



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA  
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**BENEFITS OF USING THEATER PLAYS IN THE ENGLISH TEACHING IN  
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL IN PUEBLA, MEXICO, THROUGH CRITICAL  
PEDAGOGY**

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Benefits of using theater plays in the English teaching in public high school in  
Puebla, Mexico, through critical pedagogy.

This thesis has been read by the members of the committee of

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And is considered worthy of approval in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the  
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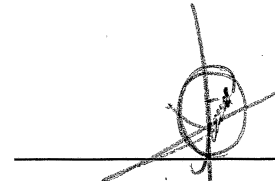
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## DEDICATIONS

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

English education has increased in Puebla, Mexico, and its communities. Teaching strategies require another change in which language acquisition could be satisfactory for students. Concerning this information, Khani and Hajizade (2016) indicate that “English language teaching has undergone fundamental changes in the past few decades” (p.972). Therefore, teachers have to implement new strategies because the generations have a different point of view regarding English education. However, some students have taken English classes and they have found them satisfactory, but in other students, English has become a problem.

One of those problems students face when learning and principally speaking English is the lack of motivation. According to Adil, in his article Problems Faced by Students in Speaking English Language, “lack of motivation is also one of the reasons students cannot speak the English language” (Adil, 2021 p. 4). Referring to this, it is well known that in a typical English class, it is pretty normal to study many grammar rules and structures that some students find very disturbing and demotivating. Therefore, students need more interaction to keep their minds on. For that reason, the implementation of theater plays takes their place.

According to Fernandez, in her article Benefits of the use of theater for the English teaching, indicates that authors like Wessels, Dodson, Maley, and Duff, authors of the book “Drama Techniques”, defend the idea of the use of the theater, even they propose theater as the base of instruction of Language classes. (Fernandez, n. d.)

What those authors propose is important when teaching a new language since students learn it in a way they speak fluently and in a natural context. Hence, students are constantly practicing speaking and listening skill, which they acquire significantly. In this manner, it depends on the teacher that students develop plays in which they can learn more about the real world. “Dramatic play simulating business life can show students the importance of emotions in professional contexts.” (Giebert, 2014, par. 15)

To complement the English theater class, the writing and reading skills have to be presented. In this case, in the written dialogues (scripts), they are going to develop those skills. Theater is one of the most recommended strategies in the English teaching. Then, those students who do not prefer to participate in theater plays require more motivation; do not exclude them but include them. Thus, there are more aims for each student.

*Involve the whole class – non-speaking parts can be given to learners who do not wish to speak or are less confident. Technical parts of a production can give others a role: sound effects, making scenery, being in charge of lights, and props, or prompting their classmates from the wings. (Lavery, n. d.)*

Lavery (n. d.) mentions that technical features can also be given to those students; that way, they will see that they are not excluded. Producing sound effects can be the first step that shy students can achieve, as making the scenery too. In that form, students can realize that they are good at doing other things; however, the primary purpose is to participate in theater plays, but little by little, they can climb until they feel comfortable when speaking in front of an audience. For that and more motives, involving the whole class will create an environment in which students feel relaxed when participating.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem.**

The general problem of this research is based on the fact that the use of the theater plays has not been implemented and studied detailed in Santa Ana Xalmimilulco, Huejotzingo, Puebla, at Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla, plantel 18, since the English teaching is based on much grammar and there has not been an opportunity to improve and implement another interactive method. It does not seek to discredit the work of English teachers within the high school; on the contrary, but looking for more teaching strategies in that case, one of them: theater plays, where art is promoted and the language is taught.

Returning to the starting point, the use of theater plays for teaching in the community has not been developed even though they can become somewhat

informal for the methodology of some teachers. However, plays such as the theater itself and its variants are a form of expression and a good way for students to learn. As was mentioned above, unfortunately, this strategy has not been implemented; there is not even a teaching strategy through this method, and one of the reasons is that in the community, the promotion of the arts, within them the theater, is not very strong. Nevertheless, this is an opportunity to make it known and what better through the teaching of English.

## **1.2 Justification**

The present research will focus on knowing the benefits of teaching English through theater plays. In this case, it is important to mention that this proposal can be effective or not, it will depend on the students attitude or if they have had English classes, it is also important the context or the way in which the English theater classes are carried out.

Students at Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla plantel 18 have taken a standard English class. It is known that English classes have lots of grammar rules, and as a result, students get worried when learning a new language. Besides that, they are conscious that English is the language of the future, and they need to know it. Through this method, students will be able to develop abilities probably not found before, and perhaps guide them (for those who don't know what they want to study at university) and help them to find their vocation.

The reason that led me to investigate the benefits plays have on students is that previous professional studies have been done within which are the methodologies to teach English through theater plays, which consequently are aimed at teachers who want to implement a different method than usual. However, in my searches, some titles showed benefits, and later I considered using it in my community Santa Ana Xalmimilulco at COBAEP Plantel 18. Also, I wanted to focus on this method since, in preparatory school, there has not been a chance to recognize the theater plays as a fundamental part of teaching a foreign language. In the community, theater has not been implemented. For that reason, my research project is

focused on teaching through theater plays since it is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that theater is an art which includes good benefits for students who take the class. The level I wanted to focus on was preparatory since, currently, students need to see other ways of learning and, therefore, to be able to speak English and understand it fluently in authentic contexts. As mentioned above, this method can also help high school students to take this subject as a guide, since in high school, it must be clear what students want to study to specify their future. However, some of these students need clarification about what they want to do. Learning English through theater plays is the guide within which careers such as Languages, theater, cinematography, dance, fashion design, image, and production can derive, among others related. Students realize that Languages and theater degrees are mainly derived since the English subject will focus on these.

Another important aspect that I want to mention is the benefits. Those are found in this interactive method, and students can develop them in their personal and scholarly life. One of them is the self-confidence they develop when acting in a theater play.

*“As confidence grows, children can become clear and confident speakers; the simple act of standing up in front of a group of people is the first step they achieve. In this way, it is a great asset for life. Even shy students are coaxed out of their shells since they can hide behind a role or props. The power of the person is such that children who might otherwise be hesitant about speaking in public are often able to do so unselfconsciously when playing a part”.* (Vernon, 2015, p. 6)

I intend then to show each of the benefits in detail when learning the English language through plays in order to help students not only know more about English but also help them in their professional and personal environment, in which they can develop skills to use the English language in authentic contexts in a manner that they can relate to other people, making them more competent.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The following research looks for the benefits that has the implementation of theater as a method of teaching and a method of learning for students. It is hoped that with

this research, teachers could implement theater within their English classes in order to create good benefits for students, benefits that can help them in their professional life or personal life. It also looks for the critical thinking of the students, to make them think beyond what they need or teacher says; for this, Critical Pedagogy by Henry Giroux is also implemented within this research

#### **1.4 Objectives**

Present a didactic proposal to implement the theater plays and explain their benefits.

General Objective: Explain the benefits of the use of theater plays.

Specific objectives: Present a didactic proposal.

Implement the theater plays in a public preparatory school.

##### **1.4.1 Research questions**

1. What didactic proposal is useful to teach English through theater plays?
2. How can the theater plays in the English class be implemented?
3. What are the benefits of using theater plays for teenagers?

#### **1.6 Significance of the study**

This research is important because through it, teachers and students have a different vision of what is normally taught in schools. It is important to mention that the teaching methods within the educational system in language teaching are fine, since, as it was mentioned before, grammar classes are very important, but they become a problem when the classes are saturated of it. That is why this research seeks to teach it in a way in which students learn English and have a little fun. In the same way, when they learn and have fun, they have the possibility of having critical thinking, which is also what is sought through Henry Giroux's Critical Pedagogy. The importance of this research is enormous since it has three important aspects: English, theater and Critical Pedagogy.

## **CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The following chapter is divided into three important premises and a conclusion. This chapter talks about the topics that are considered important to include in order to have a broader vision of what theater is, drama, and how it is composed. This is very important because this will help us in theater classes in English. It also focuses on the four language skills; speaking, listening, reading and writing, and how to include them in theater classes. Likewise, there is talk of the critical pedagogy of Henry Giroux, which is the social theory on which this research is based. Since critical pedagogy is a social criticism, this is discussed in the conclusion in which it talks about inequalities in education in Mexico.

### **2.2 Theater**

The theater has different definitions or interpretations; this art is defined according to Osipovich (2006) in a journal article named “What is a theatrical performance?” as an interaction between actors and audience in a physical space. This place is known as the theater building or arena theater. It is essential to know that a theater building is constructed with physical materials that include scenography, lights, a curtain, armchairs, and so on. In addition, Wight (2020), in the article “Understanding the differences between drama and theatre,” mentioned that theater is also comforted by people, from directors to actors, technicians, stagehands and costume designers. The main idea is teamwork, and in that manner, learners experiment with the feelings of being the main character, the producer, the one who produces the sound effects or the designer, and so forth. Contrasting the two ideas of both authors, theater can be defined as an art in which there are interactions in a physical space. It is important to mention that in a theater English class, it is not necessary an arena theater due to the school conditions, but the representation can be played in the English classroom since the main purpose is the representation.

As it is known, the theater is a physical, real-life portrayal (Wight, 2020). It does mean that theater is a creative process that can be spontaneous, rehearsed, universal, controversial, social, ceremonial, inspiring, and fascinating, among other terms. The theater plays can be rehearsed on occasions, but also they can be improvised since it is a technique that is usually used in English theater classes. Theater can also be controversial because it can touch on social issues that can become “taboo” within society, but through theater, these diverse issues can be understood without the need to create a social controversy.

In an excellent theater English class, it is required that there exist strategies for teaching theater since they help teachers to give an understandable English class through theater plays. So, there are presented three theater techniques for teaching English as “the improvisational approach, improvisation games, and human slideshow”.

### **2.2.1 The improvisational approach.**

Improvisation in theater is a method that helps students to keep their minds on. English teachers use this approach when doing activities within the English class; they are known when the teacher asks students to create a quick conversation. However, in theater, improvisation is pretty different from the common improvisations in the English classes. To start with this approach, it is required to define what improvisation is. In the article “Five approaches for improvisation”, Karen Erickson defined improvisation as acting without a predetermined text where the actor’s memorization is not presented. (Erickson 2018). Erickson’s definition is basic, but it is clear that the active mind is the main factor since improvisation and memorization of the actors are not enough at all.

In a theater class, improvisation plays are very important roles for both; the teacher and the students. As mentioned above, improvisation helps students be active within a theater class in English. It helps them to think quickly and meaningfully, allowing them to lose a little more fear when speaking since by having nothing prepared; the actors learn to say more realistic dialogues, promoting them to

stimulate the ease of speech. Improvisation is used within other genres of theater, such as ballet, opera, and musical theater, among others. In addition, Karen Erickson emphasized that learning the following approaches allows teachers to take advantage of various experiences adapting them to the actors' levels. (Erickson 2018).

Erickson mentioned five important approaches to improvisation. The first one is the "Basic performance improvisation." This one, as its name indicates, is the most basic. Its function is to be introduced formally or informally through comedy sketches, where actors learn rules for interacting with an ensemble and a process requiring timing, listening, and quick thinking. (Erickson 2018). Through the comic sketches, the audience and the students are allowed a more natural interaction in a way in which fast thinking is present within the mind of the performers. Erickson (2018) also says that interacting with an ensemble helps students connect their minds since, in the same situation, students strive to keep dialogues and their subjects aside to avoid possible deviation.

The second approach that is shown is the "Devised Theater." Erickson (2018) defined this kind of improvisation as the creation of more extended original theater plays, and they can be designed to be presented in the English classroom or in front of an audience, where the students are led in the creation of dramatic pieces. If they are presented in front of a larger audience, it depends on the leader of the project, in this case, the teacher. Examples of longer and more original works are Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Macbeth, among others. Of course, they are always considering the improvisation that is the main objective of this approach.

The third kind of improvisation is the "Applied Theater". According to Erickson (2018), he described it as an improvisation that is not focused on entertainment but facilitates the search for an idea, topic, or question from a group of persons, having the primary purpose as the communication among the participants. The idea of the author is to implement communication, and it does not matter if participants are

experts or not in the art; just the interactions are necessary for participants can improvise in a meaningful manner.

The fourth approach is “Drama in the classroom” Erickson mentioned:

Whenever students are acting a story without a script or making up their own stories based on history, science, or a favorite book, they are improvising. Teachers who engage students in drama in the classroom without having students memorize a set script are already teaching improvisation. This is a strong choice for all ages but a necessary one for drama work with the very young. This approach uses very few performance “rules” as performance is not the usual goal. If performance becomes a goal, drama in the classroom often transforms into Basic Improvisation or Devised Theater. (Erickson, 2018, p. 9)

The definition of this approach is a bit more complex to understand since it mentions that this is aimed at the little ones because it does not have so many rules. However, this method is based on the creation of stories by the students and knowing that it can be aimed at little children, it can also be beneficial for teenagers in the English class since many times, as time passes, some people lose their creativity. Still, with this approach, creativity is not lost but won.

The last approach is the “Improvisation as Scripted Theater Rehearsal,” which is when directors use it to illuminate the backstory of the characters or the hidden subtext in a script which helps students dig deeper into their character traits and motivations and establish relations among the characters (Erickson, 2018). It can be understood as a method that helps students be more spontaneous since while the director talks, students find the correct movements and speech, and in that way, it helps them develop their listening skills.

### **2.2.2 Improvisation games**

Another good technique for an English theater class is the improvisation game. First, it must be important to have a clear definition of what is an improvisation game. In an online page titled “15 large group improve games for team building in 2021,” Robison (2021) defined improvisation games as acted exercises in which

participants must react in real-time and don't have to follow a script (Robison 2021). It can be understood as a manner in which students act without rules, but they must have their minds active to react to real situations in a game way.

In addition, Lindsay Price's document "Improving games for collaboration," (2021) mentioned important games that can be taught in a theater English class. All of them are necessary to develop skills in a theater class. However, 2 of them are more interactive and significant. It is important to mention that games are as important as teaching English since some English teachers think that games are informal in teaching; however, as was mentioned before, games are necessary for theater class.

The first game that Price (2021) recommends is "Word at a time story". It is known for its speaking ability, in which students sit in a circle, the teacher gives them a topic, and the story is told one word at a time. Everybody is constructing sentences and not only words (Price 2021). In this improvisation, the game titled "Word at a time story," students use not only their speaking skill but also memorization since they must remember what their classmates are saying to construct the story.

The second game is titled "Family portrait," and its principal idea is:

*"Dividing the class into different groups, which is given a title for a picture that revolves around a kind of family. The examples for the name of each group can be: family of dentist or family of cheerleaders, and each group has 10 seconds to create a portrait related to the group's name by telling a short story with characters". (Price 2021)*

This game can probably be difficult to achieve in 10 seconds, but it allows students to think quickly. In a theater English class, it helps students to develop the ability to speak and listen fluently. Therefore it helps other students to guess what their classmates are doing.

### **2.2.3 Human slideshow**

Human slideshow is another important strategy within the English theater class. As its name indicates, it is about a show of students in a slides manner. Rosalind M. Flynn, who is a doctor and head of the M. A. in Theatre Education Program in the Drama department of the Catholic University of America, describes his strategy when a group of students that perform a character creates several slides that when they are presented in sequence, they show the progress of events of a scene from an episode of the story. (Flynn 2012) So the human slideshow strategy is a presentation with a sequence of facts performed by student actors. In each slide, they can change their facial expressions and poses since the purpose of the strategy is to communicate their actions and feelings through body language.

Flynn (2012) also indicated that the audience participates by closing their eyes using “Blackout” to pretend a lighting blackout while actors change positions. When the audience listens to the phrase “lights up,” they open their eyes and see each slide.

### **2.3 Drama**

Students in the English theater class perform drama. In a literary definition, drama is the written dialogue through the performing and can be mimic, dramatic dance, where dancers have a narrative to follow, opera, ballet, and musical theater. (Coddington, without date). Referring to what Coddington said, drama is the process of doing and can be defined as something abstract. Students in an English theater class can perform a drama, well known as a play, without a theater build.

Longley (2019) mentioned five significant types of drama which can be performed in different theater plays, and he described them as:

Comedy: Comedies are intended to make the audience laugh.

Tragedy: It portrays serious subjects, like death or disaster.

Farce: It is the exaggeration of comedy where actors overact.

Melodrama: It is an exaggeration of drama where heroes and villains are presented in perilous situations.

Opera: It combines theater, dialogue, music, and dance.

With those kinds of genres, students can choose among them and perform or develop a play inside the English class.

Through drama, students are able to perform classic theater plays in a quick manner, such as Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Faust, and so on. And to achieve those kinds of plays or other contemporaneous plays, it is essential to know the literary elements of drama that Aristotle define. These are Fable (Plot), Character, Thought, Diction, Melody, and Spectacle.

According to Nur, Hafiiza, Nisa Putri, and Fawziah, in their presentation titled "Elements of drama," defined plot as the action, the basic storyline of the play (Nur et al., 2016). However, Muniz (2019), author of the article "What is the plot of a story, the five parts of the narrative," defined plot as the foundation of a story (Muniz, 2019). In other words, plot can be defined as the arrangement of a story, the sequence in which the events are told. There are different steps in the plot: Introduction, Rising action, Climax, Falling action, and Resolution.

Muniz (2019) defines the introduction of the plot as the first part where the presentation occurs. The plot introduction is presented at first of a story, in which the protagonists, antagonists, and setting are given.

The rising action is too important within the plot since the primary conflict is introduced to create tension among characters, audience, or readers (Muniz, 2019). In other words, the rising action is when the problem starts, and the story becomes more exciting and complicated for the characters.

The climax or turning point is the most important part of the story because it puts the character in a complicated situation in which whatever they choose will affect the rest of the story (Muniz, 2019). Muniz indicates that this part of the plot is the most significant point since the decisions or choices are necessary within the story, which depends on the main character and the development of the narrative.

After the climax, the Falling action comes. That is when the tension is released, and the story becomes more relaxed (Muniz, 2019). At this point of the story, the characters solve the problem of the story, and it begins to be more sophisticated.

At the end of the plot, it is found the resolution. Muniz (2019) defines the resolution as when everything is solved; it means that the conflict of the climax has been resolved and the normalcy of the characters is presented. It establishes the definitive way of how the characters will live, but it is important to mention, since it is the end, that it does not mean that there will be a happy ending because it can even be an open ending.

Characters are the second more important aspect within the elements of drama as they are the performers of the story. "The people (sometimes animals or ideas) are portrayed by the actors in the play. It is the characters who move the action or plot" (Nur et al., 2016). As it is mentioned, without the characterization through the students' performance, there is no a plot; hence, characters are so important within theater plays and they can be played not just as humans but also as abstract characters (things, ideas, beings etc.). It is important to know that there are seven kinds of characters, each with a specific characteristic or characterization given by the author when presenting a character. The kinds of characters are Protagonist, Antagonist, Love interest, Confidant, Deuteragonist, Tertiary, and Foil characters. Having a brief idea of each one can be significant when having an English theater play since students actors can choose whatever they like. According to MasterClass staff in 2021, they defined the characters of a story as:

**Protagonist:** It is the main character of a story, which should be crafted with a logical backstory and personal motivation. They always appear at the beginning of the story, and are easy to identify.

**Antagonist:** It is the villain of the story and, as its name indicates, is the person or animal that focuses on making the lives of protagonists impossible.

**Love interest:** This character is the protagonist's object of desire. In other words, the object of desire can be performed by a person or an object, something that the protagonist wants to gain.

**Confidant:** This character is the best friend of the protagonist. The confidant character is the partner of the protagonist in the development of the story, although only in some stories this character is needed.

**Deuteragonist:** This kind of character often overlaps with confidants, but it is important to mention that they are closer to the protagonists. However, the story's main plot does not directly correspond with its own character.

**Tertiary characters:** These characters appear within the world of the story, but they are not related to the storyline. It can be interpreted that tertiary characters can be defined as secondary characters.

**Foil characters:** These kinds of characters appear to bring the protagonist's qualities into sharper relief. In other words, they are the contrasts of the protagonist, their opposite.

Characters are variables, and in an English theater class, students are chosen by their ability to interpret characters through auditions. The idea is that the teacher in an English theater class must know the students' personalities to assign each student a specific character. But the student's challenge is performing a personality that probably is not related to theirs.

Thought is the third more important part of drama. It is known as theme too, and it refers to the significance of the play, which is the first idea to learn from the play (Nur et al., 2016). In other words, the theme or thought is the main idea of the story; sometimes, it is clear what the story is about, but every so often, the theme is subtle, and its purpose is to give the general idea of the play when starting. In the English theater class, the teacher should give a theme or thought, or the students can create their own since when writing a play, it is important to think about the whole story and how it will develop throughout the presentation.

Diction is the fourth part of drama, and it refers to the clarity and volume of the voice (Barr, 2011). In the English theater class, diction is very important because when speaking in front of an audience, it could be the students or the teacher; diction must be assertive and confident because it allows students to improve their speech and to be clear when acting. Barr (2011) advised that if students have an accent, it is essential to eliminate it. It is not because of their native language, but it is because of the neutral language that student actors need to develop.

The fifth part of drama is melody. Melody is what makes emotion when acting, and it can be because of the music or the student actors' voices, which produce a melody. According to Nur et al. (2016), Melody does not refer to the music that is always presented in a play. Aristotle referred to the actors' voices as they speak. Melody or Rhythm is used by student actors in the theater English class when they are presenting. It must be clear the harmony in which they are acting; whether they are happy or angry, they must demonstrate it through their voice. This part of drama is too related to diction since both refer to the student actor's voice.

The last element of drama, such as important as the previous ones, is the spectacle, which refers to the visual elements like costumes, scenography, make-up and lights, which is what the audience sees when performers present a play (Nur et al., 2016). The spectacle or the presentation can be very interesting, such as the previous authors defined, because it is the visual element. In theater, the spectacle is essential because it is what makes it attractive to the audience. It

catches them in the first moment, the scenography is considered within this part, and through it, in the English theater class, students can develop their creativity when making a scenography (painting or building little parts of scenography), creating and designing costumes or producing special effects (sounds). All these parts are considered part of the spectacle; without them, a presentation can be a disaster since, theater plays are not just focused on the plot of the story, but also in the aesthetic presence.

### **2.3 Theater in English teaching in the world**

Theater in English teaching has been implemented in English classes because of its benefits for students and for the achievements they can make. Theater in education started in Britain in the 1960s (Prendergast, Saxton, 2009, as quoted in Gualdron and Castillo, 2018). Theater has been presented in some English classes “Most previous research based on the subject has focused on theater as a way to improve the reading, fluency, and comprehension of texts” (Casey and Chamberlain, 2016; Chou, 2013; Clark, Morrison and Wilcox, 2009; Lin, 2015; Peregory, Boyle and Cadiero-Kaplan, 2008; Ratliff, 2000; Tindall, 2012, as it was quoted on Gualdron and Castillo, 2018, page 213). Theater in English language teaching is a method that has been increased through the years, and it is a good technique when teaching a new language because, as Casey et al. mentioned, it improves reading, fluency and comprehension. In addition, through repetition and memorization, student actors are able to speak fluently.

However, Robson (2018), in her Blog news named “What is theatre in education and five reasons how it supports organizations to inspire positive change”, defined theater in education as an interactive process which uses theater or drama to help aid the educational process. Thus, in her blog, she talked about how theater can help students’ learning. Thereby, she described five important points to support education through theater. She mentioned theater is inspirational; it challenges perceptions, changes attitudes and behavior, it improves self-esteem, motivation, and achievement, delivers important messages, and maximizes learning. The

points she mentioned can be taken as benefits that theater provides students when acting in a play since it improves the learning and personality of students inside the English theater class.

Robson (2018) described that “The Theatre in Education movement soon spread to theatres across the UK. Then to broader settings across the globe. Inspiring a wide range of interactive theatre with children and young people. Encouraging and empowering them to investigate challenging situations for themselves” (2018, p. 7). In other words, theater in education became an inspiration for learners, which helps them to be more curious and autonomous. Curiosity is also important within education since it allows teachers and students to look for more information. On the other hand, autonomy is an adjective that has taken place in education in Mexico, where professors and directives look for students’ autonomy, it means that they can do tasks or search for information by themselves without hoping the teacher’s orders. This kind of adjectives can be taken within the theory of reproduction and resistance by Henri Giroux and the critical pedagogy.

### **2.3.1 Theater in English teaching in Mexico**

As discussed previously, theater in education was initiated in Great Britain and spread worldwide. Mexico was not the exception, theater within education is taking flight in the country. The University of Guadalajara published a note titled “Promueven aprendizaje del Inglés por medio de obras de teatro,” in which it is shown a Theater play called “Around the world in 80 days” performed by native English speakers to students of the University Center for Health Science (CUCS) and Preparatoria 11, schools located in Guadalajara. Within the article, the Actor Kent Reynolds explained:

“These works are important for students who learn English and thus be able to appreciate situations that we all live. It's interesting when you see performances because you can understand what's going on even though you don't know every word the actors are saying” (Reynolds, 2017, as it was quoted in Serrano, 2017 p. 6).

Reynolds (2017) mentioned an important aspect since theater in education can be a perception for the audience. At the moment, he said that students could know what will happen even they do not understand all words. It can be deduced as a perception, and students, such as the audience, can interpret messages through perceptions.

Although it is well known that theater has been implemented in some parts of Mexico, theater in education within schools is very scarce. Of course, it is implemented as a workshop within schools as an extra program, or as a topic within a Spanish or literature class, however, within the state of Puebla no results have been found showing how the theater is implemented as an English teaching strategy. The teaching of English through plays is closely related to the culture we have as Mexicans since, unfortunately, in Mexico, most people do not have the culture of attending the theater, and this is a social issue that has taken years, it is for this reason that critical pedagogy, which makes a social analysis, is introduced into English classes through the theater.

#### **2.4 Language skills**

When teaching a language, it is necessary to develop skills. Therefore, those skills are needed by teachers; sometimes who are teaching the language, do not realize about it. Husain (2015), in an article named Language and Language Skills defines the language as a skill, since it naturally comes under a psychomotor domain. And thereby, when teaching/learning languages, one unconsciously gotten four sub-skills; speaking, writing, listening and reading. This implementation is so important to keep in consideration since the purpose is that student actors acquire, learn English language, of course it is necessary to teach them about writing and reading skills.

Nowadays, the necessity of learning English is more required, and for that reason students will be able to write, read, listen and speak in a real context.

### **2.4.1 Speaking skill**

Speaking skill is used by students in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, and it allows them to communicate with the others students or native speakers. Husain (2015) considered the speaking skill as an active, productive skill, because students are not just active but also produce sounds. At the moment in which a student produces a sound, they pass to be active, and in the theater play, this is the skill which the actors/students use more. Speaking skill is one of the leading “tools” that are going to be in the theater plays class. First of all is known that when acting in the classic theater plays, people, in this case, students have to use their voices. As Husain mentioned, producing a sound not only wants to transmit a spoken message but also when acting is necessary for the production of onomatopoeia and other sounds, which at the time of being articulated by the student actors, they already make use and reference to the ability to speak, even if an oral message is not transmitted, sensations are transmitted through speech.

The speaking skill is presented too when students actors have to represent a character, and not just by speaking without sense; they have to do it with passion, and perform the character. Little by little, while acquiring new vocabulary, they are going to be using new words, phrases and sounds. We, in our native language, use words and phrases that we probably not realize that they are difficult to acquire or understand for others or for English speakers who are learning our native language. In this case, when the teacher gives students a new word or phrase, they will be using them unconsciously inside of the theater; of course, they will know the meaning, and so on, they will be acquiring a fluent way of speaking in front of the people and keeping conversations with their classmates.

### **2.4.2 Writing skill**

Writing skill is a sub-skill from a language, and with this, students demonstrate an ability when reporting, texting, paraphrasing and so on a written idea. This skill is

considered by Husain (2015) an active, productive skill, like the speaking skill in which it is included symbols of “letters” that students produce. Husain mentioned the writing ability as an active, productive skill because students must do movements to implement it within their writings, and an important aspect that Husain did, is to mention that the writing skill contains symbols and emphasized “letters”, because as it is well known, symbols can be more abstract, and they can be taken of different languages or old languages. However, his idea to make emphasis in letters is more specific and understandable. Students in the English theater class use not just “letters” but also words, phrases and texts to implement or write dialogues. It is important to know that the writing skill must be implemented not just in the English theater class, but also in other kinds of English classes because, through it, students are able to communicate in a written way. Therefore, writing skill is an ability that students in an English class must develop. This is not the exception for the theater play class.

In this case, it is focused on acquiring writing skills in a theatrical way. The best way to develop this is little by little, writing short scripts to be presented as theater plays. If students want to report an infantile theater script, the teacher has to explain what does it contains (dialogues, annotations, onomatopoeias, and so on).

Of course, there will be situations in which students will need to know how to write an idea or the grammar of some tenses. The teacher has to explain the, and if they know how to say the phrases, but they do not know how to write them (as usually happens with people when living in a country in which their native language is not spoken, and they have to acquire the second language, they know how to speak it and understand it, but they do not how to write it), the teacher has to form a team in order to students get knowledge from the other student actors.

### **2.4.3 Listening skill**

Listening skill is as important as other skills when teaching a language. Through it, students have the ability to comprehend what the other students or native speakers

and teachers are saying. Listening is considered a passive skill because in that moment, the learner is generally receptive (Husain, 2015). This means, that students do not need to do an active movement, they just have to listen carefully while receiving the information and for the English theater class, both the audience and the actors are using this skill while the others are speaking. Husain considered it passive; however, it could also be considered active, because if this ability were only passive, the students would only hear. Therefore, being active, the students listen carefully to it; that is, they pay attention to the words that are mentioned. The senders would be active, and the receivers too, because they focus on the message that is transmitted.

As it is mentioned, listening skill is another of the four skills that students have to develop during the theater play class on the English language. This skill is complemented by the theater plays and especially by the musicals. First of all, because students as learners have to understand what their classmates are saying to them at the moment of acting in front of the people. In this case, what they have to do is what everybody does when learning a language, by listening conversation with others, and of course the music.

As it is mentioned before, the skill is also complemented by the musicals (what students are going to do). It is going to be taken as a clear example of a little piece that students can perform in a musical; a Christmas song, the teacher plays the music inside the classroom while presenting the lyrics of the song meanwhile, students are listening and developing this skill.

The moment they present the musical, they are able to know what the song is saying by relating the words and phrases with what they are doing. In the same way, when they have already acquired new words and phrases by listening because of the songs, they are able to understand what the teacher and other classmates are saying when they are speaking/acting.

#### **2.4.4 Reading skill**

The last sub-skill that Husain (2015) mentioned in his article was the reading skill. First, the reading skill is used on the books or scripts inside the EFL classroom; students and teachers have to read and comprehend what they just have read. Reading skill is in books, articles, essays and so on, in which the information can be written formally or informally. Husain (2015) considered it as a passive, receptive skill, like the listening skill, since the student or learner is generally passive because they receive the information either through listening or reading. So, the reading skill is entailed with the listening skill because while a student reads, the other students listen since this is what happens in a common English theater class.

In the situation of the English theater play class, reading skill is present when students read their scripts with other classmates. There are different forms to develop reading skills inside the classroom. One interactive way to develop the reading is by reading short tales. It is not just for students, but also the teacher can read short fairy tales to students, and so in this way, they catch the student's attention, that when they listen to the teacher, they are motivated, and the teacher in that moment is fomenting the reading skill.

#### **2.5 Critical Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy was originated by the critical thinking that had its origins in the Frankfurt School in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Sharif, 2019). Critical pedagogy must be implemented within the English theater class, since teachers can have different points of view on teaching and their students. Henri Giroux and Paulo Freire are considered the pioneers of critical pedagogy who believed that teaching should challenge students to examine power structures and patterns of inequality (Currel, 2020). Critical pedagogy is very important in English theater classes because it helps students think and to be aware of inequalities, social, race and gender, among others. Likewise, a guide can be taken from it that education can be a way of change; that is, structures of oppression can be transformed (Currel, 2020). This

emphasis tries to give a different perspective to what was commonly thought of as pedagogy, where the teacher was the one who was right, and the students were usually passive. Within theater classes in English, it is the opposite; both the teacher and the students are correct, and they are aware of their differences. However, it is not an obstacle to the teaching of theater since it transforms them into equalities.

Koay (2021) defined critical pedagogy as a philosophy of education which is focused on issues of inequality, social class, race and genres. What critical pedagogy does is to emphasize those inequalities, since nowadays it is very important to be conscious that it does not matter what student's social class, race or genre. Unfortunately, some teachers and students are that kind of person that they do not care about the inequalities because they are comfortable with the status quo. Critical pedagogy makes the student think as the first point in the inequalities of social classes, that although today it is said that social classes no longer exist for reasons of equality, they are still mentioned within education. In gender, a significant mention is also made, since today there is a great debate about gender equality since it must be borne in mind that both men and women are important and equal within a society. Critical pedagogy can be perfectly related to theater, within English theater classes, students develop meaningful communication where their minds open since by working as a team and being in constant coexistence with their other classmates, they can get to the point where social class, race, gender, sexuality and so on do not matter.

For the implementation of critical pedagogy in English theater classes, placing great emphasis on social class, race, and gender, giving inclusion and equality to student actors, a role of the main character can be given to a low-income student to break up the social labeling which is seen a lot in Mexico. In the same way, it breaks with the social labeling that years ago was in Mexico and that, fortunately, it has recently been eradicated. This kind of labeling happens when men have to be the heroes and women have to be the characters who wait to be rescued, and within critical pedagogy and, of course, in English theater classes, these roles can

be changed; women can be the heroines and men the rescued ones. This is in order to break that stigma that was before and thus be able to lead the way to new ideas implementing gender equity.

According to a YouTube video “Giroux Critical Pedagogy” (Alvarado, 2014), some of the characteristics of the critical pedagogy are:

- Participation: Students participate within the class in order to demonstrate their abilities when learning and give their point of view on a topic.
- Communication and humanization: Teacher and students communicate their feelings, thoughts and ideologies in order to have interactions and conscience of being humans with classmates and people outside the classroom; they realize that everybody has different opinions, and they must apply the values, and respect their classmates and teacher.
- Transformation: This happens when students think differently than before. For example, in the English theater class, they acquire a process of thinking where they are critical students.

These characteristics of critical pedagogy can be achieved if teachers implement this approach within their classes. They are crucial because the teacher and students can create a great environment within the English class. In that way, the teacher would be teaching the English language through plays by implementing the critical pedagogy at the same time. But what happens when critical pedagogy is not implemented in a classroom? Giroux (2014) published an article entitled "When schools become dead zones of the Imagination: a manifesto of critical pedagogy" Giroux (2014) touches on very important themes within his article. Within schools where critical pedagogy is not implemented, students, instead of learning to be individual thinkers, focus more on acquiring habits, which can be considered moral and political deficits that turn them into passive and obedient students within society based on inequalities of power and income (Giroux, 2014). Giroux speaks about American schools in the previous case, but it is similar to what happens within the public schools in Mexico. Both focus more on training students who obey society or such a simple example, when a professor says, “This is how it always

has been and it always will be". They do not train individual thinkers who can see that there are a lot of possibilities to undertake or to work in a way in which people realize that normativity can change for the better.

Giroux (2014) indicates that at the core of the new reforms is the commitment to the pedagogy of repression because it is based on memorization, conformity, and passivity, and it focuses on students' shortcomings rather than their strengths. Likewise, this pedagogy of repression makes students conformists. A clear example that is well known within education in Mexico is that students are left only with what their teacher tells them, and they do not have the initiative to seek beyond what the teacher teaches. Memorization is also present in education when students only memorize terms or facts, but they do not reason for it. Finally, passivity commonly happens when the teacher is the only one who is right, and students must think and do what the teacher says. He also indicated that under the pedagogy of repression, students are not destined to learn (Giroux 2014). So what is happening with the pedagogy of repression? If students are not destined to learn, then why do they go to school for? Many times, schools want to pretend that students learn when the only thing that is important for these schools is that they follow the rules, and thus prepare them for a future full of passivity and conformity where they do not feel comfortable wanting to undertake or advance by themselves.

## **2.6 Social inequalities within education in Mexico**

After studying the theories that Giroux proposed, it is significant to mention the social inequalities in education in Mexico. As shown throughout the chapter, within the English theater class, there must be values and especially respect for others, using the critical pedagogy, in which social class and sex do not matter. However, the social inequalities within education in Mexico is a topic too important that must be shown, and it is something that I wanted to emphasize within this chapter. In Mexico, there are still prejudices about the inequalities of education (Mejía, Martínez, Ochoa, and Rivas, 2016).

According to Mejía, Martínez, Ochoa, and Rivas in the International Magazine of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOCIOTAM) in 2016 from the University of Tamaulipas “Desigualdad Social y Educativa en Mexico y España: Nuevas Formas de Atender el Desarrollo” described that in Mexico there are significant inequalities within education where the difference of learning is too notorious, and this is because of the different socioeconomic level of students. But why is this happening? Adding to what the authors Mejia et al. pointed out, unfortunately, the socioeconomic status of students influences their education, and this is because many point out public education is not quality education, since being a public service, some teachers As much as students do not insist on striving to get ahead, those who do, unfortunately, do not get the necessary support from the government, which in turn, does not pay enough attention to education, no matter how much teachers or students try to demonstrate their educational or cultural abilities, they stagnate and do not have the opportunity for growth. At this point, it is essential to mention Giroux's theory of reproduction since, as he indicated, within societies with scarce resources, the opportunity to grow is not suitable for the privileged classes, which is why they do not allow it. Anton (2014) mentioned that the worst schools are for those who need them, and the most expensive education is the “free education” for the poor. (Anton, 2014 as it was quoted on Jimenez et al., 2016). This happens when the government always promotes when they inaugurate a new school in a far poor town, but they do not care about the level of education. It means they do not want significant results but just want to show that “they are doing something for the education”. (Anton, 2014 as it was quoted on Jimenez et al., 2016).

Within private education in Mexico, most of the teachers and students obtain more “benefits and opportunities”. This may seem a prejudice, but it is merely the reality. In these schools, where their tuition exceeds 10,000 pesos monthly, students are benefited from growth opportunities. This happens because the dominant social class (an important part of the theory of reproduction) does not want the dominated classes to reach their educational level and thus avoid saturating their comforts. For many Mexican students and parents on the minimum wage, it is almost

impossible to pay their children a private education, yet scholarship opportunities exist within these schools, sometimes limited or sometimes not so much. The problem that scholarship students face is maintaining or obtaining the benefit according to the percentage; nevertheless, they also face social problems such as discrimination.

Now, with the arrival of COVID-19 to Mexico, face-to-face education had to be suspended, which caused the poor performance of students and the widening of social inequalities in the pandemic. Lloyd (2020), in her article "Educational inequalities and the digital divide in times of Covid 19", mentioned that the factors that limit access to a good education are social class, race, ethnicity, geographic location, and the type of school they belong to (Lloyd, 2020). Adding to what Lloyd mentioned is that with the arrival of the coronavirus, not everyone had access to education due to the lack of money or geographic location. Besides, access to the internet does not reach remote communities perfectly, and many of their inhabitants do not have knowledge about technological means, which brought a problem within their education.

For public schools, the Secretary of Public Education (SEP) created the program "Learn at home" which consisted of classes through open television or the internet for basic levels (Islas, 2021). However, not all students had access to this type of education since some parents did not have enough resources to buy a television, pay for the internet, buy a computer, tablet, or telephone, and even the payment for electricity, which limited education and even some students dropped out of school to work and thus help their families during the pandemic. The government did not foresee these consequences. Meanwhile, in private education, they continued their classes through Zoom or other digital platforms attending mainly from Monday to Friday. The inequality within education in Mexico is evident, and unfortunately, the government is not doing many things to improve it. That is why teachers must implement the theory of resistance and critical pedagogy to make students more autonomous and with a degree of critical thinking in which they can realize that the school does not make the student.

## **CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The following chapter provides us with the methodology in which this thesis project was done. First, it is shown the type of research. In this case, it was used qualitative research since the purpose and resources for this project is to collect texts, audios, and videos and so on, and also the opinion of the participants. Within the qualitative research, it was used the “Action research” method, in which it is explained how this method works and the way to adapt it within the English classes. This method is very important because it is an intervention because of the necessity of teaching English through theater.

It also shows the techniques that were used during the course; there were seven techniques and in each one, it is described how the class was carried on. They show tips and how the Critical Pedagogy was implemented in each class. Then, it is described the instrument that was used, which in this case, was a chronogram which includes dates, topics and seven lesson plans where it is explained the manner of teaching in each class. Finally, it is described the participants, here we can see their age, their genre, their English level among others and the application, it means the days and hours that this project lasted.

### **3.2 Qualitative research**

This research requires intervention; the qualitative model is the correct option to achieve the objectives of this project. According to Bhandari (2020), qualitative research involves analyzing and collecting data without numerical information, but in texts, videos, audio, etc., its purpose is to understand opinions or concepts. It can be deduced that for this research, “Benefits of using theater plays in the English teaching,” the qualitative method is the option because it focuses more on collecting data in which the non-numerical is not presented. It means that this method and even this thesis project use texts for data collection; that is, it is based on the opinions and perceptions of the students after the intervention in using the instrument. It is worth mentioning that the possibility of collecting data through

photos, videos, and images, as Bhandari mentioned, is valid and correct. However, because of students' safety and the essential rules of the high school, it was almost possible to collect data by text.

However, Creswell (2013) defined the qualitative model as a method of understanding and exploring the meaning that some people think comes from social problems. (Creswell, 2013, as cited in Adminlp2m, 2020). Creswell defined this method as knowing the perceptions of the people to whom the thesis instrument has been applied and not only knowing but understanding their opinions, which is achieved through analyzing their answers.

Some characteristics, according to Adminlp2m (2020) of the qualitative research, are:

1. Natural environment: Researchers collect data on where participants are. This means that researcher must go to the place where the study is carried on, in this case, as my research indicates, at COBAEP P-18.
2. Researcher as a key instrument: Researchers collect data through participative observation or direct interviews. At this point, the concept of "researcher as a key instrument" means that researchers must be active in every moment of their instrument application since they must observe the behavior and participation of participants. Within the implementation of the English theater classes, every moment it was checked students by their behaviors and their participation since the processes of students from beginning to end were noticed.
3. Design that develops: Researchers are aware that qualitative research is constantly changing, which means that the initial plan is not something that has to be achieved. All the research steps can change when researchers go into the field and collect data. This characteristic talks about how the main purpose of the research could not be achieved since it can change when researchers go to the field of study and analyze the context; that means if participants collaborate correctly with the project or not. However, the final

results cannot be what was expected at first because the context of the application can change the primary plan.

4. Theoretical perspective: Researchers often consider ethnography, cultural concepts, gender differences, social class, race, and others. This point of the characteristics of the qualitative model focuses more on the participants' perceptions and culture since, in the field of study, there could be many cultural differences among participants and researchers since every participant has a different context, and they must be respected. In the case of this research, and as mentioned at first, the community of Santa Ana Xalmimilulco is not too related to the theater or other kinds of arts, so it must be important to be aware if the project is not carried out as expected.
5. Interpretive: Researchers always make an interpretation of what they see, listen, and understand, which means that qualitative research always offers a different point of view. This means that researchers write down what they can see, listen to, and analyze; however, it does not mean that all the analysis is correct because, as the concept indicates, it is interpretative.

These qualitative research characteristics are related to the current project and give a different overview of this research.

### **3.3 Method**

The method that was used for the implementation of the English theater classes was Action research. Watts defined action research as “a process in which participants examine their educational practice systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research” (Watts, 1985, p.118, as quoted in the Journal of Natural Remedies, p.1). However, Lydia Arnold describes it as “a systematic multi-staged cyclical process, which seeks to improve practice by implementing informed and incremental change. Action research is not done in isolation but seeks out opportunities for collaboration and the participation of other agents” (Arnold, 2007, p. 1). As my research was raised, the study was implemented in which the action research was presented. It allowed us to collaborate and participate with others, in

this case, students. In this way, the search for the improvement of English in a critical way was successful.

In addition, it also provides a framework for approaching a piece of research. The framework shows the practice and researches the issues and the possible actions, but overall, it implements and evaluates the action steps and articulates the learning process, Arnold (2007). In the case of the research on the Benefits of the use of theater plays in the English class, it was necessary to implement the English theater classes, and evaluate how the students' advances were. Through the implementation, there were seven sessions of one hour per session in which eight students were selected. Through the evaluation, it was possible to explain the benefits that they acquired through theater.

According to three authors, it is not just the implementation and evaluation, but it is also focused on planning and reporting the action research through conducting, Cohen, Manion et Morrison (2017). It means that in Action research, there are some series of steps in which it is important to take a base, such as the designing of a teaching proposal, that for this project were 7 lesson plans in which every class and activity was carefully planned step by step to achieve the purpose, the implementation of that proposal and evaluation, that was mentioned above, the evaluation is the explanation of the benefits.

According to a YouTube video "Characteristics, benefits and limitations of action research" (Illuminating teaching, 2020), the characteristics that are related to action research are:

1. Action research is participatory and democratic: This means that students are active participators. In each English theater class, there is always constant participation by students or by the teacher. It is democratic because students' perceptions or opinions are taken into account to achieve good communication connections among participants. In this way, they can keep participating.

2. It is collaborative: Action research is collaborative, and this is found within the English theater classes because when students are working together or in teams, they collaborate, what makes one of the characteristics of this research.
3. It is a systematic and scientific process: Perhaps it is not too scientific, but in this research, it was included the systematic characteristic because the approach of teaching through the theater plays is systematic since it is planned what the teacher is going to implement.
4. It helps in systematic planning and restructuring.
5. Action research is socially responsive and takes place in context.
6. Knowledge gained through action research can liberate students, teachers, and administrators and enhance learning, teaching, and policy making.
7. It requires reflexive critique.

The Action research cycles that the journal paper (May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021) describes are:

1. The planning stage: that can be a lesson plan or the preparation of the research. For this investigation, it was essential to plan what was going to be taught. It means the topics were planned carefully since they were formed systematically, so the first classes as a kind of warm-up, the material that was used, and the manner in which the objective was carried out.
2. Implementation stage: executing the plan that has been made. Once the planning stage was completed, it was implemented in the research field (COBAEP P-18). As mentioned during this research, the implementation/intervention lasted seven sessions.
3. The observation stage: students learning activities and teaching activities. At this point, the observation stage took place during the seven sessions. In every class, important notes were taken, including students' behaviors, perceptions, and participation. At the end of the short course, eight students were selected (five students who excelled in their participation and three who were not interested in the project). They were asked about the course,

and according to their answers and class observation, the results were made.

4. Reflective stage: discussions to share results of observations. The final point of the Action research cycle is the reflective stage. Once the planning, implementation, and observation stage were made, the reflections about the short course were completed. This was achieved by analyzing the students' answers and class observations to deduce the results (benefits of using theater plays).

To conclude, action research is the method used for this research since it fills every requirement that this study needs. Furthermore, it gives us the steps necessary to do the research, and as it was mentioned above, it also describes the research cycles. For the research "Benefits of using theater plays in English teaching," it is vital to design a teaching proposal, implement it and evaluate it (explaining the benefits of theater). In addition, one of the points found very important is the reflexive critique since it is as important inside the English class as it allows students to be conscious and responsible with their practice simultaneously with teachers. Also, because it is related to the social theory that was used for this project, "critical theory," it is important to mention that both points are related because both talk about the responsible learning of students, that they wonder about themselves, what they learn, and to be more opened of their minds.

### **3.4 Techniques**

The techniques used for this project were English theater classes; there were seven sessions of one hour each.

Every class required a lesson plan in which there was an explanation of each activity by using the essential aspects that were mentioned in Chapter II. It was also used as a theater play because students presented the theater play at the end of the English theater class in another English classroom. Each class contributed to English teaching through theater plays. Students were able to make each activity that was proposed.

## **Technique number 1**

This technique took place on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2021, at COBAEP P-18. In that class, the presentation of the short course was made. The starting hour was at 10:50 am, and it finished at 11:50 am. Within the English classroom, there were 20 students because of Covid-19 prevention; students were explained how the short course was going to be carried out and the project's purpose. In the first English class, it was necessary to know the names of the students, as well as their English level. Even though the principal teacher reported that they had an A2 level of English, it was preferable to know it individually, but not only to know their level of English but also to know their personalities and their preferences, for that, the "Word at a time story" strategy was implemented. To carry out this activity, students were asked to move their chairs around the room and sit in a circle in the center. At first, it was not easy to have total control of the group, so the primary teacher collaborated with the order. Once the students were seated in a circle, the name of the activity, "My name, my likes, and hobbies," was written on the board. Each student was asked to stand up in the center of the circle individually and say their full name, likes, and what they love doing the most. Each student had only one minute to say the required information. While the student presenters were giving their information, the others had to identify the main ideas of each presenter without writing anything down in the notebooks, just memorizing that for the receiving students developed the ability to remember short information. The 20 students passed individually, many of them too nervous and others not so much; however, the goal of speaking English individually in front of their group was achieved. This strategy was very important to implement in the first English theater class because, in this way, students lose their fear of speaking individually in front of other people and thus experience what it is like to have many looks on themselves. After the presentation activity, they were asked to form a single story for all. That is, from the information they collected, an invented story was made in English in just 10 minutes; in this way, they worked on their writing ability in a short time. It is worth mentioning that the students wrote the same story individually in their notebooks. Later, when the time of the 10 minutes was over, the last activity was carried out, which consisted

of the students reading the same story together. That is, at the same time, it is a single voice. This strategy is very important since, within the theater, it must also be the ability to form spoken dialogues in one voice, with co-workers, according to the works that are presented. When the class finished, the students were asked to tell how they felt about the class and what things could be improved. At this point, the critical pedagogy developed by Giroux (2014) was implemented since the student's perceptions also matter, and not just the teacher's voice as it was believed before. It means that they are as important as the teacher.

## **Technique number 2**

This technique took place on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at COBAEP P-18, in which the next step of the short course was carried out. The starting hour was 10:50 am, and it finished at 11:50 am. The class name was "Basic performance improvisation," in which the main objective was for students to tell a short anecdote in front of the group using their body language. The first 5 minutes consisted of greeting students and asking how they were. After that, the new technique was presented, in which students had to improvise a short story or anecdote about themselves to be presented orally in front of the classroom. Some students had doubts about the activity, so it was necessary to explain it twice. In that class, it was not necessary to move their chairs. In the next 15 minutes, students were asked their doubts or questions and had to think about their stories. Once students already had the main idea of what they wanted to talk about, one per one was passed in front of the classroom. Some students were nervous, and it also was noticed that the majority did not use their body language. Some students talked about holiday experiences, others about fun facts about them at school, and some others about their friends. It is essential to mention that each student had just 2 minutes to present their stories. This is because, in that manner, students active their minds because of the short time, and in that way, they could feel a little pressured. After students' presentations, they were evaluated by their grammar structures when talking, pronunciation, and their manner of presenting, which means if they used body language or just stood up in front of the class.

Then, students were asked how they felt about that session and if they liked it. It was so important to ask for feedback to take it into account since, in that manner, it can be considered if there is something to change or improve. This was in order to create a good environment for students.

### **Technique number 3**

This technique took place on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at COBAEP P-18, in which the following of the mini course was carried out, the starting hour was at 10:50 am, and it finished at 11:50 am. The class name was “A day for snow,” and the primary purpose was for students to read that theater play to analyze it. The class began with greetings and asking students how they were; immediately, students were given worksheets (the script of the play “A Day for snow”). In total, they were 20 worksheets. Students were told that the play “A Day for snow” was going to be carried out in front of another English group. Afterward, each student was assigned randomly to a team conformed of five students each, so they had to move their chairs in a circle. In total, there were four teams. It is important to mention that some students were dissatisfied with the assigned work teams since some preferred to work with their friends. However, they had to join to who most likely had not worked before. At this point, the critical pedagogy of Henry Giroux was included since, as he mentioned, it is about creating a healthier and free environment without discrimination of any kind (race, gender, and social economy). The teams were not only created randomly to avoid social problems but also to allow them to work with more people and understand their points of view if they are different or the same. After forming the teams, the students explained the activity, which was to read the work and ask questions about vocabulary or grammar. After that, the literary elements (kinds of characters, plot (Introduction, Rising action, Climax, Falling action, and Resolution), thought, diction, melody, and spectacle) were explained to the students, and these were written down on the whiteboard. Some students found the explanation difficult, so the topic was explained two times. Working with classmates is a good technique because if a student does not know about a topic or does not fully understand it, their teammates can explain it

more simply since sometimes the explanation is better understood if the closest person gives it to them. This is how to work as a team to contribute ideas and take up those of others. Each team had to underline the literary elements with a marker, indicating them by name. Once the four groups had the answers, each team was asked to share their responses with the class to check if they were correct or incorrect and thus receive feedback.

At the end of the class, each team member was asked to choose one character. This time the choice was free, so each student decided on the character they liked the most. Some students wanted a specific character, but if the role was already taken, those cases, choices were made through games of chance. Each team was asked to agree on their costumes, makeup, and scenery, read the play as homework and rehearse their roles. The class ended, and the students were asked to give feedback about how they felt during the course.

#### **Technique number 4**

This technique took place on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at COBAEP P-18, in which the following short course was carried out, the starting hour was at 10:50 am, and it finished at 11:50 am. The purpose of that class was for students to rehearse the play in teams to check their abilities and correct their possible mistakes. The class began with greetings and asking if they had rehearsed their roles at home. Some students did not read their dialogues, so they found it challenging to follow the line their classmates had. Students were asked to meet with their teams, and each team was asked to choose a spot in the English classroom, so they had to move their chairs again. Each team began to talk about their progress and how to interpret their character; some had doubts about words or phrases. Each team began to rehearse the play while the other teams rehearsed it. The progress of a team was checked; that is, their fluency in English, their pronunciation, and their facial and body expression were visualized. Some students were given more personal tips, such as how to interpret their role correctly, how not to get nervous when speaking, and even how to pronounce a word they found difficult. Critical pedagogy was present in this class since Giroux (2014) also includes autonomous

learning. Here, the students who implemented it were those who studied at home and who searched the internet for more about theater. Likewise, those who search on their own if they do not understand something written in English.

When 10 minutes left to finish the class, each team was quickly asked to show their progress. Some teams were more advanced than others. However, at the end of the class, the four teams managed to show their progress, for which there were notes made for each team, within which they found corrections or what needed to be improved. This was done in such a way that feedback was given to each team. Subsequently, as was customary at the end of the English theater class, the students were asked to provide their opinions about the class, their feelings, and their feedback.

### **Technique number 5**

This technique took place on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, at COBAEP P-18, in which the following short course was carried out, the starting hour was at 10:50 am, and it finished at 11:50 am. In this class, the play “A Day for snow” continued in which the objective was for students to present their advances (team 1 and team 2) in front of the group class to pull and correct their mistakes. The class began in the first 5 minutes with greetings to students and asking them how they were. After that, students were asked to join their teams and continue with the rehearsal that every team had advanced. They just had 10 minutes to rehearse their progress while they were checked on their advances, their pronunciation, fluency, and their acting advice. In that class, as the main objective was written, teams 1 and 2 were supervised the most to present their progress correctly. After 10 minutes, team number 1 passed in front of the group to present the play; it is important to mention that it was evaluated not just their English skills but also their creativity, the costumes they used, their scenography, and sound effects. Team number one did a great job, most of them were nervous, but with time, they just had confidence when speaking and doing the body movements. Although team number 1 had a student who did not like acting or the English language, he did a great job. His performance was not as good as his classmates, but his commitment was noticed.

Team number 1 was also corrected by their pronunciation. The phrases and words that were seen as the most difficult to pronounce for them were written in a notebook, and this was in order to give them feedback at the end. When the 20 minutes passed that team number 1 had, they returned to their places, and then team number 2 passed in front of the group. In team number 2, a member was missing; however, that was not a problem for them since one student improvised the part of the missing student. Of course, since it was only a general rehearsal, the teams were allowed to pass with their worksheets; they were asked not to read everything, only to use them when necessary, in case they did not remember their lines or what was going on. This was a great technique when the teams performed because they can quickly check the scripts and get on with the show if they do not remember something in the play. During the evaluation of team number 2, even though it was not complete, they did a good job. There were times when they read the worksheets, but as it was mentioned before, the theory of critical pedagogy was implemented in all the English theater classes; many students were autonomous when working since the scripts of the play were quickly learned, for the short time that the course and the classes lasted, also, always at the end of each class, the students were asked to rehearse their lines, also that they were in contact with each other to check and refine details about the works, and that objective could be achieved since it was very noticeable when they presented advances, that is why Giroux's (2014) critical pedagogy also focuses a lot, in student autonomy.

When both teams passed, it was given their feedback in front of the group out loud. This is in order for other students to check their possible errors and avoid or correct them, and it was done through theater relaxing movements for everybody to finish the class. As it was usual in the English theater classes, students were asked for their feedback, too, because it is essential to take into account the aspects that can be corrected or implemented in future English classes. At the end of the class, it was asked to team number 3 and 4 to prepare their advances for the next class.

## **Technique number 6**

This technique took place on October 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 at COBAEP P-18, in which the following short course was carried out, the starting hour was at 10:50 am, and it finished at 11:50 am. This class continued as the previous one but with team numbers 3 and 4, in which the main objective was the same as the last class: that both teams presented their advances and progress in front of the group to get feedback. For the first 5 minutes, as was usual in the English theater class, students were asked how they were and how they felt about the play and the project. After the 5 minutes of warm-up, each team was given 10 minutes to rehearse their plays. Each student was asked to join their team, and in those 10 minutes, every aspect of each team was checked. On that occasion, the progress of team numbers 3 and 4 was analyzed the most. Once the 10 minutes passed, all the teams were asked to sit down and pay attention to team number 3; in that team, two students were not interested in the project. However, a technique that was used and that is used in theater is “if everybody is going to see you, let them see you doing it well” since it looks worse than they pretend to struggle to do it, than they do it well. So that phrase was considered of great importance, and so many managed to present it without shame. As mentioned, in team number 3, two students were not interested in the project because they did not study their scripts at home or the work in general; this could be notified when they made the presentation because they did not know their dialogues.

Nevertheless, something fundamental happened: one of those two students improvised some of the scripts. Even though worksheets were allowed, that is, read or see them from time to time; this student improvised scripts, which was very impressive since it was possible to notice that the first two improvisation classes were helpful. Of course, the student presented some faults when improvising when he spoke, but the fact that he dared to do so was a big step for him. Team number 3 presentations were not that great at all, but the effort the two students put in getting up and presenting despite not being interested was greatly appreciated. When team number 4 went on to show their progress, more commitment was

noted. It was stated that they studied their dialogues and that the team occupied the worksheets the least, only on 1 or 2 occasions. What was wrong was noted, and it was their pronunciation, as in most of the students. In the same way, they wrote down the words and phrases that the team had the most difficulty pronouncing to give them later feedback. As usual, at the end of the class, the students were asked to return to their places to receive feedback aloud, so everyone could consider the points to improve. The students were also asked to give their views and feedback to continue improving the classes. When there were 5 minutes left to finish the class, all the students were instructed not to miss the next class since they would be presenting the works in another English room. Students were asked to arrive 10 minutes early to prepare with costumes, makeup, set design, and attitude.

### **Technique number 7**

This technique took place on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at COBAEP P-18, where the objective of the short course was carried out. The starting hour was 10:30 am and finished at 12:00 pm. At this time, the teachers of the 3rd C and the other group were asked to let the students see the theater play since they were told it was for the thesis project. The student actors were preparing their scenography, costumes, and makeup at 10:00 am because, in theater, it is essential to be mentally and physically ready on time. When the time of the show was about to start, the 3C group got gathered. They were told to give their best and to enjoy it despite the nerves, they were told that it was normal to be nervous before appearing and acting, but it was very helpful for their training. After that, they were guided through a series of warm-up exercises before performing, which also served to calm their nerves. They were also advised that if any of them forgot their scripts, not to remain silent but to improvise and let the other members try to save the work. Team number 1 passed in front of the audience; they were nervous at first, but finally, they managed to present the work successfully. Team number 2 also participated in front of the group; however, a member had a problem with his costume since he wasn't wearing it well. Nevertheless, he continued with the show.

Some members were very nervous, and often the pronunciation failed, but fortunately, they knew how to continue. After the 40 minutes that teams 1 and 2 had, team numbers 3 and 4 were prepared. They had the same 40 minutes to present the project. This team presented difficulties in fluency and dialogue. Still, thanks to the improvisation classes, they knew how to solve the problems, although the lines were very different from the initial talks. While team 4 made a slightly better presentation than the previous teams since while their teammates presented, they had time to study one last time. When the four teams finished the plays, the audience applauded. The other classroom teacher was asked to give her views to the students and the moderator. In this way, the student actors did not just get one point of view and received feedback from other perspectives different from the usual ones. Although, there were more positive than negative points, which greatly encouraged the teenagers. At the end of the feedback time, the primary teacher and the student actors were thanked for their participation and dedication. This was the farewell, with a huge thanks.

### **3.5 Instrument**

The instrument that was used for this thesis helps to take the guide of the short course of the English theater classes. For example, it provides a good plan of the classes, from the first two classes taken as warm-up or “before acting” to the final classes, in which the top of the project is presented: acting. For that, there were seven lesson plans, each containing information from the preparatory school, the time and date for each lesson plan, and the topic’s name as the objective of each English theater class. There were also the steps in which every class was carried out. Therefore, every lesson plan contained important aspects of a theater class. Within the instrument, a table was also used as a chronogram that showed the course contents. It described the date and topic of each English theater class, and it was taken as an overview or a work plan too.

As it is shown above, it is described how the development of the activities is. There is also an important aspect that must be shown: the material the English theater classes need. Within the instrument, a theater play was taken as material for the

English theater classes. I did not write this play; it was written by an author named Ellaine Gallagher. This play was designed for an A2 level, and it also had at the end of the play the “jingle bells” song since the play is related to the Christmas festivities.

This instrument contains important information about how a short course could be carried out. The importance of implementing it is considered good because it innovates. Perhaps the instrument is not a new technique but provides another overview of English teaching.

### **3.6 Participants**

The project was applied at Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla Plantel-18 (COBAEP P-18) in Santa Ana Xalmimilulco, Huejotzingo, Puebla. The number of students in the English classroom was 20 students, 11 female students and 9 male. The students' age is from 15 to 17 years. According to the Common European Framework of Reference of Languages, students' English level was A2. Students had already taken English classes since high school; however, their development in the English language was not good enough. Most students presented difficulties when speaking, reading, listening, and writing, each one with different abilities. Within the English Theater classes, three students were not really interested in the theater project. Their classroom behavior was sometimes incorrect since one passively discriminated against his classmates. The other two students behaved more respectfully but did not pay much attention to the English drama classes. With Giroux's critical pedagogy (2014), the compartments could be more unified, which led to coexistence despite each student's differences. Also, this social theory allowed the group of students to come together for a good cause. Other students who did pay attention and were even good when speaking in front of the group sometimes exhibited negative attitudes when they had to work with people with whom they had never worked before. Some work teams even competed to be better than others, be it in acting, fluency in English, or pronunciation. This was an important point within some students' attitudes since

when people compete, they always seek to be better, but must be better with themselves. On this occasion the competitions were taken as motivation.

### **3.7 Application**

The didactic proposal took place in October, considering that the first session started on Wednesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, and ended on Wednesday, October 27, 2021. It took two weeks, from 2 to 3 hours a week, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, with a total of 7 sessions.

This proposal was carried out in the 3 ° C group for 1 hour per class.

## CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides us to analyze the answers of the students. This analysis is very important, because, as it was explained in Chapter III, this research is based on the opinions and perceptions of the participants. To achieve this, it is necessary to analyze the answers of the students. It is important to mention that at the end of the short course of the English theater classes, eight students were solicited to collaborate with their answers. First, it is important to know that the language in which the questions and answers were made was Spanish. This was in order to help students to be more specific with their answers. Then it was thought the questions that could be the best to know their opinions; the first question was for three students that did not like the project: “¿Por qué no quisieron aprender Inglés con la propuesta didáctica?” And the other question that was for five students: “¿Cómo sintieron las siete clases de Inglés a través de obras de teatro?” Their answers were recorded by cell phone, and then they were written and analyzed. That answer and analysis is presented in the following chapter.

### 4.2 Analysis

After applying the instrument in COBAEP P-18, with the seven sessions of the theater class in English, the students were able to act in front of an audience. It is essential to mention that 3 of the 20 students were not interested in drama class, not even learning English. However, they collaborated on the project. As it is mentioned above, during the process of applying the proposal, it was possible to notice the behavior of the students, mainly three students (two men and one woman) who were not sure of working according to the criteria that were made known to them during the first session. The three students were asked: ¿Por qué no quisieron aprender Inglés con la propuesta didáctica?

**Student number 1** pointed out: "Yo creo que este tipo de trabajos es para niños de primaria."

Likewise, the student showed negativity toward learning in general and, on some occasions, it was noticed some rude behavior with his classmates. At this point, during English class, seeing the student's behavior, which was a bit classist, it was the first opportunity to implement Henri Giroux's "Critical Pedagogy" theory and also what Koay (2020) said that critical pedagogy is focused on social inequalities too. For that, in order for the student to integrate more with his classmates regardless of his economic position, he was asked to work with the students he discriminated, this in order for him to observe their attitudes, to learn to work with their peers despite their differences and to be able to integrate in order for them to share thoughts and knowledge. Unfortunately, as mentioned previously, despite his behavior, the student did not show much interest in learning. However, the reason for the project was explained to him, and seeing that it was a thesis application, he decided to participate, although not with the attitude desired.

**Student number 2**, who was asked the same question as the first, added:

"Nunca me gusto el teatro."

It is essential to mention that it is pleasant for students to express and communicate their ideas, and they are also respected. He was asked if he would like to participate in the project, and his answer was affirmative, since in the same way, he mentioned Student 2: "Participaré en clases y en la obra, tal vez el maestro me suba de calificación." The critical pedagogy of Giroux (2014) also focuses on respecting the ideas of the students and to be individual thinkers. Giroux (2014) said that in some schools, students focus more on acquiring habits than learning to become individual thinkers (Giroux, 2014). For that reason, the student's answer was acceptable because it was not sought for the student to think like the others. However, it is not a positive attitude that a student should have so that the student does not feel oppressed; he was given the opportunity to express it and to choose if he wanted to participate since this theory also tells us that within the classroom, the teacher is not the only one who is correct, but also the students.

**Student number 3** was contacted, who was asked the same question as her classmates, to which she replied:

"No me gusta Inglés porque es difícil."

Student number 3 stated that she had nothing against theater or the arts; the problem she had was with learning English. Although she mentioned that English is something difficult for her to understand, she wanted to participate in the project, that was something very honorable. Furthermore, the attitude that she presented towards the classes and towards her colleagues was cheerful, so joining a work team was not difficult for her. Fortunately, the student's attitude was not negative like the first 2, since her main problem was the difficulty of learning English. However, in order to implement critical pedagogy, which was not based only on behavior but also on examining power structures (Currel, 2020) and on learning / teaching, the student, as well as the other students, were asked to make their own materials, since it generates autonomous learning: the same characteristic of critical pedagogy to be critical thinkers, and be aware of the processes to learn.

After listening to the responses of the three students who least liked the teaching method or the English language, the question was asked "¿Cómo sintieron las siete clases de Inglés a través de obras de teatro?" To 5 students who stood out for their participation.

**Student number 4** replied: "Creo que es algo diferente de lo usual y siento que está bien."

Student number 4 stood out in the group for his positive attitude; his way of working facilitated the integration into the work teams. In addition, his level of English was good for what was required, and he knew how to take advantage of the theater with English. Within critical pedagogy, it is important to mention his participation, in which the student demonstrates his abilities when learning (Alvarado, 2020). This is a characteristic of the same theory; in the same way, he showed the ease of adaptation of self-learning, that is, his autonomous learning when making materials by himself (Alvarado, 2020).

**Student number 5** stated:

“Siento que las clases fueron muy interactivas e interesantes ya que nos hicieron aceptar la crítica constructiva.”

Student number 5 affirms that the method is interactive for her learning and the improvement of the same person since in previous English classes, she had had teachers who probably did not allow the use of criticism. Since in theater classes, the method of giving constructive criticism to classmates is always used, and in "normal" English classes the thinking of students is not taken into account very much if it is not for educational purposes. At this point, from the student's response, it is important to mention critical pedagogy since she used her critical thinking and her transformation that consisted according to the critical characteristic to think differently than before (Alvarado, 2020). So this is accepting the comments to build a better environment. In this way, it can be concluded that accepting constructive criticism is always good. It is also important to highlight her motivation for this student since, despite the circumstances, she remained positive.

The question was asked to **student number 6**, who stated:

“Me sentí como un niño otra vez porque no estábamos sentados en las sillas como usualmente.”

Student number 6 stood out among the 5 students who were chosen for their participation. In this way, when he mentioned that he felt like a child again in class, it was very important, since his perception changed automatically that he did not see work formality but as something merely productive. That phrase was the one that distinguished student number 6 since it was found that theater can change perceptions, including study perceptions, in which student number 6 saw it more as a workshop than as a high school subject.

**Student number 7** made the statement:

"Realmente me gusta tu método de enseñanza, siempre he sido buena en Inglés, entonces no se me hizo difícil participar o hablar frente a personas...mmmh, sin

embargo, creo que la parte más difícil fue tener que convivir en el mismo equipo con personas con las que no me relaciono, solía trabajar con mis amigas, y honestamente casi no le hablo a mis compañeros de clase, pero al final entendí que son buenos trabajando en los proyectos, y creo que fue bueno.”

Student number 7 stated that she does not like working with classmates with whom she does not speak, and as she mentions, it was a challenge for her; however, it is important to mention that despite her thoughts, she worked hard in an ethical manner with his colleagues, forgetting about possible differences between them. At this point, the clear mention of critical pedagogy is made since it focuses on issues of inequalities (Koay, 2021). Although the student stood out for her participation in the educational area, she was the first to mention her behavior towards her classmates, which is commendable since, as a critical thinker, she knew how to identify what her problem was and not ignore it. Also, being aware of her problem, she knew how to solve it and joined the workgroup.

**Student number 8** answered:

“Me gustó, o sea tuve clases de inglés en un instituto y así, y lo hablo bien, además creo que buscar vestuarios fue divertido, ah, y maquillarse también porque siempre lo he disfrutado y viendo todo eso junto en clase, quedé realmente cautivada.”

Student number 8 stood out for her ability in the English language when speaking in front of her classmates; as she mentions, it is important to emphasize that within the English theater classes, many things of interest can be combined as they are English, theater, makeup, fashions (costumes) among others, and those things of interest that each student has, can be gathered in the same place, share them and learn from everyone.

## **CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

### **5.1 General conclusion**

To conclude with this research, it could be observed in Chapter 1 that it was necessary to implement other teaching strategies for students in English classes since sometimes traditional methods are not well received by the new generations. Taking into account this, it is important to say that the method of English teaching through theater plays is not new but significant. Thus, what brought us to the research problem is that this method had not been implemented in many schools in Mexico, not even at COBAEP P-18 high school. It is well known that most of the Spanish or Literature classes within schools, they speak about theater, but it is not taken as a teaching proposal, not even for teaching English within this high school. In addition, the community of Santa Ana Xalmimilulco, as well as the English teachers of this high school, do not have great knowledge about theater plays, maybe because the English teachers of the institution may not see the formality of this method because of the concern of losing control of the group.

The justification for this project was that teaching the English language brings many benefits that students acquire, and even theater helps to sensitize people's thinking and open their minds to new ideas. In Chapter 2, theater teaching strategies were discussed, and important definitions were used within theater classes, which made this research highly relevant and gave it importance. It was important to show in Chapter 2 a perspective of what theater is; it also took advantage of each of the units of analysis in which the theory that was implemented, "Critical Pedagogy" by Henry Giroux (2014) was presented. This one gives us a general view of what Giroux thinks about education, its main characteristics, functions and purposes, all of this, to be carried out with the theater plays since it creates meaningful and autonomous learning for the participants. In the same way, there was a conclusion of Chapter 2, and I talked about social inequalities within education in Mexico, which is related to the theory of "Critical pedagogy" because of the discrimination that some students suffer in schools.

In Chapter 3 the instrument of the research was created and implemented; it is important to mention that the objectives of the study were achieved only a little. This was because of COVID-19, and the new norms that were presented within all schools did not let us implement this proposal for more time. Hence, the thesis instrument was not satisfactory at all since it was stipulated that it was not allowed to stay for a long time per day, or more sessions within high school. However, taking into account that the project was carried out during the English class, which is only 3 hours per week, 7 sessions were carried out, in which the activities were prepared and adapted to the necessary time.

Therefore, in Chapter 4 where the analysis of the results was made, and the data was collected, the most and least relevant participants expressed and gave their opinions about the project. Therefore, taking into account what the participants mentioned, only 4 benefits could be obtained through the analysis. Some of the participants acquired 2 or just 1 benefit. Of course, it means that participants did not acquire the 4 benefits in these sessions, the 4 benefits were analyzed globally. However, it is important to mention those benefits and give them the importance they have, be they big or small, many or few.

## **5.2 Benefits of using theater plays in the English teaching**

The purpose of my project was to explain the benefits students acquire from acting. However, its goal was not achieved at all since the application time was insufficient to teach a complete English course by the group schedule and the COVID-19 prevention.

Four critical aspects were relevant to describe after the application.

## **5.3 Communication**

The first aspect that could be noticed was communication. Communication within the 3 ° C classroom was common between students and teachers. Of course, it existed, but the communication improved with the theater classes in English. When students interacted with each other, because of doubts, for advice on how to play

their character, or for constructive critiques, the classroom environment became an elementary-level classroom. That is to say; within the classroom, there was laughter and more dialogue between students making these two factors the reasons I could notice that the communication improved among them.

#### **5.4 Flexibility of thinking**

Another important aspect of the students is "Flexibility," but not the word's literal meaning. It refers to the flexibility of thought. It is well known that some students tend to think that it is only one thing when they want everyone to do what they are asked, and there is no human power to make them think differently. This is a problem, but fortunately for the theater, this has a solution, and it is the flexibility of thought. Improvisation is an effective way to achieve flexibility of thought, making those students more open-minded. It means accepting what others say and ask for. "Every good acting class will include improved practice. Improving its purest sense is a good conversation: listening and responding quickly and effectively" (Oleniczak, 2015). This concept was difficult to deduce since I knew what the students had achieved, so I had to search the internet. This aspect is related to the theory that was carried out in the classroom, "Critical pedagogy" since when implementing it with the English theater classes, the students accepted the criticisms, lived together more without caring about their differences, and turned them into equalities. This is related to the next aspect that I noticed.

#### **5.5 Teamwork**

The third aspect that could be noticed within the implementation of the English theater class was teamwork. As mentioned previously, it is related to the previous point, that is, when working as a team, constant coexistence becomes an environment of trust, where the differences or beliefs of each student do not matter, but rather being able to work and coexist in a harmonious way. The teams were formed among students who did not live together long enough, so the students did not choose their groups of friends with whom they used to work or to go out, among other things. In this way, working with colleagues with whom they

do not usually talk or exchange ideas gives them a broader vision of "flexibility of thought" as well as "critical thinking". During the seven sessions, the teamwork integrated by the students was very significant for their learning; this means that despite their differences, they knew how to adapt; they exchanged ideas and dialogues, in which teamwork was constantly improved.

## **5.6 Public speaking**

The fourth important aspect that could be noticed within the application was "public speaking". Speaking in front of an audience, even in front of the classroom, is a great challenge that many students had to go through; some found it easy and others very difficult. Being able to stand up in front of an audience, act and speak in English are three great challenges that the students had to face. In order to be achieved, the students had too much confidence in themselves; this is something that was acquired with the English theater classes, from the first class that was the improvisation game, in which the students had to speak in English in front of their own group, with the second class that consisted of telling a short improvised story in front of their group and individually, and the constant rehearsals of the play that took place, each time even though the student actors did not realize it, they were gaining more confidence in themselves, to have the ability and courage to make a presentation and speak in public by acting and speaking in English.

### **1. What didactic proposal is useful to teach English through theater plays?**

The didactic proposal that was useful to teach English was the lesson plans, which were based on the theater teaching strategies; likewise, each class plan carried with its proposals for theatrical improvisation, theatrical games, and the play with which it was worked in order to present it and a short song at the end.

### **2. How can the theater plays in the English class be implemented?**

The best way to implement theater plays in English classes is to give the purposes of the proposal, to publicize the chronogram and the methods that the teacher will

use during the sessions; this is in order for the students to know what it is what they will do, so they can collaborate and be aware of what they will learn.

### **3. What are the benefits of using theater plays for teenagers?**

The benefits that were analyzed after the application of the instrument for this project were, as previously shown, communication; in which the students were able to improve communication between them; for some of them, this aspect improved despite living in the same classroom, there was not much interaction between them. The second benefit that could be analyzed was the flexibility of thinking of the students, since those students who made an effort at work and stood out for their participation were able to think freely, with an open mind, were able to receive constructive criticism from their classmates, in order to be able to improve in different aspects, according to the person. Another benefit that was analyzed was “teamwork”. This benefit that students acquired is too important because nowadays it is required that people be able to work with others, be their friends or not, and for the field of work that is very necessary. The last benefit that students acquired with the English theater classes was “Public speaking,” in which students were able to present in the English language in front of an audience, in this case, another English group; they were able to communicate and interact among them, the effort they made was so big, since it is not easy to stand up and act in front of people, nor even speaking English, but they achieved, and it is hoped that they continue improving their studies in the English language field.

### **5.7 Recommendations and limitations**

To finish this research, it is sought to inform that a limitation at the time of applying this project was Covid-19 since, as was mentioned during the project, due to safety rules we, could not spend a long time inside the preparatory school or with whole groups. Therefore, as a recommendation, I would like to say that this project could be applied for a longer time so that the students obtain the desired results and thus be able to increase and experiment with new activities.

I really hope to be able to continue researching more in the area of teaching since it is a subject that interests me because I would like to be able to do something more for the students, it may not be much, but I want to contribute at least a little of my enthusiasm in the world of the English Teaching in Puebla, Mexico.

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## 7.0 Appendix

### 7.1 Contents of the course

Day	Topic
October, Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> 2021	Presentation of teacher and students. Realization of simple questions and answers in front of the group by using Improvisation games: “Word at a time story”
October Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> 2021	Realization of Improvisation approach: “Basic performance improvisation”.
October Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> 2021	“A day for snow” by Ellaine Gallagher.
October Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> 2021	“A day for snow” by Ellaine Gallagher
October Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2021	“A day for snow” by Ellaine Gallagher.
October Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> 2021	“A day for snow” by Ellaine Gallagher.
October Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> 2021	“A day for snow” by Ellaine Gallagher.

### 7.2 Activities development

**School:** Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla P-18 **Grade and Group:** 3°C **Level:** A2

**Class:** 1

**No. of students:** 20 **Date:** October 13th 2021. **Schedule:** 10:50-11:50 am **Time:** 1 hour

**Topic:** Presentation and improvisation game “Word at a time story”

**Objective:** Students present themselves in front of the group by using “Word at a time story” in order to recognize their names, likes and hobbies.

Activity	Material	Set up	Procedure	Time
1	Whiteboard, markers.	T-SS	Teacher introduces himself in front of the group, he explains the purpose of the project and the manner that the short course will carry out.	5. min
2	Whiteboard, markers.	T-SS	Students are told by the teacher the activity that is going to be done, “Word at a time story” They are explained what the activity consist of and they are asked their doubts.	15 min
3	Chairs, sheets.	SS-T	Students are asked to sit down in a circle and they are given the topic “My name, my likes and hobbies”. Students listen to their classmates carefully and they have to be creating a story and sentences by using their memorization and the speaking skill.	20 min
4	Whiteboard, markers.	T-SS	Students are asked to tell the whole story all in group.	10 min
5	Whiteboard, markers.	T-SS	Students are asked how they felt about the class and they are asked for doubts, comments or advice.	10 min.

**School:** Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla P-18 **Grade and Group:** 3°C **Level:** A2

**Class:** 2

**No. of students:** 20 **Date:** October 15th 2021. **Schedule:** 10:50-11:50 am **Time:** 1 hour

**Topic:** Improvisation approach: “Basic performance improvisation”

**Objective:** Students tell a short story of themselves in front of their group by using “basic performance improvisation” in order to activate their mind.

Activity	Material	Set up	Procedure	Time
1	Whiteboard, markers.	T-SS	Class starts with greetings, students are asked how they are and they are introduced to the topic “Basic performance improvisation”	5. min
2	Whiteboard, markers.	T-SS	Students are explained what this approach consists on and the purpose of the class. They are told by the teacher that they must tell a short story about them and they have to present it individually in front of their group.	15 min
3	Student’s notebook.	T-SS	Students are asked to pass individually in front of the class and they have to tell their improvised story. Each student has 2 minutes to present and their classmates take notes.	35 min
4	Whiteboard, markers, student’s notebook.	T-SS	Students are evaluated by the teacher and they are asked how they felt with the class.	5 min

**School:** Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla P-18 **Grade and Group:** 3°C **Level:** A2

**Class:** 3

**No. of students:** 20 **Date:** October 18th 2021. **Schedule:** 10:50-11:50 am **Time:** 1 hour

**Topic:** A day for snow

**Objective:** Students are shown a play "A day for snow" through printed sheets in order to read them and analyze them.

Activity	Material	Set up	Procedure	Time
1	Whiteboard, markers.	T-SS	Class starts with greetings and students are asked how they are. Students are explained the play that will carry out, and they are given the worksheets (appendix 1) to read them. Students are asked to form 4 teams, each one with 5 students.	5. min
2	Worksheet, Whiteboard and markers. Student's notebook	T-SS	Students pay attention to teacher's explanation where explains the literary elements like: kinds of characters, plot (Introduction, Rising action, Climax, Falling action and resolution) thought, diction, melody and spectacle	20 min
3	Worksheet	SS-T	Students are asked to analyze and identify in teams the 6 literary elements in their worksheets.	20 min
4	Worksheet	T-SS	Students are asked to share their answers and they must choose their character, they also have to think about their costumes, make up and sound effects.	10 min
5	Worksheet.	T-SS	Students are asked to rehearse the play and they must think about how to perform their character correctly.	5 min.

**School:** Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla P-18 **Grade and Group:** 3°C **Level:** A2

**Class:** 4

**No. of students:** 20 **Date:** October 20th 2021. **Schedule:** 10:50-11:50 am **Time:** 1 hour

**Topic:** A day for snow

**Objective:** Students rehearse the theater play in teams in order to act it and perform it correctly.

Activity	Material	Set up	Procedure	Time
1	Whiteboard.	T-SS	Students are greeted by the teacher and they are asked how they are and if they read and rehearsed their role.	5. min
2	Worksheet.	SS-T	Students start to act with their teams and they are supervised by the teacher.	15 min
3	Worksheet.	SS-T	While acting, each student receives comments and suggestions to perform each character.	20 min
4	Worksheet.	SS-T	Students are still acting and they ask for vocabulary doubts.	10 min
5	Worksheet.	SS-T	Each team is supervised by the teacher in order to check their progress. Students are told to prepare their costumes, make-up, special effects and sounds for the next class.	10 min.

**School:** Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla P-18 **Grade and Group:** 3°C **Level:** A2

**Class:** 5

**No. of students:** 20 **Date:** October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021. **Schedule:** 10:50-11:50 am **Time:** 1 hour

**Topic:** A day for snow

**Objective:** Team 1 and 2 perform the general rehearsal “A day for snow” in front of their group in order to pull and correct their possible mistakes.

Activity	Material	Set up	Procedure	Time
1	Whiteboard.	T-SS	Classes begin with greetings, students are asked how they are and they are asked for their materials and their progresses.	5. min
2	Worksheet.	T-SS	Students start to act while asking for their doubts, and they are supervised by their progress.	10 min
3	Worksheet.	T-SS	Team number1 presents the play in front of the group.	20 min
4	Worksheet.	T-SS	Team number 2 presents the play in front of the group.	20 min
5	Worksheet.	T-SS	Students are told that the next class team number 3 and 4 will present their progress. Team number 1 and 2 receive feedback.	5 min.

**School:** Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla P-18 **Grade and Group:** 3°C **Level:** A2

**Class:** 6

**No. of students:** 20 **Date:** October 25th 2021. **Schedule:** 10:50-11:50 am **Time:** 1 hour

**Topic:** A day for snow

**Objective:** Team 3 and 4 perform the general rehearsal "A day for snow" in front of their group in order to pull and correct their possible mistakes.

Activity	Material	Set up	Procedure	Time
1	Whiteboard.	T-SS	Class begins with greetings, students are asked how they are and they are asked for their materials and their progress.	5. min
2	Worksheet.	T-SS	Students start to act while asking for their doubts, and they are supervised by their progress.	10 min
3	Worksheet.	SS-T	Team number3 presents the play in front of the group.	20 min
4	Worksheet.	SS-T	Team number4 presents the play in front of the group.	20 min
5	Worksheet.	T-SS	Students are told that the next class the play will carry on in another English group. They are told that they have to be prepared 10 minutes before the presentation.	5 min.

**School:** Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Puebla P-18 **Grade and Group:** 3°C **Level:** A2

**Class:** 7

**No. of students:** 20 **Date:** October 27th 2021. **Schedule:** 10:50-11:50 am **Time:** 1 hour

**Topic:** A day for snow

**Objective:** Students present the play “A day for snow” in front of another English group in order to achieve the objective of the project

Activity	Material	Set up	Procedure	Time
1	Costumes, make-up, special effects.	SS- Audience	Team number 1 presents the theater play “A day for snow” in front of another English group.	20. min
2	Costumes, make-up, special effects.	SS- Audience	Team number 2 presents the theater play “A day for snow” in front of another English group.	20 min
3	Costumes, make-up, special effects.	SS- Audience	Team number 3 presents the theater play “A day for snow” in front of another English group.	20 min
4	Costumes, make-up, special effects.	SS- Audience	Team number 4 presents the theater play “A day for snow” in front of another English group.	20 min

### 7.3 Theater play

(Uno international, May 17, 2014, play number 2).

**PLAY TITLE:** *A Day for Snow*

**SPECIFIC VOCABULARY:** apple, banana, let's, cereal, egg, good, milk, triangle, six, seven, no, yes, snow, laughing, bells, fun, ride, all the way, Happy New Year, snowman. Song: *Jingle Bells* NOTE: o'er = over

#### **SETTING:**

A house, on a Sunday....

The sky outside is dark and cloudy.

It is very cold outside.

The two girls, Brianna and Cheyenne, are seated at a table, eating breakfast cereal.

Mother is in the kitchen with them.

There is a fireplace and a window in the scenery.

There is a CLOCK set at 10 a.m.

#### **CHARACTERS**

Narrator, Mother, Father, Brianna, and Cheyenne (sisters)

TEACHER: Because there are only 5 speaking parts in the play, the other students can make **sound effects** of the wind or snow...

**OR** you can divide the class into several sections. Each section will present the play and the sound effects, so that more students who want a speaking part, can participate.

You will need all the words to the song JINGLE BELLS so you can teach it to the children.

## **THE PLAY**

**ACT 1:** inside the dining room

NARRATOR: It is Sunday morning. The family is relaxing.

MOTHER: It looks like a good day for snow.

The 2 girls and mother look out the window.

CHEYENNE: I wish it would snow. I love how snow looks when it covers everything.

BRIANNA: Me, too. I love to play in the snow.

FATHER walks into the room.

FATHER: I will go light a fire in the fireplace. It is getting colder outside.

MOTHER: I am going to the kitchen to begin to prepare chicken soup for dinner.

FATHER: mmm, good.....I LOVE chicken soup.

And he walks out of the room...

CHEYENNE: I have to finish my cereal, milk and banana.

BRIANNA: And I have to finish my egg and eat my apple.

A few minutes go by.....

BRIANNA : I'm done with my breakfast now.

CHEYENNE: I'm just about done, too.

THE TWO GIRLS: Let's go read. / OK//Let's go get our books.

They go to their backpacks, and each takes out a book. They go back to their chairs and sit quietly, and begin to read.

NARRATOR: Time passes, and lunch is over. It is getting colder and darker, and windier.

Then the NARRATOR goes to the clock on the wall...and changes the time to show 5:00 p.m.

FATHER: That was delicious chicken soup, dear.

THE TWO GIRLS: Yes, Mom, it was delicious.

MOTHER: Thank you. Hot soup tastes so good on a cold day!

CHEYENNE: Look! Look out the window.

BRIANNA: I see snowflakes! It's beginning to snow.

Tiny pieces of ripped white paper can be «snowflakes».

MOTHER: Let's put on our coats, and go out and feel the snowflakes on our tongues.

THE GIRLS: OK, MOM..Great idea!

They put on coats, and go outside. They stick out their tongues and catch snowflakes.... (A few tiny pieces of white paper.)

Cheyenne sticks out her hand and catches a snowflake.

**ACT 2: Outside**

CHEYENNE: Look, Mom! I have a snowflake. It looks like a triangle!!!!....

MOTHER: No, dear, it can't be a triangle....Triangles have THREE sides.....Every snowflake has SIX sides.....and every snowflake is different, even though they all have SIX sides.

BRIANNA: I didn't know that, Mom.

MOTHER: Let's go inside now, girls. It's getting colder.

### **ACT 3**

They walk inside the house.

FATHER: Welcome back inside, my three girls. Was it cold outside?

MOTHER: Yes, and windy...We did catch some snowflakes on our tongues.

Time to get ready for bed, Cheyenne and Brianna. You have school tomorrow.

CHEYENNE AND BRIANNA: O.K. Goodnight Mom and Dad. See you tomorrow.

NARRATOR: The girls go to their room. Mother and Father shut off the lights, and the room is dark.

### **ACT 4.** The lights come on....

NARRATOR: Now it is morning. The family is getting up. Mother is getting breakfast ready. Father is seated, with a cup of coffee. The two girls enter the kitchen in their pajamas.

BRIANNA: Good morning, mom and dad. I'm hungry.

CHEYENNE: We have to eat so we can get ready for school.

FATHER: Maybe you should look out the window first.

The two girls walk to the window and look out.

THE 2 GIRLS TOGETHER: WOW! LOOK! "Snow! Snow! There is snow everywhere!!!! The trees are covered with snow."

MOTHER: There is no school today. The roads are too snowy. You can stay home and play."

CHEYENNE: Let's eat breakfast and get dressed so we can go out.

BRIANNA: O.K.:Let's make a snowman!

NARRATOR; The girls go out to eat and leave the room, and then go out to play. They make a BIG snowman. Then they come back into the house. They take off their jackets, hats, mittens, and snow boots.

FATHER: Girls, in two weeks grandma will be coming for a visit. I will teach you a song called 'Jingle Bells' so you can sing it for your grandmother when she arrives. You will like the song. Mother, sing it with me, please.

(They will use small bells, ringing them as they sing.)

*"Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way.*

*Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh.....*

*Hey.....*

*Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way.*

*Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh».....*

*Dashing through the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh,*

*O'er the fields we go, laughing all the way.*

*Bells on Bobtail ring, making spirits bright....*

*Oh, what fun to laugh and sing, a sleighing song tonight!*

*Oh..... Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way.*

*Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh».....*

BRIANNA: This day was so much fun!

CHEYENNE: We loved making the snowman. It was the first one we ever made!

MOTHER: I told you that this would be a good day for snow!

FATHER: Let's all sing *Jingle Bells* together to practice for grandma's visit.

ALL TOGETHER:

*"Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way.*

*Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh.....*

*Hey.....*

*Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way.*

*Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh».....*

*Dashing through the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh,*

*O'er the fields we go, laughing all the way.*

*Bells on Bobtail ring, making spirits bright....*

*Oh, what fun to laugh and sing, a sleighing song tonight!*

*Oh..... Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way.*

*Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh».....*

EVERYONE, EVEN THE AUDIENCE: (ringing small bells as they sing.)

*Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way.*

*Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh...etc..*

As they continue singing, they walk off the stage.

**THE END**