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**THESIS SUBMITTED TO OBTAIN THE BACHELOR IN ENGLISH
WITH CONCENTRATION ON TEACHING**

**The Use of Role Plays as a Strategy to Improve Oral Fluency in Seventh
Graders at Liceo Naranjo during the First Period of 2026.**

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Abstract

The following work tries to prove that there are strategies to improve the procedures we use to learn; however, there are other possibilities that can be applied to discover the way we learn during the different processes. In most cases, when people absorb knowledge to understand and comprehend the method of learning, we find ways to enhance the way we communicate in life. All of them are through reading, others by experience, and others through oral communication. This process has a significant impact on how certain attributes such as research in oral skills allow us to be more enthusiastic and communicative when we must send a message. The simple idea of sending a message when talking with people

makes us believe that oral communication is an art and demands effort and how we choose the words to express a clear message. For kids, for example, it is not easy to connect the world they live in with the ideas of adults. Despite, everything is a process.

According to Neurolinguistics, many of the speaking skills we acquire are developed through communication, a process that is reinforced by the mental imagery our brain generates to process language used to express emotions and acquire knowledge. As Noam Chomsky (2006) suggests, language development is closely linked to cognitive structures that allow individuals to internalize and produce meaning. In this sense, communication is not only a social act but also a cognitive process supported by neural mechanisms.

If forms of communication manifest in diverse ways, what concerns us here is how these forms help us communicate more effectively. Therefore, it is essential to support those who struggle to achieve more dynamic and effective communication. As Steven Pinker (1994) argues, language is an instinct shaped by both biological predispositions and environmental interaction, which highlights the importance of meaningful exposure and practice.

Today, languages represent one of the main ways in which we break communication barriers with individuals outside our immediate environment. They allow us to connect with cultures and countries we are interested in exploring. From a neurolinguistic perspective, this process involves the activation of multiple brain regions associated with comprehension, production, and memory (Eric Lenneberg, 1967). Therefore, the methods we use must be continuously refined so that educators understand communication barriers

and act as a bridge between those who have not yet achieved communicative competence and those who have reached more complex levels of language use.

Consequently, it is necessary to prepare the educational context in ways that promote progress and strengthen language skills. This also involves opening the door to imagination by providing students with more effective methods for speaking English, fostering both passion for the language and a genuine desire to continue learning. As Lev Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes, learning is enhanced through interaction and guided support, which is essential in language acquisition. English should not be perceived as a burden, but rather as an opportunity for growth—not merely another subject, but a meaningful pathway for personal and academic development.

Keywords: Oral skills, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), oral expression, pedagogical strategy, seventh -grade students, language teaching, vocabulary. development, speaking confidence, mixed methods research, oral fluency, Role play, communicative competence, task-based learning.

Resumen

El desarrollo de las habilidades de expresión oral en inglés en los estudiantes de séptimo año constituye un aspecto fundamental dentro del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. La producción oral no solo permite a los estudiantes utilizar el idioma en contextos reales de comunicación, sino que también favorece la integración de otras habilidades lingüísticas como la comprensión auditiva, el vocabulario y la pronunciación.

En muchos contextos educativos, incluyendo instituciones de secundaria, la enseñanza del inglés tiende a centrarse en aspectos gramaticales y escritos, lo cual limita las oportunidades de los estudiantes para practicar el habla de manera significativa. Esta situación provoca que los estudiantes desarrollen conocimientos teóricos del idioma, pero enfrenten dificultades al momento de comunicarse oralmente, afectando su fluidez, confianza y participación en el aula.

Mejorar las habilidades de hablar inglés es esencial porque permite a los estudiantes expresar ideas, opiniones y emociones, así como interactuar con sus compañeros y docentes en el idioma meta. Además, el fortalecimiento de la producción oral contribuye a reducir la ansiedad y el miedo a cometer errores, promoviendo un ambiente de aprendizaje más dinámico, participativo y centrado en el estudiante.

Asimismo, la práctica constante de la expresión oral favorece el desarrollo de la pronunciación, la entonación y la coherencia en el discurso, elementos clave para lograr una comunicación efectiva. Cuando los estudiantes tienen oportunidades frecuentes de participar en actividades orales, como debates, presentaciones o juegos de roles, se incrementa su motivación y se fortalece su autonomía en el aprendizaje del idioma.

Por otra parte, en un mundo cada vez más globalizado, el dominio del inglés, especialmente en su forma oral, representa una herramienta indispensable para acceder a oportunidades académicas, laborales y sociales. El desarrollo temprano de esta habilidad en estudiantes de séptimo año les permite construir una base sólida que facilitará su desempeño en niveles educativos superiores y en contextos internacionales.

En este sentido, es fundamental que los docentes implementen estrategias didácticas que promuevan el uso activo del idioma, tales como actividades comunicativas, trabajo colaborativo y el uso de recursos tecnológicos. Estas estrategias no solo mejoran el desempeño oral, sino que también fomentan la confianza y el interés por aprender inglés.

En conclusión, el fortalecimiento de las habilidades de expresión oral en inglés en estudiantes de séptimo año es esencial para su desarrollo lingüístico, académico y personal. Promover el uso activo del idioma en el aula contribuye a formar estudiantes más seguros, participativos y preparados para enfrentar los desafíos de una sociedad globalizada.

Chapter I

Introductory Framework

This thesis explores the innovative use of Role Plays as a pedagogical tool to improve the speaking skills of seventh graders at Liceo of Naranjo during the first quarter of 2026. At the same time pretending to enhance how the students visualize the different techniques when learning oral skills let them show the ability to get confidence in different situations they must confront in English. In addition, the research is looking to find out how to promote the self-esteem on students who believe they cannot speak due to lack of practice

and tools which permit speaking daily not only with foreigners, but among themselves and in the classroom.

As educators continually search for methods to engage students and enhance language acquisition, they experiment with innovative approaches to improve the way students learn daily in a competitive world. However, these methods have made students lose the wish of learning because of the form of how the traditional system has been made by every country, offering valuable insights into how these tools can be effectively applied in the classroom to enhance language learning skills.

1.1 Problem Statement

It is remarkably interesting as a midway point that students cannot speak or pronounce words when interacting with foreign people. But it is even more interesting that students are not stimulated by oral skills, as one of the principal factors that must be explored and addressed by professors and professionals of EFL. However, oral skills have always been one of the most difficult parts for students who want to use communicative skills; and of

course, there are many ways to enhance this ability of communication by practicing constantly if there are the tools to confront this issue.

Role play has a significant importance as one of the most fundamental techniques to improve the learning process. The problem with educational centers is centered on how the programs are made to let the students develop their learning skills through techniques that allow them to overcome their fear. Techniques that have made people practice English less due to fear of getting it wrong. For future professionals, the idea to improve communicative skills is not only in English, but also in how to grow in a society that has an impact on younger people, and what can be fixed to let people practice and improve their skills by practicing daily in real situations. Moreover, it is important to understand that since people begin to practice a language, one of the settings is confrontation, which is a necessity to apply advice on how to speak fluently without losing interest in practicing in class or outside the school. It must be motivation and engagement, enhanced fluency and accuracy, and students act out roles in different situations, such as a shopkeeper and customer or a doctor and patient. It helps to stimulate and create scenarios when role plays become important to put into practice these situations to increase the expectations about what to see during their development of skills.

In this ongoing research, we will prove how role plays function as a parachute, as Albert Einstein said once. It is particularly important to stimulate the brain through games and real situations that allow students to create their own scenes where they can make mistakes, and at the same time correct their mistakes, proving the ability that they have learned what they have acquired throughout knowledge in class.

In summary, the problem established is on how the school programs must be modified to connect knowledge with real practice where students have to face once they finish all the programs inscribe into the subjects, but also the students just speak whether or not every single day. That makes they have to use the knowledge acquisition by the English teacher. There is a growing need to enhance English language programs through the implementation of more dynamic and interactive teaching strategies. In particular, these approaches should encourage students to engage in conversations about their daily routines and real-life situations. This practice aims to reduce language barriers while simultaneously fostering self-confidence. Moreover, it is essential for learners to recognize that making mistakes is an inherent and valuable part of the language acquisition process.

Furthermore, a lack of consistent practice may lead students to develop the misconception that learning English is beyond their capabilities. As a result, this perception often generates anxiety and reluctance to participate, especially when students feel they lack proper pronunciation or natural fluency. Consequently, this fear can hinder their progress and significantly limit their communicative competence.

In addition, reinforcing English instruction is crucial. In today's rapidly evolving global context, English has become an essential tool for communication and advancement. Therefore, contemporary society continues to generate new opportunities that require proficiency in this language, thereby opening doors for both academic and professional development. Ultimately, promoting constant practice and active participation can greatly improve students' attitudes toward learning English and increase their chances of success.

1.2. General Objective.

-To analyze the impact of Role plays as a pedagogical strategy in the development of oral expression skills of seventh grade students at Liceo of Naranjo during the first quarter of 2026.

1.2.1 Specific Objectives.

-To find the specific challenges that seven grade students at Liceo of Naranjo face about oral expression in English.

-To apply Role plays as a pedagogical strategy for improving the speaking skills of seventh grade students through the integration of structured oral activities.

-To evaluate the impact of Role plays on students' English-speaking skills.

1.3. Justification

The development of English oral skills in seventh-grade students at Liceo de Naranjo is a critical component of language learning, as speaking is essential for achieving effective communication. According to Dell Hymes (1972), communicative competence involves not only the knowledge of grammatical rules but also the ability to use language appropriately in real-life contexts. Therefore, fostering oral skills is fundamental for enabling students to interact meaningfully in English.

The findings of this study indicate that students' participation in oral activities is limited and uneven. A considerable proportion of learners demonstrate only moderate engagement, while others show low participation levels. This situation suggests that students are not receiving sufficient opportunities to practice speaking in a structured and consistent manner. As noted by Jeremy Harmer (2007), the development of speaking skills requires continuous practice and interaction, which are often absent in traditional classroom settings.

Moreover, the current teaching practices tend to prioritize grammar and written skills over oral communication, which restricts students' ability to develop fluency and spontaneity in speech. Jack C. Richards (2008) emphasizes that language instruction should focus on meaningful communication rather than isolated linguistic forms. Without this shift, students may acquire theoretical knowledge but lack the ability to apply it in authentic communicative situations.

Another key factor influencing speaking performance is the role of affective variables, such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and lack of self-confidence. These emotional barriers significantly hinder students' willingness to participate in oral activities. Stephen Krashen (1982), through the Affective Filter Hypothesis, explains that high levels of anxiety can block language acquisition, preventing learners from effectively processing and producing language.

Enhancing oral skills is also essential for promoting student motivation and autonomy. When learners are given opportunities to express themselves and successfully communicate in English, they develop a sense of achievement that encourages further participation. This aligns with the learner-centered approach proposed by David Nunan (2004), which highlights the importance of active student involvement in the learning process.

Furthermore, the improvement of speaking skills has significant implications beyond the classroom. In a globalized world, English is a key tool for academic, professional, and social communication. Developing oral proficiency at an early stage equips students with the necessary skills to face future challenges and opportunities.

From an institutional perspective, enhancing speaking skills contributes to improving the overall quality of English education at Liceo de Naranjo. It also supports the alignment of teaching practices with modern educational standards that emphasize communicative competence and interactive learning.

In conclusion, this study justifies the need to strengthen oral skills in seventh-grade students, as doing so will not only improve their linguistic competence but also foster confidence, participation, and readiness for real-world communication. Addressing this need requires the implementation of effective teaching strategies, increased speaking opportunities, and a supportive learning environment that encourages active language use.

1.4. Antecedents

The development of oral fluency represents a fundamental challenge in the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. The act of oral expression needs not only an understanding of grammar and vocabulary but also elements of confidence, interaction, and spontaneity, which are often absent from conventional pedagogical practices (Brown, 2007). Within the Costa Rican educational context, students often encounter challenges in achieving fluency in English due to their limited exposure to authentic communication and pedagogical methods that prioritize written expression and grammar over active oral participation (Mora & Trejos, 2020).

To address these limitations, a number of educational theories and studies have provided frameworks that support innovative strategies such as role plays. These role plays integrate communication, creativity, and student interaction in meaningful contexts.

1.4.1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is predicated on the notion that meaningful communication constitutes the ultimate objective of language learning.

According to Hymes (1972), communicative competence encompasses not only the ability to form sentences, but also the capacity to utilize them in a manner that is appropriate for social contexts. Research conducted by Littlewood (1981) and Rao (2019) has demonstrated that communicative techniques, such as role plays, enhance students' capacity to articulate ideas with ease and fluency. Within this framework, role plays function as communicative tasks that replicate real-life interactions, thereby helping learners transition from mechanical drills to authentic speech.

In the context of Liceo Alfaro Ruiz, the implementation of CLT through role plays enables students to utilize English for pragmatic applications, such as requesting information, describing experiences, or resolving issues. Consequently, this approach fosters fluency and confidence in English language proficiency.

1.4.2. Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) emphasizes the pivotal role of social interaction in cognitive and linguistic development. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept elucidates those students demonstrate optimal learning when they engage in collaborative activities with peers or receiving guidance from educators. The use of role plays in an educational setting has been shown to promote a variety of skills that are conducive to the process of information acquisition. These skills include the ability to negotiate meaning, share ideas, and provide scaffolding for communication.

Empirical studies (Lantolf, 2000; Al-Shehri, 2020) have demonstrated that interactive learning activities, particularly role-play exercises, can enhance student motivation and facilitate more effective language internalization. Seventh-grade students have the opportunity to develop communicative skills that extend beyond the confines of the classroom and reflect authentic language use by working together in simulated social scenarios.

1.4.3. Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist learning theory (Piaget, 1970; Bruner, 1983) posits that individuals actively construct knowledge based on personal experiences. In the context of language learning, this approach entails students' acquisition and retention of knowledge being more efficacious when they are engaged in meaningful activities that connect theory with practice.

The act of role-playing fosters an environment conducive to constructivist principles, as it enables students to engage in experiential learning, engage in hands-on experimentation, and engage in self-reflective practices concerning their communication in authentic real-world contexts. A body of research has demonstrated that students who engage in experimental activities, such as role plays, exhibit elevated levels of creativity, enhanced problem-solving abilities, and augmented linguistic confidence (see Huang, 2008; Ladousse, 1987). In the context of an English as a Foreign Language classroom, this experiential learning approach fosters a deeper comprehension of the language and promotes long-term fluency.

1.4.4. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis

The Affective Filter Hypothesis, proposed by Stephen Krashen (1982), posits that emotional factors, including anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence can facilitate or impede language acquisition. A high affective filter, which is characterized by fear or stress, impedes learners' ability to process input, while a low affective filter has been shown to enhance comprehension and fluency.

The implementation of role plays in the educational setting has been demonstrated to facilitate a reduction in effective filter by fostering an environment that is conducive to expression and playfulness. In this setting, students can articulate their thoughts and ideas without the apprehension of incurring errors. As demonstrated in the research conducted by Huang (2008) and Dörnyei (2001), students who engage in low-anxiety activities, such as role plays, exhibit increased confidence and a greater propensity to communicate. Seventh graders frequently encounter an apprehension of judgment, a circumstance to which this strategy offers emotional security and an enhancement in participation.

1.4. 5. Multiple Intelligences Theory

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (1983) posits that students possess an array of intelligences, including linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and bodily-kinesthetic, among others, which influence their optimal learning strategies. The act of role-playing has been shown to engage multiple intelligences concurrently. These include the linguistic intelligence, which involves the creative application of language, the interpersonal intelligence, which entails collaboration with peers, and the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, which refers to the articulation of ideas through movement and gesture.

Research conducted by Armstrong (2018) suggests that the incorporation of multisensory activities, such as role plays, into pedagogical practices can enhance motivation and inclusiveness in diverse classroom settings. At Liceo Alfaro Ruiz, the implementation of role plays caters to a variety of learning preferences, ensuring that all learners participate meaningfully, irrespective of their predominant intelligence type.

In summary, a comprehensive review of the extant literature and theoretical perspectives indicates a consensus that role plays are a robust pedagogical strategy for enhancing oral fluency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

The CLT places significant emphasis on authentic communication.

Sociocultural theory underscores the significance of learning through interaction.

Constructivism is predicated on experiential and reflective learning.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis accentuates the emotional aspect of communication.

Multiple Intelligences Theory (MI: Gardner, 1985) is a pedagogical framework that emphasizes the importance of inclusive and engaging instruction.

The theoretical underpinnings substantiate the efficacy of role-playing as a pedagogical strategy to assist seventh-grade students at Liceo de Naranjo in managing anxiety, fostering self-assurance, and achieving fluency in English communication.

1.5. Scope

The study focuses on the implementation of role plays as a pedagogical strategy to enhance the oral fluency of seventh-grade students at Liceo Alfaro Ruiz during the first quarter of 2026. The present study is constrained to this specific population, as students at this level are in a critical stage of language development, transitioning from basic to more complex communicative skills in English.

The investigation will be carried out with a selected group of students who have been previously exposed to foundational English instruction but continue to face difficulties expressing themselves fluently and confidently. The present study will examine how

structured role-play activities contribute to improving their pronunciation, vocabulary, and overall communicative competence.

The scope of this research encompasses three primary phases:

The present study aims to diagnose the current level of oral expression among seventh-grade students. This will be achieved through classroom observations and diagnostic speaking tasks.

The implementation of role-play sessions is intended to simulate real-life communicative situations. These situations include conversations that occur in various settings, such as shops, restaurants, or schools. These activities have been meticulously designed to cultivate attributes such as confidence, spontaneity, and interaction in the English language.

A subsequent evaluation of students' progress is necessary after the implementation of the strategy. This evaluation will entail a comparison of pre- and post-intervention results so that improvement in fluency, pronunciation, and self-confidence can be measured.

The present study is constrained to oral expression and does not aspire to evaluate other language skills, such as writing or reading comprehension. However, it is acknowledged that enhancements in these domains may occur indirectly. Furthermore, the research will concentrate on the implementation of role plays conducted in classroom settings that do not incorporate technological tools or external platforms.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

What if somebody is in a foreign country and an unexpected individual comes to you and starts a conversation? And what would happen if you stayed petrified, and did not know how to reply with no words in your mouth to speak? Why? It could be a simple inquiry, but for students, since they are teenagers, it is the most common concern they face every day when they start high school in their first year. In this chapter, we are going to describe the role plays as a fundamental tool in education, fostering cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development by encouraging problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration. As a cognitive tool, and teaching strategy it helps us to understand how important it is for the students to begin with confidence when they started to speak; it allows the comprehension of methods as Role play for the students to talk as fluent speakers and comprehend the importance of developing oral skills in students of seventh grade since they are the first step of high school. It is important to apply space to them to resolve real situations letting them interact and resolving problems, scenery, and creating conversations which allow them to think about responding in the moment. In an emergent world where people are looking for new strategies for education and learning the purpose of using role plays and other techniques may be the answer. Having all these elements in mind, the researcher will present in this chapter all the theories, concepts and methods that may support the use of Role Plays as the best technique to encourage motivation and enhance knowledge of the English language in students of seventh grade. Let us start with cognitive benefits.

2.1. Cognitive benefits.

2.1.1. Problem-solving and critical thinking: In real situations, it helps to put into practice all this knowledge that permits the students to interact and think about what to respond to in moments when needed, letting their imagination use all potential features about surroundings and places, and figure out cause-and-effect, building critical thinking skills.

2.1.2 Creativity and imagination: Pretend to let the students use their imagination to believe in how to respond in real conversations and improve, and at the same time, think about new vocabulary.

2.1.3 Memory and learning: Play helps children build memory skills and make connections between what they see, hear, and experience.

2.1.4 Vocabulary and communication: Students can expand their vocabulary and communication skills by talking about what they are doing and transmitting ideas with others, creating fictional panoramas like Doctor, Firefighter, or any other professional who stands for the character in any situation in real life. Even for those who like to perform as nature guides who must explain the loveliness of nature daily to customers from other countries.

2.1.5. Developing Social Skills: Useful method to be confident when they speak, for students who rarely take part in conversations, it helps them to take part easily with confidence.

2.2. Literature Review

The use of role plays in language teaching has been widely discussed in the field of communicative language teaching (CLT), as it provides learners with opportunities to use the target language in realistic and meaningful situations. According to Littlewood (1981), communicative activities such as role plays allow students to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-life communication, helping them to develop both fluency and accuracy. Similarly, Savignon (2002) emphasizes that communicative competence can only be achieved when learners are exposed to authentic and purposeful interaction, which role plays effectively promote.

2.2.1. Theoretical Foundations

The concept of role play is grounded in the communicative approach and the interaction hypothesis. Krashen (1982) argues that meaningful communication provides comprehensible input that helps language acquisition, while Long (1996) states that interaction through negotiation of meaning promotes language development. Role plays, therefore, create a learning environment where students actively engage in meaningful exchanges, leading to increased fluency and confidence.

Moreover, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory highlights the importance of social interaction in cognitive and linguistic development. From this perspective, role plays offer a collaborative space where learners co-construct meaning through dialogue, scaffolding each other's linguistic performance within their zone of proximal development.

2.2.2. Role Plays and Oral Fluency

Some empirical studies have shown that role plays are effective in enhancing oral fluency among EFL learners. Huang (2008) reported that role play activities significantly improved

students' fluency and speaking confidence by providing opportunities for practice in low-anxiety settings. Similarly, Rao (2019) found that role plays encouraged students to use English more naturally, increasing their motivation and ability to express ideas spontaneously.

In another study, Ladousse (1987) emphasized that role play gives learners a sense of purpose in communication, allowing them to focus more on meaning than on form, which leads to more fluent and authentic language use. Furthermore, Al-Shehri (2020) saw that integrating role plays into classroom instruction not only enhanced students' oral performance but also improved their attitudes toward learning English, fostering a more communicative classroom atmosphere.

2.2.3 Pedagogical Implications

Role plays align closely with modern communicative and task-based teaching approaches, as they encourage students to engage in problem-solving, negotiation, and decision-making while using the target language (Willis & Willis, 2007). In EFL contexts such as Costa Rica, where opportunities for authentic communication are often limited, role plays can serve as an essential pedagogical tool for promoting fluency and confidence in oral interaction.

Therefore, literature consistently supports the integration of role plays in language classrooms as an effective means to enhance oral fluency, motivation, and communicative competence. This evidence forms the theoretical and empirical foundation for the present

study, which looks to explore the impact of role plays on the oral fluency of seventh-grade EFL learners.

Role plays have always existed since 1970's, when dramas and presentations began taking place to entertain people in court, circus, theaters, and other scenery.

2.3. Introduction to the Section.

The ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language is one of the most important goals of language education. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), developing oral fluency has become a major focus, as it enables learners to express their ideas confidently and interact meaningfully in real-life situations (Brown, 2007). However, for students—particularly in middle school—speaking English fluently is still a challenge due to factors such as anxiety, limited exposure, lack of vocabulary, and insufficient practice opportunities (Harmer, 2015).

In response to these challenges, communicative and learner-centered approaches have gained importance in modern language teaching. One of the most effective techniques within this framework is the use of role plays, which provide students with authentic opportunities to practice language through interactive and realistic situations (Ladousse, 1987). Role plays help learners improve their fluency, confidence, and communicative competence while also reducing their fear of speaking and encouraging collaboration.

This theoretical section explores the foundations that support the use of role plays as a strategy to enhance oral fluency in EFL classrooms. It begins by reviewing earlier research and theories related to oral communication and fluency development. It then discusses the

main difficulties in learning to speak, the essential communication skills needed for effective interaction, and the challenges students face when trying to speak fluently. Additionally, it examines the importance of reducing the fear of speaking and highlights the role of role plays in supporting students with special learning conditions.

By addressing these aspects, this section aims to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework that justifies the use of role plays as a pedagogical strategy for improving the oral fluency of seventh-grade EFL learners. The review of theories and empirical studies presented here forms the basis for the implementation and analysis of this study.

2.3.1 Relevant Theories.

The implementation of role plays as a strategy to improve oral fluency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is grounded in well-established linguistic and educational theories. These theories explain the cognitive, social, and communicative processes that underlie language learning and provide a solid foundation for understanding how role play enhances oral performance.

2.3.2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The first theoretical foundation of this study is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes the ability to communicate meaningfully and effectively in the target language. According to Hymes (1972), communicative competence involves not only grammatical knowledge but also sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. CLT promotes authentic communication, student interaction, and task-based learning — all of which are central features of role play.

As Littlewood (1981) explains, role play provides learners with opportunities to practice

the target language in real-life contexts, helping them to move beyond mechanical drills and develop fluency through meaningful use.

2.3.3 Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978)

Another key theoretical underpinning is Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and collaboration in learning. Vygotsky argued that language development occurs through interaction within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) — the space between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance.

Role play activities create an interactive and supportive environment where students collaborate, negotiate meaning, and receive feedback from peers and the teacher, thus facilitating progress within their ZPD (Lantolf, 2000).

2.3.4. Constructivist Learning Theory

The constructivist perspective (Piaget, 1970; Bruner, 1983) views learning as an active process in which learners construct knowledge based on their experiences. In this sense, role play aligns perfectly with constructivist principles because it encourages learners to actively engage in creating meaning through realistic communicative scenarios. Through performing different social roles, students construct linguistic and pragmatic understanding that supports oral fluency development.

2.3. 5. Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982)

The Affective Filter Hypothesis, part of Krashen's Input Hypothesis theory, suggests that emotional factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence significantly influence language acquisition. Role play helps lower students' affective filter by creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere where they can speak without fear of making mistakes. As Krashen (1982) notes, when the affective filter is low, learners are more receptive to input

and more likely to engage in spontaneous communication — a condition essential for improving fluency.

2.4. Interaction Hypothesis

Finally, Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis asserts that language ability develops through meaningful interaction. Role play offers the opportunity for negotiation of meaning, clarification, and feedback — all key mechanisms in language acquisition. As students interact during role plays, they not only produce language but also receive comprehensible input and output that refine their oral skills.

Summary

In summary, the theoretical foundations of this study highlight that role play is more than an entertaining classroom activity. It is a pedagogically grounded approach that integrates communicative, social, and cognitive principles to enhance oral fluency. By promoting interaction, lowering anxiety, and helping authentic language use, role plays directly support the goals of communicative competence and fluency development in EFL learners.

2.5. Difficulties in Learning Oral Speaking

Developing oral speaking skills is one of the most challenging aspects of learning a foreign language. Unlike other language skills, speaking requires not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to use that knowledge spontaneously and effectively in real-time communication. According to Ur (2012), speaking is considered the most difficult skill to master because it demands both accuracy and fluency, as well as confidence and interactive competence.

One of the major difficulties faced by EFL learners is lack of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, which limits their ability to express ideas clearly and appropriately (Richards & Renandya, 2002). When learners struggle to find the right words or construct sentences correctly, their fluency and confidence decrease significantly. Additionally, pronunciation problems often interfere with communication, leading to misunderstandings and frustration among both speakers and listeners (Gilakjani, 2016).

Another communal problem is speaking anxiety, which is one of the main psychological barriers to oral communication. Horwitz et al. (1986) explain that foreign language anxiety, especially in speaking, can cause nervousness, fear of making mistakes, and avoidance of participation in classroom interactions. This anxiety is often linked to negative self-perception and the pressure to perform correctly in front of peers or teachers.

Furthermore, limited exposure to authentic communication restricts students' opportunities to practice and develop fluency. In EFL contexts, classroom interaction tends to focus on grammar and written exercises rather than oral practice (Harmer, 2015). Consequently, learners lack communicative experiences where they can use English naturally, which hinders their ability to speak smoothly and spontaneously.

Another principal factor is the lack of motivation. According to Dörnyei (2001), motivation plays a crucial role in second language learning, and low motivation can significantly reduce learners' willingness to speak or take risks in communication. When students perceive speaking tasks as difficult, uninteresting, or irrelevant, they tend to take part less actively.

In summary, the main difficulties in learning oral speaking involve linguistic, psychological, and contextual factors. Limited vocabulary, pronunciation issues, speaking anxiety, lack of authentic practice, and low motivation all contribute to poor oral fluency. Addressing these challenges requires the implementation of communicative teaching strategies, such as role plays, which provide students with supportive, interactive, and meaningful opportunities to use the target language.

2.6. Communication Skills.

Communication skills are essential components of language learning and are considered the foundation of successful interaction in both academic and real-life contexts. According to Hymes (1972), communicative competence involves not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use language appropriately in different social situations. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), developing communication skills means enabling students to express ideas, emotions, and opinions effectively while understanding others' intentions and responses.

Richards (2006) emphasizes that communication skills include four main language abilities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, speaking and listening are often seen as the most crucial for oral interaction, as they require immediate processing of language and meaning. Effective communication, therefore, depends on fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and the ability to adapt language according to the situation and interlocutor.

Moreover, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a model of communicative competence that consists of four components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence,

discourse competence, and strategic competence. This framework highlights that communication skills go beyond linguistic knowledge; they also involve understanding cultural norms, supporting coherence in speech, and using strategies to overcome communication breakdowns.

In EFL classrooms, students often face challenges in developing communication skills due to limited exposure to authentic interactions. Harmer (2015) notes that traditional teaching methods tend to prioritize grammar and written exercises, offering fewer opportunities for real communication. As a result, learners may know vocabulary and grammar but still struggle to communicate fluently and confidently.

To address this issue, communicative language teaching (CLT) promotes the use of interactive methods such as role plays, group discussions, and task-based learning to develop communication skills through meaningful use of the target language. According to Littlewood (1981), such activities enable learners to practice language functions in realistic contexts, increasing their fluency, motivation, and communicative competence.

In conclusion, communication skills are the goal of language learning, as they allow learners to interact effectively and appropriately in diverse contexts. Enhancing these skills through communicative techniques such as role plays can significantly contribute to improving oral fluency and overall language ability among EFL students.

2.7. Challenges to Speak Fluently

Speaking fluently in a foreign language stands for one of the greatest challenges for EFL learners. Fluency involves producing speech smoothly, naturally, and with minimal hesitation, allowing communication to flow effectively (Richards, 2008). However,

achieving fluency requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, automaticity, and confidence—skills that learners find difficult to develop simultaneously.

One of the main challenges to speaking fluently is limited vocabulary and grammatical competence. Learners who lack sufficient linguistic resources often pause often, repeat words, or use fillers, which disrupt the flow of conversation (Harmer, 2015). According to Nation (2011), fluency depends heavily on the learner's ability to access known language items quickly and use them in context without overthinking grammatical correctness.

Another common obstacle is fear of making mistakes and speaking anxiety. Students hesitate to take part in oral communication due to fear of criticism or embarrassment (Horwitz et al., 1986). Anxiety affects not only students' willingness to speak but also their ability to think clearly, resulting in slower responses and reduced fluency. Krashen's (1982) *Affective Filter Hypothesis* suggests that emotional factors such as anxiety and low self-confidence can block language acquisition and prevent learners from performing effectively in speaking tasks.

In addition, lack of exposure to authentic communication poses a major limitation in EFL environments. As students rarely use English outside the classroom, their opportunities to practice natural conversation are minimal (Ur, 2012). This lack of practice leads to insufficient automaticity—the ability to speak without conscious effort—which is essential for fluency. According to Thornbury (2005), fluency develops through continuous practice and real-time use of language rather than through theoretical knowledge alone.

Furthermore, native language interference can negatively affect fluency. Learners often translate from their first language into English while speaking, causing delays and

unnatural speech patterns (Ellis, 2008). This tendency slows down the communication process and prevents students from expressing ideas smoothly.

Finally, low motivation and limited classroom interaction are also critical barriers. Dörnyei (2001) notes that motivation is a key factor in sustaining effort and persistence in learning a language. When learners do not perceive speaking activities as meaningful or engaging, they are less likely to take part actively, resulting in slower progress in fluency development.

In conclusion, the challenges of speaking fluently stem from linguistic, psychological, and environmental factors. Limited vocabulary, speaking anxiety, lack of authentic exposure, native language interference, and low motivation all hinder oral fluency. To overcome these challenges, communicative techniques such as role plays can be highly beneficial, as they provide students with realistic contexts, reduce anxiety, and increase their opportunities for active participation in meaningful communication.

2.7.1 Getting motivation to Speak.

One of the most significant psychological barriers in learning to speak a foreign language is fear of speaking. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners experience anxiety, nervousness, and low self-confidence when they must speak in front of others. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), this phenomenon—known as foreign language anxiety—can seriously interfere with language performance by increasing self-consciousness and reducing students' willingness to communicate.

Fear of speaking often originates from several factors, including fear of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation, and fear of being misunderstood (Dörnyei, 2001). Learners who are overly concerned about grammatical accuracy or pronunciation tend to speak less fluently, as their focus shifts from communication to error avoidance. As Krashen (1982) explains in his Affective Filter Hypothesis, emotional variables such as anxiety and self-esteem can function as barriers to language acquisition, blocking the natural flow of communication and preventing learners from taking risks necessary for progress.

Moreover, the classroom environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' confidence. A competitive or overly correction-focused atmosphere can increase fear, while a supportive and collaborative environment can help learners build confidence and reduce anxiety (Harmer, 2015). Teachers must therefore create conditions that encourage participation without fear of judgment.

In this regard, role plays are widely recognized as an effective method to help students overcome their fear of speaking. By simulating real-life situations in a safe and controlled environment, role plays provide opportunities for students to use English creatively and spontaneously (Ladousse, 1987). According to Huang (2008), role play activities lower the affective filter by allowing learners to “step into another identity,” making them feel less self-conscious and more willing to express themselves. This freedom enables students to practice speaking with confidence and develop fluency naturally.

Additionally, when learners engage in role plays, they work collaboratively, which reduces the pressure of speaking individually. Peer interaction and group support promote a sense of belonging and security, leading to greater participation and oral production (Al-Shehri,

2020). Over time, as students gain more experience speaking English in these low-stress contexts, their fear diminishes, and their confidence increases significantly.

In conclusion, losing the fear of speaking is essential for improving oral fluency.

Overcoming this fear requires both psychological support and practical opportunities for communication. Through interactive activities such as role plays, teachers can help students reduce anxiety, build confidence, and speak more fluently and naturally in English.

2.8 The Role of using Role plays in Students with special conditions.

Inclusive education emphasizes the importance of giving equal learning opportunities to all students, including those with special educational conditions. In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, students with learning difficulties, speech disorders, or emotional challenges often experience added barriers when developing oral communication skills (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Therefore, it is essential to implement pedagogical strategies that accommodate diverse learning needs while promoting participation and confidence.

Role plays serve as an effective tool for fostering inclusion and supporting students with special conditions. According to Tomlinson (2014), differentiated instruction allows teachers to adapt to learning activities to meet individual students' needs, strengths, and learning styles. Role plays provide a flexible and interactive learning environment in which students can practice language according to their abilities, receive peer support, and express themselves creatively.

One of the key advantages of role plays for students with special conditions is the reduction of communication anxiety. Learners who struggle with social interaction or have low self-

esteem often feel more comfortable speaking when they are acting out a character rather than presenting themselves (Huang, 2008). This “psychological distancing” allows them to overcome fear, gain confidence, and take part more actively. Furthermore, role plays create a low-stress and supportive context that encourages students to take risks in communication without fear of negative evaluation (Krashen, 1982).

Additionally, role plays promote social and emotional learning (SEL), which is particularly beneficial for students with behavioral or emotional difficulties. As Zins and Elias (2006) explain, SEL activities help learners develop empathy, cooperation, and critical thinking skills. Through role plays, students learn to interact with others, express feelings appropriately, and understand different perspectives, which contribute to their communicative competence and personal growth.

For students with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia or ADHD, role plays provide a multisensory and engaging way to learn language. They enable kinesthetic and visual learners to take part actively rather than relying solely on reading and writing tasks (Tomlinson, 2014). This approach increases motivation and helps students keep language more effectively through experience-based learning.

Moreover, role plays can enhance inclusion by promoting peer collaboration. When students with and without special conditions work together in role play activities, they share responsibility, support one another, and build a sense of community (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Such collaboration aligns with the principles of inclusive pedagogy, which emphasize that diversity should be viewed as a resource for learning rather than a limitation.

In summary, the use of role plays a vital role in supporting students with special conditions by fostering inclusion, reducing anxiety, and encouraging communicative interaction. This strategy not only improves oral fluency but also promotes empathy, confidence, and social development—core aspects of holistic language education.

2.7.1. Real-World scenarios.

In language learning, providing students with opportunities to use English in real-world contexts is essential for developing practical communicative competence. Real-world scenarios are tasks or situations that simulate authentic communication, allowing learners to practice language in a meaningful and purposeful way (Richards, 2008). Such scenarios help bridge the gap between classroom learning and actual language use, making the learning process more relevant and engaging for students.

The integration of real-world scenarios into EFL instruction is particularly effective for improving oral fluency. According to Nunan (2015), learners develop fluency when they are exposed to tasks that require spontaneous language production in realistic situations. Real-world scenarios encourage students to focus on meaning rather than form, promoting natural and fluid speech. For instance, role plays that simulate ordering at a restaurant, asking for directions, or taking part in a job interview provide authentic contexts where students can apply vocabulary, grammar, and conversational strategies in a purposeful manner.

Additionally, real-world scenarios enhance student motivation and engagement. Tasks that mirror everyday life are perceived as meaningful and relevant, which increases learners' willingness to take part actively (Dörnyei, 2001). When students see the practical

application of English in scenarios that reflect real experiences, they are more likely to practice speaking confidently and consistently.

Another significant advantage of real-world scenarios is their ability to reduce anxiety. By practicing structured simulations, learners can experience realistic communication without the pressure of real-world consequences (Huang, 2008). This safe environment allows students to experiment with language, make mistakes, receive feedback, fostering confidence and encouraging risk-taking in communication.

Moreover, incorporating real-world scenarios supports the development of critical thinking and critical thinking skills. Students must adapt language to fit the situation, negotiate meaning with interlocutors, and make decisions in real-time (Ladousse, 1987). Such dynamic interactions replicate authentic communication and prepare learners to use English effectively outside the classroom.

In conclusion, using real-world scenarios in EFL instruction provides students with meaningful opportunities to practice oral communication, enhance motivation, reduces anxiety, and develops practical language skills. When combined with role plays, these scenarios create a highly interactive and effective learning environment that fosters fluency, confidence, and communicative competence in seventh-grade learners.

2.7.2. Skill-building and specific situations.

Role plays are an effective method for skill-building in language learning because they allow students to practice English in controlled yet realistic contexts. By simulating specific situations, learners can develop communicative skills such as requesting information, giving directions, expressing opinions, or negotiating meaning, which contributes to their overall oral fluency (Ladousse, 1987).

2.7.3. Targeted Skill Development

Role plays enable teachers to design activities that focus on specific skills. For instance, students can practice turn-taking, conversational strategies, or asking and answering questions in dialogues. They can also work on pronunciation, intonation, and proper phrasing in scenarios that reflect real-life communication. According to Richards (2008), this targeted practice joins both linguistic knowledge and practical application, reinforcing fluency in meaningful contexts.

2.7.4. Application in Real-Life Scenarios

Incorporating real-world situations into role plays increases authenticity and relevance. Examples include shopping at a store, ordering food at a restaurant, visiting a doctor, or asking for directions. These scenarios provide students with opportunities to rehearse functional language, problem-solving strategies, and proper social responses (Nunan, 2015). Practicing in these situations repeatedly enhances learners' confidence and prepares them for communication outside the classroom.

2.7.5. Building Fluency and Confidence.

Role plays help develop automaticity, allowing learners to respond naturally and spontaneously without overthinking grammar or vocabulary (Thornbury, 2005). The safe, controlled environment of role plays also reduces anxiety, encourages risk-taking, and promotes confidence (Huang, 2008). Over time, repeated practice in specific situations fosters fluency, making students more comfortable with real-life English communication.

2.7.6. Integration of Social and Emotional Skills.

Role plays not only improve linguistic abilities but also enhance social and emotional skills, such as empathy, collaboration, and perspective-taking (Zins & Elias, 2006).

Working in pairs or groups allows students to negotiate meaning, cooperate in problem-solving, and develop interpersonal skills. This combination of language practice and social interaction supports holistic development and reinforces communicative competence.

In conclusion, role plays that focus on skill-building in specific situations provide students with structured, meaningful, and confidence-building experiences. By combining targeted language practice, authentic real-world contexts, and social-emotional interaction, teachers can foster oral fluency, engagement, and effective communication in EFL learners.

2.8. Traditional Education.

Traditional education, often characterized by teacher-centered instruction, focuses primarily on the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. In this model, students are expected to memorize information, complete written exercises, and prove their learning through tests or exams (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). While this approach has historically been dominant in the educational systems, it tends to emphasize accuracy over communication and often neglects the development of practical language skills such as oral fluency.

In traditional classrooms, the teacher acts as the primary source of knowledge, while students play a passive role in learning (Harmer, 2015). This passive learning environment limits opportunities for active participation, spontaneous language use, and interaction among peers, which are essential for developing oral communication skills. As a result,

learners may have strong grammatical knowledge but struggle to use English effectively in real-life situations.

Another limitation of traditional education is the lack of authentic practice. Activities often revolve around drills, repetition, and written exercises rather than meaningful, communicative tasks (Nunan, 2015). Consequently, students may feel unprepared or anxious when needed to speak English outside the classroom, as they have had limited exposure to interactive and realistic situations.

Furthermore, traditional methods often do not accommodate diverse learning needs. Students with different learning styles, abilities, or special educational conditions may struggle to engage with teacher-centered approaches (Tomlinson, 2014). This limitation highlights the importance of incorporating learner-centered strategies, such as role plays, which foster participation, confidence, and practical language skills for all students.

In conclusion, while traditional education has contributed to knowledge acquisition, it presents significant challenges for developing oral fluency in EFL learners. Its focus on teacher-centered instruction, memorization, and accuracy over meaningful communication underscores the need for interactive, communicative, and student-centered approaches such as role plays, which provide learners with authentic opportunities to practice and improve their speaking skills.

2.9. Technology in Education.

Technology has become an essential part of modern education, transforming traditional teaching methods and offering new opportunities for interactive and learner-centered instruction. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), technology helps

communication, increases access to authentic resources, and enhances students' motivation and engagement (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

Digital tools, such as language learning apps, online platforms, and multimedia resources, allow students to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in dynamic and engaging ways (Hockly, 2013). For example, video conferencing and virtual classrooms provide opportunities for students to interact with peers and teachers in real-time, simulating authentic communicative contexts that support oral fluency.

Moreover, technology supports interactive strategies such as role plays by providing scenarios, prompts, and feedback. Online simulations, digital games, and virtual role-playing environments allow learners to take part in meaningful communication, experiment with language, and receive immediate correction and guidance (Godwin-Jones, 2018). These resources can also be adapted for students with special educational needs, ensuring inclusivity and differentiation.

Another advantage of technology in education is its ability to increase learner autonomy. Students can practice English independently through recorded dialogues, language apps, or online discussion forums, reinforcing classroom learning and building confidence in oral communication (Oxford, 2017). When combined with teacher-guided activities, technology enhances the effectiveness of communicative strategies by providing repeated exposure, varied contexts, and interactive practice.

Despite its benefits, the integration of technology requires careful planning and guidance. Teachers must ensure that digital tools are pedagogically appropriate, align with learning objectives, and promote active participation rather than passive consumption (Mishra &

Koehler, 2006). When used effectively, technology not only supports oral fluency development but also creates engaging, meaningful, and inclusive learning experiences.

In conclusion, technology in education serves as a powerful tool to enhance teaching and learning. Its integration into EFL classrooms, particularly when combined with interactive strategies such as role plays, provides students with authentic, engaging, and adaptable opportunities to develop oral fluency, communication skills, and confidence in English.

2.10. Main Function of Role Plays.

Role plays serve as a dynamic and interactive method in language teaching, designed to simulate real-life communication and allow learners to practice language in meaningful contexts. The main function of role plays is to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical language use, providing students with opportunities to apply vocabulary, grammar, and conversational strategies in authentic situations (Ladousse, 1987).

By engaging in role plays, learners can develop oral fluency through repeated practice and spontaneous communication. According to Richards (2008), the primary function of role plays is to encourage students to produce language naturally, think on their feet, and respond appropriately to interlocutors, which strengthens both confidence and communicative competence.

Another essential function of role plays is to reduce speaking anxiety. Acting out a character or scenario allows learners to distance themselves from the fear of making mistakes, enabling them to experiment with language in a safe, low-pressure environment

(Huang, 2008). This psychological distancing fosters risk-taking and promotes fluency, as students focus on conveying meaning rather than achieving perfection.

Role plays also serve an educational and social function by promoting collaboration, empathy, and problem-solving. Students interact with peers, negotiate meaning, and explore different perspectives, developing not only language skills but also social and emotional competencies (Zins & Elias, 2006). This aspect is particularly important for learners with special educational needs, as it encourages inclusion and active participation.

Furthermore, role plays provide teachers with opportunities for formative assessment and feedback. Observing students during role plays allows educators to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and specific language needs, which can inform instruction and personalized support (Harmer, 2015).

In conclusion, the main function of role plays in EFL classrooms is to create meaningful, interactive, and contextually relevant experiences that promote oral fluency, confidence, and communicative competence. By simulating real-life situations and fostering collaboration, role plays prepare learners to use English effectively in authentic communication beyond the classroom.

2.10.1 Methods of Role Plays.

Role plays can be implemented in a variety of ways depending on the learning objectives, student proficiency, and classroom context. Employing diverse methods allows teachers to address different skills, learner needs, and scenarios, maximizing the effectiveness of role-playing activities (Ladousse, 1987).

2.10. 2. Scripted Role Plays

Scripted role plays involve providing students with pre-written dialogues or scenarios to follow. This method is especially useful for beginners or learners who are anxious about speaking. Scripted role plays allow students to practice pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure while building confidence (Harmer, 2015).

2.10.3. Semi-Scripted Role Plays

Semi-scripted role plays provide learners with a basic framework or outline of the scenario but allow them to create their own language within the structure. This approach balances guidance and creativity, encouraging spontaneous language use while maintaining support for students who may struggle with free improvisation (Richards, 2008).

2.10.4. Improvised Role Plays

Improvised or unscripted role plays require learners to generate language entirely on their own within a given situation. This method is ideal for advanced learners as it promotes fluency, problem-solving, and real-time communication skills. Improvised role plays simulate authentic interactions, fostering natural conversation and enhancing oral proficiency (Nunan, 2015).

2.10.5. Role Rotation

Role rotation involves students alternating between distinct roles within the same scenario. This method ensures that all learners actively participate and experience multiple perspectives, enhancing empathy, social interaction, and adaptability in communication (Tomlinson, 2014).

2.10.6. Real-World Scenario Role Plays

These role plays are designed to replicate authentic situations such as shopping, attending a doctor's appointment, ordering food, or asking for directions. Using real-world scenarios increases relevance and motivation, helping students apply language in meaningful contexts and develop practical communication skills (Huang, 2008).

2.10.7. Group and Pair Work

Role plays can be conducted in pairs or small groups to encourage collaboration and peer support. This method reduces anxiety, promotes discussion, and allows students to negotiate meaning collectively, which reinforces both fluency and confidence (Ladousse, 1987).

2.10.8. Incorporation of Technology

Digital tools, online platforms, and multimedia can support role plays by providing scenarios, prompts, or virtual simulations. Technology can make role plays more interactive and engaging and allows learners to practice language independently or in a blended learning environment (Godwin-Jones, 2018).

In conclusion, employing a variety of role play methods enables teachers to address different proficiency levels, learning objectives, and classroom needs. By combining scripted, semi-scripted, improvised, and real-world scenarios, educators can create dynamic, interactive, and inclusive opportunities for students to develop oral fluency, confidence, and communicative competence.

2.10.9. Main Technique on Role Plays.

The role play technique was selected as the main pedagogical strategy in this study because it fosters students' oral fluency and communicative competence in a dynamic and interactive way. Role plays allow learners to use language meaningfully in simulated real-

life situations, encouraging spontaneous speech, negotiation of meaning, and confidence in speaking English. According to Ladousse (2009), role play gives learners “the opportunity to use language freely and creatively by stepping into different roles,” which helps them internalize vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation through practice rather than rote memorization.

Furthermore, Littlewood (1981) explains that role play is an important part of communicative language teaching (CLT) because it promotes functional language use and develops learners’ ability to express themselves effectively. By simulating authentic contexts—such as ordering food, asking for directions, or visiting the doctor—students can bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication.

The teaching of English in Costa Rica has evolved significantly over the past century. Initially, English was introduced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, mainly due to the economic influence of foreign companies such as the United Fruit Company. These companies required local workers to acquire basic English skills to communicate in business and trade, especially in coastal regions like Limón.

During the mid-20th century, English became more formally integrated into the national education system. The Ministry of Public Education (MEP) began to include English as a subject in secondary education, recognizing its importance for international communication and economic development.

By the late 20th and early 21st centuries, globalization and the growth of tourism and technology industries increased the demand for English proficiency. As a result, English

instruction expanded to primary education, and new methodologies began to emerge, focusing on communicative competence rather than just grammar and translation.

In recent years, Costa Rica has implemented educational reforms to strengthen English teaching. These include bilingual programs, teacher training initiatives, and the incorporation of technology in the classroom. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, such as unequal access to quality instruction and the need for more interactive and student-centered approaches.

Overall, the development of English teaching in the country reflects its growing role in global communication, education, and economic opportunities.

History of English Teaching in Costa Rica

The teaching of English in Costa Rica has undergone significant transformations influenced by historical, economic, and educational factors. The introduction of English dates back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, largely driven by the presence of foreign companies such as the United Fruit Company. These companies established operations along the Caribbean coast, particularly in Limón, where English became necessary for communication among local workers and foreign administrators. As a result, early exposure to English was primarily practical and employment-oriented rather than academic.

By the mid-20th century, English began to gain importance within the formal education system. The Ministry of Public Education (MEP) gradually incorporated English into secondary school curricula, recognizing its relevance for international relations and economic growth. During this period, the predominant teaching methods were based on

grammar-translation approaches, which focused more on reading and writing skills than on oral communication (Brown, 2007).

Towards the end of the 20th century, the impact of globalization significantly increased the demand for English proficiency. The expansion of tourism, international business, and the emergence of technology and service industries in Costa Rica reinforced the need for a workforce capable of communicating effectively in English. Consequently, English instruction was extended to primary education, and the educational system began to adopt more communicative approaches that emphasized speaking and listening skills (Harmer, 2007).

In the 21st century, educational reforms have focused on improving the quality and accessibility of English language instruction. Initiatives led by the Ministry of Public Education include curriculum updates, teacher training programs, and the integration of technology in the classroom. Additionally, bilingual education programs have been promoted to better prepare students for global participation. These efforts align with theories of second language acquisition that highlight the importance of interaction and meaningful communication in learning a language (Krashen, 1982).

Despite these advancements, challenges remain, including disparities in educational resources, varying levels of teacher proficiency, and limited opportunities for authentic language practice. Therefore, ongoing improvements in methodology and access are essential to ensure that students develop effective communicative competence.

In conclusion, the evolution of English teaching in Costa Rica reflects broader socio-economic changes and the increasing importance of English as a global language. Its

continued development is crucial for expanding educational and professional opportunities in an interconnected world.

Historical Overview of the Colegio de Naranjo

The Colegio de Naranjo, located in Naranjo, Costa Rica, was founded on June 22, 1952, as a complementary educational institution. In its early years, the school operated within the facilities of the Escuela República de Colombia, providing students in the community with access to further educational opportunities beyond primary school.

In 1957, the institution was officially established as a secondary school, marking an important milestone in its development. This transition responded to the growing educational needs of the region and the increasing demand for formal secondary education. Later, in June 1962, the school inaugurated its own building, an achievement that took place during the administration of President Otilio Ulate Blanco. This development allowed the institution to expand its services and improve the quality of education offered to its students.

Over the years, the Colegio de Naranjo has played a significant role in the academic and social development of the community. It has adapted to educational changes and continues to contribute to the formation of students by promoting knowledge, values, and skills necessary for their personal and professional growth.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Design

This study follows a quasi-experimental design with a qualitative and quantitative (mixed method) approach. The purpose of this design is to analyze the impact of implementing role plays as a teaching strategy to enhance oral fluency among seventh-grade students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

The quantitative part of the research focuses on measuring students' improvement in oral fluency through pre- and post-assessments, while the qualitative part looks to explore students' beliefs, attitudes, and motivation toward role play activities in the classroom.

This mixed approach was selected because it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. Quantitative data offers measurable results of students' progress, while qualitative data reveal deeper insights into their learning experiences and emotional responses to the use of role plays.

The study is also descriptive and applied in nature, since it describes and examines a specific teaching strategy (role plays) in an educational setting with the purpose of improving students' oral communication skills.

3.1. Population and Sample

The population of this research forms all seventh-grade students enrolled at Liceo of Naranjo, found in Naranjo, Alajuela during the academic year 2026.

The sample consists of 92 students (40 female and 42 male) from section 7-2 until 7-7, and 7-9, whose ages range between 12 and 13 years old. The group was selected using non-probability sampling, specifically convenience sampling, since it was the group assigned to

the researcher as an English teacher, and it was easily accessible for the implementation of the study.

Most of the students belong to low- to middle-income families and have been learning English for two to three years. Their English ability level can be classified as A1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

This group was chosen because the students proved low oral fluency and lack of confidence when speaking English during regular classroom activities, making them a suitable sample for the study's aims.

3.2. Instruments and Data Collection Techniques:

To collect reliable and valid data, three main instruments were employed:

3.2.1. Observation Checklist:

This tool was used to record students' participation, pronunciation, fluency, and use of vocabulary during the role play sessions. The checklist allowed the researcher to track progress over time and name specific aspects of oral performance that improved or remained constant.

3.2.2. Speaking Rubric:

The rubric was designed to assess students' oral fluency based on four main criteria: pronunciation, grammar accuracy, vocabulary use, and fluency. Each criterion was graded on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. The same rubric was applied during both the pre-test and the post-test to measure improvement objectively.

3.2.3. Questionnaire:

A semi-structured questionnaire was administered after the implementation phase to collect students' opinions and beliefs about the use of role plays in English classes. The questions

aimed to explore aspects such as motivation, enjoyment, confidence, and perceived usefulness of the activities.

The combination of these instruments ensured data triangulation, which enhances the validity of the study by allowing comparison and corroboration of results from diverse sources.

3.2.4. Procedure

The research was developed in four main stages over a period of six weeks, following a systematic and pedagogically oriented process.

3.2.5. Diagnostic Stage:

A pre-test was conducted to figure out the students' first level of oral fluency. During this test, students took part in short conversations on familiar topics (e.g., daily routines, hobbies, and school life). Their performances were evaluated using the speaking rubric.

3.2.6. Implementation Stage:

During six consecutive weeks, students took part in role play activities integrated into regular English lessons. Each week, they worked on different communicative situations related to real-life contexts, such as ordering food at a restaurant, visiting the doctor, asking for directions, or shopping.

The role plays were carefully designed to include vocabulary and grammar structures corresponding to the students' syllabus. Students worked in pairs or small groups to prepare their dialogues, practice pronunciation, and perform in front of the class. The researcher provided guidance, feedback, and encouragement to foster participation and confidence.

3.2.6.1. Observation Stage:

Throughout the intervention, the researcher used the observation checklist to record students' oral performance, interaction, and willingness to take part. This stage offered valuable qualitative insights into how students reacted and engaged with the role play strategy.

3.2.6.2. Post-Test and Questionnaire Stage:

After the six-week intervention, a post-test was administered using the same rubric and procedure as the pre-test. The results were compared to show improvements in oral fluency. In addition, the questionnaire was distributed to gather students' reflections and opinions about their learning experience through role plays.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis process involved both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

Quantitative data obtained from the speaking rubrics and checklists were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as means, percentages, and comparative graphs, to illustrate the progress made by students from the pre-test to the post-test.

Qualitative data from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed through content analysis. Responses were categorized into themes related to students' motivation, confidence, and feelings of role play activities.

By combining these two types of data, the researcher aimed to provide a holistic understanding of how role plays influence oral fluency development in EFL learners. The integration of numerical evidence with individual experiences allows for a more meaningful interpretation of the results.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical standards to ensure respect, confidentiality, and transparency throughout the research process.

Participants and their parents were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that participation was voluntary. Written consent was obtained prior to data collection. Students' identities were kept confidential by using codes instead of names in all data records and reports.

The study was conducted with the approval of the school administration and followed by institution.

3.5. Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a mixed-method approach that integrates both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The purpose of this design was to evaluate the effectiveness of role plays as a pedagogical strategy to enhance oral fluency among seventh-grade students learning English as a foreign language (EFL).

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a mixed-method design allows the researcher to collect, analyze, and integrate both numerical and narrative data to obtain a comprehensive understanding of a research problem. In this study, the quantitative part focused on measuring students' improvement in oral fluency through pre- and post-tests, while the qualitative part explored students' beliefs, attitudes, and motivation toward role play activities.

This research is also descriptive and applied in nature. As Hernández-Sampieri et al. (2018) point out, descriptive applied research aims to analyze a phenomenon within a real context to generate practical implications. In this case, the phenomenon under study is the implementation of role plays to promote oral communication in an EFL classroom.

3.6. Population and Sample

The study group consisted of all seventh-grade students enrolled at Liceo of Naranjo, found in Naranjo, Alajuela, during the academic year 2026. The sample included 40 students (40 females and 42 males) from section 7-2, 7-7 until 7-9, whose ages ranged from 12 to 13 years old.

A non-probability convenience sampling method was used because the selected group was accessible to the researcher and provided a suitable context for the study (Etikan et al., 2016). The students' English ability level corresponded to A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2018).

The group was chosen due to its low oral fluency and lack of confidence when speaking English during regular classes. These characteristics are aligned with the research goal of improving students' oral fluency using interactive and communicative strategies.

3.7. Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, three main instruments were used in the data collection process:

3.7.1. Observation Checklist

This tool was designed to record students' participation, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and fluency during role play activities. Observation enables the researcher to gather authentic data about classroom behavior and interaction (Mackey & Gass, 2016).

3.7.2. Speaking Rubric

The rubric assessed students' oral fluency in four categories: pronunciation, grammar accuracy, vocabulary range, and fluency. Each category was rated on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The same rubric was applied during both the pre-test and post-test to ensure consistency and allow objective comparison.

3.7.3. Questionnaire

A semi-structured questionnaire was administered after the intervention to explore students' beliefs of role plays as a learning strategy. It included both closed and open-ended questions, enabling the collection of quantitative frequencies and qualitative insights into students' motivation, confidence, and enjoyment.

The use of multiple instruments provided data triangulation, which strengthened the credibility of the findings by allowing comparison and validation from different perspectives (Denzin, 2017).

3.7.4. Procedure

The study was conducted over a six-week period and consisted of four main stages: diagnosis, implementation, observation, and evaluation.

3.7.5. Diagnostic Stage

A pre-test was applied to find students' first oral fluency level. During this test, students take part in brief conversations on familiar topics, such as hobbies, daily routines, and school activities. Their performance was evaluated using the speaking rubric.

3.7.6. Implementation Stage

During six consecutive weeks, role play activities were integrated into English lessons. Each session focused on communicative scenarios aligned with real-life situations, such as ordering food, shopping, visiting the doctor, or asking for directions.

Role plays were prepared collaboratively by students in pairs or small groups. According to Ladousse (2009), role play fosters communicative competence by simulating authentic language use in meaningful contexts. The teacher functioned as facilitator, providing feedback, checking pronunciation, and encouraging active participation.

3.7.7. Observation Stage

The researcher used the observation checklist to record behavioral and linguistic aspects of students' performance during the activities. Notes were taken about pronunciation accuracy, interaction quality, and confidence levels.

3.7.8 Post-Test and Questionnaire Stage

After the intervention, a post-test was conducted using the same rubric as the pre-test to measure progress in oral fluency. Finally, the questionnaire was administered to gather students' reflections and beliefs about the effectiveness of role play in their language learning process.

3.8. Data Analysis

The data collected from the instruments were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Quantitative data from the rubrics and checklists were analyzed through descriptive statistics, including means and percentages, to compare pre-test and post-test results and name improvement trends. Graphs and tables were used to illustrate differences in students' oral performance.

Qualitative data from the open-ended questionnaire responses were analyzed using content analysis, a technique that involves coding and categorizing data to name common themes

and patterns (Miles et al., 2019). Themes such as “motivation,” “confidence,” and “enjoyment” were used to interpret students’ beliefs of role plays.

This combination of methods allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem by integrating numerical data and subjective experiences.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were carefully followed throughout the research process. Participants and their parents were informed about the study’s goals, procedures, and voluntary nature. Written consent was obtained prior to data collection.

Students’ identities were kept confidential by using pseudonyms or numerical codes in all documentation. The data were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely. Approval to conduct the study was granted by the school administration.

These ethical practices align with the standards proposed by the American Psychological Association (2020) to ensure participants’ rights, privacy, and dignity are protected.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through classroom observation of seventh-grade students at Liceo de Naranjo. The purpose of this analysis is to examine students' participation, attitudes, and challenges in learning English as a foreign language. Additionally, this chapter explores the role of motivation, teaching strategies, and the educational context in shaping students' learning experiences.

4.2 Classroom Observation and Student Participation

The observation of seventh-grade students at Liceo de Naranjo was conducted for approximately one hour per group. In each case, students' behaviors were systematically examined to analyze their responses to English language instruction. The primary objective was to determine the extent to which students actively participate in classroom activities and how they interact when the teacher provides specific instructions.

During the lesson, students exhibited varying levels of engagement—ranging from high to low or no interest—particularly when the teacher used flashcards on the board as a strategy to facilitate vocabulary recognition. Nevertheless, at the end of the session, students were asked a series of questions related to the topic to gain deeper insight into their perspectives and to address potential concerns regarding the content presented.

4.3 Student Perceptions and Learning Difficulties

A total of five questions were administered to identify the underlying reasons for students' responses. These questions were intended to elicit information about students' prior knowledge, attitudes, and perceived difficulties in learning English. Examples of these questions include: Who was familiar with this vocabulary before it was introduced by the teacher? Who has previously attended a bilingual school? Who enjoys learning English? Who finds English difficult? Who does not like the English language at all?

The findings indicate that some students experience difficulties in learning English not only due to academic, economic, or cognitive factors but also because of low motivation.

Motivation has been widely recognized as a key factor in second language acquisition, as it directly influences students' engagement and achievement (Gardner, 1985). Furthermore, the lack of dynamic and interactive teaching strategies may contribute to reduce student interest and participation (Harmer, 2007).

4.4 Importance of Speaking Skills Development

One of the main concerns expressed by students is the need to improve their oral communication skills. Specifically, students highlighted the importance of expanding their vocabulary to engage in meaningful conversations and increase their confidence when speaking English.

According to Brown (2001), communicative competence is enhanced when learners are given opportunities to practice language in real-life contexts. Therefore, it is essential not only to reinforce the development of writing, reading, and listening skills but also to prioritize speaking activities. These activities should create a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable making mistakes, engaging in self-correction, and learning through interaction.

4.5 Educational Context and Motivation in Costa Rica

The educational context of Costa Rica plays a significant role in shaping students' experiences in learning English. Despite the country's cultural richness and diversity, a considerable portion of the population is not proficient in English. As a result, educational programs in schools and high schools often focus on providing only the basic elements of the language, particularly in terms of speaking skills.

This situation highlights the need to incorporate more practical and dynamic approaches to language teaching. The transition from sixth grade in primary school to seventh grade in secondary education represents a critical stage in which student motivation can either increase or decline. Therefore, it is essential to implement strategies that foster interest and engagement in learning English during this period.

Moreover, students' experiences throughout their learning process reinforce the importance of developing strong motivation. Understanding the relevance of English as a global language can help students recognize the opportunities it offers for their future academic and professional development.

4.6 General Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of classroom observation at Liceo de Naranjo demonstrates that student participation and motivation are fundamental factors in the learning of English as a foreign language. While some students show interest and engagement, others face challenges influenced by both internal and external factors.

The results suggest that greater emphasis should be placed on the development of speaking skills through interactive and meaningful activities. Additionally, fostering motivation during key transitional stages in education is essential to promote positive attitudes toward language learning.

Finally, strengthening students' English proficiency not only contributes to their academic growth but also enhances their future opportunities in an increasingly globalized world, where communication skills are essential for personal and professional success.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological framework used to conduct the study. It outlines the research approach, design, participants, data collection instruments, and procedures applied to analyze students' participation and motivation in learning English as a foreign language at Liceo de Naranjo.

3.2 Research Approach

The present study follows a qualitative research approach, as it seeks to understand students' behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions regarding English language learning.

Qualitative research allows for an in-depth analysis of participants' experiences within their natural educational context (Creswell, 2014).

This approach is appropriate because it focuses on interpreting students' reactions, participation, and motivation during classroom activities rather than measuring numerical data.

3.3 Research Design

This study is based on a descriptive research design, as it aims to describe and analyze the observed phenomena without manipulating variables. According to Hernández Sampieri et al. (2014), descriptive studies focus on specifying the characteristics and profiles of individuals or groups under study.

Through classroom observation and questioning, this research identifies patterns in student participation, interest, and difficulties in learning English.

3.4 Participants

The participants in this study were seventh-grade students from Liceo de Naranjo. The sample included different groups observed during regular English classes.

Students presented diverse levels of English proficiency, as well as varying attitudes toward the language. This diversity allowed for a broader understanding of the factors influencing motivation and participation in the classroom.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

To collect data, the following techniques and instruments were used:

3.5.1 Classroom Observation

Classroom observation was the primary technique used in this study. Each group was observed for approximately one hour. This method allowed the researcher to analyze students' behavior, participation, and interaction during English lessons in a natural setting.

According to Harmer (2007), observation is a valuable tool for understanding how teaching strategies influence student engagement.

3.5.2 Questioning

At the end of each observation session, students were asked five structured questions.

These questions aimed to gather information about their prior knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding English learning.

The questions included:

- Who was familiar with the vocabulary before it was introduced?
- Who has attended a bilingual school?
- Who likes the English language?
- Who finds English difficult?

- Who does not like English at all?

This instrument helped identify key factors affecting students' motivation and participation.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was carried out in several stages:

1. *Authorization*: Permission was obtained from the institution and the English teacher to conduct the observations.
2. *Observation*: Each group was observed for approximately one hour during regular class time.
3. *Interaction*: The researcher observed students' participation and reactions to teaching strategies such as the use of flashcards.
4. *Questioning*: At the end of the class, students responded to five questions related to the lesson.
5. *Recording Data*: Notes were taken during and after the observation to document relevant behaviors and responses.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive method. Observational notes and students' responses were examined to identify patterns related to:

- Level of participation

- Interest in learning English
- Difficulties in speaking
- Motivation toward classroom activities

The analysis focused on interpreting students' behaviors and responses in order to draw meaningful conclusions about their learning process.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

This study followed basic ethical principles. Students' identities were kept confidential, and the information collected was used exclusively for academic purposes. Participation was observed in a natural classroom environment without causing any disruption to the learning process.

3.9 Summary

In summary, this chapter described the methodological framework used to analyze students' participation and motivation in learning English. The qualitative and descriptive approach, combined with classroom observation and questioning, provided valuable insights into students' learning experiences at Liceo de Naranjo.

Table 1

Student Participation in Oral English Activities (2026)

Level of Participation Number of Students Percentage (%)

High participation	28	30%
Medium participation	36	39%
Low participation	18	20%
No participation	10	11%
Total	92	100%

Note. Data collected from seventh-grade students at Liceo de Naranjo in 2026.

Table 2

Participation in Oral Activities by Type (2026)

Type of Oral Activity Participate Do Not Participate Total

Reading aloud	65	27	92
Pair dialogues	58	34	92
Answering questions	50	42	92
Short presentations	37	55	92

Note. The table shows student participation across different types of oral English activities.

Table 3

Difficulties in Oral Participation (2026)

Type of Difficulty Number of Students Percentage (%)

Lack of vocabulary	38	41%
Fear of making mistakes	24	26%
Low motivation	20	22%
Lack of comprehension	10	11%
Total	92	100%

Note. Percentages are based on the total number of students observed (N = 92).

Table 4

Students' Interest in Oral Activities (2026)

Level of Interest	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
High	30	33%
Medium	40	43%
Low	22	24%
Total	92	100%

Note. The data reflect students' self-reported interest in participating in oral English activities.

4.7 Analysis of Table 1

Table 1 shows the distribution of students' participation in oral English activities. The results indicate that the majority of students (39%) demonstrate a medium level of participation, followed by 30% who show high participation. However, 20% of students present low participation, and 11% do not participate at all.

These findings suggest that while a considerable number of students are engaged in oral activities, there is still a significant group that remains passive. This lack of participation may be associated with factors such as low confidence, limited vocabulary, or fear of making mistakes. Therefore, it is necessary to implement strategies that promote a more inclusive and participatory learning environment.

4.8 Analysis of Table 2

Table 2 illustrates student participation according to the type of oral activity. The data reveal that students are more likely to participate in structured activities such as reading

aloud (65 students) and dialogues in pairs (58 students). In contrast, participation decreases in activities that require higher levels of language production, such as answering questions (50 students) and short presentations (37 students).

This trend indicates that students feel more comfortable in guided activities but show reluctance when required to produce language independently. This reinforces the importance of gradually increasing the level of difficulty in speaking tasks to build students' confidence and communicative competence.

4.9 Analysis of Table 3

Table 3 presents the main difficulties students face when participating in oral activities. The most significant difficulty identified is the lack of vocabulary (41%), followed by fear of making mistakes (26%), low motivation (22%), and lack of comprehension (11%).

These results highlight that linguistic limitations and affective factors play a crucial role in students' oral performance. Fear of making mistakes can inhibit participation, which aligns with previous research emphasizing the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment (Brown, 2001).

4.10 Analysis of Table 4

Table 4 shows students' level of interest in oral English activities. Most students (43%) report a medium level of interest, while 33% show high interest and 24% demonstrate low interest.

Although the general level of interest is moderate, the presence of a significant percentage of students with low interest suggests the need for more engaging and dynamic teaching strategies. Increasing student motivation is essential to enhance participation and improve language learning outcomes.

4.11 General Interpretation of Results

Overall, the results indicate that student participation in oral English activities is influenced by a combination of linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical factors. While many students show willingness to participate, their performance is often limited by insufficient vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, and low motivation.

Additionally, the type of activity plays a key role in determining participation levels. Structured and guided activities tend to generate higher engagement, whereas more demanding tasks require greater support and scaffolding.

These findings suggest that teachers should implement communicative and student-centered strategies that promote active participation, encourage risk-taking, and provide opportunities for meaningful interaction. By doing so, students can gradually develop their speaking skills and gain confidence in using the English language.

Table N° 1

Participation Level	Students	Percentage
High	25	27.2%

Medium	40	43.5%
Low	27	29.3%
Total	92	100%

Figure 2

Students' Participation in Oral Activities

2. Speaking Level Graphic

Table 2

Speaking Level	Students	Percentage
Good	20	21.7%
Regular	45	48.9%
Poor	27	29.3%
Total	92	100%

Students' Speaking Skill Level

3. Improvement after apply strategies.

Improvement Level	Students	Percentage
Improved	50	54.3%
No Improvement	42	45.7%

Total	92	100%
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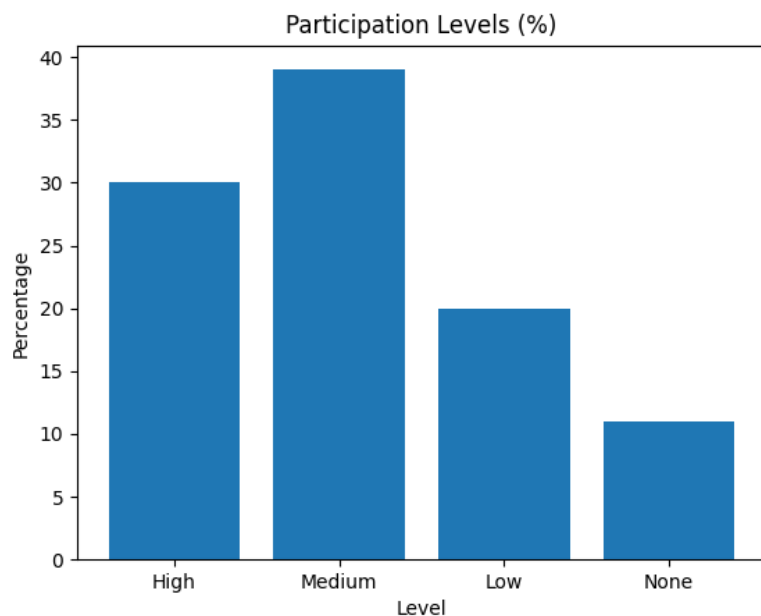
Improvement in Speaking Skills After Implementation.

Confidence Level	Students	Percentage
Confident	22	23.9%
Slightly Confident	38	41.3%
Not Confident	32	34.8%
Total	92	100%

Figure (Bar Chart)

The bar chart illustrates the percentage distribution of students' participation levels in oral English activities. It can be observed that most students demonstrate a medium level of participation (39%), followed by high participation (30%).

Graphic 1

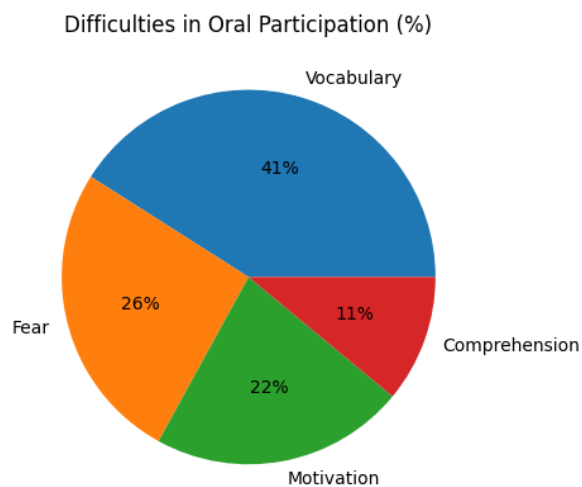


Created by: Oscar Mario Ballesteros Chaves /25-03-2026

Figure (Pie Chart – Difficulties)

The chart shows that the main difficulty faced by students is lack of vocabulary (41%), followed by fear of making mistakes (26%), which significantly affects oral performance.

Graphic 2

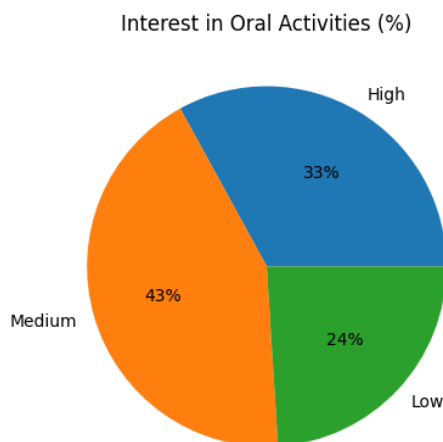


Created by: Oscar Mario Ballesteros Chaves /08-04-2025

Figure (Pie Chart – Interest)

The chart indicates that most students have a medium level of interest (43%) in oral activities, while a smaller percentage shows low interest (24%).

Graphic 3



Created by: Oscar Mario Ballesteros Chaves /09-04-2025

Implementation of an Oral Skills Strategy Focused on Speaking for Seventh-Grade Students

Introduction

The development of speaking skills is a fundamental component in the acquisition of a foreign language, particularly at the seventh-grade level. Students at this stage are generally classified within basic proficiency levels (A1–A2), requiring structured opportunities to practice oral communication. However, many learners face challenges such as limited vocabulary, low confidence, and fear of making mistakes. For this reason, it is essential to implement a strategy that focuses exclusively on speaking as the primary skill in the English classroom.

Objective of the Strategy

The main objective of this strategy is to improve students' oral communication skills using simple language structures, basic vocabulary, and interactive speaking activities.

Additionally, the strategy aims to enhance pronunciation, fluency, and student participation in a supportive environment.

Theoretical Foundation

This strategy is based on communicative language teaching principles, which emphasize interaction as a key element in language learning. According to Stephen Krashen, language acquisition occurs in low-anxiety environments where learners are exposed to comprehensible input. In addition, Merrill Swain argues that language production,

particularly speaking, is essential for developing communicative competence, as it allows learners to process and internalize language more effectively.

Description of the Strategy

The strategy is organized into stages that progressively develop students' speaking abilities:

- Warm-up (oral interaction)
- Modeling (teacher-led speaking input)
- Controlled speaking practice
- Communicative speaking activities
- Free speaking production
- Oral feedback

Figure 1

Stages of the Speaking Strategy

Warm-up → Modeling → Controlled Practice → Communicative Practice → Free
Production → Feedback

Note. This figure represents the sequence of stages used to develop speaking skills progressively.

Tables

Table 1

Distribution of Time for Speaking Activities

Stage	Time (Minutes)	Purpose
Warm-up	5–10	Activate speaking
Modeling	10	Provide language input
Controlled Practice	10–15	Practice with support
Communicative Practice	15–20	Encourage interaction
Free Production	5–10	Independent speaking
Feedback	5	Improve performance

Note. The table shows the approximate time allocated to each speaking stage in a 40–60-minute lesson.

Table 2

Tools for the Development of Speaking Skills in Seventh-Grade Students

Category	Tool / Activity	Description	Purpose
Interactive Classroom Tools	Flashcards and Visual Aids	Use images to prompt students to describe and create sentences orally	Develop vocabulary and basic speaking
	Role-play Cards	Students act out real-life situations (e.g., restaurant, school)	Promote real communication and confidence

Digital Tools	Conversation Cards	Cards with simple questions for pair interaction	Encourage question-answer practice
	Speaking Board Games	Students answer questions to move forward in a game	Increase motivation and participation
	Flip	Students record short videos responding to prompts	Improve fluency and pronunciation
	Kahoot! (adapted)	Students explain answers orally after each question	Reinforce speaking through engagement
	Padlet	Students upload voice notes or short recordings	Facilitate participation
	Vocaroo	Simple voice recording tool for speaking tasks	Focus on oral production
	Structured Speaking Activities	Information Gap Activities	Students exchange missing information through questions
	Find Someone Who...	Students ask classmates questions to complete a task	Promote authentic communication
	Think-Pair-Share	Students think, discuss, and share responses	Encourage interaction
	Describe and Guess	One student describes, others guess	Build confidence progressively
			Develop fluency and vocabulary

Support Tools	Sentence Starters	Provide sentence structures (e.g., “I like...”)	Support beginner-level speaking
	Word Banks	Provide vocabulary lists for activities	Facilitate communication
	Pronunciation Drills	Repetition and modeling exercises	Improve pronunciation
	Assessment Tools	Evaluate pronunciation, Speaking Rubric fluency, vocabulary, and participation	Measure speaking performance
	Peer Feedback	Students give simple feedback to classmates	Promote reflection and interaction
	Cards		

Note. This table presents a variety of tools and activities designed to support the development of speaking skills in seventh-grade students at basic proficiency levels (A1–A2).

Rubric for Speaking Assessment

Table 3

Speaking Skills Assessment Rubric

Criteria	4 – Excellent	3 – Good	2 – Basic	1 – Needs Improvement
Pronunciation	Clear and accurate	Minor errors	Frequent errors	Difficult to understand
Fluency	Speaks smoothly	Some hesitation	Frequent pauses	Cannot maintain speech
Vocabulary	Uses appropriate vocabulary	Limited vocabulary	Very basic vocabulary	Inadequate vocabulary
Interaction	Responds and asks questions easily	Responds with some difficulty	Limited interaction	Does not interact
Participation	Always participates actively	Participates sometimes	Rarely participates	Does not participate

Note. This rubric is used to evaluate students’ speaking performance during classroom activities.

Assessment of Speaking Skills

Assessment is conducted through continuous observation using the rubric presented in Table 2. This allows the teacher to evaluate key aspects of speaking, including pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, interaction, and participation. The use of structured assessment tools ensures objectivity and consistency in evaluating student performance.

Expected Outcomes

The implementation of this speaking-focused strategy is expected to improve students' confidence and ability to communicate in English. Learners will be able to produce short sentences, participate in basic conversations, and demonstrate improved pronunciation and fluency. Additionally, the strategy promotes an interactive classroom environment where speaking becomes a central component of learning.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the main conclusions derived from the findings of the study, as well as a set of recommendations aimed at improving the development of English-speaking skills in seventh-grade students at Liceo de Naranjo. These recommendations are based on the analysis of the data collected through observation, surveys, and assessment instruments, and are aligned with current approaches to language teaching that emphasize communicative competence and student-centered learning.

5.2 Conclusions

Conclusions

General Objective: Enhancing Oral Expression

The key goal of this study, trying to look at how role-playing affects the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at Liceo de Naranjo, showed clear results: the method works well. When taking on different roles, students did more than just practice lessons; they used the English language in real and useful ways. This way of teaching not only made them speak more smoothly and communicate

better, but it also changed the feeling in the classroom, helping more students join in and easing worries about using another language.

Specific Objective 1: Identifying Learning Barriers

After looking at the problems these seventh graders faced, it was obvious that they had a hard time without saying much. Not knowing many words and being very scared of making mistakes often hold students back. This lack of belief in themselves, along with not having enough chances to practice speaking, creates walls that stop them from talking well. The results show that we need to move away from strict teaching styles and create a kinder, more active place to learn where students feel strong enough to try things.

Specific Objective 2: The Impact of Implementation

Using role plays really changed the way the classroom felt. Instead of just sitting and learning, students showed much more excitement and imagination. By acting out scenes from real life, the classroom became a place where students were the focus, and the language felt "alive," instead of just something in a book. It proved that when students get chances to act and talk with each other, they care a lot more about getting better.

Specific Objective 3: Evaluating the Final Results

The final check of this teaching style showed big steps forward in how well the students could speak. They did more than just say words right; their confidence, smoothness, and way of saying words got better in a way people could notice. It's important that the students start to feel differently, as they were much more willing to join in English talks. This says that role-playing is more than just fun; it is a strong way to grow real communication skills in an EFL setting.

Key Takeaways

Area of Improvement: Human Impact

Fluency: Students went from broken sentences to talks that flowed better and sounded more real.

Confidence The "fear factor" went down as the classroom turned into a safe place to practice.

Engagement. Just memorizing things was replaced by using what they learned in creative, real-world ways.

Key Takeaways

Area of Improvement	Human Impact
Fluency	Students transitioned from choppy phrases to smoother, more natural dialogue.
Confidence	The "fear factor" decreased as the classroom became a safe space for practice.
Engagement	Rote memorization was replaced by creative, real-world application.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the development of English-speaking skills in seventh-grade students at Liceo de Naranjo:

First, it is strongly recommended that teachers adopt a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, prioritizing the use of English in meaningful and authentic contexts.

Instructional activities should encourage students to express ideas, opinions, and personal experiences rather than focusing exclusively on grammatical accuracy.

Second, teachers should increase the frequency and quality of speaking activities in the classroom. It is essential to provide students with regular opportunities to practice oral communication through structured and purposeful tasks.

Third, the use of interactive and student-centered strategies should be promoted. Activities such as role plays, debates, interviews, and oral presentations can significantly enhance students' fluency and confidence.

Additionally, it is recommended to foster collaborative learning environments, where students can work in pairs or small groups. This type of interaction allows learners to practice speaking in a less stressful setting and supports peer learning.

Another key recommendation is the creation of a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere, where mistakes are viewed as part of the learning process. Teachers should encourage participation and provide constructive feedback to reduce anxiety and build confidence.

The integration of technological resources is also highly recommended. Tools such as videos, mobile applications, and audio recordings can provide additional opportunities for speaking practice and increase student engagement.

Moreover, it is important to implement appropriate assessment methods, including the use of rubrics that evaluate fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and interaction. Continuous assessment will help monitor students' progress and identify areas for improvement.

It is also suggested that schools promote extracurricular activities, such as English conversation clubs and cultural events, to provide students with more opportunities to practice speaking in authentic contexts.

Furthermore, educational institutions should support ongoing teacher training programs, focusing on communicative methodologies and effective strategies for teaching speaking skills.

Finally, it is recommended that the English curriculum be adjusted to ensure that speaking skills are treated as a central component of language learning, with clear objectives, teaching strategies, and evaluation criteria.

5.3 Recommendations (Expanded Version)

In addition to the previously mentioned recommendations, the following suggestions are proposed to further enhance the development of English-speaking skills in seventh-grade students at Liceo de Naranjo:

It is recommended to incorporate task-based learning (TBL) activities, where students' complete meaningful tasks using English as a tool for communication. This approach promotes authentic language use and helps students develop fluency through problem-solving and interaction.

Teachers should implement scaffolding strategies to support students during speaking activities. This includes providing sentence starters, vocabulary lists, and guided practice before asking students to perform independently.

It is advisable to include pronunciation-focused instruction as part of regular lessons. Specific attention should be given to intonation, stress patterns, and difficult sounds to improve students' intelligibility.

The use of formative assessment techniques is highly recommended. Teachers should provide ongoing feedback during speaking activities rather than relying solely on summative evaluations.

Students should be encouraged to engage in self-assessment and peer-assessment, allowing them to reflect on their own performance and become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

It is important to promote student autonomy by encouraging learners to practice speaking outside the classroom, for example, by recording themselves, participating in online conversations, or using language-learning apps.

Teachers should incorporate content-based instruction (CBI), integrating topics from other subjects to make speaking activities more meaningful and relevant to students' academic context.

It is recommended to use authentic materials, such as real-life videos, songs, interviews, and podcasts, to expose students to natural language use and different accents.

Classroom management strategies should be adapted to ensure that speaking time is maximized, reducing teacher talk time and increasing student talk time.

It is suggested to implement project-based learning (PBL), where students work on longer-term projects that require oral presentations, collaboration, and continuous use of English.

Teachers should address individual differences among learners, adapting speaking activities to different proficiency levels, learning styles, and student needs.

It is recommended to establish clear speaking objectives for each lesson, so that students understand the purpose of the activity and what is expected from them.

Schools should promote parental involvement, encouraging families to support students' exposure to English through media, conversations, or practice at home.

It is important to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies through continuous action research, allowing teachers to adjust their methods based on classroom realities.

Finally, it is recommended to create a long-term institutional plan for improving speaking skills, ensuring sustainability and consistency in the implementation of communicative methodologies.

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Annexes

Table: Suggested New Roles for Seventh Graders in Role Plays

<u>Difficulty Level</u>	<u>Scenario Type</u>	<u>Student Role(s)</u>	<u>Targeted Language Skill</u>
Beginner	Everyday Life	Customer ordering food / Shop assistant	Basic vocabulary, greetings, Simple questions, polite expressions
Beginner	School Context	Classmate asking for homework / Teacher answering questions	Simple question formation, classroom-related vocabulary, Short responses
Intermediate	Social Interaction	Friend giving advice / Friend receiving advice	Conditional sentences, expressing opinions, making suggestions
Intermediate	Conflict Resolution	Mediator / Disagreeing peer	Polite disagreement, negotiation, turn-taking, expressing emotions
Intermediate	Community / Local Services	Police officer giving directions / Tourist asking for directions	Asking for and giving directions, prepositions, modal verbs
Advanced	Problem-Solving	Project leader / Team member	Giving instructions, coordinating tasks, future tense, persuasive language

Advanced	Debate / Opinion Exchange	Debater / Moderator	Expressing opinions, defending arguments, connectors, complex sentences
Advanced	Professional Context	Doctor / Patient or Interviewer / Interviewee	Formal language, question formation, descriptive language, professional vocabulary
All Levels	Creative / Imaginative	Superhero / Villain, Journalist / Celebrity	Storytelling, imagination, narrative structures, past tense, role-specific vocabulary

Implementation Notes

- **Role Rotation:** Encourage students to swap roles within the same scenario to practice different perspectives.
- **Progressive Difficulty:** Start with simple everyday situations and gradually introduce more complex social or professional contexts.
- **Scaffolding:** Provide key vocabulary, sentence frames, or prompts for beginner and intermediate roles.
- **Assessment Focus:** Emphasize communication, fluency, and participation over grammatical perfection.

