Enhancing the Speaking Skills of Secondary School Students Through Simulation and Roleplay

Abstract

Background and Aim. The traditional teacher-centered instructional approach has always been dominant in higher education (Evanick, 2023) and in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) specifically (Lak et al., 2017). While still valuable, this method implies serious shortcomings in today's educational context (Shakhnoza, 2023). Hence, a planned shift away from the more traditional approaches is necessary to meet the expectations of the current student-centered environment, especially when acquiring oral skills in EFL settings (Angelini & García-Carbonell, 2019). Therefore, this study aimed to design a teaching proposal using simulation and roleplay within the ADELIS model (Shepherd et al., 2019). The main objective of this study was to analyze the effectiveness of the simulation and roleplay in enhancing oral skills among three groups of fourth-year secondary students at XXX secondary school in XXX. **Method.**The study used a mixed-method approach that blended quantitative and qualitative methods, including structured observation and perception surveys. **Results and Conclusion**. The main findings demonstrated a high level of motivation, an improvement in oral skills, and the use of modal verbs and vocabulary of fears and phobias, which were the target language of the sessions according to the school's curriculum. This case study provided valuable insights for research and practice of simulation in EFL, specifically for developing oral skills. It also provides teachers and practitioners with useful resources to implement in their secondary education classrooms in similar settings.

Keywords

Simulation, Roleplay, Speaking, Oral Skills, Motivation, English as a Second Language, ADELIS model, Alternative Methods, Modals, Fears and Phobias

1.1 Introduction

Among the four language skills outlined by the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), speaking remains one of the most challenging for learners due to psychological barriers, linguistic constraints, and methodological issues. The main psychological factors that hinder speaking development in second language learners include anxiety (Horwitz, 1986; Komala, 2025), low self-confidence (Kiruthiga, 2022; Wang, 2020), shyness and inhibition (Cabaltica, 2021), lack of motivation or negative attitudes toward the L2 (Ni, 2012; Mardani, 2024), and fear of failure (Siew, 2014). Linguistic challenges further complicate speaking acquisition, including cross-linguistic influence between L1 and L2 (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Soomro, 2022), the inherent complexity of the target language (Tagarelli, 2016; Masruri, 2024), semantic mismatches such as polysemy or differences in meaning across languages (Tyler, 2012), and pronunciation difficulties (Ren, 2023), particularly when L1 and L2 phonological systems differ considerably, as is the case with Spanish and English.

In addition to these learner-related and linguistic barriers, methodological shortcomings in instructional practices significantly influence the development of speaking skills. In Spanish secondary schools, speaking is often deprioritized in favor of grammar-based instruction, resulting in limited opportunities for oral communication (Shakhnoza, 2023). Traditional teacher-centered methodologies continue to dominate EFL instruction (Lak et al., 2017; Evanick, 2023), reinforcing passive learning habits where students are recipients of knowledge rather than active participants. This is compounded by frequent code-switching into the native language, which further reduces students' exposure to authentic English input (Mejías, 2016).

Extensive research in EFL has focused on improving speaking skills (Cf Rajendran & Yunus, 2021; John et al. 2021; Ishak, & Aziz, 2022; Riaz, & Kausar, 2024). However, the existing studies have major limitations in terms of methodologies (Darazi et al 2023), sample size, technological and

classroom restrictions (Shahid et al. 2024; Dewan, & Sharma, 2025), or low levels of satisfaction among students (Lyu et al 2023) . In addition, we also observed a scarcity of studies using simulation as a methodology for enhancing speaking skills in EFL classrooms. Therefore, in our endeavour in this research, we seek to contribute to filling the existing gaps and offer insights that could be useful to both the research as well as the educational community.

Given these limitations, there is a growing need to explore more interactive and learner-centered approaches that foster active language use. In this study, we propose simulation and role-play as innovative strategies to promote speaking competence in a more meaningful and engaging manner. In the context of EFL/ESL education, simulation refers to structured learning scenarios that imitate real-life situations, allowing students to adopt specific roles and perform communicative tasks in a controlled but dynamic setting. Role-play, a closely related technique, enables students to temporarily step into roles—such as a customer, teacher, or traveler—and interact based on given prompts or imagined contexts. These methods encourage authentic use of language, negotiation of meaning, and improvisation, which are crucial for communicative competence.

Unlike traditional methods that often limit speaking to rote exercises or isolated responses, simulation and role-play create a communicative environment where language is used purposefully, contextually, and interactively, thereby addressing several key challenges that learners face. Psychologically, these methods help alleviate anxiety and fear of failure by offering a low-stakes, collaborative space in which students can rehearse and experiment with language without the pressure of being constantly evaluated. Assuming a role can reduce self-consciousness, as students are speaking "as" someone else, which can lower inhibition and increase self-confidence. These techniques also enhance motivation and engagement, as learners are often more willing to participate in dynamic, meaningful activities than in abstract grammar drills.

From a linguistic perspective, simulations provide realistic contexts for the use of complex vocabulary, grammar structures, and pronunciation patterns, making it easier for learners to internalize and apply language forms in ways that are cognitively and socially relevant. They naturally encourage negotiation of meaning, clarify semantic mismatches, and expose learners to the pragmatic dimensions of the language—such as turn-taking, tone, and register—that are often overlooked in traditional instruction.

Methodologically, simulations shift the focus from teacher-centered to learner-centered instruction, requiring active participation and cooperative interaction. They enable extended speaking turns and authentic dialogues, which are often absent in grammar-dominant classrooms. By doing so, simulation and role-play directly counteract the limitations of conventional approaches that emphasize accuracy over fluency and inhibit spontaneous language use. In short, these methods provide a holistic framework that integrates cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of language learning, making them especially promising for the development of communicative competence in the EFL classroom.

Therefore, this study aims to contribute to this underexplored area by analyzing the effectiveness of simulation and role-play in enhancing the speaking skills of secondary school students. To achieve this, we conducted an action-oriented case study with students in the 4th year of ESO (Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, Compulsory Secondary Education) at XXX. We employed a mixed-methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative data, structured around three key sessions: briefing, simulation, and debriefing. By integrating simulation and role-play into the EFL curriculum, we aim to provide practical insights for educators and contribute to the broader research on communicative methodologies in language learning.

1.2 Objectives and Questions

Research Questions

To address the psychological, linguistic, and methodological challenges outlined in the introduction, this study seeks to answer the following research questions and achieve the corresponding objectives, which are detailed in the next section.

1. **How could the implementation of the simulation approach contribute to the enhancement of English-speaking skills among secondary school students?**
2. **What impact does the implementation of simulation-based activities have on the oral skills of students in our selected sample?**

Research Objectives

1. **To design and implement** a **simulation-based teaching proposal** aimed at enhancing **oral skills** in secondary school students.
2. **To assess the impact** of simulation-based activities on **students' oral proficiency**, with a focus on fluency, accuracy, vocabulary use, and interactional competence.
3. **To provide teachers and students** with a **repository of communicative activities** that can be integrated into EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms to improve oral skills using a simulation approach (all intervention materials are included in the supplementary materials).

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1. State-of-the art in Teaching Speaking

Developing speaking skills remains a major challenge in EFL education, with many studies advocating for the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach due to its emphasis on real-life communication (Hui & Yunus, 2023). A recent review by Hui and Yunus (2023) confirms CLT's benefits for speaking proficiency by creating learner-centered, interactive environments that encourage confident speaking. However, the review mentions obstacles such as insufficient teacher training, a grammar-focused teaching culture, and learner-related challenges including low motivation, lack of confidence (to which we might be able to add other previously mentioned psychological factors such as fear of failure, and language anxiety) hinder effective CLT implementation, signaling a need for systemic support in educational practices.

Technological advancements, especially in flipped classrooms, present promising alternatives. Flipped learning is an instructional approach that inverts the traditional teaching model by shifting the acquisition of new knowledge to the home environment and reserving classroom time for active practice and application (Chen et al, 2017). Andújar et al. (2020) explored mobile-assisted learning in flipped EFL classrooms, enhancing engagement despite challenges like internet connectivity and increased distraction. Similarly, Parra-González et al. (2020) noted the positive effects of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) and gamification on motivation and autonomy but highlighted the need to address diverse cognitive styles and learning preferences. In an Indonesian context, Mahendra et al. (2020) also found improved speaking performance with a flipped model, though without insights into student perceptions, revealing a gap in understanding learner experiences within tech-enhanced methods.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is another emerging tool. Studies by Maknun (2020) and Junaidi et al. (2020) using the Orai app suggest that AI can streamline assessments by offering immediate, objective feedback, though its limitations in addressing conversational nuances remain a concern (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Additionally, Atkins and Heron (2024) highlight the critical role of body language in speaking, suggesting that techniques like roleplay may bridge communication gaps in digital and online learning environments.

Pedagogical strategies like roleplay and small group discussions also support communicative competence. Azizah et al. (2022) find that roleplaying with authentic materials fosters creativity and confidence, with teachers acting as facilitators rather than direct instructors. Crisianita and Mandasari (2022) similarly show that small groups enhance oral expression, suggesting that collaborative settings can bolster speaking skills in EFL learners. While CLT and technology-driven approaches improve speaking outcomes, they are limited by structural and contextual challenges (Hui & Yunus, 2023; Mahendra et al., 2020). Future research should prioritize learner feedback, address technical barriers, and expand to more diverse contexts, ensuring an inclusive and practical approach to teaching speaking skills.

2.2. Teaching Speaking through Simulation

Research into simulation-based teaching for speaking skills in EFL contexts demonstrates its potential for engaging learners and improving oral proficiency. Angelini and García-Carbonell (2019) employed simulations with university engineering students, focusing on four variables—delivery, content, textual organization, and language. Significant improvements in language and delivery were observed, particularly in grammar, pronunciation, and fluency, though content and organization showed minimal change. The study suggests that simulation enhances participation and decision-making but calls for further exploration with diverse learners to meet varying skill levels effectively.

Similarly, Kensicki et al. (2022) found that using the Model G20 simulation with secondary and early university students in the UK and USA improved critical 21st-century skills such as public speaking, cross-cultural communication, and teamwork. Through roleplay in international relations scenarios, students displayed increased confidence, especially in public speaking, affirming simulation's value for oracy skills in global contexts. The authors advocate for more investment in simulation-based learning to support comprehensive skill development in EFL education.

Sari and Sari's (2020) qualitative study examined English use among Indonesian marine pilots during simulated pilotage scenarios. This professional roleplay highlighted language deficits in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, reinforcing that simulation aids gradual improvement in communicative competence. Expanding this research to larger groups may provide a more complete understanding of simulation's effectiveness in specialized professional contexts.

Budiarto et al. (2023) addressed initial issues of cooperation and autonomy in roleplay with Indonesian students by introducing a think-pair technique. Results showed improved oral communication, with greater student collaboration and autonomy, supporting the use of structured simulation techniques for speaking skill enhancement. Chang et al. (2020) explored a different form of simulation—augmented reality (AR)—with junior high students, revealing notable improvements in attention, confidence, and satisfaction in speaking tasks. AR's realistic scenarios enhanced concentration and engagement, suggesting that such immersive simulations foster authentic communication and confidence.

These studies underscore the simulation's capacity to foster speaking skills through real-life contexts, enhancing fluency, confidence, and engagement (Angelini & García-Carbonell, 2019; Kensicki et al., 2022; Chang et al., 2020). Despite promising outcomes, gaps remain, particularly in addressing content-related skills (Angelini & García-Carbonell, 2019) and exploring simulations in broader, diverse educational contexts. Considering this landscape, the present study aims to extend

these findings by proposing a structured, simulation-based approach to improve speaking skills in secondary education, providing a communicative and motivating learning environment.

2.3. Theoretical Framework: the ADELIS model

To structure the simulation-based intervention, this study adopted the ADELIS model (Shepherd et al., 2019), a framework designed to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application in simulation-based education. The ADELIS model provides a structured framework for designing and implementing simulations in educational settings. In this study, we apply this model to develop a simulation-based intervention aimed at enhancing secondary school students' speaking skills, as detailed in the following methodology section. The primary objective is to ensure that simulation interventions effectively align with and enhance the learning experience. This model has been applied in various domains beyond education. It has been used in health services to bolster leadership, offering learning experiences for leaders and teams (Davies et al., 2022). By addressing cognitive, attitudinal, psychomotor, and resilience aspects, the model enhances participants' preparedness for future employment challenges.

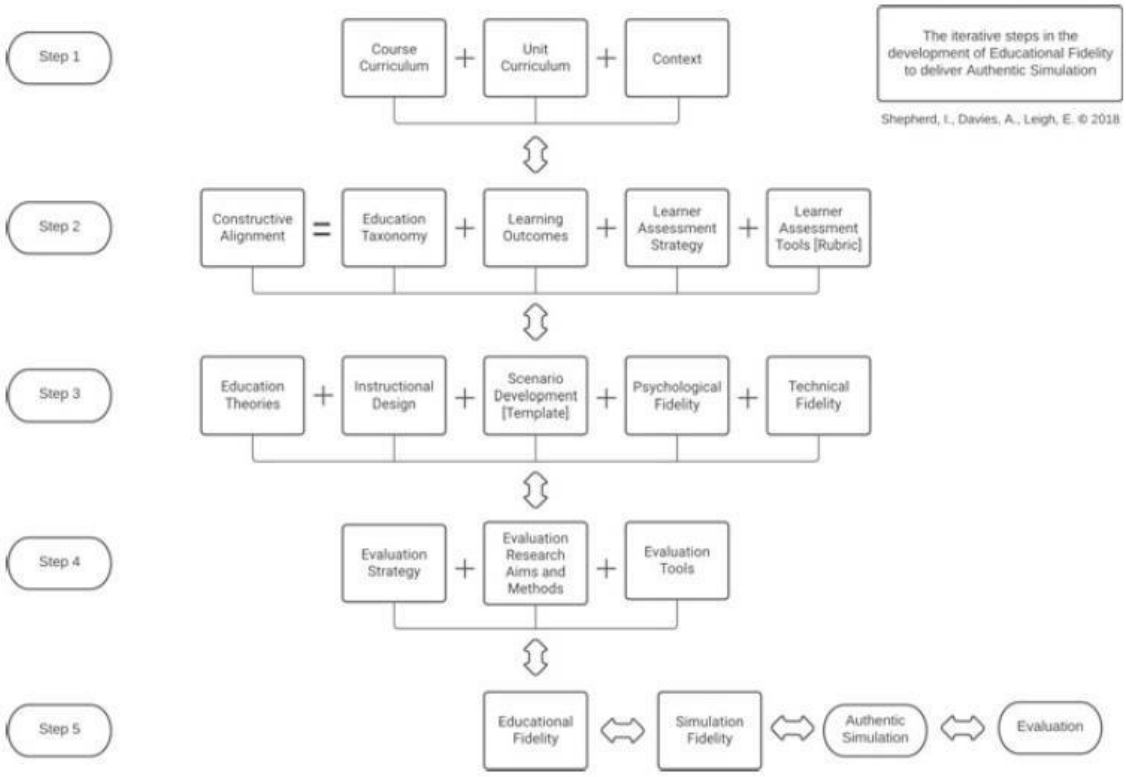

Figure 1. Steps of the ADELIS model (Shepherd et al. 2019)

The initial phase, denoted as Step 1, predominantly centers on needs analysis. This step identifies whether simulations can enhance or substitute current educational methods and whether these simulations can effectively address the curriculum content. Within this step, the context of the simulation must be defined, and reasons for its use must be established.

In Step 2, emphasis is placed on constructive alignment, which aims to ensure that learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment criteria are coherently defined, namely, aligned. Utilizing Bloom's taxonomy (Adams, 2015), the most appropriate action verbs can be identified to represent the learning area being developed. These action verbs are intricately linked to the learning outcomes of the subject, course, and program that are to be achieved after conducting the simulation. Subsequently, in order to ascertain the alignment and to see if the learning outcomes are met, the assessment is carried out. It is decided whether the assessment will be summative or formative, and the assessment tools.

Step 3 guided the design of the classroom simulation, ensuring that students engaged in structured roleplay activities aligned with curricular objectives. This is one of the most important steps because, as mentioned earlier, it is where the simulation is forged. In this step, the how, what, when, and where of the simulation need to be considered.

Step 4 is an evaluation to analyze the educational impact of the simulation. The type of data and data collection tools will be analyzed. As mentioned in step 2, constructive alignment requires ascertaining how you will measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

The concluding phase of the ADELIS model, Step 5, involves retrospective examination, reflection, and review of the development of the simulation. By going through the model step by step and conducting a review, the facilitator ensures that the simulation resembles a real-world scenario. This step is pivotal in checking the functionality of the simulation with students, and it is a good foundation for future studies measuring real-world impact.

3. Methodology

3.2. Research Design

An action-oriented case study was conducted at XXX, a secondary school in XXX, Spain, to achieve the research objectives and address the research questions. An action-oriented case study is a research approach that emphasizes practical application and real-world impact. It typically involves a participatory approach by engaging stakeholders (Vinje, 1992), a focus on action and real-world setting which leads to benefit for the involved or subjects of the research (Mohamad, 2018), with an iterative process involving cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection (Petit, 2024) collaboration among stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, and community members, to address specific

issues or challenges. This methodology aims to generate actionable insights that can lead to positive changes in policy or practice.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of the case study, particularly in assessing the effectiveness of the simulation-based intervention in improving students' oral skills and vocabulary usage.

3.3 Participants and Setting

The study was conducted at XXX, a secondary school located in XXX, Spain, with approximately XXX residents. Founded in XXX, the school serves 649 students and offers various courses, including different branches of Baccalaureate and vocational training. English is a compulsory subject for all students, with three hours of instruction per week. The curriculum primarily focuses on reading and writing, with speaking and listening comprising only 10% of the assessment criteria. This limited focus on oral skills provided the rationale for the intervention, which aimed to enhance students' speaking and listening abilities through a simulation-based approach.

The participants were 65 students from the 4th year of ESO, a Spanish secondary education level, divided into three groups: 4ºA (20 students), 4ºB (23 students), and 4ºC (22 students). The gender distribution was nearly equal, with 32 females and 33 males. The students ranged in age from 15 to 16 years old and exhibited a wide range of English proficiency levels, despite the intended B1 level according to the CEFR. This heterogeneity in English proficiency is typical of regulated Spanish high schools, where students are grouped by age rather than skill level. Most students were native Spanish speakers, with the exception of one Indian student who was proficient in English but had limited Spanish skills. Some students were enrolled in the PDC (*Programa de Diversificación Curricular*,

Curricular Diversification Program), which provides differentiated instruction for students with learning difficulties. These students joined the general class for English lessons.

Approval for the study was obtained from the school authorities, and participant confidentiality was strictly maintained. No personal data was collected, and students were anonymized using letter identifiers.

3.4. Procedure and Teaching Intervention

3.4.1. Needs Analysis

The first phase of the ADELIS model involved a needs analysis to define the context of the simulation and the curriculum to be addressed. The study took place in a secondary school classroom with 4th-year ESO students. The curriculum focused on Unit 4 of their class textbook, which covered modal verbs and vocabulary related to fears and phobias. The needs analysis identified a gap in students' oral skills, particularly in speaking and listening, which were underrepresented in the existing curriculum.

3.4.2. Constructive Alignment

The second phase of the ADELIS model focused on constructive alignment, ensuring that the learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment criteria were coherently defined. The learning outcomes for the simulation were set using Bloom's taxonomy (Adams, 2015) and were divided into two categories: thematic and sociolinguistic.

Thematic Learning Outcomes:

- Understanding mental health problems.
- Exploring the relationship between psychology, fear, and phobias.
- Using modal verbs in context.

Sociolinguistic Learning Outcomes:

- Developing social and language abilities to debate, negotiate, and make decisions.
- Using simple modal verbs appropriately.
- Improving pronunciation at the segmental and suprasegmental levels.
- Managing a wide range of vocabulary related to fears and phobias.
- Producing extended stretches of appropriate language fluently.

3.5.3. Simulation Design and Execution

The teaching intervention was conducted over three sessions, each lasting 55 minutes. The sessions were designed to prepare students for the final simulation, which took place during the third session. The simulation was designed to commemorate World Psychology Day, addressing mental health issues among students, particularly fears and phobias.

Session 1: Pre-Teaching

The first session served as a warm-up, introducing students to the vocabulary and grammar they would need for the simulation. The session was divided into three stages:

1. **Pre-Task (15 minutes):** Students engaged in an envelope game, where they solved puzzles or crosswords to uncover vocabulary and grammar words related to fears and phobias.
2. **Main Task (20 minutes):** Students matched definitions to vocabulary terms that had appeared in the warm-up activity.
3. **Final Task (20 minutes):** A competitive game called "Highlighter Battle" was conducted, where teams competed to highlight the correct vocabulary or grammar word based on definitions read aloud by the teacher.

Session 2: Pre-Teaching and Briefing

The second session focused on reinforcing the vocabulary and grammar learned in the first session while introducing students to the simulation's context. The session included:

1. **Main Task (20 minutes):** Students participated in an auction game, where they bid points based on their knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar related to fears and phobias. The materials for the auction were generated using an AI-based classroom library (Gil, 2023).
2. **Final Task (20 minutes):** Students were assigned roles for the simulation, including a psychologist, students with specific phobias, and a journalist. The teacher provided instructions on the profiles and expectations for each role.

Session 3: Simulation

The third session was the culmination of the intervention, where students participated in a simulation commemorating World Psychology Day. The simulation was designed to address mental health issues, particularly fears and phobias, and required students to use the vocabulary and grammar they had learned in the previous sessions. The simulation was structured as follows:

1. **Briefing (15 minutes):** The teacher presented the simulation scenario, which involved a conference on mental health, fears, and phobias. Students were given time to read the scenario and their assigned roles.
2. **Action (40 minutes):** Students engaged in a role-play simulation, taking on roles such as a psychologist, students with specific phobias (e.g., acrophobia, nomophobia), and a journalist. The simulation required students to debate whether phobias should be treated, using modal verbs and vocabulary related to fears and phobias.
3. **Debriefing (at home):** Due to time constraints, the debriefing was conducted at home using a Likert scale survey created with Google Forms. The survey included 23 quantitative questions

and a few open-ended questions for qualitative analysis. The debriefing aimed to gather students' feedback on their experiences during the simulation.

3.4.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected during the simulation using a modified Preliminary English Test (PET) speaking rubric (Cambridge, 2019) and an observation sheet. The rubric assessed students' performances based on grammar and vocabulary, role-play execution, pronunciation, interactive communication, and discourse management. The observation sheet was used to evaluate students' involvement, engagement, and language use during the simulation.

Additionally, the simulation was recorded for the school's podcast, "Ballesteros FM," to highlight the impact of the intervention on students' oral skills and vocabulary usage. The recording provided further qualitative data for analysis.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines following the national standards for ethics in Spain, ensuring that participant confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. No personal data was collected, and students were anonymized using letter identifiers. Approval for the study was obtained from the school authorities, and informed consent was secured from all participants.

4. Findings, Discussion, and Reflections

4.1. Reflection and Discussion of Pre-teaching and Simulation

The reflection on the simulation provides valuable insights into its design and the level of student engagement it fostered. Firstly, time constraints impacted many groups, as 55 minutes for preparation and performance were often insufficient. Some groups, in particular, could not complete their tasks or explain their roles, negatively affecting participation. The overwhelming nature of the information provided also contributed to student anxiety, suggesting a need for more streamlined guidance. Students' unfamiliarity with the teacher's passive role as a facilitator further exacerbated stress. To address these issues, future implementations could benefit from clearer, more concise instructions and a gradual transition into a facilitative teaching role.

Regarding language use, most students showed improvement in employing modal verbs, although confusion between "should" and "must" persisted. Other language errors included incorrect verb forms following modals, and misuse of "be able to." Vocabulary was well-incorporated, with students demonstrating increased use of phrasal verbs like “get over” and “cope with,” highlighting the success of pre-teaching. However, a tendency to repeat familiar terms, such as "anxiety" and "treatment," rather than utilizing a broader vocabulary was noted. This repetition could be attributed to either linguistic comfort or the influence of their native language.

In terms of engagement, the simulation proved highly motivating, with students participating enthusiastically, especially in situations resembling real-life scenarios (Hui & Yunus, 2023). However, discrepancies in involvement were observed, particularly with students who had strong English proficiency but lacked engagement, possibly due to insufficient group connection or disinterest in the activity. Conversely, students with lower proficiency levels, although hindered by language

constraints, displayed remarkable effort and involvement. Engagement also seemed influenced by interpersonal dynamics, with teams that had stronger connections showing higher involvement.

Strengths during the simulation included cooperation, as higher-proficiency students often helped peers with lower proficiency, ensuring smoother communication. Conversely, weaknesses were primarily rooted in grammar and vocabulary, with some students relying heavily on notes, which caused insecurity. These findings align with prior research by Budiarto et al. (2023) on participation challenges in language activities. Overall, while the simulation had several positive outcomes, particularly in motivation and cooperative dynamics, improvements in time management, task clarity, and gradual role transitions for teachers could enhance future implementations.

4.2. Results of Survey

The survey results, aligning with the research questions, demonstrate that the implementation of the simulation-based approach significantly enhanced students' English-speaking skills, directly addressing how such an approach contributes to the enhancement of these skills among secondary school students. Furthermore, the findings indicate a positive impact of the simulation-based activities on the oral skills of the selected sample , evidenced by the observed improvement alongside increased student motivation, a result predicted by the ADELIS model. This section presents the results obtained from the Google Forms online survey adapted from (Angelini, 2021b). Out of 60 students, we received 37 responses, rated from 1 to 5, ranging from very poor to excellent. It is essential to mention that two types of data were analyzed here: quantitative, involving 20 Likert scale items and qualitative, consisting of three qualitative open questions. The data in this regard was constantly triangulated between the quantitative and qualitative data, as well as the findings of the previous phase (observations).

4.2.1. Quantitative Data

For this research, after carrying out the simulation in the classroom, the students completed a Likert scale survey with 20 queries divided into four sections: simulation, feelings and reactions, learning, and facilitator. The survey instrument was administered in English, the language of instruction; however, teachers were present during the administration to provide clarification and address any student questions regarding the survey items, ensuring comprehension.

The analysis of the post-simulation survey revealed overall highly positive perceptions from students regarding the use of simulation activities in the classroom. Across all categories, including collaboration and engagement during the simulation, emotional responses, perceived learning outcomes, and the role of the facilitator, students consistently rated their experiences favourably. Particularly high satisfaction was observed in areas related to motivation, confidence, and perceived usefulness of the simulation for language learning, while slightly more variation appeared in students' self-assessment of problem-solving skills and the difficulty of the simulation relative to other class activities. These results suggest that the simulation not only served as an effective instructional strategy but also contributed positively to students' emotional and cognitive engagement, confirming previous research on the pedagogical potential of simulations in language education (Angelini & García-Carbonell, 2019; Kensicki et al., 2022; Sari & Sari, 2020; Budiarto et al., 2023).

The results obtained in the questionnaire are shown in the Table 1 below, and a breakdown of the different statements in each section is provided following Table 1.

Item		Likert					Statistics		
		1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean	SD
1	"Our team worked very well during the whole simulation"	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (18.9%)	15 (40.5%)	15 (40.5%)	37	4.22	0.750
2	The time for the Simulation was NOT enough	1 (2.7%)	1 (2.7%)	2 (5.4%)	7 (18.9%)	26 (70.3%)	37	4.51	0.932
3	The Simulation was more difficult thant other class activities	6 (16.2%)	6 (16.2%)	10 (27%)	9 (24.3%)	6 (16.2)	37	3.08	1.32
4	The Simulation was realistic	1 (2.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (8.1%)	12 (32.4%)	21 (56.8%)	37	4.41	0.865
5	I changed my point of view during the negotiation	5 (13.5%)	1 (2.7%)	9 (24.3%)	12 (32.4%)	10 (27%)	37	3.57	1.30
	Overall							3.96	0.613
6	I felt capable of solving problems	2 (5.4%)	1 (2.7%)	3 (8.1%)	7 (18.9%)	24 (64.9%)	37	4.35	1.11
7	I felt confident about my participation in the Simulation	0 (0%)	1(2.7%)	2 (5.4%)	12 (32.4%)	22 (59.5%)	37	4.49	0.731
8	I have listened to all participants in my group	0 (0%)	1 (2.7%)	1 (2.7%)	6 (16.2%)	29 (78,4%)	37	4.70	0.6
9	I felt motivated during the Simulation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (5.4%)	8 (21.6%)	27 (73%)	37	4.68	0.58
10	I liked the Simulation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.7%)	3 (8.1%)	33 (89.2%)	37	4.86	0.41
	Overall							4.62	0.42
11	I learned about solving problems	0 (0%)	3 (8.1%)	2 (5.4%)	12 (32.4%)	20 (54.1%)	37	4.32	0.9
12	I learned to consider others' opinions	1 (2.7%)	1 (2.7%)	5 (13.5%)	10 (27%)	20 (54.1%)	37	4.27	0.9
13	I would like to have more	2 (5.4%)	0 (0%)	2 (5.4%)	4 (10.8%)	29 (78.4%)	37	4.57	1.01

	simulations in other classes								
14	I have put into practice the vocabulary (fear and phobias) learned in previous lessons	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (16.2%)	5 (13.5%)	26 (70.3%)	37	4.54	0.7
15	I have put into practice the grammar (modal verbs) learned in previous lessons	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (21.6%)	7 (18.9%)	22 (59.5%)	37	4.38	0.7
16	This lesson is useful to revise grammar and vocabulary	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.7%)	11 (29.7%)	25 (67.6%)	37	4.65	0.5
	Overall							4.45	0.47
17	The facilitator (teacher) gave detailed explanations and instructions	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.7%)	5 (13.5%)	31 (83.8%)	37	4.81	0.4
18	The facilitator (teacher) provided the material for the Simulation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (10.8%)	33 (89.2%)	37	4.89	0.3
19	The facilitator (teacher) monitored the teams	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (10.8%)	7 (18.9%)	26 (70.3%)	37	4.59	0.6
20	The facilitator (teacher) corrects behaviour constructively	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.7%)	8 (21.6%)	28 (75.7%)	37	4.73	0.5
	Overall							4.76	0.33

Table 1 Survey Results and Statistics

Student Satisfaction with simulation: The classroom simulation generated overwhelmingly positive responses, with 97.3% of students indicating full satisfaction (M = 4.86, SD = 0.41). This high satisfaction aligns with studies like Angelini and García-Carbonell (2019) and Kensicki et al. (2022), which affirm that simulations can enhance speaking skills and foster effective skill development environments. Comparable to findings by Sari and Sari (2020) and Budiarto et al. (2023), our study

suggests that simulations not only support skill acquisition but also encourage cooperative learning, as evidenced by students' positive interactions and shared experiences. The mean satisfaction score across all simulation-related items was 4.62 (SD = 0.42), reflecting strong positive perceptions and suggesting an enhanced overall experience when simulations were employed.

Learning Outcomes from simulation: This section explored students' perceived learning gains, such as problem-solving and consideration of diverse opinions. Most students (86.5%) reported improvements in problem-solving (M = 4.32, SD = 0.9), aligning with Kensicki et al. (2022), who link roleplay and simulation to enhanced conflict resolution skills. A smaller subset (8.1%) felt less impact, reflecting some divergence in personal experience. In the area of listening skills, 81% agreed that the simulation encouraged them to consider others' opinions (M = 4.27, SD = 0.9), supporting the role of simulations in developing active listening (Watts et al., 2011). The desire to engage in further simulations was high, with 89% indicating a strong preference for more simulation-based learning (M = 4.57, SD = 1.01). Additionally, 83.8% of students noted they applied vocabulary and grammar from previous lessons (M = 4.54, SD = 0.7 for vocabulary; M = 4.38, SD = 0.7 for grammar), showing the effectiveness of simulations in language acquisition. The overall score for learning outcomes was 4.45 (SD = 0.47), suggesting that simulations facilitate both content retention and positive learning perceptions.

Facilitator's Role in simulation: The facilitator's involvement received high ratings, with students appreciating clear instructions (M = 4.81, SD = 0.4) and effective material provision (M = 4.89, SD = 0.3), consistent with Andújar et al. (2020) and Azizah et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of quality materials in simulations. Monitoring received slightly lower, though still positive, scores (M = 4.59, SD = 0.6), reflecting possible challenges in overseeing a large number of groups. Constructive feedback was highly valued, achieving a mean of 4.73 (SD = 0.5), underscoring the importance of supportive facilitation. The category mean was 4.76 (SD = 0.33), affirming that a well-

prepared facilitator enhances the educational value of simulations, leading to greater satisfaction and engagement among students.

4.2.2. Qualitative Data

The qualitative insights from this study provide further depth to the findings regarding the simulation's effectiveness in enhancing students' oral skills and motivation. The students' responses to open-ended questions shed light on key aspects of the simulation experience.

1. **Oral Expression**: Many students highlighted the opportunity to practice speaking as the most beneficial aspect of the simulation. Their responses reflected the common challenge in traditional classrooms, where oral practice is limited (Nation & Yamamoto, 2012). Students appreciated the increased speaking time, contrasting it with their usual classroom experiences, where oral interaction is scarce. This trend reinforces the potential of simulations as a tool for fostering speaking skills in EFL classrooms, where confidence often hinders verbal communication (Mejías, 2016).

2. **Realism and Learner-Centered Approach**: A significant number of students found the simulation's realism compelling. The scenarios were perceived as relevant to real-world situations, which enhanced their engagement and learning. This aligns with the findings of Chang et al. (2020), who argue that real-life contexts in simulations bolster students' confidence. However, some students initially experienced discomfort, highlighting the importance of supportive learning environments for overcoming speaking anxiety.

3. **Teacher's Role**: In contrast to traditional teacher-centered classrooms, the teacher's role in simulations was that of a facilitator, a shift that students appreciated. Responses confirmed the teacher's supportive and instructional role before and during the simulation, although a few students expressed a desire for more independence in their speaking tasks. This highlights the balance between facilitation and learner autonomy, crucial for effective speaking development.

4. **Motivation**: Motivation emerged as a recurring theme, with students contrasting the stimulation and engagement they felt during simulations with their usual English lessons. Several comments emphasized how the interactive, competition-based elements of the simulation fostered enthusiasm and focus, validating Dornyei and Clement's (2000) assertion that motivation is influenced by various factors, including teaching methods and the classroom environment.

5. **Teamwork and Confidence**: Many students underscored the value of collaborative work, noting how teamwork fostered a comfortable and supportive environment. Working with consistent teams over several sessions boosted confidence and reduced anxiety, corroborating Crisianita & and Mandasari's (2022) suggestion that small, stable groups facilitate relaxation and self-assurance in communication.

6. **Challenges and Limitations**: Some students expressed dissatisfaction with the limited preparation time, the complexity of the task, and difficulties applying certain grammar structures, such as modal verbs. These challenges highlight the need for adequate time for practice and better scaffolding, especially for tasks involving complex language structures. Furthermore, issues such as nervousness and pronunciation difficulties persisted, suggesting that while simulations offer a promising method for addressing speaking skills, continued practice and focused interventions are needed.

7. **Further Learning**: Despite improvements in speaking, students recognized ongoing needs, particularly in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The desire for more practice with content like modal verbs and vocabulary relevant to real-life scenarios indicates that simulations can serve as a valuable platform for addressing these gaps, as supported by Angelini & García-Carbonell (2019).

In conclusion, the qualitative data strongly support the quantitative findings, confirming that the simulation contributed to improved oral skills, increased motivation, and positive changes in classroom

dynamics. However, it also emphasizes the need for additional practice and more effective integration of language content, particularly grammar and pronunciation, in future simulation-based activities.

5. Limitations and future lines of research

Despite the relative success in the achievement of research objectives, the present study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration, as well as some future lines of research that successive research can adopt.

Firstly, the main limitation of this teaching intervention lies in its implementation, which was carried out over three full sessions lasting 55 minutes each. More extended time should be allocated to execute this proposal properly. Indeed, observations as well as students' perceptions, indicate that while the time devoted to the pre-teaching intervention was quite considerable, the time for the simulation phase was not sufficient. Accordingly, for future lines of research, extending the sessions to five, with three dedicated to the briefing phase and two devoted to the simulation, could offer a more expansive and constructive learning experience, consequently enhancing the final results.

Another noteworthy limitation is that proficiency level disparity among students was significant and, in many cases, disruptive. As seen in the results section, while many students reported feeling supported by their team members and felt a cooperative atmosphere despite the uneven proficiency level, many other students in the sample expressed that this significantly hindered participation and learning. Expanding on this limitation, an interesting research path would be to study learning strategies for multilevel learners to learn effectively and reach the same objectives.

Regarding the group in which the simulation was implemented, 4th of ESO, the deployment was highly satisfactory. However, once the results have been analyzed, it can be affirmed that the simulation is more effective with groups with an intermediate to a high level of English than with beginners or lower proficiency groups. There is no denying that further research and investigation

should implement this study with classes from the 4th year of ESO onwards, such as Baccalaureate. This would help make the simulation as effective as possible and make the research more complete. In addition, more extensive research regarding implementation strategies of simulation when working with lower proficiency levels could also be a question to be answered in the extant literature on simulation when adopted to second language acquisition.

It would also be appropriate to highlight the number of responses obtained from the survey, which was conducted at home individually as part of the debriefing. This decision was due to time constraints in class, as the aim was to do a reflective and exhaustive debriefing. Nonetheless, the results of this survey were not as expected, as out of a total of 65 students, only 37 responses were achieved. Indeed, these results could perhaps be altered slightly if the number of responses was higher. For future research endeavours, it would be advisable to allow enough time for students to undertake this part individually in the classrooms to ensure that the entire sample of findings is obtained.

Finally, it should be highlighted in this section that a division of opinion was observed regarding one of the survey items. The item aimed to evaluate the perceived difficulty of the simulation compared to other classroom activities. The results presented a mixed picture: while 33% considered the simulation no more difficult than other classroom activities, 40% disagreed entirely with this statement. The rest of the class (27%) were undecided about the statement. The hypotheses could be put forward regarding the group who thought that the simulation was challenging, which could be the novelty of the format, lack of preparation, or lack of knowledge acquisition. However, this is an area for which we did not gather data during this case study; many other factors, including individual characteristics of participants and structural issues related to the simulation design and implementation, could be influential in this regard. It is therefore recommended that future research explore these hypotheses and the reason for this disparity in opinion.

Despite the abovementioned limitations, the results obtained in the case study greatly encourage further research on the topic. However, an opportunity for future research could be

implementing this teaching intervention over a whole semester or even an academic year. In this way, researchers would be able to observe long-term outcomes and gather additional data. Moreover, the expansion of the study could reflect the effectiveness of the simulation in enhancing speaking skills over a more extended period, which is more in line with the natural development of productive skills.

5. Concluding Remarks

The present study sought to investigate the effectiveness of simulation and roleplay in enhancing secondary school students' speaking skills. Having had an opportunity to implement an action-oriented case study during three different sessions, it was possible to evaluate the impact of this approach on oral skills improvement and other variables that directly affected the students, such as their level of motivation or anxiety, among others.

Regarding the main objective, the research questions were successfully addressed as the results indicate a clear positive trend towards the effectiveness of simulation methodology and roleplay in secondary school students. Observations and survey outcomes show that the students demonstrated high engagement and motivation during the simulation process. In addition, an improvement in motivation, confidence and oral fluency in English with the same members of their team was also noticeable during the three sessions.

Nevertheless, some difficulties were observed in variables such as public speaking anxiety. Despite improving their communication skills through the simulation, many students still experienced certain levels of anxiety about speaking in public. Therefore, it would be necessary to apply more practice sessions in which students face realistic scenarios; this way, the effectiveness of the simulation would be improved, and consequently, anxiety among the students would be reduced. Furthermore, the results also showed that applying modal verbs and vocabulary about fears and

phobias was difficult during the first sessions. Still, there was significant progress and improvement in the simulation phase.

To conclude, while the findings are promising, it should be acknowledged that the results are subject to certain limitations, such as the lack of time, the limited scope of the study, and the differences in levels between students, thus highlighting the need for further research. Further research could be conducted with advanced-level groups or expanding the intervention to an entire semester or academic year to broaden the results of the study. In addition, it was also concluded that there was a disparity of opinions regarding the different views on the difficulty of the simulation, underscoring the need for further research. Moreover, the high levels of student motivation and engagement observed throughout the sessions suggest that simulation-based learning may align with principles outlined in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), particularly in supporting learners' autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Although this theoretical lens was not explicitly applied in the current study, it offers a promising direction for future research to deepen our understanding of the motivational mechanisms underpinning the effectiveness of simulation-based language learning.

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