The "Role Play" Technique as a Strategy to Improve Oral Production of the French Language in Higher Education Students

*Alejandro de la Rosa-García**

*American University of Puebla (UAMP-Mexico), Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Master's Program in Education and Teaching, September 16 St. #403, Downtown, Zip Code 73800, Teziutlan, Puebla, Mexico.

A B S T R A C T

This research presents the problems of some undergraduate students who have difficulties in the oral production of the French target language, taking as a reference similar studies and research conducted previously. Thus, the theoretical support bases the reality of the problem and the path to follow to solve it. Finally, the conclusion of the study is presented to allow the reader to have a clear vision of the intention of the research work, as well as its importance.The use of ICTs in education, particularly at the university level, stands out in this article's line of qualitative study, for which a literature analysis by five writers was conducted.On the other hand, a strategic proposal analysis was done with an emphasis on French to enhance communicative proficiency in a foreign language. The goal of this study was to suggest a role-playing-based instructional technique to help university students' oral output in their target language of French. In other words, since students would have easier access to various applications or platforms that would help them improve their linguistic production and comprehension through technological tools, teachers would benefit from new pedagogical techniques that would aid and facilitate the work of phonetic teaching of the language.

Keywords:Oral production, french language teaching,university students, role play, TIC's.

Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization currently demands that individuals possess greater skills in various fields of knowledge and competencies focused on the competitiveness of the world in which we live where borders seem to have disappeared thanks to the development of telecommunications in this century. For this reason, transformations are now required in the teaching-learning process of the French language to achieve a communicative competence of the students.

In the process of foreign language teaching, classrooms still have the signs of the traditional school. For it is said that passive assimilation and mechanical duplication of content by students persists. Teachers act as containers of knowledge and distributors of materials for language teaching. Therefore, this process is generated in a mechanical way, which is not relevant since it has no meaning for the student (Ginoris, Addine&Turcaz, 2006).

Based on this reality, the objective is focused on promoting fluency in French oral expression of students who are studying at the higher level, through the implementation of the didactic strategy mediated with the use of ICTs as tools that allow the development of communicative situations in context of students (role play) and through this, strengthen their ability to express themselves orally in the target language.

In this paper, we will follow the line of argumentation of five authors in which we will analyze and discuss the proposals that have resulted in the generation of appropriate strategies to implement with students at the higher level. In this way, we will reach some conclusions on the subject.

Literature Review

The use of information technologies should be implemented in higher education as an essential tool for curriculum development and progress. However, its inclusion, although beneficial to the teaching and learning process, is unreflective and subjective, and there is no consensus among professors. It is not very useful. It is essential to have an action group to advise on the whole process of incorporating ICTs into the university curriculum. On the other hand, ICTs tend to evolve very quickly, so it is also important to use them to keep the learning process up to date.

* *Corresponding author.* Tel.: +52-333-060-4405
E-mail address: alex_drg@outlook.com

ICT is often a fundamental element in the teaching of foreign languages in the university context. A study conducted by the University of Costa Rica was instrumental in making significant changes in the teaching of French phonetics within their facilities, students found the use of ICT useful because it is a main tool to promote the phonetic acquisition of French. It had also been shown that the role of the student in the classroom changed from secondary to primary, as the student is the one who plays a major role in acquiring his or her own knowledge. The teacher, for his part, has also changed his role and has become a mediator and guide of the subject, which allows the student to have a more meaningful learning. But there are studies on the advantages of audiovisual resources in the construction of oral comprehension, which have not yet been used to complement the teaching and learning of data in foreign language programs available on the market. Multimedia system materials are interactive teaching tools, considered "three-dimensional" (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic), which can be used by students and academics today, opening a whole range of possibilities for teaching foreign languages through the network (Olivera, 2019).

Virtual learning classrooms (VLL) have several important advantages for the teaching of a language as a foreign language. They help to improve comprehension and oral expression, as well as learner autonomy, since they represent an ally for collaborative work among peers. Within virtual classrooms, technological tools will serve to help students improve their language production and reception skills. Tools such as podcasts, videoblogs or video-calling applications are essential to enhance students' comprehension and oral expression. Educational institutions cannot lag within the technological spectrum, as learners themselves are at the forefront of technological updates. From the teaching point of view, virtual learning classrooms would be very practical because the pedagogical strategies would favor autonomous learning since it is possible to elaborate catalogs of activities that will not limit the student's activity to a selected space and schedule (Ramirez, 2014).

One way to develop autonomy in students is using ICTs, which since their emergence and development have allowed students to approach real environments for the use of a foreign language, tools such as chats, blogs and forums which facilitate interaction with native speakers, with whom they can practice the language or have access to a wide variety of online content related to language learning (Chao, 2014).

Improving oracy is a problem that needs to be addressed more dynamically and efficiently. It is no secret that many foreign language learners have good command of writing and reading skills, but when faced with the development of a communicative situation they must carry out they feel overwhelmed by it and do not perform well for oral production and comprehension (Olivera, 2019).

A study conducted in a private institution in the city of Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, Mexico. It showed that the implementation of role-plays in French as a foreign language (FLE) classis helped students to improve oral production and to reinforce communicative skills. Through various data collection tools, it was possible to identify those students perceived a positive change in traditional classes and had better opportunities to practice their pronunciation and vocabulary (Arias &Mazariegos, 2017).

Methodology and Results

The analysis began with the search of several articles specialized in the oral production of university students in French. Qualitative research was carried out and no instruments were applied. However, several sources of information were analysed that helped to obtain precise results that favour the hypothesis about the advantages of using technological tools in classes focused on the oral production of the French language with university students.

The search method was carried out in academic technological platforms such as: EBSCO, Taylor & Francis, Dialnet and Google Academic. filters were applied to refine the search for the materials needed to improve the research work. The results found were those expected to satisfactorily complete the research process of the present work.

The search string was restricted to relevant words or keywords that were adapted to the syntactic requirements of each search engine and were run between July 8 and July 22, 2022.

In the first stage, duplicate entries, records in a language other than English or Spanish, or citations that could not be obtained due to licensing restrictions were eliminated. Subsequently, the relevance of the titles and abstracts was evaluated according to the criteria highlighted in the keywords used for the search.

The concepts of oral production and teaching are widely used and play various roles in the context of the discipline addressed. Therefore, articles that were not useful for the purpose of this research were found and continued to be discarded.

Finally, the search was refined, leaving only those research articles that met the characteristics of the necessary keywords and were from research conducted in recent years.

The above method of file selection allowed focusing on the domains that are considered to have best summarized the literature with a high-level perspective providing a useful summary that is of great practical use in the disciplinary review. As shown in the section of the document oriented to the use of ICT's, oral production, and the "Role Play" strategy, are the focus of the literature review.

The case studies and their respective results provide a solid basis for developing the proposal for the implementation of "Role Play" as a tool for the improvement of oral production of university students studying French as a foreign language (FLE).

AUTHOR	FINDINGS
1. Alberto RamírezMartinell, Miguel Ángel Casillas Albarado, Celia Cristina Contreras Asturias.	1. Integration of ICTs in the university curriculum to justify and legitimize the daily practices of the teaching staff in this area.
2. Numas Armando Gil Olivera.	2. Advantages of Virtual Learning Environments in favor of strengthening the teaching of FLE as a foreign language.

3.	Kuok-Wa Chao Chao.	3.	Use of information and communication technology-mediated strategies with Exelearning, AulaVirtual de Apoyo de Metics and Audacity tools in the oral expression course.
4.	José del Carmen Eliud Arias González, Vivian Gabriela Mazariegos Lima	4.	Perceptions regarding the implementation of role-playing in FLE classes.

Discussion

The implementation of technology in the classroom helps to strengthen student learning. Currently, technology offers a wide variety of tools that can be used to create audiovisual content that is of interest to students.

This allows to attract the student's attention to a greater extent and thus to obtain a better result in academic performance. It is a fact that generations of students are currently in greater contact with technological tools. Channeling this knowledge by using it in favor of the development of their learning would yield very satisfactory results to improve the teaching-learning process in foreign languages (Prashant-Shedge, 2022).

On the other hand, the fact that technological tools in the university environment are a potential complement to teaching, since they allow interacting with contents and communicating through different media to select them, create them and even share new experiences. Language teaching is a discipline that relies on many tools, methods, and techniques to achieve its goal. These provide formal language learning in the sense of mainly grammatical and lexical learning, but at the same time facilitate interaction with other language users with whom you can exchange oral messages synchronously and asynchronously. The use of these tools can be the ideal complement to encourage self-learning in the student and serve as a link between the subject studied at school and the outside world, thus referring to the student's meaningful learning (Rodriguez, 2020).

The present work has a relevance in the field of university teaching of French because it proposes the development of an innovative strategy that helps both language teachers and students to improve the communicative competence of students. Taking up the skills that they handle, since the generations with whom we are currently working bring a previous knowledge and attachment to the use of technology. The proposal consists of channeling the use of these technological skills to improve linguistic communication skills by placing them in a real environment close to them and developing specific communicative tasks in a real context by means of the Role Play strategy.

Depending on the interests, tastes and even level of knowledge, they can be adapted to the requirements of the students' needs.

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the research done by the authors mentioned above and to consolidate the work done in universities on communicative competence to improve the quality of students' oral production.

Conclusion

This article followed the line of qualitative research for which the literature review of five authors was carried out, among which the use of ICT's in the educational field, specifically at the university level, stands out.

On the other hand, an analysis was made of the strategic proposals to improve communicative competence in a foreign language, particularly focused on the French language.

This research focused on proposing a didactic strategy based on role-playing to improve oral production in the French target language of university students. In other words, teachers would benefit from new pedagogical techniques that would help and facilitate the work of phonetic teaching of the language, since through technological tools, students would have greater accessibility to several applications or platforms that would help improve their linguistic production and comprehension.

The study conducted has some low-order limitations that do not significantly change the results. However, since no instrument was applied to measure the veracity of the hypothesis put forward, the results presented so far, of course, must be further evaluated and analyzed. By conducting this article, it is intended that other researchers take up the results and elaborate a reliable instrument that confirms the results of the qualitative research and if possible, improve it with quantitative results.

Finally, it can be argued based on the various sources of information gathered for this article that role-playing in FLE classes is a good option that helps to work on the cultural and pragmatic component of the target language. In addition, it can increase students' motivation to learn the language.

REFERENCES

Arías-González J. (2017). Implementation of role-playing as an activity that fosters oral expression in the French as a foreign language classroom. In U. A. Chiapas, *Pre-service Teacher Identity Construction during the Service Learning Component of Second Language Teacher Education at the Tuxtla Language Faculty* (pp. 19-38). Tuxtla Gutiérrez: General Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies.

Chao, K.W. C. (2014). Didactic Strategies Mediated With Tic In A Course Of French Oral Expression. *Research in education actualities*. 1-30.

Gil Olivera, N. A. (2019). Ambiente virtual de aprendizaje: beneficios y ventajas para enseñanza del Francés como L2. Boletín Redipe, 91-99.

Ginoris, O., Addine, F., & Turcaz, J. (2006). General Didactics. IPLAC, 6.

Prashant-Shedge, P. (2022). Natural language processing for adaptive dialogue system. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 3(6), 88-91. https://ijrpr.com/uploads/V3ISSUE7/IJRPR5616.pdf

RamírezA. (2014). The incorporation of ICT in language teaching. *University Debate*, 125-140.

Victoria, R. M. (2020). The French-Spanish/Spanish-French intercomprehension: using social networks as a model of teaching innovation. En C. L. (ed), *Innovative classrooms in the training of future secondary education educators*. (p. 263-277). Aquilafuente.