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USING ROLE-PLAYS TO ENHANCE ORAL COMMUNICATION

Enhancing oral communication through role-playing in EFL primary and secondary school
contexts

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Abstract

This study focused on the improvement of oral communication in the classroom. The main concern was to attain better EFL oral communication results through the implementation of classroom role-playing, emphasizing the relevance of certain spoken fluency features. The study was conducted with two A1 groups of eighth and fifth graders aged between 10 and 13 years average at 2 public schools in Bogotá. Data were collected mainly via interviews, videos, a rubric, and teachers' journals. Results show that role-playing activities allowed students to focus more on realistic oral exchanges and to reach higher levels of motivation in their classroom practices. Additionally, the study proposes that EFL classroom practices should focus on helping students develop fluency from early EFL learning stages. Finally, accuracy and complexity should not be overemphasized as language output, but instead they should be considered EFL learning goals.

Key words: EFL oral communication; contextualized situations; focus on meaning, role-playing, spoken fluency.

Resumen

Este estudio cualitativo se enfocó en el mejoramiento de la comunicación oral en el aula. El objetivo principal de este estudio es obtener mejores resultados en la comunicación oral en la lengua extranjera (inglés) por medio de la implementación de juegos de rol en clase, haciendo énfasis en la importancia de ciertas características de la fluidez oral. El estudio se realizó en Bogotá, Colombia con dos grupos de estudiantes de colegios públicos de quinto y octavo grado con nivel de Inglés A1, cuyas edades promedio eran 10 y 13 años respectivamente. Los datos se reunieron utilizando entrevistas, vídeos, una rúbrica y diarios de campo. Los resultados evidencian que los juegos de rol permitieron a los estudiantes centrarse en intercambios orales más realistas y alcanzar niveles de motivación más altos en sus prácticas en el aula. Además, el estudio propone que la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera debe estar enfocada en ayudar a los alumnos a desarrollar la fluidez oral desde las primeras etapas de aprendizaje. Por último la exactitud (accuracy) y la complejidad no se deben sobre-enfatizar en la producción de lenguaje, sino que deben ser consideradas objetivos de aprendizaje.

Key words: Comunicación oral en lengua extranjera; situaciones contextualizadas; enfoque en significado, juegos de rol y fluidez oral.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the study

Globalization and Internet have made foreign languages learning a necessity. Twenty-first century societies require individuals able to communicate with people from all around the globe. Governments have created regulations that aim at boosting foreign languages learning. For these reasons, in Colombia, the Ministry of Education created the Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo - National Program for Bilingualism (2006), whose main goal is to promote learning English as a foreign language (henceforth, EFL) taking into account the international standards set by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR- Council of Europe, 2001). During the last years, English curricula in Colombian public schools and specifically in Bogotá have aimed at reaching higher results in learners' use of EFL. Research and pedagogical projects have been developed in order to attain this purpose.

This study used two groups of public school students from Bogotá. Participants in this study were classified in the level A1 CEFR. Among the learning objectives in this level, language learners are expected to understand and use familiar daily expressions and very basic phrases. Learners should be able to ask for and provide information about everyday situations; introduce themselves and others; ask and answer questions about personal details such as where they live, people they know and things they have. Moreover, EFL learners are expected to interact in a simple way provided that the counterpart talks slowly, clearly and is willful to help (Council of Europe, 2001).

English teachers in both public schools participating in this study follow the Colombian standards for foreign languages teaching (Plan de Estudios de Lengua Extranjera: Inglés) enacted by the National Ministry of Education (2006), whose aim is the development of all the

communicative skills in the foreign language (FL). However, there are no specific parameters regarding the assessment of the speaking ability, and especially, students' EFL spoken fluency in contextualized situations of oral communication.

Students in the two public school-settings have basic knowledge regarding grammar (simple tenses to make descriptions or give personal information), which is necessary in order to be able to communicate orally. However, grammar knowledge is not enough to encourage learners to communicate orally in English and to foster spoken fluency.

1.2 Rationale of the study

Every language-learning classroom has its own challenges. The problem to tackle in our contexts is the poor oral communicative abilities of the participants. Overpassing these difficulties demands constant reflection of the language trainers in order to look for tools or strategies that might be helpful to reorient pedagogical practices and attain the proposed objectives in the courses. Using action research in the English class could be useful to obtain information or find strategies to transform commonly inadequate attitudes and techniques. Therefore, a classroom study becomes an option to introduce changes in our teaching practices that could affect pupils in a straight manner. In doing so, opting for a teaching communicative view (communicative-based teaching) provided the necessary principles and ideas to carry out a research task. Taking into consideration these principles, role-playing activities become a renovating learning strategy in the classroom to solve the communicative flaws of the participants.

A communicative orientation to teach and learn EFL focuses more on language use, its meanings and contents; it does not avoid errors or mistakes, they are natural in communication; and it insists in more interactive learners' roles (Nunan, 2003, 2012; Richards, 2006; 2013) .

These perspectives of language were core issues considered in this study to generate an atmosphere of more interest and involvement among students.

1.2.1 Needs analysis and problem statement

This study was conducted with two groups in fifth and eighth grades of two public schools in Bogotá, Colombia. They were at A1 level CEFR Council of Europe (2001), as previously mentioned. The needs analysis process implemented with these groups established that most of the students had speaking difficulties when they engaged in oral communication activities held in the EFL classroom. They felt insecure and could not utter full expressions and/or sentences, having excessive use of unfilled pauses and excessive hesitation, which demonstrated difficulties in their spoken fluency. Most of them argued that they did not express orally in English in their former courses and never outside the school. Therefore, if students were not encouraged to use their EFL within the classroom for communicative purposes, it would not be possible to make them aware that language systems such as grammar and vocabulary are tools for communication that may give them opportunities to interact with others. Consequently, EFL may possibly become meaningless for them (Bygate (2001); Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005); Nation, (1990).

1.2.2 Justification of problem's significance

This study focuses on generating a base for students to build spoken fluency features through role-playing activities as a communication strategy in the EFL classroom. This approach is supported on a communicative view in the teaching of English, within which the creation of messages is more relevant (meaning) than grammar (language form).

There are different factors that affect students' spoken fluency (Nunan 2001; Ellis, 2005; Nation, 1990; Segalowitz, 2010). Those factors are not only linguistic, but connect to conditions

of the situations, the contents and, clearly, pronunciation features. Oral communication in the EFL classroom demands knowledge of the language systems (lexis, grammar, syntax, morphology, semantics, and phonology), language skills and different speaking goals (Nation and Newton, 2008). This means that spoken fluency cannot be taught in isolation. Besides, oral communication also requires a contextualized background in which topics are anchored to meaningful situations. For instance, emphasis on grammar routines and repetitions, are not enough to lead students into meaningful oral communication practices.

Spoken fluency arises from the set of factors that intervene in spoken language as the gist in the EFL classroom (Hughes, 2013), not as an isolated entity. Spoken fluency, therefore, becomes a relevant factor even in very basic learning levels; it is a main constituent factor of the whole language and the communication among individuals. In this light, EFL classroom practices should foster students' awareness of how sounds, words, grammar, and pronunciation patterns are related to specific uses in given situations of communication (Hughes, 2013). Regarding fluency and the English level, Nation and Newton (2009, p 10) state that "In the early stages of language learning especially, there is a value in becoming fluent with a repertoire of useful sentences and phrases..." This repertoire (input) is given to the students during the preparation stage of the role-playing.

However, spoken fluency also relates to learners' motivational levels. The participants in this study recognize the importance of English, but they feel frustrated because they do not attain adequate EFL learning results. This might occur because spoken fluency connects to linguistic and cognitive complexity, as Housen, Kuiken and Vedder (2012) set forth. These researchers affirm that this complexity concerns difficulties in the processing of the target language elements and their connection to "learners' individual backgrounds (e.g. their aptitude, motivation, stage

of L2 development, L1 background)” (p. 4). These are learners’ characteristics that affect directly participants’ spoken fluency and which may be hopefully involved in specific manners in the EFL learning process.

Furthermore, spoken fluency must be considered in connection to specific and potential contexts of L2 use, dealt with through different types of activities (Ur, 2009). This means that students’ spoken fluency is enhanced throughout relevant situations and contexts, which may probably prompt their ability to use L2 in oral communication activities. The fact that content, language, and context are integrated in learning situations may possibly exert a positive effect on students’ inclination to participate in a less restrictive manner in oral communication activities, as well as to assume a more conscious attitude towards fluency factors that affect their oral communicative ability.

In order to foster the development of certain spoken fluency features, researchers in the present study included role-playing activities in the EFL classroom context. This means that spoken fluency is privileged in the EFL classroom instead of accurate pronunciation (oral proficiency). This decision is supported by two reasons: first, students may focus on EFL for use in context for purposes that are more communicative and not marginal inventories of words and sentences, and second, students must redirect their work to a more collaborative approach, attempting to improve their own learning process. Therefore, students may be more likely to utilize English with their peers, orientating their learning process towards oral communication, reaching some spoken fluency attributes (unconsciously), among them, individual sounds, pronunciation of individual words, stress, intonation (Thornbury, 2005) within specific communicative situations held in the classroom.

1.2.3 Strategy selected to address problem

Nowadays, academic and social environments demand the use of EFL. This entails capacity to communicate views, ideas and needs in a clear manner, and simultaneously, the ability to interact through oral communication. Although students participating in this study do not currently face peak situations where spoken English is compulsorily used, they are actually learning EFL to attain long-term goals in their lives. In their present level of language use (A1), these goals are linked to social communicative situations where they share and exchange basic information in specific places and situations (at the restaurant, in the supermarket, in a job interview).

Role-playing may affect positively learners' capacity to deal with their EFL learning and communicative goals. For instance, learners' may increase the number of participations and interactions in the EFL classroom, as well as their collaborative work capacity. Certainly, students may take part in role-playing emulating real world situations. These activities might cope with the students' needs to obtain immediate outcomes, which can be associated with short-term and long-term goals-setting (Schunk, 2005), in terms of students' learning and communicative processes. Consequently, EFL oral communication in the classroom must involve more than knowledge regarding vocabulary, grammar, or sentences structure. Meaningful language learning occurs intrinsically in connection with the contexts of use of that language. Nunan (1991) affirms that "language reflects the contexts in which it is used and the purposes to which it is put" (p. 121). The role of context throughout this study is essential. Palmer (2014) recognizes the meaningful impact of role-playing in the EFL learning process. This author states that "Role-playing activities are a great way for students to practice adapting

their speaking to task and context” (p. 164). This process involves planning, selecting and arranging tasks that fit students’ age, and their social and cultural contexts.

Various studies have demonstrated that role-playing is an effective tool to foster spoken fluency, since it provides “artificial” ambiences within which learners can communicate orally. These ambiences simulate real situations where spoken English is used (Lane & Rollnick, 2007; Okada, 2010; Rao & Stupans, 2012). This strategy drives pupils through “real” communicative situations where oral interaction in EFL is necessary. Role-playing is multi-purpose because learners may be able to act, behave, listen and speak within situations that they might possibly face in the future (checking into a hotel, visiting the doctor, a job interview, etc.).

Correspondingly, role-playing is proposed as a mediating strategy in the EFL classroom, in order to build fifth and eighth graders’ English spoken fluency features; throughout role-playing young learners may find more joyful and engaging oral practices which allow them to express their thoughts, feelings and interests more overtly and almost without restrictions. Regarding learners’ cognitive processes, role-playing tasks encourage students to interact in contextualized situations and maintain peer and team-based interaction.

1.3 Research question and objectives

Based on the previous arguments, the objectives of this study were to analyze the influence of role-playing in students’ EFL oral communication, as well as to determine the possible significance of role-playing in the construction of spoken fluency features as a determinant element of oral communication. The corresponding research question was: How might the use of role-playing aim at increasing oral communication and build spoken fluency features of fifth and eighth-graders with A1 (CEFR) English?

1.4 Conclusion

Spoken fluency is a key aspect of oral communication. Students' knowledge regarding vocabulary and grammar structures are componential elements that may facilitate language use and interaction. However, they may result useless for EFL students if there are not meaningful situations supporting their use. Role-playing may allow setting forth those situations and contexts encouraging students to both, learn and use EFL in meaningful circumstances. Since traditional methodologies have not been useful to boost oral communication in our teaching contexts, this study focuses on the implementation of role-playing activities to encourage students to use the spoken language while interacting with their peers both in artificial as well as in more realistic communication environments. The subsequent chapter analyses previous research on the proposed fields in this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the empirical and theoretical relevance of constructs such as communicative approach, speaking fluency and role-playing, which were used to tackle the research problem previously addressed. This chapter also presents previous studies that approached spoken fluency from diverse theoretical scopes. Spoken fluency is an important component in EFL oral communication; however, it is not currently addressed in beginning EFL learning groups in the public schools that participate in this study because the speaking skill has not been a main learning concern in the EFL classrooms in these contexts.

Since the problem observed in this context was the lack of oral communication in EFL, the selected strategy to stimulate speaking skills was the role-playing because of its potential to increase motivation levels and its usefulness as a pedagogical tool. The results of various studies provide a scope of the proposed strategy and its possible applicability in our teaching contexts.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Communicative Approach

The Communicative Approach or Communicative Language Teaching is a widely used method for language teaching since the decade of 1960. CLT states that language should be learned through use and communication. CLT relates to issues such as how and why people learn a foreign language, the type of activities that ease the foreign language learning process, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom (Richards, 2006). Accordingly, this approach fits into the purpose of the present study since it allows students to be involved in situations where they have opportunities to communicate with their peers using specific language forms and

expressing language functions such as making predictions, asking informal questions, comparing and describing actions, among others.

This pedagogical view foregrounds the purpose of this study, namely, to use role-playing to foster students' oral communication and observe how far role-playing helps building students' spoken fluency features in early EFL learning stages. Throughout this process, CLT principles became useful to support the implementation of role-playing in the EFL classroom. These role-playing activities might allow to build up communicative atmospheres where students perform orally by recreating true-to-life conditions in the EFL classroom. Among CLT features, Nunan (2012) mentions the following:

Focus on communication

Learner-based language items

Emphasis on content, meaning and interest.

Language linked to communicative contexts.

Every day-like language used.

Spoken interactions foregrounded.

Partially correct/incomplete utterances valued within a context of use.

Content is privileged over language form. (p. 20)

Most of these features were taken into account throughout the implementation of the role-plays in the classroom. More importantly, these features were expected to afford appropriate linguistic and situational elements to generate a more natural EFL classroom atmosphere. This view has a sound correlation with the principle that a L2 communicative syllabus focuses mainly on learners' linguistic, cognitive and affective needs, their foreign language skills, and the contexts in which they are or will be able to use the foreign language (Brown, 2007). In this

study, the communicative approach also affords fulfillment of students' language knowledge and communicative functions. These needs were met through implementing role-playing, which fostered the use of students' spoken language, emulating ambiences and situations chosen by the students, where they had to request or offer goods or services.

2.2.2 Spoken Fluency

EFL spoken fluency connects directly with language grammatical, lexical, and discourse patterns (Bygate, 1987, 2001), or language phonological, lexical and grammatical systems (Nunan, 2013) which affect EFL learners' specific communicative skills. EFL fluency links currently to the speed in which a person communicates their ideas in a clear manner, and it is linked unavoidably to accuracy (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Snow, 2014). Accuracy refers to speaking without making grammar or vocabulary mistakes (Thornbury, 2005). This means that being a fluent speaker demands awareness regarding pronunciation of individual sounds, words and, in general, of speakers' statements in order to be able to accomplish interactional and communicative purposes. This view offers some elements of fluency that render a partial account of participants' EFL oral production through role-playing in the classroom.

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) provide this study with a significant analytical perspective on fluency, which connects three aspects: complexity, accuracy, and fluency - CAF (p. 139). Complexity deals with the degree of elaboration of language forms and structures; accuracy concerns learner's knowledge of the language system and rules, finally, fluency regards learners' easiness to use language without hesitations or false pauses (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005). These analytical perspectives feature concrete language elements found in the foreground of EFL oral production. Therefore, this perspective becomes relevant throughout the process of analysis and interpretation of participants' oral communication through role-playing since it provides a

common frame of analysis. However, because this study is partially supported on grounded theory, it is not its main aim to prove the validity of the CAF analytical body. In other words, the accuracy, complexity and fluency frame will be a referential analytical instrument whose componential elements will be adapted to the specific circumstances of language use. This implies that the participants' oral production observed is not fully modeled after the analytical frame, but combined with specific elements from a communicative view on language, as it is described below. This analytical stance combines accuracy, complexity and fluency adjusting and revising them according to the oral production events observed through participants' role-playing. Although fluency is present in higher language levels than the one of the participants in this study, there are features that indicate that a speaker can be "fluent" in spite of the level they have. If a person engages in an oral activity, knows the lexis and grammatical components (Conceptualization) to be used in the following stage (Formulation) it means the speaker is able to establish communication in the production stage (Articulation). If all this occurs "naturally" during the role-playing performance and thoughts become speech, it is feasible to talk about fluency (Skehan et al, 2016).

A further perspective for the exploration and analysis of spoken fluency is provided by a communicative language orientation. Richards (2006) highlights that those activities that focus on fluency emphasize the following characteristics:

- Reflect natural use of language
- Focus on achieving communication
- Require meaningful use of language
- Require the use of communication strategies

- Produce language that may not be predictable
- Seek to link language use to context (p. 13).

This means that, within the perspective of accuracy, complexity and fluency, the present study prioritizes spoken fluency, as a language element that synthesizes students' capacity to use EFL for oral communication in the classroom through role-playing. However, development of oral communication in A1 EFL learners through role-playing requires connected activities that involve students in planning and organizing their performances. For instance, selection and organization of topics, vocabulary to be used, grammar elements, sounds, pronunciation of words, pronunciation of long statements (e.g. sentences), turns of participation, coherence of ideas, comprehension of the situation and the roles of participants. Organization, planning, decision-making, among others, are all activities that demand hard work from students, and a neat teachers' guiding role. This means that, under Richards' (2006) premises, all previous activities have to be foreseen by the teacher and thought to fit students' learning needs, age features and English level. This is an unavoidable ongoing process since the purpose of the present study was to lead students to explore their oral communicative potential through role-playing activities that focused on specific current situations and contexts, addressing spoken fluency as a central element in their language use.

2.2.3 Role-playing

Using role-playing as a tool to encourage students to develop their oral communication and consequently set a basis to become fluent English speakers, is useful because it provides an important element, namely, students' output (Krashen 1981). This output encompasses lexis elements, grammatical and ungrammatical forms, as well as chunks of oral language used during

their role-play performances. Researchers in this study focus this output in terms of contents (meanings), target language, and interactions.

An objective of fluency-centered role-playing is to connect students' prior knowledge with the foreign language system by pointing at the communication of messages (Nation, 1990). In this study, role-playing activities were implemented in order to encourage students to convey messages effectively, interacting in situations that they chose and they were familiar with. It is possible that most students had been previously involved in similar situations and circumstances of use in their mother tongue. For instance, situations that demand students to ask for products and prices in their L1. This means that they were acquainted with interaction patterns within these situations.

Role-play activities is a concept coined by William Gamson (1966). He created the Simulated Society, a game used in various universities in order to teach different aspects of sociology, politics, and the development of communicative abilities. The game was based on the reproduction of dialogues and use of great imagination in specific contexts. It was like an acting game with characters and a plot. At the beginning, this proposal was not well accepted, later, this model was taken to the language teaching scenarios and it acquired different names like simulation, role-play simulation and role-play activities.

The present study assumes that role-playing in the EFL classroom may foster students' oral communication ability, teamwork capacity and, indirectly, may help building EFL spoken fluency features. This experience of sharing and participating in performing roles raises self-awareness regarding contextual issues (Blatner, 2009).

Role-playing activities might be an effective tool to encourage learners to learn and practice EFL. Role-playing promotes oral communication and allows students to develop and

practice new vocabulary and grammar structures, mixing verbal and non-verbal language in pre-established environments (Tompkins, 1998). Role-playing also serves the purpose of this study because participants encounter strong language motivational factors such as topics of common interest and opportunities of collaborative work, which encourages them to use spoken EFL. Additionally, role-play activities involve affective, cognitive, linguistic elements that may help students to contextualize second language learning (DiNapoli, 2003). Most importantly, role-playing activities have a close connection with the communicative approach as stated above in Nunan's (2012) communicative language characteristics, and with Richard's (2006) communicative approach connected to spoken fluency attributes.

2.3 State of the art

A significant number of studies have explored the connection between the use of role-playing in the EFL classroom and its possible influence on learners' oral communication.

2.3.1 Previous research on role-playing

A significant number of studies have analyzed the effects of role-playing in learners' EFL/ESL knowledge and they have agreed that role-playing exerts a positive influence in how learners learn it and use it. Some of these studies have found that using role-playing is an effective manner to make EFL/ESL learners speak and interact meaningfully in the EFL classroom (Adnan and Abdullah, 2014; Dorathy and Mahalakshmi, 2011; Liu and Ding, 2009). Some other studies have connected role-playing to language aspects such as vocabulary and grammar (Alabasi, 2016; Edstrom, 2013), and have also appraised the impact of role-playing in both pupils' learning experience and teachers' performance in the EFL classrooms (Lin, 2009), as well as the correlation between role-playing and learners' motivational factors (Di Napoli, 2009). Edstrom's study (2013) focused on the preparation process of the role-playing activity

and its influence on university students' vocabulary and grammar structures knowledge. This study analyzed how students prepared their role-playing activities and the strategies they were able to utilize in order to deal with potential difficulties throughout the process. Its results demonstrated that a role-playing activity was seen as "a brief informal communicative scenario" to foster students' creativity and, specifically collaborative work as an essential factor to improve students' work capacity in the writing of their own role-play scripts and during their performances. This research experience may probably support the present study because planning and organization stages, as well as the acting out of role-playing imply a strong collaborative task that is essential to attain the goals proposed. Islam and Islam (2013) demonstrated that post-secondary students' speaking skills improved, as well as their creativity and critical thinking. Similarly, Gómez' (2010) study demonstrated that secondary students exposed to diverse learning strategies such as storytelling and role-playing in a multilingual context, improved significantly their ESL communication and social abilities, as well as their capacity in independent reading tasks.

In the Colombian context, some studies on role-playing have showed positive findings concerning EFL learning skills. In particular, Escobar and Sonza, (2016) showed how role-playing affected positively EFL A2 learners' grammar accuracy in their oral utterances. Although they focused on the accuracy component of oral performance, they also studied learners' self-confidence correlated to the whole learning process. Their results showed learners' significant improvement in EFL grammar accuracy and a more positive attitude to participate in oral interactions in the EFL classroom. Conversely, the current study focuses on spoken fluency features connected to the communicative situation, rather than on grammar variables.

2.3.2 Previous research on spoken fluency

Although different studies regarding spoken fluency have been carried out in the last years, their suggested strategies are not the same as in this study, namely, role-playing. Among them, 4-3-2 strategy (Ryczek, 2013); collaborative and self-directedness strategy (Contreras, 2013; Gamba, 2013); TPR Story telling (Bernal and García, 2010); motivational, self-confidence issues (Nilsson, 2012), and fluency through audio journals (Kessler, 2010).

Ryczek (2013) adapted Nation's 4-3-2 fluency procedure, based on repetition, time pressure and change in audience as factors affecting fluency in order to foster university students' speaking fluency through short speeches among partners. The study showed learners' improvement in their spoken fluency, increase in learners' confidence and better classroom conditions. Bernal and García (2010) implemented a pedagogical intervention based on TPR storytelling in order to improve primary students' EFL oral production and spoken fluency development. The study focused on retention of vocabulary associated to contextualized situations, sequences and episodes of stories to support EFL oral production and fluency. The main emphasis of the proposal was providing learners with meaningful and contextualized input associated to the stories' sequences. Bernal and García's interest in students' grammar training has a significant difference with the present study, in which language form has a secondary role in the process of EFL oral communication. Instead, spoken fluency is strongly connected to context, content and meaning.

Other studies on fluency have attempted to link learners' spoken fluency with anxiety levels, self-confidence, collaborative work, and self-directedness defining the relevance of affective-based variables on spoken fluency, conversely to grammar-based studies. Nilsson (2012) studied fluency and accuracy-based tasks developed by 16-19 year-old Swedish learners,

and analyzed learners' motivation and self-confidence. Results in this study made clear that there was a meaningful increase of vocabulary in both groups, as well as in written and spoken fluency. Nilsson's search introduces a significant issue to the present study, namely, the overlapping between writing and speaking, as complementary language skills, which support students' preparation stages in the use of role-playing.

Other studies have analyzed spoken fluency as a major element in EFL speakers' proficiency measurement, in connection to accuracy and language complexity (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Negishi, 2012). Spoken fluency has also been approached as an instructional target in the implementation of different speaking proficiency techniques (Bernal and García, 2010; De Jong & Perfetti, 2011; Ryczek, 2013). Additionally, spoken fluency has also been analyzed in the scope of the correlation among the L1 and L2 spoken proficiency factors (Bosker, Quené, Sanders, and de Jong, 2014; De Jong, Groenhout, Schoonen, and Hulstijn, 2012; Guz, 2015; Maletina, 2014) in regards to either learners' personality or speaking styles, or to grammar accuracy and proficiency assessment factors.

Other studies have highlighted the relevance of EFL spoken fluency as a component of speech performance in non-native speakers (Doe & Hurling; 2014; Hoshino, 2012; Kahng, 2014). Notwithstanding this view, a large number of these studies approach EFL spoken fluency as part of EFL accuracy and proficiency measurement views, with the corresponding lack of a clear-cut concept of EFL fluency (Hinshaw 2016; Kirk, 2014; Guz, 2015). This last issue constitutes a main research gap in EFL students' fluency, which is approached in the present study. Several EFL accuracy and fluency measurement studies support this view (Hilton, 2009; Lambert and Kormos, 2014; Porcino and Finardi, 2012). Contreras (2013) and Gamba (2013) identified a close relationship between learners' collaborative activities, self-directed speaking

tasks and spoken fluency in EFL classroom tasks. Results evidenced positive effects of learners' collaborative interaction on their spoken fluency, observed in the decrease of speakers' hesitations, participants' roles throughout the collaborative tasks, lower levels of anxiety and fear to speak. However, these studies overlook the fact that learners' cognitive and affective factors are associated to the specific contents and contexts within which language grammar, vocabulary, and phonological elements occur. Likewise, Kessler (2010) compared spoken fluency variables (volume, pausing, utterance length and rate) in American graduated students learning English. The study analyzed the effect of anxiety on spoken fluency through students' audio journals produced both in a lab setting, and with mobiles. Results made clear that there is a straight correlation between the context and the anxiety levels when performing spoken activities, as well as an inverse correlation between anxiety levels and spoken fluency. These results provide a significant support to the present study regarding students' conditions to plan and create their role-playing.

2.3.3 Previous research on use of role-playing to address spoken fluency

Regarding the focal relationship of this study, a reduced number of research has implemented role-playing in order to address EFL spoken fluency in A1 students, in the primary and secondary education levels. Some of those studies included role-playing within a general set of communicative tasks to be used in the EFL classroom to develop learners' communicative competence and language skills, and to improve teaching strategies (Ampatuan and San José, 2016; Fuentes, 2013; Islam and Islam, 2013; Haruyama, 2010; Liu and Ding, 2009; Maxwell, 1997; Seo, 1993). A low number of studies have considered role-playing as a main EFL communicative strategy in order to analyze language proficiency in terms of vocabulary and grammar, accuracy and complexity, and assuming that spoken fluency is an outcome of those

language elements, as part of the general issue of EFL speaking performance or oral use. A few more studies have aimed at the relationship between role-playing and spoken fluency within the general perspective of communicative language approach (Benabadji, 2007; Kusnierek, 2015), evidencing an emphasis on learners' ability to deal with meaning production and exchange rather than with accurate grammatical forms.

Rubiano's (2012) study, demonstrated that role-playing was useful to develop oral communicative performance among 13-16 aged students in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation (vocal expression, intonation and voice volume) improvement. Another study by Orozco (2013) analyzed how communicative activities such as role-playing influenced primary students' confidence to speak in English, emphasizing the relevance of vocabulary and pronunciation issues. Results in both studies evidenced that motivation and self-confidence were essential elements in students' speaking performance. Although the studies made by Rubiano and Orozco are similar in their results, their analysis did not evidence how learners' EFL vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation improvement link to the communicative situations, to meanings, and to features of pronunciation such as word stress and intonation, sentence stress and segments in a sentence.

2.3.4 Justification of research question/objectives

Although several studies have approached EFL oral communication through the implementation of role-playing in order to increase students' speaking practices in the classroom, as well as their speaking ability, not many studies have attempted to explore EFL oral communication based on analysis of EFL spoken fluency, and the contextual factors linked to the role-playing situations. Therefore, this general scope demands the analysis of factors associated to role-playing that affect students' oral communication, and specifically, how EFL spoken

fluency becomes the basis of this oral communication in the classroom. The studies revised have been more inclined to accuracy and language form relationships rather than to spoken fluency.

2.4 Conclusion

Various studies have demonstrated that role-playing activities have a strong influence in L2 learning process. A number of studies in the field of fluency and oral communication have been developed in the last few years. However, they have not attempted a closer view on fluency from more contextualized elements. Actually, very few studies are close to the purpose of the present research project. This is because most of them have treated role-playing as a technique to achieve EFL proficiency, or just to stimulate general English learning instead of studying how role-playing may influence spoken fluency in close connection to the contextualized situations depicted within the role-playing. The following section describes the research design of this project.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design of the study, context of implementation, participants, ethical considerations, and the data gathering instruments. Since this study aimed at implementing role-playing as a strategy to increase EFL learners' oral communication opportunities and to foster the construction of EFL speaking fluency features, it is grounded on a communicative approach perspective within the EFL classroom. Data were gathered by means of descriptive, inferential and evaluative tools. Researchers implemented a pre and a final oral assessment rubric in order to evaluate students' EFL knowledge before and after the implementation stage. Additionally, a final questionnaire with open-ended questions was applied in order to gather attitudinal data from the participants about the use of role-playing activities to increase their oral communication. During the implementation, researchers recorded videos in the classroom and the participants could observe them in order to assess (as a personal reflection) their performances. Throughout the pedagogical implementation, researchers held their teacher's journal with descriptive and analytical notes. Instruments were intended to support validity and reliability to the study, as well as coherence in the different stages.

3.2 Type of study

This was a small-scale qualitative action research study, whose purpose was to analyze the function of role-playing activities to enhance oral communication in the EFL classroom. Although there were initial statistical data collected through the EFL rubric, this quantitative data must be considered as supporting data. Creswell (2012) explains that qualitative research is "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4).

Burns (2010) claims that the “central idea of the action part of AR is to intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring about changes and, even better, improvements in practice” (p. 6). Throughout this study, action research oriented researchers during observation of specific learning issues in the EFL classroom, such as EFL vocabulary, grammar and spoken fluency in oral communication activities. Action research provided an appropriate, valid and reliable procedure in order to deal meaningfully with those problems, since this research approach is a reflexive process whose objective was to improve teaching and learning techniques (Burns, 2003). The context of this study was the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, in two public schools, with students in fifth and eighth grades. The problem to solve was the poor oral communicative skills of the participants, and the strategy to overcome this issue was the implementation of role-playing activities.

3.3 Context

This research study was implemented in two public schools in Bogotá, Colombia. The first school is Gerardo Molina School, located in Suba neighborhood. The mission and institutional principles of the school are based on the communication as a tool to increase interaction, according to the dialogic pedagogical principles proposed by De Zubiría (2011). De Zubiría’s philosophy focuses on educating smarter people at cognitive, affective and practical levels. The school offers 3 hours of English training a week. Additionally, the school curriculum follows the Colombian Ministry of Education Standards (2006).

The second school is INEM (Instituto Nacional de Educación Media Diversificada) Francisco de Paula Santander, located in Kennedy neighborhood, in the eastern part of the city. The school mission and institutional principles are based on the construction of human values. The mission of the institution is to strengthen the interest of the academic community in the

scientific, technological, and social development by means of a diversified pedagogical approach. The school offers 3 hours of English training a week, and its curriculum underpins on the Colombian Ministry of Education Standards (2006).

3.3.1 Participants

As previously mentioned, the target population of this study was organized in two groups. The first group belonged to Gerardo Molina School with 16 participant students. They were A1 students who were aged 13 years in average. This group evidenced difficulties in pronunciation, word formation and meaning understanding when they were to participate in simple oral activities. However, they showed a positive attitude to be engaged in activities programmed in the classroom. The second group belonged to INEM Francisco de Paula Santander School. Participants in the study were 16 A1 students who were 10 years in average. This group evidenced positive attitudes to English instruction in the classroom, although they showed difficulties in using EFL for oral communication in the classroom.

Despite the dissimilarities of participants' age range and school grade, they shared the same linguistic issues regarding oral communication. Most of the students possessed EFL elementary knowledge; they were able to read short texts according to their level, and write in order to give basic information about themselves, to give personal details using numbers, personal pronouns, possessive adjectives, as well as use vocabulary of occupations and age. They also knew some singular and plural nouns, as well as how to describe their favorite items or activities. Besides, they could write about their daily routines, and could describe themselves, but as mentioned before, they failed to express orally.

3.3.2 Researcher's role

According to Carr and Kemmis (2004), the role of the researchers is to participate in a process that involves planning, taking action, observing and reflecting. They state that being researchers involves “...interrogating both ourselves and the circumstances in which we find ourselves—looking ‘inside’ ourselves and ‘outside’ towards the conditions that shape how we think, what we do, and how we relate to others and the world” (p. 7). This study demanded full involvement of the researchers to select, adapt, and design instruments to collect diagnosis data, to plan a pedagogical intervention, and to apply data collection instruments in order to analyze such data. The analytical stage guided researchers through reflection on the process of students’ participation in the role-playing using EFL to communicate orally. According to Patton (2002), the role of the researcher demands paying attention to every detail during the study, writing descriptively, recording field notes, separating paramount data from useless information, using strict methods to validate and triangulate data, and reporting strengths and limitations presented in the study.

3.3.3 Ethical considerations

Taking into consideration that students participating in the study were underage, researchers observed specific ethical considerations in order to protect students’ integrity as contributors in the study. One consideration was student’s willingness to participate in the project. The other consideration was the protection of their anonymity (Burns, 2010) as participants. Accordingly, researchers used an alphanumeric system instead of their real names. Moreover, students’ parents and the authorities of the school received consent letters (Appendices H & I pp. 104, 105) explaining the nature of the research and the possible benefits for the students and for the institutions.

3.4 Data collection instruments

Researchers selected, adapted, designed, and applied data collection instruments aimed at collecting information in regards to the students' oral ability before, during and after the pedagogical implementation of role-playing.

3.4.1 Descriptions and justifications

3.4.1.1 Rubric

Rubrics are widely used for evaluation purposes. Language trainers have used them as scoring guides for all communicative skills (Wolf & Stevens, 2007). This study used an assessment rubric in order to determine students' English level and spoken competence before and after the implementation process. Rubrics allow researchers to assess and gather meaningful information regarding students' oral ability and their possible evolution after implementing role-playing activities.

3.4.1.2 Interview

Interviews are reliable sources to gather data because they allow researchers to know what people think, to explore the reasons and motivations for the attitudes, their opinions; they are also useful to complement other data gathering instruments (Keats, 2007). This study used interviews with open-ended questions in order to gather attitudinal data regarding the perspective of the participants in relation to the use of role-play as a strategy to foster their EFL oral ability. The interview implemented in this study encompassed 12 questions whose content topics aimed at approaching the perception of the participants towards the use of role-playing activities to encourage them to use spoken English in class.

3.4.1.3 Video-recording

This instrument involves the collection of naturally occurring data using video cameras. It is perhaps the most established within the social science (Jewitt, 2012). Video-recordings in this study provided significant advantages to notice and analyze elements and details in students' EFL oral communication in the classroom that researchers were not able to observe during the implementation of the role-playing. Students could reflect on their performance by watching the videos. This audio-visual material also helped researchers establish a comparison of the participants' spoken features before, during and after the implementation of the strategy of role-playing in order to measure their spoken fluency by analyzing the use of pauses and hesitations.

3.4.1.4 Teachers' journal

Teacher's journal or field diaries are instruments that provide researchers with an effective way to keep track of what occurs during the pedagogical implementation process, either with objective or subjective views (Burns, 2001). Throughout the study, teachers' journal allowed researchers to focus on particular students' interactions and EFL uses, and features of the situations represented through the role-playing. This instrument was valuable during the analytical stage since it allowed teachers to reflect upon their professional development (Koshy, 2005), and its data was crucial during the triangulation stage.

3.4.2 Validation and piloting

Data collection process was completed through four different instruments and in three different stages, namely, before, during, and after the pedagogical implementation. Taking into consideration action research stages, the validation process was carried out by observing, planning, re-planning, acting and taking action, (Burns, 2010; Kemmis, McTaggart, 2005;

Koshy, 2005). The use of several data sources and instruments ensures that “In interpretation of data ...accurate account of information is provided” (Cresswell, 2014. p. 99.

The second stage encompassed selection, adaptation and design of instruments researchers would use in the study. Researchers selected video-recordings, teachers’ journal and an open-ended questionnaire. Electronic devices used for the recordings were piloted for audio and light testing purposes. Logged data in the teachers’ journal were supported by researchers’ direct observation of students’ performances in the role-playing (when researchers did not video-record) and by carefully watching the videos from previous other lessons. Table 1 below presents clear information of the schedule followed to carry out this study.

Table 1. Overall Research Timeline

Timeline																							
Description	Month	1		2				3				4				5				6			
	Week	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Instruments selection																							
Instruments Design																							
Instruments Piloting																							
Pedagogical Intervention Planning																							
Intervention																							
Data collection																							
Data analysis																							
Writing the article																							
Writing the final report																							

During the last stage, researchers implemented the post- oral assessment rubric in order to establish a comparison of students’ EFL linguistic knowledge and communicative use prior to and after implementing role-playing in the EFL classroom. A final open-ended questionnaire aimed at getting information in regards the perspectives of the participants about the use of role-playings to foster oral communication in English class. Triangulation of data in these instruments

shed lights on the implied relationships posed in the research question among contextualized role-playing, EFL oral communication and students' EFL building of spoken fluency features in the classroom. This qualitative research design granted this study both internal and external validity since the study outcomes derived directly from the analytical claims and these outcomes may be drawn to other EFL classroom contexts (Burns, 2001, p. 160).

3.5 Conclusion

The present study used and explored qualitative tools and procedures to account for different associated variables such as students' English knowledge level, their age, as well as their cognitive, linguistic and affective features. The study responds to the characteristics of two specific contexts, in the participant public schools, located in Bogotá, Colombia. On the whole, the study was developed in three stages, taking into consideration, a diagnostic stage, analysis of students' difficulties in their EFL learning process and context, as well as selection, adjustment and implementation of data gathering instruments, sources, and ethical issues that guarantee the most adequate and sound conditions for the students participating in the study. Finally, internal and external validity traits are significant elements that support this study. The subsequent chapter shows the pedagogical intervention and implementation procedures.

Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, some statistical figures are presented which inform students' prior and final outcomes in EFL language items knowledge and oral communication performance through role-playing in the classroom. Moreover, the pedagogical intervention and implementation process are described too. These processes are supported by the researchers' views on language, learning and curriculum, which were evidenced throughout this research cycle. The authors present the pedagogical intervention within a frame of activities, situational-based contents, communicative functions, and language systems such as grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, the implementation process is described in detail in its previous, while and post stages, as well as the setting stage in which students get involved with EFL classroom factors such as the teamwork modality, resources used, and the pedagogical role(s) the researchers assumed. Table number 1 describes the timeline of the study.

4.2 Visions of language, learning, and curriculum

4.2.1 Vision of language

The objective of any language is communication (Drobot, 2014). This study considers language as the main tool for social interaction (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2009). An "aspect of classroom interaction is willingness to communicate, which is defined as a student's intention to interact with others in the target language, given the chance to do so" (Oxford, 1997, p. 449). In this light, this study used role-playing activities as a strategy to foster oral communication in the EFL because they involve a process in which speakers-listeners have to use EFL and exchange contents in specific situations, which demand meaning negotiation (Nunan, 2003). Specifically, the implementation of role-playing throughout this study encouraged students to use EFL to ask

and answer questions in contexts where some characters requested goods or services and the recipient/s provided such goods or rendered the specific services.

4.2.2 Vision of learning

Learning is a complex process that involves various elements such as acquisition, knowledge, retention of information, cognitive organization, practice and change in behavior (Brown, 2007). For Arnold (1999) learning is related to having a transformation in the way we think, react and see the world. Since this study focused on the communicative approach, therefore a main learning purpose in this study was to encourage students to use EFL spoken language in contextualized situations they might face in their future. This learning process was intended to take place before, during and after the role-playing implementation in the classroom as an EFL major learning strategy in which learners might be acquainted with significant vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation guidance within contextualized situations, and specific EFL functions. These aspects together frame a meaningful learning environment for students to perform their role-playing and learning would occur during the last stages of the implementation process. A relevant issue is the focus on collaborative-based EFL learning, since learning is not an isolated process, but a social and interactional one.

4.2.3 Vision of curriculum

Curriculum is related “to the overall plan or design for a course and how the content for a course is transformed into a blueprint for teaching and learning which enables the desired learning outcomes to be achieved.” (Richards, 2013, p. 6). The curriculum design process demands to take into account students’ characteristics such as past experiences, motivation levels, and expectations. Moreover, it is necessary to account for homogeneous or heterogeneous nature of groups, what contents they prefer, class frequency, English learning level, learning

resources that would lead to decide on the type of learning approach that benefits more the groups. The EFL curriculum at Gerardo Molina and INEM Francisco de Paula Santander Public Schools follow the general guidelines provided by the Common European Framework of reference for Languages (CEFR- Council of Europe, 2001) and the Standards of the Colombian Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2007). At these two schools, language teachers are in charge of the curriculum design process. Resources such as EFL texts are not used as primary EFL course sources. This fact allows researchers to focus more on students' interests, weaknesses, and strengths as authentic factors and content sources for the implementation of their pedagogical interventions in the EFL classroom, and to adapt the teaching processes to more significant contexts for students. Curriculums in both schools were modified for the implementation stage in order to include the role-playing activities proposed by the students, as well as lexical, grammar and phonological issues necessary for the setting of each situation.

4.3 Instructional design

4.3.1 Lesson planning

Lesson planning was developed in various stages. The first stage included the selection of the activities. Researchers provided students with significant information about the use of role-playing in the EFL classroom sessions. Then, they asked students about the themes they wanted to role-play in class. Researchers and participants in both schools chose six specific content-related situations: ordering fast food at a restaurant, buying food in a supermarket, checking into a hotel, for instance. During the second stage, researchers consulted bibliographical references that would allow them to associate the proposed role-playing activities with the necessary content and language input to meet their students' interests and language level. In this manner,

researchers managed to decide on more realistic and communicative purposes for the lessons. In the last stage, researchers planned and prepared the lessons for each role-playing session. This preparatory stage also included consultation of videos regarding the content-related situations chosen, design of worksheets as learning tools for students to be aware of language systems such as vocabulary items and grammar structures. Before each performance, researchers had to ask for materials and costumes to the students, in order to make the scenario more realistic (Appendix J, lesson plan).

4.3.2 Implementation

The implementation process took place during an eight-week period, in August and October 2015. It took 32 hours. In the first week, researchers introduced the topic to the learners; they explained the objectives of role-playing as a learning and communicative tool, and the course of action of the implementation stage. Students watched some videos where some foreign language students performed different role-playing.

For the following weeks, researchers implemented six different role-playing activities in their EFL classroom, one per week. Weekly implementation of role-playing was arranged in two sessions. In the first session, researchers provided students with input by means of videos and worksheets, which included vocabulary and dialogues supporting situations and contents selected for the corresponding role-playing. For the second session of the week, students grouped and played roles, exchanging those roles: waiters, grocery sellers, hotel clerk, and others. After three rehearsals, a group of volunteers performed in front of the whole class. The teacher provided feedback to the students, then, another group of volunteers performed for the whole class, taking into account the teacher's previous remarks to the opening group. In the last week, researchers

planned an assessment session in which students had to perform a role-playing randomly chosen in front of the class. The implementation process is described in the following table.

Table 2. Pedagogical implementation timetable

Pedagogical Intervention: Language/communicative Issues					
Week	Activity	Function	Vocabulary	Grammar	Objectives
1	Presentation		Role-playing.		To familiarize students with the role- playing
2	Fast food	Ordering in a restaurant. Complaining.	Food Fast food.	Contracted questions form.	Students will order fast food using contracted questions.
3	Supermarket shopping.	Enquiring about products.	Food: fresh fish, bananas, eggs. Shopping: checkout receipt.	Countable and uncountable nouns.	Students will use countable and uncountable nouns orally.
4	Visiting the doctor.	Asking and saying how you feel.	Adjectives and adverbs. (illness)	Talking about abilities	Students will be able to express feelings and giving advice.
5	Checking into a hotel.	Making enquires.	Hotels: double room, suite and bathroom	Questions forms.	Students will be able make inquiries in a specific context.
6	Job interview.	Giving personal information. Describing personality.	Work: part-time, full-time, wage. Adjectives: Reliable, Friendly.	Can for ability Questions forms.	Students will be able to give personal information using the modal can.
7	Shopping clothes.	Asking and refusing clothes.	Clothes shop: prices, colors and clothes.	Questions with present continuous.	Students will be able to refuse or accept prices as well as to ask for clothes.
8	Assessment			Grammar	Students will demonstrate their speaking abilities performing a role-playing randomly.

4.4 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the authors explained the intervention and implementation stages followed. They made clear their views on language, learning and curriculum, as well as on how these conceptual issues influenced their pedagogical and theoretical decisions in this study. Finally, a detailed timetable was provided with significant language and communication issues framing it. The subsequent chapter describes the procedures and research methodology used in this study to gather and analyze data.

Chapter 5: Results and Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the procedures and research methodology this study followed to manage and analyze data obtained from the collection instruments before, during, and after the pedagogical implementation stage in order to corroborate the possible influence of role-playing in building spoken fluency features as significant elements of oral communication of the participants in this study. It also elucidates the results of the study in relation to the achievement of the proposed objectives, and it states how credibility of data analysis and interpretation is achieved as part of this small-scale study.

5.2 Data management procedures

Data management was held through a pre and post-oral speaking assessment rubric, video-recordings of students' oral performances and researchers' journal during the pedagogical implementation, then, a questionnaire was applied. All these instruments were used as significant data gathering resources. Data were transcribed and stored using a word processor software for further analysis (six videos of role-playing activities were transcribed for basic speaking measurement purposes). To protect the participants' confidentiality and anonymity, researchers replaced their names with an alphanumeric coding system. To ease the analysis and coding process researchers used an MS Excel matrix that contained all data gathered along the study.

5.2.1 Validation

In order to validate data, triangulation became a main issue. This strategy allows the use of different individuals, instruments, types or data or methods for data collection (Creswell, 2012), and their further description, comparison, analysis, and interpretation. In Burn's (2010) words, "...this data collection means that a combination of angles on the data will help give us

more objectivity” (p. 95) which invariably, means a more profound sense of validity or, even further, credibility. Within the present study, this process was carried out by gathering information from 32 subjects in two public schools. Validation in this study took place by comparing and contrasting matrix data obtained from the rubric, video-recordings (transcriptions), and the interviews (always considering the observation process and the field notes registered in the teachers’ journals).

5.2.2 Data analysis methodology

Researchers agreed on action research inductive analysis (Hatch, 2002) in order to make sense of data gathered throughout this study. This inductive analysis moves from specific and detailed data to general data. Hatch (2002) emphasizes that through this type of analysis researchers “identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories. It often involves synthesis, evaluation, interpretation, categorization, hypothesizing, comparison, and pattern finding” (p. 147).

Within the general frame of action research, data analysis goes through the general stages of gathering, comparing, contrasting, organizing, reducing, analyzing, and interpreting data in order to provide coherent answer to the study inquiries. Thus, identification of initial regularities among participants’ data deserved special attention to determine initial open codes. These regularities permitted a first approach to how the use of role-playing help students building participants’ spoken fluency features. To some extent, the analytical model implemented is not supported by previous established constructs, but is “... ‘grounded’ in the data -hence, grounded theory” (Merriam, 2002, p. 7).

This study developed five data analytical stages. Firstly, initial reading of data, led by a guiding question; secondly, definition of frames of analysis of data, segments of texts or

utterances; thirdly, creation of semantic relations within frames, organized in initial codes (initial sub-categories); fourthly, organization of domains or categories, in groups of initial codes; and fifthly, setting relationships among domains (Hatch, 2002).

5.3 Categories

The categories identified permitted to relate and intertwine previous codes through specific meanings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010, p. 376). To carry out this process, the present study followed the procedures stated by Corbin and Strauss (2008) through open, axial and selective coding which were used to identify and analyze three categories, six subcategories and the core category.

5.3.1 Overall category mapping

The data analysis process started from the coding stage which Corbin and Strauss (2008) define as “Deriving and developing concepts from data... raising data to a conceptual level” (p. 65, 66). This step of the study was developed by color-coding the responses of the students and the data gathered with the final interview, the researchers’ journal, and the speaking assessment rubric that supported the analysis of the oral features of the video-recordings. During this stage, the researchers labeled the initial codification, consequently leading towards the creation of general categories and the core category. This initial process is known as open coding (Corbin and Strauss, 1998), and it is defined as “a research analytical process to identify concepts and discover their properties and dimensions” (p. 101). Results in this initial analytical stage are shown in figure 1.

Research Question	Concepts
<p>Enhancing oral communication through role-playing in EFL primary and secondary school contexts</p> <p>Research question:</p> <p>How might the use of role-playing aim at increasing oral communication and build spoken fluency features of fifth and eighth-graders with A1 (CEFR) English?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronunciation improvement • Contextualized Vocabulary • Personal aims and engagement • Understanding of long EFL segments pronunciation <p>Facilitating Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better meaning understanding • Grammar & vocabulary awareness • Self- Confidence enhancement • Motivation towards language learning and communication • Team-work learning • Oral Fluency perception • Understanding the context and content

Figure 1. Initial concepts after the open coding procedure.

In a grounded theory perspective, Charmaz (2006) signals, initial codes are not definite, they are likely “...provisional, comparative and grounded in the data” (p. 48). This principle suggests that properties and dimensions as main features of codes are not biased by researchers preconceptions (Corbin & Strauss, 1998, 2008). However, their compelling power is connected to the intended research gaps posed in the research problem and research objectives.

Axial coding was the next process during the analytical stage. Corbin and Strauss (1998) refer to it as “The process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed “axial” because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (p. 123). The first codes were classified and grouped to form three preliminary axial

categories, and two subcategories or selective codes for each axial category (Charmaz, 2006).

These categories and sub-categories are described in figures 2 and 3.

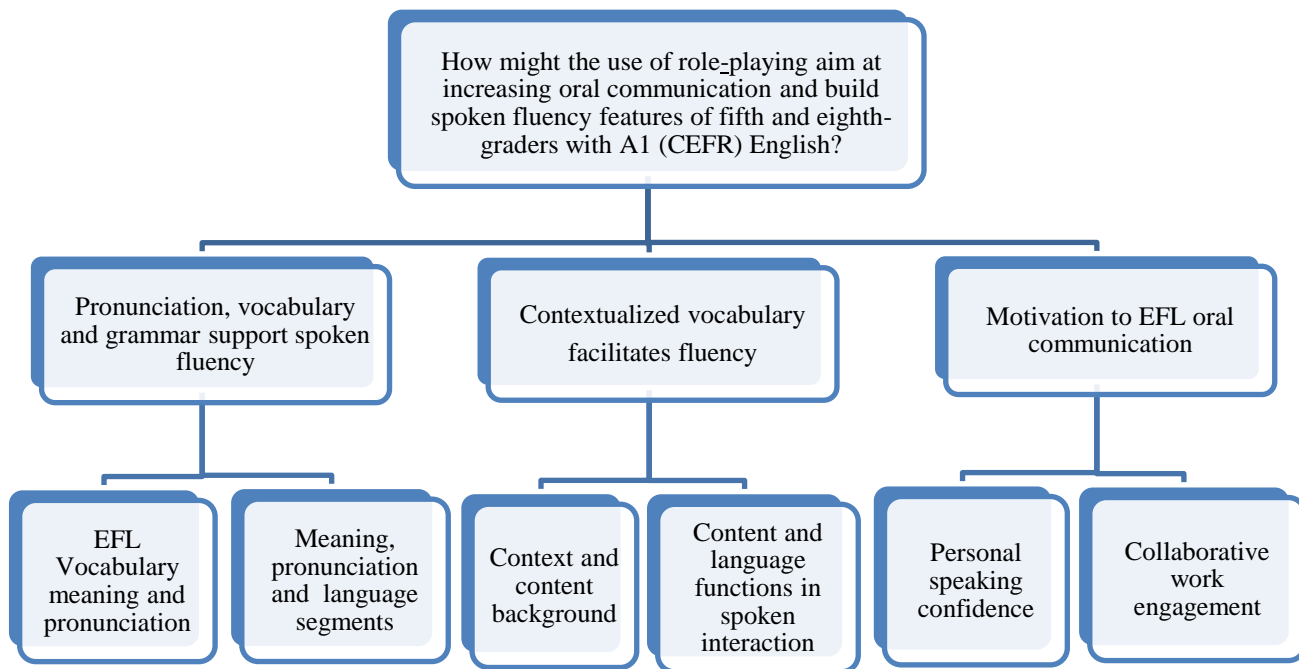


Figure 2. Preliminary categories and subcategories after the axial coding stage.

For the selective coding phase, researchers established a systematical connection between the categories, the problem of the study and the research objectives, which helped determine the final subcategories, categories, and the core category, whose interconnectedness aimed at providing answer to the research question.

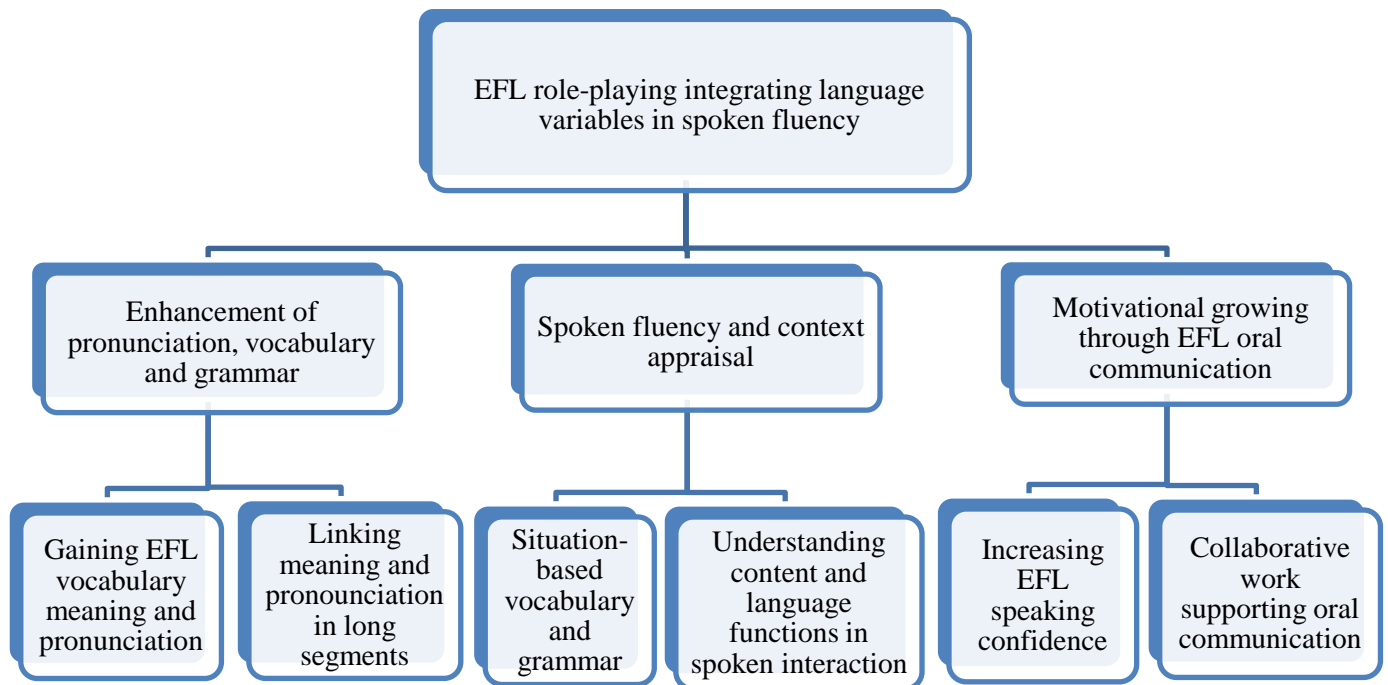


Figure 3. Final categories, subcategories and core category after the selective coding procedure.

5.3.2 Discussion of categories

The following stage brought as a result the discovery of three main categories. Category one, enhancement of EFL pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar issues, related specifically to two subcategories: gaining EFL vocabulary meaning and pronunciation, and linking meaning and pronunciation in long segments. Category two, spoken fluency and context appraisal was supported by two subcategories, namely, using situational-based vocabulary and grammar, and understanding content and language functions in spoken interactions. Finally, category three held a clear relationship to motivational features. Its supporting categories were increasing EFL speaking confidence and collaborative work supporting oral communication. The analysis of these categories and

sub-categories led researchers to affirm that the use of role-playing in the EFL classroom exerts a positive influence in fostering EFL oral communication, and especially in connection to context and motivational factors affecting speaking fluency. The analysis will show how language form (usage), language use (context) and cognitive-affective-communicative issues intertwine in EFL learners' spoken fluency during their role-playing.

5.3.2.1 Enhancement of EFL vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation

Preliminary results obtained from coding analysis of data led researchers to scrutinize the apparent relationship among vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation issues, which were iterative throughout the triangulation process. This is shown in the initial and final rubrics, as well as in students' role-play performance transcripts and in researchers' notes. This category shows how vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation elements affect students' EFL spoken fluency within role-playing context.

5.3.2.1.1 Vocabulary use

Initially, a comparison of results among the two oral assessment rubrics (the entry rubric and the final rubric) made clear that students' vocabulary and grammar knowledge raised meaningfully after the implementation of the role-playing as a strategy to increase oral communication (figures 4 and 7). The rubric was the A Level Speaking Test: Oral assessment criteria for the Key English test (KET), designed by the Cambridge English Language Assessment based on the parameters of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001).

Initially, the comparison between the two oral assessment rubrics on vocabulary use demonstrated that students increased their comprehension and use of vocabulary items associated to the situations performed through the role-playing, this was corroborated with the teachers'

journal notes. Although students knew basic EFL vocabulary items at the beginning of the study, this initial ‘stock’ of vocabulary was almost useless when they attempted to engage in oral communication in the EFL classroom. This difficulty originated in pronunciation flaws and ignorance of meaning. Results are shown in figure 4.

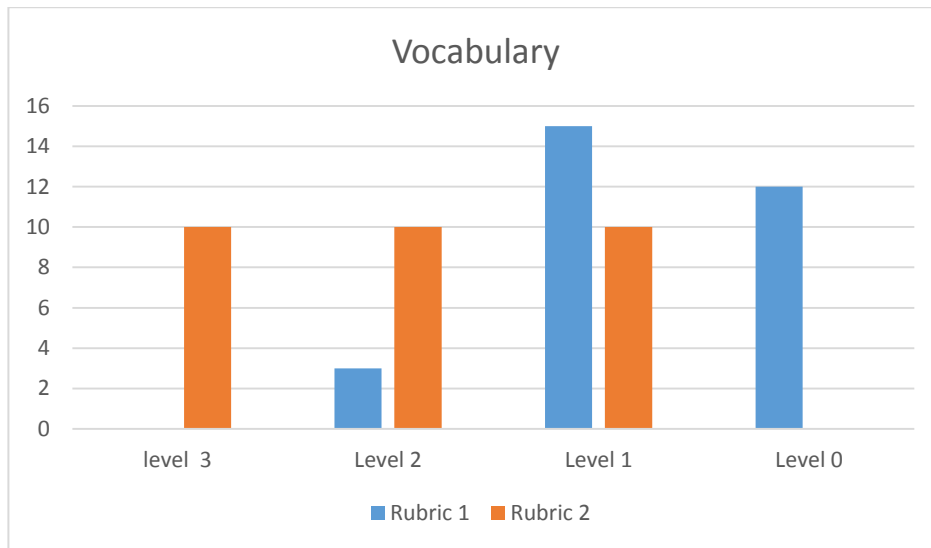


Figure 4. Comparison between initial and final oral performance results: Vocabulary use

Among the group, 40% of the students scored 0 (the lowest level) and 50% of them scored 1 (first level) in the vocabulary item before applying the proposed strategy. Only 10% of the students reached level 2. However, after the implementation of role-playing, these results changed meaningfully. Figure 4 shows that 33% of the students could manage to attain level 1 vocabulary knowledge, while another group (33%) classified at level 2, and a third of the students (33%) attained level 3.

From this comparison between pre and post rubrics, it is apparent that students' increase of new vocabulary items was strongly associated with the role-playing performance. In the same vein, a potential correlation may be drawn between meaning understanding and pronunciation

adequacy of vocabulary items during those role-playing, which may be illustrated in category two analysis. Evidence of new vocabulary knowledge and use is shown in Role-playing performance 2.

Vocabulary use
S13: <u>Fill out</u> this <u>registration card</u> , please
S13: One moment, Madam. I <u>will check</u> there is no problem.
S16: <u>I have to</u> buy things here at the supermarket.
S7: Do you have <u>a reservation</u> ?

Excerpt 1. Transcripts from video: Role-playing performance N. 2.

The underlined utterances are samples of new vocabulary learned by students. These vocabulary items seemed not to have been learnt by memory, but embedded in the specific situations selected for the role-playing. Students observed that they were able to increase their vocabulary knowledge and their meanings through role-playing, as it is evidenced in their comments in the next excerpt:

S11: ... one had to practice and then vocabulary increased.
S12: ... I learnt more vocabulary that permitted to communicate better.
S15: ... we had to consult and vocabulary increased and so our conversations

Excerpt 2. Students' responses in the post role-play written survey question 8.

This may possibly evidence that in order to propose a spoken fluency analysis in an EFL learners' group, vocabulary learning constitutes an extremely necessary learning aim.

5.3.2.1.2 Grammar use

The results revealed a significant increment in students' lexicon as well as grammar correctness when using simple tenses. Grammatical criteria provided in the assessment rubric is formally associated to a language learning correctness principle, namely, well-formed language

structures according to syntax rules. Although this constitutes basic EFL learning criteria on a language-centered learning view, it is rather insufficient to account for students' oral communicative options in connection to a specific situational context, as it is proposed within this study. Grammar results obtained are presented in figure 5.

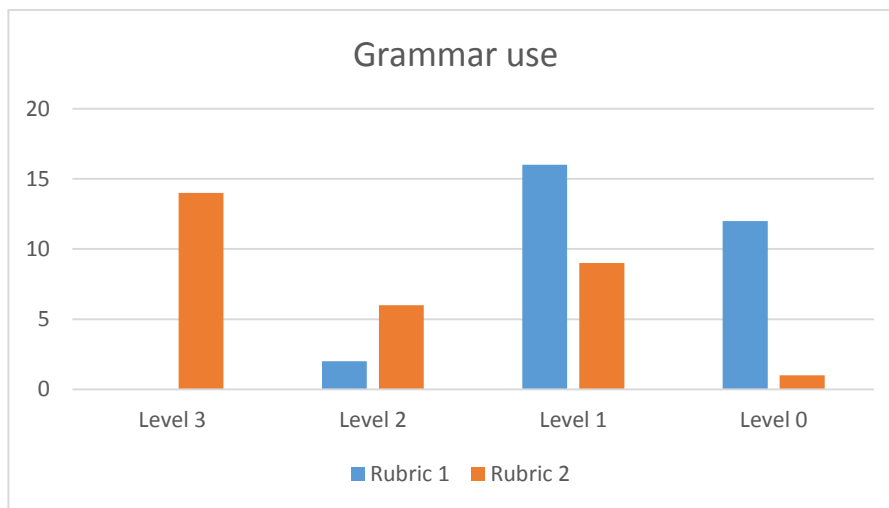


Figure 5. Comparison between initial and final oral performance results: Grammar use.

Statistical data obtained from rubric 1 and 2 allowed researchers notice a significant increment of students' grammar knowledge after the implementation of the role-playing strategy. Statistics results concerning grammatical issues (figure 5) revealed that approximately half of the participants (46.6%) reached level 3. This level showed no ranked participants during the initial rubric. In comparison to this figure, level 2 had a less significant increase, after the pedagogical intervention. It went from 6.6% in the first assessment rubric up to 13.2% of students classified in this level in the second rubric. Most importantly, no students were in rank 0 in the second rubric, while 40% belonged to this level in assessment rubric 1.

The assessment rubric included grammatical issues concerning EFL structure in the sentence level. Grammar assessment in this rubric draws meaningfully on a communicative purpose. This means that getting messages across is students' target when using grammar.

5.3.2.1.3 *EFL pronunciation*

EFL Pronunciation was another element that emerged in relation to spoken fluency.

Researchers analyzed pronunciation, stress and intonation (although intonation was not included in the assessment rubric). The results of this analysis are presented in figure 6.

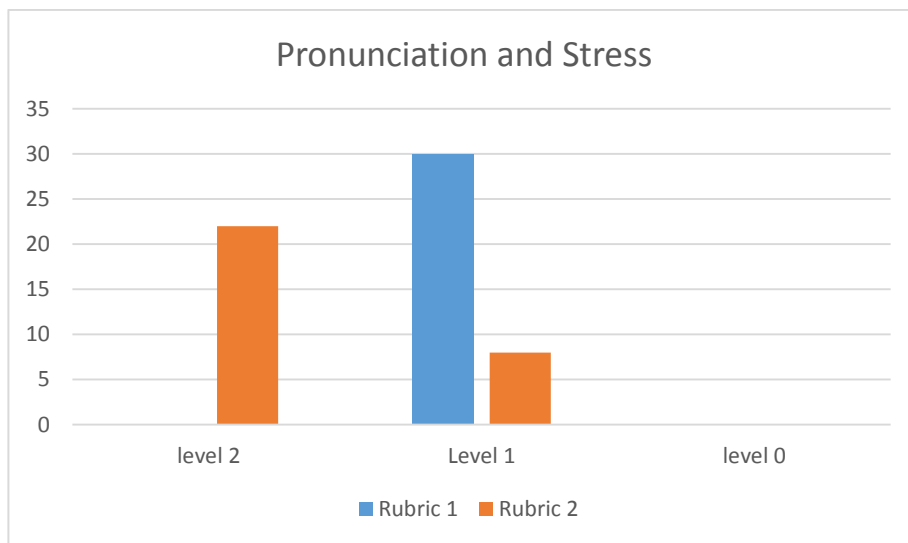


Figure 6. Comparison between initial and final oral performance results: Pronunciation stress

Figure 6 informs the results of pronunciation and stress obtained from the pre and post assessment rubric. Better EFL pronunciation and stress are evidenced in rubric 2 (appendices 4 and 4) after the implementation of role-playing in the EFL classroom. Rubric 1 shows lower scores in all three levels as follows. In the beginning, in rubric 1, 100% of the students classified in level 1. Rubric 2 revealed that 73.33% classified in level 2, although no students scored previously in this level. Only 26.67% of the students remained in level 1 after the implementation of role-playing in the classrooms. From these data, it is clear that improvement of pronunciation and stress persisted, as well as in the previous EFL vocabulary and grammar components, during the oral performance of students' role-playing. Pronunciation criteria are outlined in rubric 1 (see figure 8).

Pronunciation and stress criteria	
Level 1	Level 2
Generally clear articulation but L1 interference in pronunciation and stress is distracting and occasionally the output is unintelligible.	Occasional mispronunciations may occur and L1 accent is noticeable but output is intelligible.

Figure 7. Vocabulary assessment criteria in the initial and final assessment rubric: Pronunciation and stress. Taken from: The A level speaking test: Oral Examiner information pack. January 2013.

Hence, under the main items of the assessment rubric, students participating in this study were actually more able to produce adequate oral instances of EFL vocabulary and grammar through intelligible pronunciation. Scrivener (2005) points out that “Very often, when people study a language, they accumulate a lot of ‘up-in-the-head’ knowledge’ (i.e. they may know rules of grammar and lists of vocabulary items), but then find that they can’t actually use this language to communicate...” (p. 148). Prosodic features such as syllable stress, which corresponds to stress on a specific part of a word, that is, on a particular syllable, (Nation & Newton, 2009, p. 90) represents a significant pronunciation feature produced by students in their spoken performance within their role-playing. The following excerpt illustrates this point in which word stress is underlined in each student’ intervention.

Syllable stress
S13: I like a <u>coffee</u> , please.
S11: ...and fruit <u>salad</u> , please
S10: You are <u>welcome</u>
S13: She will take your <u>luggage</u> up
S16: I like the Italy <u>breakfast</u>
S16: ...are you <u>busy</u> ?

Excerpt 3. Transcripts from video: Role-playing performance N. 2.

Students participating in this study had pronunciation flaws, and stress represented a main pronunciation problem to them. Orion (1988) defines stress as “...force or loudness you give to a syllable in a word, or to a word in a phrase or sentence” (p. 17). The ability to identify where exactly on the word stress must be placed, and which word in the sentence must take the main stress are complex learning tasks. List of words and repetition drills are very well-known class exercises, but nowadays they do not meet young EFL learners’ necessities. For instance, content words, which hold the main meaning in sentences, are identified in the set of samples in excerpt 3.

Word sentence stress

S16: I have to buy things here / at the supermarket.

S13: I want a bag of cookies.

S8: Waitress can you come over here, please?

S11: Great! / but we have to hurry...

Excerpt 4. Transcript from role-playing 2.

Students’ sentence stress is identified above the underlined words. The slashes signal word segments produced by students. This stress pattern observed in the role-playing performance brings this analysis closer to the identification of EFL oral communication elements that connect to spoken fluency. Ruiter and Dang (2005) state that those “words that are pronounced louder and with more clarity than others (content words) ...carry essential meanings...” (p. 190). On the contrary, function words that hold a secondary stress do not hold a primary meaning in the sentences. Being aware of these EFL features facilitates speakers to produce more comprehensible utterances (Ur, 2009), and a high quality flow of speech.

5.3.2.1.4 *Gaining EFL vocabulary and pronunciation*

Within this study, role-playing constitutes an event that privileged EFL oral communication and all the potential factors linked to it. Students are driven to deal with a larger amount of language factors, which are connected to contents and contexts of use of language, implying more demanding cognitive tasks. Regarding spoken fluency, intonation and stress become initial aspects of concern, according to Bygate's (2001) "pushing them (learners) to develop fluency...might encourage greater use of formulaic chunks of language, discouraging attention to accuracy and reducing speakers' capacity for processing complex language" (p. 17). Evidence provided in the present study has shown an acceptable balance among EFL vocabulary, grammar, and basic pronunciation variables such as stress and intonation, which were not diminished in favor of spoken fluency as it will be explained when analyzing category 3.

Teachers' analysis of students' EFL performance acknowledged how students' were able to search for meaning in specific situations presented in role-playing. Students either adapted vocabulary items from previous role-play experiences (communication experiences) or asked the teachers or other partners for specific details of form, meaning or pronunciation. Samples from two role-playings prove this point:

S8. Good morning. Can I help you?
S8: I would like to reserve a table, please.
S7: Do you have a reservation?
Are you ready to order?

Excerpt 5. Transcripts from video. Role-playing 1 & 2.

Playing the roles of servers and customers demanded the use of expressions that fitted to the specific context of the situation and the purpose of the oral interaction; this evidenced certain

perception of vocabulary use and pronunciation, as they answer in the interviews. These students' perceptions on their EFL learning through role-playing are illustrated in excerpt 6.

S14: ...one gets to have a more relaxed tongue, gets more vocabulary in mind for a better pronunciation.

S1: ...one gets to study pronunciation and (learn) new words and learn from them.

Excerpt 6. Students' responses in the post interview. Question 5.

Moreover, researchers observed how students managed to deal with vocabulary and pronunciation throughout their performances, as follows:

Some students used most of the vocabulary that they have learnt in the other dialogues, and adapted the phrases to their new dialogues. Nevertheless, some students had problems in the pronunciation of some of the new sentences and words. Before their performance, some groups asked about the pronunciation of the words. Particularly, they were worried about how words should sound.

Excerpt 7. Notes taken from Teacher's journal: Role-playing: at the Hotel.

Most frequently in the previous interviews, students associated lack of EFL vocabulary and flaws in pronunciation of single words, or longer chunks to nervousness, hesitation, to error production, fear to speak, or on the whole, to fluency gaps. On the positive side, students considered that good EFL vocabulary comprehension and pronunciation factors were united to confidence improvement, better fluency and speaking confidence while engaged in role-playing activities, as presented in the following excerpt.

S3: (this Activity) helps to pronunciation in English and makes us think in English in an everyday situation.

S4: I felt very nervous before the role-play because I did not know the pronunciation of some things (words).

Excerpt 8. Students' responses in the post role-play written survey.

Accordingly, students think that role-playing is an opportunity to learn new vocabulary, to attain better EFL pronunciation, which is meaningfully connected to their thinking skills and embedded in current life situation.

5.3.2.1.5 *Linking meaning and pronunciation in long segments*

In the analysis of vocabulary and grammar sections, statistics analysis demonstrated that role-playing was effective for improving this EFL vocabulary and grammar knowledge in students. This view intertwines with Widdowson's (2008) assumptions on language usage and use. This author explains that usage, as "a language user's knowledge of linguistic rules", is a relevant component of EFL performance, as well as use as "the language user's ability to use his knowledge of linguistic rules for effective communication" (p. 3). In this regard, attention on how spoken fluency is influenced by vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, stress and intonation elements is a main concern supported by Widdowson's (2008) usage-use insight. On

one hand, language usage points at the formal and systematic students' knowledge of the language, which participants in this study are currently building. On the other hand, use is a language component that connects students' usage as well as their knowledge of the context (not necessarily EFL context) in order to understand and produce meaningful and contextualized language. In order to illustrate this issue, excerpts from students' oral performances through role-playing are presented below (Excerpt 5), which illustrates how students' EFL usage flaws actually did not interrupt their EFL oral communication or their spoken fluency either.

Consequently, the elements observed were contextualized language segments, pronunciation, stress and intonation because they guarantee intelligibility of meaning and content. The symbols used to identify these elements in the transcript were:

/ Segments identified in the utterances

∇ Word stress in the sentence

— Syllable stress

↓ Falling intonation

↑ Rising intonation

[-] Missing element

* Inaccurate use

Recognition of language segments (identified by the symbol /) became units of pronunciation in students' oral performance in role-playing. Sentence stress (identified by the symbol ∇) permitted researchers to analyze students' performance in their communicative interactions in the role-playing; falling (↓) and rising (↑) intonation provided segment boundaries and recognition of sentence type differences (affirmative, negative and yes-no

questions). Inaccurate usage of language is marked with an asterisk (*), and missing language elements are represented as []

Interventions	At the hotel
1.	<p style="text-align: center;">∇</p> <p>S13: Can I help you? ↑ /</p>
2.	<p style="text-align: center;">∇</p> <p style="text-align: right;">∇</p> <p>S11: Yes,/ my name is Karen Muñoz / I have a</p> <p style="text-align: center;">∇</p> <p>reservation for two peoples* ↓ /</p>
3.	<p style="text-align: center;">∇</p> <p>S13: ok / yes one <u>moment</u> / Madan / I will</p> <p style="text-align: center;">∇</p> <p style="text-align: right;">∇</p> <p>check there / [it] is not <u>problem</u>./ Fill [out] this <u>registrat</u>ion card,</p> <p>please ↓ /</p>
4.	<p>S11 : Yes, / it is right ↓ /</p>
5.	<p style="text-align: center;">∇</p> <p>S11: Is the <u>breakfast</u> included in the price? ↑ /</p>
6.	<p style="text-align: center;">∇</p> <p style="text-align: right;">∇</p> <p>S13: Yes it is./ you can have either or Italy <u>breakfast</u> ↓ /</p>
7.	<p style="text-align: center;">∇</p> <p style="text-align: right;">∇</p> <p>S13: Can you <u>select</u> the <u>breakfast</u>, please? ↑ /</p>
8.	<p style="text-align: center;">∇</p> <p style="text-align: right;">∇</p> <p>S16: Yes. / I <u>like</u> the Italy <u>breakfast</u>, please /and good / I *be</p> <p><i>called at half past eight</i> ↓ /</p>

Excerpt 9. Transcripts from video: role-playing N. 3.

In this role-playing, language segments that make up each utterance were defined in connection to language use, being language usage just a referential background. In other words, there was an emphasis on meaning-based communication rather than on grammar-based communication. Students’ understanding and pronunciation of those elements are based on this analytical claim, as reported by the data provided above. Current EFL spoken fluency analysis associated with factors such as pauses, length of pauses, silence, and hesitation are analyzed in

the next section. Some data from researchers' journals and post survey corroborate these insights.

“... In spite of EFL inaccuracies, students convey meaning and get awareness of grammar issues which may help them improve learning skills.”

Excerpt 10. Teachers' journal: Reflection on accuracy and fluency.

Inaccuracies are minor misuses of some words, word order, lack of elements such as dropped letters, which in sum do not interfere with meaning conveyance, or interaction among students participating in the role-play performances. Students' judgment of their own performances in the role-playing activity is shown in excerpt 11.

S9: ...one has the opportunity to make mistakes and to learn so that when this may happen in real circumstances I will be able to know better and to know what to do.

Excerpt 11. Taken from Post- role-play written Questionnaire.

Usage flaws may reveal that students are in their beginning process of spoken language use, however, role-playing seems to be effective to increase primary and essential grammar knowledge linked to contextualized situations that may demand a basic balance among grammar adequacy and oral communication appropriacy (Widdowson, 2008). This relationship between grammar use and oral communication constitutes an essential factor in the process that foregrounds spoken fluency features.

5.3.2.2 *EFL spoken fluency and context appraisal*

Within this study, fluency has been approached from a multiple perspective that exceeds the initial definition based on speaking speed, grammar accuracy, hesitations, and pauses (Celce-

Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, 2014; Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005; Nation & Newton, 2009; Thornbury, 2005). More explicitly, lexis, grammar, pronunciation, stress and intonation have been considered elements that constitute spoken fluency, and they might build the basis for a further fluent communication of the participants. Thus, role-playing becomes an EFL classroom event that affords varied options for students to assemble those elements together. The previous analysis of category one (enhancement of EFL vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) allowed researchers to make clear the correlations among those variables as usage-use-based EFL elements.

EFL spoken fluency and context appraisal is supported also in students' stances on how well they had done in their oral communication through role-playing. These perspectives were also supported by their oral performances, and by researchers' journal notes. In their accounts of the effect of role-playing on their spoken fluency, students attached their own perceptions to their experience with EFL through the role-playing. Two broad themes emerged from students' responses, theme one, concerned situational-based spoken fluency, and theme two, related to contextualized content and language functions.

5.3.2.2.1 *Situation-based EFL spoken fluency*

Role-playing takes participants to contextualize language, contents and their own interactions. Students expressed that role-playing affected positively their capacity to use and understand EFL. Their understanding of the role-playing relevance is linked to how role-playing focused on different situations and contexts about which students already had information or had experienced in their own language. This point is presented in excerpt 12.

Question 1: Is role-playing useful to develop EFL Speaking? Why?
 Question 2: Do you think your speaking ability has improved after sing role-playing? Why?

Question 1:
 Q1: S3. Yes, it is. Because it helps in English pronunciation and it makes us think in English in an everyday situation.

Question 2:
 Q2: S4: Yes, it has, because after speaking in English one (students) is more fluent and (gets) more pronunciation.

Excerpt 12. Students’ responses in the post role-play written survey.

Interestingly, most students’ responses to both questions emphasize on EFL pronunciation and speaking capacity in particular situations. Students’ comprehension of spoken fluency, in their empirical view, is intertwined with pronunciation and speaking features. Moreover, description and analysis of their EFL oral performances in the role-playing activity confirmed their initial perception.

Students’ spoken fluency features are listed and represented in figure 8.

Fluency measures observed	Keys used	Fluency measures observed	Keys used
Analyzed segments - AS	/	Incorrect word	*
Pause	•	Unclear	≈
Pause length	()	Elicitation of element	[]
False starts (word cut)	<	Word Stress	∇
False starts (utterance cut)	< >	Rising intonation (pitch goes down)	↑
Fillers	≥	Falling intonation (pitch goes up)	↓

Figure 8. Spoken fluency features observed during the implementation of role-playing

The following excerpt illustrates EFL spoken fluency features in the analysis of students’ performance in the role-playing.

Interventions	Shopping food
Scene 1	Two girls met at the food store. One of them asked the other to accompany her to do shopping
1.	∇ ∇ S16: Hi Camila / are you busy? ↑ /
2.	∇ S13: No / What [do] you want? ↓ /
3.	∇ ∇ S16: I have to buy things here at the supermarket ↓ / ∇ Can you come with me? ↑ /
4.	∇ ∇ S13: Great but we have to hurry • (-1'') / ∇ I have a little time to help you. ↓ /
5.	S16: OK /

Excerpt 13. Analysis of students’ spoken fluency based on transcripts of videoed role-playing.

In the first intervention, S16 displays a natural speaking flow with no hesitations or pauses. Word pronunciation is adequate to EFL phonetic rules. In intervention two, the auxiliary do is omitted, but this omission did not interrupt the speaking exchange; meanwhile in intervention three, S16 produces an adequate and appropriate use of EFL utterance, providing specific information to her partner. Special stress on the item ‘here’ which may become a feature of how participants in EFL role-playing contextualize their roles, assuming a spatial and temporal stance within the context. This event is clearly beyond any possible emphasis on form (grammar), in which students focus more on the communicative situation. In intervention four, S13 stresses the first word, ‘great’, expressing a subjective view and agreeing with her partner’s proposal at the same time. As in the previous sample, this specific use is strongly linked to the

situation of EFL rather than to grammar usage. Another instance of students' spoken fluency through their oral performance in role-playing is presented in excerpt 13.

Interventions	At the restaurant
1. Scene Scene 3	The costumers are sitting at the table. The waitress takes their order.
1.	∇ ∇ S14: Waitress,/ can you come here/ please? ↑ /
2.	∇ S7: What would you like? ↓
3.	∇ S15: ≥ er...The menu, please. ↓
4.	∇ S7: Take it. ↓ /
5.	S15: Thank you. ↓ /
	later on...
6.	∇ ∇ ∇ S15: I like • (short)... chicken and roast beef. ↓ /
7.	∇ S7: Are you ready to order, sir? ↑ /
8.	∇ ∇ ∇ S8: Yes. / I like ≥ er... a pizza Napolitana and fruit salad, please. ↓ /
9.	∇ ∇ S14: OK / and • (1) ≥ er what would • (1) ≥ er... want to drink? ↓ /
10.	∇ S8: ≥ er I like a coffee, please. ↓ /

Excerpt 14. Analysis of students' spoken fluency based on transcripts of videoed role Playing.

It is clear that during this role-playing at the restaurant, there were some very short EFL fluency pauses (interventions 6 and 9), and the occurrence of fillers (interventions 3, 8 and 9). However, those pauses and fillers were not obstacles to the conveyance of meaning. This means that EFL communication was not interrupted. As conventional measurement features, McCarthy (2009) affirms, "Pauses may not necessarily be a sign of communicative failure but may indicate

complex planning and boosted cognitive effort” (p. 4). Further, it is worth noting that students’ speaking speed average, although not considered as a main fluency concern in this study, seemed to be not an obstacle during students’ performances.

Emphasis on content words is an indicator of speakers’ understanding of meanings and contents conveyed through language. This emphasis factor is a facilitator of spoken fluency during the oral interactions. Additionally, this relationship takes place because when speakers have clarity of topics (content and meaning), of form (lexis and grammar), therefore, comprehension of contexts and situations are more easily understood. However, this relationship may possibly relate to students specific comprehension of the situation in which role-playing takes place and how language forms and meaning connect to those situations.

5.3.2.2.2 *Understanding content and language functions in spoken interaction*

In the previous analysis, it was made clear that students’ spoken fluency appraisal connects EFL vocabulary, grammar and meaning to the contexts and contents throughout role-playing. In this section, observation of data leads researchers to highlight an additional relationship, namely, students’ spoken fluency and language function comprehension.

From this view, knowing meaning of words and utterances does not imply directly knowing how they function in specific contextualized situations, or how language is used in order to realize different functions. For instance, asking for and providing information; reserving a table and ordering in a restaurant; inviting someone to do something, or asking for and offering help. Learning what language forms realize specific language functions in contextualized situations (Ellis and Larsen-Freeman, 2009; Littlewood, 2002; Richards, 2013) contributes to students’ spoken fluency development, from the perspective of oral performance (Nation, 1990).

In excerpt 14, students showed their ability to connect language forms and functions and conveyed of the intended message. However, students actually do experience specific difficulties to choose appropriate key words (*like*, instead of *want* in 1), or partial use of formulaic expressions as in Yes, we do (intervention 2). Additionally, mispronunciation of lexical items like in [beg] instead of [ˈbæg] (intervention 4).

Interventions	In the supermarket
1.	∇ S11: Good morning, madams / ∇ Do you *like to buy cookies? ↑ /
2.	∇ S16: Yes, [we do] / I like cookies. /
3.	∇ ∇ S10: ≥ er how * much ≥ er do you want? ↓ /
4.	∇ ∇ ∇ S13: I want a <i>bag</i> of cookies/ Thanks. ↓ / [beg]
5.	S11: is this OK? ↑ /
6.	∇ S16: Yes / it's perfect. ↓ /

Excerpt 15. Analysis of students’ spoken fluency based on transcripts of videoed role-playing.

More significantly, the situation presented above displays an opening and an ending with formal greetings among participants. In other words, there is an organizational principle of the interaction, which is not specialized knowledge of EFL. This is a typological situated use of languages in the whole. Students showed their knowledge of this type of communicative situation. The supermarket clerk asked the costumers for confirmation (suggesting customers)

about the item they wanted to buy. Although the use of the word ‘like’ in the question was not appropriate (it did not fit the current context of interaction among clerk and customers), it was very close in meaning to the intended ‘want’ currently used in these type of situations.

Regardless this inappropriate use of the verb “like” in this utterance, the language function intended was accomplished and the student’s spoken fluency was not obstructed. This experience illuminates how role-playing may foster oral communication and simultaneously affect positively students’ spoken fluency.

Students in the group also reported their insights about their own EFL learning and their capacity to participate in oral communication through role-playing, as presented in excerpt 16.

Q: Do you think you learnt something after using role-playing in the class of English? What exactly did you learn?

S7: ... one develops the ability to speak through role-playing.

S9: ...we learnt to understand situations useful for our lives.

Excerpt 16. Students’ responses in the post role-play written interview.

Students’ insights concentrate on probable situations that they may face in their current life, and which involve the use of EFL. Further analysis in the following section will show how this contextualized situations offered through role-playing connect as well with higher levels of motivational growing and self-confidence in their oral production.

5.3.2.3 *Motivational growing through EFL oral communication*

Data analysis in this study revealed a close relationship among role-playing, aimed at fostering oral communication, and students’ motivational growing and collaborative work that influence the building of spoken fluency features according to their level. Language use, self-confidence and collaborative work excelled in connection to role-playing implementation. Role-

playing activities encouraged students to participate in the whole learning process. Students became aware of many factors intervening in the process of planning and designing their own dialogues; they were also aware of their strengths and weaknesses in order to produce correct and appropriate utterances that met the communicative purposes of each role-playing situation. This means that they were aware of their EFL learning level and skills. Dörnyei (1994) considers that encouraging students' participation in the tasks boosts meaningful learning possibilities.

In the same manner, these statistical data showed students' view about the connection among role-playing and their influence for oral communication. Students' responses reported a significant connection among role-playing, motivational growth, self-confidence and collaborative work. In their responses, most students agreed that their EFL oral fluency and self-confidence when speaking reached higher results than in previous activities in which role-playing was not involved.

Hall (2011) emphasizes, "motivation is necessary to sustain both in short-term and long-term goals (e.g., completing a classroom activity, or studying a language...)" (p.135).

5.3.2.3.1 *Increasing EFL speaking confidence*

EFL speaking confidence is one of the outstanding aspects that arose during the analysis process and it can be "the most important determinant of attitude and effort expended toward L2 learning" (Clément, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977, p. 422). Students' stances on this matter is witnessed in the excerpt 17.

S6: They are real life-like experiences or everyday actions, so one can act naturally and confidently.

S7: one feels more at ease according to the (proposed) activity, so one gains more fluency.

S17: ... it develops within us a better ability to pronounce complicated words, to understand other students, it motivates us to keep further learning languages.

Excerpt 17. Students' responses in the post role-play written survey

According to the students' experiences in this study, role-playing helped them avoid shyness to use English orally. Likewise, students assumed that their confidence raises when using EFL and simultaneously, their own confidence in their capacity to attain their language learning goals (Dörnyei, 2009). As a result, students felt they became fluent when speaking. Researchers in this study noticed that students gained even more confidence in the last stage of the implementation of the role-playing in the EFL classroom. This positive sense of students' confidence and their language learning attainment is closely related to their motivational capacity (Dörnyei, 2001; Nunan, 2012) to maintain a clear goal in their EFL learning through role-playing.

In their responses to the questionnaire, most respondents indicated that role-playing prompted them to become more involved with language use, with the communicative purposes and with their own learning goals and personal expectations and interests (Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons, 1992; Dörnyei 2001). This issue is illustrated in excerpt 18.

S11: ...one knows what to say and feels more self-confident.

S13: ... I learnt to speak more fluently, and without fear because I am not as ashamed as before.

S14: Now my tongue is more relaxed, because I currently get on my nerves, and role-playing helped me to be more self-confident...

Excerpt 18. Students' responses in the post role-playing written interview. Questions 1, 4 and 7.

Dörnyei (2001) affirms that classroom teachers "...need to try and actively generate positive student attitudes towards learning" (p. 51). This author emphasizes that in order to reach language learners' motivation, teachers have to promote "positive language-related values and attitudes" (p. 51). Among those positive language-related values and beliefs Dörnyei (2001) signals that "interest and anticipated enjoyment of the language learning activity as an intrinsic value of L2 learning" (p. 54). This is reported in students' responses in the questionnaire, as seen in excerpt 19.

S1: At the moment of role-playing and one starts talking, since one learnt and got much fun (Q7).

S4: ...activities were so funny, and I felt that I learnt in a better way. (Q1)

S11: ... when we talked fluently because it was fun to be confident when speaking in English (Q4).

Excerpt 19. Students' responses in the post role-play written interview. Questions 1, 4 and 7.

Despite the intuitiveness of students' appreciations, these are worth insights linked to their objective-subjective and interpersonal EFL learning experiences, which may potentially lead them to state more elaborated and demanding learning goals connected to their personal

interests and expectations. The following excerpts from the questionnaire corroborates this analytical insight:

S3: What I liked most was words I learnt well because they may be helpful further in my life (Q7)

S5: I just think of something I have previously seen it stays in my mind or I learnt faster, because one may make mistakes... and when it appears in the real life, I will be sure to manage it (the mistake) (Q9).

Excerpt 20. Students' responses in the post role-play written survey. Questions 7 and 9.

According to Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons (1992) "From a social cognitive perspective, students' personal goal setting is influenced jointly by their self-beliefs of efficacy and the goals their parents set for them" (p. 665). These students' statements are connected to their own self-beliefs and their perceived self-efficacy (Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons, 1992). For instance, S3 emphasizes the relevance of learning vocabulary for his future life, while S5 provides a strong argument describing how role-playing permitted him to keep firmly language in his mind, despite of the presence of mistakes. His long-term learning goal is clear since he connected EFL to possible future situations in his life. In other words, students' goal-orientedness and confidence, as evidenced in the above samples, are a convincing proof that students EFL learning, in general, and their spoken "proficiency", in particular, are positively influenced by the use of role-playing.

5.3.2.3.2 *Collaborative work supporting oral communication*

Collaborative learning main aim is the construction of knowledge through social interaction (Oxford, 1997). Collaborative work increased peer-interaction when students had to make decisions regarding the assumption of the roles they had to perform, about the materials

they had to bring to class to make the performance more realistic, and about EFL uses in the construction of oral performances. Dooly (2008) claims that “collaborative learning requires working together toward a common goal” (p. 1). Essentially, this is the gist in role-playing-based classroom interactions. Students work together to attain a common goal, and EFL is both, an end and a vehicle to that goal. Working collaboratively in the classroom entails students’ insights into their own and others’ capacities and strengths. Excerpt 21 provides students’ insights into it.

S3: The teacher teaches the vocabulary and the basic aspects, but when you speak with your classmate, you improve pronunciation.

S11: I learn more with my partners because I know them.

S12: I learn more with my partners because is more fun

Excerpt 21. Students’ responses in the post role-play written survey.
Questions 5, 10 & 11.

Throughout this study, role-playing encouraged collaborative work before, during, and after the performance. Students had to interact with their peers continuously in order to prepare their activities, rehearse and perform them. Moreover, they were able to observe critically their own actions throughout the implementation of the role-playing, being aware of the potential capacity to work collaboratively. Essentially, collaborative work during role-playing took two basic forms, according to Macaro’s (1997) typology: teacher directed collaboration and learner directed collaboration (p. 136). The first type refers to “teacher’s premeditated intention for a particular type of class or group behavior” (p. 137). Learner generated collaboration refers to less controlled students’ activities where they interact more freely during the preparation of the task or activity, according to the orientations provided by the teacher (Macaro, 1997). This may be illustrated in the following excerpt, in which students describe their views on how they work collaboratively with their partners during the role-playing.

S8: Working with our partners permit to understand what we are doing...

S13: When we prepare a dialogue, we practice and we are more united.

S18: All members in the groups are important for the role-playing to work adequately.

Excerpt 22. Students' responses in the post role-play written survey. Questions 10 & 11.

Collaborative work allowed them to understand their action in the EFL learning; there is also a feeling of mutual accompanying relevant to create an atmosphere of confidence during their preparation stages; finally, students' understood that each one of them played a relevant function in the implementation of the role-playing. Notwithstanding, teachers' role is also highly estimated by students in their experience with role-playing.

S2: The teacher teaches us vocabulary and basic information and with partners we learn speaking and pronunciation.

S6: The teacher corrects my mistakes; he reinforces some topics and gives us more vocabulary.

S7: The teacher provides feedback so that we can pronounce better and do the role-playing in an adequate manner.

Excerpt 23. Students' responses in the post role-play written survey. Questions 10 & 11.

According to the students, teachers have a central role in the process of role-playing, guiding the activities, providing relevant information on language to support the activities, correcting students' mistakes, and guiding them to achieve their expected outcomes. This may be considered also a specific type of collaborative learning in which both students and teachers have functions that influence directly the expected learning outcomes.

5.3.3 Core category

The analysis and systematic reduction of categories permitted researchers to acknowledge that the use of role-playing contributes to the development of EFL oral communication and the

building of certain spoken fluency features. This means that role-playing does exert a positive influence in fostering EFL oral communication, and especially in connection to motivational, linguistic and contextual factors affecting speaking fluency.

Within this study, role-playing was not only a strategy to promote oral communication in a meaningful way. Role-playing also constituted a methodological mode that potentially triggered language learners' capacities to deal with language systems and meaning, language uses and functions, language contexts and speakers' interactions, despite the fact that students are ranked in A1 level. Role-playing in the classroom deploys a meaningful series of EFL factors associated with students learning: their current EFL knowledge, their perceptions of themselves as successful language learners and users, as well as their own motivational interests and goals in the learning process. Thus, this core category may be synthesized as EFL role-playing integrating language dimensions that lead to build spoken fluency features. Those factors are linked to language dimensions: usage, use, context, functions and learners' cognitive and affective traits. They encompass three principal supporting categories, namely, enhancement of EFL pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar meaningful uses, meaningful elements supporting spoken fluency appraisal and growing motivational factors through EFL oral communication.

5.4 Conclusion

The results of this small-scale action research study demonstrated that role-playing was an effective strategy to enhance interaction in a foreign language. The implementation of role-playing in the EFL classroom promoted the development of oral communication in specific contexts and situations with groups of fifth and eighth-graders in the setting of two public schools in Bogotá. Role-playing did not only help participants increase oral interaction in L2, but to enhance grammatical, lexical and pronunciation awareness. Most relevant, role-playing

influenced positively how students were able to cope with lack of spoken fluency. Hesitation and nervousness were reduced significantly, and students were able to focus more on specific meaning, content and language functions than on language forms. Regarding affective factors, role-playing activities were helpful to decrease shyness, gain confidence and foster teamwork. The following chapter presents the conclusions, pedagogical implications, limitations, and possible future research derived from this study.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

6.1 Introduction

This study examined how role-playing influenced students' EFL oral communication in the classroom, and their spoken fluency development within the same context. Conclusions drawn from data analysis permitted researchers appreciate more closely how students' difficulties in EFL oral communication were linked not only to gaps in their knowledge of accurate language, but also to other specific EFL variables which are not commonly considered in a grammar-based classroom, such as communicative situations and functions, and students' self-confidence and orientation to collaborative work. Henceforth, lack of EFL oral communication practice in the EFL classroom was addressed through role-playing, but with a focus on EFL spoken fluency from the perspective of language use (Widdowson, 2008) and performance (Nation, 1990) rather than on accuracy or grammar complexity (usage).

The outcomes of the study led researchers to corroborate two significant EFL learning issues. Firstly, role-playing actually causes EFL oral communication to improve in terms of more frequent communicative encounters among learners and more contextualized uses of EFL. Secondly, spoken fluency may become a focal issue in oral communication in beginning groups as long as contents and situations are contextualized, and grammar and vocabulary are considered tools to convey meaning and not learning goals themselves. This was a significant turning point in the analytical stance taken in this study. This perspective is supported by important issues that arouse in the analytical stage, such as increasing in EFL speaking confidence, understanding of language functions, higher individual engagement, and group-based speaking confidence. All of them feed students' spoken fluency appraisal and support the core category: EFL role-playing integrating language variables in spoken fluency.

For this to happen, it was necessary to go through an input stage (by means of videos, modeling and dialogues) in order to introduce meaningful vocabulary and grammar items before students perform the role-playing. Finally, contrast and comparison with previous studies confirm and validate findings in this study, and its own constraints and limitations as well.

6.2 Comparison of results with previous studies' results

Using role-playing activities in the EFL classroom context, at two public schools in Bogotá helped students improve different aspects of their EFL learning process connected to linguistic, motivational and oral communication factors. Regarding linguistic aspects, there was a significant increase and better understanding of vocabulary and grammar. This finding supports previous research in which lexical items, grammar structure and pronunciation issues were appropriately used in role-playing (Escobar and Sonza, 2016; Rubiano, 2012) allowing participants better oral communication in either perspective, namely, transactional or interactional. In their study, Escobar and Sonza (2016) proved a strong relationship between role-playing and students' oral utterances. Although their study's results regarding grammar improvement may be similar to those in the present study, their study focused specifically on grammar accuracy as the main supporting element in students' fluency. This view differs from the present study in which grammar is considered just one language variable in the process of EFL spoken fluency development among other variables as content and language functions, and learners' motivational factors. In turn, Rubiano's (2012) study aimed at correlating role-playing and 9th grade learners' oral performance improvement, based on vocabulary and word pronunciation as main issues hinging speaking performance. A main difference with Rubiano's study refers to the conception of vocabulary and pronunciation; in the present study, vocabulary and pronunciation are relevant variables of language usage, together with grammar.

In regards to the relevance of pronunciation, the current study showed that stress and intonation permitted students in basic EFL level to indicate their own positioning within the context of the situation presented in the role-playing, namely, space, time and participants of the representation. This may indicate that students' language processing is connected to the construction of meaning together with language encoding (Hilton, 2009, p. 153) in specific situations. Therefore, this meaning construction and language encoding supports students' capacity to share and exchange meanings in their oral communication through role-playing. This finding relates to Haruyama's (2010) claim that role-playing benefits pupils with opportunities for long-term meaningful language learning, and struggle against their fears to speak.

Concerning the correlation among role-playing, speaking fluency and the motivational component, the present study proved that providing students with significant input, clear instructions, and timely feedback before, during and after role-playing, result in students' low levels of anxiety and shyness when speaking in English in front of the whole group. This finding matches results in previous studies (Benabadji, 2006; Escobar and Sonza, 2016; Lin, 2009; Liu and Ding, 2009; Mohd and Hazlina, 2009; Rahimy and Safarpour, 2012; Rubiano, 2012), whose results agreed that learners achieved higher levels of self-confidence when performing orally in role-playing. This is because role-playing provided appropriate conditions and motivating factors supported by a communicative approach in the EFL classroom. Additionally, the present study also reported a significant improvement in collaborative work, which contributed to define the set of general features in the use of role-playing in the EFL classroom. Macaro (2007) claims that through collaborative work "learners are encouraged to achieve common learning goals by working together rather than with the teacher and when they demonstrate that they value and respect each other's language input..." (p. 134).

These results showed similarities with those of Rahyan's (2014) study, in which role-playing aimed at fostering EFL oral communication in the EFL classroom. Rayhan claimed the importance of role-playing in connection to spoken fluency development, and connected with other factors as confidence when using EFL; strong orientation towards group and collaborative work; recognition of roles as part of the completion of a task; and access to different types of techniques (brainstorming, questionnaires, and discussions).

Surprisingly, despite the differences in the strategies proposed to approach spoken fluency, previous studies developed in the Colombian context (Buitrago and Ayala, 2007; Contreras, 2013; Sarmiento and Pinilla, 2016; Usma, 2015) showed no significant differences among emerging correlations to spoken fluency, increase in self-confidence and motivation, meaningful vocabulary, accurate grammar output, and an outstanding role of contextualized learning and communicative situations.

However, no attempt to explore a possible relationship among contextual conditions and students' spoken fluency was observed among those studies. This issue was a clear task that underlies objective number two in the present study, namely, to determine the possible significance of role-playing in the development of spoken fluency features in EFL oral communication. Concerning this point, results in the current study indicate that students match language items (words, phrases, sentences) with the situations represented in the role-playing, appraise the situation elements (within the general frame of the role-playing), namely, topic, content and roles, and construct their representation of the whole communicative event. This perspective is more closely connected to a pragmatic account of spoken fluency rather than to a grammar accuracy-based model. This result is almost unexpected and suggests an

interconnectedness among students' knowledge of language functions and the specific roles played by them within each situation.

This result corroborates Ortiz, Rojas, Escobar and Leyva (2015) findings, which revealed a clear interconnectedness between EFL spoken fluency and learners' interaction. Results made evident a clear benefit of participants' oral/pragmatic fluency and communicative performance supported by metacognitive, affective and social language learning strategies, while expressing and sharing their ideas and points of view on different proposed topics through oral communication in the EFL classroom. However, this point deserves further inquiry. Finally, the current study made intuitively clear the existence of learners' dimensions affecting their EFL spoken fluency, namely, linguistic, cognitive and affective dimensions, which are present in the core category. This is consistent with DiNapoli's study (2003) which made clear how cognitive, linguistic and affective dimensions get involved in role-playing. These human dimensions permitted a clear contextualization of EFL learning. This means that role-playing is closer to dialogical interactions, not as role-playing- based simulations. Otherwise, cognitive and affective domains would not be naturally incorporated within it. Although certain relationship among students' EFL spoken fluency and their cognitive and emotional features was adventured, results in the current study did not show how students' might have been engaged in more dialogical-based interactions. Unfortunately, the present study could not account for these types of learners' involvement, due to students' language knowledge level.

6.3 Significance of the results

Throughout the implementation of role-playing in the EFL classrooms to promote and increase oral communication, this study has accounted for something more than language-based issues taught in the classroom. Firstly, there is a conception of role-playing that goes beyond the

concept of a simple communication tool for students to repeat ready-made conversations.

Instead, role-playing becomes a communicative and learning strategy, which strongly benefits students in their EFL learning. Furthermore, role-playing makes students aware of their own learning, guiding them into more significant involvement in individual and collaborative work, and shaping them as participants in communicative interaction playing diverse roles.

Secondly, spoken fluency gains a significant position as a main oral communication element in EFL beginning level, since it does not depend only on EFL accuracy or complexity, but it functions in connection with contextualized situations and participants' cognitive, affective and motivational features. Thirdly, this means that evaluation of EFL oral communication might not be language accuracy/complexity-based but it should take context and situation factors into account. For instance, how students are able to understand communicative functions, roles, and language forms in an integrated manner, closer to pragmatic uses of the language rather than to linguistic and grammar-based practices.

Fourthly, this study proposes the implementation of role-playing in the EFL classroom to enhance oral communication and spoken fluency, privileging a type of spoken grammar (Goh, 2009; Hilliard, 2014; Mumford, 2014; Timmis, 2005) rather than a writing-based grammar. Learning a foreign language demands to practice in an integrated manner all language skills; using role-playing in the classroom as we did might encourage pupils to develop reading, listening, and speaking (writing might be included depending on the level of the students and the features of the activity) (Canal and Swain, 1980). To sum up, role-playing combines oral with non-verbal communication in a safe environment for the learners (Tompkins, 1998).

Above all, this study fills the gap of spoken fluency analysis in beginning groups, in the EFL classrooms in the Colombian context. The study has gone some way towards enhancing our

understanding of how spoken fluency does not hinge exclusively lexical, grammar or language complexity issues. Instead of conventional quantitative analysis founded on certain number of errors, stops, repetitions currently applied to EFL spoken fluency, the current study provided valuable empirical findings in which spoken fluency in beginning learners is strongly linked more to the situational conditions provided in the communicative event –content, language functions and participants' roles, represented through role-playing. Taken together, these findings seem to suggest that learners' accurate use of grammar, their increase of lexical knowledge, as well as their ability to build up complex language statements are expected outcomes when spoken fluency is embedded within the communicative interactions generated through role-playing.

6.4 Pedagogical challenges and recommendations

Nowadays, EFL teachers must be able to deal with language teaching as well as with research actions. Transforming the EFL classroom into a participatory and action research environment is a challenge for EFL teachers. Language research deals with decisions and actions that go beyond learning EFL/ESL pronunciation. A major challenge in the EFL teaching field in our local context consists in making both, students and teachers feel that teaching and research go hand in hand. Design of EFL oral performance assessment protocols and instrument is a necessary task within the public schools contexts, supported on contextualized uses of language.

Furthermore, EFL teaching and research may help students be aware of their potential cognitive and affective features as learners and how those features may be enacted through diverse proposals that integrate research within their learning processes. It is important to suggest that institutional research should be promoted in the school contexts, and particularly EFL research proposal must be sponsored through specific research policies that affect positively

both, EFL use and EFL research practices. Finally, although there were classroom limitations in terms of resources and physical space, interactions held among students in this study mean a positive option students have to convey meaning through EFL.

6.5 Research limitations on the present study

Some limitations need to be considered in this study. Firstly, the qualitative research approach actually offers a vast number of inquiry possibilities drawn on spoken fluency, oral communication and role-playing, which in a short-term study are not exhaustively explored. Among those possibilities is the development of a whole-academic year study on EFL spoken fluency that explores in detail the probable impact of the intensified use of role-playing on students' spoken fluency. Another significant possibility corresponds to the probable involvement of students as research collaborators, and not only as participants of the interactions observed. This may take them to assume active research roles as observers and analyzers of their own performances. Secondly, there were significant qualitative research principles that might have provided a wider range of interpretative views of the process of EFL spoken fluency that could not be approached properly due to time limitations. Thirdly, teachers as novice researchers lack expertise about data analysis and interpretation, so this limited the reach and potential application of this study in other EFL learning contexts. Fourthly, The use of an already-made instrument such as the assessment rubric, biased to some extent the potential interpretation of EFL spoken fluency. Even though criteria in the assessment rubric linked objectively to students expected oral performance, researchers should have reflected previously on the piloting, in order to adjust it in terms of the defining variables that appeared throughout the implementation process.

6.6 Further research

Further studies that may focus on specific context variables affecting EFL spoken fluency are advisable. It is recommended to develop long-term studies that corroborate some of the results obtained in this short-term study, exploring other variables such as time and contextual constraints. Additionally, it would also be significant to take participants' factors such as age, genre and social background variables into account so that an enriching analytical background might be set forth. Similarly, further long-term studies could assess to what extent the roles performed by students enhance not only their EFL oral communication capacity, but also their completely cognitive learning through EFL.

Finally, the researchers firmly consider that future investigations might take hold of digital resources and the options they offer to design environments that promote spoken fluency tasks based on interactional contexts. This type of studies may also allow students to create role-playing activities that demand online communication in order to tackle time and space barriers.

6.7 Conclusion

This short-term study meant a complex but significant challenge for us, teachers-researchers. The identification of the problem dealt with our own experiences in the EFL classroom, with our perception of students' needs, learning difficulties and affective and motivational factors. The incorporation of role-playing to improve and increase oral communication in the EFL classroom was the leading inquiry into our own pedagogical practices and interactions with students. It was proven that EFL spoken fluency intertwines directly with oral communication features such as stress and intonation yet in basic EFL level learners.

The qualitative research approach provided us with the basic elementary principles and strategies to search for an appropriate response. Through basic data collection instruments such

as assessment rubrics, teachers' journals, video recordings and unstructured written interviews it was possible to gather meaningful information, analyze and interpret it. Two research objectives permitted researchers to keep track of the process evolution. On one hand, the relationship between EFL oral communication and role-playing, on the other hand, the possible interconnectedness among role-playing and spoken fluency, having oral communication as a general background.

This experience has implied a significant turn in how researchers appraise their own teaching practices and the students' EFL learning process. It has been made clear that teaching a foreign language encompasses more than having students memorize and repeat words, and language chunks in front of a class. Furthermore, teaching implies constant inquiry about what to teach, what for, why and how to make teaching and learning processes more meaningful and more human-like for students and teachers.

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Appendix 1: Rubric

School		Student:		
Overall Language Performance				
PRONUNCIATION AND STRESS				
2	Occasional mispronunciations may occur and L1 accent is noticeable but output is intelligible.			
1	Generally clear articulation but L1 interference in pronunciation and stress is distracting and occasionally the output is unintelligible.			
VOCABULARY				
3	Basic vocabulary but the words used are morphologically and semantically correct and the message gets across clearly. May use memorized phrases, groups of words and formulae in order to communicate, but the words used are appropriate to the given task.			
2	Most of the words used are morphologically and semantically correct and the message gets across though not always very clearly. Memorized groups of words or phrases are not always appropriate for the given task.			
1	Very basic and limited repertoire of mostly memorized words and phrases. Morphologically and semantically incorrect words are not uncommon (though sometimes they are self-corrected). The message gets across with difficulty.			
0	Few scattered words, inappropriate word choice or no communication.			
GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE				
3	Uses some simple structures correctly but may make mistakes. Nevertheless, the message gets across clearly.			
2	Limited range of structures most of which are used correctly. Basic mistakes are common but the message does get across without much difficulty.			
1	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorized repertoire. Errors of grammar and syntax are common but sometimes they are self-corrected, and the message does get across with some difficulty.			
0	Constant errors which obscure communication or no communication.			
COHERENCE				
3	Information clearly organized, linked with simple cohesive devices. Hesitations and reformulations are still common but do not tire the listener and do not disrupt coherence.			
2	Information in logical sequence and at times cohesively linked with basic linear connectors. Noticeable hesitation and false starts which however do not on the whole disrupt coherence.			
1	Information is more or less in logical sequence but sentences are not on the whole cohesively linked. Evident and systematic pausing to search for expressions, to articulate words and to repair communication which may at points disrupt coherence and tire the listener.			
0	Lack of coherence and cohesion or no communication.			
Mark:	3 = Fully satisfactory for A2 level	2 = Partly satisfactory for A2 level	1= Satisfactory for A1 level	0 = Unsatisfactory for A1 level

A Level Speaking Test: Oral assessment criteria for the Key English test (KET), designed by the Cambridge English Language Assessment Center, according to CEFR parameters (Council of Europe, 2001).

Appendix 2: Interview

Colegio: _____

Estudiante: _____

Género: F M

Entrevista para la evaluación de los juegos de rol

1. ¿Los juegos de rol son útiles para desarrollar el habla en inglés? ¿Por qué?

2. ¿Cree que su habilidad de habla en inglés mejoró después de usar los juegos de rol? ¿Por qué?

3. ¿Cómo se sentía antes de interpretar un juego de rol?

4. ¿Cómo se sentía después de interpretar un juego de rol?

5. ¿Usar vestuario, productos y elementos relacionados con la actividad del juego de rol ayudó a que la situación fuese más parecida a la realidad y facilitó la comunicación oral en inglés? ¿Si/no, por qué?

6. ¿Qué le pareció más complicado de los juegos de rol? ¿Por qué?

7. ¿Qué le gustó más de los juegos de rol? ¿Por qué?

8. ¿Considera que aprendió algo después de usar juegos de rol en clase de inglés? ¿Qué?

9. ¿Cree usted que los juegos de rol brindan la posibilidad de ganar seguridad en situaciones donde tenga que hablar en inglés?

10. ¿Le gustaría continuar trabajando con juegos de rol en clase de inglés? ¿Por qué?

11. Para aprender a hablar en inglés es preferible hacerlo con sus compañeros/as o con el profesor? ¿Por qué?

12. ¿Los juegos de rol fomentan el trabajo en equipo? ¿Por qué?

Appendix 3: Role-playing transcript 1

Interventions	At the restaurant
Scene 1	Phone talk: Making a reservation at a restaurant. S8: Customer on the phone. He is booking a table at the restaurant. S14: Restaurant assistant. Talking on the phone with the customer.
11.	S14: Good morning can you help you? ↑
12.	S8: Yes, • (1) good morning / ≥ we # < would like to reserve a table please. ^
13.	S14: Certainly but you...
14.	S8 : ≥ er we would like ≥ er (not clear) tonight # or at # night//
15.	S14: How many people? / and • (1) and < > what are their names/ please? //
16.	S8: ≥ Yes. / Mr. Rodriguez and Ms. Vasquez/ Please. / Bye. //
17.	S14: Thank you. // Bye.
Scene 2	At the restaurant entrance. S7: waitress S14 – S15: customers just arrive
18.	S15: Hi
19.	S7: Hi. // ≥ er do you have a reservation?
20.	S14; Yes. I have a reservation.
21.	S7: ≥ er Come here, / please.
22.	S14: OK. Thank you.
Scene 3	The costumers are sitting at the table. The waitress takes their order.
23.	S14: Waitress, can you come here/ please?
24.	S7: What would you like?
25.	S15: The menu, please.
26.	S7: Take it.
27.	S15: Thank you.
28.	S15: I like chicken and roast beef.
29.	S7: Are you ready to order, sir?
30.	S8: Yes. / I like a pizza Napolitana and fruit salad, please.
31.	S14: OK / and • (1) ≥ er what would • (1) ≥ er want to drink?
32.	S8: ≥ er I like a coffee, please.
33.	S14: OK. / And you / madam?
34.	S8 : I like chicken and French fries (fris)
35.	S14: and / what would • (1) to drink?
36.	S8: I like red wine.
37.	S14: OK /just a minute.

38.	S14: Here you are.
39.	S8 – S7: Thank you.
40.	S8: Waitress can you come over here, please?
41.	S14: What else • (1) you like?
42.	S8: the bill, please.
43.	S7: Do you take credit card?
44.	S.14: ≥ er Yes. / (She receives the credit card). Just a minute.
45.	S8: OK.
46.	S14: (coming back) Thank you.
47.	S8-S7: OK. Good boy.
48.	S14: Good-bye.

Appendix 4: Role play transcript 2

At the supermarket

Interventions	Shopping food	Teacher's observations
Scene 1		
	Two girls met at the food store. One of them asked the other to accompany her to do shopping	
1.	→ S16: Hi Camila/ are you busy? /	Natural speaking flow with no hesitations or pauses. Pronunciation is adequate to phonetic rules.
2.	→ S13: No / What [do] you want? /	Omission of auxiliary Do, which did not interrupt speaking exchange.
3.	→ ∇ S16:I have to buy things here at the supermarket / ∇ Can you come with me? ↑ /	Native-like use of EFL in the context of the food store or supermarket. Special stress on the item <i>here</i> , which may become a feature of how participants in EFL role-playing contextualize their roles, assuming a spatial and temporal stance within the context. This, clearly, is beyond any reasonable emphasis on form (grammar).
4.	∇ → S13 : Great but we have to hurry • (-1'') / → I have a little time to help you. /	There is a special and conscious stress on the first word, <i>great</i> . This is a non-conventional stress that may indicate a special subjective interest towards the interlocutor request, and it is a clear evidence that role-playing defies grammar-based tasks. Being so, RPs are more connected to opportunities to increase oral abilities and spoken fluency than grammar rules.
5.	S16: OK /	
6.	S16: First / I need ...[a] cake and <i>this</i> .	The use of the deictic <i>this</i> , instead of the name of the item makes this speaking exchange more context bounded. Speed rate is not actually such a prominent influential factor that determines speaking fluency at this EFL learning level. The perception of a medium speed rate, may be understood as a more reflective stance of students about the content and meanings they are attempting to share and convey.
7.	S13: No. I don't want [a] cake / I am really ≈ ≥ to lose weight ↓ /	- Mispronunciation of word: /lɒs/ instead of /lu:z/ -confusing sounds which did not make any phonetic sense.
Scene 2		
	The accompanying girl took the initiative in the EFL spoken exchange	Although there was a previous script of the conversation, which makes this role-play a

		simulated EFL spoken performance, there are specific turn stances that permit to notice how students grasped their roles incorporating EFL within them.
8.	→ S13: Do you want... • (+1'') do you want • (+1'') ...juice? ↑	looking around for a specific item to offer to her friend.
9.	S16: Yes.	Walking away from her friend. She stopped by another stand.
10.	→ S16: do you like a ≈ ? ↑	
11.	S10: Yes, / I like [it]/	She observed the item offered by her friend to understand what the word was.
12.	S10: OK /	(She closed this series of interventions, and walk to another place)
Scene 3	At the supermarket cashier – SC spoken exchanges on content rather than meaning	
13.	→ S11: Good morning madams / → Do you like to buy cookies? ↑	Use of wrong word: Like instead of want. This does not cause to interrupt either speaker's oral performance neither his speaking fluency.
14.	→ S16: Yes, [we do] / I like cookies. /	There is a mistake in the use of the verb like, instead of want. There is also omission of the auxiliary in the initial answer.
15.	→ S10: ≥ er how much do you want ?	Although there is an error in the use of the quantifier much instead of many, meaning and content are clear. Also, every single word in the utterance received the same stress. There is not any differentiation among levels of word stress. No syllabic notice.
16.	S13: I want a <i>bag</i> of cookies/ Thanks. /	Mispronunciation of BAG: /ˈbæg/ instead of /bæg/ However, speaking went on.
17.	S11: is this OK? ↑	Almost mechanized utterance, which permitted the student to focus his attention on content and context items, and exchanges.
18.	→ S16: Yes ↑ it's perfect. /	This is certain kind of adapted utterance. Whether it is common or uncommon in an anglo-saxon context, it is not the sheer matter here. The fact is that this is more an idiosyncratic expression that does not affect the student's speaking fluency. Rather, it eases the communicative event permitting both transact and interact within the same event. (See references)
19.	S11: ≥ er ... <i>Nothing</i> else? ↑	This is a common way to ask in Spanish: "Nada más?" We consider this a transferred expression from Spanish.

Appendix 5: Role-playing transcript 3

Interventions	At the hotel	Teacher's observations
1.	S13: Can I help you? ↑	
2.	S11: Yes,/ my name is Karen Muñoz / I have a ▽ reservation for two peoples	Peoples: Transfer from Spanish plural form for personas.
3.	S13: ok / yes one moment / Madan / I will ▽ check there / (it) is not <u>problem</u> ./ Fill (out) this ▽ <u>registration</u> card, please	
4.	S11 : Yes, / it is right/	
5.	S11: Is the <u>breakfast</u> included in the price? ↑	
6.	S13: Yes it is./ you can have either or Italy ▽ <u>breakfast</u> /	
7.	S13: Can you <u>select</u> the <u>breakfast</u> , please? ↑	
8.	S16: Yes. / I <u>like</u> the Italy <u>breakfast</u> , please ▽ /and good / I *be called at half past eight /	
9.	S13: How are you paying to stay?	
10.	S11: Three days	Inappropriate answer (?) question refers to the mode of pay, not to staying time at the hotel.
11.	S13: Here (is) your key.	
12.	S13: The room is two cero six,/ She will take ▽ your luggage up /How are you paying? ↑	
13.	S16: I will pay in the cash	
14.	S7: Thank you for choose(ing)./ My name is ▽ Valentina / and I will help you with your ▽ <u>luggage</u> up/	

Appendix 6: Teacher’s journal A

Teachers Journal Gerardo Molina						
Week	Activity	Objectives	Remarks	STUDENTS' ATTITUDES	TEACHER'S OBSERVATION	FURTHER REFLECTION
1	Presentation	To familiarize students with the role-playing	The students were taught about what a role-playing is and how they will work during the next classes, to clarify doubts about it, they watched some videos as examples from YouTube. We find very useful show the learners' videos of Spanish students and how they will developed it.	At the beginning, the students did not feel very comfortable, and it was possible to see in their faces that they were very worried. They asked about how they will be organized, what kind of language they will used, nevertheless when I explained that role-playing are a fun way to learn English, and when they watched the examples they reduce their anxiety. I explained the number of role-playing and the objective of each one. For the first role-playing, the students had previously study vocabulary of food and some expressions in that sense it could be easy to interpret their roles, but it was the first time when they put in practice their oral speaking abilities in a context. I organize groups of students, which was not well received by them	The students were expected the class. At the end, they solved more of the doubts...	Speaking it is not an easy task. Especially for beginners that normally express their thoughts with short sentences or by hand.
2	Fast food	Students will order fast food	Previously this role-playing as I told, the students now isolated vocabulary and some expressions, as a consequence they organized	The first group did not feel confident, first of all because of the video camera. This group showed their presentation only for the teacher, they organized their places. All the members were very worried and showed anxiety but as the role-playing was developed they feel	It is noticeable that the first group performing in the restaurant situation made more grammar mistakes (especially when asking questions) than the following ones. I realized that the ones who begin	The videos as well the dialogues help the students to reinforce the use of the language, but the most motivating for them was to watch the videos of English speakers talking Spanish, since

			<p>their dialogues according to their groups I did not had part in their own group partners selection. They read some books in order to find phrases and sentences for their role-playing</p>	<p>secure and their interaction was fluent having in mind their level.</p>	<p>presentations act as a model for the subsequent ones, in spite of this little inaccuracies, students convey meaning and get awareness of grammar issues which may help them improve learning skills</p>	<p>they were reflected in the exercise. They believed that they were the only one learning a second language and there was not difficulties for learners of a second language different from Spanish.</p>
3	Supermarket shopping	Students will use countable and uncountable nouns orally	<p>The first group did not feel confident, first of all because of the video camera. This group showed their presentation only for the teacher, they organized their places. All the members were very worried and showed anxiety but as the role-playing was developed they feel secure and their interaction was fluent having in mind their level.</p>	<p>The general idea is to give the opportunity of working by themselves, of course that we guide the students, in that sense the students create their own dialogues, but in this case most of the students follow the model, in consequence most of the students used the same lines, their feel more secure and their pronunciation was good having in mind the previous input given in the class.</p>	<p>Students did not manage figures, and the correct pronunciation of some words and expressions something that generates insecurity on them. They brought items and ads to decorate their spaces in order to have a better performance, something that showed motivation in their English class.</p>	<p>It is necessary to generate more input in terms of the use of numbers and their correspondence pronunciation.</p>

	<p>4 Visiting the doctor</p>	<p>Students will be able of expressing feelings and giving advice</p>	<p>In this stage, we considered that it was useful to give the students more input consequently first of all we gave them a list of useful words related to the topic, then we watched different kind of videos, and finally we repeated words, sentences to be sure that students can pronounce in a correct way.</p>	<p>In this occasion, the students want to work in pairs; some of them change their partners and did not show a great anxiety. They feel more relax in fact more of them used the dialogues given as an input. A t the end of the activity they showed a kind of satisfaction reflected in their faces. Most of the groups help each other to achieve the goal</p>	<p>Students enjoyed this role-play especially because they had good results with the previous ones. They had to ask some questions with a vocabulary that in spite of the most of the new expressions and vocabulary, they did it well.</p>	
	<p>5 Checking in a hotel.</p>	<p>Students will be able make inquiries in a specific context</p>	<p>At this stage the students have vocabulary and expressions that are enough to keep a conversation</p>	<p>Some students used most of the vocabulary that they have learnt in the other dialogues, and adapt the phrases to their new dialogues. Nevertheless some students have problems it the pronunciation of some of the new sentences and words, they work not only for their groups but for the other ones. Before their performance some groups asked about the pronunciation of the words</p>		<p>There are some aspects about culture and the place itself that students need to understand, previously their performance,</p>
	<p>6 Job interview.</p>	<p>Students will be able to give personal information using the modal can</p>	<p>In this role-playing the students showed security and they performance this role-playing</p>	<p>The students' made and excellent performance. They showed more security in their role-playing, their mistakes do not interfered in their communication. A group of them use</p>	<p>Some of the groups used grammatical structures advance for their levels, but they achieved the goal and the most important they understood</p>	

			naturally, most of the questions and answers were known by them, since they were related to personal information	some advance grammatical structures, but they produce them naturally. At the end of the exercise Ss said that it was not difficult.	the meaning of the message that could be confirmed with the students thanks to a series of questions.	
7	Shopping clothes.	Students will be able of refusing or accepting prices as well as asking for clothes	Students decorated the entire place, before their performance they talked among them in order to organize the space and bring the necessary elements. Their presentation in general were good, nevertheless they continuo with problems related with figures. Some students do no showed a good English command especially with questions.	This was the last role-playing. Students brought a lot of clothes and in general decoration for their role-playing. Before the performance they worked with their partners, I gave them input having in mind the previous strategies , but they do not feel confident in much of the cases it was because they did not manage figures, even in their own language.	Students had the initiative or use different vocabulary about clothes. Nevertheless, it is better to organize and limit the number of clothes, and in that way teach students the proper pronunciation of each word, since it causes interference at the moment of communicating their ideas.	
8	Assessment	Students will demonstrate their speaking abilities performing a role-playing randomly	The students already had input about language, and how to act in different contexts. Not all of them felt secure, this feeling	Students felt nervousness since they did not know what the role-playing they have to performance, but when they received their role, the anxiety got lower. Only the group that had to showed shopping clothes was not very confident, but at the	A basic rubric can be a good tool to evaluate to allow students to evaluate their partners and their own work.	A part of the process is the evaluation stage but it does not need to generate nervousness on the students it needs to be as a positive mirror in order to correct mistakes

		<p>appeared because they felt that it was an evaluation. They did not want to be the firsts to be assessed.</p>	<p>end, they got good results.</p>		<p>and improve the student's level.</p>
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Appendix 7 : Teacher’s journal B

Teachers Journal Gerardo Molina						
Week	Activity	Objectives	Remarks	STUDENTS' ATTITUDES	TEACHER'S OBSERVATION	FURTHER REFLECTION
	Presentatio n	To familiarize students with the role-playing	The students were taught about what a role-playing is and how they will work during the next classes, to clarify doubts about it; they watched some videos as examples from YouTube. We find very useful showing the learners videos of Spanish students and how they developed their role-playing.	At the beginning, the students did not feel very comfortable, and it was possible to see in their faces that they were very worried. They asked about how they will be organized, what kind of language they will use, nevertheless when I explained that role-playing are a fun way to learn English, and when they watched the examples they reduce their anxiety. I explained the number of role-playing and the objective of each one. For the first role-playing, the students had previously study vocabulary of food and some expressions in that sense it could be easy to interpret their roles, but it was the first time when they put in practice their oral speaking abilities in a context. I organize groups of students, which was not well received by them	The students were expected the class. At the end, they solved more of the doubts...	Speaking it is not an easy task. Especially for beginners that normally express their thoughts with short sentences or by hand.
	Fast food	Students will order fast food	Previously this role-playing as I told, the students now isolated vocabulary and some expressions, as a consequence they organized their dialogues according to their groups I	The first group did not feel confident, first of all because of the video camera. This group showed their presentation only for the teacher, they organized their places. All the members were very worried and showed anxiety, but as the role-playing was developed, they felt	It is noticeable that the first group performing in the restaurant situation made more grammar mistakes (especially when asking questions) than the following ones. I realized that the ones who begin	The videos as well the dialogues help the students to reinforce the use of the language, but the most motivating for them was to watch the videos of English speakers talking Spanish, since

			<p>did not had part in their own group partners selection. They read some books in order to find phrases and sentences for their role-playing</p>	<p>secure and their interaction was fluent having in mind their level.</p>	<p>presentations act as a model for the subsequent ones, in spite of this little inaccuracies, students convey meaning and get awareness of grammar issues which may help them improve learning skills</p>	<p>they were reflected in the exercise. They believed that they were the only one learning a second language and there was not difficulties for learners of a second language different from Spanish.</p>
	<p>Supermarket shopping</p>	<p>Students will use countable and uncountable nouns orally</p>	<p>The first group did not feel confident, first of all because of the video camera. This group showed their presentation only for the teacher, they organized their places. All the members were very worried and showed anxiety but as the role-playing was developed they feel secure and their interaction was fluent having in mind their level.</p>	<p>The general idea is to give the opportunity of working by themselves, of course that we guide the students, in that sense the students create their own dialogues, but in this case most of the students follow the model, in consequence most of the students used the same lines, their feel more secure and their pronunciation was good having in mind the previous input given in the class.</p>	<p>Students did not manage figures, and the correct pronunciation of some words and expressions something that generates insecurity on them. They brought items and ads to decorate their spaces in order to have a better performance, something that showed motivation in their English class.</p>	<p>It is necessary to generate more input in terms of the use of numbers and their correspondence pronunciation.</p>
	<p>Visiting the doctor</p>	<p>Students will be able of expressing feelings and giving advice</p>	<p>In this stage, we considered that it was useful to give the students more input. Consequently, we gave them a list of useful words related to the topic, then we watched different kind of videos, and finally we repeated words, sentences to be</p>	<p>In this occasion the students want to work in pairs, some of them changed their partners and did not show anxiety. They feel more relax in fact more of them used the dialogues given as an input. At the end of the activity they showed a kind of satisfaction reflected in their faces. Most of the groups help each other to achieve the goal</p>	<p>Students enjoyed this role-play especially because they had good results with the previous ones. They had to ask some questions with a vocabulary that in spite of the most of the new expressions and vocabulary, they did it well.</p>	

			sure that students can pronounce in a correct way.			
	Checking in a hotel.	Students will be able make inquiries in a specific context	At this stage the students have vocabulary and expressions that are enough to keep a conversation	Some students used most of the vocabulary that they have learnt in the other dialogues, and adapt the phrases to their new dialogues. Some students have problems in the pronunciation of some of the new sentences and words; they work not only for their groups but also for the other ones. Before their performance some groups asked about the pronunciation of certain words		There are some aspects about culture and the place itself that students need to understand, previously their performance,
	Job interview.	Students will be able to give personal information using the modal can	In this role-playing the students showed security and they performance this role-playing naturally, most of the questions and answers were known by them, since they were related to personal information	The students' made and excellent performance. They showed more security in their role-playing, their mistakes do not interfered in their communication. A group of them use some advance grammatical structures, but they produce them naturally. At the end of the exercise, Ss said that it was not difficult.	Some of the groups used grammatical structures advance for their levels, but they achieved the goal and the most important they understood the meaning of the message that could be confirmed with the students thanks to a series of questions.	
	Shopping clothes.	Students will be able of refusing or accepting prices as well as asking for clothes	Students decorated the entire place, before their performance they talked among them in order to organized the space and bring the necessary elements. Their presentation in	This was the last role-playing. Students brought a lot of clothes and in general decoration for their role-playing. Before the performance they worked with their partners, I gave them input having in mind the previous strategies , but they do not feel confident in much of	Students had the initiative or use different vocabulary about clothes. It is better to organize and limit the number of clothes, and in that way teach students the proper pronunciation of each word, since	

			<p>general were good, nevertheless they continuo with problems related with figures. Some students do no showed a good English command especially with questions.</p>	<p>the cases it was because they did not manage figures, even in their own language.</p>	<p>it causes interference at the moment of communicating their ideas.</p>	
	<p>Assessment</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate their speaking abilities performing a role-playing randomly</p>	<p>The students already had input about language, and knew how to act in different contexts. Not all of them felt secure, this feeling appeared because they felt that it was an evaluation. They did not want to be the firsts to be assessed.</p>	<p>Students felt nervousness since they did not know what role-playing they had to perform, but when they received their roles, the anxiety got lower. Only the group that had to shop clothes was not very confident, but at the end, they got good results.</p>	<p>A basic rubric can be a good tool to evaluate to allow students to evaluate their partners and their own work.</p>	<p>A part of the process is the evaluation stage but it does not need to generate nervousness on the students it needs to be as a positive mirror in order to correct mistakes and improve the student's level.</p>

Appendix 8: Consent letter 1

Bogotá, Abril de 2014

Señores

Padres de familia estudiantes grado 7°

Ciudad

Respetado señores:

En la actualidad yo Germán Enrique Valencia, docente del departamento de humanidades (inglés) vengo adelantando la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés con Énfasis en Ambientes de Aprendizaje Autónomo, ofrecido por la universidad de la Sabana en el marco del proyecto “Maestros empoderados con bienestar y mejor formación” liderado por la Secretaría de Educación del Distrito”.

Para lo cual debo adelantar el proceso de investigación titulado “Incremento de la comunicación oral por medio de juegos de rol”. Dicha investigación requiere aplicar diferentes instrumentos de evaluación (videos, encuestas, etc.), a los estudiantes de grado 7° 2014, manteniendo la confidencialidad de los participantes en dicha investigación y cuyos resultados serán dados a conocer al finalizar dicha investigación.

Por todo lo anterior solicito su valiosa colaboración en el desarrollo de dicho trabajo.

Atentamente,

Germán Enrique Valencia

Firma de aprobación

Appendix 9: Consent letter 2

Bogotá, Abril de 2014

Señor:

Jaime Forigua D.

Rector IED Gerardo Molina

Ciudad

Respetado señor:

En la actualidad yo Germán Enrique Valencia, docente del departamento de humanidades (inglés) vengo adelantando la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés con Énfasis en Ambientes de Aprendizaje Autónomo, ofrecido por la universidad de la Sabana en el marco del proyecto “Maestros empoderados con bienestar y mejor formación” liderado por la Secretaría de Educación del Distrito”.

Para lo cual debo adelantar el proceso de investigación titulado “Incremento de la comunicación oral por medio de juegos de rol”. Dicha investigación requiere aplicar diferentes instrumentos de evaluación (videos, encuestas, etc.), a los estudiantes de grado 7° 2014, manteniendo la confidencialidad de los participantes en dicha investigación y cuyos resultados serán dados a conocer al finalizar dicha investigación.

Por todo lo anterior solicito su valiosa colaboración en el desarrollo de dicho trabajo.

Atentamente,

Germán Enrique Valencia

Appendix 10: Lesson plan

Lesson Plan			
Target language Grammar Countable and uncountable nouns Functions Asking about products Time: 45 minutes		Materials 1. Videos about shopping. 2. A worksheet that contains a series of scramble questions and answers. 3. Series of scramble sentences for being organized by the students.	
Stage	Aim	Procedure	Interaction Patterns
Engagement	Introduce the topic	The teacher will propose a series of questions like: do you like shopping? / are there any shops in your neighborhood/ what kind of shops we can find?	T-Ss
Presentation	To teach vocabulary and structures that will be used in the lesson.	The teacher organizes groups of five and he gives a list of questions and answers then the students will complete the exercise by drawing arrows to the corresponding questions and answer.	S-S
Practice	To improve oral and reading skills	Students will be organized in groups of two and will be provided with a list of questions for a costumer and answers for shop-assistants.	S- S
Listening	To improve listening skills	The students will watch a video twice and carry out a fill in the gaps exercise	T-Ss
Practice	To practice useful expressions	The teacher will organize groups of two one of the students will be a costumer and the other one a shop-assistant. The costumer will have a list of items to buy and the shop assistant a set of phrases in order to sell the items.	S-S
Practice	To organize groups for their performances	Students will be organized in groups, in order to present their role-play	S-S
Practice	To perform	The students will perform their role- plays	S-S
Assessment	To evaluate students` performance	The students and the teacher will check their videos in order to evaluate each performance by means of a rubric.	S-S

Appendix 11: Pedagogical intervention timetable

Pedagogical Intervention: Language/communicative Issues					
Week	Activity	Function	Vocabulary	Grammar	Objectives
1	Presentation		Role-playing.		To familiarize students with the role- playing
2	Fast food	Ordering in a restaurant. Complaining.	Food Fast food.	Contracted questions form.	Students will order fast food using contracted questions.
3	Supermarket shopping.	Enquiring about products.	Food: fresh fish, bananas, eggs. Shopping: checkout receipt.	Countable and uncountable nouns.	Students will use countable and uncountable nouns orally.
4	Visiting the doctor.	Asking and saying how you feel.	Adjectives and adverbs. (illness)	Talking about abilities	Students will be able to express feelings and giving advice.
5	Checking into a hotel.	Making enquires.	Hotels: double room, suite and bathroom	Questions forms.	Students will be able make inquiries in a specific context.
6	Job interview.	Giving personal information. Describing personality.	Work: part-time, full-time, wage. Adjectives: Reliable, Friendly.	Can for ability Questions forms.	Students will be able to give personal information using the modal can.
7	Shopping clothes.	Asking and refusing clothes.	Clothes shop: prices, colors and clothes.	Questions with present continuous.	Students will be able to refuse or accept prices as well as to ask for clothes.
8	Assessment			Grammar	Students will demonstrate their speaking abilities performing a role-playing randomly.