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The Use of Drama Activities to Develop Speaking Skills in Students from Conversational English Groups of Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

El Uso de Actividades de Drama para Desarrollar Habilidades Orales en Estudiantes de Grupos Conversacionales de Inglés del Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

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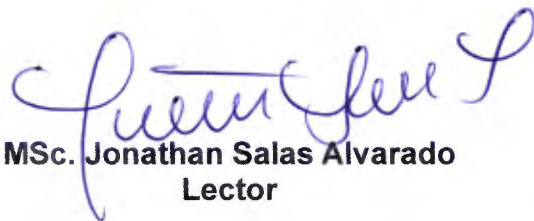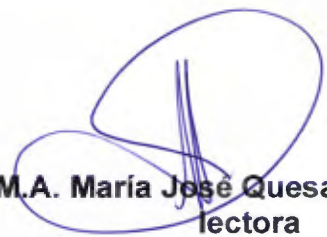
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Glossary

MEP…………………………Ministerio de Educación Pública

CEFR………………………Common European Framework for Language Teaching

CTP…………….…………..Colegio Técnico Profesional

COVID………………….…..Corona Virus Disease

L2…………….……………… Second Language

A1…………….………………Basic User

A2…………….……………… Basic User

B1…………….………………Independent User

B2…………….………………Independent User

EFL…………………….…..English as Foreign Language

ESL……………….………… English as Second Language

Abstract.

This study reports on the effectiveness of using drama activities to improve speaking ability in seventh grade students from conversational classes. This research study developed a mixed methodology and a Quasi-Experimental method, which made it possible to compare two groups of students: an experimental one and a control one. The participants were 12 students from the experimental group and 12 students from the control group, both in a seventh grade group of the Cóbano Professional Technical College of the Peninsular Regional Office during the first and second school term 2022. The main objective of this research was to evaluate the possible effectiveness of the constant use of drama activities to examine oral skills with a sample population by carrying out tests before and after the activities developed in class. It was found that the experimental group improved their fluency by 75% (6 students) in terms of spontaneity compared to the control group, which had a setback in the results obtained in both tests. The results revealed that the use of theater activities is effective in improving the oral proficiency of the students. Also, it was possible to obtain qualitative results that reflect great benefits to the final results such as motivation, creativity and confidence. Finally, the researchers concluded that through the implementation of drama activities in conversational English classes, students can improve their mastery of speaking skills since the activities promote positive experiences in them. Finally, it is similarly recommended that researchers who wish to replicate studies be able to have longer periods of time in terms of the application of drama activities to obtain better results.

Keywords. Effectiveness, Drama Activities, Drama, Speaking Skill, Motivation, Creativity, Confidence, Pre-Test, Post-Test.

Resumen.

Este estudio informa sobre la eficacia del uso de las actividades de drama para mejorar la habilidad del habla en las clases conversacionales de los estudiantes de séptimo año. Este estudio de investigación utilizó una metodología mixta y un método Cuasi Experimental lo cual permitió comparar dos grupos de estudiantes: uno experimental y uno control. Los participantes fueron 12 estudiantes del grupo experimental y 12 estudiantes del grupo control, ambos en un grupo de séptimo grado del Colegio Técnico Profesional de Cóbano de la Dirección Regional Peninsular durante el primero y segundo periodo escolar 2022. El objetivo principal de esta investigación fue evaluar la posible efectividad del uso constante de actividades de drama para examinar las habilidades orales con una población muestra a través de la realización de pruebas previas y posteriores a las actividades desarrolladas en clase. Se encontró que el grupo experimental mejoró su fluidez un 75% (6 estudiantes) en cuanto a espontaneidad en comparación al grupo control que tuvo un retroceso en los resultados obtenidos en ambas pruebas. Los resultados revelaron que el uso de actividades de drama es eficaz para mejorar el dominio oral de los y las alumnas. También, se lograron obtener resultados cualitativos que reflejan

grandes beneficios a los resultados finales como la motivación, creatividad y confianza. Finalmente, los investigadores concluyeron que a través de la implementación de actividades de drama en las clases de inglés conversacional los estudiantes pueden mejorar su dominio de la habilidad del habla ya que las actividades promueven experiencias positivas en ellos. Por último, se recomienda a los investigadores que deseen replicar estudios similares poder tener lapsos más prolongados en cuanto a la aplicación de actividades de drama para obtener mejores resultados.

Palabras clave. Efectividad, Actividades de Drama, Drama, Habilidad Oral, Motivación, Creatividad, Confianza, Prueba Previa, Prueba Posterior.

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1. Introduction.

Education has become a concept of change and adaptation. The current reality needs different actions focused on inclusion and the development of critical and analytical thinking. In an increasingly globalized world, it is necessary to think about different ways to educate in order to prepare the student to face society and be productive. The activities carried out in class need to be spaces for the development of effective communication, free expression and self-knowledge, skills that can be fostered through the use of drama activities. Isyar and Akay (2017) state that:

> Students experience the sense of socializing while learning with the drama method in education, which is an area in itself and a teaching method at the same time. Drama in education is also a method that strengthens the individual's communication with himself/herself. (p.215)

This thought contributes to the idea that drama can serve as a tool for improving communication skills in English, and at the same time it can help to develop social skills and the understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The drama itself is usually conceived as the artistic expression of feelings. Muszynska et al. (2017) point out that: "drama can be valued as an art form which involves an aesthetic experience that may go far beyond that initial technical consideration" (p. 180). This encourages imagination and helps to create a safe space for the expression of ideas. As well as Knudsen (2018) states that: "from a teaching perspective, dramaturgical thinking emphasizes how one structures the dramatic process and works with the themes or educational content alongside the participants" (p.9), which allows the connection with the benefits that drama offers with the study, in this case, of a language. Szatkowski (as cited by Knudsen, 2018) expresses that "given the notion that life can be experienced as an imitation of theater, it has an influence on the ways in

which theater composes/structures its performances" (p.10) who supports the idea of contextualization of content, since drama can be used to relate the lives of students with what is studied in the classroom, and thus bring education closer to the reality of the student body.

In today's society, knowing and understanding how to teach English, has become essential for a successful teaching-learning language process. Besides, Hussain (2018) states that: "it is an agreed fact that language is learnt by speaking it first after a lot of listening to the sounds, words, phrases and sentences from the surroundings" (p.14), in this way students can acquire a second language much more effectively and in a more meaningful way, promoting a climate of trust and confidence to foment communicative situations that are familiar for them. It is at this point where drama in education takes a very interesting role in teaching the English language. The application of drama can favor the improvement of various skills, provoking that the students need to learn the language to communicate when acting, just as they learned their native language. Hussain (2018) believes that:

> Listening and speaking are the fundamental skills. In mother tongue, children get a very natural opportunity of listening and speaking in their surroundings; then they go to school, and it will provide the strategies to understand, to read and begin to write, but it should not neglect the way in which the first communicative skills were learned. (p.14)

Therefore, drama activities can be a successful tool to take into account the experiences of the students and take advantage of them to improve the level of English, as it is stated by Gürbüz (2021):

> The purpose of drama in education is to make a concept better comprehensible, to be studied by reviewing and thinking on it. In addition, by including drama in education, it is aimed that students who participate in the learning process

by having fun are self-actualized, creative, honest, open to communication and independent individuals. (p.127)

Through tasks that are attractive and open to different topics, students will have more options to make their learning more meaningful, as mentioned by Salas (2017) when he states that "the use of drama activities in the classroom goes beyond more entertainment. It gives students the chance to explore different areas and improve a group of skills that would not be stimulated in other cases" (p. 309). From this point of view, drama activities help students to know themselves better and the way in which he or she expresses the language since the use of drama can be taken as a playful and more experiential learning, in which people learn through games and their own experiences.

The use of drama activities has advantages for both students and teachers. The authors Zahid and Rohi (2018) explain that: "drama is one of the most important methods that provide much more involvement for both teachers and students in the learning process" (p. 1380). In addition to this, tasks that are related to drama can help to have an atmosphere of inclusion and acceptance in the classroom, since it is possible to suggest topics in which the culture, traditions and realities of other people should be known. This is supported by research done by Mavroudis (2020) in studying whether the use of theater activities would help eliminate stereotypes within the classroom. Mages, 2010 (as cited by Mavroudis, 2020) points out that: "the nature of drama activities itself is the most suitable condition to develop collaboration, empathy, substantial acquaintance and communication aiming in a targeted manner to optimal contact" (p.97), so following this point of view, the activities should be directed in this sense of inclusion so that the environment favors learning. At the same time, these can be viewed from a starting point for the inclusion of other important cross-cutting issues, such as caring for the environment. Akyol et al. (2018) recommend including theater as a means to make students aware of social struggles, in the specific case of the struggle for sustainability; the authors mention that:

The pursuit of solutions for social and environmental problems also forms the basis of dramatic procedures. In fact, it is claimed that how children learn science related concepts and how they comprehend nature of science is promoted by their own through role plays in dramas as well as pretended and unintended performance. (p.103)

The inclusion of drama as a teaching method can help to encourage group work and to promote the creation of ideas, while for the teachers it is a different experience that allows the students to be the ones who create the content and develop the bulk of the lesson. Drama can become an ideal space in the classroom to develop different skills differently. According to Kuranchie and Addo (2015):

Drama in education may play a positive role in the development of socio-emotional skills, which are necessary for a successful social adjustment. Such skills, linked to the satisfactory expression of emotions, self-empowerment, the advancement of collaboration and respect for the ideas, interests and needs of other people, improve the interpersonal relationships of children and should be developed by all students at school. (p. 449)

Additionally, the incorporation of many methodologies in one way of teaching can give the teacher the tools to change the way and the subject that is being taught when necessary. Understanding education in this way leads to the inclusion of new activities that can reinforce the teaching-learning process. For that reason, this study will focus on the population of the Colegio Tecnico Profesional de Cobano, specifically on two groups of 8th grade of Conversational English that will be used as a control group and as an experimental group. This is in order to evaluate if the use of drama activities is really effective for improving speaking skill. This project raises the possibility of using drama as a tool to help improve the speaking skill through activities that promote participation and the integral development of the student and at the same time, analyze the

contributions that drama can have in the use of the English language as a concrete learning context.

1.1 Justification

The current educational context poses serious challenges for tomorrow's teaching. The lag left by the COVID-19 pandemic is an undeniable fact that can have direct consequences that could affect the future of several generations of students. This situation requires decisions to be made that are consistent with the improvement of education and all its aspects. In the Estado de la Nación (2020), the immediate impact that education has had due to the pandemic is shown; the fact of not having the opportunity of being present has caused that social skills have been diluted from the lives of the students. The study mentioned before, points out a harsh reality when showing that 37% of students do not have internet connection in their homes, which has caused them to not receive classes for a long time when the COVID pandemic started and in some cases the situation got worse because some students had months without receiving classes. The pandemic has shown a side that Costa Rican society does not want to know and has made the gap between social classes wider as this publication points out when mentioning that only 19% of the students has received the majority of lessons or have had little impact, but of that 19%, 7% corresponds to all students belonging to private institutions, which makes it a clear disadvantage for thousands of people who cannot even connect to the Internet. All of this without taking into account all the training in the area of technology that private institutions have, a situation that does not happen in most public schools. Costa Rica faces a situation that could bring down all the educational progress that has been made for generations. Additionally, the Estado de la Educación (2021) indicates that the infrastructure, the lack of face-to-face classes and the technological inequality can create an educational gap in current generations of students as these factors have directly affected the teaching-learning process. In the specific case of the English teaching, the same study indicates that the lag is greater than in the rest of the subjects, leading the country to a fall in

the level of English when compared to the rest of Latin American countries, thus showing the great challenge that presents itself in front of our faces.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned, this project does not propose the improvement of the infrastructure or the training of teachers, it does focus on proposing distinct techniques teachers can choose to educate. In this country, many people indicate that most of the classes are taught in the same way and that there are few signs of innovation. On some occasions it has been mentioned that students fail to reach an expected level of English by comparing this level with the number of years that current generations receive language classes, in this case English. That is why, one of the most frequent complaints among Costa Ricans is that after so many years in the educational system, most people leave with a very basic level of English that would not help them even to maintain a normal conversation in a second language with native English speakers. This popular thought is supported in a study of the Universidad de Costa Rica made by Montero (2021) which was applied in order to know the students' English level, and it indicates that:

> The first application revealed that 70% of students who graduate from high school have a level of A2 (basic or elementary command of the language), 25% registered a level of B1 (pre-intermediate), while only 4% reached level B2 (intermediate proficiency). No percentages were recorded at level C1 (advanced). (par. 7)

Therefore, one of the main concerns and challenges of the Costa Rican educational system is related to the need of knowing effective methodologies that stimulate the development of knowledge of the target language, so that they can be incorporated into the pedagogical practices of teachers. The teaching of a language can be positively affected due to the use of strategies such as games or activities that develop the skills of the student. Likewise, the acquisition of a second language needs elements that facilitate this development in learners of a second language.

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These ideas are shared by Celome (2017), who understands that "the main limitations are, in part, the lack of well-designed protocols, the lack of innovation on the part of the teachers and the lack of enthusiasm of the students" (par. 57). Certainly, it is necessary to find a balance in which the topics appear attractive to students through the implementation of new tasks to promote creativity. In fact, the Estado de la Nación (2020) indicates that the steps to follow for the recovery of our educational system are very focused on the enthusiasm that the teacher has for trying to innovate and use new methodologies.

The new generations of teachers need to understand that the content is important, but it is necessary for the students to understand the usefulness of communicating and begin to express their ideas and feelings. The implementation of the drama itself requires that students have to create content, which makes them participate directly in the development of the class, promoting that they can become the main actors of their own learning process. As mentioned by Kuranchie and Addo (2015) "drama in education may play a positive role in the development of socio-emotional skills, which are necessary for a successful social adjustment" (p.42). With this, a safe space can be created in which students can express themselves without fear of being judged. This tool can motivate them to participate and to be responsible for their own learning and for the group. Therefore, this study focuses on two groups of Colegio Técnico Profesional de Cóbano, who present certain distinctive characteristics that may or may not affect the level of English. These students are in the middle of highly touristic areas of the country, so the contact with the English language is not something strange. This fact serves to formulate the hypothesis that living near to a touristic area supports the acquisition of language in an easier way; in addition, the last Index of English Proficiency (2021) shows that it is in the coastal areas where there is a better level of English, in the specific case of Limon and Guanacaste, which are almost at the same level as San Jose but with much less population. The first two with a score of 57.6 and the last of 59.3 (pp. 4-37). However, the participants in this research present a low

level of English and almost zero understanding of it, in contrast to the reality that is lived around them. Therefore, this project takes into account everything that has been mentioned to try to understand the causes of this phenomenon in order to propose a way to help the specific improvement of the speaking skill.

As for the teaching of languages, the traditional way of repeating the words after the teacher is the most common, a method that has been effective but needs to be replaced by new ideas that revolutionize the way of educating; for example, Boltayeva and Boyzakova (2021) believe that "the knowledge (information)received in the traditional way of putting grammar and writing as a priority is very quickly forgotten" (p.656). This strategy is forgotten by the learners since the way it is developed in the class is not innovative, and it does not allow the participants to use their creativity and their own ideas. On the other hand, Garnikau and Macelro's (2012) state that "the natural physiologic and psychological capabilities of an individual make it possible to preserve to a different extent the knowledge acquired in an oral, entertaining and contextualized way" (as cited by Boltayeva & Boyzakova, 2021, p.656). As mentioned, it is clear to see how the authors agree that the activities or techniques used in class that are presented in a verbal, amusing and contextualized manner cause a more lasting and remarkable impact on the participating people. In addition, Hussain (2018) mentions that "speech is the best introduction to other language learning skills. Learning through speaking is a natural way of learning a foreign language" (p. 15). In this sense, this research is concerned with providing an additional option to break this monotony in the Costa Rican educational system. It is understood that in this globalized world, communication plays a very relevant role in the creation of new opportunities, economic development and for the understanding between cultures, so it is necessary to start thinking about activities that prepare the student to propose new ideas, defend their beliefs and develop critical thinking, so when the time to face the reality of the new world comes, they can have the necessary tools to excel. Today's society is precisely demanding this, students who are capable of expressing themselves and

communicating correctly in a foreign language, not students who memorize a series of theoretical contents in English, which they will later forget, and which are not useful for communicating. Regarding this, Isyar and Akay (2017) state that:

> The method of drama in education is a method that contributes to an individual's personality development, develops social behavior and skills, enables the individual to trust and recognize himself/herself as well as academic achievement; this is what allows the person to remember more easily and meaningfully what they learned. (p.216)

There is a wide range of techniques that educators can adapt to their classes and their teaching process; drama is one of them. Although it is true that drama is not primarily a merely educational activity, it has been used and adapted to education due to the fact that its benefits contribute to the learning of a language. For this reason, the use of drama activities suggests that the students think and create for themselves. Taking into account all the above, this study is directed towards the formulation of a proposal that will alleviate the lack of new strategies for the improvement of education because the most recent data from national and international studies show that there is a significant decrease in the level of English, and it is our duty to find a way to counteract the situation.

1.4 Objectives and Hypothesis.

General Objective.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the use of drama activities when applied during Conversational English Classes from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

Specific Objectives

- To diagnose the students' speaking skill level from the experimental and control group by the implementation of a pre-test in

Conversational English classes from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

— To design drama activities for the experimental conversational English group from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano in order to perform an analysis of its effectiveness to foster speaking skill.

— To contrast the obtained results from the experimental and control group after the implementation of the post-test in Conversational English classes from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

Hypothesis:

● The use of drama activities can improve the speaking skills of a group of a conversational English class from the Colegio Técnico Profesional of Cóbano.

2. Theoretical Framework.

This section presents the main theoretical concepts, quotes, definitions and examples of literature related to drama and its use in the classroom. The foregoing has the objective of allowing the reader to understand the elements to be discussed during the analysis of the information and to understand the results obtained at the end of the investigation.

2.1 Learning process of speaking skill

The process of oral learning of a second language is one of the most relevant factors in which, despite being the most important skill from the aspect of communication, it takes a lot of work from students in order to have an effective process. Due to the complex process of oral communication, it is necessary to find the most effective way to teach this skill in second language acquisition classes. According to Leong and Ahmadi (2017), it is necessary to indicate that: "Language learners sometimes evaluate their success in language learning based on how well they have improved in their spoken language ability" (p.34) For its part, the oral learning process is the most needed development approach in language that is not taught individually without practice or someone to practice with. Group work and the acquisition of skills through practice in teams allows the evaluation of how well the student is developing when assessing his or her ability to communicate orally.

Due to the significance of the ability to communicate orally, teachers must find the best strategy to develop this skill in the classroom. One of the great challenges of the English teacher is to provide the main tools for the student to be able to perform orally. Bahrani and Soltani (2012) express that the processes to achieve that students can communicate orally depend on the student's degree of attention. Indeed, they believe that concentration on grammatical and structural processes does not confer motivation to speak the language because they are not presented in a concise and meaningful way through oral practice,

"language first needs to be noticed to be acquired. In other words, when language learners have noticed something, they are more likely to acquire it if they meet it again" (p.25). This implies that learners should pay attention to the input and pay special attention to any aspect of the input that may be vital for them to develop their speaking skills.

Speaking is considered the most important skill, since it implies a methodical understanding of what one wishes to express. All the cognitive processes behind the generation of a sentence is fundamental to understand the scope of second language acquisition. The learning process involved in being able to communicate orally places the other areas of learning in a single interaction that involves a huge flow of interplay and activation of soft skills to develop effectively, as such, learning how the oral aspect plays with the rest of the macro skills enables a new way of analyzing language:

> The tendency to prioritize the mastery of speaking is also reflected in the tendency of society to make speaking skills as a measure of one's mastery of English. In fact, many students consider language fluency to communicate verbally with others is often considered more important than the ability to read or write. (Nazara, 2011, p.29).

Indeed, it is possible to mention that the focus on the ability to speak is due to the fact that the great need in learning a second language is to master speaking with fluency and good pronunciation in order to be understood. This results in the ability to speak being the most important among the skills that a student must learn in second language proficiency classes.

2.2 Speaking Skill

In our daily life, speaking is the tool most people use to communicate with others. Although there are many ways to convey information between

individuals, speaking is the most commonly used. The definition of this concept is described by some authors. In this way, Nazara (2011) says that speaking: "could be defined as a social, multi-sensory speech event, whose topic is unpredictable" (p. 30). This concept refers to the definition of speaking as a phenomenon in which several individuals participate, who have constant interaction on various topics. On the other hand, Thornbury and Slade (as cited in Nazara, 2011) mention that: "Speaking is social, in the sense that it establishes rapport and mutual agreement, maintains and modifies social identity, and involves Interpersonal skills" (p. 30). Following the same idea, it is mentioned again that speaking is a social act that involves the relationship and interaction of the participants as the interaction that takes place daily in the classroom, with classmates and with the teacher.

According to Burnkart (as cited in Nazara, 2011) the spoken discourse involves three areas of knowledge: the mechanical elements of language, the speaking functions and the sociocultural norms. The author refers to the three areas and explains what the function of each of them is. First, Burnkart (as cited in Nazara, 2011) explains that the mechanical elements of language: "(pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary), allows the speaker to use the right words in the correct sequence and appropriate pronunciation" (p. 31). In this area, the person who is learning the language needs to know the correct pronunciation of the words together with the appropriate way to structure what he or she wants to say appropriately and the correct words according to their meaning in the language.

Also, Burnkart (as cited in Nazara, 2011) mentions that the transaction and interaction can be considered as the second area of speaking functions since they "enable the speaker to know when the clarity of the message is needed (as in carrying out the transaction or in exchanging of information) and when a deep understanding is not necessary (as in the development of relations)" (p. 31).

The speaking functions allow the speech maker to identify the ways of receiving and interpreting the message and how much analysis the information that is being received deserves. Finally, the author describes the sociocultural norms as: "(such as turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants) which enable an individual to realize the conversational situation, whom he is talking to, and what the purpose of speaking is" (p. 31). These elements allow the individual to maintain a more fluid conversation since the person understands the purpose of the communication that he or she is engaging in at the time. Knowing this, the learner can maintain greater fluency when speaking with other people. Referring to this, as it is mentioned by Nazara (2011): "By understanding these elements, an individual will know when he takes a turn to speak and when to listen, how quickly he should speak, and how long he should pause" (p. 31). Also, these areas help improve the interaction between the communication of two people, since both understand how to transmit a message properly in different areas.

When individuals want to express themselves, they tend to choose oral communication because it facilitates the performance of the assignment. The task of speaking in the mother tongue is not as difficult as trying to communicate in an unknown language. Most of the time, students fail when performing communication in a distinct speech because they are not familiar with derivations of speaking skill such as fluency, pronunciation, rhythm, delivery among other premises that result in a hassle to be performed by learners. According to Afifah and Devana (2020) one of the most difficult skills to master is the ability to speak English because it goes hand in hand with the psychological aspect of developing their ideas properly, and they need time to accommodate thoughts about what they want to express when talking. Without this preparation, the mission to achieve speaking is quite difficult to apply in an English conversation. Since speaking is an active skill, it is necessary to expose pupils to a series of assignments that give them the necessary experience to initiate a conversation and maintain it appropriately.

Moreover, Boonkita (2010) describes this skill as: "one of the four macro skills necessary for effective communication in any language, particularly when speakers are not using their mother tongue" (p. 1305). In fact, people need to improve their communication ability in a foreign language in order to be able to express to other people, without having misunderstanding issues.

Speaking is the competence that helps learners to externalize their own thoughts when having to talk to others in situations they require producing an exchange of words to maintain a conversation, as Torky (2006) states: "it is the means through which learners can communicate with others to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions, intentions, hopes and viewpoints" (p.13). Developing this easiness to talk can be complicated because expressing what someone thinks without having the knowledge on how to do it in an accurate way to their classmates may cause learners to worsen their learning. However, this is the macro skill that students practice the least, as Basheer and Azeem (2011) explain:

> This skill is also neglected in our classrooms. Students do not get any chance either in the classroom or outside to speak English. Speaking is not a part of our examinations. Learning to speak also demands a lot of practice and attention. (p. 35)

Pupils do not have the opportunity to practice speaking or pronunciation during their classes because most of the time teachers try to focus on the skills that are going to be evaluated on future tests such as writing and reading. On the other hand, Segura (2012) explains that the interaction this skill requires is quite relevant:

> The most difficult aspect of spoken English is that it is always accomplished via interaction with at least one other speaker, and this is one reason why many of us were shocked and disappointed when we used our second or foreign language for the first time in real interaction: We had not been

prepared for spontaneous communication and could not cope with all of its simultaneous demands. (p. 21)

Consequently, the lack of interaction and practice in classrooms could create an environment where pupils are not internalizing, analyzing and understanding the language knowledge they are learning in order to be applied outside the classroom. When students have to properly communicate with natives or others using English, they lack experience in a real life situation.

In addition, Gumperz (as cited in Nazara, 2011) mentions that: "speaking is cooperatively constructed which is based on contributions, assumptions, expectations, and interpretations of the participants' utterances" (p. 30). Interaction and collaboration are essential features in learning and fostering the speaking skill. Furthermore, Thornbury (as cited in Nazara, 2011) refers to speaking as: "a multi-sensory activity because it involves paralinguistic features such as eye-contact, facial expressions, body language, tempo, pauses, voice quality changes, and pitch variation which affect conversational flow" (p.30). The previous preparation on the communication assignment ahead will help the learner to further understand how to communicate properly in order to involve the student in a more realistic scenario where they have to contribute in the conversation.

2.2.1. Macro Skills

The way we learn a language usually follows the same line, in fact, according to the University of Rizal System (2021) "When we learn a language, there are four skills that we need for complete communication. When we learn our native language, we usually learn to listen first, then to speak, then to read, and finally to write. These are called the four "language skills": also known as macro skills" (p. 2). In the case of this research, it focuses on the speaking skill and its micro skills, as Delos Reyes in 2013 (as cited by Trazo, 2019): "Fluency, intonation, pronunciation and stress"(p. 184). Focusing on these specific points

separately helps to understand the best way to teach the correct way of speaking in the target language by identifying the biggest challenges and the most effective way to address them.

These micro skills are an important part of the analysis proposed in this research, which is why they are defined below along with an aspect that is considered important, such as grammar for good communication.

2.2.2. Fluency

A significant skill exists when learning or promoting the correct use of a second language becomes crucial to have a better understanding of the communication. One of those abilities, in terms of speaking skill, is fluency. Referring to the views of Koponen and Riggenbach in 2000 (as cited by Galante and Thomson, 2017) give a definition of fluency as: "how smoothly a speaker delivers the message in terms of flow, continuity, and automaticity" (p. 117). The authors emphasize the easy movement of speech when someone is talking. Similarly, Gatbonton and Segalowitz in 2005 (as cited by Galante and Thomson, 2017) implement the term "automatic fluency" to refer to fluency as: "the smooth and rapid production of utterances, without undue hesitations and pauses, that results from constant use and repetitive practice" (p. 117). Fluency is mainly based on the form of communication where the speaker produces language, either in his own language or a second language, and language does not present any type of obstacle, so the message in speech is continuous and spontaneous without harming what the speaker wants to express.

In addition, Schmidt in 1992 states characteristically fluency as a : "speaker's automatic procedural skill, emphasizing the performance aspect of actually doing something in real time rather than the knowledge of how something is to be done" (Galante and Thomson, 2017, p. 117). This author also considers that the term of fluency is related to producing speech naturally at the moment in which language needs to be transmitted without the need to overthink the action or even having the knowledge, but never having applied it to everyday life. Notably is to mention the

relevance of fluency motivated by the use of drama techniques. As Galante and Thomson (2017), point out that: "drama techniques include group-oriented activities, negotiation of meaning, and more natural and extemporaneous speech" (p. 119), they also refer to Kao and O'Neill idea on how those activities seek for "fluency in communication" (Galante and Thomson, 2017, p. 119). Drama activities seek that the learner can communicate instinctively and when doing a practice or impromptu performance, this benefits the ease of speech.

2.2.3. Intonation

In English, it is considered important to have a good intonation in order to communicate correctly. According to Betti (2021) " Every sentence is structured to carry a certain intention. Intentional action is intended to achieve a goal, through some kind of plan, to give some beliefs about the state of things (Betti, 2021a: 13)" (as it is cited in Betti, 2021, p.2). Intonation is defined as "It refers to the distinctive use of pitch or melody (Crystal, 2003: 241)" (as cited in Betti, 2021, p.2). Betti (2021) explains that intonation has one function called the attitudinal function of intonation. The attitudinal function of intonation, according to Betti (2021), "...expresses our feeling, attitudes, emotions, for example anger, boredom, gratefulness and so on." (p. 4) which helps the listener to understand what the speaker is feeling. In the same way, this function is divided into two types: fall tone, rise tone. The fall tone is, according to Betti in 2002 (as cited by Betti, 2021):

> The tone that is usually regarded as more or less neutral. If someone is asked a question and the reply is yes or no, it will be understood that the question is now answered and that there is nothing more to be said. (p. 63)

The falling tone is emotionless, since the tone that is used means that the speaker does not have anything else to say to the listener. The rise tone is to make an impression, general questions and to encourage

someone. (Betti, 2021, p.5) Usually this tone is the most common and allows the speakers to express their emotions.

2.2.4. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is one of the most important factors for good communication. Cambridge dictionary (n.d.) defines it as: "the way the sounds of a word or language are spoken" (definition 2) and according to Levis (2018): "Research has shown that intelligibility, the extent to which a listener can understand a speaker's speech, is crucial for successful communication and should be the goal in second language (L2) classrooms" (p. 1). This point of view exposes a situation that affects the acquiring process of a second language, according to Pennington (2021) "a central concern of language teaching, such as pronunciation, had been sidelined in response to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizing movement meaning over form." (par. 1). A teaching methodology that avoids a phonological approach can affect communication between people who try to speak a new language, since being understood and understanding the message play an important role in a conversation.

For a person who is learning a new language, pronunciation is quite a challenge as it is influenced by what is already known about their native language. Pennington (2021) understands the difficulty that there may be in learning how to pronounce differently something that may be familiar by expressing:

> While the influence of first-language (L1) phonological transfer on the pronunciation of a second or additional language (L2) is undisputed, it is possible for adult language learners to change their L1-influenced perception and articulation of an L2. Our phonetic systems remain adaptive over the life span and [can] reorganize to allow for L2 sounds by adding new phonetic categories or modifying old ones'. However, this is not an easy or quick process, and it requires

a high quality and quantity of L2 input, as well as sufficient opportunities for L2 use in communication, in order to reset perceptual and articulatory targets. (par. 4)

This idea proposes the inclusion of oral activities that encourage the use of the target language, encouraging the learner to try to be understood. To fulfill this purpose it is necessary, according to Saito (2019), to understand that "L2 pronunciation proficiency is considered as a multilayered phenomenon composed of two different levels—one global construct (human intuition of overall pronunciation proficiency) and two specific constructs (expert rating of segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation proficiency and computerized measurement of acoustic properties)" (p. 6), this idea should make the educator think that there will always be prior and usually different knowledge from what is being taught, and it is necessary to understand it in order to find a way for the student to have real learning. Pennington (2021) also suggests using engaging activities that include striking aspects for the student to help them become interested in what they are learning, all this together with the use of audios or videos and technology in general that helps to understand how a word is really pronounced (par. 9-12). The foregoing helps to support the use of drama activities that promote the use of the target language orally and the good development of participants.

However, pronunciation can be somewhat subjective as it can be expressed in different ways depending on the factor that influences it, such as the accent or the place where the speaker comes from. Trazo (2019) expresses that in order to avoid subjectivity, an organism that generalizes the reproduction of sounds must be used; "New learners need to devote their study time on the simplest basic aspect of English, which is to learn and understand the use of phonemes. Sound recognition is vital when someone gives a speech or converse with people, so the phonetic alphabet can provide a guide to be followed by all learners of English." (p.184). From this point of view, the International Phonetic Alphabet (2015) could provide a guide that can be used to teach pronunciation correctly.

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2015)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC) © 2015 IPA

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ѵ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

In this way, the evaluation of how a student pronounces a word is more organized and aligned to the original sound of the language.

2.2.5. Grammar

Grammar comes to provide learners with structures and rules that can be applied to language in general. Whether written or spoken, people should follow a word organization in order that the message they want to convey is understandable in any language and makes grammatical sense. For instance, Kusumawardani and Mardiyani (2018), refer to what Hamer and Malova say about the grammar knowledge, and mention that "the language user must learn grammar because grammar skills will help students organize words and messages and make it meaningful" (p. 725). A main reason to communicate with other people is to express our ideas and to be understood in what we want to say, that is why elements such as grammar improve the clarity of the information that is constantly

transmitted when speaking. In other words, Gleason and Ratner (as cited by Kusumawardani and Mardiyani, 2018) simply establish a concept for grammar as: "a set of rules that explores the forms and structures of sentences that can be used in a language" (p. 726). Those sets of rules include the use of nouns, verbs, adverbs, pronouns, adjectives, prepositions and many others in the creation of a sentence. Additionally, Kusumawardani and Mardiyani (2018), provide a concept for grammar in which they state that,

> Based on explanations and definitions above, the researcher assumed that grammar is a science of rules that governs the order of sentences, phrases, and words to show some meaning. By knowing the grammar our abilities are improved in using an effective style to train expressions in speaking and writing. (p. 725)

The grammatical structures allow students to improve their ability to speak because it can provide information that helps the reader or listener understand the content of the message in a more effective way. In speaking, structural corrections allow the speaker to improve their confidence and fluency by knowing the correct rules in a sentence, even avoiding errors that make the language not so clear for native speakers.

2.2.6. Stress

The stress in the learning of a language is relevant due to the importance of the correct pronunciation in the words. The stress is "a stressed syllable is in some way more prominent than the others in the same word." (Mai, 2012) which means that each word has its own stress and one of the syllables is going to be highlighted during the pronunciation. According to Mai (2012) To identify the stress it is necessary to pay attention to the syllable that is louder, high in pitch and longer. Another relevant definition of stress to add, as cited in Shaban (2018) is

A suprasegmental feature of utterance. It applies not to individual vowels and consonants but to the whole syllable wherever they might be. A stress syllable is pronounced with a greater amount of energy than an unstressed syllable and is more prominent in the flow of speech. (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2011, p. 249)

It means that every word has the necessary stress to identify the meaning of the same word, and it is always going to focus on a syllable. In the same way, Shaban (2018) mentions that "The problem with stress is that if a non-native speaker produces a word with the wrong stress pattern, an English listener may have difficulty in understanding the word." (p.4) something that is accurate because if there is a problem with communication, the conversation is not going to be clear for any of the implicated people. The process of communication needs to go clear in both ways in order to create an understandable message. That's why this is one of the important elements in speaking skill that has to be taken into consideration.

2.2.6.1. Common European Framework of Reference

The Common European Framework of Reference has its function in being able to identify how much knowledge the person has according to the pre-set standards and to assign a value to it by means of the proposed fixations within its spectrum. As such, the CEFR is based on the individual's command of the language from its different points of action, ranging from A1 to C2, which can be regrouped into three main levels: Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User, which, in turn, are subdivided according to the local or regional scenarios of the different educational systems. The organization within the spectrum of the MEP curriculum is similar to that mentioned above, but, they are placed from a horizontal proposal to design and explain how the activities generate competence and knowledge, and a vertical one that represents progress within the language, as well as a constant improvement according to the subdivisions, being the seventh year a proposal of A.1.2. By that, The

CEFR has three principal dimensions: language activities, the domains in which the language activities occur, and the competences on which we draw when we engage in them.

The CEFR, according to the English curricula of 7th grade (MEP, 2020, p, 18) distinguishes among four kinds of language activities:

· Reception (listening and reading),

· Production (spoken and written),

· Interaction (spoken and written),

· Mediation (translating and interpreting).

Both the aspect of mastery and the aspect of evaluation and assessment respond to the need of education to have an international margin that allows them to give a label to the expected level of achievement, therefore, the CEFR formula is imposed in the teaching of English within the framework of a new citizenship. Beresova (2017) says that "A great advantage of the CEFR is that skills can be tested separately and then linked to a particular level, as well as skills-specific ability levels can be defined on the basis of specific-specific descriptors" (p. 963).

Overall Spoken production:

C2	*Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.*
C1	*Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.*

	Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.
B2	*Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.*
B1	*Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.*
A2	*Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines. likes/dislikes etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.*
A1	*Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.*

Source: Council of Europe, 2011

PHONOLOGICAL CONTROL

C1	*Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning.*
B2	*Has a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation.*
B1	*Pronunciation is clearly intelligible, even if a foreign accent is*

	sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.
A2	*Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time.*
A1	*Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group.*

Source: Council of Europe, 2011

2.3 Drama

The author Buneri mentions that "The word drama comes from the Greek verb "dran" which means 'to act' or to perform" (2020, par. 14). Students may think that drama involves any act in which they have to perform on a stage, without considering the fact of analyzing the whole process behind it, but they forget the whole process of communication that it requires. That is the reason why the drama's concept is defined by the author Via in 1987 (as cited by Angelianawati, 2019) as: "communication between people that conveys meaning" (p. 127). Drama is a tool that seeks to enhance the abilities of the student, it becomes an important tool for the human being who seeks to exploit his or her abilities. Salas (2017) exposes that: "the magic of theater is able to take readers and theatergoers to different places, to other realities, other lives and other times" (p. 307). Indeed, drama is an essence. Also, another definition that the author Graham shares is "a presentation before spectators by performers who take on roles and who interact with each other to further a story, or a text intended for such presentation" (n.d., p. 12) which it means that it is a way to present a story to other people.

Some of the characteristics that can be mentioned in the drama are the ones that Graham (n.d.) explains. These are:

> Dramas are presented as parts of a sequence of varied performance forms. Within one drama, a variety of performance forms and dramatic modes can be found. Also, the plays use the stylistic devices characteristic of oral literature. The subject is familiar to the spectators. In the same way, settings are minimal, costumes are gorgeous. Actor-spectator relationships are close. The performance is free to the spectators. (p. 14)

Also, Buneri (2020) explains three different levels that Drama has. Performance, composition and Branch of literature are those levels. The first level is performance. Performance is about the acting in the scenarios and telling stories; it is about actors and actresses ".... imitating other characters" (par. 7). The second level is composition. The composition is described as "a dramatic composition which employs language and pantomime to present a story or series of events intended to be performed" (par. 8); however, even when it is not presented, it is still drama. The last level is the branch of literature. The branch of literature is related to the composition of drama; the author tells us, "You know already that drama is a literary art. The basic difference between drama and other forms of literature (prose and poetry) is that drama is presented in dialogue from the beginning to the end." (par.9) In the same way, Buneri (2020) mentions the elements of the drama, which are considered important to understand its development. The elements are plot, action characters, dialogue, setting and theme.

2.4 Drama Activities in the Language Classes

Drama activities are essential for learning skills that encompass the primary needs of communicating effectively. According to Kobayashi (2012) drama activities can be defined as: "games that are used to help actors enhance their creativity and unlock spontaneity" (p. 25). The

greatest advantage of seeing learning as a game corresponds to the student's need to feel that studying does not imply getting bored or falling behind because of a traditional way. On the contrary, dramatic activities are made to motivate students to feel part of a different environment where creative and meaningful thinking predominates.

The role of the pupil in a drama activity is to serve as part of a world where the collaboration between them allows the mind to broaden and the creative role to grow, in this way students develop the skills necessary to learn a second language. Drama activities can provide more skills for students, as Lee et al explain (2015) "include theater games that are intended to facilitate community development and team building among the participants" (p. 6). Those activities allow learners to explore unfamiliar skills, the use of speech and word together with kinesthetic activities while learning a new language, and to understand the nature of the activity according to the objective to be achieved. The drama activities boost the students' psychological and social developmental mechanics, as mentioned:

> Drama has the potential to serve as a powerful psychological tool that forms an interrelated and dynamic system of written and oral forms of communication. Its potential is derived from a link between the students' developed system of oral language and the developing system of written language (Kyrimi and Tsiaras, 2021, p.5).

The development of language skills is one of the affinities that can be achieved through the execution of the learning process objectives within a drama activity. The reinforcement of language and the possibility of fostering speaking skill through situations that require appropriate communication allows the student to understand the need for drama in its educational function in the academic environment and to appreciate it as a skill builder.

2.5 Types of drama activities to develop in classes

Activities that include performing dramatic arts are useful as long as there is an objective that the student can recognize. For this, it is necessary to start from simple to more complex activities. In fact, drama activities push students to the limit by placing them outside what they are used to do in a classroom. The popularity of certain activities makes students more participative when they include situations that they have lived in the past or allows them to perform an exercise from which they stand out. Nguyen (2021) in his study about role play as an educational method states that: "the aim of using drama in the classroom is not the creation of refined performance but the development of emotional, embodied and cognitive knowledge built on experience" (p. 304). For example, role-plays are types of dramatic activities that require the student to apply all his or her knowledge and skills in order to carry them out. The role play is the most complete educational activity since it places the student within the essence of meaningful learning. In addition, the way in which they perform the activity allows them to study the meaning of a scene according to the holistic application of their knowledge to do more complex activities while learning by interpreting life scenarios.

In addition to role-play, which is one of the best known theater activities, there is a wide range of activities such as miming. One of the basic principles before performing a role play consists in the execution of mimics to know what to do and how to do it in action. Mimics have corporal and verbal significance if you want to implement oral activities. Guessing and interpreting are useful when pronunciation practice is needed. Yates (2003) states that: "linguistic Mimicry provides a non-threatening environment that lowers anxiety and inhibitions and creates a safe environment to integrate the pronunciation of the L2 into the student's personality" (p. 22), which implies that it can be used as a starting point to increase the objectives of the activities and model whole classes under the concept of mimicry and performance, using the contents in a lively and active way. By understanding the output of the activity, it reduces the analysis of vocabulary and structures, such as isolated parts of a

sentence. The output complements the actions developed in the class by contextualizing the learning to real life and exposing the need for their use in the everyday environment.

Another type of drama activity that allows interaction when teaching vocabulary in a meaningful way consists of charades. Bafadal and Humaira (2019) deduce that vocabulary must have an objective in order to be learned, and a dramatic activity, such as charades, may be able to fulfill this role since: "charades is an excellent way to facilitate the emotional education of the children. It can be used as prevention for the emotional well-being of children experiencing emotional difficulties, or remediation for children who appear to be lagging in emotional development" (p. 14). Because the focus of the activity is on the student, this lets students control the activity and allows the student to progressively learn to lose fear of the audience. Charades can be considered a starting point for activities that require the group to be more active, such as miming and role-plays. The pantomime and work structure of the activity makes it a valuable way of working with students new to these dramatic areas of learning.

2.6 Benefits of drama activities when learning a second language

The benefits of drama activities take into consideration a series of improvements in terms of corporal and oral expression, as well as meaningful learning through the recognition of multiple intelligences as such. Being able to provide the right tools for students, drama activities allow teachers to carry out activities that motivate pupils to continue learning. According to this, Kalidas (2014) explains that: "one of the reasons drama is able to enhance students' learning experience is because of its unique ability to accommodate many different learning styles and thus able to motivate the learners" (p. 444), which indicates that one of the direct benefits of drama is to accommodate different learning styles according to the intended activity.

The creativity of teaching a class through the use of drama means that the students can learn about areas that were unknown to them. One of the biggest limitations when learning a second language is the fear of being judged for pronunciation or for mistakes that may be made, this absorbs the fact of feeling overwhelmed due to people's stares when trying to establish communication. This is an important variable to take into account when learning a second language. This event becomes imperative to look for activities that place students outside this area of fear and to include the rest of the class in the same position of participation to avoid those issues mentioned before. Using these techniques is the way creativity becomes meaningful for learners rather than forced. Additionally, Sternberg (as cited in Ozdemir and Kakmak, 2008) mentions that: "Drama offers participants the opportunity to practice constructive behavior and provides a medium through which students learn to cooperate and collaborate, and it develops self-confidence and self-esteem as well as providing learning and socialization" (p. 14). Artistic expression and the means to perform it is a fundamental pillar when trying to bring drama to English classes. It provides individuals the tools to construct knowledge and their own personal development. Moreover, Ozdemir and Kakmak (2008) mention some of the characteristics and benefits of the use of drama techniques, they state that:

> Drama also provides individuals with an opportunity to get encouraged, to have new experiences, to be at peace with themselves and with the others, and to be tolerant towards others since every member of the group has the opportunity to participate in the process. (p. 14)

The opportunity to achieve growth in healthy environments, the management of emotions and stage presence while practicing a second language, is part of understanding English classes as a game that allows people to recognize teaching as an active and lively way of education without the use of traditional models. As well as, Ozdemir and Kakmak (2008) explain how group work works: "Group members examine a

particular topic, analyze, play, revise, synthesize, apply the knowledge obtained to real life, take lessons from their experiences, and reflect these lessons into real life" (p. 14-15). The benefits of drama can be noticed not only individually but also in group work since it allows all the participants to work with a topic in a deep and dynamic way, as well as being able to use their daily experiences to enrich the activity.

2.7 Drama in language teaching

In the last few years, education has been more concerned with finding new ways of educating, and this has caused greater demands in knowing techniques and developing skills that help innovate in English classes. Therefore, the interest in knowing about the use of drama when teaching a second language has begun to increase more recently. With this, new ways and techniques have been developed to be precise in exposing the student to activities that require drama. As such, drama activities are aimed at learning to express oneself appropriately both corporeally and through speech. Following this idea, Spada in 2007 (as cited by Angelianawati, 2019) exposes that:

> Communicative language teaching is essentially "a meaning based, learner-centered approach to second or foreign teaching in which priority is put on fluency rather than accuracy and emphasizes more on the comprehension and production of messages rather than the instruction or correction of language construction". (p. 126)

The components of drama, such as non-verbal language, acting, dialogues and the way sentences are spoken, allow the learner to be exposed in his or her way of being and confronting him or herself against the reality of communication. With this, the learners within the learning of a new language under the role of the drama in class are placed as the center of the classroom, being the educator a guide of the learning and contents through the creativity of the student. In the same way, the

applications of those components generate, in a holistic way, significant learning by receiving the influence from all fronts of the correct use of the language in their learning process.

Indeed, when students perform drama activities, they have to apply all possible skills in order to achieve the objective of the task. From walking or repeating a sentence to being able to perform a role play, the student begins to understand that these activities are made to place him/her at the limit and even beyond. Masoumi (2018) mentions that: "drama techniques are powerful means to motivate students' active involvement in learning as it brings excitement, fun and laughter into the classroom and encourages cooperation in a creative context" (p. 64). This implies that the importance of the second language learning process can be directly motivated by fun activities that seek to teach and to give a glimpse of the way the world unfolds through the collaboration and creativity of the student involved in this process. On the other hand, the teaching of drama has been a process where most of the teaching comes through an instructor. The student's ability does not depend on the instructor, but the professor can have enough tools for the student to discover drama as a way of life to be taken into account in their future activities. Camileri (2015) writes that:

> The role of 'teacher' is occupied by someone better designated as 'training coordinator' or 'session leader', a first-among-equals in a situation that is essentially geared towards an auto-didactic process through/with others, and one which is relatively open to the pursuit of specific areas of interest. (p. 19)

Everything is connected to work together in the learning process such as the activities developed, students´ attitudes towards classes, environment and teachers´ role. Likewise, there are many additional strategies teachers can use in their classes to encourage students to upgrade their speaking performance, and one of them is drama. The diversity of teaching a class through the use of drama means that the

student can learn about areas that were previously unknown to them. Following this idea, the authors Ozdemir and Kakmak (2008) state that creativity in drama is essential for people to learn the way to function in their work environment, in fact, they explain that: "drama activities provide lots of opportunities for revealing, supporting and developing creativity. Drama is to perform a word, concept, behavior, sentence, idea, experience or event by utilizing theater techniques and developing a game or games" (p.14). Artistic expression and the means to perform, it is a fundamental pillar when trying to bring drama to English classes.

Drama in language teaching can provide great efficacy and power to promote students´ curiosity to acquire a second language. There are some authors that highly recommend the use of drama because of all the benefits that it brings for the total of the classroom participants. As mentioned by Mattevi in 2005 (as cited by Angelianawati, 2019) this author emphasizes that: "... the use of drama in the language classroom allows the teacher to present the target language in an active, communicative and contextualized way" (p. 126). Activities based on drama adapted to the classroom learning unit provide learners with a purpose to activate the stimulation of the language skills such as speaking skill in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, confidence, creativity, even gestures that will improve their own real communication when talking to someone else. Besides, this effectiveness in language teaching is also reinforced by Moore in 2002 (as cited by Angelianawati, 2019) who states that:

> Drama has an important role to play in the personal development of our students. The skills and qualities developed by students in drama, such as teamwork, creativity, leadership, and risk-taking, are assets in all subjects and all areas of life. Drama stimulates the imagination and allows students to explore issues and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. (p. 126)

Significantly, drama has benefits and important characteristics that it offers to the people who carry it out both, inside and outside the

classroom. Especially in this case, where drama focuses on learning a language, since when learning a second language it is helpful to explore techniques that develop a better acquisition of learning.

2.8 Drama activities on third cycle of seventh's grade program of conversational English

The MEP has a work structure based on tasks, which seeks that the student develops together with his/her capabilities in its environment, channeling the knowledge within the framework of tasks to be applied. The planning structure consists of meeting the indicators and learning objectives in order to ensure that the student can use them in their environment by seeing the reality of the theory put into practice. The development of language has become a primordial aspect since, within the learning process, it is integrated into society to take the advantages conferred to it, therefore, the relevance and meaning of the tasks takes greater force when the student manages to link what he or she learns in class with what surrounds them. Putra (2021) exposes that: "To learn English requires constant practice and patience. The kind of feeling that succeeds among students is that it is not possible to achieve fluency or mastery over the English language. This kind of tendency prevents students from learning English." (p.2)

Due to the importance of English in global competitiveness and the universality of the language, tools have been used to make it a primary tool in schools and colleges. The MEP has sought to establish ways of working within the curricular structure together with a mesh of topics aimed at generating technical knowledge from different topics ranging from healthy lifestyles, technology, tourism, agriculture and livestock among others. With this, MEP (2020) realizes the necessity of creating programs that have affinity of knowing the necessities of the new era:

> The programs of study from seventh to ninth grade offer a novel curricular approach that combines the development of communicative skills with student-centered pedagogy, a

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technical orientation that integrates collaborative learning, the development of critical thinking, instruction based on conversation about a problem or product in the classroom, and project-based learning. (p. 7)

The response to this is the Action Oriented Approach and task based as an elementary structure within the way of working in class. A planning style aimed at reinforcing the scaffolding of knowledge is generated and, in the conversational English plans, both the teacher and the student are requested to be executors of the work to be done. Due to the general way in which the real need is written in the characteristics and traits of the teacher and the student, it is not possible to determine if there is a focus within the drama activity plan; however, taking into account the student's emotions, how the student feels, the role plays and the simple examples offered of how to develop topics within the unit, it is possible to indicate that a direct formula to develop it and to give an outline of learning with an emphasis on reality and meaning is lacking:

The student should be encouraged to extemporize, using whatever language they have at their disposal, to complete the task. Those who innovate will be producing what is known as 'pushed output' because the learners will be 'pushed' by the task to the edge of their current linguistic competence. (Swain, 1995 cited in MEP, 2020, p.43)

The strategies that the teacher chooses to develop in his or her plan should go hand in hand with meeting the needs of the students to be able to integrate into the subject and advance around it. The sequence of controlled or uncontrolled practices depends on the structure of a teacher's work. In this example curriculum, the MEP does not mention drama activities directly, which implies that it is up to the teacher's discretion what type of activity to apply. What the MEP asks for in this curriculum is "to implement a student center pedagogy which integrates collaborative learning, development of critical thinking skills, conversation-based instruction around a problem or product in the classroom." (MEP,

2020) This gives the teacher a certain free-selection of strategies that must be aligned with the proposal of the curricula.

2.9 Motivation

For the proper development of a person's learning process, it is necessary to take into account the emotional part. According to Daif-Allah and Aljumah (2020) motivation can be defined as a goal for the learners and an ongoing determination to continue learning, they also explain that it can drive a person to do their best in the learning purposes (p. 66). Motivation can make a person do something in order to achieve different goals. For instance, when motivation is related to the learning process, the authors Filgona et al. (2020) state that: "Student motivation is an essential element that is necessary for quality education" (p. 17), it means that the education will depend on how much motivation has a student in their process of acquiring knowledge. Motivation is present in most people around the world, since this is the way individuals feel stimulated to participate in activities related to the learning process. This encouragement that motivation provokes can be divided into two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. They are going to be explained in the next section.

2.9.1 Intrinsic Motivation

Motivation is an aspect that can help students to learn better and to have a better performance during the lessons or tests. Regarding intrinsic motivation, Ryan and Deci (2000), explain that: "When intrinsically motivated a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external prods, pressures, or rewards" (p. 56). Students that are intrinsically motivated about certain activities might have an advantage from others because they have the opportunity to enjoy the learning process more. However, not every student is intrinsically motivated, for this reason, they might need extra help to enjoy their classes too.

If a student feels motivated about certain activities, it does not mean they might feel the same way regarding other kinds of activities. Ali (2022) explains that: "people can be intrinsically motivated to do an activity but not other activities" (p. 439). It is important to consider that students can feel motivated to participate in activities such as drama activities, speeches or those that include more movement, but those students might not feel the same way with activities that require them to stay still. However, it is necessary to take that information into consideration, so teachers can take advantage of those activities that make students motivated.

To sum up, Ali (2022) also explains: "intrinsic motivation is the feeling when a particular activity is enjoyable to the person, and therefore, he/she becomes engaged doing it" (p. 439). Intrinsic motivation is the kind of feeling that some people have regarding certain activities, some people might feel more comfortable while doing activities that require dancing than others. Those students that might not feel as comfortable may need more from the extrinsic motivation to enjoy the activities. However, most people have that intrinsic motivation that can be helpful in the learning process.

2.9.2 Extrinsic Motivation

Motivation is one of the most relevant aspects in the classroom. Part of the aspects that move students to learn something new is motivation. Sometimes that motivation comes from the outside, and it is called by experts as extrinsic motivation. Regarding this, Legault (2016) refers to this type of motivation and explains how the purpose of extrinsic motivation is to obtain something called outcome from people who are performing a task (p. 1); meaning in order to do something, another action motivates you to do it. If it is related to the educational process, being motivated is essential for the students to learn, but it is always a challenge to find a way to motivate them.

Teachers have to find out techniques on how to motivate students in a creative way, and drama activities are one of those ways. According to Faruk (2021): "Learning a foreign language requires high motivation" (p.91), and drama activities help students to feel more motivated in the learning process, since these activities are not as boring as a memory test in which if they fail one question, they will lose points. On the other hand, Shand (as cited in Faruk, 2021) mentions that since motivation is vital for learning a language, the drama activities can be a good way to help students to feel comfortable in the process.

Extrinsic motivation can be introduced in the class using drama activities. Rastelli (as cited in Göktürk et al., 2020) mentions that drama activities enable many aspects related to the educational process, but especially motivation is one of them. If the drama activities can help students to learn a foreign language, the extrinsic motivation caused by the drama activities can be part of the classroom every day to enhance the learning process through it.

2.9.3 The role drama activities play in students' motivation towards class activities.

The effectiveness of drama activities will respond to the student's level of motivation to engage and participate naturally because "Most learners show an instinctive interest to explore the world, which means they are likely to find learning intrinsically motivating. In reality, however, this interest is weakened by such factors as compulsory attendance, curriculum content, and grades" (Iaremenko, 2017, p.126). From these it can be added that the position of learning within the person's reality scale, by engaging the person to learn, the person can understand that reality is intrinsically related to the instinct of wanting to explore the world.

Motivation is related to the person's performance during the activities. The learner's attitude plays an important role, as it involves creating a circle of trust among second language learners. In the same way, learning through drama activities allows exploring other essential

characteristics, such as exposing or handling nerves, which allows the learner to know how effective such skills are in the future, which creates intrinsic motivation with the outcome of the activity. "Lack of inspiration and motivation, using traditional methods of learning and teaching, being discouraged by their teachers and instructors, and having a fear of not learning English easily are some of the fundamental difficulties in learning to speak English correctly" (Qarshieva, 2021, p. 1) with this, the lack of self-confidence plays a fundamental role since, with the right motivation, this stage can be trained and tamed by the person and turned into real learning.

2.10 Effectiveness

Effectiveness can be a subjective term. Each person's perspective on whether something is effective is likely to be based on their prior expectations. This idea causes that, most of the time, the effectiveness of programs or activities in specific fields such as education can be a subject to be discussed. Starting from this point, it could be said that something is effective if it meets the expectations or objectives set. This idea is the one presented by the Cambridge dictionary (n.d.) when it remarks that: "it is the ability to be successful and produce the intended results" (definition 3), thus emphasizing that in the final conclusion is where the answer is found. However, Gabitova et al. (2018) comment that in the educational field something is effective when it makes students feel comfortable and can learn something from the process. In their words they emphasize that: "These actions are means of shaping behavior of students in real and given situations within an educational process that contribute both to the formation and development of communicative competence of students and to the emotional qualities of a person" (p. 309). From this perspective, we can highlight that if education is seeking for an integral learning that involves the student's experience with the subject under study, the inclusion of drama activities can be an important tool to achieve these objectives.

Drama activities can facilitate the learning experience by putting students in situations that can be real and that allow them to relate the topics studied to their daily lives. At the same time, drama activities may help the student to develop different social skills through collaboration among peers and can facilitate participation by promoting a more relaxed space within the classroom. Najami et al. (2019) remark that: "drama involves the players changing roles, so they can begin to empathize with each other's point of view, even if they do not agree" (p.98), allowing the classroom to become a space for new knowledge and sharing of experiences and perspectives. The effectiveness of these activities can be evaluated by understanding the reaction and participation of the students since drama provokes that the person has to understand the concept first in order to be able to transmit it as indicated by Najami et al. (2019):

> The process of transferring a model or a description from a textbook to a three-dimensional live model requires the students to re-conceptualize their knowledge. Drama combines elements of art, music, and sport and can develop students' creativity and ability as well as their affective and aesthetic awareness. Drama involves teamwork, and as such, promotes communication and cooperation among learners (p. 98).

Taking this point of view into account, drama activities transform the subjects into an experiential act that allows the student to relate what he or she sees in class with a more real scenario. In the same way, constant communication is a requirement for the development of drama activities, which can encourage the use of the target language in the classroom. Drama is a method that can help students gain a better understanding of the concepts that are difficult to comprehend using traditional methods.

2.11 Students` Participation in Classes

One of the objectives of teachers in English lessons is to integrate the students in everyday activities, and to get them to actively participate in what is planned to be done each day, with the aim that the students can

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learn and put into practice the knowledge acquired in the class. There are different conceptions on what participation is and according to those references students can be considered passive or active learners whether they interact or not in the learning process. One of the definitions is found in the Cambridge dictionary (n.d.) that refers to participation as: "the act of doing an activity with other people" (definition 1). On the other hand, according to Lee (as cited by Namini and Simanjalam, 2008): "participation usually means students speaking in class which consists of answer and asks questions, make comments, and join in discussions" (p. 24). That is one of the ways instructors can use to identify how pupils participate inside the classroom because when learners speak constantly in class, it denotes their active involvement in the activities developed by the instructor.

Additionally, Zolten and Long (as cited by Namini and Simanjalam, 2008) defines participation as: "paying attention, being on task, responding to questions, participating in group discussions, asking questions, seeking help and making good use of class time also considered as classroom participation" (p. 24). Participation not only involves speaking in class, aspects such as those mentioned by the author are also considered when taking into account who is participating or not. The class management of time and seeking help is a form of participation that improves the development of the English courses in terms of interaction.

On the other hand, Namini and Simanjalam (2008) mention that: "classroom participation requires students to interact in the classroom to indicate that they are learning and paying attention" (p. 24). Participation can be identified by the instructor in various ways inside the classroom, but all these actions require the student to constantly disrupt the class or the activity orally to give their opinion or ask for clarification or explanations using the language of the class. When teachers see how students interact by asking questions in class, they can verify that learners are paying attention and understanding the class` content.

2.12. Encouragement

Encouragement can be defined as that state of acceptance or rejection of a person towards an activity. During class, it is essential that the student has a high level of motivation so that he/she is encouraged to participate in the different activities of the class. The classroom environment helps students find a safe place to retreat and actively participate. The enthusiasm generated due to a teacher who prepares his or her classes and encourages students to participate, allows the student to feel part of the knowledge that is generated in class; in addition, this is complemented by the instructor's skills to be able to optimize language learning. Indeed, getting to know the students (personality, way of working, motivation) is the most effective way to encourage them to participate (Abdullah, Bakar y Mahbob, 2012, p. 517).

Students are the main actors in the class. It is necessary that they feel comfortable in order to participate. Engaging students to participate in a class goes hand in hand with the motivation they have to learn the subject as well as the feeling of success in the subject. If students learn about the outcomes of learning, the purposes of the activities they are performing and the reasons why the professor develops the class in certain ways, they would probably be willing to participate through the engagement in the process. In fact, "need for achievement is measured by describing affective experiences or associations such as fear or joy in achievement situations" (Steinmayr, Weidinger, Schwinger and Spinath, 2019, p.6) As such, there must be a reason why students are not actively participating in class. Sougari and Hovhannisyan (2016) explains the following: "studies have shown that the teacher, favorable learning conditions as well as an early start in language learning are among those factors that affect learners", especially young learners", attitudes towards English… (p.745) This implies that young students are heavily connected by the level of encouragement and motivation provided by the professor to be active in class regarding the participation and learning.

2.13. Creativity

Creativity can be a tool with enormous potential to develop in the classroom, since it implies to let students contribute with their own originality to the class. There are some concepts that describe the meaning or perspective of some authors regarding the idea of creativity. According to Stokes (as cited in Gerlovina, 2011) this concept refers to: "creativity is what happens when an individual produces something that is novel as well as appropriate, generative or influential" (p. 5). This idea leads to a meaning that refers to someone who manages to produce something that is particular, that is rare, and that contributes to others. In English classes, educators seek that students produce knowledge in order to have dynamic classes and to achieve the purpose of the learning process, using dynamic and innovative tools.

On the other hand, Naiman (as cited in Ávila, 2015) mentions that: "creativity is the process of turning imaginative ideas into reality" (p. 93) and that: "creativity involves two processes: thinking, then producing" (p. 93). It refers to how creativity is related to the implementation of ideas, not only thinking about it but applying it to the class or to the reality that would be the production of that innovative idea. In the case of educators, innovating in their daily classes would help them to improve students´ production. Regarding this idea, Ávila (2015) states that: "as teachers, we must use whatever we can get our hands on to evaluate students' performances in order to achieve success in the classroom" (p. 94). This is the reason why teachers, most of the time, use a diversity of techniques in classes such as the use of videos, songs, drama activities, among others. Creativity is highly developed in class when the teacher and students experiment with different strategies. Following this idea, Cremin (2014) mentions that: "The key features of creative literacy practice are evident in improvisational drama: it fosters play, collaborative engagement and reflection" (parr. 1). In this way, creativity is intensely developed when drama activities are used since drama leads to improvisation and play, students feel more motivated.

In addition, Neelands (as cited in Cremin, 2014) conceptualizes drama as creative learning and explains that: "improvisation is itself a creative activity   because it requires teachers and learners to imagine themselves and the world differently, making spontaneous decisions and responding to the unexpected" (parr. 1). These characteristics that students and teachers experience are related with the improvement of learning a language, especially the ability to speak.

3. Methodological Framework.

In this segment, the pertinent definitions for the understanding of the subject and all its edges are exposed with the idea of facilitating the comprehension of the analysis and its respective results. In the next chapter, the emphasis is placed in a way in which the study was carried out, together with the information of the participants, the present limitations and the different phases of the investigation.

3.1. Type of research.

The type of research used in this project is a Quasi-Experimental research, Thomas (2020) mentions how this kind of research aims for a relation between an independent and dependent variable; also, it is not an experimental because the subjects are not selected randomly (par. 1-2). For this research it was important to have a quasi-experimental method because it could create a comparison of two groups, one of the groups did participate in the drama activities (experimental group) and the other did not (control group). Rogers and Revesz (2019) mention that: "true experiments also include a control group and an experimental group. The control only takes part in the pre- and posttesting, whereas the experimental group receives the experimental treatment in addition to completing the pre- and post testing" (p.134). This type of method

provided validation to the results because of the comparison between the two groups. Gopalan, Rosinger and Ahn (2020) states the following: "when treatment is randomly assigned, we can confidently claim that the treatment is the most plausible driver of the outcome. Because it is essential to rule out alternative explanations for an observed outcome to make a causal claim…" (p. 219). It means how the application of this treatment helped the development of an outcome through the environment that was created. Also, it was designed to corroborate the essence of the investigation through the selection of a specific approach to work in the group.

A cross-sectional investigation allowed the researchers to establish baseline and end line tests without requiring minimal testing to prove progress, meaning that changes between the results obtained at the beginning and at the end of the investigation could be recognized. This was due to time and the influence of the students' environment in seeing the evaluation as repetitive, which could influence them to be inhibited in participating naturally. For this reason, a format was available to apply an evaluation at the beginning and another at the end of the research process. Singh (2016) talks about: "the investigator measures the outcome and the exposures in the study participants at the same time." (p. 261) Thanks to this, it was possible to know the prevalence done through the influence and observation made during the months of research work regarding the model of drama activity performed. In turn, a cross-sectional study does not require a determined follow-up on individuals, which implies that the analysis times are general.

The design was focused on the use of a pre-test and a post-test, according to Thyer (2012): "this design is used to help determine if a given intervention produces any effects above and beyond those attributable to the passage of time, concurrent history, or the experience of being assessed" (p. 16). In the case of this research, a pretest was implemented to both groups before starting using the drama activities in the classroom in the comparison group. Once the period was finished, a post-test was implemented for both groups in order to find out if there was any difference in their speaking skills development.

Since this research was based on the application of tests, but also in a survey for feedback from the students, a mixed method was going to be developed. As Hernandez et al (2014) explain: "the mixed method is a combination of the qualitative and quantitative, in this way it can reduce the number of weaknesses because this type of research uses the strengths of both kinds of research" (p. 532).

The mixed method helped to improve the information and results obtained during the implementation of the drama activities; it also gave the opportunity to receive the students' perspective after the experiment was done. The nature of mixed research was to answer the paradigms of the educational research in a wide way, for that, it was important to understand the objective of the mixed research when conducting a survey. In fact, Kimmons (2022) states that: "parallel mixed-methods designs involve collecting and analyzing both qual and quan data in tandem, where each process operates independently of the other. An example of this would be conducting surveys and focus groups simultaneously…" (parr. 5). In that aspect, the way how the information could be analyzed was through the comparison and contrast between the participating groups, in fact, this states that the selected group must had an evaluation after the process as well as the other group that was not receiving the drama activities to understand how fostering these activities helped the development of the objectives proposed on the investigation.

3.4. Target population

In any research, one of the most relevant aspects are the subjects, the people who are going to participate actively in the research because the information researchers are going to gather is taken from the target population and from their experience during the activities in the class. The chosen population was in relation to the characteristics of the research, and this population should comply with certain features that helped researchers to meet the objectives of the research project.

In this case, the participants needed to meet inclusion criteria such as students from a public institution that were taking English classes in

which they foster certain English language skills such as listening and speaking. In addition, students who take English conversational classes can easily perform certain activities in the classroom that involve the development of language speaking skills, since the central focus of a conversational English class was to motivate the student's spoken participation.

This research focused on two groups from seventh grade, and they attended the Colegio Técnico Profesional located in Cóbano, Puntarenas province. The English level of seventh graders aims to be A2, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) set by the Ministerio de Educación Pública of Costa Rica. Regarding this organization of levels, students were considered basic users of English.

According to what the Ministerio de Educación Pública (2016) establishes in the "Programa de Estudios de Inglés" students can:

- Understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).
- Communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.
- Describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment, and matters in areas of immediate need. (p. 24)

One group consisted of 12 students (experimental group) in total from section 7-3 and the other group had a total of 12 pupils (control group) from section 7-1. The total number of the students is 24 divided in two groups of English conversational courses from seventh grade and the ages of the participants ranged from 13 to 14 years old. The students who attend this institution are generally students from Cóbano or areas close to Cóbano such as Montezuma, La Menchita, Tranquilidad, Cabuya, Malpaís, Santa Teresa, Las Delicias and many others. Cóbano is a rural area, but it is an extremely touristic area, which leads to the need for

participants to learn the English language in order to improve their future job opportunities.

3.5 Variables.

The independent variable was the methodology implemented during the lessons, as Thomas (2020) explains, "the independent variable is the cause. Its value is independent of other variables in your study" (par. 4). For this case, the variable that was changed in order to get an effect and it was the lesson methodology that included drama activities.

On the other hand, the dependent variable was the speaking skill, for the dependent variable, Thomas (2020) explains that: "the dependent variable is the effect. Its value *depends* on changes in the independent variable" (par. 5). In this research, the skill that was aimed to be affected was the ability to talk, for this reason this skill was the variable working as the dependent variable due to the reason that it needed the independent variable to be affected.

For this research, it was implemented a quasi-experimental method in order to compare the results from the control and the comparison group chose for the application of the new methodology. The application of the instruments was fundamental to get the required data and details to explore the results.

3.6 Instruments.

In order to get the information related to the speaking skill level of both groups of participants in the Colegio Técnico Profesional Cobano, researchers applied a pret-test, a post test, a survey, and proposed drama activities to be applied in the lessons.

3.6.1. Pre-Test

Due to the type of skill researchers were focusing on to investigate and the research problem, the pre-test was designed to be an oral test.

This pre-test helped researchers to be aware of what the exact level of the students were in order to identify from where researchers could compare the final results with the information gathered at the beginning of the investigation. Regarding this, Hilton (2015) refers to the pre-test as "a method of checking that questions work as intended and are understood by those individuals who are likely to respond to them" (p. 1). It means that this instrument helps testers to get a better inside the results, since the participants are the ones who answer the questions and let examiners of the information know the level that they have before researchers start to carry out the process of applying the proposal drama activities. This pre-test was applied at the beginning of the investigation by using a rubric (appendix 6.2) that helped investigators to preview an objective view in order to understand the level at which pronunciation, fluency, intonation, stress and correct use of grammar were developed by the students.

This oral pre-test consisted of ten basic questions about personal information such as knowing the name, age, where students live, if they have pets, their favorite animal, color and TV show, their birthday, and finally their teacher's name. Researchers considered that the types of questions they designed were adequate to the level of the participants, and the main purpose was to let students feel comfortable responding to easy questions if they did not have a high level of English. This test was made in pairs or individually.

3.6.2. Drama Activities

Once researchers had the results of the participants from both groups, they started implementing the proposed drama activities in the English conversational classes. The activities were suggested according to the level participants had and were focused on speech development. The proposed didactic activities were a complement to the planning of the teacher for the daily classes, and they were adapted to the topic that the teacher was developing in the class. The groups had English conversational classes once a week, so researchers proposed two activities per class to be developed. The professor in charge adapted the

activities according to his own weekly planning. Five of the six activities proposed were taken from the article called "The Use of Theater and Drama Techniques to Foster Speaking Skills in the English Class" by the author Jonnathan Salas. The initial purpose of the researchers was firstly to apply at least three activities previously used by other researchers (in this case by the author Jonnathan Salas) in order for students to become accustomed to the use of drama with activities that have already been tested for similar purposes to the present research. Previously, the activities that were designed by the researchers of this investigation would be used to test their effectiveness. Due to multiple class cancellations and other circumstances that hampered the continued application of the instruments, the researchers decided to use five activities proposed by the author Jonnathan Salas in his article (each activity adapted to the teacher's planning) and a single designed activity (activity #6) proposed by researchers. These activities are described below. The observed group corresponds to 12 students, and they were accommodated in a semicircular manner, which facilitated observation through video calls.

3.6.2.1. Chosen activities

The activities were selected taking into account the students' command of English, and they were chosen so that the activities would require from less to more skill to perform. Within the factor of applying the vocabulary studied in class, the level of confidence that the children had with respect to their own bodies was taken into account. It was a matter of choosing a strategy that took their performance and body management to think of a way to support the partner to improve. Within the framework of task based learning, these activities were focused on group work where students were observed to pronounce what they should say and act in order to help their partner to better identify the vocabulary studied.

Additionally, researchers chose the drama activities from the previous article mentioned and they were adapted to the units studied in class from the seventh year of conversational English, where the vocabulary resource was used to apply drama activities focused on

practicing vocabulary and acting it out in order to learn it. In addition, students used a collaborative learning system to try to stand out from the rest.

Activity #1: Talking with Numbers

In this activity students needed to prepare a short conversation about the topic they were studying in the class or a daily life situation. Students worked in groups, pairs or trios, and they had 5 minutes to prepare the conversation. They had to use only numbers in the conversation, words were not allowed. The dialogue could be only made using numbers, regular words were not permitted. When finished, they had to go in front of the class and present the dialogue, the rest of the class had to guess what the conversation was about. (Salas, 2017, p. 311)

Activity #2: Broken TV

Broken TV was an activity where students had to act out a scene of a specific topic that the professor provided to them and it could be a daily life situation or specifically about an activity (depending on the topic they were studying). Students started the acting and after some minutes the teacher used the phrase "remote control" or "pause" to stop the scene, after that, one student switched to another classmate. The professor said "play" to start the scene again with the new student and the new participant changed the story or situation that was previously presented by their classmates. Both of the participants needed to adapt the past story with the new one and improvise. This activity can last as long as the teacher and students want. (Salas, 2017,p. 313)

Activity #3: Statues

Statues was an activity where students had to represent something by "sculpting" it on one of their classmates. Students worked in pairs, in which one of them was going to be the sculptor and their partner was

going to be the sculpture. When the student called the sculptor to finish, the rest of the class guessed the creation that the statue represented. Once they guessed, in groups, the class had to talk about the topic being represented. They had to create simple sentences in simple present tense. (Salas, 2017,p. 311)

Activity #4: Charades

Charades was an activity that required students to be divided into small groups. All of the groups had a set of vocabulary depending on the learning unit they were studying. One of the members of each group was in charge of describing the characteristics of the word provided in the paper using gestures and, if the professor considered it necessary, students could use spoken language. The group needed to guess the word if not they could pass to the next one. The participant in charge needed to give at least 6 characteristics to help the group guesses. (Salas, 2017,p. 312)

Activity #5: Objects and Occupations.

For this activity, students had different objects that they brought to the class or that were part of the classroom. They could sit on the floor making a circle or they could sit on a round table, so all of them could observe the total of the objects carefully and choose one of the objects. The purpose of choosing one of the objects was to act like the person who normally uses that specific object, while the professor asked questions about the character. After that, students worked in trios, and they had to create a conversation where they acted as the character or the profession from the object they previously chose. (Salas, 2017,p. 313)

Activity #6: Acting and Presenting

The Acting and Presenting activity consisted in practicing pronunciation focusing on the silent ⟨ e ⟩ presented in words such as debate, desire, desirable,

dine and so on. Students were asked to write a text using the silent ⟨e⟩ individually. When finished the text, students had to write sentences using the silent ⟨e⟩ and some minimal pairs. After finishing those sentences, students were divided into groups. One student read the text and while the rest of the group acted on what their classmate was reading. (Own elaboration, 2022-2023)

3.6.3. Post-Test

After the application of the drama activities, researchers conducted the post-test. The aim of this last instrument was to apply the test to both groups in the conversational classes to check if the speaking skill level increased or not and if it kept the same. One group was the one experiencing drama activities in their classes each week as a classroom technique. The second group did not make any changes in their class structure, nor did they implement any type of theatrical activity. Despite not having the same dynamic of theatrical activities in their classes, both groups must take the same test. The final exam or post-test was a way of comparing and verifying how learning was modified compared to the initial test and the process of applying and not applying theatrical activities. In this case, EMpower (n.d), in its guide called *Guidance for Pre- and Post-test Design*, mentions that it is necessary to: "ensure that the reading or vocabulary level is at the right level for the youth participants. Determine whether literacy levels demand oral interviews. Feedback from youth on unfamiliar or ambiguous words or phrases is helpful" (p. 2). This is a detail that was extremely relevant when we created the tests because we had to do it in the clearest way possible that we could find. In that way, it was necessary to avoid misunderstandings with the purpose of the tests.

The post-test consisted of ten questions about personal information (same questions as in the pre-test) in order to see if participants improved compared to the first time they responded to those questions (pre-test).

3.6.4. Survey

For the purposes of this research, knowledge of the students' attitude towards the use of drama activities was of paramount importance. It was intended to understand what the students' reaction was when they were exposed to different activities that promote oral communication, mostly in front of an audience. This perception could be collected and analyzed thanks to the use of surveys. This research instrument allowed researchers to receive direct answers about a specific topic, which was very helpful to understand the reaction of the participants during the drama activities. Supporting this idea, Callegaro and Yang (2018) comment that: "Surveys have the advantage of being designed for the researchers to answer the question at hand. They also collect attitudes and opinion data which cannot be readily covered by other instruments for investigation" (p. 183) allowing researchers to obtain more accurate answers in order to accomplish the research objectives.

This research applied two surveys, one at the beginning and one at the end, and was divided in two parts in order to find out what the ideas of the students were regarding activities carried out by the professor in general and their perception after the application of drama activities in the classes. The survey was in Spanish in order for students to understand the questions clearly and obtain more in-depth information about their experiences regarding the activities. The first survey contained nine questions related to their general and personal contact with English conversational activities developed by the teacher. The second one applied had the same number of questions, but in this case was focused primarily on the specific drama activities that were proposed each week.

3.6.5 Observations

Observations were one of the main instruments of this investigation. Observations allowed researchers to pay attention to specific details and to see the students' development in their classes during the drama activities that were applied. Direct observations were done since the observants were not to have any involvement with the class; the author

Kawulich (2012) explains that: "Direct observation involves observing without interacting with the objects or people under study in the setting" (p.2). Four observations were applied during the investigation. The experimental group (7-3 A) is the one that was observed during the investigation process and the application of the drama activities.

3.7. Procedures

Steps to apply the approach

For the fulfillment of the objectives, a three-stage methodology was followed in which the processes of compilation, analysis and presentation of results were divided. These phases were intended to be carried out progressively, since the completion of one was required to move on to the next. Each phase of the procedure is explained in the following section.

Phase 1

The first stage served to define generalities and collect pertinent information through the implementation of the chosen instruments. Generation of a database about the level of English exposed by the students through the application of a diagnostic level test. In this stage, it was intended to analyze the initial state of the level of English in which the students of both groups were. It was planned to apply a survey to understand the perception of the students about the drama activities. The control group and the comparison group were randomly chosen to define the procedure and the activities to be carried out with each group.

Phase 2

At this stage, the drama activities began to be implemented. Once the roles to be played by each group have been chosen, the activities were implemented and analyzed. This step required continuous evaluation of the teaching process that was affected by the inclusion of drama. At the same time, the responses and behavior of the group without drama

activities were analyzed. The information obtained was analyzed by comparing it with the students' perception of the activities and materials used in class to foster the speaking skill. The response of the different students to the different activities were extremely important to understand if there was a positive or negative effect on their implementation or if, on the contrary, there was no response of any kind to the new tasks.

Phase 3

Finally, the results provided by the analysis of behavior and reaction to activities are compared. In this phase, a second test was carried out to evaluate the effect of drama in English classes. This test evaluated the existence of improvements in the group, as well as how the drama activities were applied with the group that followed the normal plan and activities. Comparisons are analyzed in order to generate recommendations and steps to follow.

Once the information, provided by the tests, had been compiled, it was analyzed comparing the results where different aspects were taken into account. This method served to understand different aspects that were difficult to analyze such as the Ministerio de Educacion Theory, the results obtained in the Pre -test and Post-test, and the theory used in order to understand if drama activities are really effective in the specific case that this research takes into consideration. Triangulation helped the investigation from a point of view that tests could not evaluate, since according to Noble (2019) it:

> (...) is also an effort to help explore and explain complex human behavior using a variety of methods to offer a more balanced explanation to readers. Triangulation can enrich research as it offers a variety of datasets to explain differing aspects of a phenomenon of interest. It also helps refute where one dataset invalidates a supposition generated by another. (p. 67)

From this point of view, it was necessary to take into account the results obtained by the two groups studied in order to analyze whether the

drama activities had a real impact on the learning and development of the speaking skill.

3.7.1. Zoom Platform

To carry out the application of the instruments, the Zoom platform was used as a tool which allowed researchers to have direct and easy contact with the participants. The intervention of the researchers was minimal in the classes in terms of the observations and activities implemented in the class, the intention was that the participants felt comfortable when developing the activities which would expose them to use their speaking skill. The use of Zoom helped students in their comfort when speaking, as explained by Khotimah (2022) that says: "Zoom Meeting can enhance their speaking because they feel confident to speak when their friend is not around them" (p. 61) The presence of guests inside the classroom could cause some alteration in the natural reaction of the students, for this reason the zoom platform was an essential tool for the conversational English class to take place in the most natural way possible without distractions. This tool could reduce the anxiety that speaking in a second language can cause for some pupils. In addition, Khotimah (2022) employs the use of this platform for learning speaking and this author describes students´experience about it saying that:

> The students have self-confidence to speak English and they did not feel afraid of making a mistake. On the other hand, one student said that he felt shy and nervous in his speaking, but he could reduce his shyness and nervousness in trying to relax and calm down. (p. 61)

Moreover, the use of Zoom allowed researchers to record observations and tests for further review later. The techniques used focus on seeking the least interruption of the class and the students in their process of developing and learning a new language. In addition to this, Archibald et al. (2019) are authors that use this platform to obtain data in

their research and they mention how the participants agreed that Zoom: "was a useful method for conducting qualitative interviews. The majority of participants (69%) identified Zoom as a preferred method compared to in-person interviews, telephone, or other videoconferencing platforms" (par. 12) Those authors also mention some advantages of using Zoom in data collection such as rapport: "Many of the participants (69%) found Zoom to be useful in forming and maintaining rapport with the researcher" (par. 13), convenience: "Participants and researchers commonly cited convenience, particularly in terms of access to geographically remote participants, cost-effectiveness, and time effectiveness, as a key advantage of Zoom" (par. 16), and user-friendliness (par. 18). The interviews entail a closer interaction with the participants, but the use of Zoom makes even this intervention beneficial for research without the need for a face to face interview. Taking into account all these benefits and perceptions of participants and researchers regarding the use of Zoom, researchers decided to use this tool to be able to carry out the application of instruments such as virtual observations as more effective than face-to-face ones.

4. Results and discussion

In this chapter, the results of the study are exposed and analyzed in correspondence with the objectives of the investigation; each part contains the analysis of the data obtained when applying the instruments that were designed by the researchers. Initially, the first objective corresponds to the analysis of the diagnosis or pre-test made to both groups, the control group and the experimental group. Likewise, this analysis is based on the results obtained by the application of this pre-test and the information gathered. Furthermore, conducting a survey to recognize the knowledge of the students regarding the drama activities was valued, so this data is analyzed in order to know what the students expected from the activities and their background knowledge.

Along the same lines, the second objective proposed the inclusion of drama activities in the professor's lesson plan as an instrument and complement for the professor to improve the speaking skill of the students involved in the class. This section analyzes the reactions of the students, their participation and the immediate results within the class through observations.

Correspondingly, the third and last specific objective established the application of a post-test in order to examine whether the implementation of the drama activities were effective or not for the improvement of the speaking skill in conversational English classes. Likewise, a second survey was carried out to identify the students' perception regarding the implementation of drama activities. Moreover, the analysis of the aforementioned is presented below, and it should be noted that the results of pre-tests, post-tests and surveys have been obtained through virtual platforms such as google forms and Zoom. On the other hand, the observations made, and the results were obtained through the zoom platform due to the conditions of the high school such as good internet connection that allowed researchers to apply instruments virtually and did not prevent the correct application of the previously mentioned instruments as stated in the methodology. Therefore, responding to what is proposed in the methodology, the investigation proceeded to analyze the outcomes and information gathered from the implementation of the instruments.

4.1. Survey Applied to the Participant Students

Researchers created and applied a total of two surveys, one survey to be applied at the beginning of the investigation before the application of drama activities in classes and a second survey to be applied at the end after the application of the drama activities. As mentioned before, the purpose of the first survey is to know students´ general and personal perception about English conversational activities developed by the teacher before getting in contact with the drama activities. The second one

applied was focused primarily on the specific drama activities that were proposed each week. The survey was applied virtually through the use of Google Forms platform. The survey consisted of nine questions about participants' own personal encounter with drama activities and non drama activities in English conversational classes. Finally, a total of 12 individuals from the experimental group were the ones who participated in responding to the survey.

4.1.2. First Survey Applied to the Participant Students from Experimental Group 7-3 A

Among the results obtained in the survey, it was observed that out of twelve students, just the amount of eight students answered the survey, in total five women and three men, this survey was made before the application of drama activities. For the first question, that was about "Which kind of activities help me to better understand the topics developed in the Conversational English classes?" three students answered that they would rather have activities that are creative and funny but that the activities don't require them to move or stand up during the activity. However, four of the total participants wanted activities that require physical movement during the class such as standing up, moving, walking around, going outside, talking and so on. The option one and two in the first question provided by the researchers corresponded to activities that involved creativity as a central function to refer to the tastes of the students. In their majority of responses (seven participants out of eight) decided that the most attractive activities for learning in English classes would be mostly diverse activities with a great inclination to creativity, in which only movement would be the difference between their preferences. Likewise, creativity in this case was taken into consideration due to the relevance mentioned by some authors such as Stokes (cited by Gerlovina, 2011) which refers to this concept of creativity and mentions that: "creativity is what happens when an individual produces something that is novel as well as appropriate, generative or influential" (p. 5), with this, it

was enough time to provide a space to the introduction of drama activities as an ideal option for English classes and an option that would meet the expectations of students taking that course. Regarding these same results, it was found that from the total of the eight participants, one of the students considered that any type of activity helped the process of better understanding the topics in conversational English classes meaning that the activities previously applied by the professor in the class were not helpful or relevant in their personal learning process.

Consequently, in question number two, researchers asked pupils if they considered the activities carried out in class by the teacher created a better understanding of the topic they were studying. For this question, seven of eight students agreed that activities the professor implemented helped them to better understand what they were studying. On the other hand, just one student considered that the activities the professor implemented during the classes did not help them to better understand the topic. A similarity could be noticed between both results in question one and two, since one of the participants referred to the teacher's activities and activities in general as ineffective when learning a second language. Class activities are a tool for teachers to motivate their students in terms of learning. Similarly, students feel motivated when the course content is boring; the teacher can include activities to make learning meaningful. In this result, one of the participants did not feel that the activities motivate him/her in the learning process and this is a relevant factor when learning a second language since, as mentioned by Filgona et al. (2020): "Student motivation is an essential element that is necessary for quality education" (p. 17), the enjoyment of classes through the activities leads to students having a quality education and its results are positive.

Then, in the third question, all the eight participants (100%) agreed that the activities that the professor implemented made the classes more interesting for them. In contrast with the first two questions, the one participant who considered activities developed by the professor as not effective for their learning process also considered the same activities as tasks that made English classes interesting. On the other hand, all the students (100%) considered that the activities made the classes more

interesting and some of the reasons they mentioned were that English lessons turned funny, the teacher explained the topic in an easier way, he asked questions, and classes were different from other professors.

In question number four, the participants expressed that, from their perspective, the English activities were not quite difficult to carry out. However, the perception of 5.9% of the total of students was that these activities would represent a difficult challenge. Otherwise, most of the group considered that the activities represented a challenge of regular difficulty with 64.7% of the sample, while 29.4% of the participants believed that activities were easy to perform. This prior perception was in line with what was expected by researchers when dealing with oral activities, due to the fact that they were usually perceived as more difficult to perform than any other skill. In this case, taking this survey as a reference, this premise was fulfilled and at the same time reinforced what Kobayashi (2012) says when this author expresses that the oral skill must be taught differently as it is one of the most complicated skills to learn in a second language, for that reason, he emphasizes that drama activities must be seen as "games that are used to help participants enhance their creativity and unlock spontaneity" (p. 25), which can help the student to relate what is learned with their daily activities, so it becomes easier to be remembered after classes. Table 1 shows the mentioned information in a more organized way.

In the following question related to how clear the teacher explains, the perception of the students was extremely positive when choosing only the options "very clear" and "clear" with 47.1% and 52.9% respectively. As it can be seen in Table 1, the students did not respond that the instructions provided by the teacher were difficult to understand when developing activities during English classes. This question was extremely important because the way in which the teacher explained could help or affect the development of the activities and, at the end, positively or negatively it could change the result of the activity applied. This perception became more relevant when authors such as Lee et al. (2015) explain that: "the inclusion of theater games is intended to facilitate community development and team building among the participants" (p. 6). Taking this idea into

account, the instructions given by the teacher should motivate and should provide the student the confidence to believe that they are performing the activity in the best way and at the same time learning.

Question number six suggested students to perceive, in a hypothetical way, the final result of the application of the drama activities. In this case, most of the participants (82.4%) believed that drama activities could help them improve their fluency when speaking in English, while 17.6% expected to have no positive results after the application of the aforementioned tasks. This perception could be justified, as those were activities that represent a challenge for students when facing the target language and being forced to reproduce it. In addition, Kalidas (2014) thinks these activities can help significantly since: "one of the reasons drama is able to enhance students' learning experience is because of its unique ability to accommodate many different learning styles and thus able to motivate the learners" (p. 444), this could be understood as an innovative way that embraces different ways of learning and allow students to express themselves in order to improve the learning experience. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that:

> Drama has the potential to serve as a powerful psychological tool that forms an interrelated and dynamic system of written and oral forms of communication. Its potential is derived from a link between the students' developed system of oral language and the developing system of written language (Kyrimi and Tsiaras, 2021, p.5)

This point of view raised the idea that drama activities not only helped to learn specific skills such as speaking, but also they encouraged the motivation of the participant and helped them to develop different skills such as public speaking and confidence. This was replicated by the students in the follow-up question that asked the reason for their initial perception, due to the fact that in their answers they said they felt confident to improve their skills, since these are activities that allow them to practice English and do it in a different and funny way.

Furthermore, question number seven, Table 1 shows that seven students (87%) said that they would like to participate regularly in drama activities during the classes; however, one student (13%) said that she/he would not like to participate in those activities. In contrast with the rest of the students, it showed that drama activities are not an extrinsic motivator for this student, and it did not produce any intrinsic motivation. Legault (2016) mentions that "in order for intrinsic motivation to flourish, the social environment must nurture it" (p. 2). For instance, it means that the drama activities were activating the participation for only 87% of the students and 13% of them were not responding to it.

In addition, graph 1 shows that all eight students (100%) answered positively that they felt fine and amused in the development of the conversational English classes, their comments were very positive regarding the learning process they were experiencing at the moment with the activities previously done during the scholar year. Something to highlight is that they mentioned they were learning new abilities during the activities and even though they did not specify if they learned something related with academic or emotional matters, the learning process was always active when using English in regular activities. Those activities were helpful for the students because they were improving some areas of English and learning.

Graph 1. *First Survey Applied to the Participant Students from Experimental Group 7-3 A*

Graph 1.
Question #8. How do you feel during the development of the activities in the conversational classes?

100%

■Fine, amused, learning new things, active learning
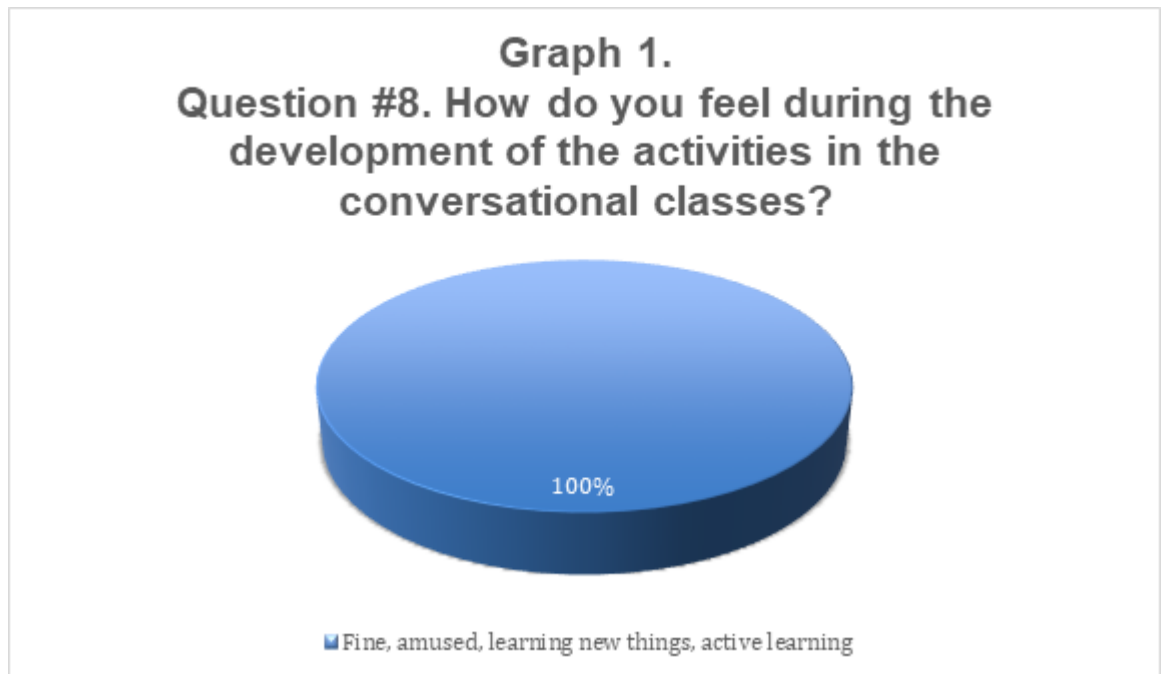
Source: Own elaboration (2022-2023)

Finally, in graph 2, five students (62%) said they do not want to change anything from the classes because they consider everything is fine the way it is; but, three students (38%) agreed they would like to change the attention from the teacher, they would like more outdoor, different and varied activities. In this question, it could be noticed how the class was divided in opinions and three students craved for more creativity from the teacher. With that perspective, the use of drama activities could help teachers to improve the desire of creativity inside the classroom as it is mentioned by the authors Ozdemir and Kakmak (2008) when they state that: "drama activities provide lots of opportunities for revealing, supporting and developing creativity. Drama is to perform a word, concept, behavior, sentence, idea, experience or event by utilizing theater techniques and developing a game or games" (p.14). Since creativity was part of the class, the teacher had to work harder to draw the attention of the students to the drama activities that were applied in the classroom than in the following lessons.

Graph 2. *First Survey Applied to the Participant Students from Experimental Group 7-3 A*

Graph 2.
Question # 9. What would you improve about the activities in conversational English classes?

38%

62%

■ Do not want to change anything ■ More outdoor, different and varied activities.
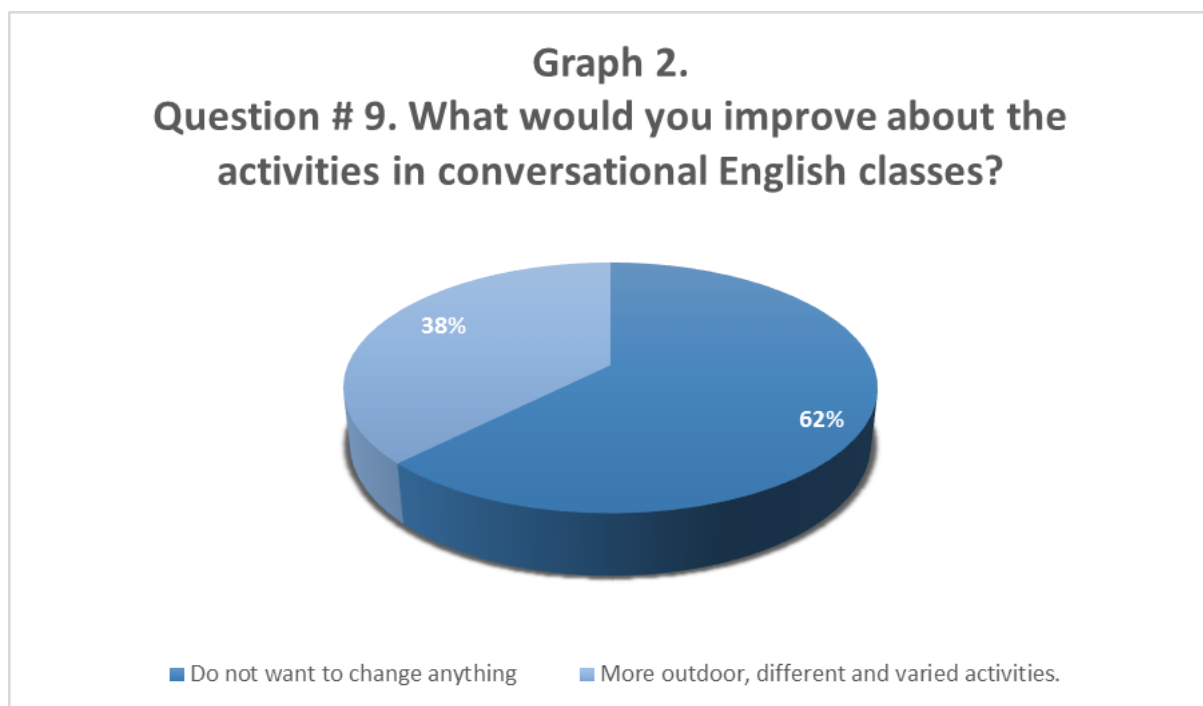
Source: Own elaboration (2022-2023)

Table 1. *First Survey Applied to the Participant Students from Experimental Group 7-3 A*

Survey's Questions	Experimental Group Answers Total of students: 8	
1. What kind of activities help me to better understand the topics developed in conversational English class?	-Activities creative and funny but don't require moving (37%) -Activities that require physical movement (50%) -No type of activity (13%)	
2. Do you think that the activities carried out in class by the teacher help you to better understand the topic you are studying?	-Yes (87%)	-No (13%)
3. Do the activities		

developed by the teacher make the English class more interesting?	-Yes (100%)
4. How easy or difficult is it for you to participate in the activities of the conversational English classes?	-Easy (29.4%) -Regular (64.7%) -Difficult (5.9%)
5. How clear are the teacher's instructions to carry out the activities in English classes?	-Very clear (47.1%) -Clear (52.9%)

6. Do you think that drama activities would help you improve your fluency when practicing the English language?	-Yes (82.4%)	-No (17.6%)
7. Would you like to regularly participate in drama activities in English classes?	-Yes (87%)	-No (13%)

Source: Own elaboration (2022-2023)

4.1.3. Second Survey Applied to the Participant Students from Experimental Group 7-3 A

From the results obtained in the second survey, it is observed that out of twelve students, just eight of them answered the questions, four women and four men. There were some noticeable changes in the responses. For the first question, that was about "Which kind of activities help me to better understand the topics developed in the Conversational English classes?" Two students (25%) answered that they would rather have activities that are creative and funny, but that the tasks don't require them to move or stand up during the classes. Those results contrasted with the first survey, in which three students chose this option. There was

a reduction in the number of students who considered this option as their main preference of the first question from the first time researchers applied the survey. Besides, the number of participants on this option vary because the drama activities were applied before the final poll.

On the other hand, different from the first survey, there were more students (6 students / 75%) that changed their perspective and preferred activities that require physical movement during the class such as the previously mentioned: standing up, moving, walking around, jumping, going outside and talking. The first survey showed how fewer students consider activities that require movement as tasks that help them to improve their English level before the application of drama activities as part of their curriculum. Another key aspect was that none of the pupils (0%) chose the option "any activity" in contrast to the first survey that showed that one of the participants considered that any type of activity helped them to better understand the English classes. Participants felt more comfortable using creative activities such as drama activities in their classes since they are able to produce something as mentioned by Stokes (cited by Gerlovina, 2011) that: "creativity is what happens when an individual produces something that is novel as well as appropriate, generative or influential" (p. 5). After their experience with drama activities, students felt positive using moving and active activities in classes, and researchers observed this transition in the positive responses and the number of participants in each question.

In question number two, a total of eight students (100%) agreed that the activities the professor implemented during the classes, in this case the drama activities applied as part of the research, help them to better understand the topic they were studying. That was a remarkable difference according to the first survey, in which one student considered the activities did not help them. According to Namini and Simanjalam (2008): "classroom participation requires students to interact in the classroom to indicate that they are learning and paying attention" (p. 24) meaning that when they feel encouraged participating in the activities their learning process improves significantly. A difference was noticed in the answers of the participants since the students, when having contact with

the drama activities, improved their understanding of the topics and their responses were positive towards the use of drama in English classes in terms of the comprehension of topics that are included as part of the MEP curriculum.

Besides, in question number three, all the eight participants (100%) agreed that those activities make the classes more interesting for them. This question kept the same results from the first survey, since the majority of participants felt that drama activities provide a great engagement for them when learning a second language. Some of the reasons students provided regarding the activities of the classes were that they found them interesting for the development of the English lesson because they made classes funny, they felt more motivated, and they felt encouraged to study English, they also said that they like the activities, the activities let them go outside, take pictures and did something different, they considered that those drama activities gave a plus to the regular teaching material, finally it helped them to learn. Some of the answers mentioned by the students in the final questionnaire were based mainly on how they perceived the activities, how they felt when doing each one of them, and how effectively these drama tasks persuaded their way of learning and perceiving the language. In contrast to the first time researchers asked this question, participants mostly focused on the fun and variety that the regular activities that took place in conversational English classes offered to them. On the other hand, as states by Filgona et al. (2020): "Student motivation is an essential element that is necessary for quality education" (p. 17) and this definition can be noticed on the second survey since the participants maintained the perspective of about the great fun activities provided was, but contrary to the first time this question was applied, the motivation, interest, encouragement on learning English and creativity were mentioned after application of drama activities in the lessons.

In question number four, the participants expressed that the drama activities were not so difficult to do. In contrast to the first survey, the students did not answer that the conversational English activities were difficult to do, and only chose the options of regular (75%) and easy (25%).

However, in the second survey the perception of at least one student changed respecting the ease of performing a drama activity or any regular English activity, since this item dropped from 29% in the first survey to 25% in the second, thus increasing the number of people who consider these activities to be of regular difficulty. From this it could be inferred that although it was true that drama activities were no longer perceived as something very difficult to carry out when compared to regular activities, they continued to represent a challenge for the majority of the participants. The drama activity offers the opportunity to be built in groups, which allows the student a new way to learn, this is supported by Sternberg (as cited in Ozdemir and Kakmak, 2008) mentions that: "Drama offers participants the opportunity to practice constructive behavior and provides a medium through which students learn to cooperate and collaborate, and it develops self-confidence and self-esteem as well as providing learning and socialization" (p. 14); this allowed the students to feel more relaxed at the time of their performances and at the same time create new experiences by putting themselves in situations in which they would not normally be involved. Ozdemir and Kakmak (2008) explain how group work can offer another perspective to its participants since: "Group members examine a particular topic, analyze, play, revise, synthesize, apply the knowledge obtained to real life, take lessons from their experiences, and reflect these lessons into real life" (p. 14-15); the foregoing supports the idea that the student can learn in a more integral way when the subject is related to real life and thus feel and believe that what they are doing makes sense. The students saw in the drama activities the opportunity to do something different and learned in a creative way, so they stopped perceiving the activities as difficult to do.

The next question (number five) did reveal significant changes regarding the students' perception of how clear the teacher explained the activities. In this sample, the participants expressed that they had more difficulties understanding the teacher, given that in the first survey, 47% of the participants said that the teacher's instructions were "very clear", while the remaining 52% mentioned that they were "clear". However, for the second time they were asked, the percentage of the "very clear" option

dropped to 25%, increasing the option of "clear" to 62%, while 13% stated that the instructions were unclear, as can be seen in Table 2. In this sense, the students were more critical respecting the teacher's instructions, where it could be inferred that there were more complications in understanding the drama activities than the activities that were applied before. This situation was extremely important since one of the objectives of the drama activities was for the student to be the creator of his/her own content, so the instructions had to be clear before starting the task, for this, Camileri (2015) mentions that the role of the teacher must be replaced in one way or another to allow knowledge to flow naturally in the student during the activity creation process:

> The role of 'teacher' is occupied by someone better designated as 'training coordinator' or 'session leader', a first-among-equals in a situation that is essentially geared towards an auto-didactic process through/with others, and one which is relatively open to the pursuit of specific areas of interest. (p. 19)

From this point of view, these drama activities should be a tool that helped the student to better understand the topics that could be more difficult to understand, as reinforced by Mattevi in 2005 (as cited by Angelianawati, 2019): "... the use of drama in the language classroom allows the teacher to present the target language in an active, communicative and contextualized way" (p. 126) so that the learning process is attractive and at the same time easy for the student. However, as it could be seen in the survey, the students believe that the teacher should be more careful when explaining so that the instructions are clear for better understanding.

Question number 6 showed an advance in the perception of how helpful drama activities can be to improve oral expression. On this occasion, the students responded that the drama activities were useful to improve fluency in the English language (100%), in contrast to the previous survey where 17% believed that these activities did not help to

improve this micro-skill. It could be inferred that students saw this type of activity as a challenge, as shown in question 4, but that it could help them improve their speaking level. In this question, the participants could be more open in their answers and some commented that the drama activities were very helpful because they were funny, and they made the memorization part less monotonous. On the contrary, it gave a context to what they were learning; at the same time, they mentioned that by being forced to speak and be understood, pronunciation and the use of grammar improved. According to this, Kalidas (2014) explains that: "one of the reasons drama is able to enhance students' learning experience is because of its unique ability to accommodate many different learning styles and thus able to motivate the learners" (p. 444), so, that the student can accommodate their way of learning and thus get more out of the activity, this is reflected in the perception of students who see activities as helping to improve their level.

In question number seven, a remarkable change happened, a total of eight students (100%) agreed that they would like to regularly participate in drama activities during English classes. This is something that needed to be highlighted because in the first survey, one of the students disagreed with the drama activities in English classes. Related to this, Namini and Simanjalam (2008) mention that: "classroom participation requires students to interact in the classroom to indicate that they are learning and paying attention" (p. 24), so this change related to the participation could happen, since the implementation of the drama activities caused a positive change in the opinion of the students, and they could experiment something different in the English classes that ended up being a good learning process for them.

In question number eight, "How did you feel about the development of the drama activities?" One of the students answered that the experience was pretty good. In the same way, three learners said that they felt good. Another one felt normal, and one of them said that the activity was funny. However, there was one student who felt nervous during the drama activity. The last student mentioned that he did not know how to describe the feeling. The answers changed since the first survey was applied. They

had different feelings, unlike the first survey that they expressed they felt fine and amused with the learning process they were experiencing before the application of drama activities. Moore in 2002 (as cited by Angelianawati, 2019) who states that:

> Drama has an important role to play in the personal development of our students. The skills and qualities developed by students in drama, such as teamwork, creativity, leadership, and risk-taking, are assets in all subjects and all areas of life. Drama stimulates the imagination and allows students to explore issues and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. (p. 126)

Taking into account the previous information, there was a contrast to focus the attention on, and it was that at the beginning they shared a singular emotion, but the time passed by and they faced other emotions in the process of learning.

Graph 3. *Second Survey Applied to the Participant Students from Experimental Group 7-3 A*

Graph 3.
Question # 8. How did you feel during the development of the drama activity?
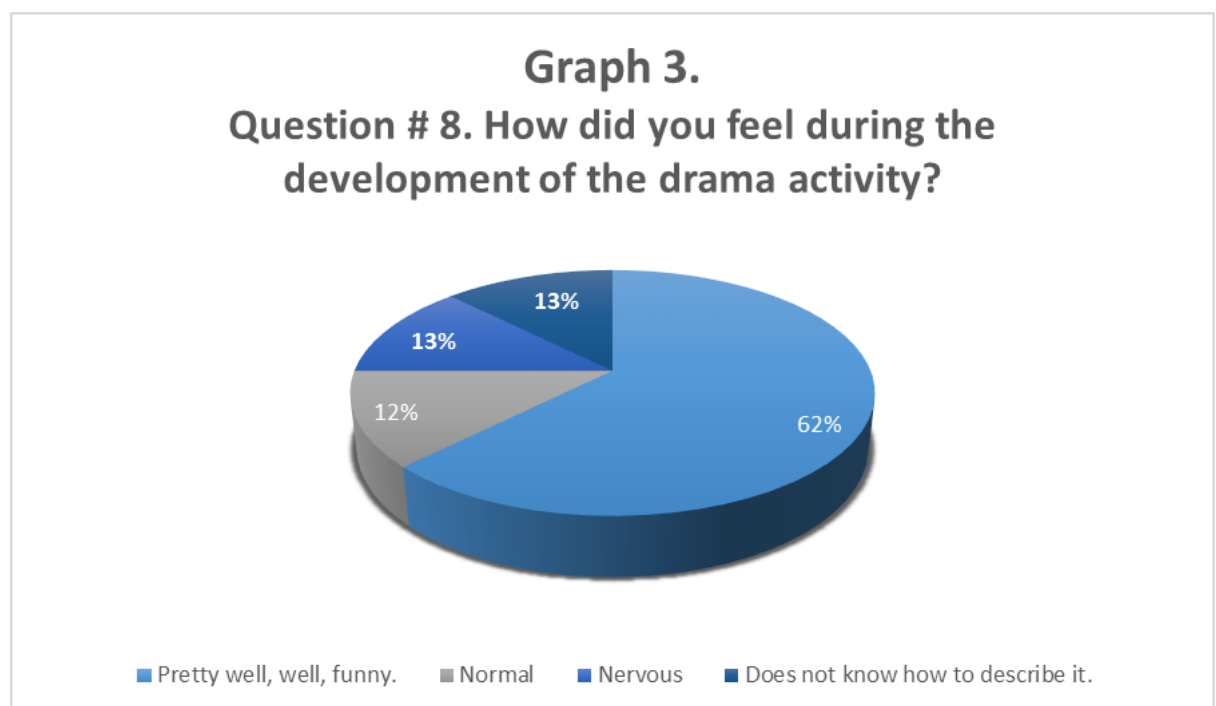
- Pretty well, well, funny. — 62%
- Normal — 12%
- Nervous — 13%
- Does not know how to describe it. — 13%

In the next question, "What would you improve in the drama activities?"Six students said that they would not change anything and the activities were fine ;however, one scholar said that he would implement more drama activities in the classroom. According to Kobayashi (2012) drama activities can be defined as: "games that are used to help actors enhance their creativity and unlock spontaneity" (p. 25). This made reference to the students´ comment because the fact that they were requesting more drama activities could be positive. The last student mentioned that English needed to be more present in the class. According to Afifah and Devana (2020) one of the most difficult skills to master is the ability to speak English because it goes hand in hand with the psychological aspect of developing their ideas properly, and they need time to accommodate thoughts about what they want to express when talking. For that reason, it is relevant to use the target language of the 100% of the class for them to practice as much as they can. In comparison, within the first survey, the students´ answers changed since only five students said that they would not change anything, and this time there was one more student who agreed to maintain the drama activities in the way they were implemented in the English classes. Which means that during the application of the drama activities in the English classes, they changed their mind about it positively.

Graph 4. *Second Survey Applied to the Participant Students from Experimental Group 7-3 A*

Graph 4.

Question # 9. What would you improve about the drama activities?

Source: Own elaboration (2022-2023)

Table 2. *Second Survey Applied to the Participant Students from Experimental Group 7-3 A*

Survey's Questions	Experimental Group Answers Total of students: 8
1. What kind of activities help me to better understand the topics developed in conversational English class?	-Activities creative and funny but don't require moving (25%) -Activities that require physical movement (75%) -No type of activity (0%)
2. Do you think that the activities carried out in class by the teacher help you to better understand the topic you are studying?	-Yes (100%)
3. Did the drama activity developed by the teacher make the English class more interesting?	-Yes (100%)

4. How easy or difficult was it for you to participate in the drama activity?	-Easy (25%) -Regular (75%) -Difficult (0%)
5. How clear are the teacher's instructions to carry out drama activities in English classes?	-Very clear (25%) -Clear (62%) -Unclear (13%)
6. Do you think that drama activities help you improve your fluency when practicing the English language?	-Yes (100%)
7. Would you like to regularly participate in drama activities in English classes?	-Yes (100%)

Source: Own elaboration (2022-2023)

4.2. Pre-test Applied to Students from the Experimental Group (7-3 A) and Control Group (7-1 B)

To evaluate the participants' speaking skills, the researchers designed and applied a pre-test to the collaborating students at the beginning of the research process. Since the goal pursued in this study was to improve the speaking performance of language learners, firstly, the researchers were required to determine the starting speaking proficiency level of the participants. Hence, students were asked to answer some questions about personal information with a different level of difficulty. The test was applied through the Zoom platform, one researcher asked the questions while another evaluated the answers using a rubric based on CEFR standards. The collaborating teacher was attentive to clarify any doubts and help them understand what was being asked. The camera could be on or off depending on the student's preference to help build

confidence. The interviews were recorded, with prior authorization, in order to better analyze the aspects on which this research is based. Related to the amount of students in the group, the pre-test was applied to a total of 24 students, 12 from the experimental group and 12 from the control group. As it has been mentioned before, the results from the pre-test were analyzed taking into account the situation experienced during the pandemic, it is considered as a factor that could affect the performance of the students in both groups. It is also necessary to highlight that the CEFR and its standards were applied in this analysis in order to determine the initial English level of the students. The Zoom platform was used as a tool to carry out the test. Micro-skills such as stress and intonation were going to be included in the analysis, however, the students did not show the necessary level to be evaluated in these aspects since they did not meet the CEFR standards. They did not make correct use of these skills nor differentiate falling tone or raising tone nor do they change intonation between responses; so their analysis is omitted and the findings were collected to be analyzed later.

-Spanish Usage:

Initially, this research did not contemplate analyzing the use of Spanish in conversational English classes, however, based on the theory proposed by several of the authors and what was found in both, the observations and pre/post tests, it became necessary to take this factor into account as it was an important point in the learning process that the students were carrying out during the time in which the research was conducted. Therefore, this section is dedicated to analyzing this behavior and its implications in the evaluations.

For the analysis of the results of this research, it is considered pertinent to understand as a factor the pandemic that kept students away from the classroom for around two years, since, according to data from the Ministerio de Educación Pública, more than 425 thousand children and young people do not have access to the internet, which has generated a very worrying backlog in the study plans of each subject during this time

(Rodriguez, 2021). Taking into account this educational gap, the students showed a relatively acceptable level of understanding the questions; nevertheless, it is important to highlight that the obtained results showed some differences in the frequency of the use of Spanish as a tool when answering the pre-test. Although it is true, the majority of the participants used their native language, this behavior was more common in the control group where six (50%) out of the twelve interviewed students could not answer satisfactorily all the questions and required the use of Spanish in 9 of the 10 pre-test questions.On the other hand, the students of the experimental group who needed to use Spanish were fewer, a total of 5 out of 12, thus showing a similar level regarding this subject.

It is necessary to highlight that in terms of understanding the questions, the majority of students did not have significant complications getting the message in the target language. However, the students, mentioned before, used Spanish constantly when they had to ask the teacher for the meaning of some words. In fact, Lopez (2019) details that: "the use of L1 when doing pair work to construct solutions to linguistic tasks and evaluate written language, is a strong factor. L1 vocabulary allows learners to use the language which they may not yet possess in L2 to process ideas and reach higher levels of understanding" (p. 22), so it can be argued that the use they gave to Spanish could have been due to the lack of vocabulary and the intention to understand the question and give a satisfactory answer.

Before starting the test, the participants were explained that the answers should be in English and that if they did not know what to answer, they had to say "I do not know the answer", however; when the students did not know what to answer, they just used Spanish without following the given instructions. Sometimes the teacher translated the meaning of the question and the students continued to use Spanish to answer, ignoring the teacher's instructions. These students used to say: "Profe, no entiendo la pregunta", "Profe, ¿Qué es lo que me están preguntando?", "Profe, ¿Qué significa…?"; or in some cases they understood the question but

answered in their mother tongue, for example, some students answered most of the questions in Spanish, showing little or no difficulty understanding the question but some problems expressing the target language.In the process of learning a language, it is necessary to use the mother tongue to compare and learn new ways of expressing what is already known but in another language, however, López (2019) points out that "the overuse of L1 does not strengthen learner's cognition but may result in inappropriate transfer of the bad language habits from first language to the target language; thus it should be abandoned" (p. 22) thus deepening that the use of Spanish it is necessary but can be detrimental to the understanding of the person of the new language he or she is learning. In questions such as: What is your favorite TV show? Do you have pets? Or what is your teacher's name? They had the most significant difficulties understanding the message; they could not understand specific words that made them fail when answering the question. They used phrases in Spanish (como se dice …) to ask for clarification in order to know if their understanding was right. Also, they required clarification like exemplification or illustration to find an answer through previous knowledge and experiences where that question about personal information was used.

In some cases, the students were nervous to answer some questions, stating that they did not have the necessary English level to maintain a fluid pace of the conversation; however, it is necessary to understand that, as Afifah and Devana (2020) say, one of the most difficult skills to master is the ability to speak English because it goes hand in hand with the psychological aspect of developing their ideas properly, and they need time to accommodate thoughts about what they want to express when talking which can affect the way in which people wanted to express themselves. In the case on which this research is focused, the ability to speak in the target language requires certain knowledge of vocabulary, grammar rules, and pronunciation to be able to satisfactorily develop this macro-skill. In the case of the participants, the overuse of L1 prevented a fluent conversation, concentrating on thinking in Spanish the answers that

should be in English, thus demonstrating the lack of vocabulary and knowledge of general rules of the English Language. Sometimes they focused more on giving short answers with the intention of not failing, so they did not decide to take risks. This situation helps the research to understand the little progress of the participating students because in the Conversational English classes there is an overuse of Spanish, this being the predominant language during the lessons.

-Grammar

Grammar was a repetitive mistake for the students in both groups, especially in topics such as subject-verb-agreement, with an emphasis on the use of the verb to be. Only four students (33%) out of twelve from the experimental group knew how to use the verb (to be) correctly and had no grammatical errors in their answers. The remaining eight students (67%) regularly confused the are-is verb forms and did not know when or how to use them. The lack of use of these verbal forms could be understood through the scope of predictable answers where students used the safest response and tried not to elaborate further sentences because probably they did not know more verbs, they learned to give automatic responses and did not know how to use them and the best moment to use it. Participants used "minimal responses" as Basher and Azem (2011) mention that those responses "are predictable" (p. 39) and the responses were concise without further elaboration in terms of structure, for example, instead of saying "My name is _____", they automatically preferred to say their name directly. This 67% did not know how to properly structure their answers when speaking about personal information. Due to the type of questions used in the pre-test, the answers had to be in present simple tense or, in some cases, present progressive, which most of the students could not use correctly. On the other hand, it was difficult almost null to analyze the responses from the control group, since most of the students did not understand the question and preferred to ignore it and move on to the next one in which the same thing happened. Their responses showed complications in the subject-verb-agreement and in the correct use of the

verb to be. Grammar was not a point that could be taken into account because there were no answers, meaning that there was nothing to take into account according to this aspect and the minimal responses were repeated in this group.

In the case of conjugating to the third-person singular, the experimental and control group failed most of the time. They also had issues pluralizing adding the -s ending indicating it; for example: "My favorite food**s** is". In other cases, the use of "am" was confused with the verb "have" in questions such as "How old are you?", the most frequent response was: "I **have** 13 years old", confusing the verbs "be" and "have" with the Spanish translation. The influence of Spanish when using the phrase: "Tengo 13 años" confused students because they understood the statement as a Spanish language translation (possession) and not a part of the English language in which it is correctly said: "I am 13 years old". In addition, the correct conjugation of to be verb was confused because students did not know when to use is or are in responses such as: "My favorite food **are** pizza" or "My favorite color**s** is red", mixing conjugation of the verb to be and affecting the clarity of the message. In fact, Boonkita (2010) emphasizes that factors such as: "Pronunciation, vocabulary, and collocations" (p. 1306) are effective in English speaking performance in order to perform an appropriate oral production and clear communication. Most of the pupils from the experimental group gave automated responses and ignored the subject-verb agreement order demonstrating that they required more practice on this specific topic. In like manner, the control group showed lack of knowledge when applying grammar structures where students tended to repeat the same combination of words as their partners. For that reason, participants created a type of script to use when receiving a question and did not have enough tools to accurately answer. When they wanted to use them, they tended to make mistakes such as mispronunciation of words, subject verb agreement, verbal tenses among others.

Repetition of words was a condition that happened in both groups studied, where students repeated the same animal or the same food over

and over again. This reinforced the Basher and Azeem´ (2011) idea: "Some students will be able to repeat only everything that someone says" (p.36) because they used common animal and food vocabulary (dogs or cats) to answer the questions from the test. When using structures that are not familiar enough to them, they tended to repeat answers and used incorrect sentences without formulated appropriate replies using right structures such as Present Simple or Present Progressive (MEP, 2016, pp. 40-160). All of the participants from the experimental group stated that their favorite food is pizza, this statement should be considered the safest path to avoid any mistake in terms of vocabulary and verbal structures.

In terms of the CEFR, most of the students from the experimental group (67%) were considered to not share certain indicators of A1 level for proper grammar use in most of the answers; so it was not possible to classify them in any band. In more quantitative terms, 33% of the students shared some characteristics of the A1 band, which states that the person: "Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learned repertoire." (2011), which came to support what was previously analyzed. However, it should be noted that some students (three of them) showed greater knowledge of the rules and tried to apply them according to their understanding, correcting themselves on occasions when they identified an error or trying to repeat their answer differently, nevertheless, the number of errors prevented them from being qualified as a higher band, so it could be expected that in the post test they could show a better level not committing the errors made. On the other hand, the control group, according to the CEFR standards, showed very different results among the participants. Most of the students (50%) could not be classified in any band while 28% shared some characteristics of A1 users: "Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learned repertoire" (p. 28). This group presented serious problems on the use of the verb to be, so the post test served to find out if there will be a change in the English level and in the understanding of the grammatical rules.

-Pronunciation

In the case of the experimental group, the students had difficulty pronouncing the words. In this regard, no student was able to pronounce all the words correctly, especially the sound [θ], which is present in words that contain the TH letter combination and is commonly used in content words. According to The British Council (2022) "Content words are words that have meaning. Nouns, main verbs, adjectives and adverbs are usually content words. Auxiliary verbs, pronouns, articles, and prepositions are usually grammatical words." (par. 1). Pronunciation was a complicated issue since the vowel sounds and other consonant sounds were not recognized, so the answers were difficult to understand. As mentioned by Burnkart (as cited in Nazara, 2011) pronunciation is essential for good communication and the expression of ideas, which was made difficult by the non-recognition of the different sounds. The sound [θ] in the experimental group, was confused with others such as the [t] sound or the [ð] sound (commonly present in the structure words explained above) in words such as "thanks" /θæŋks/ or "birthday" /bɝθˌdeɪ/. Vowel sounds like [aɪ] in words like "my" /maɪ/ were also confused with the [ɪ] sound.

In the same way, the control group had issues with the vowel sounds as well; the vowel sounds were the most difficult for the students to produce, practically all the sounds were replaced by how they would normally be read in Spanish. Using in most cases the sounds [aː], [ɔː], [e], [iː] and [ʊ] when any vowel had to be pronounced. Also, the sound [θ] usually present in the letters TH was replaced by the sound [t], as it happened in the experimental group, showing little understanding of the different sounds of words in English and reproducing what they already knew from Spanish. Burnkart (as cited in Nazara, 2011) considers as a serious problem for the good flow of communication, when emphasizing that mutual understanding is necessary to maintain a good pace of the discussion demonstrating that the poor pronunciation of the language prevented good results from being shown. Nevertheless, four of the participating students of the control group demonstrated a better pronunciation level, showing awareness of the different vowel sounds

understanding the usage of long sounds such as [eɪ], [iː], [aɪ], [əu], [uː], which were difficult for the rest of the group to produce, in cases such as cute /kjuːt/ or gray /greɪ/. Besides, the sound [θ] which the vast majority had problems with in both groups. In the case of these four students, they were able to pronounce common words such as "thanks" /θæŋks/ or "birthday" /bɝθˌdeɪ/ using phonology correctly.

-Fluency

Fluency could not be highly evaluated on the control group since half of the students (50%) answered an average of five questions, where at least four of the questions were answered monosyllabically. Two students (17%) showed more difficulties having to translate from Spanish to English in order to express what they wanted. However, four students (33%) managed to maintain good fluency, which helped to keep a fluid conversation and even ask about aspects not included in the questions, such as the names of their pets, maintaining a good flow in the conversation.

It could be noticed that some students from the experimental group responded syllabically, so fluency could not be assessed, but some students maintained an acceptable pace when formulating longer sentences. Most of the participants did not show fluency management and failed to apply the term "automatic fluency" in their responses. Automatic fluency as stated by Gatbonton and Segalowitz in 2005 (cited by Galante and Thomson, 2017) is a term implemented to refer to fluency as: "the smooth and rapid production of utterances, without undue hesitations and pauses, that results from constant use and repetitive practice" (p. 117). There were occasions in which the students had a period of silence before answering the question since they used "fillers" or sounds like "mmmmm", "eeehm" or "aaah" while they were thinking about the answer they were going to give. This type of "fillers" make the speaking process less natural and block the fluency when expressing themselves in any language. The students used to say primarily word-by-word, occasional two-word or three-word phrases, but these were infrequent and they did not preserve

meaningful syntax. The majority of the participants from the experimental group (67%) showed serious difficulties in terms of fluency, since their answers were constantly interrupted by periods of silence and conversations in the native language. On the other hand, in the case of four students (33%), they were able to say longer sentences fluently and seemed to have more control of what they said and what they wanted to say. The participants who were able to say longer sentences (33%) showed mostly an average level in terms of fluency. The phrases or sentences that the students used dealt with familiar topics, which caused them to handle the answers more easily, and their fluency benefited when formulating their sentences according to the questions that the researchers were asking.

When comparing both groups studied, the control group had a low level of fluency when answering the pre-test questions. In both cases, fluency was not widely taken into account, since there were many aspects that influenced the pre-test and students did not deliver a continuous message taking into consideration aspects that Koponen and Riggenbach in 2000 (as cited by Galante and Thomson, 2017) mention such as: "flow, continuity, and automaticity" (p. 117). It was intended to level that fluency by applying the drama activities and by further practicing the speaking.

Also, It could be observed how the majority of students responded quickly but only using words like "rabbit", "green", "yellow", and so on. This also tended to minimize the sense of fluency in speech because although they responded automatically using the Gatbonton and Segalowitz' term of "automatic fluency", they did not have: "the smooth and rapid production of utterances" (as cited by Galante and Thomson, 2017, p. 117). Related to this term, the production of utterances entails the production of meaningful sentences that are as complete as possible so that the message can be understood. In addition, the answers of the students were short and the variations of complete sentences and vocabulary used when answering cannot be measured because they did not use complete grammatical sentences. Communication becomes mostly quick understanding, but not

a dense analysis of the entire communication process and production of utterances.

-CEFR

As mentioned above, the CEFR has served as a guide to develop the evaluation rubrics. Taking this into account, the results obtained showed some characteristics that the participants shared with certain indicators of A1 and A2 bands. According to MEP (2016), the expected level in seventh grade goes from A1 to A2 (p. 60-146), so, the investigation proceeded to evaluate whether the students shared some characteristics with those levels without having yet implemented the drama activities, which allowed knowing the initial level of the students for a future comparison when the post-test was applied.

The results of the experimental group obtained from the pre-test revealed that 33% of the participating students (four students) comply with certain indicators that are described in the A1 English-speaking proficiency level according to the CEFR, so, they were basic speaking users whose language mastery was limited to the implementation of basic sentences. On the other hand, the rest of the participants (eight students, 67%) shared characteristics from A1 level but faced many difficulties in different aspects so they could not be categorized within any band, based on the parameters and language goals depicted on the CEFR. The responses were varied depending on the level of English proficiency shown by each student. Those of a higher level responded quickly and in a longer way; for example, to the question "Do you have pets?" one of the students said: "Yes, I have one dog and one cat, their names are Estrella and Michi", thus demonstrating not only that he understood the question very well but at the same time showing ease of expression and knowledge of vocabulary. On the other hand, students with greater difficulties responded in a monosyllabic way; to continue using the question about pets, they would only say "yes" or "no", showing more difficulties in expressing themselves.

In the case of the control group, there were 4 students with a high level in their answers, they did not have grammatical errors in their

answers, which promoted the understanding of the message they wanted to give. The results obtained from the pre-test in the control group revealed that 50% of the participating students (six students) achieved certain indicators that cannot fit in the A1 English-speaking proficiency level according to the CEFR. That is, they were basic speaking users whose language mastery was limited to the implementation of basic words and null use of sentences using simple present tense. On the other hand, 17% of the participants (2 students) were classified as A1 speakers based on the parameters and language goals depicted on the CEFR and 4 (33%) students fit in the A2 category. In this case, the data revealed that more than a half of the sample population possessed an upper low beginner level of mastery of the speaking skill and some showed some characteristics of A2 users. These findings support the arguments stated by MEP´s authorities (2016) when they stated that language learners from public schools in Costa Rica were not reaching the expected English proficiency levels after eleven or twelve years of instruction (p. 12). The foregoing presents a challenge for the educational system that was tested by the post test carried out in order to analyze whether the activities proposed by the MEP or those that the collaborating teacher regularly used help to improve the speaking proficiency of the students.

Table 3. *Comparative Results Pretest Applied to Students from the Experimental Group (7-3 A) and the Control Group (7-1 B) according to CEFR.*

CEFR	**Experimental Group (7-3 A)**	**Control group (7-1 B)**
-Spanish Usage	*-40% Spanish Usage*	*-50% Spanish Usage*
-Grammar	*Sharing certain indicators of A1: 33 %* *Did not fit in any band: 67%*	*Sharing* certain indicators of *A2: (33 %)* *Sharing* certain indicators of *A1: 17%* *Did not fit in any band: 50%*

-Pronunciation	-Excellent: 0%	-Excellent:33%
	-Regular:33%	-Regular:17%
	-Needs improvement: 67%	-Needs improvement: 50%

Source: Own elaboration (2022-2023)

4.3. Observations

The purpose of the observations was to identify the most palpable traits when a drama activity was executed. With these observations, it was possible to keep track when and where the students expressed the acceptance or reluctance towards the activities during the conversational English classes. It was necessary to carry out several observations within the group in order to identify the situations where the oral aspect was involved as well as the participation of the group within the scenarios of the seventh year plan. Given the number of lessons per week, it was mandatory to find a way to establish a connection between the programmed oral activities and the evaluation of the scenarios. Therefore, the analysis of the students' acceptance and possible enjoyment of the activities added that they were doing something unusual to learn and improve the key aspects of second language learning. These observations were used to accomplish the proposed objectives regarding the effectiveness of drama activities when speaking. For these observations, the Zoom platform was used to record the class activity, then to analyze it after the class for deep analysis in terms of reluctance, acceptance, motivation and use of the target language (pronunciation, words, structure, mistakes). Researchers previously sent a letter to get the permission to record the class as can be seen in Annex 6.1.

4.3.1. First Observation Experimental group (July 19th 2022)

The first activities applied to the experimental groups were "Conversation with Numbers" and "Broken TV" and they were used to recall previous knowledge about numbers that was needed on this unit. This was based on " Plan Integral de Nivelación Académica" (PINA) to check previous knowledge. Both activities were carried out as a warm-up activity on the second week of the unit "Eat well and feel good". In the first activity, conversation with numbers, the students were divided in pairs and after each pair presented their conversation, the rest of the classmates had to guess the topic of the conversation. For this, the professor explained the activity and stated that numbers ranged from 1 to 20, so the students practiced previously with the teacher to recap vocabulary. When using a drama activity, it is important to recall the importance of being understood by students, by that, it is possible to assure that instructions are clear. Here the professor did a couple of examples regarding the use of numbers such as calling one student to the front of the class, then the professor performed the mimic of using a weapon, then the student had a better understanding of the action and replied with a number signaling the place to shoot. The first group that went to the board was nervous due to the fact that they had to be in front of the class, also, they were not used to being there, so they reacted nervously and laughed a lot, they could not concentrate until a couple of chances. In fact, they tried several times to start, but it was difficult because of the group. It is possible to analyze that the group was not used to seeing their partners doing an activity outside the normal classroom. The laughing and the nervousness were important aspects to consider in this activity; for example, some students tried to record their classmates; that made them feel uncomfortable. The professor agreed with the students to show respect to the ones in front. This was a crucial moment because students controlled their anxiety a little bit. Creating a non-secure space to commit mistakes and not be judged by others is mandatory when learning a second language and practicing. When doing a drama activity, or an activity that involves someone getting exposed, the professor must act accordingly and react quickly to any

possible outcome regarding the confidence of the students that is exposed to the rest of the class.

The students who were participating in front of the classroom could finish the activity successfully, even though they took some time to prepare themselves to act. Their presentations were short, but they followed the rules of the activity and the instructions of the teacher. Also, they participated without the teacher's intervention (the teacher did not force anybody to participate). The natural participation of the students after they found out that it was funny to be involved in the activity helped to create a safe environment to participate without being judged. The group seemed to be more comfortable in front of the class; they started right away after the teacher told them about their turn, without any necessity to remind them the importance of participation in class. Talking with numbers is demonstrated to be an activity that engages the attention of the group as well, it helps to practice vocabulary and body expression through the use of numbers. Through learning the flow of a conversation, the volume, the importance of tone among others, students can learn how a conversation works. After each presentation, as it was mentioned before, the teacher asked the students what the conversation was about. Some of them tried to guess using words in English and Spanish but tried to use the target language when possible. Lopez (n.d) referred to the importance of Spanish because this is a tool that links the student with being safe to not commit mistakes in the target language. The student's effort to communicate must be fed with additional vocabulary to foster the use of the speaking skill when giving comments or opinions.

The second activity, broken TV, was used as a follow-up activity of speaking with numbers. The teacher gave the instructions in English as well, and then he used Spanish to ask the student if they remembered the instructions ``De que trataba Broken TV?". One of the students answered in Spanish "estar uno viendo al otro y tiene que contar toda la historia". Then, the teacher continued explaining to them about the activity in Spanish, saying: "Yo los llamaré y les daré la situación". The students

were excited, and they did not look nervous at all. This second warm up activity served as a connection to the purpose that was practicing numbers. In this activity, they kept practicing the target vocabulary using a new approach. Wagner(1998), exposed that the feeling of excitement of a new opportunity to participate in a drama activity is part of the enjoyment of this kind of task. Students were excited about what the scenarios were. The professor used scenarios using the unit of "Food Security Matters" as well as previous units to develop the PINA strategy.

After each pair presented, the teacher said "pause" and he took out one of the students and added one more student to the broken TV until every student participated. The students presenting were laughing and enjoying the activity as much as the ones that were seated. At the end of the class, the teacher asked once again about the many situations shown in the Broken TV. They answered in Spanish and English, saying sentences such as: "Era sobre fishing", "asalting (the student referred to someone stealing something)". The teacher corrected the students in a kind way. The corresponding feedback and the mistakes on the activity regarding pronunciation were used as a base to explain the pronunciation of some sounds, such as the "th" sound or the silent –e. In drama activities, instant feedback is never a good idea because the teacher wants to observe how natural the participation of a student and the execution of the target language can become, in this case, how they use numbers and creativity to create a conversation. Also, the instant feedback in terms of pronunciation can make the student avoid participation in other drama activities that require more from the student. It is recommended to do a list of words and vocabulary that must be corrected after the drama activity. Avoid any interruption that can disturb the flow of the speaking skill.

It was noticed that even though students were nervous at the beginning of the activities, they got a lot of confidence after the first activity. Wood (2008) mentions that drama is a way to increase confidence in students inside the classroom. Which is very good, since confidence will

help students to feel more comfortable when they have to talk in a language that is not their mother tongue. Wagner in 1998 (As cited in Wood 2008) states, "Drama is powerful because its unique balance of thought and feeling makes learning exciting, challenging, relevant to real life concerns, and enjoyable" (p. 14). Drama can give the teacher and students a unique class to develop the speaking class in the most original way.

In the same way, students used Spanish sometimes to express themselves during the class. As cited in Lopez (n.d.), he explains one advantage of students using Spanish in the classroom while they are learning English:

> The use of L1, when doing pair work to construct solutions to linguistic tasks and evaluate written language, is a strong factor. L1 vocabulary allows learners to use the language which they may not yet possess in L2 "to process ideas and reach higher levels of understanding. This applies both to social talk between partners and private talk intended for the learner alone" (Morahan, p. 2)

It means that even though they are not using the target language, the mother tongue provokes a better understanding and development of the target language, in this case English, for instance, the fact that students used Spanish in the class is shown as a supporting tool for them in the learning process. This tool is an enhancer of opportunities to learn, such as using the words that they commonly use in Spanish to give opinions and teaching them how to say them in the target language.

4.3.2. Second Observation Experimental group (August 16th 2022)

This observation was carried out during the third week of August (August 16th) and a total of nine individuals were present in the class. The topic for this class was "Thank our farmers".

First, it is important to mention that all the students (100%) were willing to participate in the activity called "Statues'', where they were happy and interested in finding the correct answer each time, also, it is necessary to highlight the way in which they seemed interested in participating on a new activity regarding drama. The teacher explained the activity in English but repeated it in Spanish looking for a better understanding from the learners, which consisted about the teacher saying a profession and the students, in pairs, simulated creating a statue referring to what the educator said, one student being the sculptor and the other the statue. This activity was carried out as a review from the topics previously studied from Academic English as well as generating a new bridge between the topic and the scenario of farmers. Due to the nature of the activity, the speaking outcome was low because the aspect to analyze in class was the body language and the creativity of the figure created.The activity was well received and encouraged students to participate in it by shouting out the profession they thought their classmates were referring to. Although they maintained constant communication in Spanish, the objective of the activity was fulfilled, which was to refresh the vocabulary about professions and the students had to use it in order to win the game. According to Torkey (2006): "Tasks such as role plays, simulations and drama engage students in different social roles. Such tasks provide opportunities to practice the wide range of pragmatic and sociolinguistic abilities students need in interpersonal encounters outside the classroom" (p. 56). However, in this section, it could also be said that all the students (100%) used their native language both to ask the teacher and to communicate with their classmates. This implies that students are in need of more vocabulary to foster their language skill. The students mentioned that they lack words to describe the scenarios. One of the students said "It is… esta que se llamaba… no recuerdo… la de pilotar un avión." Some students from the group tried to give an answer in English but they lacked enough words to do so.

It can be pointed out a quick adaptation that the teacher made when a couple of students could not make the statue, so the educator suggested that the students describe what they were doing, which

generated a bit of confusion since neither of the two students had the ability at that time to express their actions in the target language. Here, the English level and practice play an important role regarding the fostering of the English speaking skill. The way in which some students acted during the activity recalls the importance of knowing one limitation regarding the use of drama activities: "it is necessary to consider the fact that not everyone is always willing to be acting in front of others, which would be the most important limitation to consider." (Salas, 2017, p. 316) By that, it is possible to determine that students were not used to being exposed, so it is important that the professor acts accordingly to the needs of the group or specific group of students. In fact, the "sculptor" tried to communicate even by writing and showing different related words, but the teacher ended up telling him what he should say to describe the statue's profession. In the end, the student gave up and told the educator "explain again what I just said, teacher," demonstrating the poor understanding of the language in this case and the poor performance of repetition. The other students asked if they should describe what they were doing, which was not necessary, and everything went smoothly. Teachers must be aware of the outcome in every activity regarding drama, they must be well planned to be effective and not be a traumatic experience for students that are not used to them.

In the second activity called "Charades" the students were attentive and enthusiastic to participate. The activity consisted of using an application that showed random words about farm animals where a player must place the cell phone on his/her forehead so they cannot see the word and others can describe it using related words, mimes or sounds. The instructions were again given in English and then repeated in Spanish. In this kind of activity, the group was not used to receiving all the instructions in English, at least, for some activities that were new to them, for further clarification, the professor used to give them the instructions in Spanish. For this, the use of the mother language is important to foster the second language to make students comfortable as mentioned by Lopez (2019): "The first language's primary role is to provide scaffolding, which can lower affective filters by making the L2 comprehensible and the classroom

environment feasible for meaningful learning to occur" (p.21). However, the instructions in this case were not very clear for the students, although the teacher explained it several times, the students did not understand the rules in the best way. The theme chosen was animals, so the students could use sounds, descriptions or movements, however, as soon as the application showed a word, some students shouted the word translated into Spanish. This activity messed up the class a bit more because all the students went to the front of the classroom and stayed there while the activity was taking place, shouting and laughing. In this case, the activity required more communication because the words had to be described, however, simple words were used, or it was simply described in Spanish. Near the end of the activity, the students began to disperse, even two students left the classroom, so the teacher changed the rules to only make the animal sound; however, the students continued to use Spanish and the sounds were ignored. In conclusion, the activities used on August 16 had a positive impact by the students who were participatory and happy when it was their turn; furthermore, the activities did not encourage dialogue in English and, on the contrary, caused the students to always use Spanish under the pressure of trying to do it well. It is noteworthy that these activities were able to teach new vocabulary to the students when they shouted different words to achieve their goal, however, the vocabulary of professions and animals already seemed very familiar to the students as they always said the same words such as: teacher, doctor ,carpenter (in the first activity), bird, dog and cat (in the second activity) so it could be used to reinforce new vocabulary. The activities required group work and knowledge of vocabulary, for some students the words used were new and they learned them through the participation of others, reinforcing the idea proposed by Gumperz (as cited in Nazara, 2011) when mentioning that: "speaking is cooperatively constructed which is based on contributions, assumptions, expectations, and interpretations of the participants' utterances" (p. 30). Although it is true that the students used their native language in most cases, they did so in order not to fail in their response and thus fostered new knowledge of words unknown to them through group collaboration. As stated by Lopez (2019): "L1 vocabulary

allows learners to use the language which they may not yet possess in L2 to process ideas and reach higher levels of understanding" (p. 22). The way of implementing the activities could be better because they messed up the class a bit, which can be corrected with class management by the teacher.

4.3.3. Third Observation Experimental group (September 13th 2022)

This observation was carried out on September 13, 2022. The activity was called "Interpreting Occupations" where the students gathered different objects of daily use or objects found in the English laboratory. This activity was used as a warm up to elaborate further vocabulary on the MEP´s scenario that was "Our Towns and Stories." For this scenario, it was necessary that students practice vocabulary regarding professions in industrial areas as well as learning the materials that were used to build houses. This activity helped them to have an idea about the scenario of the topic and to help them use vocabulary from previous scenarios to create more complete sentences. The instruction was given completely in English and explained in Spanish in order to have a better understanding from pupils. The objects chosen by the teenagers were pens, combs, umbrellas, leaves, pens, rulers, calculators, a Nintendo switch, eye glasses, among other objects. The variety of chosen objects was focused to develop their creativity using objects to represent something different. As Cremin (2014) exposes that: "children are expected to 'take part in a range of drama activities to support activity based learning across the curriculum' and to improvise based on experience, imagination, literature, media and/or curricular topics" (p. 2). To foster the imagination, students must engage in activities that put them at the edge of it. When picking an object, students encountered themselves in a situation where professions could not be repeated, so they could use a marker to represent a teacher using a board. However, when the professions that used markers were limited, they had to start producing a new idea using a different object and

vocabulary. At the beginning, the teacher asked them that, when the student was ready, he/she could mime the profession; however, this instruction was quickly changed due to the order of participation. The educator chose to do it in order without repeating a profession. In addition, if the student did not know the profession performed, they could look up its meaning or translation in the cell phone or dictionary. It could be observed how participants chose to mime simple professions due to the rigidity of their freedom with respect to their bodies. To accomplish this, it could be seen that students had little or no capacity to express themselves freely when communicating. At the beginning of the activity it was difficult for them to perform profession, but, slowly and progressively, it could be seen how students were using the indicated vocabulary as Cremin (2014) indicate that: "Classroom drama can help children dig down into the substrata of texts, increase their involvement and insight" (p.4). This scenario helped students to use the vocabulary previously learned in practice through the imagination in their mimics. The progress of the students when guessing the profession, made them perform clearly to be understood by their classmates. On some occasions, one student took a pencil, put it behind her ear while doing mathematical calculations, another pretended to be a model in this way they showed researchers great passion when participating actively in this activity. The familiarity of the vocabulary of professions allowed pupils to use the words studied in previous classes and it helped to accommodate the scope of the activity, which allows students to study according to the needs of the educator towards the student's learning. The activities were basic and simple in order to mix with the inexperience of the presents. Regarding this, Salas (2017) explains that: "When actors and actresses are new and inexperienced, they need to start on basic exercises that will help them to understand their bodies, their emotions and their intentions so that they can be convincing performers" (p. 307). These students, who were inexperienced in terms of drama, accepted the proposal of the task and created an imaginative product. Their body language and the expressions that they generated with this activity exposed the benefits that drama provides to take students out of their comfort zone. When doing something

as simple as using a marker to pretend to write on a board, they changed their way of communicating language. Using mimics, students could discover that their body was able to interpret ideas and be understood. Boys were more excited than girls in this activity due to their shyness. In fact, establishing this type of contact allowed learners to improve the development of the class with the boys because they were having fun at the time they became more creative in their own ideas. There was a significant difference compared to the first activity because students in general avoided laughing at others during the activity, which helped them to concentrate at the time of doing the activity and to feel relaxed when speaking. Creativity is the key when developing tasks that contain mimics and other components such as the component of creativity that include: "domains, fields, and people" (Avila, 2015, p. 94) to make classes interesting. The significance of a well-defined activity using the drama experience was to establish simple rules that must be followed according to the expected outcome of the students, also, to keep in mind that students could do something different to what is proposed. At this point, fostering body language through mimics requires students to clearly understand what they must do and what is the scenario to do.

4.3.4. Fourth Observation Experimental group (September 20th 2022)

This observation was made on September 20th, during the class, the minimal pairs /e/ /i/ were explained, and the students must learn to differentiate between them. According to the planning, this activity was carried out as part of the phonology practice of the unit called "Our towns and stories". In this case, the teacher set up a game that fosters students' listening skills that was called "Land and Sea"; this activity pretended to reinforce students´ knowledge to be used in the next activity using the Silent -e. The next activity observed was called "Acting and Presenting", which was used after the explanation of the use of Silent -e together with the five rules that the teacher indicated to them in its use and pronunciation. For this activity, the students chose five words that had the Silent -e on the board, they created a text, or short story, and they gave

back this text to the teacher. The teacher put all the texts in a bowl, mixed them up and gave one text to each student. The following instruction consisted of making groups of four members, one was the narrator and the other three the actors, who had to mime what was happening in the text they received from the teacher. After that, the narrator changed until all four members had read their paper. In this activity, the narrator of the first group spoke quite softly, which was a recurring problem for the rest of the students, who could not hear very well even though she had good pronunciation. It was remarkable how this group agreed on the way to act, one of the members was the most expressive while one of their partners read the paper without intonation or rhythm, he acted quite excited by throwing himself on the floor, rolling, and pointing fervently, among others. The first group had an idea that the other groups took, they first read the idea in Spanish and then read it in English. When the teacher asked them why, they mentioned that it was so that the others could understand what they were reading and help each other with the story. As explained before on the previous observations, students from 7-3 A felt comfortable about using their native language to further explain their comments or ideas about a topic. In this scenario, they felt that the rest of the group would not understand unless they repeated the information in Spanish.

During the pronunciation of the Silent -e words, they focused on the repetition of the word when an erroneous situation was detected when certain words were on the blackboard. They would corroborate if it was correctly pronounced with the symbol and the corresponding vowel sound. For example, when they said /live/ as /laɪf/ they took a few moments, and corrected themselves after a few seconds for /lɪv/ when they saw the rule on the board. One member of group three said the following "*in the shape of*" and incorrectly pronounced the word by saying /ʃape/ as it sounded, forgetting the rule of silent -e. However, when finishing the word, he reverted and corrected himself immediately by saying /ʃeɪp/, implying that, despite being reading the story and being focused on it, he was able to correct himself without the need for the teacher to do it later.

4.4 Post-test Applied to Students from the Experimental Group (7-3 A) and Control Group (7-1 B)

To evaluate the progress on participants' speaking skills, the researchers designed and applied a post-test to the collaborating students at the end of the research process when the total of the activities were applied during all the research time. The questions that were applied in the pretest were repeated in the post test in order to recognize the advances in their responses when having the same structures in questions and responses. Simple questions with simple vocabulary were used to create the test. Since they were personal information questions, the students could answer using common information about themselves, information they know well such as their name or their favorite color, using no complex structures in most cases. The purpose is to compare the post-test results with the pre-test results from both groups. This comparison was required because researchers could obtain information to make sure if students had an improvement or not in their learning process when referring to speaking skill. Since the goal pursued in this study was to improve the speaking performance of language learners, firstly, the researchers were required to determine the starting speaking proficiency level of the participants and now that they have this data it is time to analyze the effectiveness between the two tests and the theory. This test was applied through the Zoom platform, one researcher asked the questions while another evaluated the answers using a rubric based on CEFR standards. The collaborating teacher was attentive to clarify any doubts and help them understand what was being asked. The camera could be on or off depending on the student's preference to help build confidence. The interviews were recorded, with prior authorization, in order to have a better analysis of data. The post-test was applied to eight students from the experimental group; the number of students changed in comparison with the pre-test because some of them were absent that day and others were transferred to another high school at the moment that the test was applied. Additionally, the post-test was applied to eleven students from the control group; the number of students also changed in comparison to only eleven

students attending classes. One of them was absent due to personal reasons. As in the pre-test, micro skills such as stress and intonation were going to be included in the analysis, however, the participants did not show considerable progress or there was simply no improvement. In general terms, these micro skills were still not understood by students, as they were not used by the majority of them. The students did not have the ability to express feelings, attitudes or emotions and did not know how to differentiate when to use fall tone or rise tone, speaking in a monotonous way. In the case of stress, the participants did not know when to use it, so it could be difficult for an English native speaker to understand the message. For these reasons, it was considered that the students did not demonstrate mastery of the subject and the analysis of those micros skills was omitted. Furthermore, in the following part, there is the analysis of the results found in the post test.

-Spanish Usage

In the control group, eleven out of a total of twelve students were interviewed, five (45%) were unable to complete all the questions despite the teacher's explanation and examples. In certain cases, students expressed the answer in Spanish: "No sé, ¿Cómo se decía en Inglés, profe?" or "¿Trece? Trece, profe, ¿Cómo era? ¿Trece?" And, although the teacher tried to give hints, the student did not follow the instruction and did not try beyond that. In the experimental group, eight out of twelve were interviewed; three of the students still used Spanish to ask questions or ask for the pronunciation of some words in English, but the majority of the participants answered questions without the necessity to use the phrase "next", "pass" or "do not know the answer". In regard to this, the minority, two students, were the ones who skipped a couple of questions because they did not know what to respond or did not understand the question completely. The use of Spanish in the class can be seen as a tool since it

minimizes the "affective filters" mentioned by the author Norman (as cited by Carson and Kashihara, 2012) that refers to the learner's attitudes that affect the relative success of second language acquisition (p. 42). Norman also mentioned that "Students are often unresponsive, inattentive, and unwilling to speak in class" (as cited by Carson and Kashihara, 2012) but when participants use L1 from time to time the classroom teachers perceive a satisfactory response from them. (Carson and Kashihara, 2012, p. 42) The students in the control group had some difficulty completing the post-test because they did not understand certain questions, and they did not know the vocabulary related to the question. In these cases, the cooperating teacher tried to give hints and cues to the students so that they could understand, sometimes asking the same question but emphasizing so that they could understand. On the other hand, In the experimental group, the remaining six students were very familiar with the questions asked, and they did not have serious problems catching what the questions were about or responding to the interviewer in the target language. Lopez (2019) states that "Many of the students need actual communication and will rely on whichever means they find feasible at their disposal, whether it is English or Spanish" (p.29). Therefore, the student will always look for a way to communicate even if this means following external instructions, using simple vocabulary or simple answers so as not to leave a blank answer; however, the problem lies in the fact that the student does not know how to answer the question and prefers to skip the question so as not to have to think about an answer. The remaining six students in the control group (it should be noted that two of the students who were pre-tested were no longer in the group and one joined in August 2022) showed better results, one of them stood out due to the varied use of vocabulary. The remaining five needed clarifications from the teacher in some questions because they did not know certain key pieces of vocabulary to answer, for example, illustrating the word "pets" by saying "the animals that live in your house" and, with this, the student understood what was being asked.

-Pronunciation

Overall, students in both groups had little or no improvement in terms of pronunciation; however, an advance could be noted in 5 (62.5%) of the students in the experimental group who appropriately identified the corresponding sounds, especially those recognized by differentiating English vowels from Spanish vowels in pronunciation. They achieved significant progress recognizing when and how to use them and the pronunciation errors did not affect the meaning or understanding of the message. In specific cases such as "years" 5 of the students were able to pronounce the sound [ɪ] correctly although confusing the final sound [z] with [s], also in the word "wait" they were able to respond with the correct pronunciation of the vowel "a" /weɪt/. In the case of the control group, the post test showed that there was no improvement respecting the pre-test. The four students who showed few or no errors on the pretest in pronunciation continued with the same performance, improving in other micro skills that are analyzed in their respective sections. However, the remaining students failed to show any improvement. The problems in pronunciation of the vowels were the most notorious and most frequent during the application of the test; in general terms only the short sounds were used: [aː], [ɔː], [e], [iː] and [ʊ] that can be confused by those used in the Spanish language, which is why it was common to hear them in words that needed long vowel sounds ([eɪ], [iː], [aɪ], [əu], [uː]). The influence of the native language had repercussions on the oral production of the target language as mentioned by López (2019) "the overuse of L1 does not strengthen learner's cognition but may result in inappropriate transfer of the bad language habits from first language to the target language; thus it should be abandoned" (p. 22) Which shows that as long as the native language is used as the primary source of communication, there will be problems, in this case of pronunciation.

Additionally, the case of the sound [θ] continues to be a difficult challenge for both groups, since only 3 of the participants from the experimental group showed progress in the pronunciation of this sound. The pronunciation problem arose in several words, among which are sixth

/sɪksθ/, eleventh /ɪˈlev(ə)nθ/ or birthday /bɝθˌdeɪ/. It should be noted that they faced a greater difficulty when the sound appears in the middle of words or at the end of words, as presented by the words mentioned before, but they pronounced with less difficulty the words that begin with the sound, for example: thirty /ˈθɜː(r)ti/. It is necessary to emphasize that in the case of the [θ] sound all the participants made mistakes, however these 3 participants understood the mistake and corrected themselves or sometimes managed to say it without much thought. Also, the lack of pronunciation of [v] sound in words such as live /lɪv/ and TV /ˌtiː ˈviː/ was a factor to consider, again, making the same mistake in sounds like [j] or [z] which were constantly mispronounced in words such as "years" /ˈjɪrz/ and "is" /ˈɪz/. This result obtained by the experimental group, allowed researchers to notice the improvement in pronunciation and it can be attributed to the implementation of the drama activities since the students from the control group did not have considerable advancements in their performance, except for the 4 students that stood out. This aspect was supported by the survey carried out, since the students expressed that the drama activities were a great help to improve various aspects and have a better level of English.

Taking these results into account, the notable improvement in 3 of the students from the experimental group should be highlighted, who answered correctly and made minimal errors that did not affect the meaning of the message.Their pronunciation was clear enough to understand, showing progress in the final grade of the test and thus proving the theory used in this project and proposed by Pennington (2021) when mentions that a person can change the pronunciation of the words once he/she understands that it is different in the target language from the native language, showing as well that our phonetic systems remain adaptive over the life span and can reorganize to allow for L2 sounds by adding new phonetic categories or modifying old ones (par. 4). Furthermore, four of the students from the control group, managed to maintain the level shown in the pre-test by not having much complication to understand the message and an acceptable pronunciation in the

vowels, differentiating between sounds long and short. However, the majority of the participants (50%) showed little or no improvement, so it is not possible for them to enter the A1 category since they continued to fail to comply with the parameters proposed for the A1 level; which is why they cannot be classified within any band. It is important to highlight that the influence of Spanish as the mother tongue of the participants is notorious since they used to say the words as if they were reading a text in Spanish, especially the case of the vowel sounds in which they did not make any differentiation between short and long sounds using the short ones for the vast majority of cases. Trazo (2019) expresses that it is important to understand how the target language is spoken by stating that "New learners need to devote their study time on the simplest basic aspect of English, which is to learn and understand the use of phonemes. Sound recognition is vital when someone gives a speech or converse with people, so the phonetic alphabet can provide a guide to be followed by all learners of English." (p.184). Taking this into account, the results show that teachers must pay more attention to the pronunciation microskill and it should be understood as an essential part for effective communication in the English language.

-Fluency

Initially, students´ fluency from the experimental group was mostly acceptable when formulating longer sentences, they presented some hesitation but managed to continue and complete thoughts. On the contrary, it should be noted that the control group most of the time did not have a smooth and natural flow of responses. There was a need for more oral practice and more confidence for students to be able to take the question and answer it without seeking approval. Due to this situation, the professor had difficulty providing real scenarios and activities to learners that enhanced the interaction between students and the nature of questions, it became a constant challenge for them. The speaking skill was a huge challenge, as the student demonstrated coherence in understanding the question asked, but lacked the practical means to

answer it or did not know how to structure it correctly. (Afifah and Devana,2020)

As Nazara (2011) states, fluency is defined as: "the ability to converse with   others" (p. 29). According to this concept of fluency, researchers focused mostly on the students' ability to speak in English without using their mother tongue or other tools that helped them to answer the questions. In addition, in the post test from experimental group, fluency improved in terms of spontaneity since most of the students, 75% (six out of eight students), had an immediate response to the questions not overthinking the formulation of the sentence or words that they wanted to use to express their ideas, likes and dislikes. Compared to the previous test it is observable that there is an increase in the level of fluency of the students regarding the pre-test. In the pre-test, 33% of students showed a good level while in the post test 75% of students demonstrated a more fluent way to answer. Compared to the pre-test where eight out of twelve students did not have a good level of fluency when speaking, an improvement can be observed by seeing a decrease of six students who improved their level of fluency in the post-test compared to the pre-test.

On the contrary, the students from the control group did have the vocabulary to answer certain questions as they could understand it and had the tools to do it, but when put into oral practice. They could not develop the idea without the teacher's intervention in the whole test except for only two of the eleven students in total. Compared to the previous test, it is observable that there is a decrease in the number of students with a proper level in fluency since in the pre-test we had a total of four students that shared a good level of fluency while in the post test there were a total of two students who had a good development of fluency when answering the questions researchers asked. On the contrary, nine of the eleven participants managed very short, isolated utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication (Council of Europe, 2011, p. 31). Additionally, with these results, it is evident that the students had a regression in the level of fluency when comparing the results from the pre-test and the post test. This could have occurred due to the lack of practice in speaking skills and

the little variation in activities involved in speaking in English conversational classes such as the addition of drama activities and so on. Fluency could not be assessed in general because they hesitated and were unsure of the answer and based on the definition of fluency given by Koponen and Riggenbach in 2000 (as cited by Galante and Thomson, 2017) fluency has to be evaluated according to: "how smoothly a speaker delivers the message in terms of flow, continuity, and automaticity" (p. 117). Consequently, it could not be analyzed due to the fluency they maintained during the test, in some cases, they maintained naturalness and confidence in answering, but they were noun-based answers, instead of saying "I am 13 years old" or "I am 13" they only chose to say "13." There was no structure to denote fluency in a large majority of cases. In both cases, this group of students kept short answers that did not allow the "production of utterances", as mentioned by Gatbonton and Segalowitz in 2005, so that their message became much clearer and more fluent. (Galante and Thomson, 2017, p. 117)

-Grammar

In most answers, at least four (50%) of the participants from the experimental group did not answer the questions using a complete grammatical structure according to what was required in the question. For instance, in questions such as *"Do you have pets?"* their answers were "yes" or "no" forgetting the use of complete answers according to the structure such as "yes, I do" (yes/no, subject+Do/does auxiliary) in short responses. In cases where the interviewer asked "What is your favorite food?". The participants' responses were "pizza" or "spaghetti" instead of using the whole structure such as subject+verb+complement (My favorite food is pizza). According to Basheer and Azem (2011) "Minimal responses are predictable, often idiomatic phrases that conversation participants use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt, and other responses to what another speaker is saying." (p. 39) However, it should be noted that there was a notable improvement in the other (50%) of students, especially in the use of the verb to be, they no longer made the mistake of saying "I

have thirteen years old" as happened in the pre-test, and they used the variation "am" to refer to their age. In the aspects of grammar from the control group, the persistent error of many students corresponded to the subject-verb agreement or the selection of appropriate verbs to answer, a common error being "I **have** 13 years old." which, for the expected level, is an error that should be corrected promptly. Only two students had no major problems in this regard, four encountered the problems mentioned above, and the remaining five did not show much grammatical use because they did not know how to answer or generated answers without grammatical structure. There was not enough improvement when doing long answers on questions, seven students used the method of giving just the word and not the structure in almost all questions. That suggests a repetition of the aspect signaled on the pre-test about the repetition of vocabulary. "Some communication situations are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges "a script. Greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations, and other functions that were influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts." (Basher and Azeem, 2011, p.40) In fact, it was possible to analyze the importance of attitude when learning a second language and how this could help to improve grammar mistakes. "An attitude is composed of three main components: cognition, affect and readiness of action and is generally defined as a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution or event" (Sougari & Houvanishjan, 2016, p.744). When having errors, self-correction is: "considered to be the best form of correction" (Gumbaridze, 2012, p.1662) and concerning this, one of the students from the experimental group was the one who monitored himself and made the necessary corrections when he realized he had a grammatical error. Also, three other students from the same group exposed that they felt when they committed the mistake but it was too late to correct themselves. In more quantitative terms, it must be said that there was a great improvement in general terms. The students stopped making so many mistakes in the use of the verb to Be, with some exceptions, and focused on answering all the questions without skipping any due to lack of knowledge or not understanding the question. The lack of practice of a second language

creates an environment where grammar was done through rough translation and direct methods such as using "have" instead of "is" because of how they did that in Spanish. In fact, this mistake was the most common one in terms of grammar of these students. If they barely committed it, they were a downgrade in terms of intonation. (Basher and Azeem, 2011) It meant a lack of confidence when they said that. According to the standards of the CEFR, four of students from the control group (36%) were unclassifiable on any category, five (45%) had traits to be considered as an A1 but require more practice and 2 (19%) fit in the category of A1: "A1 Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learned repertoire" (p.28). It was still applicable for the level shown in the post test. These two students showed progress by answering in a more elaborate way and making minimal errors in the use of the verb to be and in aspects of the subject verb agreement, so they fit the description.

-CEFR

The use of the CEFR to evaluate students´ level of English helped researchers to identify where to start from according to their previous knowledge and answers in the pre-test. Consequently, with the post test and what the CEFR mentions, in the experimental, five out of eight students (62%) maintain a level equal to or similar to the one mentioned in the pre-test since they were able to "understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment)" (Ministerio de Educación Pública, 2016, p. 24) which placed them in A1 range since they share some characteristics of this band. It is necessary to mention that although the students showed difficulties they had an improvement in understanding the questions and sometimes mentioning extra aspects related to the topic such as varied vocabulary that they did not use on the Pre-test. There was an advance in at least three students (38%) who showed more confidence and a better level of English, at least during the post-test. In the case of the control group, it is

possible to determine that only four students (33%) were in the A2 range. Given the indicators analyzed, these four students demonstrated a level of response and comprehension appropriate for their level according to the CEFR. The experimental group answers were better grammatically and were faster to answer as mentioned above. In contrast, the remaining seven students (67%) of the control group had deficiencies in oral ability, their comprehension is limited, their ability to generate response was low as well as their structuring and delivery of responses, as they needed help from the teacher in small or large quantities to seek approval. These students did not even master the simple present tense to generate answers appropriate to their level. For instance, they were not placed in any level of the CEFR.

Table 4. *Comparative Results Post test Applied to Students from the Experimental Group (7-3 A) and the Control Group (7-1 B) according to CEFR.*

CEFR	Experimental Group (7-3 A)	Control group (7-1 B)
-Spanish Usage	*-72% of Spanish usage*	*-45% of Spanish usage*
-Grammar	*-Sharing certain indicators of A1 (50 %)* *-A1 Sharing certain indicators of A2 (50 %)*	*-A1 sharing* certain indicators of *A2 (19 %)* *-Sharing* certain indicators of *A1 (45%)* *-No classification (36%)*
-Pronunciation	-Excellent: 37% -Regular:25% -Needs improvement: 38%	-Excellent:33% -Regular:17% -Needs improvement: 50%

Source: Own elaboration (2022-2023)

4.4.2. Qualitative Results of the Experimental Group After the Application of Drama Activities

At the beginning of the investigation, it was proposed to analyze the effectiveness in the improvement that a student could have in the speaking skill through the drama activities. However, as time passed, the researchers together with the collaborating teacher identified the improvement in areas more qualitative and personal thanks to the implementation of these dramatic activities. In each observation it was noticed that the students participated more in the lesson, they were expectant to see what new activity the teacher was going to propose to them and they were not that nervous about going to the front of the class to present their work. This can be attributed to the implementation of the drama activities, since the control group did not have the same behavior at the end of the investigation. For these reasons, it was considered pertinent to analyze this phenomenon. The following section includes some qualitative results obtained from the survey and the application of the drama activities that were found and not included in the initial objectives, but that were considered of great importance for the investigation since they provided relevant data to take into account for researchers, so the findings and their respective analysis are presented below.

-Creativity

Creativity was presented in each drama activity that was applied to the experimental group. With each task, the students had to think about the best way to do it. This situation promoted creative behavior that made the student feel more attracted to the activity they were doing. In the surveys carried out, one of the answers was that the drama activities helped them improve their English level because it made the person think of different ways of presenting what they wanted to express in each game or activity and at the same time putting the student in situations more related to life outside the classroom as Neelands (as cited in Cremin, 2014) conceptualizes drama when explains that: "improvisation is itself a creative activity because it requires teachers and learners to imagine themselves and the world differently, making spontaneous decisions and

responding to the unexpected" (parr. 1) thus demonstrating that in drama activities the participant must put himself/ herself in different situations and if these are applied in the teaching of English the person can learn vocabulary more related to their lives or situations that they may experience. Creativity is essential for the learning process, and it is even more when drama activities are applied. Ozdemir and Kakmak (2008) state that creativity in drama is essential for people to learn the way to function in their work environment, in fact, they explain that: "drama activities provide lots of opportunities for revealing, supporting and developing creativity. Drama is to perform a word, concept, behavior, sentence, idea, experience or event by utilizing theater techniques and developing a game or games" (p.14). This is related to the fourth observation in which the teacher performed an activity called "Acting and Presenting" because the students had to be creative at the time that they wrote the short story. Following this idea, Cremin (2014) mentions that: "The key features of creative literacy practice are evident in improvisational drama: it fosters play, collaborative engagement and reflection" (parr. 1). In this way, creativity is intensely developed when drama activities are used since drama leads to improvisation and play, students feel more motivated. The implemented activities helped the students to use their imagination and be more creative in their presentations, thus promoting a more lasting and closer learning to their realities.

-Confidence

Confidence turned out to be one of the strengths to be analyzed among the activities. Students mentioned that these activities helped them feel more confident about expressing their ideas in English. The ability to express themselves and make their comments understood with basic structures while learning through simple games served as a gateway for students to understand their capabilities. The confidence that the students had at the time of their answers played an important role. When the pretest was applied, most expressed feeling uncomfortable when

answering questions to an unknown person and little confidence to turn on the camera and have a closer contact with the interviewer. In fact, it is necessary to point out the lack of confidence that they showed during the first part of the pre-test. Students didn't want to be evaluated because they felt that they would fail or be judged by someone else (thought expressed through the survey carried out).

Among the students, the case example of two girls who showed optimal levels of basic knowledge in the micro and macro areas of English stands out; however, they did not feel self-confident and were closed in the idea that they did not have a good level, in fact, they felt insufficient to answer simple questions for the level of speech they had (according to their responses on the survey). They were afraid of being judged by others because they felt that their level was not sufficient for the evaluation to be carried out. Through the activities applied, the students commented that they felt more and more comfortable to participate as they felt confident in what they said and how they said it. "It is not possible to expect students to learn a foreign language effectively in learning settings where only the teacher speaks and students listen during the whole class. If students actively take part in the learning process, hands-on learning can be achieved." (Faruk, 2021, p. 89); during this investigation, it was possible to perceive a greater acceptance of the activities and, more importantly, more participation in each class, this happened because, according to the students themselves, the drama activities helped them to have a better performance in front of others, which facilitated their participation in class. The lack of confidence arises when a student wants to participate but they genuinely feel that everything that they say is wrong. "The focus was on the negotiation of meaning between learners and their relation to second language acquisition. In other words, the more learners participate orally and the more they are engaged in the negotiation of meaning, the better they will acquire the language." (Namini and Simanjalam, 2008, p.16) Taking this thought into account, the environment plays an important role in enabling students who have confidence problems to participate. One detail to analyze is the number of group members. This is explained by

Abdullah, Bakar and Mahbob (2012) where they explain that a closed classroom, equipped with air conditioning and closed windows, makes it easier for students to feel confident. Indeed, one of the boys commented that he felt comfortable when two students were not in the classroom as, the way they looked at him, it would break his concentration, on the other hand, another boy in the section explained that the classroom was perfect to carry out these activities, as, in the open air, he would be embarrassed to participate. The classroom plays a vital role when theater activities are desired because the children do not want to be judged, and respecting the group to which they belong (7-3rd) there is no major problem as long as there is an environment where respect remains.

-Motivation

Within the aspects that could be cataloged as a significant advance, it is important to highlight the motivation the students showed during the investigative process. In the surveys carried out, the participants expressed that the implemented activities made it easier for them to understand the topics and made the classes more interesting, which was why they liked attending them more. Some responses mentioned that they were no longer lazy to study English because the teacher implemented new ways of explaining and that, unlike other types of activities, drama activities were activities in which they felt happy to participate. According to Daif-Allah and Aljumah (2020) motivation can be defined as a goal for the learners and an ongoing determination to continue learning, they also explain that it can drive a person to do their best in the learning purposes (p. 66); this perception expresses that a person can improve more easily when they are motivated to do what they do. In other words, and relating it more to the subject of learning, when students were motivated to attend English classes and wanted to participate, they had more possibilities to learn satisfactorily as stated by Filgona et al. (2020) state that: "Student motivation is an essential element that is necessary for quality education" (p. 17). The person felt in a suitable environment that allows them to be more relaxed and confident in the process. During this process, it could be

said that the students of the experimental group were intrinsically motivated by the fact of participating in activities that were different for them, as proposed previously by Ali (2022, p. 439). Drama activities gave a new meaning to learning and to the student's perception of the classes and how they should be taught, this could even be observed by the attendance to the Conversational English classes when the control group had more absences during the process. Although this situation could have occurred due to other factors, the participants of the experimental group stated that they did not want to miss classes, so they did attend them. Undoubtedly, motivation played a very important role in the learning process of the person and it encouraged them to participate more in class thus promoting a favorable environment. As Patil (2009) cited in Bonkita (2010) states that "building up the learner's confidence to eliminate fear of making errors was a priority that the teacher should consider in order to make the learner feel comfortable with their language use" (p. 1306). This research showed that drama activities can give students the necessary motivation to learn and have fun at the same time.

4.4.3. Effectiveness of the drama activities.

The students in the experimental group, regarding the post test, showed a notable improvement in aspects such as confidence when speaking in public and the fluency with which they did so. On the contrary, the control group did not present important advancements in the aspects mentioned, in fact, there were no notable improvements in the responses of the post test applied to them, and the level of confidence remained the same as the one shown in the pre-test. The experimental group was more confident in their answers and their ability to express themselves in the

target language, the students seemed eager to participate in the drama activities. This helped the students to pay more attention to what the teacher had to say and even led the students to forget about the departure time as they were certainly attracted by the participation of themselves and their classmates.

Regardless, as it was mentioned in the analysis of the control group, practically half of them were unable to complete the exam and those who did, mostly required help from the teacher, using Spanish as their primary source of communication. On the contrary, it is noteworthy that it was easier for the experimental group to remember the vocabulary used when it was practiced in a dynamic and innovative way, so they could understand new words and use them in the appropriate context. In the observations made in the investigation, it was possible to notice a greater interest on the part of the students to attend and participate in the conversational English classes, which meant that the teacher did not spend more time trying to get the students to participate.

For this reason, this research considered that drama activities helped the development of other skills that were of the utmost importance in the educational process, such as confidence and motivation in the teaching and learning process. The fact that the students were relaxed caused a better result. On the other hand, if the drama activities were effective to improve the speaking skill, yes, they were. A big difference between the pre- and post-test was noticed, the micro skills such as grammar, pronunciation and fluency were the most benefited and had a great improvement in the experimental group.

5. Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

5.1. Conclusions

This study was designed to assess the effectiveness of using drama activities to improve the speaking skill level of the students. After a

period of 27 weeks during which the target tasks were applied in a group of seventh graders at a public high school in Cobano, several conclusions were drawn.

Some students from the experimental group as well as students from the control group improved their speaking skill level by the end of the study; however, the use of drama activities showed to be much more effective. Besides, the use of these tasks was appealing for the majority of the students. As evidenced through the class observations and the participant's responses in the surveys, since students themselves expressed their satisfaction when performing the activities; they felt motivated and more confident to participate and speak in the target language in class. Some relevant points to highlight are the use of the zoom platform, the fact of having small groups, the lack of classes and the unexpected institution closures. All of these points were found in the development of the investigation, and it is mandatory to explain the way in which they had an influence. The following section is responsible for explaining the findings, limitations and opportunities for improvement that were concluded at the end of the investigation.

Research in education

Carrying out research focused on education is extremely rewarding and enriching. This process allows researchers to understand different ways in which teachers can act in different situations that occur in the classroom and that cannot be taught at the university. Through this research, it was possible to understand the limitations of the current educational system, especially in the Colegio Técnico Profesional de Cóbano. The schedule proposed by MEP does not allow for continuous education, on the contrary, suspensions of the educational process are normal and prevent the student from having satisfactory learning. During the investigation, there were moments in which the process had to be suspended due to: suspension of classes, civic acts, institutional processes or attendance at union activities, all these situations occurred two to three times a month, so the students only received an average of 2 lessons in the subject of Conversational English during that same period of

time. What was said before made the investigative process suffer delays and had to be reconsidered the best way to meet the objectives. MEP could adjust a calendar that contemplates a continuous education for the benefit of the student's learning process. However, it should be noted that research in the field of education is extremely important to understand the current state of it and serves to suggest improvements to it and propose an innovative way of teaching.

Research Related Conclusions

Given the number of functions of a teacher, conducting educational research is complex. With this research, the teacher in charge of the group lost class time, the reason for this was the MEP's agenda, extracurricular activities and holidays. In addition, the fact that the teacher was the guide of two groups, meant that sometimes it was not possible to make observations because of orientation cases, protocols of action, among others. The level of the students was a little low, in order to perform a roleplay, it was necessary for the students to have a solid base and, given the level of the students and the context of the area, this became a limited use in the target language applied by the students. The purpose of the research was to demonstrate that drama activities are useful to learn and improve the speaking skill; however, the fact was that drama activities in groups with limited command of the language proved to be tools to break the ice between students, to get out of the regular classroom context, to make them participants of their own knowledge, as well as a motivation for the activities among others. The level of student participation increased as the classes progressed, which made it possible for the group to perform better when an activity was carried out.

Positive Experiences of the Drama Activities Application

During the time that the investigation lasted, a great advance could be noted in aspects that the objectives did not contemplate. The application of drama activities allowed students to enjoy the subject and understand the topics in a more experiential way and attached to their realities. The students stated that they were happy for the implementation

of activities that were innovative for them and that made the Conversational English class different from the others. In each observation it was possible to notice the growing participation and the constant interest of the students to do things well. The drama activities offered the student the opportunity to relate the subject to their daily experiences and allowed them to recognize that what is seen in class can have relevance in the exterior. It is important to mention that at some point there was some resistance to participate, and the students expressed being nervous to speak in front of an audience, but the fun experiences and the accompaniment of both the teacher and their classmates made those who were not so convinced to participate change their minds and improve in aspects such as confidence.

Objectives Accomplishment

The population of Cóbano had a complex educational context towards the importance of study. This implied that study is not important, in fact, education in the area and the level of English had a fairly high lack of importance for being a tourist area. This made English not a priority for the students, despite the importance of English in the Cóbano area. The effectiveness of drama activities to improve English in the short term did not facilitate an immediate improvement; however, it is necessary to propose these activities in the medium and long term within a study plan aimed at satisfying the students' need to communicate. Given the situations of missed classes and the overcrowding respecting the number of proposed observations, it became necessary to explain that the design of drama activities within a proposed objective was not met due to the lack of time for implementation of activities and response. The fulfillment of the proposed objectives explains the achieved dimensions of the work within the form of work carried out that allows understanding how the students perceive these tools as skills to improve self-confidence and do not focus on improving the ability to speak English as such.

Participant Groups

Having two groups during the research process was very enriching and helped a lot in the process of comparing the results. The methodology used in this research allowed visualizing the process of each group being taught the same contents but in a different way, which made the process of analysis of results easier by having a point of comparison. However, due to the constant suspension of lessons, on several occasions it was difficult to follow the same rhythm of analysis because this allowed one group to get ahead of the other, and they did not have the opportunity to study the same subject at the same time. In addition to this, there were no other complications that stopped the expected result. The fact of having two groups as subjects of analysis was of great help to meet the objectives proposed at the beginning of the investigation.

5.2. Limitations

Limitations and delimitations.

This investigation faced several obstacles that limited the investigative process and the analysis of information. First, it is important to emphasize that this study was limited to setting the Cóbano area as a key point for the investigation; temporarily, this took place in the year 2022, comprising the second semester as a probable time to conclude the results. As for the thematic part, it focused on the implementation of drama activities to improve the speaking skill, specifically for two groups of seventh graders of the Colegio Técnico Profesional de Cóbano.
In addition, it is necessary to take into account the context that students have experienced in the last two years due to the pandemic where virtual classes were necessary to continue with the educational process, but many could not access for various reasons such as lack of internet or equipment in order to attend these lessons.

The situations that represented obstacles for the investigation are listed below:

1. Due to time limitations and administrative restrictions, such as opening processes with students who presented a behavior problem within

the institution such as fights, among others; the study could not be completed in the time proposed by the researchers. The time was limited for researchers when applying instruments.

2. The samples obtained from the students specifically in the surveys were a cause of delay for the investigation. This is because some students did not show willingness to answer quickly, or promptly, the survey sent by the researchers, or they were absent in many of the classes. These situations affected the final stage of results because not all the information was available to perform the necessary triangulation for data analysis.

3. The low beginning language level from some participants made it difficult for them to follow the drama activities proposed. This situation meant that the activities that were planned to be used were rethought and adapted to the level of the participants in order to obtain better results and not force the students to feel uncomfortable or insecure when carrying out the activities, since one of the goals of this project was to use these tasks as a source of motivation.

4. Closures of the institution for respiratory virus (Ministry of Health recommendation in official paper DM-0064-10-2022), suspension of lessons, extracurricular events such as soccer games, civic acts, food sales, holiday festivities, some teachers´ responsibilities such as meetings, training, and other festivals were common in the institution during the time that the investigation lasted. These situations caused the Conversational English classes to be suspended several times, which prevented the necessary information for the proposed analysis from being obtained. Due to this problem, it was decided to change the participating groups in the middle of the investigative process, which caused it to have to start again. This made it difficult to obtain results in the time needed to complete the work, since these interventions in the institution were not taken into consideration at the time of planning the instruments. These changes were done in order to apply the instruments in the institution and to have results

for the investigation in the requested time. All the dates of the chronogram were moved in order to accomplish the purpose.

5.3. Recommendations

1- During this investigation it was possible to understand aspects that would have improved or made the process easier. Within these aspects, it is necessary to consider whether it is feasible to carry out a study like this in a public academic or technical high school, because in this type of institution suspensions, civic acts or disciplinary processes are normal, so the investigative process usually are compromised and delayed by the same situations. In order to carry out a more stable process, the use of private institutions or other public modalities such as scientific high schools could be considered, where the situations mentioned above are not a very common factor. In addition, the use of higher levels could be recommended in specific levels of diversified education, since students at these levels tend to be more mature and could facilitate the application of activities and instruments.

2- One of the recommendations regarding the research experience consists in the application of drama activities in a group where the age is low. This implies that they are still in a transitory process where their capacity to assume certain tasks with a degree of academic maturity as analyzed during the research is evaluated. Therefore, exposing groups of diversified education (10,11,12) or adults of CINDEA allows them to understand the theater activities as a game with an educational purpose. This leads to the opportunity of studying whether it is possible for there to be greater order and discipline at the time of fulfilling the proposed objective. This academic maturity makes it possible to take the activities with greater objectivity.

3- Another recommendation to take into consideration to others who want to research using drama activities is the fact of time. Better results can be obtained if the activities are applied long-term. The reason is that the students need to have the time and space to learn the different

vocabulary that drama activities are going to provide them. In the same way, the researchers need the time to apply the necessary instruments to have the essential results. If the research is done with a great amount of time, any situation that happens and interrupts the process can be rescheduled because the time gives the opportunity to do so. In the same way, the research can be done in a qualitative way if it is short-term research, especially if there are multiple obstacles in continuously applying the evaluation instruments. In the case of this study, information gathering occurred in a short and medium term, which presented a greater wealth of qualitative data. This qualitative data was a detail that researchers were not taking into consideration at the beginning of the investigation. On the other hand, if the research is carried out in the long term, the quantitative data will be greater, as well as the qualitative data. Likewise, it is recommended to take both methods into account for a better analysis of results.

4- Due to the minimal or no intervention of the researchers in the classes, the students felt comfortable respecting the activities carried out as expressed by the participants themselves. The Zoom platform worked as a recommended tool to prevent the presence of a person or persons outside the classroom from serving as a distraction for the students. The tool also made it possible to record the classes and, with the permission of the students and parents, it was possible to study factors that cannot be determined at the moment, which implies a better collection of data regarding the learner's pronunciation and the way they cope with the theater activities carried out. The null presence of a person in the classroom and the fact that it was a computer, which the pupils knew to be the same as in the pre-test and post-test, established a certain relationship of ignoring its existence and concentrating on the activity to be performed. In this sense, what was proposed by the authors Khotimah (2022) and Archibald et al. (2019) agrees with the findings of this research. The Zoom platform or any other platform of the same type can be of great help to satisfactorily advance the investigative process and allows researchers to have the information they need at hand for their respective analysis, as

well as being a backup that can support and verify that the findings are true.

To the authorities

In the light of the results depicted in this study, the application of drama activities can be implemented in English classes; not only to improve the speaking skill and other macro and micro skills, but also to encourage students to understand there are other ways to learn. The MEP authorities should truly advocate for implementing this kind of activity, since they help to promote values through acting and encourage students to express themselves in front of other people. As Nguyen (2021) explains: "the aim of using drama in the classroom is not the creation of refined performance but the development of emotional, embodied and cognitive knowledge built on experience"(p. 304). Therefore, the implementation of drama activities can help students when it comes to expressing themselves and being who they want to be through the creation of characters or stories that reflect their day-to-day experiences. Consequently, the MEP authorities must be aware of the need for students to express what they feel, which is why this research understands that drama activities should be implemented as a means of creating safe spaces within the institutions. In the same way, more workshops should be facilitated to converse about educational innovation and the implementation of attractive activities that captivate the attention of the student and encourage them to stay in the classroom. However, the foregoing must be accompanied by a reform of the duties of the teacher because these directly affect the performance of education. The educator has to focus more on processes or other types of administrative actions than on the act of educating itself, as was reflected in this research.

To CTP of Cobano

According to the results obtained in this study, the application of drama activities in English classes can be implemented as part of the curriculum when the teacher needs to improve students' speaking skill.

The main focus of English conversational classes is, as its name evokes, to promote the oral competence in learners. Additionally, the institution should encourage the inclusion of techniques such as drama activities in their educational environment, since their benefits in the learning process are extremely helpful. The institution should include drama in the study program in order to motivate students' participation and confidence when communicating in a foreign language.

Teachers should be trained to implement those activities as part of their daily class routine. Similarly, one of the recommendations given to the institution is that drama workshops could be included within the activities that focus on the personal and professional development of students. Also, to avoid many of the interruptions in the learning process of the students, since this affects it and the fact that the process cannot be continuous makes it more difficult for the teacher to teach and for the students to learn.

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6. Annexes

6.1. Carta de consentimiento informado.

	Escuela de Formación Docente Escuela de Lenguas Modernas	Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

Lunes 01 de Noviembre de 2021

Consentimiento Informado

Reciban un cordial saludo de nuestra parte. Nosotros/as Heiner Torres Castro, Shakira Torres Sirias, Berny Montero Alfaro, Karol Muñoz Solano estudiantes de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés en la Sede del Pacífico Arnoldo Ferreto Segura de la Universidad de Costa Rica, estamos realizando nuestro proyecto de graduación titulado: "El uso de actividades teatrales para el desarrollo de la expresión oral en estudiantes de grupos de inglés conversacional del Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.". La importancia del estudio reside en la necesidad de mejorar el proceso de enseñanza del inglés y comprobar la efectividad del uso de actividades teatrales para el mejoramiento de la expresión oral de los estudiantes en las clases de inglés conversacional. Por este medio deseamos solicitarle su participación en el proyecto.

El objetivo de la investigación:

Evaluar la mejora de la habilidad oral de los estudiantes mediante el uso de actividades teatrales en las clases de inglés conversacional en el Colegio Técnico Profesional de Cóbano.

Método:

Realizar un diagnóstico inicial basado en una prueba previa oral, aplicación de actividades teatrales como complemento del planeamiento y una prueba posterior a los estudiantes en el Colegio técnico profesional de Cóbano (CTP) para corroborar la efectividad de la aplicación de las actividades teatrales en su desarrollo del habla en el idioma inglés. Esta investigación siendo un cuasi experimento requiere de dos grupos una donde se aplicarán las actividades realizadas por los investigadores y otro grupo que será el punto de comparación y al que no se le aplicaran las actividades únicamente las pruebas. De igual manera, se aplicarán dos pruebas orales a los estudiantes de ambos grupos, una al inicio y una al final de la investigación, y varias actividades teatrales complementarias al planeamiento serán aplicadas a los estudiantes del uno de los grupos del curso de inglés conversacional del colegio anteriormente mencionado.

Riesgos y beneficios:

El estudio no conlleva ningún riesgo. Los beneficios consisten en que el/la participante experimentará una nueva metodología la cual busca beneficiar su desarrollo oral del idioma y principalmente que disfrute el proceso de aprendizaje de un idioma con actividades teatrales con el fin de mejorar la habilidad oral durante las clases de inglés.

Confidencialidad:

El proceso será estrictamente confidencial. El nombre de el/la participante no será utilizado en ningún informe cuando los resultados de la investigación sean publicados.

Participación voluntaria:

La participación es estrictamente voluntaria.

Autorización:

He leído toda la información descrita en esta fórmula antes de firmar. Se me ha brindado la oportunidad de hacer preguntas y estas han sido contestadas en forma adecuada. Por lo tanto, acepto que los estudiantes suscritos apliquen el presente estudio en la institución educativa que dirijo.

Nombre del director de la institución educativa:

Institución:

Firma:

¡Le agradecemos el apoyo que pueda brindarnos!

Atentamente,

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6.2 Pre test rubric

Universidad de Costa Rica.

Sede del Pacifico.

Research proposal to obtain the Licenciatura Degree in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language.

The Use of Drama Activities to Develop Speaking Skills in Students from Conversational English Groups of Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

Integrantes: Heiner Torres Castro B67137, Shakira Torres Sirias B67161, Berny Montero Alfaro B64549, Karol Muñoz Solano B64907

1. **Objectives**

General Objective.
 – To evaluate the effectiveness of the use of drama activities when applied during Conversational English Classes from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

Specific Objectives
 – To diagnose the students' speaking skill level from the experimental and control group by the implementation of a pre-test in Conversational English classes from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.
 – To adapt drama activities for the experimental conversational English group from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano in order to perform an analysis of its effectiveness to foster speaking skill.

- To contrast the obtained results from the experimental and control group after the implementation of the post-test in Conversational English classes from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

● **Instruments:**

Rubric Pre Test

English Department

Objective:

-To diagnose the students' speaking skill level from the experimental and control group by the implementation of a pre-test in Conversational English classes from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

People in charge: _____ **Institution:** _____

Student's name: _____. **Level:** __ **Date:** _____

Total Students:_____

Pre Test Questions:

-Personal Information

1. What is your name?
2. Where do you live?
3. Do you have pets?
4. How old are you?
5. What is your favorite food?
6. What is your favorite color?
7. What is your favorite animal?
8. What is your teacher's name?

9. When is your birthday?

10. What is your favorite TV show?

Student's name: _____

INDICATORS	1. *Does Not Approach Expectations*	2. *Approaching Expectations*	3. Meets Expectations	4. *Exceeds Expectations*
FLUENCY	Speech halting and uneven with long pauses or incomplete thoughts.	Speech choppy and/or slow with frequent pauses, most thoughts are complete.	Some hesitation but manages to continue and complete thoughts.	Thoughts expressed completely with few pauses or hesitation.
PRONUNCIATION	Multiple problems with pronunciation of words that may interfere with communication.	Some problems with pronunciation of words that may interfere with communication.	Sounds somewhat natural. The pronunciation of words is pretty similar to the correct articulation.	Sounds natural. The speaker's pronunciation had no mistakes at all.

INTONATION	There is no variation in the tone of the voice. Falling and rising intonation is not put into practice in the speech.	Some difficulties with using the right intonation. This interferes with distinguishing one type of phrase or sentence from another.	Intonation is applied in most of the phrases used. As well as falling and rising intonation. The speech sounds more natural.	Variation in the tone of the voice according to what is being pronounced. Falling and rising intonation used correctly.
GRAMMAR	Grammar is rarely accurate or appropriate for the level.	Grammar is sometimes accurate and/or not appropriate for the level.	Grammar is mostly accurate and appropriate for the level.	Grammar is consistently accurate and appropriate for the level.
STRESS	Stress is rarely accurate or appropriate for the level	Stress is sometimes accurate and/or not appropriate for the level	Stress is mostly accurate and appropriate for the level	Clear use of stress according to the sound or syllable. Words can be distinguished.

Additional comments:_____

Source: Own elaboration.

Annotations: The questions for the test that will be used to evaluate the students are not included because there is no information on the topics that students will be studying at the time of applying the instruments.

6.3 Rubric Post Test

English Department

Objective:

-To contrast the obtained results from the experimental and control group after the implementation of the post-test in Conversational English classes from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

People in charge: _____ **Institution:** _____

Student's name: _____.   **Level:** __   **Date:** _____

Total Students:____

Pre Test Questions:

-Personal Information

11. What is your name?
12. Where do you live?
13. Do you have pets?
14. How old are you?
15. What is your favorite food?
16. What is your favorite color?
17. What is your favorite animal?
18. What is your teacher's name?
19. When is your birthday?
20. What is your favorite TV show?

Student's name: _____

INDICATORS	1. Does Not Approach Expectations	2. Approaching Expectations	3. Meets Expectations	4. Exceeds Expectations
FLUENCY	Speech halting and uneven with long pauses or incomplete thoughts.	Speech choppy and/or slow with frequent pauses, most thoughts are complete.	Some hesitation but manages to continue and complete thoughts.	Thoughts expressed completely with few pauses or hesitation.
PRONUNCIATION	Multiple problems with pronunciation of words that may interfere with communication.	Some problems with pronunciation of words that may interfere with communication.	Sounds somewhat natural. The pronunciation of words is pretty similar to the correct articulation.	Sounds natural. The speaker's pronunciation had no mistakes at all.
INTONATION	There is no variation in the tone of the voice.	Some difficulties with using the right intonation. This interferes	Intonation is applied in most of the phrases used. As well as falling and rising intonation. The speech sounds	Variation in the tone of the voice according to what is being pronounced. Falling and rising intonation used

	Falling and rising intonation is not put into practice in the speech.	with distinguishing one type of phrase or sentence from another.	more natural.	correctly.
GRAMMAR	Grammar is rarely accurate or appropriate for the level.	Grammar is sometimes accurate and/or not appropriate for the level.	Grammar is mostly accurate and appropriate for the level.	Grammar is consistently accurate and appropriate for the level.
STRESS	Stress is rarely accurate or appropriate for the level	Stress is sometimes accurate and/or not appropriate for the level	Stress is mostly accurate and appropriate for the level	Clear use of stress according to the sound or syllable. Words can be distinguished.

Additional comments:_____

Source: Own elaboration.

Annotations: The questions for the test that will be used to evaluate the students are not included because there is no information on the topics that students will be studying at the time of applying the instruments.

6.4 Observations Rubric

Observation guide to evaluate the use of drama activities to develop speaking skills in students from conversational English groups of Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano.

People in charge: _____ **Institution:** _____

Level observed: _____ **Date:** _____ **Observation #**
_____

Total Students: ___

- How was the students' reaction towards the drama activities developed in class?

Bad: Poor participation. Students were reluctant to speak or to be part of the activity (stand up, movements, paying attention). None of them like the activity	**Good:** Most of the students were paying attention, participating in the activities and speaking when necessary throughout the whole class. There were some students who didn't want to participate at all.	**Excellent:** All students enjoy each of the drama activities developed in the class. All of them participate actively when the teacher requires their participation. The task was completed successfully.

- Describe the students' reaction towards the drama activities developed in class.

_____

_____

_____

Aspects to be observed.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	Comments
1- The drama activities encourage students to work individually during the class by creating a positive environment where they feel motivated, respected, receive positive feedback and builded confidence so that the student feels more comfortable using their speaking skills and participating in the class. Explanation of the descriptor: students are allowed to develop their own creations and express themselves as individuals.						
2- The students are able to work in pairs or as a group during the class. Explanation of the descriptor: students are required to work as a team without any problems.						

3- The students participate by speaking and performing the drama activities proposed by the teacher.						154
4-The activities developed by the teacher promote the use of the speaking skill.						
5- The students practice pronunciation and grammar structures while speaking.						
6-Students pay attention to the facilitator and follow instructions carefully.						
7-The teacher tries to be a guide within the learning process.						

| 8- The students acquire their own language knowledge through drama activities that let students practice and make use of the speaking skill while they perform the activities in the class.

Explanation of the descriptor: students participate actively in the activity proposed by the teacher. They stand up, use English to answer and ask questions, make use of the language (English) and pronounce some words in English.						155

Source: Own elaboration.

6.5 Students´ First Survey

Objective:

> To know the perceptions about the drama activities carried out in the conversational English class.

Institution: _____

Student's name: _____   **Level:** _____

Date: _____

Instrucciones:

- La siguiente encuesta tiene como fin evaluar el efecto de las actividades de drama en la habilidad del habla en el idioma Inglés. Esta encuesta tomará aproximadamente 10 minutos y es completamente anónima. Gracias por su participación.
- Para efectos de esta encuesta es importante que el estudiante tenga conocimiento del concepto de actividad de drama. De acuerdo con Hidalgo (n.d), una actividad dramática o actividad de

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drama son: "todas aquellas actividades y tareas que provienen de la disciplina del teatro sirviendo para desarrollar y mejorar la competencia comunicativa de los alumnos en la lengua meta" (p. 451-452).

● Responda las preguntas que se le presentan a continuación sobre las actividades que se desarrollan en las clases de inglés conversacional de manera clara y concisa escogiendo la opción que considera es la que mejor le representa.

Instructions:

● The following survey is intended to evaluate the effect of drama activities on the ability to speak in the English language. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes and is completely anonymous. Thanks for your participation.

● For the purposes of this survey it is important that the student has knowledge of the concept of drama activity. According to Hidalgo (n.d), a dramatic activity or drama activity are: "all those activities and tasks that come from the discipline of theater serving to develop and improve the communicative competence of students in the target language" (p. 451 -452).

● Answer the questions that are presented below about the activities that are carried out in the conversational English classes in a clear and concise manner, choosing the option that you consider is the one that best represents you.

21. ¿Qué tipo de actividades me ayudan a comprender mejor los temas desarrollados en clase de inglés conversacional?   (*What kind of activities help me to better understand the topics developed in conversational English class?*)

- Actividades que me permitan moverme y participar activamente en clase.
- Actividades que sean creativas y divertidas, pero que no necesiten movimiento.
- Ningún tipo de actividad.

22. ¿Considera que las actividades realizadas en clase por el profesor le ayudan a comprender mejor el tema que se encuentra estudiando? (*Do you think that the activities carried out in class by the teacher help you to better understand the topic you are studying?*)

- Si
- No

23. ¿Las actividades desarrolladas por el profesor hacen la clase de inglés más interesante? (*Do the activities developed by the teacher make the English class more interesting?*)

- Si
- No

¿Por que?

_____
_____
_____

24. ¿Qué tan fácil o difícil le resulta participar en las actividades de las clases de inglés conversacional? (*How easy or difficult is it for you to participate in the activities of the conversational English classes?*)

- Difícil

- Regular
- Facil

¿Por que?

_____

_____

_____

25. ¿Qué tan claras son las instrucciones del profesor para realizar las actividades en las clases de Inglés? (*How clear are the teacher's instructions to carry out the activities in English classes?*)

- Poco claras
- Claras
- Muy claras

26. ¿Considera que las actividades de drama le ayudarían a mejorar su fluidez al practicar el idioma Inglés? (*Do you think that drama activities would help you improve your fluency when practicing the English language?*)

- Si
- No

¿Por que?

_____

_____

_____

27. ¿Le gustaría participar regularmente en actividades de drama en las clases de Inglés? (*Would you like to regularly participate in drama activities in English classes?*)

- Si
- No

28. ¿Cómo se ha sentido durante el desarrollo de las actividades en las clases de inglés conversacional? (*How did you feel during the development of the activities in the conversational English classes?*)

_____

_____

_____

29. ¿Qué mejoraría de las actividades en clases de inglés conversacional? (*What would you improve about the activities in conversational English classes?*)

_____

_____

_____

Source: Own elaboration.

*Annotation: The questions are in Spanish in order to get more accurate information about the students' perception towards the drama activities.

6.6 Students´ Second Survey

Objective:

To know the perceptions about the drama activities carried out in the conversational English class.

Institution: _____

Student's name: _____   **Level:** _____

Date: _____

Instrucciones:

- La siguiente encuesta tiene como fin evaluar el efecto de las actividades de drama en la habilidad del habla en el idioma Inglés. Esta encuesta tomará aproximadamente 10 minutos y es completamente anónima. Gracias por su participación.
- Para efectos de esta encuesta es importante que el estudiante tenga conocimiento del concepto de actividad de drama. De acuerdo con Hidalgo (n.d), una actividad dramática o actividad de drama son: "todas aquellas actividades y tareas que provienen de la disciplina del teatro sirviendo para desarrollar y mejorar la competencia comunicativa de los alumnos en la lengua meta" (p. 451-452).
- Responda las preguntas que se le presentan a continuación sobre las actividades que se desarrollan en las clases de inglés conversacional de manera clara y concisa escogiendo la opción que considera es la que mejor le representa.

Instructions:

- The following survey is intended to evaluate the effect of drama activities on the ability to speak in the English language. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes and is completely anonymous. Thanks for your participation.
- For the purposes of this survey it is important that the student has knowledge of the concept of drama activity. According to Hidalgo (n.d), a dramatic activity or drama activity are: "all those activities and tasks that come from the discipline of theater serving to develop and improve the communicative competence of students in the target language" (p. 451 -452).
- Answer the questions that are presented below about the activities that are carried out in the conversational English classes in a clear and concise manner, choosing the option that you consider is the one that best represents you.

1. ¿Qué tipo de actividades me ayudan a comprender mejor los temas desarrollados en clase de inglés conversacional?   (*What kind of activities help me to better understand the topics developed in conversational English class?*)

   - Actividades que me permitan moverme y participar activamente en clase.
   - Actividades que sean creativas y divertidas, pero que no necesiten movimiento.
   - Ningún tipo de actividad.

2. ¿Considera que las actividades realizadas en clase por el profesor le ayudan a comprender mejor el tema que se encuentra estudiando?   (*Do you think that the activities carried out in class by the teacher help you to better understand the topic you are studying?*)

   - Si
   - No

3. ¿La actividad de drama desarrollada por el profesor hizo la clase de inglés más interesante? (*Did the drama activity developed by the teacher make the English class more interesting?*)

   - Si
   - No

   ¿Por que?

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. ¿Qué tan fácil o difícil fue para usted participar en la actividad de drama? (*How easy or difficult was it for you to participate in the drama activity?*)

- Dificil
- Regular
- Facil

5. ¿Qué tan claras son las instrucciones del profesor para realizar actividades de drama en las clases de inglés? (*How clear are the teacher 's instructions to carry out drama activities in English classes?*)

- Poco claras
- Claras
- Muy claras

6. ¿Considera que las actividades de drama le ayudan a mejorar su fluidez al practicar el idioma Inglés? (*Do you think that drama activities help you improve your fluency when practicing the English language?*)

- Si
- No

¿Por que?

_____

_____

_____

7. ¿Le gustaría participar regularmente en actividades de drama en las clases de inglés? (*Would you like to regularly participate in drama activities in English classes?*)

- Si

- No

8. ¿Cómo se sintió durante el desarrollo de la actividad de drama? (*How did you feel during the development of the drama activity?*)

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. ¿Qué mejoraría de las actividades de drama? (*What would you improve about the drama activities?*)

_____

_____

_____

Source: Own elaboration.

*Annotation: The questions are in Spanish in order to get more accurate information about the students' perception towards the drama activities.

6.7 Drama Activities

Objective:

To adapt drama activities for the experimental conversational English group from Colegio Técnico Profesional Cóbano in order to perform an analysis of its effectiveness to foster speaking skill.

High School: CTP Cobano.	Technical Field: Conversational English.	Course: English for Conversation II.
Level: 7th	Teacher: Berny Montero Alfaro.	Year: 2022

Values and Attitudes: Respect for other people's preferences and decisions.

Observations' Number and Dates	Activity #1	Activity #2
Observation #1 (July 19th 2022)	Activity: Conversation with Numbers. Materials: none	Activity: Broken TV. Materials: none
Observation #2 (August 16th 2022)	Activity: Statues Materials: none	Activity: Charades Materials: none
Observation #3 (September 13th 2022)	Activity #1: Interpreting Occupations Materials: pens, combs, umbrellas, leaves, pens, rulers, calculators, a Nintendo switch, eyeglasses, among other objects. Cellphone or dictionary, board, marker.	

<u>Observation #4</u> (September 20th 2022)	<u>Activity:</u> Land and Sea <u>Materials:</u> none	<u>Activity:</u> Acting and Presenting <u>Materials:</u> none

Source: The Use of Theater and Drama Techniques to Foster Speaking Skills in the English Class, Salas, 2017.

*Annotation: The activities are taken from the article called "The Use of Theater and Drama Techniques to Foster Speaking Skills in the English Class" by the author Jonnathan Salas Alvarado and they are adapted to the topic the teacher is developing in the class.