Role Play to Develop Oral Production of the English Language in Undergraduate Engineering Students

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Abstract. This research aimed to develop the oral production of the English language in undergraduate engineering students at a national university. It was based on the need to improve the teaching of oral language production to promote oral ability in students. The research is interpretive paradigm educational. The sample consisted of four teachers and 26 students. Questionnaires and observation were used to collect data in this study. The information was processed and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively, which allowed the generation of emerging categories. The diagnosis showed that teachers apply strategies that do not promote oral production in students or are contextualized. It is concluded that the scientific contribution of research is the design of the didactic strategy, based on the role play, which will generate a more interactive, contextualized and reflective teaching-learning process.

Keywords: Didactic strategy, Oral Production, Communicative ability, Role play

1 Introduction

This Nowadays, spoken English has become a great need for people in the workplace, academic and personal. The mere fact that Peru has improved its economy makes large international companies decide to invest in the country and, therefore, English is required as a free language for different purposes. [1] point out that, English proficiency is increasingly necessary for business and international communication; in that sense, it is linked to prospects of economic competitiveness and growth in the global economy. The national university is a technical professional training institution that contemplates the English course as part of the academic training it provides to its students. The objectives of the oral production skills of this course are based on

international standards established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Foreign Languages (CEFR).

Due to the importance of the course, lately, it has been observed that the oral production skill is not being adequately worked by the teacher in the teaching-learning process, because the students do not show up to the standards when asked to hold a Natural conversation in English in different social contexts. In this regard, [2] in a research on the improvement of oral ability, affirm that speaking a second language is important for the development of humanity in different areas; as political, economic, social and cultural. Nowadays it is essential to be aware of this detail, otherwise we could be excluded from the social environment, which is globalized.

The teachers of the institution have evidenced that they are not using the appropriate strategies and techniques of oral communication, which demonstrate a lack of didactic knowledge. Many of them only take their students to a simple grammar teaching and structure formulation. [3] emphasizes that as language teachers we must look for new ways to provide students with the most effective and efficient language learning experiences possible. For the reasons stated above, it is foreseeable that students will not reach the expected communicative level to express themselves naturally and fluently. To propose role play, as a didactic strategy to develop the oral production of the English language in the students of the Systems Engineering career of a national university, is the main objective of this research to be able to achieve the transformation of the object of study from its initial state to the ideal state. [3] states that activities must often be carried out through contextualized role plays in various social situations to put into practice what they have learned in class.

2 A Study on the current state of the teaching strategies for the development of oral production in English in undergraduate engineering students.

2.1 Methodology

The research is part of the interpretive or naturalist and socio-critical paradigm [4, 5]. The research was developed through a qualitative and quantitative approach in the educational context as it seeks the study of processes and objects of education to contribute to the improvement of educational practice. In this regard [6,7] consider that educational research must be committed to improving the quality of the teaching-learning process

The type of research is applied educational with descriptive design since it seeks to solve the problem of oral production. [8] emphasizes that it starts from a problematic situation, which needs to be intervened and improved. With regard to this research, the population is made up of 90 teachers and 800 students from the systems engineering specialty of a National University of Cañete.

Table 1. Study population.

Carreer	Subject	subtotal

		Male	Female	
Systems Engineer	Teachers	52	38	90
	Students	455	345	800
Total		507	383	890

The type of sampling applied in the research was not probabilistic, that is, at the discretion of the researcher and for convenience, in this sense the study sample was made up of four teachers of the specialty of the English language taught in the institution under study and 26 English students, from the Systems Engineering degree of a national university. The unit of analysis is made up of teachers of the specialty of English, students of English and specialized bibliography.

Different methods, techniques and instruments were used during the investigation process. Methods such as: the historical-logic to analyze the historical evolution of the object studied in the research background search; the analysis-synthesis was used during the analysis of the information both qualitatively and quantitatively; the induction and deduction method was used to establish logical inferences about the problem; The modeling method was used to model the proposal based on the theoretical and methodological foundations and to be specified in the design of the didactic strategy; the empirical method was used in class observation, teacher interviews and student surveys; the mathematical and statistical methods were applied for the percentage analysis during the processing of the data obtained and allow the corresponding analysis with the use of the statistical package SPSS-v25 and the Atlas program.

2.2 Moments of the research process

First moment: Data reduction and generation of categories: The instruments were developed and validated by the experts for their application, the information collected from the field was collected, the information was processed qualitatively and quantitatively, the result was analyzed through the Atlas software and the statistical package SPSS-v25. New emerging categories were generated with data reduction.

Second moment: the comparison and classification of categories began with the triangulation process, whose objective was to generate the first conclusions from the "oral production" category by comparing and relating the data by similarity or contrast. During the analysis process all the information collected was integrated through the pedagogical test, the interview and the observation to classes.

Third moment: in the interpretation and discussion of the results, the similarities, contradictions, causes and consequences found about the "oral production" category from dialectical and holistic positions were analyzed in order to reach the partial conclusions of the investigation.

2.3 Results

Survey conducted to students. The questionnaire applied to 26 students allowed to obtain relevant information. Regarding the question about the importance of the content of the English subject for them, it was evident that 53.85%, 14 students, expressed that the content of the English subject is important; 42.31%, 11 students, said the course is very important and 3.85%, a student, said it is of little importance. It is then affirmed that the student does believe that learning English is necessary and important.

Table 2. How important is the content of the English subject you receive in class?

	Frequency	Percentage
Little important	1	3.8
Important	14	53.8
Very Important	11	42.3
Total	26	100.0

Regarding the question if the English subject contributes to the development of communication skills for professional training, it was evidenced that 65.38%, 17 students, said that the course does not contribute much to the development of their communication skills; 19.23%, five students, said that the course contributes little to the development of their communication skills; 15.95%, four students, said that much contributes the course to the development of their communication skills. This indicates that the teacher does not promote communication strategies that promote oral production in class.

Table 3. Does the English course contribute to the development of your communication skills for your professional training?

	Frequency	Percentage
Little bit	5	19.2
Not Much	17	65.4
A lot	14	15.4
Total	26	100.0

When asking the question: Does the teacher encourage an active learning method in class? 65.38%, 17 students, said that sometimes the teacher encourages an active learning method in class and 34.62%, nine students, revealed that the teacher does promote an active learning method in class. Which shows that the teacher does not work an appropriate learning method that involves the participation of all students.

Table 4. Does the teacher propose participatory tasks or activities at the beginning of each activity?

	Frequency	Percentage
Never	1	3.8
Rarely	12	46.2

Usually	12	46.2
Always	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

Teacher Interview. The interviews with three teachers were analyzed and codified through the application of the Atlas program. Two teachers showed that they have some mastery of theoretical and methodological knowledge about communication strategies, but in practice they fail to apply them correctly. With regard to their knowledge of oral production, they agree that it is a very important category since it promotes interaction and the ability to function in daily life, however, one of them said that it is the most difficult of the four skills.

Regarding the question, how do you arouse interest and motivation in your students at the beginning of each class session activity? One of them stated that the motivation must be contextualized and energized so that the students can connect that activity to their life and be memorable. Another interviewee stated that the motivation must be permanent through experiential strategies.

Class observation to teachers. The observations were made to two teachers, this was analyzed and codified through the application of the Atlas program. From the findings found, the punctuality that both teachers have to reach the classroom can be rescued. An important aspect to highlight was the varied materials (visual and digital) available to work. However, they do not make proper use of these resources. One of the teachers said he knew didactic strategies, but in practice I did not carry it out.

Another of the findings that could be obtained was that both teachers often used Spanish to explain some points. It is clear that teachers are not aware of the importance of using and adapting the level of language to the group taught.

The communicative activities were very scarce and rarely productive, minimum monitoring of the production of the groups or peers, which caused the students' performances to be unproductive.

An intense grammatical practice was evident. In one of the observations, what led the students to boredom and that they begin to focus on other issues. In this regard, we firmly believe that in a class session there should be simulation activities, dramatizations and above all role play to generate an experiential environment and lead the student to live the language.

3 A didactic role-play-based intervention for the development of the oral production in English

3.1 Theoretical reflections on role play and oral production

The role play as a didactic strategy belongs to the communicative approach, theory of the nature of learning a second language. [3] states that students are often taken to perform activities through role plays or dramatizations, contextualized in various social situations to put into practice what they learned in class. [9] state that with the communicative approach, emphasis is placed on using the language rather than learning it structurally. Students are responsible for their learning with tools provided by the teacher and point out that there is an intrinsic motivation. [10], argues that through play you can strengthen and strengthen social relations with family, friends and other people in society.

[11], due to its didactic nature, considers three types of role play: (a) Role play controlled through clues and signals; (b) Role play controlled through clues and information; and (c) Role play controlled through the situation and objectives. [12] points out that, the role play would be the representation of a real or unreal context that generates a lot of oral production in the classroom, while [13] points out that, role play is a strategy that allows students to assume and represent roles in the context of real or realistic situations typical of the academic or professional world.

[14] defines oral production as a communicative process, in which a message is transmitted and constructed in an intentional way. For this, two important tasks are required. The first is to make the decision of the content of the message; and secondly to formulate the order and relation of the words, as well as the formulation of the sounds. Similarly, [15], states that oral production is considered the skill and ability of orality in communicating messages actively.

3.2 The Role-play didactic intervention

The proposed strategy is designed to develop and improve oral production in students of the English course of the systems engineering career of the third cycle of a National University in Cañete, an institution with more than 5 years dedicated to the training of professionals, to research, and university extension and projection.

The proposal based on the diagnosis is based on the emerging categories, obtained in the field work, which will be useful for the construction of the modeling and achieve the transformation of the object of study.

The modeled strategy is based on the role play that has an interactive and communicative nature which is highly essential, since it has the function of favoring significant oral skills in students in situations of daily life and allows the student to give opportunities to express ideas and respect coexistence. In this regard, [10], argues that the game develops personality and character and learns to deal with situations and decisions that must be addressed.

3.2.1 Functional graphic design of the proposal

The didactic strategy based on the role play to develop the oral production of the students, is a proposal that emerges when reflecting on the result of the field work, the situation of the teacher to teach the oral ability and the difficulties that the student shows for be able to communicate.

We focus on the didactic strategy How is it applied? What is it for? What is your end? What are the improvements when applied to the object of study? All of this, applied in a didactic way, will lead us to strengthen the communicative practice and the improvement in the teaching and learning practice.
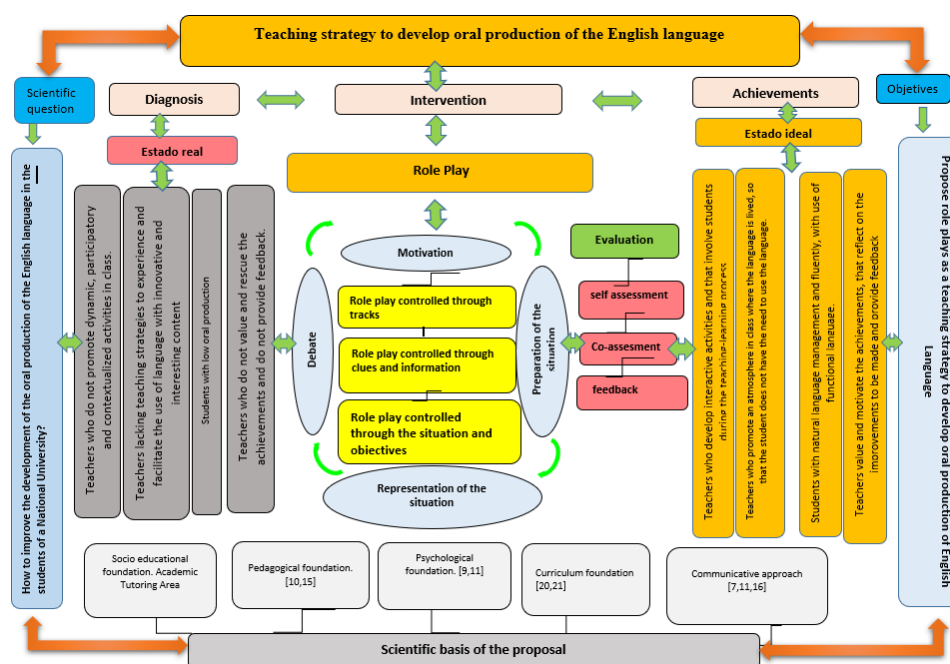

Fig. 1 Functional graphic design of the proposal

3.2.2 By staging and acting we improve our oral language ability.

The role play proposal is designed in three learning sessions, each session based on one type of game. (a) Role-controlled games through clues, (b) role-plays controlled through clues and information, and (c) role-play controlled through the situation and objectives. Each session designed in four stages: (a) motivation, (b) preparation of the situation, (c) representation of the situation, and (d) debate.
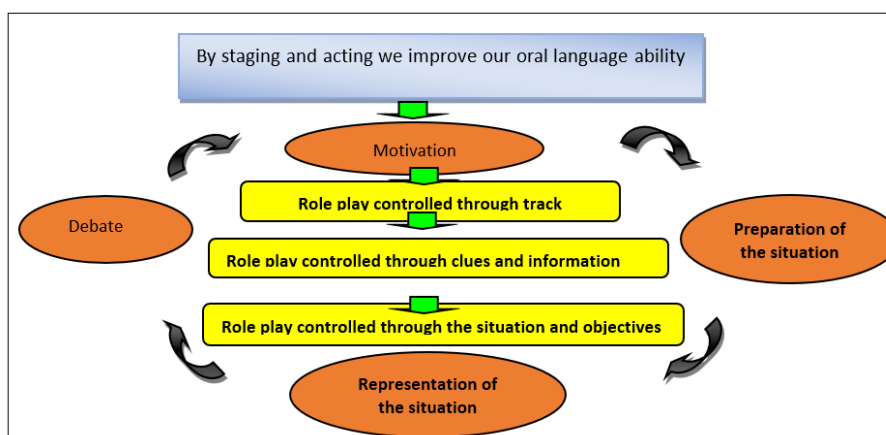
Fig. **2**. **Subtle development of the strategy**

Next, we present the structure of how the learning strategy should be treated in its different types, put in context, leading to problematization and reaching the ideal state

Table 5. Treatment of the learning session based on the type of role play.

Learning session	Roleplay	Context	Problematization	Final product / ideal State
N° 1 "Talking on the phone with my friends"	No. 1 Role play controlled through tracks Level: A1	Nowadays people are in constant telephone communication for family, friendship and social reasons sharing tastes, information and plans.	How to make a telephone conversation to friends, in English, inquiring about their families and plans using the linguistic elements of the required level? Level: A1	He is able to make a phone call with regular naturalness and fluency to inquire and express plans about situations of daily life.
N° 2 "buying the house of my dreams"	Role play controlled through clues and information. Level: A2	The purchase and rental of houses and / or apartments is the desire and need of many people and at the same time a topic of conversation in social groups.	How to request information by phone in order to achieve a purchase, rental and sale contract that is beneficial to buyer and seller?	It is capable of handling business situations to buy and / or sell real estate. Successfully formulate and answer questions and answers clearly.
N° 3 "Looking for solutions for our customers"	Role play controlled through the situation and objectives. Level: A2	Nowadays traveling and staying in hotels is a common activity in people for business, study and vacation reasons.	How to handle situations that may occur during a hotel stay? How to remedy situations without affecting the guest-hotel relationship?	It is able to provide solutions to unforeseen situations using an A2 language level. It makes use of different types of functional, lexical and vocabulary language.

4 Discussion

Thus, after the field work where the instruments and techniques were applied to obtain information on the object of study, the findings obtained allowed the formation of influential emerging categories that were decisive for the modeling of the proposed strategy. The benefit of applying the role play in the classroom generates a climate of real and experiential situation in the students and at the same time improves the oral expression, which coincided favorably with the assertion by [18] who argue that the Role play has a positive effect on improving oral ability.

Generating oral production in the classroom systematizing methods and techniques has positive results in all types of students, not only in matters of oral expression but also in the improvement of personality development. [12,19,20] demonstrated that this technique fosters self-confidence, generates communication skills in social relationships and at the same time gives shy students another identity to express themselves.

From the current state of the study phenomenon, teaching in English is required that considers oral skills as the most relevant and necessary skill, and also the most anticipated to be mastered by students. [3] asserts that language teachers must also familiarize themselves with research in the field of acquiring a second language.

The use of digital tools energizes and motivates the teaching process learning of a language. However, the proposal based on the role play requires a real and contextualized interaction in the classroom to develop the oral production of the student. In this regard, [21] in his theory of the innatism and faculty of language, argues that the language is specific enough for it to be learned through cognitive procedures, since the acquisition of language is innate and acquired from the individual from birth. [16] reports that role play is beneficial in developing interaction skills for L2 students who are normally reluctant to speak in the target language.

5 Conclusions

The didactic strategy of the role play was designed to develop and improve the oral ability of the students. This proposal is based on the different theoretical, practical and methodological criteria of the theoretical framework, as well as the criteria of the experts for the final validation. Being innovative and consistent with the didactic sequences required by the communicative approach.

The diagnosis of the field work allowed us to obtain an objective result on the development of the oral production of the students taken as a sample for research. The application of different techniques and instruments of data collection through the unit of analysis was fulfilled. The findings found were contrasted with the a priori categories, emerging categories and emerging influential categories were identified in the research problem, which would be essential for modeling the proposal and give solution to the object of study.

The application of Role Play contributes to the development of oral language production as long as student participation and production is maximized through dynamic and real activities.

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