

Theater as PBL and its implications in the development of spoken language

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Abstract

This document is qualitative research that intends to analyze the implications of implementing PBL in a eight-grade English class in the Guillermo Cano Isaza. This project was born after observing how students were learning alongside the National English Project and with the book *Way to Go* (Plan Nacional de Bilinguismo 2021) which allowed them to develop written skills, but it does not give many opportunities to work with the oral language. In order to complement the studies of this material a project based on a theatrical production is proposed with eight session so students could improve their oral skills while working in a cooperative environment.

Key words: PBL, theater in PBL, cooperative environment, oral communication, EFL (English as a Foreign Language).

Chapter 1. Contextualization and statement of the problem

This chapter aims to describe the context where the research was conducted, both local and school contexts, the population, the diagnosis, the rationale, the problem statement, the research questions, the objectives, both general and specific, and the hypotheses.

Local Context

Meissen neighborhood, where Guillermo Cano Isaza school can be found, is located in the south of Bogota, just on the borderline (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2012). This neighborhood started as an invasion settlement, meaning its population arrived and built the houses without any legal regulation. This population around the area is also recognized because of the lack of opportunities regarding education and occupational training. Normally, people are obligated to create neighborhoods like this because they could not access a regulated home (Franco, 2021).

Due to the continuous violence presented all around the country, people from different zones/departments have been arriving in the capital looking for a better lifestyle. Most of the time the population who arrived in Bogota could not access a home in the city because of the money or opportunities. Therefore, they decided to stay as closed as possible, forming a settlement right outside the capital. As these people had difficulties to housing medical and educational services being outside the city in an illegal neighborhood the government started programs to become the settlement into a legal and regulated neighborhood as part of Bogota city. (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2012)

School context

CEDID Guillermo Cano Isaza is a public school located in Ciudad Bolivar. It only has one branch in the south side of the city. The school was founded in 1987 as a government initiative to bring education to the most vulnerable population within the “Plan de Ciudad Bolivar” which was a plan to face the problems of this location. The institution offers pre-school, primary and secondary education during the morning, afternoon, and night shift. It also has an agreement with Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA) to develop different technologist programs alongside the common curriculum such as commerce, industrial design, and food processing. (CEDID Guillermo Cano Isaza, 2016, P.7) Most of the students belong to a low socioeconomic status (1 and 2) (CEDID Guillermo Cano Isaza, 2016) measured by strata which are a way to classify the status of a population based on the location of their homes. This means that some of the students may not be able to access some benefits that could help with their learning process.

The mission of the institution is to “form children, teenagers, and adults in the development of occupational competences with conceptual, artistic, scientific, and technologic tools. Preparing them to solve their personal, contextual and professional problems” (CEDID Guillermo Cano Isaza, 2016, P. 7) Moreover, its vision is to “maintain the institution as outstanding in regards of Technological high school in relation with SENA in Ciudad Bolivar, to be recognized because of its efficiency and its organization.” (CEDID Guillermo Cano Isaza, 2016, P. 7)

Participants

The participants in this research are eight grade students, they belong to group 803. There are 21 students in total, 12 boys and 9 girls. During the observations done in October of 2022 the group could be characterized as willing to participate in the activities motivated by a grade

system based on "ok". This system functions with the teacher signing the activities made in class with the word "ok" and counting how many each student got at the end of the semester.

It was also observed that in some classes the environment became more difficult regarding the relationship between partners or between teacher and students. This relationship can be owed to interpersonal issues such as teasing or disrespect, however this type of interaction was shown by less than half of the students who belong to the group.

The characterization survey applied (annex #1) showed that most of the students had access to the internet and a computer, giving them support to complete the activities. In contrast, the students did not have internet in homes, had the support of a family member or an adult friend to accomplish their homework. The previous was also observed during the development of the classes as students were able to fulfill the tasks given by the teacher that required connection. It is relevant to mention the changes the group had after they were promoted to eighth grade. It was noticeable how they started to take the class more seriously, the mocking between them and the class was almost completely left behind and their attention to the class increased.

Diagnosis

For the development of this project, it is relevant to mention, that during the observation English classes were developed in Spanish and the only interventions where the teacher or the students spoke in English were during the revision of the activities. For example, the teacher would read the sentence and the children would repeat it. However, the students produced no more than 2 sentences per class, being activities, such as completing the sentence or using determined words to build a new one. The reason for the teacher to use only Spanish during the sessions, she commented, that the listening level of the students was low and when she tried to

develop the class in the foreign language the participants did not understand, were reluctant and did not pay attention, which shows a distance relation in regards of spoken language.

Consequently, oral communication was identified as the main problem in the learning process of the students and in order to start with this research, it was important to identify the English level of the students taking a special focus on orality (Annex #2). The test was divided into two parts, the first one was a written exercise where they had to describe their experiences, expectations, and feelings about English learning placing an emphasis on orality (class participation, speaking in English, and participation in theatrical productions).

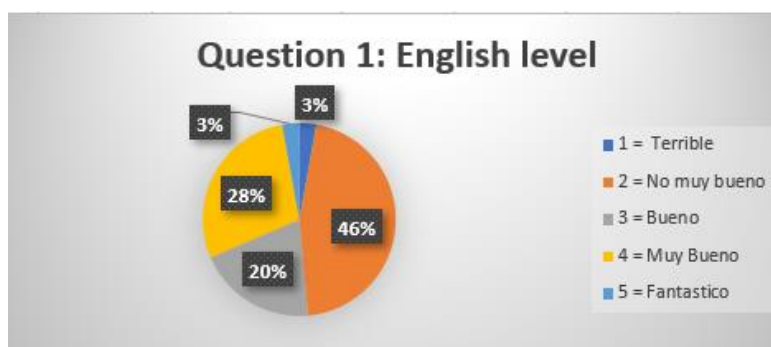


Chart #1 Showing question #1 of initial survey

The second part was created to explore and to get familiarized with their speaking level. This part was designed as a short roleplay (Annex #4) where their abilities to recognize the parts of a small conversation and to represent it in front of their classmates were going to be used. The roleplay is called “on one condition” and pretends to give the students a known environment where two people are trying to decide what to do on their date. (Annex 4)

From the diagnosis it could be seen that most students have inconvenient pronouncing some specific sounds from English language such as open and closed vowels, sh, ch, y, s as a starting

letter and the sound of letter T. In contrast, during the observation phase and through field notes organized in a chart (Annex 3) it was recognized an understanding of basic English structures as present simple, present continuous, and adjectives (comparatives and superlatives). Also, the students showed compromise and excitement with their process.

The expected result of this project is to take the knowledge they already have on the written level and apply it to the oral field, being able to recognize the new sounds and how they affect the meaning and intention of a speech.

Rationale

In this section, the reasons for this research to be relevant are highlighted, recognizing the implications inside students' context, the role this present research will play in their learning process, and why PBL and theater were selected to work on pronunciation.

First, this research has been done to deepen the development of spoken language as it is relevant to complement students' formation (considering that their formation has been more grammatical, with low use of speaking) in a foreign language and to relate with students' social and globalized context. Considering oral language as the "Most important raw material in understanding language in its social context" (McCarthy, P. 21), activities that involve interaction can help students develop a cultural understanding of English-speaking countries' culture, facilitating the acquisition of the English language.

Second, as it was a necessity to promote interaction between the students, the pedagogical approach used to develop this action research was Project Based Learning. PBL allows students to rapidly engage with the proposed project by giving them the opportunity to take ownership of their learning process, improving not only their engagement but also their motivation. Moreover,

PBL allows interdisciplinarity, which may significantly impact students' English learning process by giving them a wider set of abilities and understandings. In this research, a mix from two separate fields: English as a foreign language and dramatic arts, were implemented.

The reason to join dramatic arts in the English teaching process is because theater is also a communicative act that allows sharing of knowledge, “el acto teatral es, ante todo, un acto de comunicación, mediante el cual un grupo de personas comparte una determinada realidad en un momento dado del espacio y del tiempo” (Núñez y Navarro, 2007, P.3). Under these parameters, theater as PBL can take advantage of the shared context to improve communication. Furthermore, it exposes the students to current and real sociocultural problems. Representing different communities, problems or reality can help children develop empathy as a collateral benefit, allowing personal and group growth.

In summary, it was seen through the diagnosis that the 803 group needed to practice the acquired knowledge in the EFL classroom by using speaking abilities. That is why a new set of activities is proposed to be worked on within this group using PBL and theater as both components have advantages that can implicate changes in the group's learning process such as an engagement and motivation propulsor, enhancement of oral communication, a confidence improvement, and an offer of a safe space to practice a foreign language.

Problem statement

After the observations, it was found that children did not practice the oral communication very often. In a regular class they follow the guidelines of the National English Program but most of the activities were related to writing and reading. Since students were not working in an integral development of English it was recognized the importance of complementing their

learning process. Considering that one of the main objectives of the school is to prepare the students for occupational competences “El colegio forma niños, jóvenes y adultos en desarrollo de competencias laborales, con herramientas conceptuales, artísticas, científicas, tecnológicas y axiológicas, preparándolos para solucionar sus problemas personales, de su entorno social, profesional y laboral” (CEDID Guillermo Cano Izasa, 2016, P. 6) it becomes relevant to complement this preparation with the development of oral communication, making sure that they will be able to express themselves in a foreign language and also considering that improving communication in a foreign language will also give them tools to work on their native language communication, contributing to the development of their communication skills and knowledge in general. Working on oral communication becomes important to create relevant relations inside their social environment.

As a solution for the previously mentioned, a theatrical production through Project- Based learning is proposed. In this way students will be able to work in a cooperative environment and to get in touch with the spoken language in a way that makes them feel connected, comfortable, and motivated.

Research question

What are the implications of role plays as PBL for the improvement of the oral communication in EFL of 8th grade students at Guillermo Cano Isaza school?

General objective

To analyze the consequences of applying theater as PBL for the improvement of the oral skills in an EFL classroom.

Specific objectives

- To identify different learning and teaching strategies that could be applied to an EFL classroom in order to improve students' oral communication.
- To examine the changes regarding orality after the application of the project.
- To motivate speaking interactions through the theater/roleplay technique.
- To identify students' perception and motivation in regards of EFL learning

Hypothesis:

After the proposal is applied the students from Guillermo Cano Isaza 803 will be able to speak more fluently with a better recognition of the sound of English phonemes. Also, they will be able to recognize everyday language related to their context.

Chapter 2. Literature review and Theoretical framework

In this chapter there is a compilation of previous studies that have been made around the topics of this research and the theoretical framework giving the theoretical guidelines for this document.

Literature review

In 2021 a study called "Theater as a safe environment to start productive skills development in an EFL classroom" (Aguirre, Palacios, Ramos, 2021) was carried out by students of the Pedagogical and Technological University of Colombia. This research was done in a High School located in Tunja, Colombia. The proposal aimed to develop productive skills alongside the theater with eleven graders by creating a safe environment for them to learn. Even though the

methodology was similar to the one in the present study, the focus on providing an anxiety-free environment differs from this research which aims to develop oral skills through a real life-similar production. In addition, the research final acting production carried out by the students was completely selected by the researchers and without considering the social reality of the participants. The present study aims to allow participation from the students for the construction of the final project from the beginning. In this way students can be more involved in the process, gaining engagement and self-confidence.

The next study “Fostering Oral Communication through Project Work and Situated Learning” was carried out in National Pedagogical University in 2018. This research presented the PBL as a demanding project that allowed students to improve their oral communication while processing information (Corredor, 2018). While Corredor’s project was developed with the central topic “Looking after our friends, the animals” (Corredor, 2018, P.35). The final project of this present research will be focused on theater as a way to make learning an interdisciplinary process. The situated learning considered in Corredor’s research also shows the importance of giving the students a context where they can test their new knowledge, ensuring that they will be able to recognize the situations where they can use it and enhance their learning of a topic, this characteristic will be seen during the presentation of the play, where students will be able to recognize the language and vocabulary inside a conversation.

Lastly "A different type of success: teaching important life skills through project-based learning" was a study made in 2009, in Minnesota, United States. This research analyzed how PBL can improve important life skills, where students could develop specific abilities and behaviors that could be helpful for their whole life (Wurdinger, Rudolph, 2009). As this present research aims to motivate speaking interactions it becomes relevant to signal speaking as an

important life skill in their mother language or a foreign one, a skill that can give them tools for all interactions they have from now on and that will allow them to be better understood and to be listened.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, the main concepts on which this research was based are reviewed; Theater in education, oral communication and cooperative environment are defined, as all compose the research theoretical and pedagogical framework. These concepts are the basis from where the pedagogical design took place for working on students' oral communication skills, moreover, they are the theoretical standpoint of the research and provides the practical applications for it.

Theater in Education

In order to be able to specify a relation between theater and education it is relevant to, in the first place, to describe how theater is understood. "Theater is perhaps the one human activity where we can see most clearly the mimetic quality of social interaction" (Hoëm, 1999, P.247) this performance is usually done to represent different types of situations that are in some way inspired on real life, becoming important when learning a foreign language and its uses inside a real context.

Theater in education has been applied lately in the schools in order to offer a more complete system of education and formation for the students "The event and the play are based on radically different understandings of what human beings are and what they have created" (Bond

& Nicholson, 2017, P. 11) This means that theater will not only allow us to learn about language and arts but also to conform a solid idea of what humans are and its social interactions.

Theater can be applied in education as a way to create a mix between scientific or academic subjects and arts, being more truthful to human nature, allowing an exploration of full development inside of human reality, and breaking the stereotypes of having just one interest or ability, it also becomes a way for students to be able to explore and experiment different types of communicative situations using a foreign language inside a controlled environment, situations that could happen on their personal lives can be practiced beforehand.

Oral communication

When working with communication it is relevant to specify how it is understood. Considering that this project was developed inside a classroom where the students are constantly creating interpersonal relations both in Spanish and in English, for the purpose of the study, communication is defined “as the process of message transaction between people to create and sustain shared meaning” (West & Turner, 2010, P. 10). Giving value to the meaning of the relations they have created already being classmates and friends.

Oral communication contains a wide range of aspects, the research into it “is subdivided at a minimum into the following aspects:

- Verbal, non verbal
- Syntactic, semantic, pragmatic ad sound levels of analysis
- Different language and cultures” (Quasthoff, 2011, P.4)

This gives oral communication a much bigger spectrum and understanding all the different layers oral communication can have also makes communication easier and more

useful, making sure that the message that was intended to be sent is the same message that is received.

Being oral communication the main topic to work on during the interventions, it is significant to understand why students are not feeling comfortable inside an environment where they are supposed to feel safe. West & Turner expose that “The extent to which people exhibit anxiety about speaking to others is called communication apprehension... people with communication apprehension can go to great lengths to avoid communication situations because communicating can make them feel shy, embarrassed and tense” (2010, P. 4). Therefore, this research aims to use theater as a tool to decrease students' communication apprehension as it provides a safe place where students can feel they are able to express themselves without being judged.

Cooperative environment

A cooperative environment helps students work in groups by creating an environment of shared knowledge. For PBL (Project Based Learning, the chosen pedagogical approach for this proposal, see chapter 3) development the creation of work groups is mandatory as “Group members are made interdependent through common goals. For interdependence to exist there must be more than one person or entity involved and the people or entities must impact each other”. (Johnson & Johnson, 2005, P. 288). Having one common goal gives students a reason to work together, being able to create an impact on each other, getting to know and to appreciate their different abilities. Considering that a cooperative environment is a must for PBL development it will be seen throughout the implementation of this research.

Having a cooperative environment inside the classroom also fosters Cooperative learning, which is understood by Johnson, D. & Johnson R. (2017) as the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning, in this case students can create a positive interdependence to learn and to motivate each other because one student can feel they can reach a goal if another student does it. Also, having a group with different types of abilities and skills enhances the development of students with more difficulties as they can rely on their partners to help them, explain to them and practice together. The cooperative environment is present in this research because of the groups formed to achieve the final goal, students with more difficulties will have the opportunity to have academic growth alongside their peers.

Chapter 3. Research design

In this section, the basis of the research design is addressed. Beginning with the research paradigm and type, the subsequent points provide a more detailed insight into the creation of various data collection tools and methods.

Research Paradigm

The present research is driven by a qualitative paradigm because of its subjective and participant-centered nature. Qualitative research is defined as “a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the research process” (Hammersley, 2012, P.12) Considering Hammersley's definition, this present research can be considered qualitative on a

first moment basis being a social inquiry and also to emphasize in the subjectivity of the researcher and the participants.

Type of research

This research enters to the Action-research category as it is a way to explore teacher practices inside a real classroom, this type of research promotes “personal and professional development that enables practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work, and to create their own theories of practice.” (McNiff, Whitehead, 2012, P.9). Because of this methodology the teacher to be can become more aware of their practice and be present in the development of new strategies.

Data collection Instruments

In order to develop this study and to gather the data needed to answer the research question and to accomplish the main objective, six instruments were designed. These instruments are described below.

1. Survey: Two surveys were conducted to the students at the beginning of the research (annex #1 and annex #2), considering that surveys are where “Information is collected by means of standardized procedures so that every individual is asked the same questions... not to describe the particular individuals who, by chance, are part of the sample but to obtain a composite profile of the population”. (Scheuren, 2004, P.9). These were applied to find information about their history with the English language and to find more information about their background, making a general profile of the group’s trajectory inside EFL learning.

2. Diagnosis- Roleplay: Two roleplays were conducted, the first one was done at the beginning of the research (annex# 4) to get to know the students' English level in regards to oral communication and expression around their partners. The second one was done at the end of the research alongside the script that had been worked on since the first intervention, to see if there were any changes in comparison. This instrument was relevant because of its capacity to show student's real abilities and knowledge, considering that it can be used as a showcase for talents and skills.

3. Voice recordings: Voice recordings were done during the third and fourth interventions to have more details about the learning process of the students. This instrument allowed a way to go back through their process and opened the gate to a more detailed analysis of students' process as it is a tool that can allow the researcher to carefully go through the while intervention as many times as needed.

4. Video recordings: Video recordings were done on the last session to analyze the change between the roleplays done exploring the non-verbal expressions students could show. Even if the body expression was not the final objective of this research, it is relevant, as mentioned before, for students to show confidence through non-verbal communication and to be able to interpret a scenario inside the theater activities. Here is where the video recordings contributed, as they allowed repetition and a careful analysis of the messages they were sending through their body.

5. Teacher's diary: This diary was done to highlight moments that could become more important during analysis and to try to add as many details as possible of the situations and interactions that were happening during each intervention. In order to maintain fidelity to the

real-life situations that happened during interventions it is backed up with real-time notes (notetaking) of the classes.

6. Field diary: This diary contains information about each session organized in the most important categories, to facilitate the obtaining and reading of the information. It was relevant to the research as it allowed to highlight the most important details of every intervention and it permitted an easy and fast way to recover the information for the analysis section. The field diary contributed to a complete overview of the classes signaling the elements that were directly related to the research and the elements that at first could seem external to the project but in the end were key to understanding the implications of it.

Ethical considerations

Considering that this research was carried out alongside participants under the age of 18 (considered under age by Colombian law), it is important to highlight that they and their legal guardians were informed about the participation in this process and they all signed an informed consent stating that all the information gathered is and will be used for academic purpose only. Also, in order to protect students' privacy neither of their identities or personal information will be revealed.

Chapter 4. Pedagogical proposal

This section aims to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the practical and theoretical approach developed for the implementation of this research, which includes Language Vision, Learning Vision, and Classroom Vision. Furthermore, in the instructional design section,

a detailed examination of the pedagogical approach is conducted, offering an in-depth description of the concepts and materials used in the study.

Vision of Language

For the development of this research language can be seen from two different but complementary perspectives, pragmatic and sociocultural, considering that language is used to communicate specific situations inside a specific scenario, in this case, the classroom.

The first perspective found its basis in pragmatics, which is defined as “the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding” (Levinson, 1983, P.21). This definition shows the importance of context for language understanding and how these relations cannot be ignored when talking about meaning. In the classroom it can be seen when students are trying to express themselves and learning a new language in order to make themselves understood.

The second perspective is related to how students are developing a second language in a shared environment alongside their peers, “Vygotsky proposed that the key to internalization resides in the uniquely human capacity to imitate the intentional activity of other humans.” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p.203) The imitation of their partners allows students to learn from every participation they have as activities are aimed at out loud reading so students can listen to their partners and repeat the sounds.

Having in mind the previous, the present research study language approach emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between language and context in language acquisition and comprehension. It also aims to recognize that language acquisition is not solely about rules and vocabulary but is profoundly shaped by both the context in which it's used and social

interactions, underscoring the dynamic interplay between language and its environment in the educational context.

Vision of Learning

In regards of the learning vision for the present research, it is based on the social constructivism approach, this means that students can learn from their peers, and theater is a powerful tool as it creates an environment where young learners can support each other when practicing. In addition, the relation between classmates is not the only one present inside the classes, students are also able to create a relationship with the teachers or mentors inside their learning environment. The combination of both types of support to the learner streamlines their learning process.

Vision of the classroom

For this research the classroom is seen as an experiential learning classroom, where learning by doing is one of the principal characteristics that were considered in the development of the pedagogical proposal. “The experiential educator seeks to place the student in a setting which forces appropriate problem-solving behavior” (Kraft, 1990, P.183). This characteristic is considered as the classroom during this project was aimed to fulfill the role of a safe and practical environment, where students could work together to solve the principal activity which was creating a role-play.

Project Based Learning (PBL)

After observing difficulties regarding the oral language, especially when students tried to communicate using sounds that are not used in Spanish, it was necessary the implementation of a pedagogical approach that focuses on the meaning construction, participation and feedback.

Therefore, with the aim of fostering oral communication while promoting a cooperative environment, Project *Based Learning*, from now PBL, was chosen and is described below.

As teachers we are used to working with projects inside the classroom but not all of them can be considered as Project Based Learning as PBL is an approach with defined strategies and objectives. According to Lamer, Mergendoller and Boss (2015) Project based learning cannot be confused with only “doing a project” as for implementing a successful PBL some specific characteristics must be considered.

As noted in Blumenfeld et al., 1991; Krajcik et al., 1994; Krajcik, Czerniak, and Berger, 2002, as quoted in Blumenfeld and Krajcik 2006, PBL has specific guidelines, and five steps should be contemplated when implementing a PBL. It is important to highlight that for the purpose of this study, the following steps were conducted. First, the implementation phase should start with a driving question or a problem to be solved, which in this case was proposed as the creation of a theater show guided by the teacher. The second step entails motivating students to participate in situated inquiry, allowing them to explore the driving question. The third step promotes a collaborative environment in which students can work together to find solutions to the driving question, mirroring complex social situations. The fourth step involves scaffolding students with learning technologies and support from their peers during the inquiry process, enabling them to engage in activities that may typically be beyond their reach. Finally, the last step requires students to create a tangible product that addresses the driving question, representing the learning process they experienced in the classroom. All these steps were carried out during the pedagogical implementation and are addressed more in detail in the following sections.

Another advantage of PBL is that it allows students to be part of a real situation where "deep understanding occurs when a learner actively constructs meaning based on his or her experience

and interaction in the world" (Blumenfeld et al., 2000, P. 218). This interaction enables students to create meaningful learning that equips them to face real-world challenges, which also allow them to have a more active role in their learning process making it more significant as it becomes a contextualized experience where they confront real-life problems with the meaningful knowledge they acquired during the implementation.

Instructional design

In this section the phases and the lessons applied to develop the research are presented. Five phases are planned according to the different topics that had to be reviewed to create the project, and the lessons are shown according to the class time that was dedicated to fulfil the project.

Phase One

For this proposal, the first step was to apply the diagnosis in order to discover information about students' reality and production preferences (such as favorite movies). From this phase, they started a recognition of the vocabulary related to theater and a recognition of the reality they would like to represent.

Phase Two

The second part was focused on theatrical productions, during this phase students formed five-students' groups and they were given the option to represent a theater play proposed by the teacher, considering the likes and interests they wrote in the diagnosis and their English level, in the meantime, classes were focused on giving general elements they needed to form their play

such as getting to know what is a scrip and which are its parts, how to talk in front of people and be heard and how to represent different emotions.

Phase Three

On this phase students had time to realize guided practice. The time of the class was divided into the number of groups so everyone can have supported practice. During this time of practice teacher researcher went group by group listening to the conversation they had prepared and made the respective corrections. Also, general activities were made to ensure good comprehension of the language and guided practice along with the teacher.

Phase Four

This phase is focused on individual work groups. Each work group will be in charge of preparing their own production. During this phase, practice was vital to memorize all the dialogs while activities were done inside the classroom.

Phase Five

For the final phase students presented all the work they were developing during the implementation of this research. The product was also presented to an audience in accordance with PBL final product and Theater nature.

Chronogram/ Time Chart

The five phases were developed over five weeks of the school calendar dedicated to the implementation of this present project, which gave a week for each phase planned. In the next chart, the distribution, principal objectives, skills, and activities can be found for each phase.

<i>Guillermo Cano Isaza School- Chronogram 2023</i>				
<i>Living Through Theater- Presented by: Ximena Torres alongside 703/803</i>				
Week / phase / dates	Activity	Objective	Skills	Vocabulary
1st Week. Phase One: February 27th- March 3rd	Apply the diagnosis and have small talk with students	To find out about their likes and shared history	Auto- recognition, Speaking	Movies, Theater, Play, Characters, actors
2nd Week. Phase Two: March 6th - 10th	Select work groups, select desired play and work on general elements	To give a slow start to the project giving the students time to get familiarized with the theater	Listening, Speaking, reading	Costume, Plot, Theme, Problem, Storyteller
3rd Week. Phase Three: March 13th- 17th	Guided practice	To slowly approach to the final presentation, working on pronunciation and confidence alongside small activities that allowed students to talk in front of their partners little by little	Speaking, reading, writing	Specific Vocabulary regarding their theatrical play
4th Week. Phase Four: March 20th- 24th	Individual work and construction of props	To build the scenario that will be used for the final presentation	Speaking, reading, writing	Scenography, props, set, backstage, mood

		and to work on confidence by practicing.		
5th Week. Phase Five: March 27th to 31st	Final Presentation	To present the final product of the last month hard work. In front of an audience	Speaking	Stage, Choreography, public, make up, curtain

Chart 2 Time Chart

Individual sessions

The classes were developed on eleven interventions divided into one diagnosis and nine class sessions, each one with a specific activity and a specific objective shown on the next chart.

Date	Lesson Number	Activity	Objective
March 6th and 9th	0: Diagnosis	Short presentation with the script "on one condition"	To get to know the abilities of the students in regards of oral communication
March 13th	1: The serpent about phonemes	Dynamic of the serpent with words using the selected phonemes	To practice the pronunciation of the selected phonemes
March 29th	2: Recognizing moods and attitudes	Charades game where student by students interpret lines of the script	To practice the expression of attitudes and the lines of the script
April 12th	3: Recognizing parts of the script	Activity where the script would be colored depending on its parts	To get to know the parts of the script and how they work
April 19th	4: Recognizing the pronunciation	Group activity where students read out loud the script line by line	To practice reading a complete sentence with good voice levels
April 26th	5: Creating the play	Group activity to decide the elements the play should have	To start thinking the play as a reality

May 10th	6: Tongue Twister	Selecting phonemes from the script to create a tongue twister	To practice pronunciation of the phonemes in different contexts
May 15th	7: Drawing Phonemes	Group activity where phonemes were assigned to each group, and they must draw and explain it	To recognize how phonemes are formed inside the speaking apparatus
May 17th	8: Practice Round	Each group of students had the opportunity to practice the presentation and receive feedback	To give the students more confidence for the final presentation
May 30th	9: Final presentation	Class dedicated to show the final presentations and to give feedback	To demonstrate the abilities practiced during the research

Chart 3 individual sessions

Chapter 5. Data Analysis

In this chapter, the definition of the data analysis approach used in the present research is presented as well as the steps taken to categorize the data collected. Moreover, the reflections made by the teacher researcher and conclusions derived from the data analysis conducted.

First, to provide the readers with the analysis of the information collected during the implementation, it is necessary to underline the bases of the data analysis approach used to conduct the present research, the Grounded Theory, from now GT. As Oktay argues, GT it is a method “designed to create theories that were empirically derived from real-world situations” (2012, P.4) allowing a deep analysis of the situations that happened inside the classroom such as reactions and results to the activities proposed.

According to Charmaz (2014), Grounded theory is a flexible strategy that allows the creation of an abstract understanding of the recollected data, serving as a way to learn and understand the phenomena studied. Certainly, this method takes on great importance as it

responds to the specific needs of the research, allowing an analysis that conducts the understanding of the processes and relations inside the classroom.

The step by step of the method is usually not linear according to Charmaz (2014), who has taken the original method from Strauss (1967) to apply it and to describe it in her own book “Constructing grounded theory”. The method can be sometimes de-organized as it allows the analyst to “jump” between phases of analysis depending on the ideas the researcher might get or connections that might be done during the revision process (Charmaz, 2014). The phases are described with the next figure:

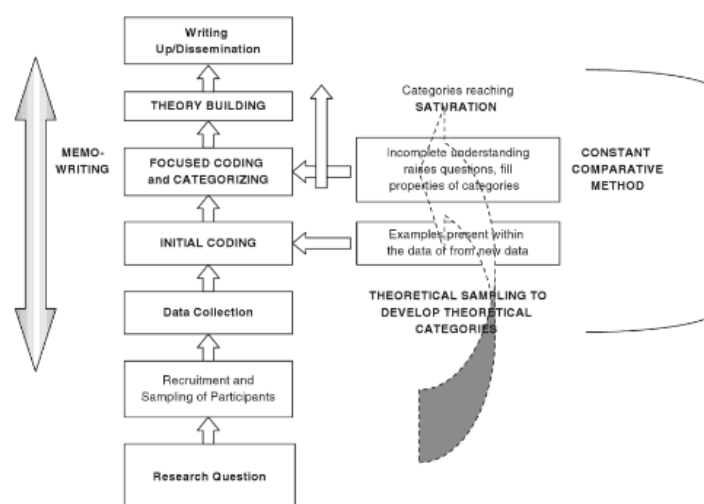


Figure 1.1 Sections of the grounded theory, taken from “Constructing grounded theory” by Kathy Charmaz (P. 18)

5.1 Coding

Following the guidelines given by GT, coding is a procedure that must be done after the data collection. Coding is described in Thornberg & Charmaz (2014) as a process of categorizing and labeling data, which is divided into two moments; initial coding and theoretical coding. Both of the processes are described below.

The first part: initial coding, being a comparative between data, looking for questions and answers the data itself can provide such as *how is this developed or how participants feel?* This comparison can be done instrument by instrument, line by line or incident by incident looking for categories that fit along with the data and not forcing data into categories. For the present research the categories found during the documental revision were organized in a chart with a color code:

Categories	Sub-categories	Diagnosis (March 6th and 9th)	March 13th	March 29th	April 12th	April 19th	April 26th	May 10th	May 15th	May 17th	Final presentation (May 30th)
Communication EFL	Phonology	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
	Body expression	Red	Grey	Green	Grey	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
	L. Comprehension	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
	Vocabulary	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
Cooperative environment	Respect	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
	Attention	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
	Confidence	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
Learning and teaching strategies	Creation	Grey	Grey	Green	Yellow	Grey	Green	Green	Green	Grey	Green
	Group work	Yellow	Grey	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Grey	Green
Motivation	Participation	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
	Attitude	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green

Figure 2. Categories chart

On the left column the categories *Communication in EFL*, *Cooperative environment*, *Learning and teaching strategies* and *Motivation* can be found in relation of every intervention made during the implementation phase starting on the diagnosis and ending with the final presentation: the presentation of a piece of a scene belonging to “The spy game” the principal theater play that was used for the implementation.

The color code was selected to facilitate the visual recognition of how the categories were seen in each class. In this chart, green color represents when the students demonstrated a higher level of the ability the category demands, yellow color being when students used the ability with some difficulties, the red color for the classes where students were expected to demonstrate such abilities and did not do it and the grey was used for the categories that were not present during

the intervention. As an example, if students were expected to read a sentence using the negative on present simple with good pronunciation, *creativity* would be in grey as they did not need to create any sentence, just read it. And if they did not respect the rules of pronunciation for the word “did” the subcategory *phonology* would be in red.

After initial coding was made, the Theoretical coding was conducted. According to Thornberg & Charmaz (2014) the codes and the categories are analyzed together in order to create a hypothesis. There are also ideas and lenses imported from outside to the research creating a coherent and enriched theory.

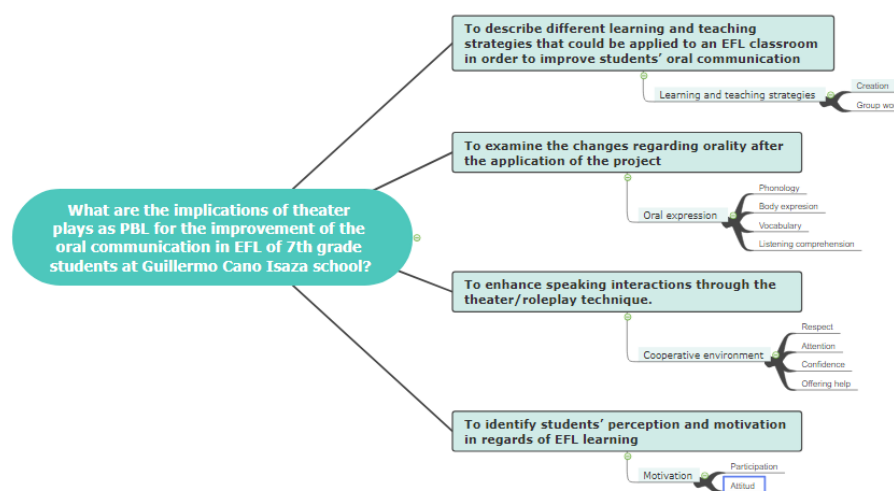


Figure 3. Theoretical coding map

In figure 3, the categories that were defined during initial coding are related to each other to answer the main concerns of the research, and finally to give an answer to the problem question using all the data that could be gathered from the present proposal.

5.3 First Category: Communication in EFL

The first category is aligned with the language vision and is related to the main context where the research was implemented. Since the beginning of the research process, the study was aimed to be developed inside an English classroom in a school located in Bogota, Colombia. Inside this specific context English is seen as a foreign language that needs to be strengthened as a competence through primary and high school.

Even though the research is directed to developing oral communication it cannot be seen as just speaking or just listening. As it was described in the theoretical framework, Oral communication “the ability to transmit ideas from your brain to either one person or a group of people.” (Alpha, 2019, P.1) And this transmission of ideas is done through different paths. During the implementation phase it was noticeable that with every practice students were naturally expressing their *listening comprehension, body expression, vocabulary* and *phonology*.

These four categories were areas of improvement for all students during the project and they were enhanced in a different way in each class, showing what type of activities were better to improve communication in EFL for the eighth-graders of the Colegio Guillermo Cano Isaza and how the group was evolving throughout the classes.

5.3.1 Subcategory: Phonology

Phonology was selected as a subcategory because of its importance when communicating with other people, and for the purpose of this research, as is considered by the University of Sheffield Center of linguistic research as “the study of the categorical organization of speech sounds in languages; how speech sounds are organized in the mind and used to convey meaning”

(Prize, 2022, P.1) It was because of the importance of Phonology for the creation and understanding of meaning that all the lessons contained at least a small part of speaking practice.

Trying to implement the complete phonetic alphabet to the classroom would be a goal set too far away to be reach highlighting that the lessons to be applied were only nine and the time would not be enough to practice it all and therefore to significantly learn it. That is why some phonemes were selected to be emphasized during class time. The selection of the phonemes was done after seeing the first presentation of the students, where most of them had difficulties (pauses, several tries on one word, confusion of the sound they must use, omission of the sound) with the same words of the script (the spy game) such as: *weekend, thinking, could, would, hadn't, vegetarian, meat* as seen on the next image:

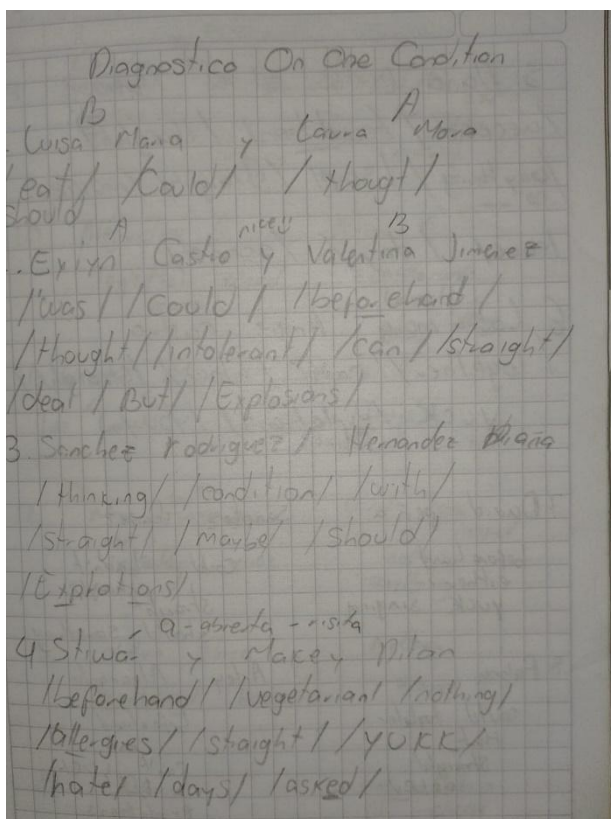


Image #1. Photograph of the teacher's notes during the diagnosis

In image #1 it can be evidenced some of the flaws made by the groups that participated in the diagnosis. Underneath, the words that they had more difficulties with. These words have the vowels (short and long form) *ih*, *sh*, *y* and *h* sound in common. Therefore, the phonemes to be worked on the lessons were selected, class after class they had to practice and remember these specific sounds through continuous practice and read aloud sessions. Also, during some classes the main topic was the phonemes mentioned previously so they could be more familiarized.

As an example of the activities mentioned above, on May 10th students had to form groups to find assigned phonemes inside the script (Image #2) and to create a tongue twister using the words found to respect repetition of phonemes that happen inside it (image #3).

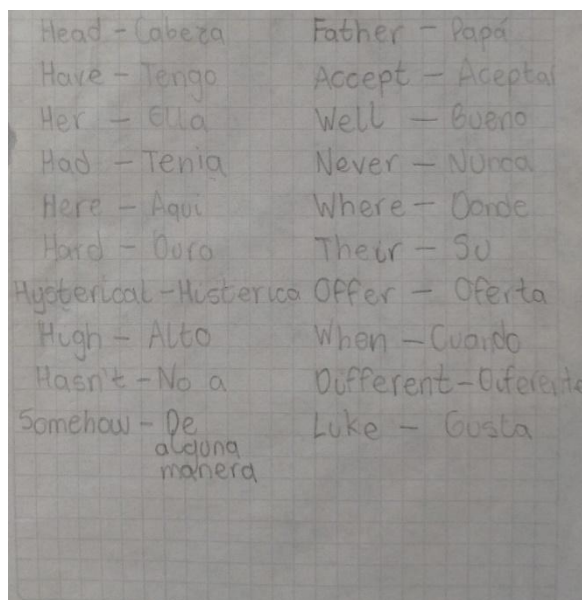


Image # 2 Artifact of the selection of words

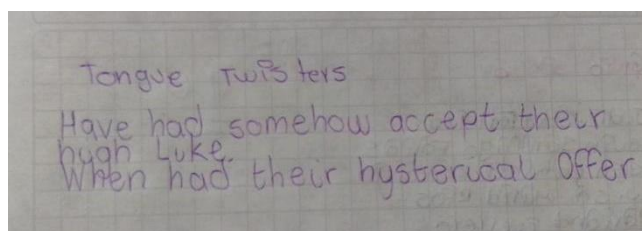


Image #3 Artifact of the tongue twister created by students

The constant use of each phoneme and the repetition of the same script in all classes gave as a result, students who were able to perform the final script with less difficulties regarding phonemes pronunciation, they were capable of using / h/ and / k/ phoneme, being able to overcome the initial difficulties to recognize the uses of these phonemes in English. However, some of them still had confusion between the long and short vowels, the use of /dʒ/ instead of /j/ when reading the “y”, and the use of /t/ instead of /θ/ when reading the “th”. It is also relevant to mention that the pauses and the confusion were noticeably less than during the diagnosis. In the videos recorded (annex #5) on the final presentation can be seen that even though they were nervous as they were reading at a slow rhythm, they were able to keep reading out loud without asking for clarification about how to pronounce the words nor for validation.

5.3.2 Subcategory: Body expression

When talking about communication it cannot only be considered oral speech, and it is because every action that we perform transmits information to the people around us. For this reason, in this research Body expressions became a milestone that relates both oral communication and theater techniques such as role play and script reading. It was seen during the diagnosis that the body expression of the students was transmitting in-depth information about their feelings; they began to hide, to try to be as small as possible, to find support on the wall, or on a chair and even avoided eye contact.

Bearing in mind that theatre, and specifically role play, is one of the pillars of this research and that this art (unlike other practices such as radio or narration) requires visual

components to fully tell the story which reinforces the need to also work Body expression in the students. That is why the lesson on March 29th was focused on expressing moods and attitudes, especially the ones that appeared on the script. Alongside the students a list of attitudes was created, the teacher was reading the lines to the students so they could add the attitude they felt was related to the lines (image #4).

Excited	I must insist that you let me go at once before I call the police.	It melted the instant you placed it in your teacup
Dramatic		it looks like you need a little more training.
Amused	It's only been a few years since I went there myself.	
Laughing	You used to be such a good kid! What's happened to you?	Oh, this isn't the end, Mrs McQueen. Do you hear me? This isn't the end.
Angry		You can't drink...My spoon just disappeared.
Calm	You expelled me, that's what happened	
Enraged	And now I go by the name Number Two	
Confused		
Sly/ mischievous	I'm going to take your school down.	
Yelling	You're making a mistake, Louise	
	Can't we talk about this over a nice cup of tea?	

Image #4 List of attitudes and lines of the script

After having the list an activity was done where all the students, one by one, had to go to the front of the classroom, grab a paper with a line and another paper with an attitude so she or he could act it in front of their classmates, and they could guess what mood was selected. At first students were feeling uncomfortable with being watched, this resulted in them not acting, just reading the lines but as their classmates could not guess what they were trying to express the situation rapidly changed and were able to accomplish the main task using role play as a medium

and it was noted that although during classes students seemed to feel more relaxed for orally communicate this feeling of being able to express themselves in a freeway was not transferred to the final presentations, (image #5 and #6) where most of them were expressing the same discomfort as the first time. However, this could be related to deadlines, final exams and grades pressure at the end of the scholar year.



Images #5 and #6 Two different groups presenting the final dialogue

At the end of the implementation, during the final presentation, students were presenting the same posture as the first day (diagnosis test), being completely focused on the paper they had in front of them, without any type of eye contact even though it was a conversation, some of them were supporting on the wall and just one group represented the emotions seen in class with their voices and their bodies. This could mean that the pedagogical proposal could not significantly impact the students' motivation nor their self-confidence to avoid communication apprehension.

However, it is necessary to mention that other factor could have had influenced student's mood and therefore their oral performance (as final exams, time constrains, promotions and recovery of class subjects), moreover the time dedicated to developing their scenario skills was not enough. For this reason, they were showing signals of discomfort from the moment they were called to present their final work. In order to improve how they felt during the presentations more activities should be done aiming to achieve comfort in oral communication situations.

5.3.3 Subcategory: Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension inside a classroom is usually defined as the ability to recognize words and sentences from audios, this ability is normally measured with worksheets requesting to transcribe the words or complete the sentences. However, for this study this skill can go further as “listening comprehension is defined as one’s ability to comprehend spoken language at the discourse level – including conversations, stories (i.e., narratives), and informational oral texts – that involves the processes of extracting and constructing meaning” (Kim, Y.-S. & Pilcher, H., 2016, P. 3) Considering this definition of listening comprehension, it cannot be understood as just being able to identify words but to get to an understanding, and it is also not restricted to a foreign language, it is wide enough to contemplate any type of spoken language.

Inside of eight-grade English classroom students had some flaws in their Listening comprehension as it was noted from the moment of performing the diagnosis, students were reluctant to participate to a class given completely in English as they argued understanding impossibility. Although the language dynamic of the classes was changed, lessons given mostly in Spanish did not solve the inconvenience of understanding, as students would ask instructions,

clarification and repetition several times to fulfil the task required. Additionally, during the implementation phase, the explanations made in English student automatically ignored the teacher researcher mentioning: “I do not understand English”; “I do not know what we must do” or “I am not going to do anything” affirming their reluctance to the specific skill of listening comprehension of oral communication.

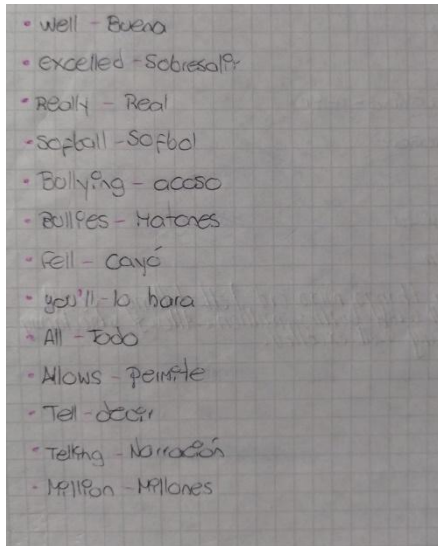
This situation was aggravated when they were talking with their classmates, as they started to talk about other things rather than cooperating to accomplish the final tasks when they were not observed by the teacher researcher. This does not mean that cooperative work has not been accomplished or that it is a negative resource for the main purpose of the project, however it is a signal for further research that wish to address related topics: to improve listening comprehension in general, including gaining the meaning of any type of oral communication, concentration and interest also must be improved. Both characteristics can be worked from the teacher’s end and the students’ end to achieve an optimal level of understanding.

5.3.4 Subcategory: Vocabulary

In the beginning of the research vocabulary was not one of the main concerns, the study was aiming to the reproduction of a conversation without necessarily knowing the meaning or structure of every sentence. And in the end, it would not have mattered if the students learned new words or not.

During the development of the classes, students started to show interest in the new words that were being used to explain the theater play and its characteristics. Given the situation, time of the lesson was dedicated to creating a meaning around the new words by fomenting the search

for unknown vocabulary and asking the students to produce their own sentences and texts to facilitate the memorization of words by using the acquired knowledge.



Image# 7 Artifact extracting words from the script

Even if it was not the main objective of a class to give the students new vocabulary, it became important to allow them to explore the meaning of this language in the process of learning. Then, vocabulary turned into a mandatory complement to develop, as it facilitates the understanding of future activities by promoting the acquisition of significant words. Applying the new section of vocabulary to the lessons brought advantages to the final process that were not expected. Getting familiar with the vocabulary of the script allowed students to memorize their lines in a better way and to get to know the characters through their dialogues.

5.4 Second Category: Cooperative environment

The cooperative environment becomes relevant as a category for this research seeing that it is one of the main columns to apply Project-Based Learning to a classroom. PBL allows the students to create a safe space to share ideas and creations in order to solve the project suggested. Especially, this category needs to be analyzed as one of the implications of applying PBL, giving the importance of every relation that is formed inside a classroom to the learning process.

It is relevant to remember that a cooperative environment is not only understood as group work but also it should be seen from the inside of the classroom itself, so all the interactions that happen in it should be also considered as part of what is understood as a cooperative environment. To further explore this concept, the following subcategories are addressed, *Respect*, *Attention* and *Confidence*. These Four aspects were decisive on how the environment of the class would be, and they were also strongly related to the attitudes of the students.

5.4.1 Subcategory: Respect

With the intention of creating an environment where students could feel comfortable, respect was non-negotiable during all lessons. From the first intervention, respect was emphasized to make sure nobody would say any harmful commentary that could hinder the learning process of the other students. Respect can be seen in different forms, for example “as active listening; respect as assertive speech; respect as avoidance of passive-aggressive communication; and respect during conflict” (Kupperschmidt, 2006, P. 6).

The lessons aimed to reinforce all the forms mentioned above by , considering that if a cooperative and respecting environment could be created, students would feel much more confident expressing themselves and actively participating. Also, it must be recognized that respect could not be just inside the classmates, the main idea was that students could apply this type of behavior to every interaction in their lives, including the relation between students, the teacher and the teacher researcher.

At first, students were interacting with disrespect, especially regarding the lack of active listening and aggressive commentaries against their partners. Every time a student participated in class the others started laughing and making commentaries such as “No, ese es muy malo, mejor que se siente” “Mucho bobo” or “él/ella no puede con eso, cámbienla”. It was told to the students that respect was one of the main columns to developing this project so it would be one of the main things to work on during each session. The calls for attention were diminishing class after class until the mocking ended in lesson #6, where students stopped laughing at their classmates and listening with more respect, allowing the speaker to be heard (even though attention on the speaker is still being worked on).

Respect in general was improved over the lessons with maybe a few slips that were quickly corrected by themselves, showing a gain of consciousness of their actions and their impact on people around them. The improvement was also noticed in their relationship with the teacher, as time passed students were more conscious of the difficulty of speaking in front of an audience that was speaking at the same time, so they would show more respect to the person speaking in front of them.

5.4.2 Subcategory: Attention

The attention to the class on the part of the students was something to work on, from the observation phase of the research it was noticed that students were easily unfocused in class. This situation made the lesson more difficult to develop in a fluent way, affecting the group learning process as “poor attentional skills in the classroom have adverse effects on academic achievement” (Hill et al., 2010, P.929).

The main attempt to improve students' attention was to maintain a classroom full of changing activities and activities that required them to present something to the teacher in a short amount of time. This strategy worked in terms of finishing activities, but the stronger problem was when a presentation had to be done, which could be an explanation to introduce a new topic, or a presentation given by the students to present their findings and achievements. This bigger difficulty was because they had to spend a large amount of time without working on a specific activity that required them to write or do something practical.

The lack of attention during the classes where explanations took place generated an impossibility of presenting new topics in a fluent way. Every time a grammar or project-related topic had to be introduced, it needed more time than the time planned to give guidelines, which ended in a lot of questions about the topic that were not understood, activities that were not developed the way it was expected, or useless feedback.

In an attempt to minimize the impact of the lack of attention to their academic achievement, several calls for attention were made during every intervention, at first it looked like it was working because students were not talking, but after asking probing questions they were not able to recover any information from the speech presented minutes ago. This means that

students were committed to not interrupting the interventions but not to listening to what was being said. In the end, an important improvement in attention could not be made during this present research, a next attempt to improve this subcategory could include engagement between the students and the class, creating the consciousness of learning importance and activities aiming to improve attention.

5.4.3 Subcategory: Confidence

Confidence was selected as a subcategory because of students' feelings and attitudes toward their capacities and abilities, from the researcher's point of view, students' confidence was very low as they were making commentaries such as “yo no paso porque no sé inglés” and “no puedo leer eso, no sé cómo se hace”. Students were unwilling to practice and participate on English activities because they thought they did not know enough. To find out what did they really perceive and think about themselves in relation to the English language, during the diagnosis it was ask “How do you consider your English level?” They answered on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being terrible and 5 being fantastic. This is what they answered:



Chart #4 Showing question #1 of initial survey

Considering that almost half of the group considered their level was “not good” and that the commentaries previously shown strengthened the idea that their self-confidence was low, class after class teacher researcher reinforced their self-confidence by encouraging them to participate and reminding them that having some “mistakes” was part of the process of learning.

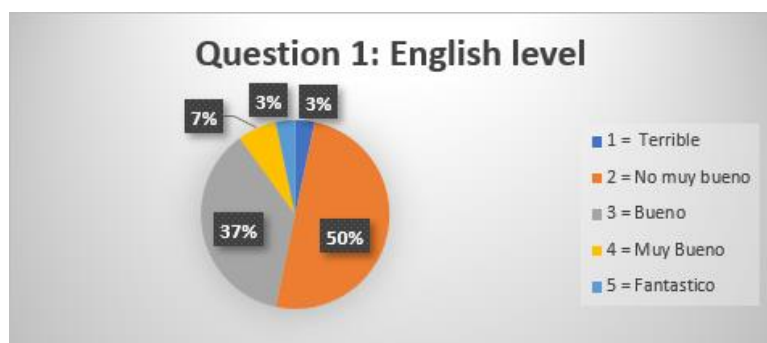


Chart #5 Showing question #1 of final survey

Despite the attempts of boosting students' confidence related to oral communication, the final survey revealed that more than 50% of students consider that their English level is not good, 37% good and just 10% consider it as better than good. In comparison to the previous figure, this can mean that the awareness about their learning process was increased as students change their self-conception regarding English learning and that even if their perception dropped it must be considered that they were working during all classes to reinforce their confidence and that in the end, although they showed some reluctance to perform as seen in *Body expression* subcategory, students accomplished the final presentation.

5.5 Third Category: Learning Strategies

Unlike the past categories, this one is more centered on planning each class implementation. This category aims to describe the students' response to different types of

activities giving the research a more pedagogical view and analyzing how the participation of the researcher can affect the project and students' behavior. For this reason, the subcategories created to better understand the learning strategies are *Creation* and *Group work*, both being the two main types of activities applied inside the classroom that showed the bigger changes in the students' response. Also, these two subcategories became useful to understand the likes and dislikes of the population and how engaging with the activity can be a game-changer for the learner, and emphasizing on the flexibility a teacher must have to ensure the offer of the best class as possible for the students.

5.5.1 Subcategory: Creation

Given the pedagogical component of this research, each lesson had contained different types of activities to recollect more information about how the learning process of the group could be improved. The varied activities can be separated into *identifying* and *creating*, students responded in a different way to each activity, showing different levels of interest and comprehension.

At first, most of the activities were created with an emphasis on *identifying* vocabulary, sounds, and parts of the play they were organizing. Different from the oral performance, some of these activities elevate the students' interest showing signs of excitement towards activities such as *the serpent*, *recognizing parts of the script*, *creating the play* and *the tongue twister* (see annex #4 Lesson plans). Two out of the four activities mentioned above were centered on Identification (*of vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation*) and two of them were *creation (of their own*

sentences and construction of meaning), both created interest but only the activities that involved creation allowed learning and memorization of the topic.

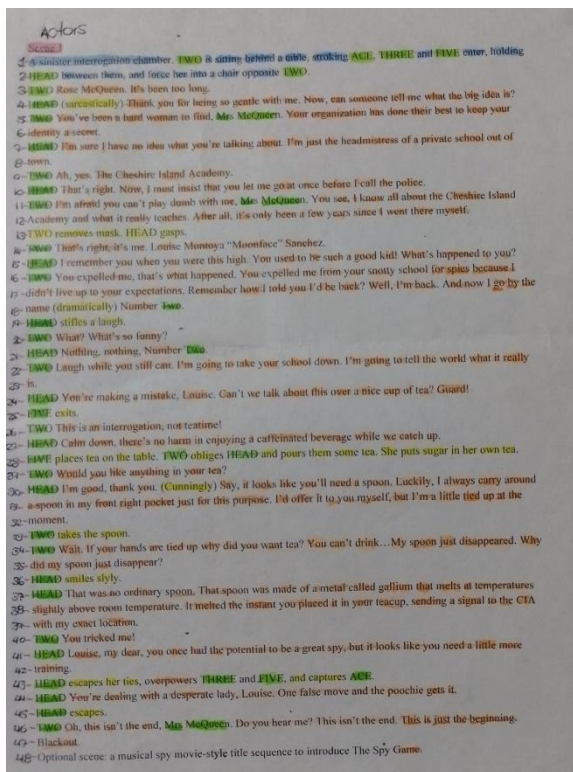


Image # 7 Artifact from Recognizing parts of the script

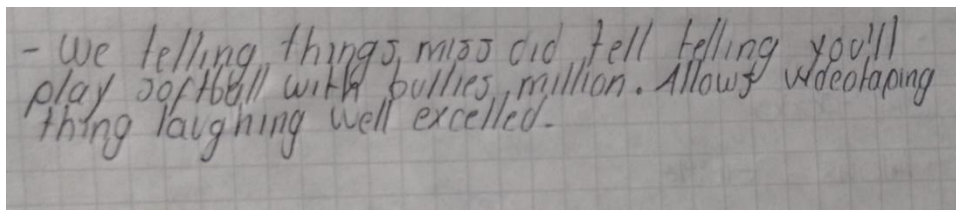


Image #8 Artifact from the tongue twister

Taking recognizing parts of a script (image #7) as an example, it can be seen that students completed the task in an excellent way, following directions and assigning the correct color to the requested part. The contra of this type of activity arrived when this information was

requested in another lesson and the students had already forgotten all the parts of the script. This situation was repeated with the activities *the serpent* and *recognizing lines of the script*.

On the other hand, activities that required *creation* from the students such as the *tongue twister* (image 3# and #8) or *creating the play* allow the students to recover the information whenever they need it. The vocabulary used in these activities was used in future lessons with good pronunciation, lessons where it was requested to select a verb or to form a sentence would lead to them using the same words they had used before, during creation activities.

As a conclusion, both activities can be used inside a classroom to generate dynamism and interest but the activities that aim to have the students *create* using their acquired knowledge will be more productive as they will remain longer in the students' memory. Throughout the lessons, students exhibited varying levels of interest and comprehension in response to these activities. Initially, the emphasis lay on identifying vocabulary, sounds, and play components, and some of these activities generated genuine excitement and engagement among the students. However, it became evident that activities with a creative component, where students actively participated in generating content, were more effective for learning and retention. For instance, the activity requiring students to recognize parts of the script was executed excellently in one instance but failed when repeated in a subsequent lesson, indicating issues with retention. Conversely, activities involving student creation, such as the tongue twister and play creation, allowed students to not only grasp the content effectively but also retrieve and apply it as needed. This insight underscores the value of active participation and creative engagement in the learning process, which is vital for long-term retention and application of knowledge.

5.5.2 Subcategory: Group work

Group work is one of the main components of PBL; when a project is proposed inside a classroom students will work together to give an answer to the final project. Rance-Roney (2010) as cited on Morris (2016, P.1) describes group work as when “students work in teams to construct knowledge and accomplish tasks through collaborative interaction” allowing an enriched solution with the contribution of all participants. Considering that the final project was to interpret a scene of a theater play that involved interaction between several actors, it became relevant to strengthen students' ability to work inside a group, and to give value to other's knowledge and capacities.

Focusing on developing this ability, six lessons were planned to be done in groups or in pairs, five of them had very good results. These lessons showed that students were able to manage the convivence inside a group with no more than one problem per class, usually being small inconveniences like one integrant of the group was distracted and was not doing anything or that one of the members was doing all the work. These are referred to as small inconveniences because of the time the students took to solve the problem, whenever this type of situation happened, they would quickly report to the teacher, and they would change groups to find the best way to work.

The other lesson where this strategy did not work as planned was Lesson #5: *Creating the play*. During the development of the class students started to get more and more excited about

the play they wanted to present, this led to disorganization, distractions and high levels of noise. Also, some students took the opportunity to disregard the activity and to start talking with their friends, an attention call was made to the students to avoid this situation happening again.

Additionally, students were showing behaviors related to group work in almost every lesson. Apart from the first lesson, students formed their own groups to do all the activities, allowing them to perform in a more comfortable way. Giving them more confidence in their work and doing the activities faster.

In summary, group work is a pivotal component of Project-Based Learning (PBL), allowing students to collaboratively construct knowledge and accomplish tasks. This research highlighted its significance in fostering students' ability to work together effectively and appreciate each other's capacities. Six lessons, including group or paired activities, showed that students generally managed group dynamics well, with minimal disruptions, mostly minor, swiftly addressed. However, one lesson presented challenges due to heightened excitement, leading to disorganization and distractions. Overall, students consistently demonstrated positive group work behaviors, forming their own groups for most activities, enhancing their confidence and efficiency in collaborative tasks. The research underscores the invaluable role of group work in PBL, promoting cooperation, and teamwork among students.

5.6 Fourth Category: Motivation

The theater PBL arrived at the class as a new activity, this situation created an impact on the motivation of students in comparison to the motivation shown at the beginning of the

research, the diagnosis. This category aims to describe the changes (positive or negative) in the students' motivation. Two subcategories were selected to respond to motivation signals. The first one being the *Attitude*, towards the class, an activity or between classmates and the *Participation* through willingness to contribute to the class. Both subcategories represented a big role during the development of each lesson, both were an indicator of how motivated the students were feeling towards the class. This motivation could happen from the beginning of the class, or it happened towards a specific part of the lesson.

5.6.1 Subcategory: Participation

Participation was taken as a subcategory because of the students first approach to theater during the diagnosis made in pairs. During the activity there was a lot of resistance from the students. At first participation was voluntary but no one wanted to go first, then, the grade was offered to motivate students, but they were not showing interest either. A possible answer to this is that participation was being diminished by the embarrassment of speaking in front of their partners. The teacher had to call them one by one to find out if they were going to participate and after feeling the pressure of being selected, all but eight students decided to participate.

On the second activity, students were already feeling more motivated, and they were discussing on their own what had to be done to present the activity. They started feeling more comfortable with speaking English in front of their classmates with every intervention and they showed it through smiles and a good attitude every time they participated in classroom activities. It is also relevant to mention that grades played an important role in how much they would

participate in class, if they knew the activity was not going to be graded the participation was diminished by at least 50%.

Participation was limited by students' motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) and their interest in the activity proposed. Regarding the development of the lessons, the ones that presented the best results were the ones where students participated the most. Whenever they decided to participate in class, their work could be reviewed alongside the other students, so every participant contributed new knowledge to the next presentation and their peer's performance.

5.6.2 Subcategory: Attitude

The attitude was selected as a subcategory because it can highly impact the development of the project and students from the beginning showed resistance when they had to do any type of presentation because of the reasons mentioned above. Despite the project included different types of activities they disliked, especially participating in front of the whole class and speaking in English, which cause this initial resistance, they showed a good attitude towards what the project could offered to them.

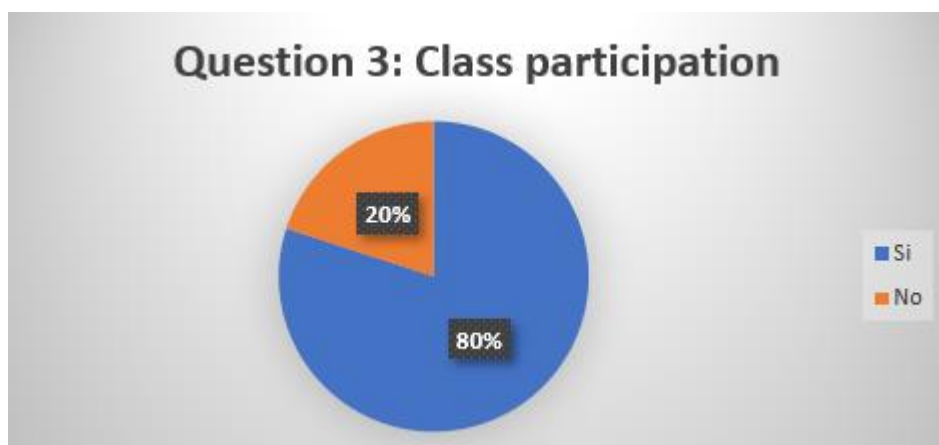


Image #9. Question 3 taken from initial diagnosis

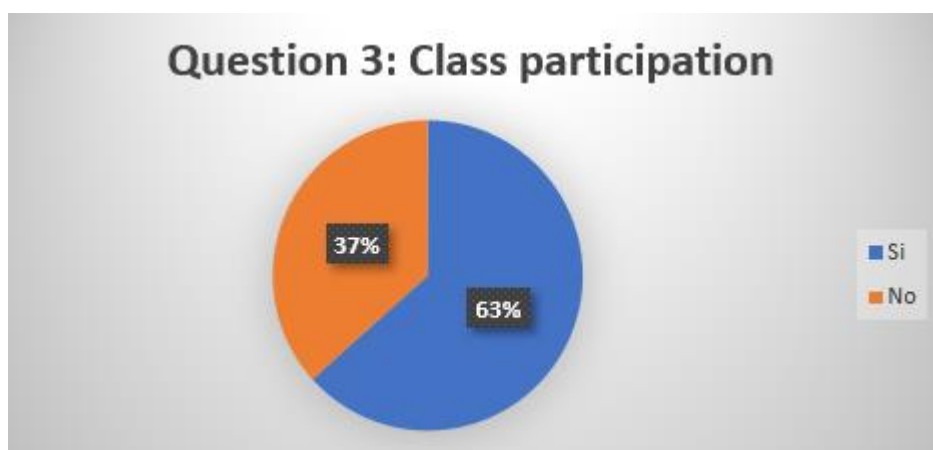


Image #10. Question 3 taken from final survey

Question # 3 taken from the diagnosis (image #9) showed that students liked participating in class, but as mentioned before, this result was not seen when they were asked to participate in the implementation phase; they would initially reject an offer to contribute to the lesson. They slowly started to willingly participate in the activities presented to them, even so, in the final survey 20% of students changed their answer to “I do not like to participate in class” which implies that oral communication, more specifically orality remains as an area where some students continue to face challenges or discomfort. This suggests that while there was an observable shift in their willingness to participate over the course of the implementation phase, a significant portion of students still deal with reservations about actively engaging in oral communication in the classroom. It underscores that the journey towards full confidence and comfort in participating in class discussions, particularly in the context of oral communication, remains an ongoing process for some students.



Image #11 Question 2 taken from diagnosis



Image #12 Question 2 taken from final survey

The second question of the survey asked the students how they felt about speaking in English, it can be seen that in either of the cases, students loved this activity but still, they were able to start participating and willingly speaking in front of their classmates. In fact, the audio recorded during lesson #6 was spoken by students who decided to participate on their own, and in the final presentation most of them were trying to have fun during a difficult activity for them.

In conclusion, the data collected through Question #3 from the diagnosis (image #9) provided valuable insights into students' participation and oral communication preferences.

Although the initial survey indicated that students favored participating in class, this sentiment did not uniformly extend to their willingness to engage in the implementation phase, where some initially hesitated. However, over the course of the implementation phase, a positive transformation emerged as students gradually embraced participation in the presented activities. Nevertheless, the final survey revealed that 20% of students had shifted their stance to "I do not like to participate in class," highlighting that oral communication, particularly orality, remains an area of challenge and discomfort for a significant portion of the students. This underscores the ongoing nature of the journey toward building full confidence and comfort in classroom discussions, especially within the realm of oral communication. The second question in the survey, addressing students' feelings about speaking in English, indicated their initial enthusiasm, which translated into voluntary participation and speaking in front of their peers. This was evident in audio recordings from lesson #6, where students chose to participate independently, and in the final presentation, where many endeavored to have a lighthearted approach to a challenging activity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter presents the conclusions of the findings described above, also it presents the implications of the implementation of the project for the teacher (researcher), the homeroom teacher, and the participants. Additionally, limitations are displayed and suggestions for further research are made.

6.1 Conclusions

Considering the findings described above, this section will present the final conclusions of the project, starting with a description of how the objectives were developed and the answer to the research question.

The first objective of this research was to describe the different strategies that could be applied inside an EFL classroom to improve students' oral communication. Two main strategies were seen inside the classroom that showed a compromise and an improvement in students' learning process, *creation* and *group work* activities. As said above both strategies had strong and weak points but, in the end, they both had something to offer to the students that improved their oral communication. *Creation* would give them an easier way to memorize and *group work* could allow them to build knowledge together.

The second objective aimed to examine the changes regarding orality after the application of the project and it was analyzed above through the category *Oral expression*. From a phonological aspect, students showed an improvement in recognizing and producing the consonants seen in class, unfortunately, the vowels did not show such improvement. From the body expression perspective, it was also seen that students did not have the opportunity to work on their body expression, showing no difference from the first presentation to the final role-play.

In the third subcategory, *vocabulary*, it was seen that students were able to recognize the meaning of words taken from the script, and they were able to recover words that were studied during the implementation phase. However, listening comprehension did not show many changes either, even in Spanish repetitions had to be made to ensure comprehension and fulfillment of the

activity. These four subcategories describe how the work inside the classroom was done to try to obtain an integral formation but not all of them had satisfactory results. Even though the changes were not many, they were noticeable in regard to pronunciation and vocabulary acquirement.

The third objective aimed to enhance speaking interactions through the theater and role-play technique which was analyzed along the subcategory of *cooperative environment*. The interactions that were expected were supposed to contain respect on the first level, as the eighth graders had a relationship of disrespect with each other, they were very used to saying bad words between them and mocking their classmates. Respect was a requirement inside the classroom and little by little their interactions became much more respectful, even though they continued with the first type of language when talking to their closest friends.

In regard to attention, students were also able to improve their interactions by listening to the sender without a major quantity of interruptions as usual, even if the attention was still not practiced enough to completely comprehend and remember the words of the sender. Finally, regarding confidence, students looked more comfortable when they had to ask for help or to speak to their partners about a topic related to the class. However, according to them they do not enjoy participating in the class. This objective brought a nice environment to the classroom, where the interactions were greater in quality and in quantity, the group work also helped enhance this type of communication directed toward a project.

The final objective was to identify students' perception and motivation in regard to EFL learning and it was analyzed along the subcategory of *motivation*. Participation and attitudes both showed that even though they did not feel comfortable, and they did not enjoy either speaking in English they still participated in all activities and their attitude towards the project showed that they will perform in a good and cooperative attitude even if the activity is not to their liking.

Finally, the research question aims to find out what the implications are of applying PBL for the improvement of oral communication in Colegio Guillermo Cano Isaza's eighth grade. The implications regarding orality were an improvement in the consciousness of pronunciation and in fluency over a practiced text. From the cooperative environment it can also be seen an improvement in the importance of respecting the person speaking in front of an audience and the seriousness the speaker needs to demonstrate to gain the attention of the audience. Also, it was seen that even if the motivation was an expected characteristic thanks to the theory of PBL it cannot always be achieved, as during the implementation with this specific group of students, there were no activities that showed a complete commitment or complete interest in gaining the knowledge.

It must be considered that some of the goals proposed such as memorizing a complete paragraph, showing emotions during the presentation, or interacting with more people on stage could not be achieved because of the time constraints and students' attitudes and motivation. This affirmation is done because of the signals students showed when developing the activities, class by class they showed a small improvement in the abilities that were demanded of them but in the end, their oral communication abilities could not be fully developed.

6.2 Implications

This present research brought with it certain implications that could affect the researcher, the titular teacher, and future teachers.

In the first place, this research presented the opportunity to work alongside other areas of knowledge, allowing a more integral formation for students to acquire and practice abilities that will help them in different areas of development: working with theater and orality enabled the students to develop the ability to speak in front of an audience, an ability that will be useful in several scenarios in their lives, from a presentation in another subject to work interviews.

Second, this research also had an impact on the titular teacher and her classes, as she tried to incorporate new activities inspired by the present research to better develop English skills. Ultimately, this research holds significance not only for the current educational landscape but also for future educators. It underscores the potential for a harmonious mix of diverse topics and subjects, illustrating how they can mutually reinforce each other to provide students with the highest quality education attainable.

6.3 Limitations

To implement this project many things had to be considered, the population, the time, the knowledge to be acquired, the previous knowledge, the disposition of classes and students' attitudes, external activities, etc. When implementing the project some situations that were not inside the initial planning hindered the continuity of the process.

First of all, time was the main limiting factor for the development of this project. In order to achieve the memorization of a script and an acquisition of the pronunciation rules to reach a final presentation as it was planned, one that included scenography, costumes, and a performance filled with confidence from the actors more time had to be dedicated to the project. The

activities proposed during the implementation helped the students develop the abilities they would need to achieve the final product, but the time was not enough to practice it.

Secondly, the low compromise of the students generated a basic outcome. It was expected that the students would do individual work from home, it was said to them which part of the role play they had to practice but not even one student showed proficiency in their scripts. Whenever a homework assignment was left for them to do less than 30% of students would present it, some saying they left it at home and others saying they forgot. The lack of commitment from the participants hindered the learning process that was planned.

Lastly, there were some activities external to the English class that also interfered with the implementation. Required paperwork to start the contract between the school and the university, strikes done by the teachers, and cultural activities proposed by the school generated a delay in the process and a loss of opportunity to give students more practice classes. Although there are several ways a learning project can be affected, that does not mean that it cannot be applied. From the beginning, it was hard to think that a noticeable advance could be seen in the learning process of a foreign language in just two months of interrupted classes, but it still had other types of implications that can be good for the implicated.

In conclusion, the implementation of this project confronted a multitude of considerations, including time limitations, knowledge acquisition, prior student proficiency, classroom dynamics, and student commitment. Regrettably, various unanticipated challenges emerged during the project's execution. Chief among these was the constraint of time, which hindered the project's intended objectives, such as script memorization, pronunciation rule acquisition, and the development of confident actors for a comprehensive final presentation with scenography and costumes. Additionally, the students' limited commitment posed a significant

obstacle, with few engaging in independent practice outside of class, and external factors, including administrative paperwork, teacher strikes, and school-sponsored cultural activities, introduced disruptions and delays. These challenges underscore the need for flexible planning and adaptability in project implementation to better address unforeseen obstacles and optimize student learning outcomes.

6.4 Further research

Due to the limitations of this research, there are some areas that could not be explored but that are worth considering deepening research.

Firstly, there exists an opportunity to delve into the realm of project-based learning approaches that encourage students to collaboratively tackle overarching issues. Such an exploration aims to cultivate a cooperative and self-motivated environment, allowing students the freedom to exercise their creativity and take charge of their partnerships and problem-solving strategies.

A second avenue for further research pertains to the development of extensive interdisciplinary projects, fostering a more integrated learning experience for students. This initiative envisions multiple school disciplines collaborating on projects, thereby creating a contextually rich learning environment. Students could then discern meaningful connections between different areas of knowledge within the school, transcending the notion of subjects existing in isolation.

Lastly, it is imperative to scrutinize methods for enhancing students' self-perception with respect to their English language skills, motivations, and attitudes. This necessitates a critical examination of how students assess their language proficiency, including the identification and rectification of any self-imposed limitations that impede their ability to communicate effectively in English. Removing these psychological barriers can ultimately empower students to engage confidently in English communication.

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Annexes:

Annex 1: Contextualization test



Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
Facultad de humanidades- Lic. Español y lenguas extranjeras



CEDID Guillermo Cano Isaza
Encuesta grado 703 JT

La presente encuesta tiene como objetivo reunir información general sobre las características del curso, la encuesta es totalmente anónima por lo que puede ser completamente honesto/a. Gracias por su participación y completa transparencia.

- A. Edad:
- B. Género:
- C. Estrato:
- D. Barrio/ localidad:

Marque con una X una sola respuesta:

E: ¿En dónde vive?

- Casa Apartamento Habitación Otro: _____

F: ¿Cuál es el tipo de vivienda en el que habita?

- Propio En arriendo Familiar Otro: _____

G: ¿Cuánto se demora en llegar al colegio?

- Menos de 10 min Entre 10 y 30 min Entre 30 y 60 min Más de una hora

H: ¿Cuál es el transporte que usa más seguido para llegar al colegio?

- Bus/ SITP A pie Bicicleta/patineta Carro propio
 Ruta del colegio Taxi/aplicaciones de transporte. Moto

Escriba su respuesta sobre la línea:

I: ¿Con quién/quienes vive?



J: ¿Cuenta con apoyo para realizar tareas en su hogar?



K: ¿Quién o quienes le ayudan con sus tareas en casa?

L: ¿Qué hace en sus tiempos libres?

A continuación encontrará un cuadro con servicios y objetos con los que una vivienda podría contar. Marque con una X frente a las cosas a las que tenga acceso desde su hogar

M. Agua	
N. Electricidad	
O. Gas	
P. Internet	
Q. Televisión	
R. Teléfono fijo	
S. Celular inteligente o tablet	
T. Computador	

Annex 2: Diagnosis and final test



Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
Facultad de humanidades- Lic. Español y lenguas extranjeras



CEDID Guillermo Cano Isaza
Diagnostico grado 703 JT

La siguiente encuesta tiene como objetivo reunir información sobre su relación con el inglés, experiencias y expectativas. Las respuestas son completamente anónimas por lo que puede ser completamente honesto/a. Gracias por su participación y transparencia.

Responda a la pregunta sobre la línea:

A. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva aprendiendo inglés?

B. ¿Dónde ha aprendido inglés?

C. ¿Cuál ha sido la actividad que más le ha gustado durante el proceso de aprender inglés?

Responda si o no

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| D. ¿Suele participar en clase? | <input type="checkbox"/> Si | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| E. ¿Ha participado en alguna actividad relacionada al teatro? | <input type="checkbox"/> Si | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| F. ¿Ha visto alguna obra de teatro? | <input type="checkbox"/> Si | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| G. ¿Ha cantado en público? | <input type="checkbox"/> Si | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Escriba sobre la línea :

H : ¿Qué tipo de películas/ series disfruta más? Ej : Acción, comedia, drama, Animación, suspenso, etc. (Puede incluir nombres de películas o series como ejemplo)

Marque con una X

I: ¿Cómo considera que es su nivel de inglés en este momento?

Observaciones adicionales:												

Annex 4: Diagnosis scrippt On one condition

A: The big dance is this weekend. I was thinking...maybe we could go together?

B: On one condition. Where would we eat beforehand?

A: Oh, I don't know. I hadn't thought about it.

B: I'm a vegetarian. I can't eat meat.

A: That's no problem.

B: Good. And nothing dairy based. I'm lactose intolerant, so I can't have anything with milk or cheese.

A: I think we can work around that.

B: And nothing wheat based either...my allergies...I'll blow right up.

A: Maybe we'll just skip dinner and go straight to the dance.

B: Deal. But no slow dancing. And I hope they don't play any fast hip hop songs either. Or country music. Yuck. Did I mention I'm not much of a dancer? And I hate music.

A: Maybe we should skip the dance and go to a movie.

B: Yes! But nothing with singing or explosions. And not on the weekend. I don't leave the house on days that have the letter "u" in them.

A: You know what? Forget I asked.

B: Was it something I said?

Annex# 5 recordings

[Evidence- Recordings.mp4](#)