



Self-assessment of Roleplays to Improve Speaking

Lady Liliana Quito Parra

Guide: PhD. Carlos Chancay Cedeño

Presented as Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Magíster en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con Mención en la Enseñanza de Inglés. CES: RPC-SE-19-N°.140-2020. Cohort 2019 - 2021. Author's email: lady.quito@casagrande.edu.ec, Guayaquil, October 15th, 2021.

Abstract

This study describes the application of self-assessment through roleplays for the enhancing of speaking skills in English. It was applied to 10 volunteer students of a public high school in Guayaquil, who were interested in improving their abilities in oral communication using a L2. The most part of participants in this study demonstrated an A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the placement test, a hopeful result considering they were in 1st year Bachillerato and based on The English Language Learning Standards (ELLS) they must reach an A2 at the end of the year. To collect information about their perspective of this innovation, some instruments were applied online through specific apps (Whatsapp and Zoom). The pre and post-test evidenced participant's improvement in oral production showing the difference in the scores: the pre (M=5.00; SD=1.18) and post-test (M=8.00; SD=0.47) when analyzing the sample. The p value= 0.00 showing that the results were significant because is less than .05. Students declared that self-assessment of roleplays helped them to develop their speaking skill using vocabulary according to the situation, correct grammar structure, proper pronunciation with the confidence and motivation necessary for learning English as a second language. This study is a great contribution for English teachers, especially those who work in public high schools and require a useful strategy for the development of students' speech in EFL.

Keywords: Self-assessment, roleplay, speaking, EFL

Resumen

Este estudio describe la aplicación de la autoevaluación a través de juegos de rol para la mejora de las habilidades orales en inglés. Se aplicó a 10 estudiantes voluntarios de una unidad educativa pública de la ciudad de Guayaquil, quienes estaban interesados en mejorar sus habilidades comunicativas usando un segundo idioma. La mayoría de los participantes en este estudio demostraron un nivel A2 de acuerdo con el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCER) en el test de ubicación, un resultado alentador considerando que cursaban el Primer Año de Bachillerato y en base a los Estándares de Aprendizaje del Idioma Inglés, los estudiantes al término del Primer Año de Bachillerato deben alcanzar un nivel A2. Para recopilar información sobre su perspectiva de esta innovación se aplicaron algunos instrumentos en línea a través de aplicaciones específicas (WhatsApp and Zoom). El pretest y el posttest evidenciaron la mejora en la producción oral de los participantes mostrando la diferencia en los puntajes: el pretest ($M=5.00$; $SD=1.18$) and post-test ($M=8.00$; $SD=0.47$) cuando se analizó la muestra. El valor $p = 0.00$ mostrando que los resultados fueron significativos porque es menos de .05. Las respuestas de los estudiantes fueron positivas y de gran aporte para este estudio. Los estudiantes manifestaron que la auto evaluación a través del juego roles ayuda a desarrollar la destreza de hablar del idioma inglés usando vocabulario acorde a la situación, estructura gramatical de manera correcta, pronunciación adecuada con la confianza y motivación necesaria para el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma. Este estudio es un gran aporte para los docentes de lengua extranjera, en especial para aquellos que trabajan en instituciones públicas y requieren una estrategia de mucha utilidad para el desarrollo del habla de los estudiantes en Inglés como lengua extranjera.

Palabras claves: Auto evaluación, juego de roles, hablar, Ingles como lengua extranjera

Self-assessment of Roleplays to Improve Speaking

Education First (2019) stated that according to the last English Proficiency Index Exam, Ecuador placed 81st among one hundred participant countries. This study reveals undoubtedly, the necessity of doing something different to improve English education in Ecuador. The current Ecuadorian English curriculum emphasizes on developing communicative competences in our students. It implies that reading, listening, speaking and writing skills are integrated to have effective communication. Cetinkaya (2005) manifested that more than know the patterns or structures of a second language, it is essential to use the target language in a real-life context.

The present research study focused on the application of roleplays to enhance students' communicative abilities. Some researchers (Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2010; Neira, 2020) implemented roleplays as a strategy to enhance speaking skill. Other researchers (Dután, 2020; Masruria & Anam, 2021; Ushca, 2020) conducted a study to assess oral communication improvement through peer feedback and self-assessment focused on WhatsApp and podcasts recordings.

A common factor that is present in the studies mentioned previously, students who hesitate to speak, ask, participate, and turn nervous or fearful to use the target language to interact inside and outside the classroom. Krashen (1982) pointed out that "in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), many key factors of learners' success in language learning should be associated with the student's emotional condition" (as cited in Lin, 2008). Krashen theory looks for student's well-being in the learning process, suggesting teachers to apply activities or classroom situations where students can feel motivated and get into the subject.

Observing the aspects that lead students to struggle in speaking skill, this innovation proposes the use of roleplays to enhance oral communication skill through self-assessment through role-plays. This study explores the following research question:

1. To what extent will students' speaking skill improve with the application of self-assessment?
2. What are students' perspectives about the innovation?

Literature Review

This research study focuses on enhance oral communication skills using self-assessment and the performance of roleplays oriented to a real-life context. Related theories and studies are introduced in this section.

Speaking

Speaking skills is considered one of the main skills to be developed in education. Ur (1996) mentioned:

Speaking as the most important skill among four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because people who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language. It indicates that using a language is more important than just knowing about it because —there is no point knowing a lot about the language if you can't use it” (as cited in Al Hosni, 2014).

Therefore, to make students develop speaking skills is necessary to provide students with the right tools and create situations in the classroom in which they can master the language without too much complexity.

Besides, there are two characteristics of speaking skills: fluency and accuracy. Hedge (2000) mentioned, “fluency is the ability to answer coherently by connecting the words and phrases, pronouncing the sounds clearly, and using stress and intonation.” On the other hand, accuracy according to Mazouizi (2013), “learners should pay enough attention to the exactness and the completeness of language form when speaking such as focusing on grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation” (as cited in Leong & Ahmadi, 2017, p.36).

According to some teaching theorists, students' fluency and accuracy can be developed through communicative activities such as information gap, a jigsaw puzzle, games, problem-solving, and role-playing (Oradee, 2012). As the author mentioned, role-playing can be a good technique to get students to improve their speaking difficulties including the characteristics of this productive skill.

Roleplay

Oxford English Dictionary defines the word role-play as “the changing of one's behaviour to fulfil a social role”. When this strategy is used in the classroom, the teacher provides the topic and students have to develop a presentation according to the assigned role. Teed (2009) explained that “in most role-playing exercises, each student takes the role of a person affected by an issue and studies the impacts of the issues on human life and the effects of human activities on the world around us from the perspective of that person” (as cited in Ardriyati, 2009, p.220). Thus, it involves students' creativity and conflict resolution capacity to face roles that can be handled in real-life situations.

Llivingstone (1986) mentioned “roleplay is a classroom activity which gives the student the opportunity to practice the language, the aspects of roles he may actually meet outside the classroom.” (as cited in Arifin et al, 2016, p.4). It implies that students probably

will have opportunities to travel to an English speaking country, and this practice of roleplays involved in real situations, allow them to have rehearsals before been exposed to real environments and make them feel more secure and feel free to make mistakes without hard consequences.

Richard & Rodgers (2001) present some important principles about roles in EFL learners, relevant information to support this study:

1. Tasks provide both the input and output processing necessary for language acquisition.
2. Tasks activity and achievement are motivational. They are also said to improve learner motivation and therefore promote learning.
3. Learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned for particular pedagogical purposes (as cited in Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2010, p.19).

According to Harper-Whalen and Morris (2005), there are three types of roleplaying: fully scripted roleplay, semi-scripted roleplay, and non-scripted roleplay. In the scripted roleplay, each word is given, and students should understand or memorize his/her role. The semi-scripted roleplay includes a model conversation with some missing words and students should know how to fill in the blanks in suitable words of these contexts (Livingstone, 1983). In the non-scripted roleplay Pi-Chong (1990), said that keywords and information, or contexts and aims in less controlled and structure tasks, in this type, students establish a mini conversation based on keywords, materials or contexts are simply as filling in gaps (as cited in Krebt, 2017, p.865).

Self-assessment

Most of the time students who are learning a second language feel the need to know their weaknesses and straightness without being embarrassed. According to Gardner (2000), “self-assessment is the best way to help learners to monitor their progress and identify their language level” (p.49). In addition, It means that students become more conscious and autonomous of their learning because self-assessment also provides students to choose what, when and how to be assessed. Schwartsz (1989) mentioned that there are advantages and disadvantages of self-assessment. One of the advantages is “it encourages students to reflect on their role and contribution to the process of the group work”. A disadvantage would be “self-evaluation has a risk of being process of presenting inflated grades and being unreliable” (as cited in Ashraf & Mahdinezhad, 2015, p.112).

Kaur et al. (2020) stated that “In speaking class, one of teacher’s role is to communicate with students and provide them a feedback on their speaking”. (p.693). As the author mentioned students need feedback from teachers about their progress and what needs improvements on a particular skill, however, teachers can help students become more independent from external sources of feedback (teachers and peers) and self-assess their own learning. To get this autonomy, students need to learn identify the success criteria and learning goals.

There are two types of self-assessment: formative and summative. Esfandiari & Myford (2013) stated that “formative self-assessment is considered as the student self-evaluation and summative self-assessment as the grading or student marking”. On the other hand, Chen (2008) argued that “the focus shifts from summative to formative assessment and he also recommend self-assessment as an assessment procedure to involve students in monitoring the self-learning process” (as cited in Baleghizadeh & Masoun, 2014, p.26).

WhatsApp

Nowadays technology has developed new Apps that has become the latest social network for people, especially for teens. It is an advantage for teachers who work with young learners because they can use social media to enhance students' learning. As Sharma (2019) mentioned, “most EFL students regarded social media applications as useful tools for improving their English language skills as well as English learning motivation” (as cited in Yang, 2020, p.163). Students through this App can develop short videos that involve creativity and body language about any topic.

Using familiar applications like WhatsApp in EFL classes has become very popular in recent years, as it allows unique and versatile learning opportunities. According to Han & Keshin (2016), “while using WhatsApp students have the chance to individualize their learning, especially the language they have been working on. For example, they can monitor and check their language output for mistakes and practice their pronunciation while rehearsing for the recording” (p. 32).

Innovation

Because of the pandemic that the world is facing nowadays, this innovation was applied to 10 students of the first year of Bahillerato who manage an English level proficiency from A1 to A2. A WhatsApp group was created by the teacher for the application of the innovation in order to share the material to be worked on and give feedback to students in an effective way. Students worked with five topics that contain vocabulary related to known and familiar interactions for students in their daily lives: such as dialogues in the supermarket using vocabulary about food, shopping applying vocabulary about clothes, at the doctor's office with vocabulary about diseases, cinema learning vocabulary about movie genres, and the zoo with vocabulary about animals. The lesson plan included activities that

allow oral production and give opportunities to go into the self-evaluation process. In addition, students created, performed, and recorded roleplays oriented to a real-life context.

The three types of roleplays mentioned were applied in this study: fully scripted roleplay, semi-scripted roleplay, and non-scripted roleplay. Those were used according to the lesson plan. For example, at the beginning of the lesson, a fully scripted roleplay was shared with the students with the new vocabulary and phrases related to the topic, so that the students could infer the situation and at the same time practiced the pronunciation of the dialogue with a partner. Then, they received a semi-scripted roleplay so that they completed and created a new conversation with the new vocabulary and phrases learned during the lesson in pairs. Finally, for the final presentation, students applied the non-scripted roleplay since they had to do it in teams using the content previously practiced according to the scenario required by the teacher.

Before the innovation, students performed a dialogue in pairs showing their prior knowledge. In this phase of the study, the teacher did not provide the dialogue, students were free to choose the best that suits their expectations. Teacher just gave some instructions related to this, for example, each student must speak at least five times and also gave feedback before the presentation to calm down participants' anxiety.

Then students connected with the teacher through a zoom conference to perform the roleplay. Students were evaluated by the teacher and the fellow teacher. The zoom sessions were recorded to evaluate and give feedback. Ten hours of classes per week were worked, which were divided as follows: Each activity (5 activities in total) was covered in two days (four hours of classes). The teacher interacted with students through zoom sessions for each class.

Power point slides were used as visual support to present the content. Teacher reviewed with students vocabulary, grammar, useful expressions for each activity and

prepared interactive activities using different platforms to reinforce new knowledge. Also, students filled out worksheets sent by the teacher to keep on practicing. The researcher presented to students an authentic animated video realized by herself containing the dialogue students used to roleplay, and then teacher introduced the script and together with students analyzed the vocabulary word, useful expressions presented on it and practiced pronunciation, asking to students read the dialogue in pairs. After that, the students wrote their own dialogue in pairs taking into account the parts that must change (semi-script dialogue). At the end, students presented their roleplay using the vocabulary learned. The whole process was carried out through Zoom sessions until the 24 hours of classes were completed according to the planning.

The self-assessment rubric allowed students to assess themselves and make observations on how they can improve in each recording with the teacher's support. The aim of the innovation is that students evolve in oral production in each class being aware of their weaknesses and strengths. At the end of the process, as the final project, students performed a roleplay with a partner, choosing 1 from the 5 dialogues prepared during the innovation. This final work was considered to compare and contrast their improvement in oral production skills.

Methodology

This study followed an action research process because the investigators collected data, analyzed it, and took actions to solve a problem. It is said that "action research is the idea that teachers will begin a cycle of posing questions, gathering data, reflection, and deciding on a course of action" (Ferrance, 2000, p.2). This action research applied qualitative and quantitative instruments to explore how self-assessment of roleplays (independent variable) improve speaking skills (dependent variable).

Participants

This study, with 10 students (3 males and 7 females), was carried out in a public high school. Student's ages were between 15-17 years old, attending the first year of Bachillerato. All of them lived in a urban area, so all they had internet connection. This was a positive factor, considering that COVID 19 has affected the regular development of classes in the educational field. The researcher used this permanent connection using WhatsApp and Zoom platform to interact and foster active participation in this study.

Participants shared the English level from A1 to A2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). To know students' English level, a placement test was applied before the innovation. Students took this online placement test from an English Language School accredited by California's Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE); Language Scholastic (LASC).

Instruments

The instruments applied for gathering information were a pre and post-test and an interview.

Pre and Post-test

A pre-speaking test was taken before the innovation to know students' previous knowledge. This test was a semi-scripted role-play in which students had to complete some missing words to develop the dialogue with a partner. Teachers used a rubric to evaluate important aspects that involved speaking skill in roleplays like vocabulary, grammar, confidence, motivation and pronunciation.

Before and after the innovation, to measure students' speaking skill, participants were asked to create and perform a role-play with a partner through a video call with the researcher and a fellow EFL teacher.

The rubric aimed to identify important aspects that involve speaking skill in roleplays. "Fluency" criteria were removed from the original one because due to the level of the

participants, it needs more time to be improved. The same rubric was used for the self-assessment strategy replacing the rating scale with: Excellent, Good, Satisfactory, Poor, in the same order. Learners used the rubric for each task that involved role-play performance.

In the same way, after applying the innovation, a post-test was developed based on the 5 topics planned for this innovation. Students chose the topic and role-play in pairs using the vocabulary learned during the innovation related to the lesson of their choice. For this evaluation, teachers applied the same rubric as the pre-test to later analyze and contrast students' speaking skills improvement. This instrument answered the first research question: To what extent will students' speaking skill improve with the application of self-assessment?

Interview

Gillham (2000) said that an interview is “to obtain information and understanding of issues relevant to the general aims and specific questions of a research project” (p. 2). Based on this innovation, an individual pre-interview of 9 demographic questions was applied to get information from the students' background and after a post-interview of 7 questions was taken individually to know students' perspectives of the innovation. This instrument answered research question 2: What are students' perspectives about the innovation?

The teacher conducted Semi-structured interviews at the beginning (9 questions) and the end of the research project (7 questions). The pre-interview contained demographic questions (name, age, place of living) and open-ended questions related to the field of study (fears, strengths, weaknesses about the target language, experiences, prior knowledge, expectations). The post-interview focused entirely on students' perspectives and conclusions towards implementing self-assessment to improve their oral skills. It aimed to know the enhancements, outcomes, challenges, learners found through the innovation.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collected in the pre and post-tests were computed in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to make the analysis easier. Then, the information was transferred to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) program to get the mean, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value. The Cohen's d was calculated with that information. The results of that information provided the answer to the research question #1.

On the other hand, the data of the pre and post interviews were organized and analyzed into categories. Students' answers were organized according to the questions related to self-assessment, roleplays, and speaking to answer research question #2.

Ethical Considerations

To carry this study the respective authorization from authorities and students' parents were asked. The parents and the students were informed about the procedure of the study and they also knew that the information collected was for academic goals.

Results

The study focused on determining the improvement of oral communication skills through the use of roleplays. So, the researcher analyzed and evidenced students' difficulties and improvements during the process.

To answer the first research question: *to what extent will students' speaking skill improve with the application of self-assessment?* The data was computed in SPSS program to contrast the difference in the scores between the pre (M=5.00; SD=1.18) and post-test (M=8.00; SD=0.47) when analyzing the sample. The p value= 0.00 showing that the results were significant because is less than .05. In conclusion, the analysis evidenced the difference of the scores from the pre-test to the post-test of the sample. The pre-test results showed that students need improvement in the criterias presented in the rubric; and the post-test results

indicated that students really improved obtained better results after the implementation.

Table 1 presents the results obtained:

Table 1

Pre and Post-test Results

	N	Min	Max	M	SD	Sig. (P)
Pre_Test	10	5.00	8.50	6.7000	1.18322	.000
Post_Test	10	8.00	10.00	9.0000	.47140	

Note: N=Sample, Min= Minimum, Max= Maximum, M= mean, Sd= Standard Deviation, Sig (P)=Significance

The researcher used SPSS Program to tabulate the data and according to the statistics gotten from it, made an analysis of the challenges students overcame and improved according to the criterias presented in the self-assessment rubric: vocabulary, control of grammar, confidence, motivation and pronunciation. Criterias that were considered by the researcher to measure speaking skills. The researcher used a paired t-test to compare the results by criteria. Table 2 shows that students make progress significantly in three main aspects: Vocabulary (M=1.80); Confidence (M=1.95); Pronunciation (1:70) in comparison to the values presented in the pre-test.

Table 2

Paired t-test

	N	PRE-TEST		POST-TEST	
		M	SD	M	SD
Vocabulary	10	1.2000	0.25820	1.8000	0.25820
Control_of_Grammar	10	1.2500	0.26352	1.5500	0.15811
Confidence	10	1.4500	0.36893	1.9500	0.15811
Motivation	10	1.6000	0.31623	2.0000	0.00000
Pronunciation	10	1.2000	0.25820	1.7000	0.25820

Note: N=Sample, M= mean, Sd= Standard Deviation

To answer the second research question: *What are students' perspectives about the innovation?*, the researcher considered the answers of the pre and post-interviews of the total sample of participants in this study. The results of the interviews were explored and grouped by three main categories: Self-assessment, roleplays and speaking.

To get results for the first category which was *Self-assessment*, students were required to answer the following question: *Do you consider self-assessment a good way to know your weaknesses and strengths?* Students answered that the use of a self-assessment rubric during the process of learning to evaluate their speaking skills, allowed them to identify what aspects need improvement and even they were pretty good in some others they still tried to improve even more. For example: S4 mentioned “Yes, I think self-assessment let me know to identify when I was wrong or right in order to improve.” Also, participants mentioned, that it is necessary to practice a great value to give a trustful significance to the instrument. For example: S10 mentioned “Yes, because at the same time I’m being honest with myself and accepting the aspects that I have difficulties and what I can improve.”

Considering the second category which was roleplays, students were asked to answer: *Do you believe roleplays improve speaking skills? In which ways?* Students’ answers were positive to this query. They expressed that roleplays is a great strategy to develop speaking skills because it involves interaction, and it means that listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary are fundamental factors to communicate with people. S2 said “Yes, because there is interaction and it is necessary to understand and be able to answer”. Additionally, S10 stated “Yes, because through a dialogue I can interact with another person and doing this I can learn and feel more confident to speak in English.”

Regarding to speaking, which was the third category, the following question was asked: *Do you feel more confident to speak in English now?* Most students replied affirmatively, however, some of them considered that they still need more practice to speak

English because of the cognitive process that consists of thinking in Spanish, translating into English and then producing, takes time and this is a barrier that restricts the fluency and self-confidence to express themselves in the second language. S2 mentioned “Yes, but a little bit, because sometimes I feel embarrassed, and it is complicated because most of the time I think in Spanish and then I translate into English, but when I just let the language flows, it is better and easier, I can express myself better.” Most of them concluded that they made great improvements after the innovation in terms of confidence to speak. For example, S4 said “Yes, I feel more confident to speak in English now than before.”

To conclude, students’ perspectives about the innovation were favorable, students’ replies demonstrated that roleplays was a great strategy to improve oral communication, and the application of self-assessment rubrics was a key instrument to identified their strengths and weaknesses of their speaking skills.

Discussion

The researcher found out in the first research question that the application of a self-assessment rubric allowed students to improve speaking skills. Other research studies also have reported positive results implementing self-assessment rubric to improve speaking skills (Dután, 2020; Masruria & Anam, 2021; Uzhca, 2020). Their findings also showed that specific criterias as self-reflection presented in a rubric to self-assess helped to enhance oral communication. According to the results it was evident that participants made a great progress in the post-test, after the innovation, the scores were higher. During the process the students realized and identified the aspects they needed to overcome to improve their speaking skills.

In addition, students participated actively in roleplays. As Livingstone (1986) mentioned “roleplay is a classroom activity which gives the student the opportunity to practice the language, the aspects of roles he may actually meet outside the classroom.” (as

cited in Arifin et al, 2016, p.4). During the application of the innovation students demonstrated motivation to play the role of a customer or a clerk in the different settings proposed in the content (at the supermarket, at the hotel, at the doctor's office, at the cinema, at the clothes store), These settings are connected with the real life situations. This was a way to prepare students for future situations that can meet outside the classrooms in near or future time. Moreover, they created different scripts using their creativity and at the same time their imagination to express their needs, preferences, in real context, using appropriate vocabulary words and useful expressions to have an effective communication.

Regarding the second research question, student's perspectives on innovation were positive. Mustofa et al. (2019) stated that the teacher should add instructing technique to assist students with understanding material without any problem (as cited in Wibawanti, 2016, p.4). The material provided during the innovation were motivating for students and encouraged them to participate actively. The researcher prepared material based on the content reviewed to facilitate students learning and keep them interested during the development on the class. Games of competitiveness like: trivia and listening practice, allowed to keep students engaged and develop their listening skill. Strategies like: brainstorming, filling in the blanks, were helpful for students because they had the opportunity to practice pronunciation. Providing worksheets and handouts to practice grammar structures and vocabulary, were essential material to scaffold comprehension of the target language. All these interactive resources were a great support for the teacher, and they were applied through different apps: nearpod, kahoot, and educaplay. The activities and materials prepared were easy to understand and allow students to feel confident.

Kaur et al. (2020) stated that "In speaking class, one of teacher's role is to communicate with students and provide them a feedback on their speaking". (p.693). The rubric used by the teacher to explore students' achievements was a reliable instrument to

identify the aspects each participant were struggling on. After analyzing the results, the researcher was able to give feedback to the students and provide some techniques, for example: self-recordings to identify their mistakes, and play the audio sent by the teacher as many times they can to be familiar with the language pronunciation, among others. Students felt that they were not alone during the process of learning and felt free to express their fears toward speaking.

Conclusion

Being a country where English is not the mother tongue and people do not learn it within an English environment, make difficult to develop all the skills that are needed to use the language accurately and precisely. The reality for teachers and students in Ecuador is that English is learned inside a classroom but outside the classroom they continue to speak their own language which is Spanish. However, the Ministry of Education has made its best effort to improve English acquisition and has implemented several programs like Go Teacher and Time to Teach to give real opportunities to Ecuadorian to speak a second language. This study is focused on the exploration of the enhancement of speaking skill, applying self-assessment of roleplays to foster oral communication competences.

The positive results obtained after the implementation of the innovation, showed that self-assessment of roleplays are an effective strategy to help students develop their speaking abilities. Participants' replies and comments to the questions asked in the pre and post interviews pointed out that the innovation reached the objective, because they were aware of the improvements they did and did not hesitate to recommend to other students to participate in this study. It is inferred in their answers that the teaching methodologies used during the teaching and learning process (rubrics for self-assessment of roleplays) were innovative and ignite their motivation and increase their desire to learn English.

In spite of the difficult situations students went through, due to the pandemic, their excitement for learning did not wane. However, some of them, in certain occasions, could not be connected during the zoom conference because they had important issues to do, but this situation happened occasionally. To monitor students' product (roleplay), to give feedback on the aspects presented in the rubric and in the different practices made during the implementation, were important factors that allowed to have success at the end of the implementation. Technology was a great support on this path and the predisposition and eagerness to learn from the part of students, benefited both, participants and researcher. The objective was reached and this made well worth the time and effort invested.

Limitations

Low number of participants did not allow to go deeper in the exploration of this study. This project was applied during school holidays, there was just the participation of 10 volunteers. However, it is necessary to highlight that the situation that happened around the world because of COVID 19 interfered on the desired process. It means that it was not possible to work with students during school days because they were adapting to new ways of learning that they had not lived before, many families were through really tough times, and the major challenge students faced was the lack of expertise in the use of technological resources.

In addition, it is necessary to mention that roleplays embody some other aspects that were not considered in this study, for example, communication is not just "speaking", it also involves body language, however, researchers could not require to the students to use and appropriate body language because the sessions were online and the different settings where students were connected did not allow them a live interaction where they could be able to transmit the message with an assertive body language or prepare appropriate scenarios.

Recommendations

This study was executed with a minimum sample (10 participants). It is recommended for future researchers to apply the innovation on a sufficiently broad sample, considering a control group for better results. The material, the activities and the methodology used in this innovation produced a serie of opportunities to enhance oral coomunication skills that must be taken advantage of.

In addition, these findings suggest that other researchers could apply the innovation in a different scenary: in the classrooms. It is necessary to represent a “real scenary” as much as possible to evaluate the effort of the students to play the role, and other performance criteria in the rubric could be added, for example: customes, creativity, body language, entonation, and gestures, among others.

As final recommendation, the different roleplays prepared by students could be performed as part of an English festival, where students experience the satisfaction to demonstrate their knowledge and feel proud of their progress and at the same time, they serve as an inspiration for other students to acquire a second language.

References

- Al Hosni, S. (2014). Speaking difficulties encountered by young EFL learners. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, 2(6), 22-30. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/28699301/Speaking_Difficulties_Encountered_by_Young_EFL_Learners
- Aliakbari, M., & Jamalvandi, B. (2010). The Impact of "Role Play" on Fostering EFL Learner's Speaking Ability; a Task-Based Approach. *Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 14(1), 15-29, 2010. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ920501>
- Ardriyati, W. (2009). Role-play: one alternative and effective teaching method to improve students' communication skill. *Dinamika Bahasa Dan Budaya*, 3(2), 218-228. Retrieved from <https://www.unisbank.ac.id/ojs/index.php/fbib1/article/view/452>
- Arifin, Z., Nurbaya, S., & Salam, U. (2016). Improving students speaking ability through role play. *Journal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Khatulistiwa*, 5(10). Retrieved from <https://garuda.ristekbrin.go.id/documents/detail/1562716>.
- Baleghizadeh, S. & Masoun, A. (2014). The Effect of Self-assessment on EFL Learners' Goal Orientation. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 17(1), 25-48. Retrieved from: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Effect-of-Self-assessment-on-EFL-Learners%E2%80%99-Goal-Baleghizadeh-Masoun/4c5dcc4ac63da54408c7914264997d9201b4d8b5>
- Cetinkaya, Y. (2005). *Turkish college students' willingness to communicate in English as a foreign language*. (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation). Retrieved from <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/>
- Dután, S. (2020). *Peer feedback facilitated by WhatsApp to develop accuracy in speaking: an action research study*. (Master's thesis, Universidad Casa Grande, Guayaquil,

- Ecuador). Retrieved from
<http://dspace.casagrande.edu.ec:8080/handle/ucasagrande/2301>
- Gardner, D. (2000). *Self-assessment for autonomous language learners*. Links & Letters, Num. 7, pp. 49-60. Retrieved from <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/2281>
- Gillham, B. (2000). *The research Interview*. The Tower Building. Retrieved from:
https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=jaWHcDTMkL8C&oi=fnd&pg=PP7&dq=interview+&ots=qCO99pTXY8&sig=r8ZHxgkeH-XteSMg4eELhED7_tA#v=onepage&q=interview&f=false
- Han, T., & Keshin, F. (2016). *Using a Mobile Application (WhatsApp) to Reduce EFL Speaking Anxiety*. Gist Education and Learning Research Journal, 12, 29-50.
Retrieved from: <file:///C:/Users/HP%20240%20G4/Downloads/Dialnet-UsingAMobileApplicationWhatsAppToReduceEFLSpeaking-5560191.pdf>
- Kaur, D., & Aziz, A. A. (2020). The Use of Language Game in Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(12), 687-706. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v10-i12/8369>
- Krebt, D. (2017). The effectiveness of role play techniques in teaching speaking for EFL college students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8 (5), 863-870.
Retrieved from:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319431174_The_Effectiveness_of_Role_Play_Techniques_in_Teaching_Speaking_for_EFL_College_Students
- Rojas, M. (2018). Role-Play as an Assessment Tool in English as a Foreign language (EFL) Class. In (Intriago, E., Soto, S., & Villafuerte, J.), *Beyond Paper-and-Pencil Tests: Good Assessment Practices for EFL Classes (49-73)*. UTMACH: Ecuador. Retrieved from: <http://repositorio.utmachala.edu.ec/handle/48000/14443>

- Leong, L., & Ahmadi, S. (2017). *An Analysis of Factors Influencing Learners' English Speaking Skill*. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 2 (1), 34- 41.
Retrieved from: <https://ijreeonline.com/article-1-38-en.pdf>
- Lin, G. (2008). *Pedagogies proving Krashen's theory of affective filter*. (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED503681.pdf>
- Masruria, W., & Anam, S. (2021). Exploring Self-Assessment of Speaking Skill by EFL High School Students. *Linguistic, English Education and Art (LEEA) Journal*, 4(2), 387-400.
Retrieved from <https://journal.ipm2kpe.or.id/index.php/LEEA/article/view/2285>
- Neira, C. (2020). *Peer-feedback of students' recorded videos to improve oral skills: an action research study*. (Master's thesis, Universidad Casa Grande, Guayaquil, Ecuador).
Retrieved from <http://dspace.casagrande.edu.ec:8080/handle/ucasagrande/2311>
- Oradee, T. (2012). *Developing Speaking Skills Using Three Communicative Activities (Discussion, Problem-Solving, and RolePlaying)*. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 2 (6). 1-3. Retrieved from: <http://www.ijssh.org/papers/164-A10036.pdf>
- Ushca, A. (2020). *Improve speaking by self-assessment of students' recorded messages to improve speaking: an action research study*. (Master's thesis, Universidad Casa Grande, Guayaquil, Ecuador). Retrieved from
<http://dspace.casagrande.edu.ec:8080/handle/ucasagrande/2302>
- Wibawanti, I. (2020). Improving students' speaking skill through role play. *Journal of English Teaching and Learning*, 9(2). 1-11. Retrieved from
<http://riset.unisma.ac.id/index.php/LANG/article/view/7306/pdf>
- Yang, H. (2020). Secondary-school Students' Perspectives of Utilizing Tik Tok for English learning in and beyond the EFL classroom. *3rd International Conference on Education*

Technology and Social Science. Retrieved from

<http://clausiuspress.com/conferences/AETP/ETSS%202020/G7605.pdf>

Appendix A

Lesson Plan

Available upon request.

Appendix B

Rubric to assess speaking skill (pre and post-test)

Available upon request.

Appendix C

Interview

Available upon request.

Appendix D

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF ROLE PLAY

Available upon request.

Appendix E

Available upon request.