs have to make a list of the activities they do daily so they know what questions they need to ask. Both students will take notes of 1 similarity and 1 difference between their routines.</p> <p>They could follow this model:</p> <p>Carlos does homework on Mondays, <b>but</b>, I do homework every day.</p>	20 minutes ss-ss  ss-ss  s-ss

## Role-playing to Improve Grammatical Accuracy

		Finally the teacher will ask for a volunteer to say his or her report to the class.	
<u>Teacher assessment</u>	To identify the possible students' grammar and pronunciation mistakes, in order to correct them on time.	The teacher will take notes of the students' pronunciation and grammar mistakes (making emphasis on the word order, and the use of appropriate subject and auxiliary verb), and when the student finished the communicative event, s/he can provide them feedback of the activity.	2 minutes T-ss
<u>Evaluation of attainment of lesson objectives:</u>	To check if the class objectives were achieved or not.	The teacher will ask the students to read the objectives, and after each one of them, she will ask student to give examples of the language objective, and to tell her if they achieved the communicative one and if they used the learning strategy in class.	2 minutes T-ss