

Real-Life Role-Playing for English Speaking Skill

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Abstract

Third semester students of the BS in Bilingual Education with Emphasis in English at a private university in Cartagena take communication courses, among which is

Communication Workshop I. One of the requirements in this course, is to practice speaking and academic speech in the middle of their Bachelor program English courses. Therefore, the experience of these courses, help students seem to lack the necessary academic reading, writing and speaking skills to complete the assignments as giving opinions, reflections and debates properly. This action research describes the effect of pedagogical intervention that includes a practice of Role-play strategy facing spontaneous real-life situations in communication I course on the academic speaking skills of 28 students in a Communication Workshop I class. Two surveys were administered to them: one at the beginning of the semester attended first classes of the course. The other one after they finished the last activity of the pedagogical intervention. Both surveys included issues related to the effectiveness of the intervention. Then, their final Role-play activity were compared to those written draft during activities. Findings suggest that the intervention was helpful to a certain range. Further research is needed to explore alternative ways of tackling this issue and improve academic speaking skill.

Keywords: content-based instruction, academic speech, speaking skills, Role-plays, Performance.

Introduction

This research began as part of a concern about the importance of bilingualism in the world due to globalization and how role play strategies could help the professional at UNICOLOMBO to improve the level of fluency in English, taking into account that the students had grammar knowledge but they had lack of fluency for speaking in real-life situations of their daily life.

Currently, having the knowledge of English and having a good level of fluency provides greater work and personal opportunities, especially if professionals are directly connected with education as professional bachelors. This work examined the strategy for helping students to improve their knowledge and increase speaking skills in our new generation. Many institutions in Colombia are responding to these needs. Fundación Universitaria Colombo Internacional (UNICOLOMBO) has been working on this need. They have been offering a B.A. in Bilingual Education to increase quality of foreign language education in the region. They improve Speaking skill through a communicative approach, based on strategies to humanistic methodology, significant learning, and Team work. This action research is focus on the need to help teachers to improve speaking skills in those new teacher generation, as a matter of fact, role-play could provide academic skills to be able to state as learning-strategy in the classroom and work on speaking skill.

Even though there were several strategies and techniques to improve speaking skills, role play was taken into account because it was considered by some authors to be a creative and motivating strategy to reach better results in speaking skills. Besides, it is a suitable strategy for student's interaction.

This research will permit us to know the importance of pedagogical strategy: real-life role-play on the students' academic speaking skill facing spontaneous real situations;

systematized all the experiences in relation with the topic, which is one of the skills that needs to be developed in the language learning, and lead processes to encourage this important skill as English teachers.

.....Need Analysis

This research project is focus on a group of students studying “Licenciatura en Bilinguismo con énfasis en inglés”, 3th semester, in Communication workshop I Course. When students are in the middle of their English courses in third semester of the B. A. in education with a focus in English, they start to take communication courses, among which is Communication I. The most important prerequisite for joining in the communication courses, is to study English program at the Centro Colombo Americano, where all UNICOLOMBO students take their English courses as part of the Bachelor’s program.

The expectations of those courses are to improve students speaking skills by academic knowledge and critical thinking. Although, some students take the communication I course without the necessary skills to perform well in tasks, which include reading at an academic level, participating in class performing and developing speaking opinions and writing papers. The purpose of including this subject in the program is to help students first semesters to be part of the academic environment where they are part of.

The teacher had to use a syllabus for training learners to acquire these skills, using important class time to work on committed to covering the course. As part of the research experience, students made by hand a survey at the beginning of the course. However, only 25 students out of 28 of the total of the class answered the survey. The survey consists of 6 points in Spanish in order to be understood by everyone.

Table 1. Students' English Interaction Group in Communication I. Do you feel comfortable when your classmates listen your participation in classes?

Students' English Interaction group.	
Completely agree	7
Partially agree	11
Partially disagree	6
Completely disagree	1

Sources. Authors' Thesis

Table 1 displays two of the main aspects of the questionnaire. The first one is the students' English Interaction of third semester group at the beginning of the Communication I course. Only 7 (28%) of the students are disagreed about their group interaction, which is the lowest ideal to develop and perform real-life role-plays during the course.

The second aspect displayed in table 1 is the students' perception of their own academic skills and their ability to perform well in their participation in the course. The question asked was if they felt comfortable about lacking the skills to participate in interactive classes, performing role-plays and giving opinions to all class in Communication I course.

Twenty one students (72%) thought that they are confident and have the skills to integrate with the academic requirements of the course. This information seems to reveal why the tasks was assigned to the students throughout the course (during the first semester of 2018), represented a major challenge for them and why it was necessary for the teacher to spend important class time teaching aspects of academic speaking performance, so most students could complete the assignments.

Table 2. Role-play a strategy to practice speaking skill in classes.

Do you use or performance Role-plays in classes?		Which courses do you practice speaking through Role-play?	
Never	1	History of L. T.	10
Hardly ever	4	English Course	8
Sometimes	19	Other	5
Always	1	DK/NA/REF	2

Sources. Authors` Thesis

Table 2 shows the amount of academic experiences student had had before taking the Communication I course. Table 2 answer question number 3 and number 6 (open question) in the survey. The majority of the students in the course (19) took the survey and sometimes performance Role-play as an academic purpose and only one of twenty five (4%) had always been in role-plays, which probably explains why the students had trouble understanding the concept of Role-play. They understood the concept as a videogame rule, and we needed to make an intervention to clarify the concept. The results on Table 2 also showed that just in two courses they had used Role-play to practice speaking. One was History of Language Teaching course (40%) and the other was in English courses (32%) of the Bachelors' program. For this question, these results were expected since it would be natural for this student profile to have low experiences to performance Role-play as a strategy to improve speaking skill. All this evidence suggests that academic strategies could help students in content-based higher education courses for specific purposes.

Table 3. Which skills you can develop using Role-play in classes?

Abilities to develop performing Role-play	Frequency
Writing	1
<i>Reading</i>	2
Listening	1
Speaking	11
<i>Team Work</i>	3
Group Interaction	3
Vocabulary	4

Sources. Authors` Thesis

In Table 3, students' answers identified the biggest purpose when they had to face Role-play in classes. Students were allowed to choose up to seven options. As the table shows, eleven out of twenty-five students (44%) identified *Speaking* as a major benefit performing. Performing Role- plays, followed by *group interaction and team work* which is one of the purposes, with six students out of twenty-five (24%) ranks as the second most frequent benefit. The results in Table 3 also shows Vocabulary as the third advantage option (16%) using Role-plays in classes.

These three aspects were emphasized in the pedagogical intervention, which includes a 2 hour per week in Communication I course which academic purpose is developed an academic speech in order to work on technical, and academic language as teachers. The intervention was applied in the first semester of 2018. The objective of this study is to describe the effects and benefits of this pedagogical strategy: real-life role-play on the students' academic speaking skill facing spontaneous real situations. The extent of the intervention's effectiveness could eventually lead to a future advantage in the program curriculum in Communication courses.

The main question that needs to be answered is: How real-life role-play can benefit speaking skills in B.A. at UNICOLOMBO in communication I course? Aiming to answer this, we made a background of general concepts about role play based on references, applied the methodology based on observations and surveys, lesson plans and then made the data analysis and conclusions according to the results of this experience.

1. Theoretical Framework

Globalization has triggered a number of positives changes around the World. In Colombia, these changes were used to make a better merging into international aspects of economy including social and educational fields. Therefore, English has been recognized as an important tool for competitiveness in the global market as in our country in order to make international agreements with business outsourcing and external universities. In order to meet this demand, people have replied to these needs and started to learn English as a foreign language in different Bilingual Institutions in Colombia, with local and foreign teachers.

UNICOLOMBO has been working on this need. They have been offering a B.A. in Bilingual Education to increase quality of foreign language education in the region. They improve speaking skill through a communicative approach, based on strategies to humanistic methodology, significant learning, and Team work. For achieving communication, Feng Liu & Yun Ding in their investigation of role play in English language teaching (2009, P. 140) said “Incorporating role-play into the classroom adds variety, a change of pace and opportunities for a lot of language production and also a lot of fun”.

Some of authors consulted for this research were:

Feng Liu & Yun Ding (2009, P.141) thesis in a general concept of Role – play said “*The purpose of role-play that applies to practical usage in communication demands the flexibility of participants' words, generally speaking, the more approximately the activity access to reality, the more interests students will take in so the choice of roles and contexts become very important. When teachers design a role-play, they must take students' ages and experience into consideration*”.

In their conclusion, about communicative purpose, they said:

“Without rigid limit of word application, students had much space to bring their imagination and intelligence into full play. About 80 % (24 students) can communicate freely and fluently in English in this way. However, the accuracy of their speaking needs to be improved. Here the accuracy does not only mean using grammars and vocabulary correctly without errors, but also refers to the "property of language ", which means to speak appropriately according to different time, places and situations”.

Guanquiza (2013) in his thesis: application of Role Play as teaching-learning strategy for enhancing English level, 2013 which has the goal develop English speaking through role play as a learning strategy. The result of this thesis shows that students significantly improve the Common European Framework levels of reference for language learning, specifically the ability to English speaking and the improvement of creativity and motivation in specific foreign situations.

In addition, this author explains that in role plays, students use the language in a spontaneous way and establish a comparison between before and after the usage of role play and its conclude that role play improve the production of English into a funny context.

Emunah (1994) in his publication acting for a Real Drama Therapy Process, Technique and Performance, argued that “the dramatic realization is an intermediate internal state, between fantasy and reality. Once we have experienced it, although in an artificial way, these new experiences can be part of the repertoire of our real life” (page 8). Thus, when real-life facts are dramatized using English language, the teaching process is made real and experiential for the teacher, as well as for the students.

The object of this research is investigating the role-plays as a technique to develop the speaking skill. The investigation was focused on how speaking skills could be improved through role-plays and how this skill could improve the level of fluency in speaking a

target language. First, this technique responds to the socio-cultural theory by Lev Vygotsky “about the development of human cognitive and higher mental function”. Aimin, (2013:pag.162). The theory argues that the communication is part of social interactions, as a matter of fact, language is not only a linguistic and cognitive process, because it functions by social and cultural input.

Liang Aimin (2013) mention Lantolf and Thorne (16) who explain that “Learning is embedded within social events and occurring as an individual interacts with people, objects, and events in the environment”.

On the other hand, language learning strategies are considered more effective learning when collaborative work is implemented; Interaction in classrooms is one of the primary means by which learning is accomplished. For this reason, this research was focus in Role-play as a strategy to develop speaking skills but taking into account teamwork. In addition, role-play involves teacher-efficacy in the needs of linguistic, cognitive, affective and social-cultural level. To develop this theoretical framework, the Common European Framework was mentioned and its description of teaching languages; and finally, the concept of Role-play.

The learning of English as a foreign language was based on some parameters of Common European Framework; a guideline used to provide a method of learning, teaching and assessing all language in Europe. In November 2001, a European Union Council Resolution recommended using it to set up a system of validation of language ability. They were focused on plurilinguism as a strategy to increase commercial relationships and collaborative social, cultural, economy and political work around the world. They understood that language is a product from the cultural knowledge from a

country; therefore, a language needs to be acquired with all the benefits and minimize the impediments that disrupt the communicative function between people.

Through role play participations, people are more likely to develop competences in linguistic and communication in relation with metacognitive processes to control 'spontaneous' ways of handling tasks and in particular linguistic dimension; they are first, pragmatic competences; second, it leads to a better perception of the linguistic organization of different languages (form of metalinguistic, interlinguistic or so to speak 'hyperlinguistic' awareness), and, third it is to use language in context.

Role plays are another concept that will be taken into account on this research. Role-plays were developed by Jacob Levy Moreno in the 60's. Moreno approaches this "game" to figure out his psychological patients to look different perspectives about a situation. This psychodrama was part on his classical methods to simulate how they could act and how they adapted to the concept of catharsis. Currently role-play is part of the learning strategies in the classroom.

Role-plays can be defined as simulations of social interactions in which participants assume and enact described roles within specified situations. "Role plays are used to allow students to practice speaking in conversational situations, build confidence and fluency assess progress, and put learning into action" Aaron Bell, (2014). According to the type of Role play used in this investigation, we find on task-base role play which Aaron define :

"require participant to complete a set activity such as checking into a hotel, giving directions, giving city information, debate a specific theme. It is useful for helping student to practice realistic survival English skill and excellent way to build student's confidence in their ability to function in real situations".

According to Ladousse (1987) in *Role play book for the teachers* refers that: "role play is an ideal communication technique to promote fluency and develop skills in teaching the English language, encourages interaction and dynamic work in the classroom, increasing motivation and encouraging learning "(page 7). In that sense, the role play technique boosts motivation in students. Peer learning improves Here, and takes responsibility shared between the teacher and the students during the teaching process.

Another concept where the author mentioned the relation of role play with socio cultural theory in order to improve the English learning is "A group of students carrying out a successful role play in a classroom has much in common with a group of children playing in school...Both are unselfconsciously creating their own reality...they are experimenting with their knowledge of the real world and developing their ability to interact with other people" (Ladousse, P. 5).

In 2016, the researcher, Daria Kaminskaya from Masaryk University focus her *Teaching Speaking through Role-plays: Master's thesis*. In Brno, Czech Republic. Her thesis was based on an action research when she was doing her internship in 9th grade of lower secondary school Husova, Brno. The researcher was focused on the mainly general notions in teaching speaking, as role-play as a teaching strategy. The thesis was divided in two parts: theoretical view and practical; the first one connected the theory to show role-play as a tool in relation with the second part, practical when it describes details of the action research. It was based on a description and analysis of data sources. The author used methods like observations, interviews, questionnaires to teacher and students, and finally, some reflections. The research concludes that active participation in role-plays could help to increase speaking skills in the students.

With this research, role play was worked mix with CLIL (Content and Learning Integrated Language) with the objective of obtain good results; and lesson plans were designed and applied in the sections of pedagogic intervention. CLIL defined by Coyle Hood (2010, P. 1) “It is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language”. And CLIL has a close relation with the SCT as this author mentioned: “landmark work by Bruner (b. 1995), Piaget (1896-1980), and Vygotsky (1896-1934) led to the development of socio-cultural, constructivist perspectives on learning.

These perspectives have had an immense impact on educational theory and practice”. According to Ladousse, there are two ways of looking at language through role plays, through the language the students know or after they practice structures and functions that have been presented during the course. During the pedagogic intervention, it was offered an active phase of learning so that they can use them during role play practices. The author mention “Role play is the active phase of learning and offer the opportunity for students to make personal use of language that has been presented to them formally, Role play can be used in this way right from the start in elementary classes” Ladousse (1987, P 9).

In Cartagena has been made two researches with the Role-play as a part of develop of effective communicative skills. The Use of Role-plays and Real Life Like Interaction in Class to Help Students Develop Effective Communication Skills (Garzón & Serje) and The Implementation of Role Play, Information Gaps and Simulations as Strategies to Improve the English Speaking Skill in Tenth Graders at Soledad Acosta de Samper School, (Castilla & Valencia, 2015); both researches were worked in public Institutions, their interest was focus on student’s ability to improve speaking skill. The researcher in their first thought consider that recollected data to teaching strategy, thus, they realize that during the classes sections,

the main problem with develop student speaking skill need to a reformation from the teacher methodology. So they tools were observations, video recording, to obtain real develop of the learning process and the face effect during the actions. They made this researcher on their institutions, because they recognized that educational strategies at school just prepare the students to take writing exams, but not oral experiences; so they consider the skill as necessary, especially because in a globalized World, education must encourage students speaking skill to higher education.

2. Methodology

This research is qualitative and descriptive because it was described and interpreted the development of speaking ability in third semester of Licenciatura in UNICOLOMBO. According to Hernández, Fernández and Baptista (2014) indicates that “descriptive studies seek to specify the properties, characteristics and profiles of people or groups, communities, processes, objects or any other phenomenon that undergoes an analysis” (p. 80). The method of this work was descriptive because at the end of the process, we could describe in a systematic way the aspects, facts and characteristics of role play use in Communication I course of Licenciatura at UNICOLOMBO.

Teachers always look for activities that increase students’ interest in classes and students need to grow their abilities as speakers of a foreign language. We consider that Role-play works not only as a strategy to transform better English speakers but also a good interaction between the participants and could motivate this participation, this strategy created new experiences in relation with skills to developed language learning to be measurable and lead processes to encourage competitiveness in students through of their motivation and self-esteem respect to English learning as tomorrow’s English teachers.

Xus,(1992) cited in Torres Molina (2017) state that motivations are all actions that inspire the students to carry out actions and follow the interest in reaching their goals previously proposed, generating planning and organization.

The main question to be answered is: How real-life role-play can benefit speaking skills in B.A. at UNICOLOMBO in communication I course?

The project applies Role-play concepts related with speaking skill and connect it to the methodology used by teacher in higher levels. With this work we would analyze how Role-play as a strategy is developed at B.A. in Bilingual Education at UNICOLOMBO and how teacher could make it effectively in third semester.

The kind of data to be analyzed is qualitative; accomplished by teaching observations and interviews to students. It's starting with some observations and surveys. After that, interviews, videos and a journal will be made to approach depending on the context and how these affects the development of Role-play as a strategy.

The action research will be applied to student from B.A. in Bilingual Education at UNICOLOMBO. The population is composed by twenty-eight students from third semester. This research will be work in Communication workshop I. These students were working in communication workshop in 2018; in this level they were working with specific strategies to develop speaking skills, writing skills in order to encourage their level as English speakers and future English teachers.

We consider working with third semester because of subject objective is promoting speaking skill. They have been studying English for one year in English courses, additionally; they are related to the approach and it can increase their capabilities as language students. Speaking skills are one of the most important approaches regarding communicative competences. Students need to communicate with others and language is the most powerful symbolic tool in higher mental functions of the brain. Therefore, we select the second part of this subject as they have the knowledge and experience from first classes; the change to try new learning strategies to improve their speaking skills.

As a matter of fact, the intervention will start with a questionnaire. Pair work and group work state role-play as activities with students through collaborative work. The classroom

interaction in which students involve pair work and group work exercises in order to have the possibility to practice activities together.

We applied class observations; we survey the activities and lesson during classes; we interviewed students and teachers regarding the beginning and the end of the activities, in order to estimate considerations from them; we recollected data with video recording, audio recording, through transcriptions. Data from questionnaires and other assessment we used originals or copies.

Action research is common in social context to manage academic policies or present diagnostic to resolve problems. Therefore, it is important to introduce this action research, the objective and the approbation from teacher, students and the institution on we work.

UNICOLOMBO and the department of B.A. in Bilingual Education provided us the information of the group, their characteristics and the localization of the classrooms. Teacher from communication workshop 1 introduced us to the classroom. They were interested in our research and they agreed to work on it. This semester we just explain and talk about the object of our research and advice to the future work with them.

We considered meeting the students this semester because we wanted to get in touch and we wanted take some suggestion from the teacher and the students who will be working next semester in communication workshop II. We recognize that, most of the time transparency are increasingly striking because the combination of quality in mixed methods research in the health services are difficult to describe all the processes. But our Ethical considerations focus to be clear with the studying and expose our interested.

The design of lesson plans of pedagogic intervention under CLIL (Content and Language Interchange learning) allow some expectations of obtaining good results; where students were invited to *learn* the target language improving the vocabulary from BICS

(Basic Conversational Fluency) to CALP (Literacy and academic). The main academic vocabulary used was about Cartagena city because of the importance as a touristic and historic city.

Video Clips

Despite having several sessions of role-play into the classroom, only a video was recorded during the activity and it showed the performance of the students and some classroom interventions. The objective of only one sample was that we wanted the students to feel a natural environment so that they could express themselves freely and spontaneously.

Role Play samples

Role plays was the main strategy for achieving our objectives. We worked with open role – play and mixed it with CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in order to achieve the best result. We choose Cartagena city as the center of the information and connected the interest and motivation of the student with the importance of the city and the needs to speak English here because of the condition of touristic place.

We gave them real situations without pre-preparation in order to motivate them to speak spontaneously and developed their thinking ability and good reaction when those situations were faced. Before role play output, students received all necessary input and many concepts and vocabulary were reminded through CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning) intervention. Then, we gave the situation and they participated according to the situation.

The first and second role plays were related to Cartagena as important and touristic city where students should describe with simple vocabulary one historical place of the city on a picture and explained it orally (picture sample) and compare the different cultures that influenced the city in a chart.

The third and fourth role-play were related to cultural customs as topless in an oral discussion and cultural events in Cartagena city in a chart.

Interviews

A written interview was administrated to some students where they gave us their considerations about some activities and their expressions were positive and encouraging. They thought that the activities were different from normal role play, where they had the opportunity to enjoy the moment and learned more than normal. Besides, they had to express their ideas and concepts without afraid of making mistakes.

In addition to that point of view, they expressed interest in put role play in practice as teacher when they finish their profession because they see this strategy as a great alternative to increase and understand a theme, it allows to increase the vocabulary and confidence. Besides, students like to participate and contribute actively in the activities in spite of having different levels in the classroom.

Finally, some suggestions were given to the students so that they could be motivated for interact with others and be motivated for speaking practiced.

3. Data Analysis and results

Immediately students started Communication I class, the first stage of the process was observations which main objective was to observe the student's performance during the class. After that, the students were given a survey in order to collect a first impression of the effectiveness of the pedagogical strategy: Role-play. The first part of the survey was about their experiences and prior contact with Role-plays in other courses. The second part described the students' initial perception of effectiveness of the strategy in Communication I course.

3.1 Observation the student's performance in Communication I course.

Observations could visualize all the activities that teacher made during this class time (Thursdays from 2 pm to 4 pm). After several observations these following aspects could be note:

- Lack of student's participations and interactions during classes
- Some students restricted their participations or just made little interventions in speaking activities.
- They did not show preferences between writing and speaking activities in class.
- There were a selected group of students that always participated in the classroom while others were usually quiet in their sits.
- Students were usually working individual, although they interacted with their closest classmates during classes.
- The class had a range of ages between 17 to 37 years old.

- Most of the time they were punctual. Communication I was a one class per week.

3.2 First survey: students' experiences and prior contact with Role-plays.

The students also expressed their experiences and prior contact with Role-play strategy on the classroom and foreign language courses during the bachelor program. The data collected in this section of the survey provided the following fundamental information:

- 21 of the 25 (72%) students agreed that they feel confident on their skills in the academic requirement of the course therefore they were comfortable to show and performance in front of the class. The other seven (28%) disagreed with group interaction.
- Most of them (19 out of 25 students) at least knew Role-play as a strategy used in their prior courses. Those students (76%) agreed that sometimes this strategy were used with academic purposes. Only five students (20%) hardly ever remember the use of Role-plays in courses. Actually, during this exercise they understood the concept and recognize it as a pedagogical speaking strategy.
- Speaking activities were worked through Role-play in one course (History of English Teaching) of the bachelors' program and English courses (32%); Only 2 students (8%) considered Role-play out of their class experiences.
- Most of the students were conscious about how role-play performance could help them on their own academic skills and their ability to perform well participations during course.
- The necessity for this strategy to be use for improving speaking skills was recognize as the major benefit (44%) to students. Other advantages were group interaction and team work (24%) and Vocabulary (16%) was a good option to focus on the necessity

for this class.

- Students were also asked interested and enthusiastic to add those new experiences to the class and were attended to work on the activities during pedagogical intervention in Communication I course.

3.3 Challenges to face spontaneous real-life Role-play Strategy in class.

In this first survey, students finally expressed their opinions on what they thought would be the biggest challenges to face during this strategy to communication class.

Table 4. Major challenges to be faced spontaneous real-life role-plays strategy in Class

Spontaneous speaking	11
Academic Language	6
Participating in class discussions	3
Making oral performance about new topics	2
Vocabulary	2
Group interaction	1

Sources. Authors` Thesis

According to the information in table 4, it can clearly be noticed that most students (11 out of 25) identified *spontaneous speaking* as the biggest challenge to face during pedagogical intervention in Communication I course followed by *academic language* identified by 6 out of the 25 students who took the survey. After analyzing carefully the third one was participating in class discussions and Making oral performance about new topics are related with the vocabulary needed to face spontaneous real-life Role-plays. Students would have to agree or disagree with someone's in group interaction and use for

the appropriate sources and vocabulary to support elaborated good performances for new topics.

3.4 Second survey: students' perceptions after pedagogical intervention.

A second survey was conducted at the end of the pedagogical intervention with the main purpose of confronting participants' initial perception right after the pedagogical intervention with their opinions after submitting the final version of their experiences performance role-play at the end of the semester. This second survey was made by oral participations. It required the students to do the following:

- Identify the most difficult items of the activities while performing roles-plays.
- Express their opinion on the effectiveness of the speaking strategy as well as the effectiveness of their group interaction components.
- Identify which of the elements given during the activities were able to improve mainly due to the intervention.

When asked to identify the most difficult parts of speaking role-play performance after actually having gone through the process, their opinion changed meaningfully from the opinions expressed earlier immediately after the intervention.

Table 5. Major difficulties identified by students while performing Role-plays.

<i>Knowledge of topics</i>	10
<i>Academic Language</i>	6
<i>Performance</i>	5

Sources. Author`s Thesis

The results on Table 5 clearly shows that, 10 out of 21 expressed knowledge of the topics had been the hardest challenge, followed by Academic language, 6 out of 21 identified it. This data matches the students' opinion in the earlier survey was not allowed. The difference could be explained by the fact that in the diagnosis survey, they were not allowed to choose up to challenges different from the basic skills. It is interesting to notice, however, that right after the intervention during students did not think using new and current topics unknown by most of them, and this was going to be that hard. Actually, among the challenges to be faced in the intervention, they considered performance role-plays would be the least demanding. This opinion dramatically changed after the intervention. This might be explained by the students' misleading feeling that having understood the performance role-play to improve speaking skills requires a lot of vocabulary and academic work.

3.5 Participants' perception of the intervention and Students' perception on the skills improved

The students' perception of Role-play effectiveness as a strategy to improve spontaneous real-life speaking skills and Students' perception on the skills improved components. All the students, 21 who were in this last activity at least partially agreed that the topics were updated, and very informative to connect them with topics known in other

cultures and classroom intervention helped them improve their academic speaking skills in the course.

The perception of the skill improved Speaking. Role-play Strategy effectiveness, contrary to the fact that most students were afraid to face performance in front the class, it was contrast, because they could work on specific objectives and enough time, students could work on the strategy to develop academic speaking skills. It might be interesting to try redesigning courses to make it more attractive to learners or to develop combined assessment instruments as an extrinsic motivation tool. Some of the students could feel out of the class, but the most of them enjoy the activities and they admitted this strategy as a step to practice and improve their speaking skill.

3.6 Analysis of students' performances

The four sessions were accompanied by four different activities in order to achieve their skills in real-life situations. This interventions were made in one hour of their Communication I class and the teacher and the students could participate and give opinions for developing the activity. The agenda was introduced by one researcher, describing the activities and procedures.

3.7 Performing Role-play: Cartagena as a historical and touristic City

Role plays were related to Cartagena as historical city where students should describe using a picture with the vocabulary needed one historical place of the city and described it orally and then a written draft was done with comparison of the different cultures that influenced the city, confronting cultural points of view about topics and recommended cultural events in the city. In addition to that students, in group work, described depending

of the situation, a place of Cartagena, an event or an opinion using characters or open role play.

Table 6. General evaluation of the group in each component performing Role-play per activities.

	P1	P2	P3	P4	Mean
Previous knowledge of the topic	3	2	4	4	2.6
Using vocabulary related	3	4	4	4	3
Team work	3	4	3	4	2.8
Performing	2	4	4	4	2.8
Fluency	2	3	3	4	2.4
P1: Presentation 1	P2: Presentation 2		P3: Presentation 3		P4: Presentation 4

Sources. Author's Thesis

The results on Table 6 shows important aspects during intervention most students were able to perform well and make their participations in each role-play, even though some of them lacked one of the main elements (aim, previous knowledge) or in some cases were a bit confusing because they were confronting to new information. Of the four criteria evaluated, the ability to use related vocabulary got the highest scores. The mean score was 3 over 5, a little better than the mean for performing: 2.18. Unfortunately, in regards to fluency, the scores were not as good as we thought. The mean score was 2.40. This data is coherent with the students' final opinion right after pedagogical intervention having submitted the performances but not with the students' perception before the semester started when they were not able to anticipate *to introducing new information and knowledge of the topics* would be such challenging tasks. Fluency got the lowest mean score: 2.4. If we take into account that the importance of the speaking skill has to be done in appropriate academic style, we might conclude either of the following: Fluency on

academic speaking style is hard for undergraduate students to learn or students do not like to participate on such a spontaneous and time (but not necessarily difficult) task as using new vocabulary and information in an academic speech.

It is important to note that team work were absolutely related with performing, that means groups could performance well if they got empathy with their classmates. Table 6 also shows how performing was taken advantage in each presentation and support the same score in the last 3 activities.

Table 7. Comparing components performing Role-play between 1 and 4 activities. Including writing draft.

	P1	P4
Previous knowledge of the topic	3	4
Using vocabulary related	3	4
Team work	3	4
Performing	2	4
Fluency	2	4
Writing draft	2	4

Sources. Author`s Thesis

In this Table a writing draft was included. To assure the correct understanding of the topic and to keep a product of the activity, students in their groups of participations need to write a draft to compare, add or conclude their performing. Since the first Activity, students showed a progress, especially in the topics related with touristic activities in the city. The first performance was to describe a touristic place orally and then write a little invitation. But the last performance was too much elaborated, they need to give a list of one cultural

event in the city. Table 7 shows their progress in all components. Performing and writing drafts showed the most advance. They started in a little level 2 of 5 and advance to 4 of 5.

In the writing draft allowed their engaged with the activities. They cared to writing convincing arguments, explanations and details of why their event was the correct one to live cultural experiences in the city. Besides, Students themselves looked more relaxed in the last performances in Role-plays than in writing activity.

Table 8. Evaluation of the group in writing draft component performing Role-play.

	I	CM	CH	L	Mean
Knowledge of the topic	2	3	3	4	3
Vocabulary	2	3	4	4	3.25
Performance	2	3	2	4	2.75
Following instruction	2	4	4	4	3.50

I: Invitation CM: Conceptual Map CH: Chart L: Comparative List

Sources. Author`s Thesis

To start with, writing a good draft seems to be one benefits obtained from the intervention. As the table shows, the main score of the intervention group in this ability was 3.50 compared to a mean score of 4 in the total of the last draft. In activities without specific instruction in Role-play sample, some information on write the draft is complete. However, instruction which included Specific role-play personages were better performing even in writing draft. The intervention group did receive complete information on how to write a draft in each activity.

This could explain the difference in the mean scores. A second better result was obtained from the students in the vocabulary component to elaborate arguments related to the topic and support them properly. The mean score was 2.75 while the mean score

obtained in the last activity was 4. It is important to highlight the fact that two activities were assigned the exact same task in open role-plays and in the other too the same instruction with specific role-play personages. The last component used to evaluate draft was knowledge of the topic. This was given by the researchers. All the sources of the topics according to activities. Here the results are unexpected.

The mean scores for the component was 3. It was unexpected because most of the participants were from the city and they did not have a lot of information about Cultural events, historic places and mixed cultures involves in their city. Even though the writing draft received enough information of the topic and on how to use proper vocabulary, the given instruction about the role-play to be performance by did not appear as an accurately source in their papers. At this point, enough evidence has been collected as proof that writing draft complete task in Role-play performance for undergraduate students in our region. The mean score of the writing draft (4) was the same as appear in the General Evaluation of the group. A number of conclusions can be drawn from the data collected.

4. Conclusions and Implications

The data collected throughout this small-Scale research allows drawing the following conclusions:

- Most students agree that the intervention was of high significance and contributed to the improvement of the skills required to performance role-plays. Most of them also considered the strategy should be included as a requirement in the communication courses.
- The relevance and effectiveness of the intervention was highly appreciated by the subjected group, which is based on the fact that such group obtained a higher in score three out of the four criteria that was subsequently used to compare with the results obtained by the counterpart. Writing a good abstract, elaborating arguments and writing the list of references. Surprisingly enough, they chose the same criteria as the ones in which they admit to have achieved the most improvement.
- Another finding that contributes to determine the benefit of the intervention is the fact that right after the intervention, most students agreed that writing an abstract was not as difficult as they thought it was. The same students confirmed this opinion in the questionnaire answered immediately after submitting the final version of their reflection papers, when most of them did not think writing an abstract was as hard as they had anticipated before the SLA started.

- After observing some classes, it was evident that students of communication at UNICOLOMBO had enough knowledge about the target language to express their ideas naturally and some of them did not have fluency when they wanted to speak in English. These are common problems with people who live in a country where first language is spoken in Spanish all the time or when they do not have confidence at the moment of facing a real situation.
- On the other hand, self-driven motivation is a tool which is inversely proportional to the learner's goal to speak a foreign language. This research aimed to encourage students to speak English through role-play, using giving tourist information as citizens of Cartagena as a springboard to boost their command of the language.
- The difficulties of participants occurred when they performed role-plays with academic purposes due to not having the English level required, not being in contact with academic language before and not being familiar with the nature of academic vocabulary.
- In addition to that, we use a mixed of role play with CLIL (Content and Learning Integrated Learning) where students did not feel alone and they gave their best in order to participate in the session and enjoyed the moment. It was a great experience for both, teacher and students. Students felt that pedagogical intervention increased their vocabulary and the scaffolding to think their own ideas and express them naturally. That is because at the beginning of this work many of them expressed the difficulty for building the ideas and achieve the communication in different situations or context.

- Besides, students practiced grammar and made fewer mistakes when they focus on output, with few particular cases but avoiding traditional ways of teaching at all cost.
- The main characteristic of role play used in this research is based on real situations, where the student had to think and figure out problems or take part in situations which they are likely to encounter in the work place. In addition to the aforementioned topic, trendy scenarios, informative topics and realia give the students the opportunity to express their own opinions about real life situations through roles where they need to build a speech to be in favor or against, or at least to be creative while interacting a lot with their partners.
- The video shows that students enjoyed activities and they interact actively with the rest of the class. This interaction is possible thanks to simulations of discussions or games proposed by the facilitator.

As a small research, it is necessary to look at these findings as a first step to describe the problems students have to deal with when speaking academic speech in undergraduate programs in our country. It is true that the necessity for developing academic speech skills in the English language is growing. A new generation of teachers in our region should be ready to implement new strategies of teaching that make learning more successful for learners specially in speaking skill.

Finally, we consider that role play is the best strategy for speaking English and if it is mix with CLIL, it exceeds expectations because help the students could participate in

public while it is mix with another efficient strategy such as CLIL. Developing academic strategies to improve skills an integral part of teaching. As teacher finding new ways of helping this new generation of teachers were the purpose of this short intervention.

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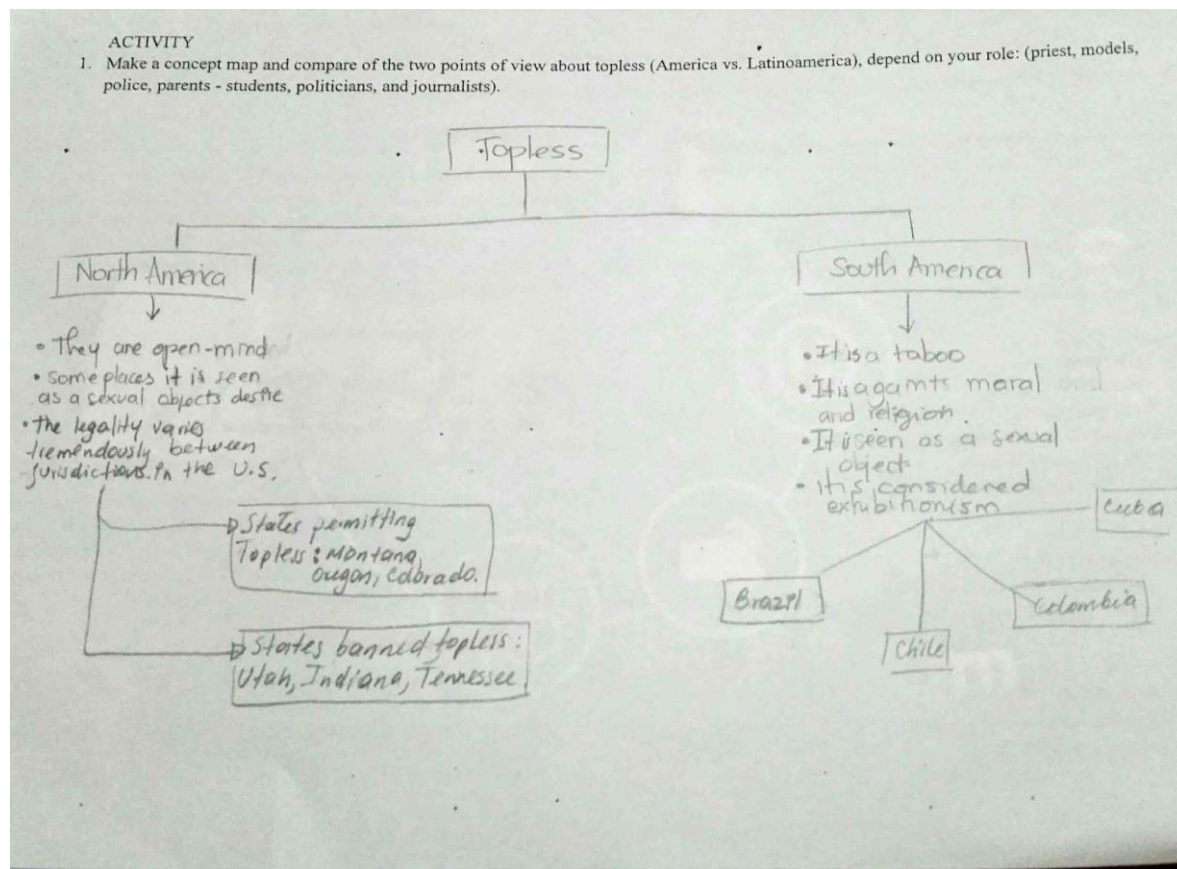
Annexed

Annexed A. Encuesta Juego de Roles Como Estrategia de Aprendizaje para Ampliar las Habilidades de Habla en Lengua Extranjera

ENCUESTA

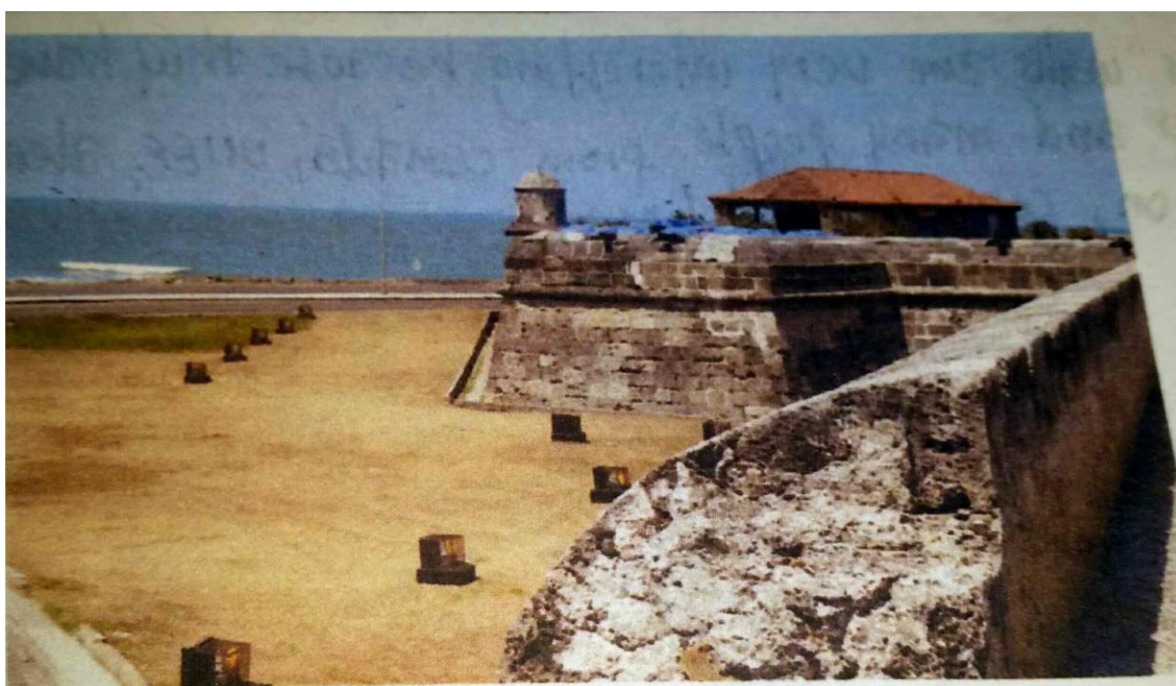
1. EDAD _____
2. ¿SIENTE LIBERTAD A LA HORA DE INTERACTUAR EN CLASES EN PARTICIPACIONES, ROLE-PLAY O DANDO OPINIONES EN FL?
ACUERDO____
DESACUERDO____
TOTALMENTE DE ACUERDO____
TOTALMENTE EN DESACUERDO_____
3. ¿CUANTAS VECES HA USADO JUEGO DE ROLES PARA PRACTICAR EL HABLA EN FL?
NUNCA____
UN MES____
DE DOS A CUATRO MESES____
DE CUATRO A SEIS MESES____
SIEMPRE_____
4. COMO ESTUDIANTE, ¿QUE HABILIDAD CONSIDERA PUEDE MEJORAR USANDO JUEGO DE ROLES?
HABLAR____
ESCRIBIR____
LEER____
ESCUCHAR_____
5. CUAL DE ESTAS OPCIONES CONSIDERAS SE PUEDE MEJORAR A TRAVÈS DEL JUEGO DE ROLES:
VOCABULARIO____
INTERACCION DE GRUPO____
HABLAR ESPONTANEAMENTE____
CONOCIMIENTO DE LA LENGUA____
6. EN CUAL DE LAS ASIGNATURAS CURSADAS HA TRABAJADO JUEGO DE ROLES DURANTE EL DESARROLLO DE LAS CLASES_____

Annexed B. Activity 1



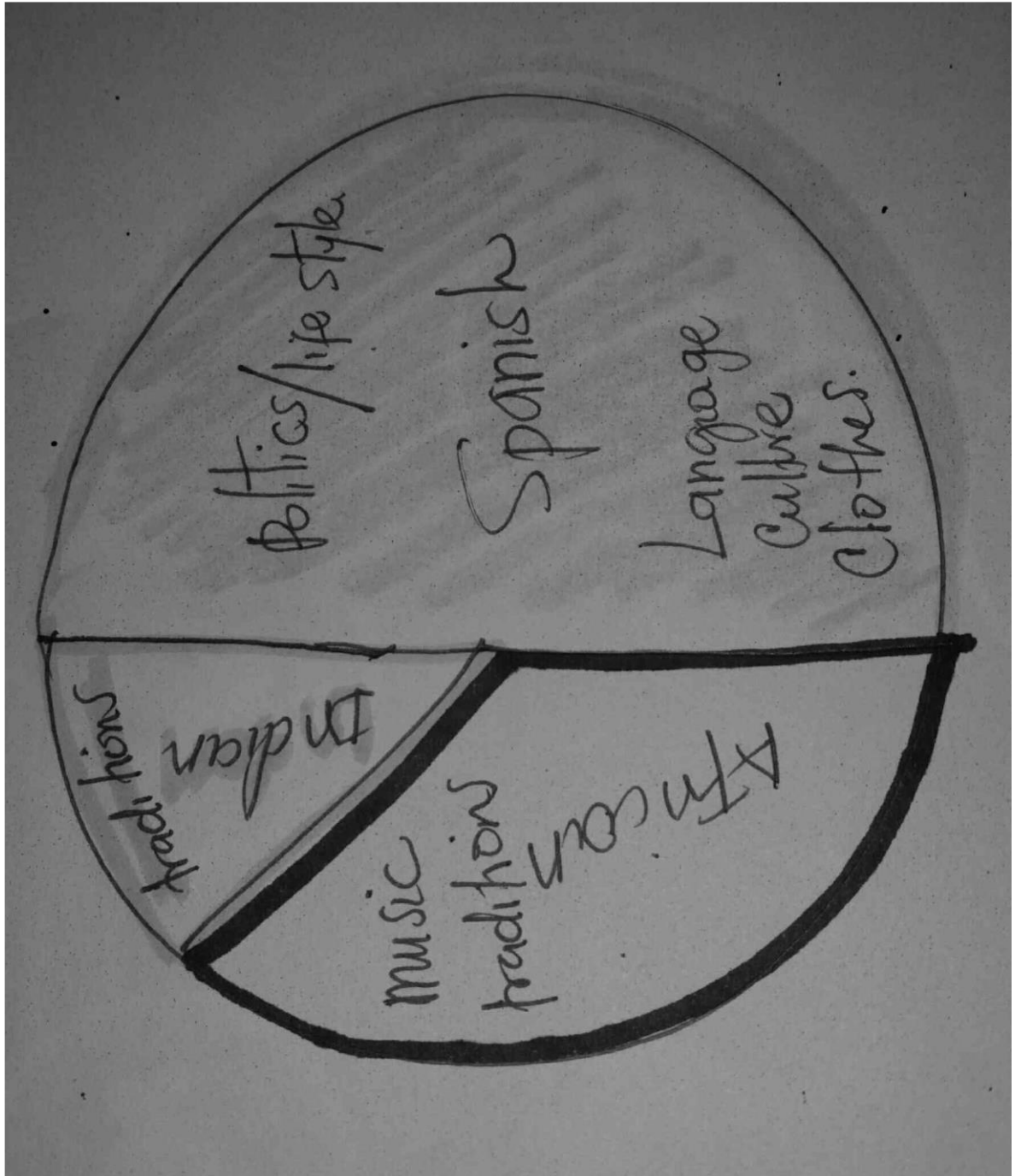
Annexed C. Activity 2

- 1) The cartagena's walls are the most magnificants, large, and tall of colombia, i like it.
- 2) This walls are very interesting because they have several ages and many people from canada, uuee, alemanna and so on, come to visit here.



Walls

Annexed D. Activity 3



Annexed E. Activity 4

FICCI	VS	NOVEMBER INDEPENDENCE FESTIVAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Since 196- Historic Cinematographic Festival- 30 producers countries invited- Cinematographic Feats From Latin America- A Film Festival by academics critics with movies and documentaries		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Since 1933- Historical event- Similar to Carnival- One week festival- Traditional performances from Caribbean dances and music- traditional dresses, costumes- Commemorating Cartagena independence.

Annexed F. Interview

Interview

At the end of the pedagogical interventions, we conducted some interviews to the students so that we could assess the impact of Role-playing in Communication I at UNICOLOMBO:

1. Why do you consider Role Playing to be a good strategy for speaking fluently?

Answer: Based on my experience as a teacher, I am quite sure role playing is an excellent strategy to improve learner's speaking skill, unfortunately it cannot be implemented in the classroom as often as most teachers would like to. This is so due to many factors but the main one I consider is time constraints.

However if we had the desired time to practice it, it would be a fun and fruitful way to foster the speaking skill in target language.

As a student, I feel that Role Playing is a suitable way to practice a foreign language, as well as to acquire fluency.

2. Do you want to continue practicing role-playing as a student and as a teacher?

Answer: Yes, I do. Personally, I would like to keep on practicing Role-playing, as it is a wonderful way to boost my own command of the target language as well as my students' oral practice.

3. Did you feel confident with your participation in the pedagogical intervention?

Answer: Yes, I did. I felt more confident and fluent at the end of the activities.

4. Did you increase your vocabulary by talking about the culture of the city?

Answer: Yes, Of Course! Students acquired a better level of English through picking up academic vocabulary and grammar

5. Do you think that it is worth continuing learning or teaching with Role Play in real situations?

Answer: As long as it is done as you did it in our classroom. Yes. I've learned that Role Playing is the best technique applied to English teaching because students improved their skill to speak fluently.