THE INFLUENCE OF DRAMA IN THE SPEAKING SKILLS OF TENTH GRADERS IN THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS

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PEREIRA
2018

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Trabajo de grado presentado como requisito para obtener el título de Licenciado en Bilingüismo con énfasis en inglés.

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ABSTRACT

This project examines the effectiveness of using Drama techniques to enhance the speaking skills in terms of prosody aspects of 10th graders in the public institution Francisco José de Caldas. The project was conducted by using three different types of Drama: Role-play, simulation, and Drama games. This classroom project discusses the main points and characteristics of Drama in the EFL classroom regarding speaking skills of students, as well as their attitudes and responses towards this innovative element in the language classroom. Some suggestions and beliefs are given throughout this written product to use Drama in the EFL classroom based on the particular experience of this project.

This project concludes that Drama is helpful for promoting speaking skills of students naturally and spontaneously while they have fun during the dramatic event. Drama is a suitable resource for bringing didactics into the language classroom and promoting speaking skills without pressure or anxiety, which leads to a natural and spontaneous oral production. This resource is not customary in the EFL classroom and has not usually been considered as a strategy for teaching English in the Colombian educative scenarios, which makes this exploration more interesting and helpful in our context for future teaching experiences based on Drama.

Keywords: Drama, Speaking, Prosody, Games, Acting

RESUMEN

Este proyecto examina la efectividad de las técnicas del arte dramático para mejorar las habilidades verbales en términos de prosodia, de estudiantes de grado décimo grado en la institución pública Francisco José de Caldas. El proyecto fue desarrollado por medio de tres tipos diferentes de teatro: juego de roles, simulación y juegos teatrales. Este proyecto de aula describe los principales puntos y características del arte dramático en el aula de clase de inglés respecto a las habilidades de habla de los estudiantes, así como también sus actitudes y respuestas hacia este elemento innovador en el salón de clase. Se proporcionan sugerencias y creencias a lo largo de este escrito para usar el arte dramático en la clase de inglés, basadas en la experiencia particular de este proyecto.

El proyecto concluye que el arte dramático es útil para promover las habilidades de habla de los estudiantes de forma natural y espontánea, mientras ellos se divierten durante el evento dramático. El arte dramático es un recurso adecuado para implementar didáctica en el aula de clase, y promover las habilidades de habla sin presión o ansiedad, lo cual conduce a una producción oral natural y dinámica. Este recurso no es habitual en el aula de inglés y usualmente no ha sido considerado como una estrategia para la enseñanza del inglés en escenarios educativos colombianos, lo cual hace esta exploración más interesante y útil en nuestro contexto para experiencias futuras de enseñanza basadas en el arte dramático.

Palabras Clave: Arte dramático, Habla, Prosodia, Juegos, Actuación.

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1. JUSTIFICATION

Oral speech is an essential ability of human communication, and when it comes to bilingual and educative contexts, it is relevant for learners to communicate fluently and effectively in real and immediate situations. This skill is the central focus of this project, as an effective oral communication is essential everywhere. Speaking skills have been studied by countless researchers, who have focused on their characteristics, development, and importance in human communication. Chaney (1998) indicates that speaking is the fact of constructing a reasonable sense by using different communicative abilities in various domains (p. 13), which states the necessity of developing this skill to achieve an effective communication in different contexts. Similarly, Bailey and Savage (1994), state that speaking is a central skill that consists of a set of several systems, which clearly means that this ability shows the development of the other skills at the same time. Furthermore, the implementation of this skill in EFL contexts has had a visible evolution since it started to be studied. Nunan (1999) argues that when teaching speaking, the focus should be on students, as they are the ones that should develop the oral abilities. Oral speech is the core of human communication in any context, and in bilingual education, speaking is an essential component, since it shows the language proficiency of every user, and it is the most basic way of communicating everything naturally.

In English teaching and learning scenarios, speaking abilities are one of the most important aspects to consider, as they represent one of the productive skills of the language, and the ability of learners to simply communicate regardless of the domain. Speaking is everywhere, ranging from a simple encounter of friends in the street to the most complex debate. In Colombian education, learners are usually afraid of using oral speech, as speaking has been taught as something systematic, and students generally do not have the opportunity to practice this skill in authentic and interactive activities, that encourage them to communicate orally in classes and out of them. That is the reason why this project focuses on prosody aspects of the language, since a high percentage of English classes in our country are based on grammar and linguistic structures, without considering aspects such as fluency, verbal production and the way language functions are communicated orally. Prosody takes care of all those language aspects that are not directly related with grammar, such as the emotional state of the speaker, pitch and stress, language functions and an appropriate

intonation for expressing ideas. This project focuses on this language feature, because it is relevant to emphasize language aspects that are also part of an effective communication. In addition, learners have the chance to simulate real life situations and express them naturally without considering "rules".

According to some national statistics, 40 percent of the participants in a research administered by the British Council, reported that their speaking skills were poor/basic, compared to 24 percent that rated their reading skills as basic. (British Council, 2015, p. 31)

Unfortunately, one of the skills that students find more difficult to meet is speaking, as educative scenarios usually lack innovative strategies to promote proficiency at speaking. In this way, this project is intended to cover a field that has not been well-developed and explored in Colombian language teaching, which is the implementation of Drama techniques to foster prosody aspects of speaking skills in English. National education has been characterized for being traditional and seeing language as a structural system and a set of grammatical rules. The use of artistic resources is important to transform education into a meaningful learning experience, and in this case, drama is the method that will be used to provide students with a significant and authentic learning environment, and at the same time, they can practice and work on an essential skill for communicating: Speaking.

The purpose of the project is to enhance and promote prosody aspects of speaking skills of tenth graders in a public institution, through the implementation of specific Drama techniques that have been selected by considering the development of this ability in a spontaneous, natural and significant way. This resource allows students to express freely without feeling evaluated or going through the normal pressure of making mistakes in front of everyone. This project provides high school learners with the opportunity to practice English in a realistic, enjoyable and dynamic environment.

This classroom project is made of teaching and learning goals. Regarding the professional development field, this project will provide practitioners with the opportunity of learning how to plan, design and implement teaching sessions based on a creative and innovative resource, which is aligned with a skill that is essential in EFL scenarios. Teachers to be can develop pedagogical foundations to know about new and useful learning strategies to promote language learning through a different methodology. It will also be a chance for

practitioners to learn classroom management techniques, as drama includes certain activities that require organization and a specific setting arrangements for the lessons to be successful. In general, this project focuses on creating a dynamic learning environment through Drama techniques, to practice and enhance learners' prosody aspects of speaking skills in diverse contexts and uses. In this way, at the end of the implementation of this classroom project, students are expected to come up with spontaneous and natural oral interventions in any context and topic, showing aspects that are mostly hidden in EFL classrooms such as emotions, intonation and language functions, which are essential when communicating.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The learning and teaching objectives for the development of this classroom project were:

- Explore the usefulness of drama as a teaching strategy to promote prosody aspects of English speaking skills.
- Discover students' attitudes towards drama as a speaking strategy to determine at what extent this resource works in the EFL classroom..
- Differentiate the use of intonation according to the type of performance and the utterances used when speaking (statement, question or command).
- Show prosody aspects of English language such as speaker's emotional state and identify the language functions present in the performances.
- Verbalize statements in English based on the performance developed, feelings involved and interaction of the participants.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have proved the efficacy of drama as well as the impact that it has on people's confidence and development of various skills. Drama is a resource that masters many abilities, such as: Body language, voice projection, improvisation, self-confidence and self-esteem, open-mindedness, among others. Drama prompts people to perform different characters in diverse situations, which leads to the exploration from the wide variety of circumstances they are exposed to in an artistic way. This is exactly what many teachers have found, that the art of acting with their innovative characteristics could serve as a resource that may help them boost students' skills, and at the same time, they would implement didactics into the classroom and bring new and creative opportunities for students to have a meaningful learning experience.

This review will present two studies that show the relation between drama/theatre and the learning of a second language through Dramatic resources. The first study was developed by Janudom and Wasanasomsithi (2009), which is *Drama and Questioning Techniques: Powerful Tools for the Enhancement of Students' Speaking Abilities and Positive Attitudes Towards EFL Learning*; and the second study belongs to Berman (2012), related to *Clowning and Improvisation in the ESL Classroom: Observations and Suggestions*

The first study mentioned before is about presenting techniques and strategies that can be beneficially used to accomplish the challenge of developing the students´communicative skills in the foreign language. Janudom and Wasanasomsithi (2009) examined the effectiveness of using drama and questioning techniques to enhance students' speaking skills in the English language, as well as their feelings and thoughts when learning a foreign language. The participants were a group of 15 students, three males and 12 females, who were second, third, and fourth-year students enrolled in an elective course offered by the university as a seven-week English through Drama summer course.

This project was based on two questions, which were: To what extent can drama and questioning techniques enhance students' speaking achievement? And what are students' attitudes towards English instruction employing the integration of drama and questioning

techniques? In order to collect data, the authors applied speaking tests before and after the implementation of the teaching tools and used a triangulation method that includes teacher's diaries, journals from students and questionnaires based on attitudes. The methodology that the author used is shown in four steps : (1) Working on a drama script in which students received background, (2) Drama rehearsal where students practiced each character's' roles, (3) Drama production in which students were recorded acting the play , and (4) Drama evaluation that was done by all the students and teacher watching their recorded performance. The findings of this research pointed out that there was a significant difference between the scores students obtained through the data collection methods before developing the project and finishing it, in terms of oral interaction and active experience. This improvement was noticeable in terms of the speaking abilities that students showed after administering the language tests. Moreover, it was proved that Drama and questioning techniques highlight oral interaction and active experience, and the teaching steps of the project facilitated students' interaction in various domains, and provided learners with useful language tools. It can be also said that there is a favorable perception and a positive position in general of English as a foreign language when being taught through the use of drama and questioning techniques. Finally, although the main focus of this study was the speaking ability, students were required to use also other language skills, as they had to read, write and listen in the different activities, which contributed to the enhancement of the speaking abilities.

The previous study can be connected to the second project that was carried out in 2012 by Robert Berman since both articles are focused on different variables of drama such as improvisation and clowning techniques to work on specific communicative skills including speaking. The second project called *Clowning and Improvisation in the ESL Classroom: Observations and Suggestions* by Berman (2012) intends to show how specific artistic strategies could work in EFL classrooms and the benefits it could bring. This thesis discusses the main points about these techniques and the reason why they may be helpful for students to facilitate their linguistic and paralinguistic skills. Regarding the context and setting in which this project was carried out, the teaching took place at the school Hofstaðaskóli in Garðabær with students from the sixth grade who have had two years of basic knowledge in English. The main question that guided the development of this project was: Does clowning and improvisation help when teaching English?

The methodology of this project was based on the development of four sessions that provided students with the most basic elements of clowning and improvisation. In the lessons, students had the opportunity of trying out different clowning exercises, and the researcher was in charge of exemplifying what students should do and the way they should behave after putting on the clown noses. During the sessions, students were asked about personal information, but they were supposed to talk about them by using clowning features. In addition, students were exposed to improvisation activities and games that helped them develop the artistic activities in a spontaneous way: these activities ranged from artistic warms - up to nonverbal exercises, that focused on the development of students' paralinguistic skills. As a final activity, learners performed their own clowning version of the fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood.

The findings of this project pointed out that students' confidence increased and they turned out to be open minded to try out new experiences. The facilitator also highlights the importance of the space when teaching drama, since the size of the room should be big, otherwise, the drama activities would not have the same impact on students' learning process. Finally, he states that the rule number one when teaching drama is to create trust in the classroom, since a student may not adapt to the method if there is no comfort with the resources presented and a confident relationship with the practitioner. In terms of language, these techniques proved to be effective for enhancing the communicative competence of students and their oral interaction as users of a foreign language.

In order to carry out the classroom project based on drama at the High School Francisco José de Caldas, the projects presented above, are helpful to have a basis and a general perception of how these new strategies may work into the EFL classroom, and they also provide us with a diagnosis of the anticipated inconveniences we may find, as well as an idea of the way this new teaching technique should be implemented. Studies conducted by anudom and Wasanasomsithi (2009), and Robert Berman (2012), offered an outline of the events we would later face during the implementation of drama, and also they provided us with some ideas and specific drama techniques that may be included in the project, such as clowning and improvisation; which help learners boost not only their linguistic skills in terms of communicative competence and speaking abilities, but also their paralinguistic features. However, there are other aspects that we implemented, which those studies lack. For instance, this project considered students' likes and familiar situations for them, prompts for

them to create innovative performances, and students' imagination to come up with authentic ideas.

<div align="center">**2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**</div>

2.2.1 DRAMA

Innovation and creativeness are two aspects that many educators try to reach in EFL contexts, not only to achieve content goals in the subject matter, but also to foster and strengthen students' affective filter when learning a second or a foreign language. As a matter of fact, many studies have discovered that teaching strategies such as Drama, gather these two components, and it could be effective in language teaching scenarios. Drama has been proved to have a positive impact on students' speaking skills, but also on their confidence, body language, and spontaneity and on their general perception of English learning. Here are the main concepts, studies and research about Drama and its impact in teaching scenarios in order to support the classroom project "The influence of Drama in the speaking skills of tenth graders in the public institution Francisco José de Caldas".

Drama

Drama has plenty of concepts and definitions since it is a wide artistic field. Regarding the main definitions, Drama is defined as a process in which human thoughts and imagination are transformed into real behaviors. Drama focuses on empathy and recognition of ourselves, which conducts us to adopt other personifications. (Courtney, 1980, p, 7.). Holden (1982) agrees with Courtney, saying that it leads the learner to the body and inner self of someone else, but he also considers that Drama carries the learners to imagine themselves in other settings for what "Drama is concerned with the world of let's pretend" (p. 1). Besides, there are other perceptions of Drama, apart from imagination and representations as stated above. For instance, Drama is also taken as a part of our daily life:

> Drama is doing. Drama is being. Drama is such a normal thing. It is something that we engage in daily when faced with difficult situations. You get up in the morning with a bad headache or an attack of depression, yet you face the day and cope with other people, pretending that nothing is wrong [...] getting on with our day-to-day lives requires a serie of civilized masks if we are to maintain our dignity and live in harmony with others. (Wessels, 1987, p. 7)

This means that Drama is part of human life, as it is experienced by every person in real life since we are usually involved in situations that lead us to behave differently from what we feel, by projecting other image and hiding our real emotions, to keep our honor and a good environment with other people.

Basically, these three authors point out that drama is about embracing other postures different from what we are and distinct experiences from the ones we normally go through. Courtney (1980) and Holden (1982), claim that imagination is an important component of drama in order to assume new characters and identities, while Wessels (1987) indicates that drama is similar to normal life because of extrinsic factors, which prompt us to fake our real emotions to depict a more acceptable behavior.

Use of Drama in Language Teaching

As drama covers different features of acting, it is necessary to divide it into several types or variables in order to understand the content of this field. That is the reason why drama has been classified according to the focus and features of its elements. The four main types of drama are as follows:

Mime. This particular use of drama has been always appealing by different artistic purposes since nonverbal language gives a special and distinct touch to the field of drama and theatre. According to Dougill (1987), mime is a non-communicative performance of "a nonverbal representation of an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement and expression" (p. 13). This definition comprises how mime works, including the body language and all the features that help to express any issue or situation. However, mime also turns out to be an effective method to encourage the target language production because "Its strength lies in that although no language is used during the mime, the mime itself can act as a catalyst to generate and elicit language before, during, and after the activity" (Gaudart, 1990, p. 235). This author points that even though spoken language is not used in this type of drama, language can be elicited from the performance due to the specific events that occur during its development. In addition, Savignon (1983), not only highlights the ability of mime for producing language, as he says that mime helps learners become comfortable with the idea of performing in front of peers without concerning for language, and that although no language is used during a mime session, it can be a spur to use language (p.1427). This expert

highlights the importance of mime to create a more pleasant atmosphere, as people are not usually afraid of making language mistakes. Gaudart (1990) and Savignon (1983) agree with the fact that this technique can bring linguistic advantages if it is used as a motor that produces speech. For example, in a guessing game, mime would be the stimulus that impulse the use of language.

Role-Play. Different from mime, this type of drama focuses on real life situations and behaviors that are performed in a theatrical way, since mime is a nonverbal activity, and role-plays are based on verbal language. Livingstone (1986) defines role-play as "a classroom activity which gives the student the opportunity to practice the language, the aspects of role behavior, and the actual roles students may perform in real life". This expert points out the linguistic benefits that drama practice brings and how useful the roles reproduced in the classroom can be in real life situations. Similarly, Sam (1990) confirms that role-play is "an activity which requires a person to take on a role that is real or imaginary" (p. 15). He introduces a factor that is relevant in the definition of role-play, which is imagination, as he considers that role-play may focus on both real and imaginary conditions. Scrivener (2005) is more specific saying that in a role-play, students act small scenes using their ideas or from ideas and information on role cards (p. 362). He clarifies that teachers are not the only ones who prepare the plays, as students' creativeness can be developed in this kind of activities by producing their own performance. Besides, Landy and Montgomery (2012) see a role play not only as an activity in which students can act scenes from particular ideas, but also as

> "A basic procedure in every life and in drama and theatre that occurs when individuals put themselves in the shoes of others. It involves a process of decentering, imagination, and action. In therapy, role playing is used to rehash an unresolved episode from the past, to rehearse a future possibility and to learn to live more fully in the present." (Drama and theatre in therapy, para. 9).

These authors think of role-playing as a more natural matter, as they consider this to happen not only in drama classes but in the common roles we perform in our lives. Livingstone (1986) pointed out that these roles can be a great help outside the classroom due to the therapy use mentioned. In this way, these experts believe this type of drama can be used for personal improvement, which may be reflected also in the classroom as spontaneity and natural interaction when speaking, and the perception of the learning process in general.

Simulation. Even though simulation is not as spontaneous and free as improvisation, it is another well-known use of drama that highlights the social benefits of performing a role, which is even useful for real life situations and to raise awareness in key learning factors. Davies (1990) points out the effectiveness of simulation to enforce social skills, as he says that simulation may help learners find the sensitiveness human beings need to perform adequately in social contexts. This is also confirmed by other authors, who state that in a social environment, learners should identify themselves. "In order for a simulation to occur, the participants must accept the duties and responsibilities of their roles and functions, and do the best they can in the situation in which they find themselves" (Jones, 1982, p. 113). The simulation process is based on taking responsibility and determining duties, in order to simulate and perform a situation as real as possible, and simulation is believed to include all those aspects of life circumstances, so the participating learners are also involved in real life. According to Buckner (1999), simulation portrays in a dynamic way what people usually find in specific contexts. This author refers to simulation as a didactic process in which learners find the possibility of seeing real life situations reproduced in the activity they perform, which is related to the goals of this classroom project that wants learners to focus on prosody aspects of speaking skills while acting a real life situation.

Drama games. Drama and language games have a different focus from the types of Drama listed previously, as they can serve as a natural introduction to dramatic activities and as preparation for role-play, improvisation, and other drama experiences. They involve concentration, listening, memorization, observation, interaction, and interpretation, language games extend the word power of learners, and increases their agility, fluency, and flexibility in the use of English (Davies, 1990, p. 96).

Drama games include ice-breakers, energizers, and brain-teasers, among others. These are usually of short duration and are used as introductory or concluding activities. They are meant to create immediate motivation as well as physical and/or mental stimulation, which will draw students into or sustain active learning that, is centered on authentic/actual communication in the target language (Stoate, 1984 and Dougill, 1987). This author highlights the effectiveness of using drama games to arise interest and foster motivation to learn a foreign language, so they can find the meaningfulness of their learning process. Furthermore, observations have indicated that less structured games allow students to switch easily to their mother tongue. Unstructured games also demand very minimal teacher control,

so the class can be out of it (Gaudert, 1990). This signifies that the more structured a drama game is, the more control and effectiveness the teacher will have over the activities, and the better the results will be. In this classroom project, some drama games are part of the introduction in each session, to warm students up and get them to be familiarized with Drama.

Drama in EFL classrooms

When it comes to the linguistic effects and the efficacy of using drama as a resource for teaching English into the EFL classroom, some researchers have demonstrated how effective this innovative resource is as a language learning tool. Heldenbrand (2003) indicates that drama allows teachers to detach from the teaching materials to focus on authentic and useful language. Adding to what Heldenbrand stated, Moghaddas and Ghafariniae (2012) went beyond and discovered that Drama is not only a medium to contextualize new words and expressions, while speaking aspects such as pronunciation and intonation are improved and the culture of the target language is comprised. Drama also increases student' self-determination, liability, and trust to speak in front of other people. Likewise, Rothwell (2012) argues that

"Enrollment in drama by students and teacher encourage risk taking and participation, so many students become more confident to experiment with limited language in order to communicate spontaneously. […] Actually 'doing' drama allow them to engage with both spoken and written language while also using their bodies as an expressive, communicative medium" (p. 66).

On the other hand, Rothwell (2012) highlights that Drama employs not only speech, but also written and body language, which makes this field appropriate for the development of numerous abilities, including other types of communication. However, the speaking skill seems to be the most favored in Drama, as Moghaddas and Ghafariniae (2012) and Rothwell (2012) stated. Moreover, these authors acknowledge that Drama plays an important role by making learners believe in themselves to boost their public participation. Finally, Heldenbrand (2003) and Moghaddas and Ghafariniae (2012) strengthened the idea that Drama offers the opportunity to use authentic language since instead of implementing material designed for language teaching, it focuses on the use of genuine vocabulary and

expressions in a practical way. That is the reason why this resource was selected as the teaching strategy to be implemented in the classroom project, since Drama, its characteristics and benefits should serve as a help for working on students' oral speech in a more natural, realistic and didactic way, which impacts their prosody aspects of speaking skills. The next conceptual framework focuses on these last concepts.

2.2.2 SPEAKING

After reviewing the different functions, benefits and characteristics of Drama in the speaking skills, it is important to analyze this ability in depth to understand the main focus of this project that is the enhancement of prosody aspects in oral speech. Particularly, speaking has a wide variety of definitions since it represents the ability of producing the spoken language, which is essential for human communication. Unfortunately, students' output usually reflects the lack of strategies and methods to work on this ability in EFL classrooms. Drama is considered to be an innovative way of fostering this skill, as it is different from the traditional techniques that are not effective anymore in language teaching.

Nunan (2003) states that "speaking is the productive oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterance to convey meaning". (p. 48). This author approaches speaking as a meaningful way to communicate orally in order to achieve specific functional purposes. Chaney (1998) indicates that speaking is the fact of constructing a reasonable sense by using different communicative abilities in various domains (p. 13), which presents speaking as the way to construct and show thoughts, either oral or by other mean, and in diverse circumstances. Bailey and Savage (1994), state that "Speaking is an activity that requires the integration of many subsystems. All these factors combine to make speaking a second or foreign language a formidable task for language learners. For many people yet, speaking is seen as the "central skill". These researchers highlight speaking as one of the most important skills, since it is essential in language learning, and for many learners it is believed to be the main skill, as it gathers the learning and development of other skills as well.

Teaching Speaking

As presented so far, speaking is essential, as it serves as a method to express meaning effectively and immediately. In this way, the achievement of a high conversational level in any language has become a main goal in the teaching field, and therefore, it is necessary to explore the barriers that impede the accomplishment of speaking proficiency.

Factors that impede the speaking development. Working on oral speech sometimes is a drawback when there are different types of learners. That is why Nunan (1999) argues

that when teaching speaking, the focus should be on students. Teachers must consider the individuals who are unwilling to speak as his/her greatest challenge. The prior learning experiences and motivation are the factors that lead learners to become reluctant. (as cited in Fauzan, 2012).

> *Students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy. Students have no motivation to express themselves (...) only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate while others speak very little or not at all (...) learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because they feel less exposed if they speak their mother tongue* (Hosni, 2014, p. 123)

This author presents specific behaviors that affect the use of the target language during the classes. Students' fear and shyness can be closely related to what Nunan (1999) mentioned regarding the impact of previous negative experiences in English lessons. He also approaches a relevant and actual aspect of the current English teaching scenarios, as students prefer to use their mother tongue because of shyness and comfort, which diminishes the use of the target language and improvement of oral production.

In the same line, Tuan and Mai (2015) present some factors that affect students' speaking performance such as motivation, confidence, anxiety, time, planning, amount of support, standard performance, listening ability and feedback during speaking activities. It requires students to have well-developed listening skills in order to understand the speech of their interlocutor. (As cited in Oseno, 2015).

These authors add more elements that justify the oral communication difficulties. Similarly, Tuan and Mai (2015) highlight that if the learner is not a good listener, neither he nor she will be a good speaker, and they also comment that if learners were allowed to speak freely without many rules and interruptions, their performance would be better. According to all the authors involved in this section, there are external and internal elements that play an important role to foster oral language, and one of the most crucial is motivation. Considering what Hosni (2015) stated above, it can be inferred that motivation is impacted by the class management in which other aspects must be included, as mentioned by Nunan (1999) and Tuan and Mai (2015).

Activities to foster speaking production. When it comes to encourage students to speak in front the other classmates, factors that limit the use of spoken language, such as the ones mentioned before, are beneficial to be considered. This should be done with the purpose of searching appropriate activities that destroy those interferences. Thus, authors as Lubis (1988), interpreted by Fauzan (2012), suggests some communicative activities in teaching speaking; they are: guessing games, situational practice, self-directed dialogue, a mixer, dialogues, improvisations, plays, readings, compositions, speeches, small group discussion, debates, group projects, and games. These activities have been proved to be useful to foster speaking skills in a didactic way, which means that learners could develop easier their oral speech when being exposed to dynamic environments. Likewise, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) focus on real and genuine activities such as oral interview, stories, broadcasting, video clips, gap-filling, storytelling, and other dynamic Drama activities.

Similarly, Gudu (2015) has cited some language scholars who indicate that the implementation of learning activities, can help to improve the lack of speaking skills' development. Those activities should lead learners to enjoy and help them foster their spoken language. Some activities are: "group discussions, speeches, storytelling, drama, debates, poem recitation, songs, and tongue-twisters" (Johnson, 2006, Villegas and Lukas, 2002, Gathumbi and Masembe, 2005; Okech, 2005).

Most of the activities suggested by these experts are fun and require teamwork, which means that dividing the class into small teams can be an effective technique to arise students' participation. The activities above require learners to express their opinions, thoughts, likes and dislikes, which indicates that learners need to be provided with a space where they receive attention about their speech and communication, so they feel valued and comfortable for being participants of the class. Finally, the activities embrace prosody aspects of speaking skills, as drama activities lead students to simulate real life situations, which prompt them to express feelings, different language functions and modify their intonation appropriately.

Main components of the spoken language

In order to achieve a better understanding of the wide term of speaking skills, it is necessary to take a look at the different components in which this skill is classified.

Regarding the elements that compose the oral language, there are many items that could be listed in this broad skill. However, according to some known authors, there are five components that are definitely essential in the development of this ability:

Pronunciation. This is an essential component of speaking skills, since an effective comprehension and clear communication depend on pronunciation features. A speaker may have clear ideas in mind, but if there is no knowledge about how to pronounce correctly, communication will not be achieved. Murphy (1991) claims that there is a strong relationship among pronunciation, speaking and listening skills, and therefore, pronunciation should be a particular subject that facilitates the development of these skills. Pronunciation turns out to be such an important aspect, that it is considered to be a subject apart from the other skills. In addition, Ur's (1984) comments that "it is certainly true that if the learner learns how to pronounce sounds accurately, it will be much easier to hear them correctly when said by someone else". This author agrees with Murphy (1991), since he also considers that an accurate pronunciation facilitates the comprehension of our interlocutors' speech, which confirms the relevance of this component. Some authors point further features of pronunciation that make this component even more necessary for oral communication and intelligibility. For example, Crawford (1987) claims that suprasegmental features of the language are truly relevant in spoken language, since they lead to the improvement of EFL learners' pronunciation, and therefore, they should be mastered and practiced in order to achieve a higher level of effective communication and comprehension. As this researcher states, the elements of pronunciation, such as intonation, stress, accent, among others, contribute to the advancement of speaking skills and communication in general.

Fluency. This element of speaking skills is related with pronunciation because it makes speech more natural. This is an important element in oral communication, as a fluent speaker shows a well-developed internalization of the language. It was first defined as 'the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously' (Bygate, 1991, p.3). This author points out that fluency is based on spontaneity and the ability of using the oral language in an uninterrupted way, and without hesitation. Richards (1992:141) defines fluency as "the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal." This concept of fluency leads to the belief that fluency is the characteristic that makes oral language natural. Fluency is considered to be the range of use for speakers to manage the language in a fast and confident way, with few hesitations or interruptions, false starts, word searches. (_Bailey and

Nunan, 2004, p. 55). This author mentions speed and confidence about spoken language, and in this way, fluency becomes a personal factor for the comfort when speaking a foreign language, to sound natural, spontaneous and precise.

Accuracy. It is said that being fluent in a language is not enough to convey meaning effectively, since speech should be also accurate in order to be effective. Basically, an effective communication is made up of accuracy and fluency characteristics. Some authors consider the speakers of a language to be fluent but not accurate, which interferes a good communication at all.

To begin with, Richards (1992:31), defines accuracy concerns as the ability to generate statements that are grammatically accepted. This author states that accuracy is in charge of producing well-structured speech, which is essential for developing strong communication skills. Many linguists agree with the idea of developing linguistic skills similar to the ones of native speakers of the target language. According to Bartram and Walton (2002) accuracy in spoken English, refers to utterances that are similar to the native speaker's speech", which means that the closer language is to that of native speakers, the more evident accuracy is. In addition, other experts define this characteristic as the similarity between speakers' speech and others' speech. "Accuracy is the extent to which students' speech matches what people say when they use the target language" (Bailey, 2004, p. 55). A comparison is made again between the speech of non-native speakers and native speakers, in order to become a more natural and accurate speaker.

Grammar. In order to become an accurate and fluent speaker, it is necessary to be aware also of grammatical structures and rules that are used to communicate and speak a language appropriately. Countless authors have approached this language component, which is basically defined as "the internalized system of rules that speakers of a language share" (rpt. in Hartwell 189). This concept presents grammar as the basic language knowledge that is shared by a community and that provide information about the rules that should be used to speak a language. Additionally, Swain (1998) said that "teaching grammar lessons out of context, as paradigms to be rehearsed and memorized, is also insufficient", which clearly indicates that grammatical issues must be taught in context, since it is not enough to work on grammar as an isolated element that has to be learnt without a practical use. Some experts approach grammar as a language aspect that is natural and instinctive for language

acquisition. As a matter of fact, Kolln (2012) said, "If you are a native speaker of English, you are already an expert. You bring to the study of grammar a lifetime of "knowing". This demonstrates that grammar is a set of structures naturally acquired, and that a native speaker has already expertise in this matter for the language acquisition process, so native knowledge of a language is a reference for an appropriate language use.

The experts above agree with the fact that speaking is an essential communicative skill that embraces all the knowledge about the language. This skill shows the proficiency level in the foreign language, as well as the grammatical structures the speaker is aware of. Despite the fact that the speaking components mentioned above are important, this classroom project based on Drama activities is focused on prosody aspects of speaking skills, which is not directly related to grammar, accuracy and other speaking aspects, but the production and expression of other language elements. It is important then to review some information about the feature the project focuses on. Firstly, "Prosody is the music of speech. It includes features of sound such as pitch, stress, duration, and loudness. Prosody is the way we say words and phrases beyond their phonemic and lexical qualities. Phrasing in spoken and written English is based on normative musical patterns for grouping words together (Armstrong & Ward, 1931; Schreiber, 1987; Wennerstrom, 2001). As stated, prosody has to do with some language features that are beyond grammatical rules and accuracy; it is related instead to the way things are said, speaker's intentions and emotional state when speaking, and how intonation changes according to the situation and internal/external factors, just to mention a few. Prosody is considered also as the melody and rhythm of oral language. It includes the suprasegmental features of speech that are communicated under the factors of frequency, intensity, and length; some of these features are stress, intonation, tone, etc. (Kent and Kim, 2008). So far, prosody aspects of language have been presented as those elements that are communicated via language but are not related with grammar or systematic components of language. Instead, those elements are linked with the intentions, feelings, and suprasegmental features of pronunciation that reflect what is happening in a speaker's mind at the moment of producing oral speech. This classroom project is focused on prosody, as it is important to take a look not only at grammatical issues at the moment of speaking, but also at verbal production itself and the presence of language functions, feelings and intentions, and how they influence pronunciation patterns and the way of communicating things.

Some of the authors mentioned, highlight the importance of didactics when developing speaking exercises and activities, to reduce anxiety and stress to become spontaneous, fluent and accurate speakers. As this classroom project is based on the implementation of Drama to foster prosody aspects of speaking skills, Drama must be a key strategy to achieve the reduction of these negative feelings that affect the affective filter of students at the moment of speaking. The different types of drama are a great help for students to enjoy speaking activities. Moreover, it is proved that Drama helps students feel comfortable while working on language skills, so they can become natural and spontaneous speakers. Students can focus on enjoying their speech while they use the language naturally, instead of paying attention completely to every single word, which may impede learners' development of oral communicative skills. Drama is definitely an excellent way of stimulating prosody aspects of speaking skills, since it is based on playing, using the language and simulating real life situations at the same time, which facilitates the use of prosody within the EFL classroom.

3. METHODOLOGY

This section presents the information about the classroom project proposal, based on the implementation of drama resources to foster students' prosody aspects of their speaking skills. It presents the procedure, methodology, instructional design and development, resources and materials, assessment procedures and instruments for data collection of this classroom project, along with other aspects required for its implementation in a real educative scenario.

3.1 Context

The high school Institución Educativa Francisco José de Caldas is the institution in which the classroom project was carried out. This is a public school founded in 1950, with a medium socioeconomic stratum. This school has an academic and technical focus, as the syllabus is based on the exposure of the students to content of different academic subjects, but also to technical areas. In tenth grade, students may decide which modality to choose as their graduation focus, either the academic, that includes a higher intensity on subjects as English, Spanish, and Mathematics (five hours per week in each one of them), or the technical modality that focuses on an intensity of technology and electronics. This institution has 25 In-service teachers, including 5 that specialize on English teaching. Nowadays, there is an approximate amount of 900 students enrolled in this institution, which are distributed from 6th grade to 11th grade.

3.2 Setting

This classroom project was developed in this institution, where English teaching is applied based on the standards provided by the National Ministry of Education for each grade. The project was implemented specifically in a 10th grade classroom. In this grade, students who chose the academic modality, receive 5 weekly hours of English classes. The English curriculum is based on a forward design, that sets the goals at the beginning of the course, so students can be aware of the focus and learning points they will achieve throughout every period, and the English teachers implement their methodologies differently, but they all follow the requirements of the syllabus and the curriculum.

3.3 Participants

This classroom project was conducted in a public school located in Santa Rosa de Cabal. The students are secondary graders and the practitioners are two students from the program "Licenciatura en bilingüismo con énfasis en inglés". The participants and practitioners of this classroom project are as follows:

3.3.1 Students. This classroom project was conducted in a tenth grade with 38 students, whose ages range between 15 and 17 years old. They were 25 males and 13 females. In this grade, learners are expected to have achieved an A2 proficiency level in the language, and they should go over the B1 level in the following grade. They are in the stage of formal operations that is the last stage of development of intelligence that starts between 11 and 12 years of age when "the child becomes capable of reasoning not only on the basis of objects, but also on the basis of hypotheses, or of prepositions" (Marlowe & Canestrari, p. 105, 2006). That means that the learners are able to think about abstract ideas and they also have the ability to imagine possible solutions and results to different problems or situations; therefore, their cognitive processes are more advanced and complex.

3.3.2 Practitioners. The practitioners of this classroom project were two students of the Licenciatura en Bilingüismo program from Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira. They were in charge of orienting the project, designing and planning the lessons, engaging students in the drama sessions based on simulation, role-plays and drama games, and assessing students' progress in speaking skills. Practitioners performed the roles of implementers and observers simultaneously during the lessons.

3.4 Instructional Design

This project was aligned with communicative language teaching since the implementation of Drama was focused on producing meaningful and authentic communication among students instead of teaching language structures. The activities were designed for small groups and others with the whole class, depending on the type of drama.

On the other hand, this project followed a backward approach, since there were specific outcomes that were defined since the beginning of the project, which focused on prosody aspects of spoken language that students rehearsed and worked on during the implementation of Drama and its different variables. The population impacted by this project was a tenth grade group from a public institution in Santa Rosa de Cabal, who were the participants of the Drama sessions that were divided into three main types of Drama, through which learners were expected to experience a rehearsal and improvement of their speaking skills, specifically prosody aspects such as intonation, fluency, register, pitch, and language functions and emotional state.

3.5 Development and Implementation

This classroom project was focused on the use of Drama, defined as a process in which human thoughts and imagination are transformed into real behaviours. Drama focuses on empathy and recognition of ourselves, which conducts us to adopt other personifications. (Courtney, 1980, p, 7.). In this way, drama was used as a resource to foster students' speaking skills and to provide them with other enriching and interesting experiences apart from the traditional textbooks. As drama is such a wide artistic field, its implementation in this project was done according to some known types of Drama. In this way, in every session of the project, students were exposed to one main variable of Drama such as: role-playing or simulation, and also Drama games that were used to open the sessions, since they "include ice-breakers, energizers, and brain-teasers" (Stoate, 1984 and Dougill, 1987, p.1425). The idea was that students could become fluent at speaking and identifying spoken features unrelated to merely grammar and linguistic structures, while they lose their fear of expressing themselves in front of their classmates.

In order to implement this project, the Drama sessions were conducted based on the principles or steps that have been defined by Janudom and Wasanasomsithi (2009) for the development of a Drama activity, which are (1) Working on a drama script in which students receive background knowledge, (2) Drama rehearsal where students practiced each character's' roles, (3) Drama production in which students are recorded acting the play , and (4) Drama evaluation that is done by the students and teacher. These guidelines proposed an effective method for implementing a variety of Drama activities into the EFL classroom, as they synthesize the basic steps and events that occur during a Drama activity. However, it is

important to clarify that these principles were applied only for some of the types of Drama that this project intended to present. Simulation, Role-play and some Drama games followed completely this sequential theory proposed by Janudom and Wasanasomsithi (2009). In contrast, some Drama games were practiced in accordance with only the third step of the sequence, which is based on the production of drama, and as these games are more spontaneous, the only aspect to consider is the production in the activities. Basically, these principles are completely or partially followed depending on the activity that is presented to the learners. (See appendix 1)

This project was intended to impact a group of teenagers from tenth grade in a public institution, who were expected to have an A2 level of English language proficiency. As speaking skills are the ones that learners usually feel more afraid of, this project aimed at presenting a different strategy to work on students' speaking features, and also to help them lose their nervousness of using the oral language in front of their partners, in a meaningful and innovative way, so they can boost one of the productive skills that is essential for communication, and its prosody aspects that are not considered most of times in speaking activities.

3.6 Resources and Materials

This classroom project required specific materials and resources that were key components in the implementation of Drama as a mean to foster students' speaking skills. The resources were an essential element of the project, since they guaranteed an adequate implementation of Drama that had a direct impact on students' performance and skills' improvement. This classroom project included mainly the following resource:

3.6.1 Scripts. It refers to the dialogues, lines and defined language that students used during the Drama activities. They provided students with the possibility of focusing completely on the depicted situation and circumstances, so they could experience their characters in a realistic way. The scripts were used as a support of the simulation and role-play activities, and were written by students themselves. Scripts followed real-life situations, which facilitated the inclusion of language functions and prosody aspects such as intonation, pitch and emotional state that the project intended to identify.

3.7 Assessment procedures

In this classroom project, assessment played an important role to measure specific features in the speaking ability, related to prosody aspects. Therefore, assessment examines the impact of role-playing, simulation, and also Drama games on students' prosody aspects of speaking skills.

Learners were assessed considering the formative form. According to Harlen and James (1997), the formative assessment takes into account the promotion of learning by considering the progress and effort of each learner, so they can notice their strengths and weaknesses and create awareness of their own learning process. This type of assessment was done by the practitioners in class; for instance, general feedback was given to the class in general and also per groups. Participants received comments, linguistic support and monitoring during the stage of drama rehearsal and they were assessed in the production stage in terms of prosody aspects.

3.8 Instruments and Reflection for the report of the project

Schön (1983) states that 'When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories or established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case' (p.68). It is important to reflect in-action, since the practitioner becomes independent and a constructor of a new way of theory. In this project, practitioners considered the theories proposed about Drama and speaking skills of previous studies and projects, but adapted to this context, and in this way, practitioners could develop a unique experience for learners to work on speaking skills through Drama.

On the other hand, reflection-on-action involves reflecting on how practice can be developed or modified after the teaching event, since 'We reflect on action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome' (Schön, 1983, p. 26). In this way, by reflecting on-action, practitioners of this project could discover the effectiveness of Drama, which is an innovative teaching resource nowadays, to work on speaking skills of the students, focusing on prosody aspects. In order to reflect on-action, it is necessary to develop first an adequate process of

reflecting in-action during the implementation process, and due to this, teachers could discover those outcomes that were arisen as a result of the learning experiences of the project, which were reflected in the improvement and practice of prosody aspects of speaking skills through Drama. Regarding the roles for reflecting in-action and on-action, practitioners played the roles of implementers and observers. Both practitioners had these two roles simultaneously in each session.

In this project, the reflection was based on students' linguistic outcomes and responses, and practitioners' professional development. In order to evidence the reflection on those components after implementing the project, some instruments were used. These were the instruments for students' linguistic outcomes:

3.8.1 Observation formats. One observation format was used in this project. Six observations formats were filled out according to the number of participants observed. They included items aspects of prosody, such as intonation, fluency, register and emotional state, and a space to cross them out if they were present and at which point, and a space for observations and comments on these linguistic aspects. The codification for observation was "O" (See appendix 2)

3.8.2 Interview. This method was relevant for this project, because learners could be aware of previous aspects of their learning process that they usually did not think about. These interviews were done with the six students of the sample population selected. The six interviews were conducted throughout the implementation of the project, and its principal objective was to know students' perceptions and knowledge about the topics of the project, and at what extent they were familiar with those issues. This information was useful for practitioners to determine if students' performance was due to their previous experience in the subject matter, or just because of the input they received in the project. The codification for interviews was "I" (See appendix 3)

In contrast, to reflect on practitioners' professional development, the following instrument was used:

3.8.3 Journal entries. This instrument was useful for facilitators to reflect and think about the teaching aspects that occurred during the sessions and the way they can improve, polish, or modify them. This instrument provided an opportunity of registering valuable data based on what happened in the classroom through the implementation of Drama to foster speaking skills. One journal entry was written per each session, which led to a collection of events and reflections that told the progress of the project and its participants. The codification for journal entries was "E", that stands for entry.

4. RESULTS

Based on the data collected from three data collection methods: Observation logs, written interviews for students and reflection entries for practitioners, the following results of the classroom project "The influence of Drama in the speaking skills of tenth graders in the public institution Francisco José de Caldas", are presented under three main categories: linguistic outcomes, students' responses and professional growth. In general, these instruments demonstrate how useful Drama techniques are when it comes to work on prosody aspects of students' speaking skills under the three main fields mentioned above.

4.1 Linguistic outcomes

Drama and its influence on students' speaking skills in terms of prosody

Different prosodic aspects were considered in this category. Regarding intonation, students were able to turn their voice up and down according to the messages conveyed in the different drama activities. Intonation was appropriate in most cases based on the language functions that were used in each performance (apologizing, giving opinions, ordering, and expressing affirmative statements). Intonation reflected the situation that was portrayed in each case, and its correct use was connected to fluency in most of cases. In contrast, voice was flat in some students, which was an obstacle for communicating effectively, since the situation they performed was less credible and more confusing. In general, students expressed themselves accurately and accordingly, and their use of prosody skills facilitated the comprehension and credibility of the performances based on real life situations.

Students' speech in this project, confirmed the importance of prosody aspects of speaking skills to achieve an effective communication. In this way, drama techniques were useful for evidencing students' development in terms of prosody aspects as well as their abilities to depict situations with the intonation, fluency, emotional state and register they would use in real life. The implementation of the different drama techniques gave students the opportunity to reproduce and simulate situations in the classroom and act as if they were living those experiences in the real world. It was evident that they tried to use prosody skills correctly to make their statements accurate and their performance real and credible. In

general, there was an appropriate use of language functions such as asking questions, expressing opinions, apologizing, making requests; which shows the influence of emotional state in students' outcomes. Those students that used intonation appropriately and were more fluent, happened to have a better use of language functions when representing real life situations. Regarding register, it was noticed that most of the students observed, had problems when trying to use an adequate register for each situation. Some of them acted and spoke very formal in informal situations, and register could have been more informal and relaxed due to the daily and spontaneous situations they performed. In general, drama served as a method to prove how students would speak and use prosody skills in common situations, and it was a dynamic way of dealing with realistic scenarios and their pragmatic competence.

Students' linguistic outcomes in this classroom project, were outstanding in terms of prosody skills and oral production, focusing on intonation, fluency, language functions, emotional state and register. Two of the components observed, are evidenced in the following comments taken from the observation format under the characteristics *Intonation and Fluency*:

Voice went up and down according to the messages conveyed and their content. However, some hesitation was evident.

(O1; implementer 1; 17/10/2017) Box 1

This sample stands for a piece of an observation log format that was used to check prosody skills of one of the students observed during a role-play performance. It basically describes how appropriate and well-developed intonation and fluency aspects were in accordance with the situation that was portrayed while the observation took place. In this case, Michelle (student 1), showed an outstanding performance at the intonation and fluency levels, with just some hesitation that may be attributed to the nervousness this participant went through in the activity.

It is necessary to highlight that in certain moments, students' linguistic outcomes were interrupted because they would laugh or make fun of the situation they were representing, which was a disadvantage for analyzing students' prosody aspects. As it was the first time that the majority of students were in contact with drama activities as a teaching strategy, students lost easily their concentration on the activities and started laughing or doing other type of things.

we are going to create fun and interesting activities and games to engage them and motivate them to learn and activate their knowledge through drama sessions.

(E2; Lizeth; 02/10/2017) lines 5 to 6

Students themselves confirmed their feelings when producing speech, as the drama strategy that was brought into the classroom, was completely new for them, and it turned out to be a drawback for them to be totally focused on the activities. It was noticed that laughter is spread quickly in a drama activity, because as soon as one participant of the activity laughs, the rest of the members do it as well. This characteristic of students with drama when producing linguistic outcomes, is undoubtedly, one of the main difficulties of working with these new strategies, especially when we try to analyze their speech.

Basically, when analyzing students' linguistic outcomes in terms of prosody aspects of speaking skills, they expressed clear intentions, emotional state and appropriate use of intonation in most of the activities and situations that they were required to perform. The appropriate use of language functions is a key factor in the development of prosody skills; therefore, they were counted as an essential component for both the project and the observation logs format. This element is evidenced in the following chart that represents a

piece of an observation of Martin (Student 2), that was conducted by the facilitators to check the presence and level of development of the students' prosody aspects through drama: In the so called observation format, in which the pre-service teachers would write down their classroom happenings and observations, under the title Language Functions, it reads:

Good expression of language functions in each case. There was an adequate use of questions, opinions and complaints. Voice reflected that. Interaction facilitated a good and visible use of language functions.

(O2; implementer 2; 17/10/2017) Box 3

This piece of observation, shows that Martin (Student 2) has a high ability to use language functions appropriately, to facilitate and negotiate meaning in the conversation, and express his intentions clearly through a dynamic interaction. Language Functions are strongly connected with intonation and fluency, as these allow the speaker to locate his/her voice in the appropriate point to achieve the necessary level of understanding. In general, all students demonstrated to have a deep comprehension of *language functions*, and it was easy for them to identify those and carry them out in a simulation of a real context.

4.2 Students responses

Students' attitudes and behaviors towards drama as a teaching strategy

From the beginning of the project, students reacted in a positive manner to the different drama activities. In the first session, students showed interest and curiosity towards the topics that the project entailed, the activities, the performance of situations from daily life (that are not customary in the language classroom), and artistic elements that are rarely seen in an EFL Colombian scenario. Students were lost and confused at the beginning because they did not have the slightest idea of what the project was about. This confusion explains their reluctance at first, as it was something totally new for them. Their body language indicated that they felt confused and uncomfortable, and that they needed an explanation about the presence of these two people wearing the UTP shirts. However, as we started introducing the topics and describing the activities of the project, they became interested and started asking questions about the topics, which indicated that they were curious about this new way of learning English. This represents a need for implementing didactics in the language classroom, as it is an essential component of an EFL learning process, as stated by Hadfield (1990), "games should be regarded an integral part of the language syllabus, not an amusing activity for Friday afternoon or for the end of the term" (p. 19)

> Students were lost, they did not know what we were about to do right there, so I felt a big responsibility. When we started talking about speaking and drama in order to introduce these concepts, students started to increase their participation and they expressed their opinions about the different topics.

(E1; Santiago; 25/09/2017) lines 5 to 8

Teachers made emphasis on the use of prosody skills for students to relax and not to worry about their speaking performance in the project. In general, students were attentive, interested, motivated and curious about the activities, and it was evidenced through their attitudes during the presentation stage of their performances. Students made fun of everything in the plays, and it was evident that they tried to perform the plays as realistically as possible by using not only linguistic elements, but also body language, eye contact and voice projection aspects. Students showed an outstanding performance in the different activities

conducted with them, as they came up with original ideas for the dramatic activities, and they acted as if the depicted situations were real, which was the main objective of the activities in addition to developing students' prosody aspects of their speaking skills.

> The good thing is that at least they try it, and we try to help them with the writing of the scripts they will use, so they do not feel afraid of the grammatical mistakes they could make.

(E2; Santiago; 02/10/2017) Lines 6, 7

It was noticed that Drama activities are useful for having students to speak spontaneously and naturally in the EFL classroom, as stated by Taylor (2000), who found in his study that "drama techniques can satisfy primary needs of language learning in that they can create motivation, enhance confidence, and provide context in learning a language. It is also great fun" (p.4). One reason for this result is that students do not feel the normal pressure that a student usually endures when being assessed, and role-plays, simulations and drama games were enjoyable and fun for students. Another principal feature is naturality, because participants were not required to focus on their speech, but on the performance and representation of the daily situations they were given, which led them to come up with authentic and natural representations of real life situations. In general, students had positive reactions towards the communicative language teaching approach, now that they had the chance to bring real life situations to the classroom on one hand and on the other hand to practice authentic language in a dynamic way, which they seemed to have much fun with.

Some positive responses from students can be evidenced in this part of participants' reflection:

(E1; Lizeth; 25/09/2017) Lines 8, 9

> we asked several questions about drama, speaking and prosody to contextualize our classes, and most of the students answered our questions.

The engagement and interest of students was perceived from the very first session as they attempted to answer the questions on the topics that the project involved. Students would ask questions and inquire about the different aspects that the project entailed. As a matter of fact, they happened to be rather interested in the first activity of the project, which was on miming and guessing titles of movies. Therefore, drama is a suitable resource to make students speak up in English without any restriction, as they can feel engaged and entertained from the first moment, even though they are not used to have these teaching strategies in the EFL classroom.

Students started to increase their participation and they expressed their opinions about the different topics

(E1; Santiago; 25/09/2017) Lines 7, 8

In contrast, most of students looked lazy during certain activities, and they did not seem to be willing to participate, but they openly expressed that it was because the drama sessions took place in the last hour of their academic schedule, and they felt tired and less active. This issue was perceived by the participants of the project in the following piece of reflection:

(E3; Santiago; 03/10/2017) Lines 10-12

One of the difficulties is that the implementation of the project sessions takes place in the last hour of their classes, and they become lazy, tired and shy.

This facilitator made emphasis on the importance of the specific hour of the day at which the project took place, as it determined multiple attitudes and responses from students. Learners reduced their interest all of a sudden, as they were already tired and wanted to go home after a long academic shift. However, facilitators helped students do their best to overcome these negative factors and fulfill the activities the best way. Most of the activities were so amusing for learners, that they forgot about their fatigue, and achieved the expected performance and fulfilled the level of participation. One important factor for activating students, was the use of drama games as an introduction to the main drama activities, since students felt immediately engaged with the input as soon as they participated in the short games. After that, students were connected with the main activity, and it was much easier for them to go over the rest of the activities that were related to the initial game. According to Richard-Amato (1988), "A student who is engrossed in interesting ideas will be apt to have less anxiety than one who is focused mainly on form" (p.19).

Students used the language in an authentic way, with fluency and naturally, as well as body language, which made me think that students are more fluent and engaged in drama games.

(E7; Lizeth; 02/11/2017) Lines 8, 9, 10

Another consideration of the project in regards to students' responses is seating arrangement and classroom space for the development of the activities. Students were more engaged and showed a higher interest in those sessions that were conducted at the auditorium of the high school, while they were more distracted and lazy in those sessions that took place in the general classroom. The auditorium sessions facilitated the U shape seating arrangement, in which all students and teachers were face to face, and in that way, it was easier for students to be focused on the input and pay attention to the teachers while they gave the instructions. These differences report the importance of having an adequate environment and space for students to participate freely and be more concentrated on the drama activities, which seem to be more effective in comfortable and wide places. Berman (2012), highlights the importance of classroom size for developing drama activities, as it makes students feel in a wider place different from the classroom where they usually take other subjects.

> Students' participation was awesome in all the activities. The use of "tingo tango" to choose the participants at random, was an engaging strategy. It was evident that ss made fun of the games.

(E8; Santiago; 03/11/2017) Lines 3-8

On the other hand, students presented two negative behaviors throughout the project: fear and lack of concentration. First, they would laugh or forget about the fact that they were representing a serious scenario, which interrupted the performance and had an impact on the prosody aspects that were being analyzed, and on the credibility of the play. In general, the interruption occurred due to the belief that the performance was not real or was considered as ridiculous. These interviews' lines demonstrate this problem:

(I2; Martin; 17/10/2017)

> I like it but it is weird because deep down we know that the situation is not real, and I try to speak fluently, but when I see partners laughing around, I laugh too and forget about everything in the performance.

This is a normal issue in EFL classrooms when new teaching strategies are presented: reluctance towards new ways of learning. In these cases, students felt ridiculous at times while they were asked to perform and speak up, since they were trying out something new in their learning process. This issue since to be usual even in teachers according to Roykja (2002), whose article points that teachers reported feeling uncomfortable when teaching drama, because they had no experience, and they felt afraid of looking foolish. (p.8).

Sometimes, students became distracted because the situations they performed were funny, and that led them to misbehave and think that the performances were a joke or an opportunity to bully their classmates. For this reason, students received constant encouragement and feedback from implementers to fulfill the activities the best way, and to make them feel that the exercise was serious and enriching. For this issue, scripts played an important role, as students had the chance to review their dialogues in writing if they felt unsure about their speech, and those scripts were a reliable source for them because they contained the lines they would convey during the performances. Hence, the rehearsal stage of the drama activities turned out to be an important part of the sessions, since it made students felt more confident when speaking.

They had kept their scripts and the written ideas they had for their performances. Students were noisy and distracted at times.

(E5; Santiago; 28/10/2017)

4.3 Professional Growth Data

Drama learnings for implementers' professional development

The beginning of the project was difficult and shocking for implementers, since students were lost and they did not have any idea about the project. Most of them did not know about drama and they were shy and scared when being asked questions in English. Presenting the project in an appealing way was necessary for students to feel interested in knowing more about it. The introduction of the project was key since students were able to contextualize and understand what was happening. They started asking questions and being curious about the project, even though they did not know much about the resources that were to be implemented. Shortly after, students began to be willing to participate in all the activities, despite their lack of experience and knowledge, which was an earning in the field of professional development. Spolin (1986), provides a reason for students to get into new methods easily: "Through play, students will develop imagination and intuition and find it easier to project themselves into unfamiliar situations." (p.6).

> The first session was scary for me at the beginning, When I entered the classroom and saw students' faces, I wondered if our job would be worth it,

(E1; Santiago; 25/09/2017) Lines 1- 3

The implementation of different Drama techniques gave the implementers the possibility to explore and promote prosody aspects of speaking skills through innovative strategies that are not usually implemented in language classrooms. The fact of bringing new material and activities related to dramatic arts, helped the facilitators of this project develop classroom management abilities as well as teamwork techniques, as drama requires specific arrangements and organization for the different activities. Guiding role-plays, simulations and drama games into the EFL classroom led facilitators to view English teaching from a different perspective, since bringing components from the real world into the language classroom was useful for students to explore a realistic, spontaneous and natural speaking experience. It was also an opportunity for practitioners to implement the CLT approach and to learn about communicative strategies for students to explore and use authentic language freely in a real educational scenario, as stated by Culham, (2002), "Drama activities, while

providing a kinesthetic learning process, allow teachers to accomplish the goals of CLT." (p.10). These reflection lines demonstrate the following positive aspects:

(E2; Santiago; 02/10/2017) Lines 7-9

we tried to encourage them to use the language freely and spontaneously without caring so much about language itself and we were able to pay attention more carefully to the prosody features of the students.

In general, the implementation of drama was useful for the facilitators of the project to check students' responses towards new teaching strategies, and to know more about the ways this type of strategies should be implemented. The development and guidance of role-plays, simulations and drama games, were an enriching experience for facilitators to learn about teaching strategies and communicative activities in the language classroom. Furthermore, speaking is known for being one of the skills students are usually more afraid of, and that prompted implementers to explore teaching options to expose students to a pressure-free speaking environment, so they could feel encouraged to have oral production without anxiety, as it is evidenced in the following facilitator's piece of a journal entry.

(E2; Lizeth; 02/10/2017) Lines 4-6

we are going to create fun and interesting activities and games to engage them and motivate them to learn and activate their knowledge through drama sessions.

An outstanding result in the professional field is that students tend to be reluctant at first when working with new teaching strategies, even though they feel interested about them. One of the reasons to explain this event, is that students are not used to have different and innovative teaching strategies in the EFL classes, and not even in the other subjects; therefore, it takes time to develop a new teaching strategy completely, so students can feel finally engaged, and understand the purpose of such activities. Chauhan (2004), confirms the usefulness of drama to work on this productive skill when he says that "Using drama to teach English results in real communication involving ideas, emotions, feelings appropriateness and adaptability; in short an opportunity to use language in operation which is absent in a

conventional language class" (p.8). These reflection lines demonstrate this classroom phenomenon:

(E2; Santiago; 25/09/2017) Lines 7, 8, 9

> I also concluded that it is difficult for students to interact with a resource that they never had a contact with before. They are shy and also afraid of speaking English in a dramatization, which makes the activities more complicated.

This result raises awareness on the aspects that need to be considered when implementing new teaching strategies into the EFL classroom, as it is necessary to be sensitive and skillful to bring innovative resources to teach English or work on a specific skill, because "The level of implementation of a new method depends on the self-efficacy of teachers." (Poole & Okeafor, 1989) (p.241). Some students are not prepared for having contact with those resources, just because they have always been exposed to traditional education, and it is necessary to expose them little by little to new strategies in teaching, so they can discover new ways of learning. For instance, one session of the project was conducted with only nine students, and we discovered how effective the implementation of new teaching strategies is when it is carried out with few people, as it allows facilitators to focus completely on students, their attitudes, behaviors and of course, their prosody skills, as in this case. This session allowed implementers to help students out with writing their scripts and drafting their ideas to speak up in the performances, which facilitated the reinforcement of grammar topics and pronunciation skills. In this regard, a suggestion is to work with less people if possible when it comes to try out a new teaching strategy, especially when learners

do not have any type of knowledge about the subject matter. In his study, Barman (2012) points out the number of students as an important factor for a successful drama session, as in his project there were twelve students as the maximum number of people when teaching drama to his group, and they were never more than twelve in these classes.

> This session was much easier and more enjoyable, because we could focus completely on the nine students of the class, and all of them were able to participate in the activities. It was easier for us to monitor students and make sure that their work was accomplished.

(E6; Santiago; 25/09/2017) Lines 2-5

Another relevant aspect that came up in the project is space. This factor has an enormous impact on students' performance, because they were usually more interested and engaged in those sessions that were conducted in the school auditorium rather than the classes that took place in the regular classroom. In the auditorium, students had a wider space and freedom to move, speak and participate, and seating arrangement was easier to manage in general. The performances were played in a more dynamic way in those sessions that developed at the auditorium, and in that way, it was much easier for implementers to carry out the sessions. To sum up, space, layout and environment play an important role in developing a new teaching strategy that involves the use of kinesthetic and hands-on activities, as stated by Berman (2012) in his project related to clowning and improvisation techniques to enhance students' speaking skills, "When using drama you need space and I realize that this is not always possible within the school system".

> I think that the space plays such an important role, because this session was conducted in the auditorium of the school, and students had a wider environment to play, move around and develop the activities.

(E8; Santiago; 03/11/2017) Lines 6-8

In general terms, the implementation of the project gave the facilitators the opportunity of learning in a practical way about communicative approaches, as well as strategies for exposing students in an innovative way to real life scenarios inside the classroom, and get them to speak up naturally and spontaneously while having fun.

Implementers were able to grow professionally and pedagogically through the implementation of this project. Aspects such as seating arrangement and giving instructions were improved, but also pedagogic components such as interaction with students, activities development and language tasks, which were recorded in the different stages of the implementation schema provided by Janudom & Wasanasomsithi (2009): drama scripts, drama rehearsal, drama production and drama evaluation. In this way, facilitators were also able to learn about using specific schemas and sequences of implementation to develop an innovative teaching strategy in the EFL classroom.

> we learned that making a final review is a great way of checking if students remember and enjoy the games, and it was rewarding to see students thankful because they learned a new way of learning English.

(E8; Lizeth; 03/11/2017) Lines 10-12

5. CONCLUSIONS

The design of this project was the most challenging stage of it. The main difficulty when designing was the selection of the drama focus and the different activities that derive from that, as there are countless types of drama and endless activities that can be done with students to make them speak and depict situations. At the beginning, the idea was to provide students with Drama input during the eight sessions of the project, so they could perform a final theatre play during the final session. However, that proposal quickly switched to something more practical, due to students' confidence and language development issues. After a brief research over the main types of Drama, it was possible to define role-play, simulation, and Drama games as the techniques that were to be used in the project for having students to speak in the Drama art. The selection of activities for each one of the techniques was done based on the acting experience of one of the practitioners, but they were aligned completely with the selected approach and types of Drama. Different ice-breakers commonly used in Drama activities were used as Drama games, and various topics, words and situations from real life were considered for developing role-play and simulation activities. In general, designing is a tough exercise that is facilitated when objectives are clearly defined, and at the end, it was easier to come up with the activities and dramatic events that facilitated the revision and enhancement of students' speaking skills.

The implementation of the project was the practical stage of it, in which the design became meaningful. In this stage of the project, we can evidence the students' behaviors, attitudes and levels of language achievement as well as the learning processes and results. In this particular scenario, it was encouraging to see students having fun while they tried to perform the situations and use the language naturally and spontaneously. Nonetheless, this classroom project faced numerous drawbacks related to students' misbehaviors during the class sessions, space and time constraints, which had an impact on the final results of this exploration. However, despite the issues encountered during the sessions, it was possible to implement the activities that were previously planned for students, and they did enjoy the dramatic activities even though it was something new for them. To sum up, the implementation of the project allowed practitioners to evidence how effective this innovative resource is when working with students in the EFL classroom, and confirmed the positive influence of Drama when it comes to teach English, especially speaking skills and oral aspects such as fluency, intonation and prosody.

Finally, the results we were able to come up with were the final stage, and during this phase we were in charge of observing, video-recording and log writing the learning processes in terms of three main categories: students' linguistic outcomes, students' responses and practitioners' professional growth. The design and further implementation of the project led us to the results of it, which describe the three main categories above mentioned. Speaking of linguistic outcomes, it was possible to work on students' speaking skills through the three selected types of Drama, as students came up with a natural and spontaneous speech during the proposed dramatic events. In behavioral aspects, the project faced unpleasant situations such as students' disruptive behaviors at times, the inadequate space which means classrooms, auditoriums, etc. where some sessions were carried out, as well as the time scheduled for the sessions--last periods of school journey--in which students were rather tired and therefore, inattentive. However, the results of the project are rather positive, since the objectives were achieved, and the speaking skills were enhanced inasmuch as students were able to experience a natural and spontaneous talk through the implementation of the innovative resource of Drama.

6. APPENDIX

6.1 Appendix 1

Teachers: Santiago Arango, Lizeth Rendon Grade/group: 10th grade	Learners Level Basic (A2)
Learners Average Age Between 15 and 17 years old	**Language forms:** Present, past and future tenses, verbs, nouns, basic vocabulary **Language function:** Giving opinions and suggesting.

Linguistic Aims:
- To identify different language functions in specific contexts. - To express ideas and opinions about the methodology of the project. - To read and comprehend others' readings during class activities. - To use body language to facilitate understanding of vocabulary.

Specific Standards:
• Me arriesgo a participar en una conversación con mis compañeros y mi profesor. • Utilizo elementos metalingüísticos como gestos y entonación para hacer más comprensible lo que digo.

Language skills developed: Speaking, reading, and listening

Material required: Flashcards, board, accessories.

Student's previous knowledge: Verbs , general vocabulary, pronouns, grammar tenses.

DAY/STAGE / ACTIVITY/ TIME	PROCEDURE TEACHER AND LEARNER ACTIVITY
15 min	**General Description:** The first session is designed to introduce Drama as the resource that students will work on during the 8 sessions of the implementation stage. Teachers ask general questions about theatre and present the different types of Drama. They ask students to participate by

	describing the differences between some types of Drama, such as role-play and simulation. Then, teachers introduce Drama games as the introductory stage in each session, and they carry out a Drama game that will be the warm-up activity.
15 min	**Warm-up:** Practitioners develop an activity in which learners are divided into two teams, A and B. Team B is going to give the name of a movie to one member of team A, and that person is going to mime the word (s) through body language to the other members of the team. If team A guesses the word within 2 minutes, they win a point, and if not, team B wins it. Then, teams will switch roles, and team A proposes the name of a movie for team B, and a member of that team is going to mime the word (s) to the team. At the end, the team that gets more points, will be the winner. Teams will receive a total amount of 5 names of movies per turns, and they will switch the roles after a point is won.
10 min	**Activity 1** Role-play is a Dramatic activity in which each person of a group is given a specific character that needs to be performed within the play. This type of Drama is characterized for having a plot, or an issue that needs to be handled and solved by certain characters of the play. In this first session, teachers distribute some sheets with several situations written on them, which have evident problems that need to be dealt. Students are going to read them aloud by turns, and then the whole class look for strategies or

	possible solutions to the problem mentioned.
10 min	**Activity 2** All sessions of the project include Drama games, and some of them will be clowning and miming exercises. Teachers present the definitions and descriptions of these Drama games, and the factors students need to consider for the development of these activities. Teachers show how to speak, move or behave according to each type of Drama. An example is made with some students too.
10 min	**Activity 3** Students speak up and give opinions about the activities and Drama in general. Teachers describe how the coming sessions will look like, and students express their opinions about the activities and how they contribute to their English learning process, especially speaking skills.

Anticipated problems and solutions:

- Learners may be shy to participate in the clowning/miming example or in the general interventions. For this situation, practitioners show an example with the teacher of how to do it, so they can feel more encouraged to perform their plays.
- Learners do not anything about Drama. For this, teachers present the key points of the Drama field, and the different types of Drama, through the use of clear examples.

6.2 Appendix 2

Fill out the following format by making a cross or a tick in each one of the characteristics of the performance. A tick stands for the presence of the items and a cross stands for their absence. Comment on each one of them, regardless of the symbol, by following this criteria:

- Did students show a high, medium or low level of verbal production during the performance according to the situation they needed to express and perform?
- Did learners express properly the feelings involved in the performance through their speech?
- Did students use the right intonation according to the language functions evident in the performance?
- Did learners verbalize the situations with the appropriate tone according to the performance characteristics?

Prosody characteristic	**Mark**	**Comments**
Intonation		
Emotional State		
Language functions		
Appropriate register		
Pitch		

6.3 Appendix 3

Interview

Answer the following questions based on your knowledge, experience and perception of the items considered in this interview: Drama and Prosody aspects of speaking skills.

Prosody section

1. How do you consider that aspects such as intonation, pitch, stress and accent could affect your speech?
2. Do you think that the elements mentioned above, vary depending on the message that is conveyed?
3. How do you consider that your emotional state influences your performance and the way of communicating things?

4. How important fluency and a natural verbalization of statements are to facilitate communication between two people?

_____

Drama section

1. How would you describe your ability of speaking in public in situations such as performances or fictitious scenes?
1. Do you feel able to communicate appropriately in different contexts?
1. Have you participated in Drama activities before? How was it? Otherwise, How do you feel about doing it for first time?

_____

Personal opinions

1. How would you rate your pronunciation in English in general from 1 to 5?
1. Do you think that language in this case determines a great percentage of your performance? How does English affect your communication and acting?

6.4 Appendix 4

01-2144-24

Pereira, agosto ____ de 2017

Señores
Institución Educativa _____
Atn. Señora _____
Rectora
Ciudad

Cordial Saludo,

De manera atenta solicitamos permiso para que los estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Bilingüismo con énfasis en inglés de la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, _____, identificada con cédula de ciudadanía No. 1.088._____, y_____, identificada con cédula de ciudadanía No. 1.088. , realicen la implementación del trabajo de grado "*(title of project in English)*", en su Institución Educativa.

Atentamente,

Enrique Arias Castaño
Director de programa
Licenciatura en Bilingüismo con énfasis en inglés
Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira

6.5 Appendix 5

Lugar ___Santa Rosa de C.___ Fecha___10/10/2017___

A QUIEN CORRESPONDA

Quien (es) suscribe suscribimos el presente documento, obrando como representante(s) del menor de
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Firma _____.   Firma

Nombre de la madre ___María Idrundo López___ Nombre del padre
cedula de ciudadanía ___25164.325.___   Cedula de ciudadanía

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