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Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Staging communication: drama-based learning for speaking competence in EFL undergraduates

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Abstract

This dissertation explores a drama-based, task-supported intervention designed to enhance speaking skills among undergraduate EFL students in a Colombian university setting. Rooted in communicative and learner-centered pedagogy, the project reimagines the use of Victorian-era literary excerpts as the foundation for collaborative dramatizations. The intervention aimed to improve oral fluency, foster teamwork, and integrate 21st-century competencies within a meaningful, student-led context. Through formative assessment tools such as observation checklists, peer feedback, and self-reflections, students actively participated in rehearsals, script development, and performance. Findings suggest that drama not only boosts linguistic confidence and spontaneity but also revitalizes engagement with literary texts and promotes critical soft skills vital to future educators. The study demonstrates that drama, when paired with task-based learning, offers a creative and inclusive alternative to traditional EFL instruction. It concludes by positioning performance as a powerful space for identity-building and authentic language use in the classroom.

Keywords: drama, project based learning, speaking skills.

Abstract

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1. Introduction

A broad goal of the higher education system is to prepare professionals who are capable not only of working effectively but also of creating and innovating. The twenty-first century is largely defined by digitalization, globalization, and constant change. In order to align higher education with these realities, it is essential to equip learners not only with disciplinary knowledge but also with the skills and mindsets required to succeed in an increasingly complex world. As such, educational objectives must go beyond traditional content mastery and drive the adoption of innovative teaching approaches, with the ultimate aim of fostering lifelong learning. Almutairi and Alfarwan (2024) stress that integrating dynamic and student-centered strategies, such as drama-based instruction, is essential to meet the communicative and cognitive needs of today's learners. Similarly, Ambawani et al. (2025) argue that the development of speaking skills should be tightly connected to real-life scenarios and learner engagement to ensure sustainable language acquisition.

The EFL classroom should not be an exception to this paradigm shift but rather an active platform through which these broader educational goals can be achieved. Through the careful selection and integration of learning materials, students can cultivate cultural awareness, for example, by engaging with the histories of English-speaking countries. Immersing themselves in these contexts through the English language allows learners to develop a deeper understanding of cultural diversity. Furthermore, reading and interpreting literary texts from English-speaking authors promotes the development of critical and analytical thinking (Syed et al., 2023). Collaborative learning tasks enhance both communication skills and the ability to work in diverse teams.

An equally essential 21st-century skill—creativity—will be nurtured through the core component of this proposal: the development and implementation of a drama-based project for university students. This initiative aims to serve as a meaningful and innovative approach to language learning, while simultaneously addressing key competencies required in the modern world. Drama activities in the EFL classroom offer a dynamic and immersive environment where language use becomes purposeful and contextualized. Through the proposed project, based on performing a drama within the EFL classroom, students are

encouraged to use English communicatively, expressively, and interactively. These practices not only support linguistic development—such as vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and fluency—but also promote soft skills including empathy, self-confidence, and teamwork. For university students, particularly in academic environments where language exposure is often limited to formal instruction, drama serves as a powerful tool to bridge the gap between passive knowledge and active use.

1.1. Justification

Even though drama activities are widely recognized as highly beneficial, certain challenges and limitations may still arise in the process of implementation. One of the most common issues is student shyness, which can hinder full participation in the final performance—a core component of the proposed project. To address this barrier, the teacher must design supportive strategies or alternative roles that allow less confident students to engage meaningfully, helping them gradually overcome emotional discomfort. Another potential difficulty involves the evaluation of student performance. Since drama incorporates creativity and subjective expression, assessment can be complex. To ensure transparency and fairness, the assessment criteria must be clearly defined, aligned with the objectives of the activity, and communicated to students in advance. In addition, the complexity of materials selected for the drama project must be carefully considered. If the materials are too linguistically demanding, they may overwhelm learners, especially at the B2–C1 transitional level. This can lead to frustration and demotivation. Teachers must be conscious of their students' current language proficiency and select texts that challenge them appropriately without exceeding their zone of proximal development. As Bessadet (2022) notes, one of the major challenges reported in her study was the teacher's struggle to adapt drama activities effectively to the EFL classroom context.

Nonetheless, despite these challenges, the literature overwhelmingly supports drama as a powerful pedagogical tool for enhancing students' speaking skills and overall communicative performance. Astiandani and Mustofa (2021), through a critical review of empirical studies, affirm the pedagogical value of drama, highlighting its dynamic nature and ability to engage students across multiple competencies.

Baldwin and Fleming (2003, as cited in Kondal 2016, pp. 94-95) offer further insights by demonstrating how drama can develop a wide range of intelligences—linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Table 1 below illustrates how each of these intelligences can be nurtured through specific drama strategies:

Table 1. *Using and Developing Different Intelligences Through Drama.*

Intelligence	Means by which in might be used or developed
Linguistic intelligence	Use of the text, teacher in role, role play, thought-tracking, improvisation
Logical/mathematical intelligence	Structuring movement activities and presenting logical image sequences
Bodily and kinesthetic intelligence	Movement, dance-drama, improvisation, enactment, mime
Musical intelligence	Using and linking music and emotion within the drama context, creating soundtracks, sound collages
Interpersonal intelligence	Teacher in role, improvisation, group playmaking, tableau, performance
Intrapersonal intelligence	Empathizing and reflecting whilst working in role

Source: Reprinted from Baldwin and Fleming (2003, as cited in Kondal, 2016, pp. 94–95)

Benefits of drama techniques in the EFL classroom advocate for choosing it when pursuing a learning goal of refining students' speaking skills. Katz (2000, as cited in Kondal, 2016, p. 95) states that "a student that is involved in assorted drama activities, will also exercise thinking skills such as invention, generation, speculation, assimilation, clarification, inducing, deducing, analyzing, accommodating, selecting, refining, sequencing and judging".

Given these significant benefits—linguistic, cognitive, and socio-emotional—drama stands out as a particularly suitable method for addressing the speaking needs of university students in

language programs. In contexts like Valledupar, where opportunities for real-life communication in English are scarce due to sociocultural limitations, a drama-based project offers a non-traditional yet highly effective alternative for practicing spoken language. Moreover, considering the constraints teachers often face—limited time, high student numbers, and lack of exposure to authentic English-speaking environments—drama becomes a practical, engaging, and multidimensional approach to improve students' spoken output and overall communicative competence.

1.2. Brief analysis of the state of the art

Recent scholarly investigations have increasingly emphasized the value of drama as a pedagogical tool in foreign language education, particularly for enhancing speaking proficiency and fostering communicative competence in EFL learners. In the context of higher education, the integration of drama into language instruction has been found to contribute not only to linguistic development but also to the cultivation of 21st-century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. In a comprehensive review by Satiandani and Mustofa (2021) it was demonstrated that drama techniques significantly support learners' speaking abilities by providing meaningful contexts for language use, encouraging spontaneous expression, and enhancing learner motivation. Their analysis synthesized various empirical studies and concluded that drama creates a learner-centered and emotionally engaging environment, which is especially beneficial for speaking practice in EFL classrooms, regardless the age group of the learners, which is relevant for this proposal. Similarly, Almutairi and Alfarwan (2024), in their study on drama techniques in Saudi university classrooms, confirmed that students who participated in drama-based activities exhibited greater fluency, pronunciation accuracy, and overall confidence in oral communication. Their findings reinforce the notion that drama tasks promote authentic language interaction, thereby narrowing the gap between passive language knowledge and active language use.

When looking at the use of drama from teachers' perspective, in a more recent study, Mar et al. (2023) explored teachers' and learners' perceptions of using drama activities in university settings. The authors identified several pedagogical advantages, including heightened student motivation, greater peer collaboration, and enriched cultural understanding. However, they

also noted the need for adequate training and material adaptation to avoid overwhelming learners and to ensure drama activities align with language proficiency levels.

Tong Thi Hue (2024) focused on the development of listening and speaking skills through role-play and dramatic techniques in Vietnamese universities. Her study concluded that drama methods facilitated learners' communicative competence by placing them in simulated real-life situations that demanded linguistic spontaneity, negotiation of meaning, and context-based interaction—core aspects of CEFR-aligned learning outcomes. Complementing these findings, Bessadet (2022) emphasized the importance of using structured frameworks when implementing drama in the EFL classroom. Drawing from Susan Holden's earlier work, Bessadet proposed a five-step drama integration model that includes preparation, discussion, rehearsal, performance, and reflection, thus aligning closely with task-based language teaching (TBLT) principles.

Together, these studies confirm the relevance and effectiveness of drama as a task-based learning strategy that promotes speaking fluency, intercultural awareness, and learner autonomy. Moreover, they highlight that successful implementation requires thoughtful planning, level-appropriate material selection, and clear assessment criteria. This research-based foundation strongly supports the development of the present proposal, which seeks to integrate a drama project grounded in the historical and cultural context of Victorian England to refine speaking skills among B2–C1 university students.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The following section outlines the general objective of this intervention proposal, followed by its specific objectives. These will guide the development of the project and serve as benchmarks for evaluating its implementation and effectiveness in the EFL classroom for university students.

1.3.1 General objective

This master dissertation aims to design an intervention proposal for undergraduate students enrolled in the Languages Degree university program, with the objective of enhancing their speaking skills through the implementation of a drama-based activity inspired by the Victorian Era in the history of the British Empire.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

In order to achieve the proposed general objective, the following specific objectives will be pursued:

- SO1: To explore the pedagogical value and practical implementation of drama-based instruction within the EFL university classroom.
- SO2: To examine how drama activities contribute to the development and refinement of students' English-speaking skills, particularly at the B2–C1 level.
- SO3: To integrate historical and cultural content from the Victorian Era as a means of enriching language instruction and fostering intercultural competence.
- SO4: To design appropriate assessment tools and evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed drama-based intervention in achieving its intended learning outcomes.

2. Literature review

This literature review provides a theoretical and conceptual foundation for the current proposal by exploring key areas relevant to the development of speaking skills in the EFL classroom. The review is organized into three main sections. First, it discusses the nature of speaking skills and their central role in communicative language teaching. Second, it examines the integration of culture and history—specifically British and Victorian contexts—as valuable content for language learning and intercultural competence. Finally, it explores drama-based learning as an innovative and multidimensional pedagogical strategy to foster oral proficiency, learner engagement, and holistic development. Together, these sections support the rationale and design of the intervention proposed in this master dissertation.

2.1. Drama-based approach

The use of drama in language education has gained increasing recognition as an effective strategy to promote learner engagement, communication, and cultural understanding. This section explores the foundations of the drama-based approach in English language teaching, highlighting its relevance for fostering speaking skills in EFL contexts. It further examines various types of drama activities and their pedagogical implications. Emphasis is placed on how drama supports not only linguistic competence but also personal and social development. The following subsections offer a detailed analysis of these dimensions.

2.1.1. Drama-based approach in English Language teaching

Using drama as a learning strategy has been evaluated and discussed often within the last years. The high interest to this nontraditional method can be explained by shifting from a traditional teacher-centered methodology to student-centered approach. Another reason for drama activities to be a central objective of several studies may be its proven efficiency in developing students overall speaking performance in a context of foreign language learning. So, what does the term "drama" entail? Bessadet (2022) indicates that in the developmental history of a human being, drama becomes a natural means of learning. This affirmation is supported by Thompson and Evans (2005, as cited in Bessadet, 2022, p. 527) who point out that "drama is a multi-sensory tool, which combines listening, speaking, thinking, exploration and use of the immediate environment, and the development of physical control". Following the idea, Davies (1990, as cited in Bessadet 2022) claims that when drama is used as a teaching

method, it can become a central aid in acquiring communicative competence. If we consider the learning environment as our main focus, Bessadet (2022) highlights that "drama techniques are valuable means to strengthen students' active involvement in the learning process" (p. 528). It incorporates the affective side of learners, making excitement, fun, imagination and laughter as a part of the language classroom, which in turn, transform a learning into life-long language acquisition.

On the other side, traditional EFL classroom has limited exposure to authentic language, for that drama activity may act as an opportunity to create an authentic context for language use, claims Chia-Ti (2021). The motivation through involvement of emotions is also considered by Chia-Ti (2021), pointing that "drama can be fun and motivating since it is creative, collaborative, interactive, and expressive" (p. 41).

Drama activities enable teachers to apply the whole language approach, without breaking the language into separate chunks and studying them independently. Taken that into account, a drama-based project in the EFL classroom may demonstrate its effectiveness for learning English. Consequently, a learning based on an elaboration of a project, is proved to be effective in enhancing language proficiency. Stroller (2007, as cited in Chia-Ti, 2021) states that "its many advantages arise from increased motivation, improved learner autonomy, to enhanced learners' confidence" (p. 41).

Drama from a language teaching perspective was also studied and described by Kondal (2016), who clarifies that drama does not refer solely to classical or theatrical performances, but rather includes elements of a play along with various other components that make classroom learning more engaging and motivating (p. 93). Additionally, Baldwin and Fleming (2003, as cited in Kondal, 2016) describe drama as a medium for fostering personal, social, and emotional development, as well as communication and language growth (p. 93). It becomes evident that drama, as a teaching strategy, proves to be a multi-beneficial tool—not only for the acquisition of a foreign language but also for shaping personal identity and facilitating individual growth. This idea is further supported by Kondal (2016), who highlights that dramatic techniques are employed in the classroom to build learners' self-confidence, thereby transforming the learning process into a meaningful experience (p. 92).

Additional evidence is found in the work of Even (2011, as cited in Keinänen and Hahl, 2021), who explains that "learners act and react spontaneously in staged situations, using not only their intellectual faculties, but also kinesthetics and body language; facial expressions, gestures, modulations of voice, movement, etc." (p. 29). Thus, movement becomes an essential component of drama-based activity. The benefits of movement are further described by Lengel and Kuczala (2010, as cited in Keinänen & Hahl, 2021), who assert that movement helps prepare the brain for acquiring new knowledge. At the same time, Keinänen and Hahl (2021) emphasize that movement supports classroom management and fosters a more stimulating learning environment, as learners remain focused on tasks they find both enjoyable and meaningful (p. 29).

2.1.2. Drama as a tool to foster speaking skills

Analyzing drama as a learning strategy, its numerous benefits are frequently described in a correlation with a spoken discourse. Thus, Astiandani and Mustofa (2021) state that "in language teaching, drama has been proposed as an effective way to encourage the students' speaking skills" (p. 18). Drama has been seen as "a useful technique that can actively include students in the teaching and learning process" (p. 18). Moreover, besides having positive effects on students' speaking skills, drama also brings affective benefits to students.

An interesting finding was made by Sirisrimangkorn (2018, cited in Astiandani and Mustofa 2021), revealing that "students obtain higher chances to use a foreign language for communication when utilizing the drama project-based learning in the teaching and learning process" (p. 19). From the teachers' perspective, incorporating drama in their teaching practice certainly contributes to avoid boredom, monotony and encourage learners to talk more, which is one of the current problems in language teaching routine – the lack of time to make all the students talk and perfection their talking ability. Additionally, Bessadet (2022) claims that drama tool possesses a potential to engage English FL learners and promote their oral proficiency.

Time limitations as a stimulus to implement drama in the EFL classroom was also suggested by Kondal (2016), who claims that when students present inadequate exposure to the target language, the impossibility appears in terms of practicing language in a reliable context. Among the difficulties, such as time limitations, and number of students per class, students'

lack of confidence plays a major role to deny practicing speaking during the learning sessions. Hence, introducing drama techniques as a teaching strategy, enables to tackle aforementioned difficulties from a new angle. "The technique of drama provides a variety of opportunities for learners in language learning in practical circumstances" (Kondal, 2016, p. 93). In the same way, Kondal (2016) argues that with the sufficient number of practices in the class, students eventually will perceive talking in a foreign language more comfortable. The learning experience is enriched and stimulated, when mime and body language are incorporated.

Action research, conducted by Kumar et al. (2022), positions speaking skills as critical for effective communication in any language, therefore, speaking correctly and effectively is considered to be a process that requires training. Kumar et al. (2022) claim that speaking is one of the language skills that is used the most, yet the most difficult one to learn. Consequently, the development and improvement of speaking skills may be seen as one of the important problems, when looking at a dimension of the foreign language acquisition. Out of this, we may conclude, that it may be difficult to develop speaking skills, if a person who learns a foreign language does not have the opportunity to practice. Classical and traditional methods of English language teaching rather develop and refine the grammatical dimension of the student, while the development of speaking skills requires the application of more practical methods or strategies. With practical methods, students' fluency may be practices and improved, as well as a gain of normal pace of speaking may become another learning outcome. Thus, achieving fluency in speaking English may be accomplished by incorporating more opportunities to practice communication within settled scenarios. So, considering the structure of drama method, it may be given an important place in achieving an objective of fostering students' speaking skills. Incorporating drama in the EFL classroom may provide students with an opportunity to better understand the learning language and see its usage in a context, and, as a result, to improve their fluency.

For the last, Schejbal (2006, as cited in Kumar et al., 2022, p.374) indicates that "the use of drama ensures that students participate actively. As a result, learners who practice speaking a language in the classroom gains hands-on experience that is comparable to that gained in real-world situations". In conclusion, multiple evidence and results, described above, prove

how useful and beneficial drama activity has been when it comes to refine and enhance speaking skills of English language learners.

2.1.3. Types of drama activities for EFL classroom

In the context of EFL learning within the classroom, several drama techniques can be applied. As Bessadet (2022) states, "drama is a specific action to make the learning process more active, exciting, communicative, and contextual" (p. 528). She further explains that "drama techniques refer to all those strategies that accompany a dramatic discourse to help a better understanding and a better performance of the text" (p. 528).

In the language classroom, the teacher can apply the following drama techniques: scripted play, mime, improvisation, frozen image building, simulation and a role-play. Relevant to mention, those techniques are valuable means to promote students' active involvement in the learning process. A creative context that accompanies one drama activity, encourages collaboration and cooperation within EFL learners, as well as provides an involvement of excitement, fun, and laughter in the language classroom.

Similarly, Almutairi and Alfarwan (2024) mention in their study such drama techniques as role-playing, simulation, improvisation and mime. They claim that by using those, students can improve their speaking skills and in the end, can verbally communicate satisfactorily in the English language. Among the side benefits of role-playing there are "enhanced second-language learning, increased student cooperation, and a relaxed, engaging, and inspiring learning environment in EFL classes" (Mollazamani and Ashtiani, 2008, cited in Almutairi and Alfarwan 2024, p. 313). Mime as a drama technique, is particularly beneficial for students with limited proficiency in foreign language, to participate in class activities, as mime stands for non-verbal representation of one's idea or story through gestures, body movements and facial expressions. Thirdly, improvisation, according to Wessels (1987, cited in Almutairi and Alfarwan 2024) taps the students' already existing command of the language and tests their communicative strategies. Students are free to express themselves or create their personas if the concept is presented, and they act spontaneously when an unexpected situation occurs (p. 314). Lastly, simulation as a drama activity shows that there is an opportunity for students

to engage in meaningful activities. The essential point of simulating activity is that the student brings his personality, experience, and opinions to the task.

Below, there will be a summary of the article by Dundar (2013) which describes nine drama activities for foreign language classrooms. Those activities are listed as:

- Drama and language games

- Role play

- Improvisation

- Mime

- Simulation

- Readers' theatre

- Frozen image building

- Scriptwriting

- Skits

    Source: Dundar, 2013

Each of these activities separately targets various functions in foreign language teaching, each one of them has its own benefits and challenges. What will be taken in mind is the level of a target group of students, their age, and the environmental factors.

2.2. Speaking skills

Speaking is one of the core components of language proficiency and arguably the most immediate indicator of communicative competence. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, speaking is not only a means of expression but also a gateway to intercultural understanding, academic success, and future employability. According to Calle (2018, as cited in Almutairi and Alfarwan, 2024) speaking requires being "linguistically competent, knowing how to produce specific points of language, such as grammar, pruncioation, or vocabulary" (p. 314), making it an essential skill to master in communicative language teaching.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (hereafter CEFR)**,** developed by the Council of Europe (2020)**,** categorizes speaking into two main components: spoken production and spoken interaction, each with specific descriptors across proficiency levels (A1

to C2). These descriptors emphasize not only linguistic accuracy but also pragmatic competence, fluency, and adaptability in various communicative contexts. As such, effective speaking instruction must go beyond grammar and vocabulary to integrate fluency, coherence, interactional strategies, and confidence.

In recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed on interactive and performance-based learning approaches to address the complexity of speaking instruction. This part of the literature review explores particular challenges that learners face and the role of classroom practices such as task-based learning and student-centered teaching practices in fostering spoken language proficiency.

2.2.1. Speaking constraints of English learners

The study conducted by Octaberlina et al. (2022) identified three challenges, that the participants of the study encountered while speaking in English language. The difficulties are categorized as linguistic difficulty, psychological difficulty and an environmental factor was found. The following Table 2 provides detailed aspects of each type of difficulty that accompany English learners when it comes to produce an output.

Table 2. *Difficulties in Speaking for EFL Learners.*

Linguistic difficulties	Psychological difficulties	Environment factors
• Variety of vocabulary	• Student's concern about making errors	• Inadequate learning atmosphere
• Understanding of level of meaning (vocabulary related)	• Feeling of embarrassment, caused by linguistic difficulties	• Inadequate frequency of English practice
• Adequate sentence structure	• The worry about seeming stupid	• Availability of facilities
• Correct usage of word order	• Feeling of intimidation	• A lack of adequate support

• Adequate usage of grammar	• Anxiety	• Limited English language use
• The ability to pronounce words correctly	• Inadequacy of self-confidence	

Source: Adapted from Octaberlina (2022)

Yet, a number of researchers tailored the same problem, which conclude that to develop a competitive spoken English remains one of the most significant challenges for EFL learners, due to a range of psychological, linguistic barriers, as well and structural impediments and environmental factors.

To mention few, Shaiboob and Hablaja (2024) identify psychological factors, such as anxiety and lack of motivation, as central barriers to oral proficiency. Their mixed-method study of Libyan university students revealed that learners often feel "anxiety" and a lack of confidence, which limits their willingness to speak despite having adequate linguistic knowledge. Omar (2023) echoed this finding in an Iraqi context, showing that fear of mistakes and shyness significantly impede participation in speaking activities. Omar (2023) reported that even learners with sufficient vocabulary often avoided speaking due to emotional discomfort associated with public discourse.

Continuing, limited linguistic knowledge is another major obstacle. Shaiboob and Hablaja (2024) found that insufficient vocabulary, grammar mistakes, and pronunciation issues hinder learner fluency and accuracy. Similarly, Rahayu et al. (2020) observed that many learners struggle to produce coherent speech due to gaps in their language knowledge. Without adequate vocabulary or pronunciation skills, even motivated students hesitate to engage in conversation, which further limits practical speaking exposure. As a result, linguistic constraints may force psychological barriers to appear, making it even more difficult for students to produce coherent and logical utterances in English language.

Moving forward, it is relevant to mention external factors such as pedagogical and structural constraints. Large class sizes, limited speaking opportunities, and weak course design also obstruct oral skill development. Shaiboob and Hablaja (2024) emphasize that minimal practice outside the classroom and lack of targeted listening–speaking courses negatively affect

progress. Omar (2023) similarly highlighted that large class sizes and insufficient teacher feedback discourage students from participating actively in spoken tasks, reducing chances for effective language production.

The latest study that focuses on drawing perspectives to tailor all the aforementioned difficulties, conducted by Ambawani et al. (2025), propose a multidimensional framework integrating psychological, linguistic, environmental and pedagogical factors. Their qualitative analysis at an Indonesian university underscores that these barriers are interrelated: anxiety exacerbates hesitation stemming from poor vocabulary, and inadequate classroom structures reinforce both linguistic and affective barriers. They argue that addressing speaking challenges requires holistic strategies targeting all dimensions simultaneously.

Considering described difficulties is crucial for designing EFL classroom strategies and projects that will target and promote effective speaking skills. The following section of literature review will discuss how student-centered learning can tailor these challenges.

2.2.2. Development of speaking skills through student-centered teaching practices

Analysing the tendencies in teaching styles of recent years, learner-centered teaching (hereafter LCT) has gained significant attention in second language acquisition research for its potential to enhance communication and speaking skills. In comparison to traditional teacher-centered approaches, LCT emphasizes active learner engagement, autonomy, and authentic language use—those qualities that are considered essential for developing oral proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings.

Batmaz (2023) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis to examine the effect of student-centered teaching practices on speaking skill development. Analyzing 24 experimental studies conducted between 2005 and 2022, the study found a strong positive effect (Hedge's g = 1.375) of LCT methods over traditional instruction. The findings support the claim that learner-centered methodologies consistently outperform teacher-centered approaches in fostering spoken language competence. Similar conclusions were drawn by Indrapurnama et al. (2023) in their classroom-based action research. The researchers implemented student-centered methods in an EFL speaking course and found a marked increase in learners' speaking performance. Specifically, students' average scores improved from 14.3 on the pre-test to

17.56 on the post-test. This gain illustrates how classroom restructuring around learner autonomy and interaction can contribute meaningfully to language productive performance.

Huang (2022) provided further evidence of the benefits of learner-centered environments by focusing on student motivation in the EFL classroom. In a flipped classroom model, students demonstrated increased engagement and willingness to participate in speaking activities. According to the author, shifting the role of the teacher from knowledge transmitter to facilitator allowed students to take ownership of their learning, resulting in more meaningful communication. In a related study, Minalla (2021) investigated how personalized and student-driven speaking tasks empowered young EFL learners to initiate and sustain oral interaction. The study found that when learners were given the opportunity to make choices and contribute personal experiences, they engaged more actively in speaking tasks. The experimental group, taught through LCT strategies, significantly outperformed the control group in both fluency and interactional competence.

Summarizing the aforementioned findings, these studies highlight the efficacy of learner-centered teaching in enhancing students' speaking abilities. They emphasize the importance of classroom interaction, task personalization, and learner autonomy as driving factors for successful communication skills development in EFL contexts. These findings support the rationale for integrating learner-centered methodologies into speaking curricula, particularly in university-level EFL programs where communication skills are essential for academic and professional success. Another argument worth to consider is for a future language teacher profile, it is essential to develop the highest oral proficiency possible. So, teachers confront the necessity to implement best-working strategies to take advantage of short time provided for English classes.

2.3. Culture and history as a teaching source

In university settings, EFL teaching becomes a complex task, not merely focused on a linguistic knowledge of one language, but trying to reach the development of several competences of forming young generation. The significance of integrating cultural and historical knowledge into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education has been discussed closely within the recent years, especially in the light of perceiving language learning as a comprehensive

intercultural endeavor. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2020), effective language learning entails developing not just communicative competence but also intercultural awareness. It refers to the ability to understand and engage with the social practices, values, and perspectives of both the learner's own culture and that of the target language. In accordance with CEFR descriptions, the objectives of foreign language teaching have shifted from purely grammatical instruction toward the holistic development of the language user as an intercultural speaker and global citizen.

The inclusion of cultural elements—such as history, literature, social customs, and ideological frameworks—contributes directly to learners' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, as described in the CEFR's broader model of communicative competence. Rather than being passive receivers of information, learners become active participants in cultural dialogues, which fosters empathy, critical thinking, and identity formation. Those are relevant for university-level students, who must engage with diverse worldviews, historical narratives, and global contexts as part of their academic and professional development.

In this section of literature review, the essential role of including cultural and historical components as part of EFL curriculum will be discussed, as well as alignments with CEFR's vision of modern language education will be shown.

2.3.1. Role of culture in English language teaching

Shah et al. (2023) state in their comprehensive study that the incorporation of cultural elements into language classes can greatly benefit students in developing their intercultural competence and cross-cultural understanding. Foundations of English language teaching is not just a mix of words and grammar rules, it is a multi-dimensional matrix of relations between language and a culture, meaning they almost can't be separated and studied independently. People's language will always be a direct reflection of their culture, as it is highly shaped by norms, values and principles possessed by its speakers.

The authors claim that cultural pedagogy evolved toward a more communicative and sociocultural orientation, particularly from the 1970s onward, when language teaching began to incorporate learners' intercultural awareness and critical thinking skills. This shift may be seen as a positive move to make the whole learning process more meaningful and related to real life context. Shah et al. (2023) propose a classification of five main pedagogical

perspectives on how the cultural component may be integrated into English language teaching:

- The communicative view – it sees culture as essential to authentic language use;
- The classical curriculum view – it emphasizes access to canonical cultural knowledge;
- The culture-free view – it minimizes culture to avoid ideological bias and presumptions;
- The deconstructionist view - it critiques how cultures are represented in learning materials;
- The competence view – it treats cultural and linguistic competences as inseparably linked.

Nowadays, teachers are facing the necessity to recognize the complexity of global communication in English and consequently teach their students about it by fostering inclusive and culturally responsive classrooms' environment. Taking that into consideration, effective English language instruction must engage with culture for several reasons: as a support of linguistic development and as means to cultivate learners' ability to navigate and contribute to multicultural, global contexts. Worth to mention, this perspective aligns with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which integrates intercultural competence as a core element of communicative language teaching.

Other researches have focused on cultural component as well. An analysis made by Merdassi and Baghzou (2024) demonstrates how cultural component can be integrated in English as a foreign language instruction, with a particular focus on textbook material and teacher perspectives. Their study critically examines how cultural education is addressed in EFL curricula considering ongoing educational reforms. Merdassi and Baghzou (2024) advocate for a more balanced and contextually sensitive approach to culture teaching in EFL, suggesting that materials and teacher training programs should be revised to foster a deeper engagement with cultural dimensions of language learning. This aligns with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020), which emphasizes intercultural communicative competence as an integral part of language proficiency.

Another significant study on the role of culture in the EFL learning context was conducted by Syed et al. (2023). In their study, Syed et al. (2023) highlight how deep and vast the relationship

between culture and language is. In turn, this interconnection affects and shapes pedagogical strategies and, as a result, impacts language acquisition. At the same time, Scarino and Liddicoat (2009, as cited in Syed et al., 2023) affirm that linguistic structures reflect cultural subtleties and social values through their semantic richness and contextual meanings, demonstrating the interactions between language and culture. Thus, Syed et al. (2023) argue that cultural integration is now recognized as an essential component of English language teaching. Language not only serves as a means of communication, but it also carries cultural norms, values, and social practices. Therefore, teaching a language in isolation from its cultural context significantly limits the learner's ability to fully grasp the nuances of authentic communication. The authors argue that a culturally inclusive curriculum allows learners to move beyond mechanical usage of grammar and vocabulary to develop pragmatic competence, which includes understanding idiomatic expressions, politeness strategies, and social cues specific to different English-speaking cultures. This cultural insight enhances learners' communicative abilities, especially in intercultural settings, and prepares them to use English more effectively in globalized contexts.

Furthermore, Syed et al. (2023) develop the idea that when students are exposed to diverse cultural references embedded in the language, their motivation and engagement often increase. By introducing learners to real-world content such as traditions, historical events, and contemporary issues from English-speaking countries, instructors can make lessons more relevant and stimulating. This aligns with the broader goal of language education in the 21st century: to form globally aware individuals who are not only linguistically proficient but also culturally competent (Syed et al., 2023).

2.3.2. Integrating the Victorian Era into EFL instruction

Victorian England presents a valuable cultural and linguistic context for EFL students at an advanced level. This historical period, marked by great social, industrial, and cultural changes, offers students an opportunity to explore authentic language while gaining deeper insights into the roots of British society. In this way, the proposal connects language development with meaningful historical and cultural learning.

The Victorian era is also rich in literary and dramatic works that reflect the complexity of the English language. As Lazar (1993) points out, literature "provides genuine and varied language input, encouraging students to develop interpretative and analytical skills" (p. 19). Through

drama activities based on Victorian settings or characters, students not only practice speaking but also develop empathy, creativity, and a sense of cultural perspective.

Moreover, learning about British history helps students understand the social and cultural dimensions of English-speaking countries. According to Kramsch (1993), "learning a foreign language without its cultural dimension is like learning words in a vacuum" (p. 8). When students explore the lives, customs, and values of a historical period like the Victorian age, they build stronger intercultural competence, which is crucial in today's globalized world. In addition, exposure to the written style of English featured in Victorian-era literary texts can significantly enrich students' awareness of historical language variation. This enables them to critically analyze and compare older forms of English with contemporary usage, deepening their understanding of the language's evolution and diversity.

Incorporating Victorian content into a drama project also fosters key 21st-century skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking, while maintaining a clear focus on improving oral proficiency in English. The integration of culture, language, and performance makes the learning process more dynamic, engaging, and effective. Moreover, by stepping away from ready-made textbooks typically used for English language study, and instead building knowledge through authentic historical sources, students are offered an unusual and stimulating opportunity to deepen their interest in the language. This approach not only enhances their learning experience but can also motivate them to continue exploring British history beyond the completion of the project.

3. Intervention proposal

The present intervention proposal aims to develop and enhance the speaking skills of 5th-semester students enrolled in a Languages Degree program, specifically within the context of the *Advanced English* subject. Drawing on the findings from the literature review above, this proposal integrates a drama-based project rooted in the historical and cultural context of Victorian England. The central activity will involve group-based elaboration and performance of short drama scenes, offering students a non-traditional, interactive, and engaging opportunity to practice and refine their oral communication.

Beyond improving fluency and pronunciation, the project seeks to foster intercultural competence by encouraging students to explore historical narratives, social values, and linguistic styles characteristic of the Victorian era. The drama activity will be designed to reflect a student-centered learning approach, promoting both independent inquiry and collaborative engagement. Through this method, learners are encouraged to take ownership of their learning process, make creative choices, and engage in meaningful dialogue.

In addition to the communicative dimension, the proposal emphasizes the development of soft skills such as teamwork, empathy, and interpersonal communication. Working in groups to interpret and perform scenes will provide a platform for students to navigate diverse perspectives and cultural nuances. Furthermore, this pedagogical strategy aligns with 21st-century educational goals by integrating creativity, critical thinking, and global awareness into language instruction.

Finally, the intervention aligns with CEFR descriptors, particularly those related to spoken production and interaction at B2–C1 levels, aiming to help students express themselves fluently, participate in extended discourse, and demonstrate sensitivity to socio-cultural contexts through language.

3.1. Aims of the proposal

This section outlines the general and specific objectives that guide the development and implementation of the current intervention proposal. These objectives reflect the expected achievements of undergraduate students within the context of a public university in

Valledupar, Colombia. The proposal is aimed at students enrolled in the Advanced English subject of the Languages Degree program, who are expected to develop C1-level speaking proficiency. Taking into consideration the challenges of limited English exposure outside the academic environment, the intervention focuses on fostering language development through meaningful, culturally embedded activities—in this case, drama based on the Victorian Era.

3.1.1. General objective

To develop English-speaking skills in undergraduate students in the Languages Degree program through a drama-based learning project that integrates the cultural and historical context of the Victorian Era, fostering communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and active engagement.

3.1.2. Specific objectives

- **SO1:** To improve oral expression and fluency in English through participation in dramatized classroom activities that require both spontaneous and structured speaking.
- **SO2:** To develop critical and reflective thinking skills by engaging in the analysis and interpretation of historical and literary materials from the Victorian period.
- **SO3:** To enhance intercultural competence by exploring cultural values, social norms, and historical contexts of English-speaking societies.
- **SO4:** To strengthen collaborative skills by participating in group-based tasks that require negotiation, teamwork, and co-construction of meaning.
- **SO5:** To increase the ability to self-assess and reflect on speaking performance through the use of guided evaluation tools and peer feedback.

3.2. Educational context and/or Target group

The present section outlines the broader educational environment and specific learner profile to which this intervention proposal is tailored. First, the institutional context will be described, including the university setting, curriculum design, and relevant program characteristics. Following this, attention will be given to the target group of students, highlighting their academic background, language proficiency, and key developmental features. This two-part

analysis ensures that the proposal responds accurately to both institutional demands and learner needs.

3.2.1. Educational context

This intervention proposal is intended for implementation at a public university located in Valledupar, the capital of the Cesar region in northern Colombia—a region commonly classified as part of the country's coastal zone. Valledupar hosts only one public university, which operates under a government-subsidized, zero-tuition program aimed at providing access to higher education for students from low-income families. In contrast, the city also has five private universities that charge standard tuition fees.

The public university in question is the only institution in the region offering a degree program in *Modern Languages*. This undergraduate program spans five academic years and is designed to train future educators of Spanish and English. Students enrolled in the program are expected to acquire a high level of proficiency in both languages, with the possibility of studying Korean as an additional language if specific academic and administrative requirements are met.

Admission into the Modern Languages program does not require an entrance examination. Any prospective student with an interest in becoming a language teacher may apply and enroll. As a result, first-semester cohorts typically demonstrate a wide range of English proficiency levels. Students who attended private secondary schools often begin with a B-level proficiency, whereas those from public schools frequently display limited or no English language skills.

The curriculum includes five sequential English language modules, beginning at a pre-intermediate (A2) level and culminating in an advanced (C1) level. Each level spans one academic semester, equivalent to 16 weeks, typically from February to June or from August to November. Each module consists of 10 weekly contact hours (2 hours per day from Monday to Friday) and includes an additional 5 hours designated for independent study.

By the end of the fifth semester, students are required to attain a C1 level of proficiency, which is formally assessed using the Oxford Placement Test (OPT), administered through a partnership between the university and the Oxford Center. Furthermore, as a graduation requirement in the tenth semester, students must complete a high-stakes English proficiency test, taken at a nationally accredited testing center.

In addition to English language modules, students are expected to take several content-based courses delivered in English. However, in practice, many of these courses are taught in Spanish due to the linguistic limitations of faculty members. Most professors in the program are native Spanish speakers who have learned English as a foreign language; only one faculty member is a non-native English speaker from Europe.

During the eighth semester, students must complete a mandatory teaching practicum in local schools, serving as English language instructors. This practicum is a graded component of the program and is considered essential for teacher preparation.

The socio-cultural environment in Valledupar presents notable challenges to English language acquisition. As the city is neither large nor internationally oriented, opportunities for real-life English interaction are minimal. English is spoken by only a small fraction of the local population, limiting students' exposure to and practice with the language outside the academic setting. This context reinforces the importance of classroom-based speaking activities and targeted interventions to support communicative competence.

3.2.2. Target group

The target group for this intervention is Group #01, consisting of 12 students (8 females and 4 males) aged between 19 and 21, who are currently enrolled in the *Advanced English* module during their fifth semester of the Modern Languages degree program. At this midpoint in their academic journey, all students have demonstrated B2-level proficiency in English and are now transitioning into coursework designed to meet the C1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

A particular characteristic of the English language curriculum within the program is that students receive instruction from a different professor for each level. As a result, each module is taught using a distinct teaching methodology, reflecting the individual approach of the assigned instructor. While this diversity can be enriching, it also presents challenges in continuity and skill development—particularly in the area of speaking. Observations suggest that relatively few instructors dedicate sufficient time to the active development of oral communication skills. This may be partly attributed to their own limitations in spoken English proficiency, which in turn affects their confidence and focus in classroom instruction.

The *Advanced English* module is currently taught by a team of three instructors: two Colombian professors and one European educator, all of whom possess high levels of English

proficiency. Each professor is assigned a different group, and Group #01 falls under the guidance of one of these instructors. The module is delivered over the course of a 16-week semester, during which students are expected to progress substantially in their communicative competence.

Despite their linguistic capabilities, students at this level can be difficult to motivate. This is due, in part, to the developmental stage they are in—navigating both early adulthood and their emerging identities as future language teachers. Therefore, the module must not only focus on academic language goals but also address students' personal and professional growth. Maximizing the effectiveness of the 16-week period is critical, and this intervention proposal seeks to do so by implementing a dynamic, student-centered, drama-based approach that integrates language development with creativity, collaboration, and intercultural competence.

3.3. Timing

3.3.1. Suggested implementation timeline

Considering the structure of the academic semester, which typically spans 16 weeks, the distribution of academic activities is generally organized as follows: four weeks of classes, followed by one week of partial examinations; another four weeks of instruction, followed by a second partial examination week; and a final five-week study period, concluding with a final examination week.

Based on this structure, it is recommended that the intervention proposal be implemented either during the second or third four-week instructional period. In the latter case, the final product of the intervention could be presented during the third partial examination week, integrating assessment into the academic timeline.

This proposal is designed to be carried out over a period of four weeks, comprising several sessions, and will serve as an extracurricular yet curriculum-aligned project focused on specific pedagogical objectives. Regular academic content will be delivered concurrently, ensuring alignment with the module's learning outcomes.

The following section presents a proposed calendar for the second academic semester of the 2025 academic year. Nonetheless, the intervention can be adapted to other timeframes and is expected to yield equally effective results across different scheduling contexts.

3.3.2. Proposed calendar for implementation

The figure below presents the calendar months of November and December of the current academic year, highlighting the days designated for the implementation of the intervention proposal. As previously noted, students attend daily two-hour sessions of the Advanced English course. On the selected days, instructional time will be divided as follows: one hour will be dedicated to activities related to the proposal, and one hour will focus on the curricular content established by the official syllabus. During the week of partial examinations in November, the final performance of the drama project will be scheduled.

Figure 1. *Calendar Months of November and December 2025 in Which the Proposed Intervention Could be Carried out.*

NOVEMBER 2025

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER 2025

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

The grey-colored cells indicate the days on which activities related to the development of the proposal will take place. In total, eight sessions will be dedicated to preparation and elaboration tasks. The days highlighted in green represent the final drama performance days for each group of students, followed by assessment and feedback sessions.

To provide a clearer overview of the sessions, the following table outlines the chronological sequence and key information for each session. It details the specific activities to be carried

out, along with the corresponding days and weeks within the proposed timeline of the current intervention.

Table 3. *Chronology and Information about the Sessions.*

Week	Session	Activity	Time
1	1	• Activity 1: Warm-up	5'
		• Activity 2: Video watching & note taking	10'
		• Activity 3: Guided discussion	15'
		• Activity 4: Group work	30'
1	2	• Activity 1: "Guess the Quote" Quiz	15'
		• Activity 2: Literary Excerpts	15'
		• Activity 3: Drama Project introduction	15'
		• Activity 4: Decision-Making and Justification	15'
2	3	• Activity 1: Goal setting	10'
		• Activity 2: Reading and analysing	20'
		• Activity 3: Presentation	20'
		• Activity 4: Wrap-up and reflection	10'
2	4	• Activity 1: Role definition and character profile	15'
		• Activity 2: Script drafting and scene setting	30'
		• Activity 3: Peer rehearsal and feedback	10'
		• Activity 4: Wrap-up	5'
3	5	• Activity 1: Vocabulary scaffold	10'
		• Activity 2: Script drafting and rehearsal	25'
		• Activity 3: Script revision and dynamic rehearsal	20'
		• Activity 4: Wrap-up and short reflection	5'
3	6	• Activity 1: Scene planning starter	10'
		• Activity 2: Costumes and props planning	20'
		• Activity 3: Focused rehearsal	20'
		• Activity 4: Wrap-up and sharing time	10'
4	7	• Activity 1: Warm-up game of voice projection	5'
		• Activity 2: Scene rehearsals block 1	20'
		• Activity 3: Feedback break	

		• Activity 4: Scene rehearsals block 2	10'
		• Activity 5: Wrap-up reflection	20'
			5'
4	8	• Activity 1: Rehearsal set up	5'
		• Activity 2: Full group rehearsal	45'
		• Activity 3: Group check-in and feedback	10'
5	9	• Warm-up and setup	10'
		• Drama performance	25'
		• Peer and teacher feedback	15'
		• Self-assessment and reflection	10'
5	10	• Warm-up and setup	10'
		• Drama performance	25'
		• Peer and teacher feedback	15'
		• Self-assessment and reflection	10'
5	11	• Warm-up and setup	10'
		• Drama performance	25'
		• Peer and teacher feedback	15'
		• Self-assessment and reflection	10'

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

3.4. Methodology of the proposal

As Syed et al. (2023) emphasize in their research findings, there is no universal strategy for incorporating cultural elements into language instruction. Pedagogical decisions must be context-sensitive, reflecting the diversity of learners' backgrounds, needs, and institutional realities. Effective teaching methodologies—particularly within culturally responsive language education—require that educators exercise professional autonomy to select or adapt approaches that best align with their students' learning goals and sociocultural environments. In some cases, this may involve applying a single established method, while in others, it may require blending elements from multiple pedagogical frameworks. As Syed et al. (2023) point out, factors such as instructional objectives, student demographics, and the broader cultural context must guide methodological choices. This flexibility not only fosters inclusive and

meaningful learning experiences but also enables teachers to create dynamic, engaging classroom environments that promote both linguistic and intercultural competence.

In this regard, Bessadet (2022) presents a useful model for integrating drama activities into language instruction, drawing upon a five-point plan originally developed by Susan Holden (1982). The suggested stages include:

- The teacher introduces the idea, theme, or problem, and organizes any necessary preliminary work, ensuring that students understand the task clearly.

- Students discuss in groups what they will do and how they will do it.

- Students experiment with various interpretations in groups until they are satisfied with one version.

- Students may present their interpretation to another group.

- Students may engage in reflective discussion—either within their group or with the entire class—as a means of peer assessment and critical evaluation of their work.

In order to meet the objectives of the present proposal, it is crucial to adopt a methodology that actively engages learners, enhances their linguistic performance, supports meaningful learning, and strengthens communicative competence. Additionally, the selected approach should stimulate problem-solving, foster collaboration, and encourage active student participation. In this context, drama emerges as a highly effective pedagogical tool, as it not only supports these aims but also aligns with the development of key 21st-century competencies.

Drama can be conceptualized as a form of task-based learning (TBL), where students participate in communicative tasks requiring the authentic use of the target language in socially and culturally meaningful situations. The process of planning, rehearsing, and performing dramatized scenes—especially those situated in historical or cultural contexts—challenges learners to negotiate meaning, articulate complex ideas, and adapt their spoken language to diverse roles and interactional scenarios. These tasks directly support the development of spoken language proficiency.

Moreover, by engaging in dramatic performance, students move beyond rote memorization of grammar and vocabulary and are instead encouraged to speak spontaneously, manage

discourse, and respond authentically during real-time communication. These experiences are crucial in transitioning from B2 to C1 proficiency, as they require greater fluency, lexical sophistication, and pragmatic competence—all descriptors highlighted by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for advanced users of English. In this sense, the drama project becomes a powerful vehicle for achieving the communicative goals of the curriculum. By the end of the Advanced English module, students are expected to reach the C1 level, which is formally assessed through the Oxford Placement Test. Thus, the integration of drama-based learning directly contributes to the fulfillment of the course's learning objectives.

Equally important, drama fosters the integral development of learners, in line with 21st-century educational goals. It cultivates empathy, creativity, collaboration, emotional intelligence, and intercultural awareness. These competencies are essential for modern language learners striving to become responsible global citizens. Through drama, students not only enhance their linguistic abilities but also grow personally and socially, gaining the skills necessary to interact effectively across cultural boundaries and contribute meaningfully to increasingly diverse and interconnected communities.

To summarize the aforementioned arguments, the comprehensive framework of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), as outlined by Rod Ellis (2003), will be adopted for the development of this proposal. TBLT is structured around three key phases, demonstrated in Figure 3:

Figure 2. *Key Phases of Task-Based Language Teaching.*
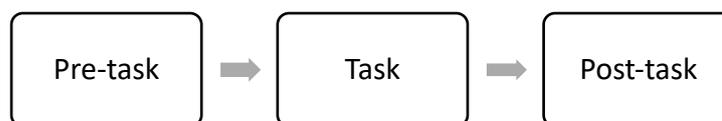
Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

This tripartite framework aligns seamlessly with the process of drama development, where each phase can be conceptually paralleled to preparation**,** performance**,** and reflection, respectively. Such alignment supports both the linguistic and pedagogical objectives of the proposal, enabling a structured, communicative, and learner-centered approach to English language learning. For better visualisation, the following Figure 3 represents the alignment between TBLT and drama-based approach:

Figure 3. *Alignment of Framework for TBLT and Drama-Based Approach.*

Pre-task	Preparation
Task	Performance
Post-task	Reflection
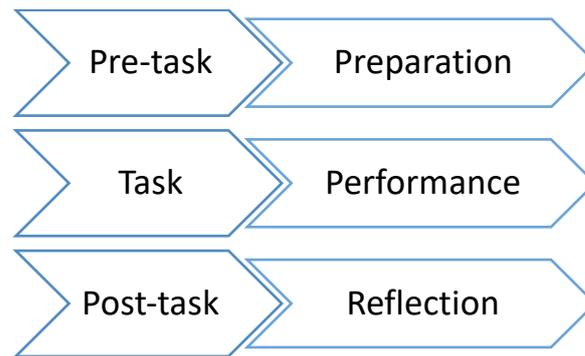
Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

Building upon the methodological foundation outlined above, the next section presents the sequence of activities designed to implement this intervention proposal. Rooted in the principles of TBLT and framed within a drama-based learning context, these activities are aimed at fostering the development of students' communicative competence, particularly their spoken English skills. The tasks are distributed across a four-week period and follow the pre-task, task, and post-task structure to ensure progressive language development, reflective practice, and meaningful learner engagement.

3.5. Sessions and activities

This section presents the sequence of teaching sessions, and the corresponding activities designed for the implementation of the proposed drama-based intervention. The sessions are structured to support the development of students' speaking skills while fostering creativity, collaboration, and cultural awareness. Each session integrates elements of the Victorian Era and task-based learning methodology to ensure meaningful language use. The timeline, objectives, and core tasks of each session are outlined to demonstrate the coherence and feasibility of the proposal.

All the teaching and assessment materials for this intervention proposal are organized and made available through a shared Padlet, which serves as the central hub for resources, templates, and activity guidelines. In addition to hosting lesson plans and supporting materials, the Padlet also contains the assessment tools used throughout the project, including observation checklists, peer-evaluation forms, and self-assessment templates. This digital space not only supported students during the implementation but also ensures transparency and accessibility for future adaptation of the project.

Figure 4. *Screenshot of the Padlet resource hub for the drama-based intervention*
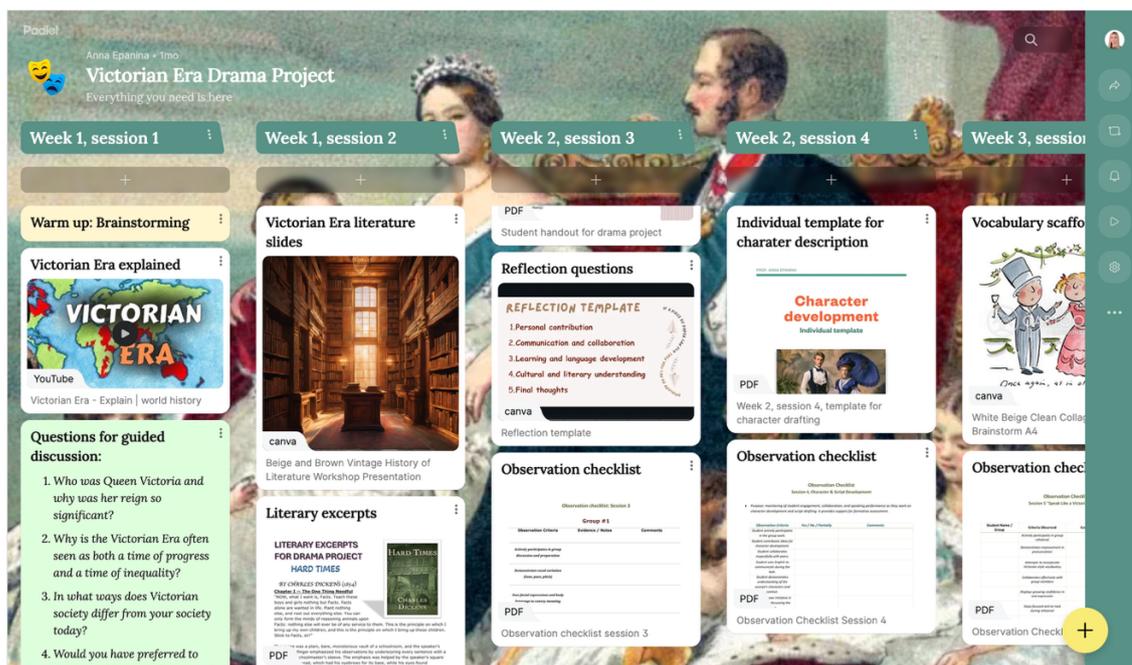
Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

Access the Padlet here: [Link for Padlet hub](#)

Table 4. *Session 1: Echoes of a Victorian Empire – Instructional Design*

Session 1. Echoes of a Victorian Empire

Duration: 60 minutes   **Week:** 1

Objectives:

- To activate and assess students' background knowledge of the Victorian Era through brainstorming and group discussion activities.
- To develop students' ability to extract and organize key information from an audiovisual source related to historical and cultural aspects of Victorian England.
- To foster collaborative speaking skills by engaging students in the creation of historically grounded fictional characters using appropriate vocabulary and social references.

Competences:

- **Linguistic competence**: Develop oral communication abilities in English, focusing on fluency, coherence, and appropriate vocabulary use in academic discussions.

- **Intercultural competence**: Reflect on cultural and historical elements from the Victorian era to enhance understanding of social norms and values in English-speaking contexts.

- **Collaborative competence**: Demonstrate the ability to work effectively in a group, contributing ideas and negotiating meaning during joint tasks.

- **Critical thinking competence**: Express and justify opinions clearly in response to historical themes, using relevant arguments and examples.

Skills:

- **Speaking:** Describing, hypothesizing, collaborating, and presenting ideas.

- **Listening:** Understanding main ideas and specific details in an informative video and group discussion.

- **Note-taking:** Identifying and organizing key historical content.

- **Critical thinking:** Analyzing and applying historical context to fictional character development.

Resources and materials:

- Video: *Victorian Era Explained* (World History Channel)

- Whiteboard & markers for brainstorming

- Padlet (Session 1):

  - Shared worksheet for video note-taking
  - Critical thinking discussion questions
  - Assessment checklist template for group task

- Printed worksheets

- Timer (or laptop with internet connection)

Activities:

- **Warm-up (5 minutes):** Activating prior knowledge. The teacher prompts students to brainstorm all possible associations with the term *Victorian Empire* / *Victorian*

England. The teacher writes their ideas on the whiteboard, creating a visual map of the students' background knowledge.

- **Victorian Era Explained (10 minutes):** Students watch the video *Victorian Era Explained* and take notes using a shared worksheet (see Padlet, Session 1), identifying key details about various aspects of life during the Victorian period.
- **Guided Discussion (15 minutes):** The teacher displays a set of critical-thinking and personal reflection questions on the screen (see Padlet, Session 1). A whole-class discussion follows, guided by the teacher with attention to time management.
- **Group Work (30 minutes):** Students are divided into groups of three and collaborate to develop fictional male and female characters based on the social and cultural norms of the Victorian Era. Each group creates two character profiles—one male and one female—that reflect typical roles, occupations, and social classes of the time. The teacher observes and assesses speaking fluency, accuracy, and the use of historical vocabulary using a checklist (see Padlet).

Assessment:

- **Formative assessment** based on observation.
- **Criteria:** engagement in group activities, appropriate use of vocabulary, clarity of oral expression, collaboration within the group (more details see Padlet).
- **Informal feedback** during class discussion.

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

Table 5. *Session 2: Exploring Victorian Literature – Instructional Design*

Session 2. Exploring Victorian Literature

Duration: 60 minutes   **Week:** 1

Objectives:

- To explore literary content from the Victorian Era and identify narrative elements relevant to drama creation.

- To introduce and explain various drama techniques appropriate for project-based learning.
- To encourage collaborative decision-making and planning within student groups for the upcoming drama performance.

Competences:

- **Linguistic competence:** Understanding literary vocabulary and syntactic patterns typical of Victorian English.
- **Intercultural competence:** Interpreting literature in its historical and social context.
- **Collaborative competence:** Working cooperatively to interpret texts and make project-related decisions.
- **Strategic competence:** Selecting appropriate drama strategies based on group analysis and communication goals.

Skills:

- Reading comprehension
- Critical thinking
- Oral interaction and discussion
- Group decision-making
- Literary and cultural analysis

Resources and materials:

- Canva slides with literary quotes
- Printed copies of six literary excerpts
- Drama techniques Canva slides (can be printed upon request)
- Padlet link for worksheet entries
- Observation checklist for teacher
- Whiteboard and markers

Activities:

- **Warm-up (15 minutes): "Guess the Quote" Quiz** The teacher displays a set of five quotes from Victorian literature using Canva slides ([see Padlet, Week 1, Session 2](#)). Working in pairs, students try to guess the book each quote comes from and discuss the possible context and meaning. After the quiz, the teacher reveals the correct answers and offers a brief introduction to Victorian literature, including visuals of key authors from the era.

- **Reading (15 minutes): Literary Excerpts** The teacher distributes six literary excerpts from novels written during Queen Victoria's reign. Students are divided into three groups of four (these groups will remain for the entire project). In groups, students read two excerpts, analyzing the main characters, mood, and setting.

- **Presentation (15 minutes): Drama Project Introduction** The teacher explains the drama project to be completed by the end of the second academic period. A visual presentation ([see Padlet, Week 1, Session 2](#)) introduces different drama techniques students may choose from. These techniques will guide the creation and performance of each group's drama.

- **Group Planning (15 minutes): Decision-Making and Justification** Groups define their members and discuss which drama technique(s) they will use. They briefly justify their choice in a Padlet entry or a handout. The teacher circulates to monitor interaction, using an observation checklist.

Assessment:

- **Observation checklist** to assess students' engagement during group work, contribution to discussion, critical thinking during quote analysis.

- **Padlet or manual handout response:** reviewing and following up the coherence ad justification of chosen drama technique.

- **Informal feedback** during reading and discussion activities.

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

Table 6. *Session 3: Vocalizing Literary Masterpieces – Instructional Design*

Session 3. Vocalizing Literary Masterpieces

Duration: 60 minutes   **Week: 2**

Objectives:

- To analyze selected Victorian-era literary excerpts for thematic and contextual understanding.
- To collaboratively adapt a text excerpt into spoken dialogue using improvisational techniques.
- To develop students' ability to assign and perform dramatic roles in English.
- To encourage reflection on language learning through performance-based activities.

Competences:

- **Linguistic competence**: Develops students' ability to use English accurately and expressively in spoken form.
- **Intercultural competence**: Enhances understanding of Victorian societal values and norms through literary texts.
- **Collaborative competence**: Strengthens teamwork and group planning skills essential for project development.
- **Learning to learn**: Promotes reflective practices and self-regulated learning.

Skills:

- Speaking (fluency, pronunciation, improvisation)
- Reading (critical reading and interpretation of literary texts)
- Listening (peer interaction and collaborative negotiation)
- Critical thinking and adaptation
- Role negotiation and creative planning

Resources and materials:

- Canva poster with Drama Project information
- Literary excerpts from the Session 2
- Drama techniques explanation (provided in the Session 2)
- Handouts printed individually for each student
- Self reflection template in Canvas
- Optional: dictionaries or glossaries, tablets for online reference, costume/prop ideas (optional and optional props list)

Activities:

- **Warm-up (10 minutes): Goal setting** The teacher quickly reminds main information about the project, and asks students to set a goal for today's session.
- **Reading and analysing (20 minutes):** In their assigned groups, students silently read two out of the six distributed Victorian-era literary excerpts. They collaboratively analyze the texts by identifying the main characters, setting, mood, and any social or historical elements depicted. They are given a choice of modifying the excerpts or choosing any other from the same novels, or any other book of Victorian Age. Each group discusses their impressions and begins to consider how the excerpt could be adapted for a drama performance. The teacher circulates to support comprehension and encourage discussion in English.
- **Presentation (20 minutes):** Groups begin orally drafting their scene based on their excerpt:

  - Students improvise and "speak the scene" to find natural expressions.
  - Teacher circulates, correcting pronunciation and encouraging expression.
  - Roles are assigned tentatively, with an option to be re-assigned through the drama development.

- **Wrap up and reflection (10 minutes):** One or two groups volunteer to perform a 30-second snippet of their improvised dialogue. Class gives short feedback. Then, each

student responds to the self-reflection prompt in writing or via Padlet (each group decide which tool to use for their reflection). Reflection template made in Canva is provided by the teacher (See Padlet, Week 2, Session 3)

Assessment:

- **Formative observation** using a checklist (See Padlet, Week 2, Session 3)
- **Informal speaking assessment** through fluency and collaboration
- **Self-reflection prompt** at end of class (See Padlet, Week 2, Session 3)

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

Table 7. *Session 4: Character Development – Instructional Design*

Session 4. Character Development

Duration: 60 minutes   **Week: 2**

Objectives:

- To finalize group member roles and collaboratively develop a working draft of the script.
- To engage in character exploration by analyzing character traits and motivations.
- To use historical, linguistic, and emotional features to shape character portrayal.
- To foster autonomy and collaboration during the creative process of drama building.

Competences:

- **Linguistic competence**: Use of contextually appropriate language while drafting scenes and character lines.
- **Intercultural competence**: Understanding characters' actions and perspectives based on the values and norms of Victorian society.
- **Collaborative competence**: Efficient cooperation in group-based creative work.

- **Strategic learning competence**: Self-organization and planning of steps toward the final performance.

Skills:

- Speaking fluency and intonation
- Scriptwriting and dialogue construction
- Critical thinking and historical interpretation
- Empathy and perspective-taking
- Collaboration and peer negotiation

Resources and materials:

- Group Padlet boards (Week 2, Session 4 section)
- Canva character profile template (Padlet, Week 2, Session 4)
- Laptops or tablets or notebooks for scriptwriting
- Excerpts of Victorian texts (as reference material)
- Whiteboard or smartboard for optional brainstorming
- Teacher's observation checklist

Activities:

- **Role Definition & Character Profile (15 minutes):**
  - Students confirm or modify previously assigned roles.
  - Each student uses the PDF character profile template (See Padlet, Week 2, Session 4) to detail their role (personality traits, backstory, motivations, social status).
  - Group Padlet (optional) is used to upload completed profiles.
  - Teacher circulates, answering doubts and encouraging thoughtful character development.
- **Script drafting and scene setting (30 minutes):**

- o Groups begin writing a preliminary version of their scene, using their chosen excerpt as a starting point.

- o The script must include dialogue, stage directions, and emotional cues.

- o Teacher provides minimal intervention, acting as a mentor, available for language corrections, cultural clarification, or historical alignment.

- o Option to use collaborative tools like Google Docs or Padlet (up to the students' decision).

- **Peer rehearsal and feedback (10 minutes):** Groups rehearse a short section of their draft scene (about 2 to 3 minutes), meanwhile students listen actively and provide instant and quick oral feedback, focusing on clarity of the message, character coherence and logical combination, and details of expressions.

- **Wrap-up (5 minutes):** Each group think about and define a goal for the next session. Those can be written in their shared online collaborative tool, or read aloud. Alternatively, they can put it within their template of individual drafting.

Assessment:

- **Formative observation**: Teacher uses a checklist to monitor student engagement, collaboration, and task progression. (See Padlet, Week 2, Session 4)

- **Product assessment**: Quality of character profiles and initial script structure will be briefly reviewed by the teacher on Padlet or printed templates.

- **Peer feedback**: Group members provide constructive feedback to each other during script discussion.

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

Table 8. *Session 5: Speak like a Victorian Citizen – Instructional Design*

Session 5. Speak like a Victorian Citizen

Duration: 60 minutes   **Week: 3**

Objectives:

- To support students in refining their group scripts and rehearsing selected scenes with increased fluency and expression.
- To foster greater ownership of roles through dramatic embodiment and collaborative peer input.
- To encourage the integration of Victorian-style vocabulary and expressions into scripted dialogues when appropriate.

Competences:

- **Linguistic competence**: using grammatical structures and vocabulary appropriate to character and context.
- **Sociolinguistic competence**: adapting tone, register, and style to suit Victorian societal roles.
- **Intercultural competence**: representing the historical and social dimensions of the Victorian era.
- **Collaborative competence**: co-constructing performance scripts and scenes with peer feedback.
- **Digital competence**: using online tools to organize ideas and rehearse interactively.

Skills:

- Speaking fluency and pronunciation
- Creative writing and dialogue composition
- Listening and interaction in group rehearsal
- Critical thinking and decision-making during refinement

Resources and materials:

- Digital or handwritten scripts by students
- Shared Padlet board (column for Session 5)
- Slides in Canva featuring Victorian vocabulary and expressions with modern equivalents (Posted on Padlet under the column for Session 5)

- Teacher's observation checklist

Activities:

- **Vocabulary scaffold (10 minutes):** Teacher presents Canva slides with Victorian expressions and their modern meanings. Students volunteerily can read them aloud and teacher revises the pronunciation and corrrects it if necessary. Students may choose to integrate some into their dialogues for authenticity and originality (it is optional). Slides are posted on Padlet so students can consult it any time, as well as they are welcomed to research freely independently for any other vocabulary related to Victorian times and also incorporate it into their script.

- **Script drafting and rehearsal (25 minutes):** Groups rehearse their selected scenes using their current script drafts. Students are encouraged to experiment with tone, movement, and character delivery. Teacher circulates with an observation checklist, offering individual feedback and encouraging expressive delivery.

- **Script revision and dynamic rehearsal (20 minutes):** Groups revise their scripts and rehearse again, focusing on fluency, gestures, and timing. The teacher encourages self-monitoring and suggests to offer other groups to observe rehearsals and give opinions.

- **Wrap-up and short reflection (5 minutes):** Teacher facilitates a quick reflective round: "What worked best today in your group?" or "What is your next step before finalizing your scene?" Students are encouraged to think about those questions and share their thoughts with peers. Some ideas might be annotated in their personal working tools.

Assessment:

- **Formative assessment**: Teacher observation using a checklist focused on group collaboration, speaking fluency, and integration of feedback ([posted on Padlet](#)).
- **Self and peer-assessment** (optional at the end of the session if timing allows): Short oral comments or written Padlet entries about progress and scene clarity.

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

Table 9. *Session 6: Staging the Scene – Instructional Design*

Session 6. Staging the Scene

Duration: 60 minutes   **Week: 3**

Objectives:

- To collaboratively design the staging, scenery, and dramatic movement of the chosen scenes.
- To plan and select appropriate props, visual elements, and costume ideas relevant to the Victorian era.
- To rehearse scene segments with increased fluency and creative expression.
- To promote cooperative decision-making and strengthen group cohesion through collaborative planning.

Competences:

- **Linguistic competence**: Use of context-appropriate vocabulary and expressions related to staging, costume, and drama.
- **Intercultural competence**: Application of knowledge of Victorian social norms in costume and scene design.
- **Learning to learn**: Developing autonomy in group decision-making and creative planning.
- **Collaborative competence**: Contributing actively in teamwork and peer negotiation.

Skills:

- Speaking fluently and expressively in rehearsed dialogue.
- Justifying choices related to design, props, and character portrayal.
- Using descriptive vocabulary and persuasive language.
- Demonstrating creativity and adaptability in performance planning.

Resources and materials:

- Group folders on Padlet (project planning boards)

- Victorian costume and props reference board ([template on Padlet](#))

- Excerpt scripts in development (may be published through Google Doc)

- Access to rehearsal space or cleared classroom area (University campus)

- Observation checklist ([see Padlet, Week 3, Session 6](#))

Activities:

- **Scene planning starter (10 minutes):** Each group outlines the scene they intend to stage, with teacher circulating briefly to ensure clarity and group cohesion.

- **Costumes and props planning (20 minutes):** Using the template for brainstorming provided by the teacher ([See Padlet](#)), groups discuss and brainstorm which props, costume styles, and set elements they need. They annotate their script on Padlet or Google Doc with ideas and reasoning.

- **Focused rehearsal (20 minutes):** Students rehearse partial scenes, experimenting with movement, tone, and space. Teacher observes and provides discreet support or pronunciation correction if needed.

- **Wrap-up and sharing time (10 minutes):** Each group shares one creative decision they made today (e.g., costume idea, staging trick, or an expressive line delivery). Class gives brief feedback. The teacher pays attention and encourage their creativity.

Assessment:

- **Observation**: Use of observation checklist focused on fluency, group interaction, decision-making, and language use ([posted on Padlet](#)).

- **Peer discussion**: Teacher checks group Padlet reflections for justification of choices.

- **Performance preparation**: Groups show draft scene designs and costume/prop ideas verbally or visually.

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

Table 10. *Session 7: Power of Voices – Instructional Design*

Session 7. Power of Voices

Duration: 60 minutes   **Week: 4**

Objectives:

- To rehearse full dramatic scenes incorporating voice, movement, and space.
- To refine oral fluency and pronunciation in English through repeated rehearsal.
- To collaboratively enhance scene coherence and performance quality using peer and teacher feedback.

Competences:

- **Linguistic competence** – expressing meaning clearly and fluently using appropriate vocabulary and grammar.
- **Interpersonal competence** – collaborating respectfully and productively in group tasks.
- **Cultural competence** – demonstrating awareness of historical setting, characters, and norms through dramatic expression.

Skills:

- Speaking fluently with clear pronunciation
- Using paralinguistic features (intonation, stress, gesture)
- Cooperating in team-based problem-solving
- Interpreting and performing texts creatively

Resources and materials:

- Student-generated scripts (printed copy for every student)
- Printed or digital staging handouts (from Session 6, posted on Padlet)
- Classroom space for movement

- Phones/tablets for recording (optional)

- Observation checklist (for the teacher, posted on Padlet)

- Rubric overview handout

Activities:

- **Warm-up game (5 minutes):** Quick voice projection game leaded by the teacher to warm upp physically and vocally. All students are participating. Explanation of the game is providet on Padlet ([Week 4, Session 7](#)).

- **Scene rehearsals block 1 (20 minutes):** Each group begins rehearsing full scenes with a focus on voice clarity, characters movements and scene transitions. Teacher circulates with a checklist and gives micro-feedback or provided momentum help where needed.

- **Feedback break (10 minutes):** Groups pause for a moment and reflect (self-assessment) pondering about what is working for them, what stays unclear, and what can be improved? Teacher optionally comments on shared patterns related to unclear pronunciation, inconsistent tone, etc.

- **Scene rehearsals block 2 (20 minutes):** Groups rehearse again, now implementing the improvements discussed shortly before. Volunteerily, one group may perform for the class for a peer oral and instant feedback.

- **Wrap-up reflection (5 minutes):** Teacher encourages students to reflect on what part of the scenes felt strongest and what the focus would be before the final permormance?

Assessment:

- **Observation**: Use of observation checklist focused on fluency, group interaction, decision-making, and language use ([posted on Padlet](#)).

- **Peer discussion**: Teacher checks group Padlet reflections for justification of choices.

- **Performance preparation**: Groups show draft scene designs and costume/prop ideas verbally or visually.

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

Table 11. *Session 8: Polish and Perform– Instructional Design*

Session 8. Polish and Perform

Duration: 60 minutes   **Week: 4**

Objectives:

- To collaboratively revise and finalize the drama scripts.

- To rehearse scenes with fluency, expression, and stage movement.

- To prepare performance logistics: staging, timing, and transitions.

Competences:

- Communicative competence (spoken production & interaction).

- Intercultural and literary awareness.

- Collaborative and project management skills.

- Creative expression and critical thinking.

Skills:

- Fluency and expressiveness in oral production.

- Use of language for dramatic effect.

- Teamwork, rehearsal techniques, and problem-solving.

- Literary interpretation and character embodiment.

Resources and materials:

- Final version of drama scripts

- Costumes and props

- Scene design visual organizer (from Session 6)

- Space for rehearsal (University campus)

- Timer or stopwatch

- Teacher observation checklist

Activities:

- **Rehearsal setup (5 minutes):** Students organize their materials, designate areas for staging, and review their final scripts. The teacher briefly reminds them of the importance of fluency, expression, and collaboration.

- **Full-group rehearsal (45 minutes):** Each group rehearses their full scenes while classmates from other groups observe quietly. Groups use this opportunity to polish scene transitions and cues, voice prjection and emotion, movement and stage presence, and finally use of props and costumes. Teacher observes, taking notes using the observation checklist and offering brief targeted support where required.

- **Group check-in and feedback (10 minutes):** After rehearsals, each group self-assesses their readiness for the performance and identifies final details to improve. Peers may offer brief, constructive comments. Teacher reinforces positive aspects and encourages final improvements. Students are offered a quick exit ticket as a self-evaluation strategy for this finalization of Task stage.

Assessment:

- Observation checklist (See Padlet Week 4, Session 8)
- Peer and group feedback (oral or Padlet post)
- Quick exit ticket (See Padlet Week 4, Session 8)

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

Table 12. *Group Drama Presentations – Instructional Design*

Post-task phase: Group drama presentations

Final group performances

Duration: 60 minutes per group   **Week:** 5

Objectives:

- To showcase students' final drama performances as the product of a four-week project-based learning experience.

- To evaluate students' oral communication, creativity, collaboration, and ability to adapt literary content into dramatic scenes.

- To foster reflective thinking through self-assessment and peer evaluation.

Session structure for each of the three days:

- **Warm-up and setup (10 minutes):** Teacher welcomes the group and audience, checks tech needs, and gives a brief intro. Students finalize any last-minute stage arrangements.

- **Drama performance (25 minutes):** One group performs their adapted Victorian-era drama using chosen drama techniques, costumes, and props. During the performance, teacher completes the rubrics of final assessment (See document on Padlet, Week 5).

- **Peer and teacher feedback (15 minutes):** Audience (classmates) use peer-evaluation rubric to provide feedback. Teacher gives oral comments aligned to summative assessment rubrics.

- **Self-assessment and reflection (10 minutes)**: Performing group fills out self-assessment form (See the template on Padlet, Week 5 section) and uploads it to Padlet. Short Q&A may follow to reflect on the process.

Summative assessment:

The final performance will be assessed using a detailed rubric in four categories:

- Language use and fluency

- Pronunciation and vocal expression

- Creativity and interpretation

- Teamwork and preparation

Rubrics will include 4 detailed descriptors per category with defined levels: Excellent / Good / Satisfactory / Needs improvement. (See Padlet, Week 5 section)

Weighting for the final grade will be composed from the following distribution:

- Teacher evaluation: 60%

- Peer evaluation: 20%

- Self-evaluation: 20%

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

3.6. Assessment

Assessment in this proposal is conceived as an integral part of the learning process rather than a final stage. It serves to monitor progress, guide instructional decisions, and provide learners with opportunities for reflection and growth. Both formative and summative approaches are incorporated to ensure that evaluation remains continuous, transparent, and aligned with the pedagogical goals of the intervention. In addition to assessing student learning, this section also includes a critical evaluation of the proposal itself, considering its effectiveness, feasibility, and potential for future implementation.

3.6.1. Learning assessment

Throughout the learning sessions of this drama-based intervention, formative assessment was prioritized to ensure continuous support for student learning and to promote self-regulation, peer interaction, and reflective practice. In alignment with the principles of task-based and project-based learning, assessment was embedded within the learning process rather than imposed externally. In this way, assessment isn't perceived as such but rather is considered as a natural part of the proposed project, constantly supporting the coherence of the developmental phase (task phase). The strategies selected were adapted to the needs of undergraduate EFL students aiming for a C1 proficiency level, many of whom benefit from process-oriented, interactive, and creative engagement rather than traditional testing methods.

Summarizing the tools used during the project, observation checklists were systematically employed by the teacher in each session. These tools allowed for the monitoring of students' linguistic, collaborative, and creative development in real time, while maintaining a non-intrusive presence during student-led activities. To give an example, the checklist of the first learning session included criteria such as collaboration and participation, creativity and

historical accuracy, language use, and engagement with the task. For each criterion, two indicators were developed, which the teacher assessed as either achieved or not achieved, with space for additional comments where needed. Consequently, every learning session had its own observation checklist with criteria adapted to the specific learning objectives of the session. All the assessment tools were presented in [Padlet](#) and could be easily accessed for revision and use. Through detailed criteria such as language use, group interaction, dramatic expression, and engagement with literary content, the checklists offered the teacher insight into each group's progress and provided formative feedback when necessary. Moreover, checklists helped the teacher to maintain the course of students' work and provide support where necessary.

On the other side, the assessment tool self-assessment was introduced in several sessions. This tool was integrated to promote metacognition and students' self-guide of their learning process. Structured prompts and reflection templates—sometimes completed individually, other times collaboratively via Padlet—invited students to critically assess their personal growth, contributions to the project, and linguistic development. This practice responded to the realia of the students' learning environment by acknowledging their need for autonomy and relevance in learning experiences. Furthermore, peer evaluation was also introduced as an assessment tool in this proposal. Peer evaluation allowed students to assess each other's work constructively. This choice was justified by the collaborative nature of the drama project, where mutual feedback was essential for improving group coherence, vocal and physical performance, and narrative clarity. Additionally, it fostered a supportive classroom atmosphere and developed students' critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills. Lastly, teacher-guided vocabulary scaffolding—such as the presentation of Victorian-era expressions—was included as an optional resource rather than a graded component. This decision acknowledged the diversity of linguistic confidence within the classroom, allowing students to personalize their linguistic input without performance pressure.

The summative assessment of this intervention was conducted during the post-task phase, which took place in the fifth week of the program. Each group of students was assigned a full session (one hour) to present their final drama performance based on the literary and thematic work developed in previous sessions. These final performances served as a partial oral exam and represented the culmination of the students' work over the four-week creative

process. Evaluation was guided by a comprehensive rubric developed specifically for the final performance. The rubric covered key dimensions such as pronunciation and fluency, use of language appropriate to the Victorian theme, collaborative execution, creativity, and communicative impact. The rubric is presented below (Table 13).

Table 13. *Final Performance Rubric for Drama-Based Intervention*

Assessment criterion	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs improvement
To use language fluently and accurately	Language is rich, varied, and accurate; fluency is sustained throughout the performance.	Language is rich, varied, and accurate; fluency is sustained throughout the performance.	Language shows some errors, and occasional pauses or disruptions affect fluency.	Language shows some errors, and occasional pauses or disruptions affect fluency.
To demonstrate clear pronunciation and vocal expression	Pronunciation is clear, with excellent projection and expressive intonation.	Pronunciation is clear, with excellent projection and expressive intonation.	Pronunciation is mostly clear, with good vocal expression.	Pronunciation is understandable, though expression or projection is limited.
To display creativity and interpretive skills	Adaptation is highly creative, with a strong and insightful interpretation of the text.	Adaptation is highly creative, with a strong and insightful interpretation of the text.	Adaptation is creative, with a clear interpretation of the text.	Adaptation demonstrates limited creativity or unclear interpretation of the text.
To collaborate effectively in teamwork and preparation	Group works seamlessly with balanced contributions and thorough preparation.	Group works seamlessly with balanced contributions and thorough preparation.	Group collaborates well, with only minor issues in coordination or preparation.	Group shows uneven contributions or preparation, with some disorganization evident.

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

The criteria were clearly communicated in advance, promoting transparency and alignment with expected outcomes. In addition to teacher evaluation, peer-evaluation forms were used during the performance sessions to encourage active listening and critical engagement among classmates. This component served not only as a tool for accountability but also as a reinforcement of the collaborative spirit fostered throughout the project. Finally, self-assessment prompts were distributed following the final performances, allowing students to

reflect on their learning journey, challenges faced, and personal growth in language use, performance, and group dynamics. These reflections provided the teacher with additional qualitative data to complement the rubric-based assessment.

Together, the formative and summative assessment strategies ensured that evaluation was holistic, student-centered, and aligned with both the pedagogical goals of the intervention and the educational realities of the learners. Beyond measuring individual progress and group performance, the assessment design also provided a foundation for reflecting on the overall effectiveness of the proposal itself. In this sense, the evidence collected through checklists, self- and peer-assessment, and final performance rubrics not only supported student learning but also served as indicators of the intervention's broader success and feasibility. This naturally leads to the following section, where a critical assessment of the proposal is carried out through a SWOT analysis in order to evaluate its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and to determine its potential for replication or improvement in future implementations.

3.6.2. Assessment of the proposal

The present proposal introduces an eight-session drama-based intervention aimed at fostering oral production, collaboration, and critical thinking among undergraduate EFL students working toward a C1 level of English. Based on the principles of task-based and project-based learning, and thematically centered around Victorian-era literature, the proposal is both ambitious and pedagogically innovative. It seeks to integrate language learning with the development of 21st-century competencies such as creativity, teamwork, problem-solving, and self-regulation. From a pedagogical standpoint, the design reflects current best practices in communicative language teaching and learner autonomy. It emphasizes formative assessment, learner-centered practices, and the integration of literature and drama—elements often underused in EFL contexts despite their high motivational and educational value. The proposed intervention seeks to introduce innovative methods within the EFL classroom by promoting variability in learning strategies while taking into account the time constraints of academic semesters. In many university contexts, large class sizes and varying levels of student motivation often limit the opportunities for each individual to engage meaningfully in speaking practice. To address this issue, the proposal adopts a task-based approach designed to ensure that every student receives equitable

opportunities to develop their oral communication skills. Through collaborative, performance-oriented tasks, the intervention encourages active participation and creates space for individualized expression within group work.

The proposal also makes strategic use of digital tools (Padlet, Canva) to enhance accessibility, organization, and creativity. However, despite its strengths, the proposal requires careful consideration in terms of logistical feasibility, classroom management, and student variability. Implementing drama-based interventions in higher education contexts may present time-related and affective challenges, particularly for learners unaccustomed to performance tasks or with low confidence in oral skills.

To provide a structural assessment of the intervention proposal, SWOT analysis is to be provided in a continuation. When creating the SWOT analysis, the following criteria were considered:

- Degree of alignment with institutional curriculum and learning outcomes.

- Integration of communicative, intercultural, and 21st-century skills.

- Feasibility of implementation within available time and resources.

- Flexibility and adaptability to different student proficiency levels.

- Capacity to engage and motivate students in active learning.

- Teacher readiness and professional development needs.

- Assessment practicality and reliability.

- Potential for replication in other EFL contexts.

- Compatibility with students' digital literacy and technological access.

- Relevance and appeal of content (Victorian literature and sociohistorical themes).

To better visualize the scope of the proposal's potential and limitations, the following SWOT analysis is provided:

Table 14. *SWOT Analysis of the Intervention Proposal*

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Innovative pedagogical approach	- Time constraints for deep learning

• Focus on real communication	• Uneven participation of group' members
• Integration of 21st-century skills	• Limited prior drama experience
• Inclusive student participation	• A need of teacher' training
• Cultural and literary enrichment	• Complexity of assessment
• Clear structure, organization and alignment with academic calendar	• Logistical limitations
• Blend of formative and summative assessment	• Possible linguistic difficulties
• Boost of learning motivation	• Digital dependence and consequent delay with tasks' execution
• Minimal requirements of materials	

Opportunities	**Threats**
• Fostering students' confidence when Speaking English	• Unequal language proficiency within groups
• Alignment with institutional curriculum goals	• Lack of institutional support or resources
• Constructing awareness of sociohistorical themes	• Cultural resistance to non-traditional methods
• Potential for replication for other EFL courses	• Time pressure and academic workload
• Digital literacy enhancement (valuable skills beyond the classroom and for future EFL teachers)	• Fear of public speaking or stage anxiety
• Encouragement of interdisciplinary thinking	• Group dynamic issues (possible interpersonal conflicts)
• Classroom culture more inclusive	• Risk of superficial engagement with texts
• Increased students' ownership of their learning	• Concerns about subjectivism in grading
• Building a positive reputation for the program	

- Responding to generational learning preferences

Source: Author's own elaboration (2025)

In conclusion, this intervention proposal represents a non-traditional, student-centered approach to enhancing speaking skills among EFL university students through drama-based, task-supported learning. By integrating collaborative scripts, literary exploration, and performance-based tasks, the intervention responds to the complex realities of mixed-proficiency classrooms, time-limited semesters, and students' diverse motivational profiles. The SWOT analysis highlights not only the proposal's alignment with institutional goals and learner needs but also potential risks such as workload, resource constraints, and varied student engagement. Nevertheless, these challenges are counterbalanced by meaningful opportunities for inclusive participation, critical thinking, and the development of 21st-century skills. The consistent use of formative and summative assessment ensures that learning is tracked and supported at all stages, while the structure of the project allows for scalability, adaptability, and future refinement. Overall, this proposal demonstrates both educational innovation and pragmatic implementation, offering a promising contribution to the evolving landscape of English language education in Colombia.

4. Discussion

This master's dissertation aimed to explore how a drama-based, task-supported intervention could enhance speaking skills among undergraduate EFL students within the Colombian higher education context. Based on communicative, experiential, and learner-centered pedagogies, this intervention proposal emerged as a potential solution to persistent challenges faced in large, mixed-ability classrooms—where time limitations, unequal participation opportunities, and lack of student engagement often limit or impede meaningful oral practice. The ease of data collection—through observation checklists, student self-assessments, peer evaluations, and performance rubrics—provided a real-life basis to demonstrate how drama, when executed through task-based learning and authentic literary content, can act as a powerful catalyst for oral fluency, confidence, creativity, spontaneity, reduced anxiety, and collaborative competence. These findings support previous literature (Maley and Duff, 2005), which highlights drama as a rich medium for communicative language teaching, while extending it with fresh insights specific to the Latin American university EFL environment.

One of the most significant contributions of this study is its demonstration of how literary excerpts from the Victorian era — often considered linguistically or culturally distant — can become accessible, engaging, and personally relevant to students when recontextualized through dramatization and group adaptation. This challenges common assumptions in EFL settings about students' ability to relate to canonical literature, showing that the affective and performative dimensions of drama serve as a bridge between historical texts and contemporary learner identities. In other words, converting a 19th-century literary text into a drama performance is a non-traditional yet non-invasive way to bring original British English into a modern learning context. It provides students with an opportunity to reflect upon the depth of studying a language and to formulate their own ideas about teaching English, particularly relevant in their role as future educators.

Furthermore, the drama-based methodology revealed an unexpected potential to cultivate a broader set of 21st-century competencies, such as critical thinking, negotiation, improvisation, and multimodal communication. Offered as a complementary project occupying 8 hours of the course, it gave learners the chance to develop multitasking and analytical skills, supported by reflective activities and self-assessment. These outcomes

suggest that drama should not be viewed solely as a method for oral language development but rather as an interdisciplinary platform for integrative skill-building, aligned with global educational goals. Another important insight was the dynamic role of formative assessment throughout the process. The consistent use of observation checklists, student reflections, and peer feedback not only supported ongoing learning but also empowered students to take ownership of their development. This aligns with constructivist theories of learning and addresses a general weakness in traditional EFL classrooms, where feedback is often sporadic or overly summative – especially considering the high-stakes nature of final university exams.

On the other hand, several factors may create tensions in classroom implementation, such as the time constraints of the academic semester, varying levels of student commitment and intrinsic motivation, and the need for strong institutional support for non-traditional methods like drama. Additionally, while group work fosters collaboration, it can occasionally obscure individual progress, raising concerns about equitable participation and fair assessment in project-based formats. This challenge is intended to be addressed through the teacher's professional expertise, relying on their ability to observe each student's contributions independently from the overall group outcome, thus ensuring fair grading.

In conclusion, this proposal contributes a practical and innovative model for integrating drama into EFL pedagogy—one that resonates with both linguistic and humanistic aims. It supports the idea that language learning is not only about mastering forms, but also about inhabiting voices, negotiating meaning, and performing identities—both imagined and real. Through portraying characters from the pages of Victorian novels in a controlled classroom setting, students can gain a range of side benefits, as described in 21st-century skills frameworks. By placing drama at the center of language learning, this proposal moves beyond traditional models and offers a pathway for more inclusive, meaningful, and transformative EFL education.

5. Conclusions

Analysing the shifting trends in how foreign language teaching is approached, it is worth noting that today's English learners belong to a generation that is predominantly visually and auditorily oriented. Teachers are thus called to reflect on how to innovate within the classroom without compromising the focus and effectiveness of their pedagogical strategies. In this sense, a student-oriented approach might offer a meaningful solution.

Nowadays, many young learners are almost non-readers. They do not view books as valuable learning resources. Therefore, it becomes the teacher's responsibility to find creative ways to revive the use of literary texts as a source of enriching foreign language vocabulary and cultural awareness. However, traditional reading activities may feel boring, disengaging, and uninspiring to young adults. This proposal aimed to address that challenge by reimagining the use of 19th-century English novels—transforming them into dynamic, performative experiences where multiple competencies could be developed. Among them, the primary focus was placed on enhancing speaking skills by engaging what learners use most in real communication: their voice.

Building on this foundation, the intervention sought to meet four key objectives: fostering oral fluency, encouraging collaborative learning, integrating authentic literary content, and developing 21st-century skills in a realistic and engaging way. By involving students in dramatized adaptations of Victorian-era excerpts, the proposal encouraged spontaneous speech, negotiation of meaning, and creative risk-taking in English—skills often underemphasized in traditional EFL classrooms. Additionally, the collaborative nature of the drama project promoted teamwork, empathy, and problem-solving, creating a space where language use was both meaningful and emotionally resonant. Through this collaborative work, students also developed greater autonomy, learning to self-direct their strategies in pursuit of shared goals. They learned how to function effectively in groups, resolve interpersonal or logistical issues, and work together to achieve the best possible outcomes. These skills are especially relevant to their future teaching careers, where they will frequently encounter—and need to lead—collaborative work environments. For last, incorporating formative assessment tools such as self-assessments, peer feedback, and observation checklists also supported the proposal's aim to empower students as autonomous learners. These tools not

only helped monitor progress but also contributed to developing learners' metacognitive skills, self-awareness, and responsibility for their own improvement.

Ultimately, this dissertation demonstrates that drama-based, task-supported interventions can be a valuable and realistic means of bringing life back into literary texts while responding to the needs of modern learners. By rethinking how language, literature, and performance intersect in the classroom, this proposal encourages educators to see speaking not just as a skill to be tested, but as a human act of expression, interaction, and identity-building. There is a shift from solely assessing the act of sentence construction through analytic rubrics in the EFL classroom toward creating an environment where speech becomes part of a dramatic performance or simulation of scenes from literary texts—enriching it with meaning, emotional nuance, and the personal characteristics of each student and their own interpretation of the characters. In doing so, it offers a creative, inclusive, and learner-centered pathway toward more meaningful and effective English language education.

6. Limitations and further research

While this dissertation offers a meaningful contribution to the integration of drama-based, task-supported methodologies in EFL instruction, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the proposal was developed for a relatively small sample size—three groups within a single university context—which may limit the applicability of the findings. Larger and more diverse populations would provide a broader basis for evaluating both the process and the outcomes of the intervention. Secondly, the methodological scope was constrained by institutional time limitations: the intervention spanned just eight one-hour sessions, seeking to fulfill the demands of the official curriculum while simultaneously pursuing the objectives of the proposed project. This dual focus left limited room for long-term impact measurement or deeper tracking of language development over time. Another limitation lies in the assessment instruments used; while checklists, peer feedback, and rubrics offered valuable formative insights, a more vigorous combination of qualitative and quantitative tools could improve data triangulation and reliability. Additionally, the inherent variability in student engagement, motivation, and readiness for drama-based learning could not always be fully addressed. This suggests the importance of accounting more explicitly for affective and psychological variables in future implementations.

Looking forward, several lines of inquiry emerge. Future studies could extend the intervention over an entire semester, exploring long-term gains and potential secondary benefits in speaking fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and learner autonomy. Comparative studies between traditional and drama-based task approaches could yield further insights into pedagogical effectiveness and learner preference. Incorporating digital tools—such as video journaling or AI-based pronunciation feedback—might also enhance the reflective, interactive, and expressive dimensions of student learning. Moreover, there is promising potential in expanding the literary scope of such interventions, adapting dramatizations not only from canonical Victorian texts but also from postcolonial or contemporary literature that resonates more closely with students' sociocultural realities. Ultimately, further research should investigate how drama and literature can be combined not merely as supplementary elements, but as foundational frameworks for fostering linguistic proficiency, emotional intelligence, and intercultural competence in EFL classrooms across Colombia and beyond.

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