



**UNIVERSIDAD LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE DE GUAYAQUIL
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
MENCIÓN - INGLÉS**

RESEARCH PROJECT:

**“PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION IN 40-50
YEAR OLD ADULTS LEARNING ENGLISH AT INSTITUTO TECNOLÓGICO
BOLIVARIANO”**

**PREVIO A LA OBTENCIÓN DEL TÍTULO DE:
LICENCIADO EN LENGUA INGLESA
ESPECIALIZACIÓN LINGÜÍSTICA Y LITERATURA**

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GUAYAQUIL – ECUADOR

2016

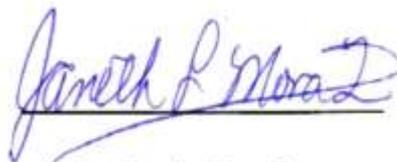
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Yo, Msc Janeth Mora Zapater, certifico que el Proyecto de Investigación con el tema: "Pedagogical strategies to enhance communication in 40-50 years old adults learning English at Instituto Tecnológico Bolivariano", ha sido elaborado por el señor JOHNN HENRY MELENDEZ ORELLANA, bajo mi tutoría y que el mismo reúne los requisitos para ser defendido ante el tribunal examinador, que se designe al efecto.

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ABSTRACT

Most Ecuadorian teachers are always looking for the best teaching methods, techniques, and strategies that can help students learn English as a foreign language.

Communicative language teaching activities have been considered an essential tool for this study, because they set as a main goal, the use of the foreign language in different contexts, so students could effectively develop their abilities in the target language, focusing on the oral expression and communicative interaction.

It is not only important to be aware of the grammatical rules, but students also need to face different language contexts, situations, and negotiate with meaningful codes at the moment of communicating.

On the whole, this research has taken as a sample, a group of students from Instituto Tecnológico Bolivariano who had problems in their oral production. In addition, they need to get involved in the process of communication during their English classes.

This project has proposed some CLT activities that adjust to the students' needs in order to promote a significant improvement in their oral proficiency. This research paper has also considered the advantages of developing communicative language teaching activities in class as an instrument to contribute with the development of new communicative strategies.

DEDICATION

Every work we do needs effort and sacrifice, as well as guidance and support of experienced and close people to reach a successful outcome.

My humble effort is dedicated to my family who have always been there and motivated me with their unconditional love to set higher targets, along with all hard work and respected teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, I would like to thank God who always shows me the way and gives me strength to continue working hard in every stage of my life.

I express my special gratitude to my parents and sister who assisted me and encouraged me to keep on the progress of this project. Even when it seemed to be impossible to accomplish, they were always there.

Guidance, valuable information and unconditional support were provided by the academic staff of Laica Vicente Rocafuerte University. I offer my sincere appreciation to these close people who helped me to develop and complete this project step by step.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Statement of the Problem.

When learners study a foreign language, it is not only important to understand the sentence structure of a specific grammar tense (Syntax), but also the meaning of any specific word or sentence (Semantics), as well as how to use the language in an appropriate context (Pragmatics), that allows learners to get involved in the process of communication.

It becomes increasingly difficult to ignore the fact that oral expression is the first ability human beings develop and learn to do naturally, through relationships as an essential activity of communication. Furthermore, it is completely necessary to know if students are engaged in a communicative learning process, and to identify which troubles they present, when they speak the foreign language.

Most studies on the field of teaching English as a foreign language mention that it is essential to develop the four language skills and their components. These language skills are part of communication, which is an encoding (speaking and writing) and a decoding process (listening and reading).

However, the key problem in academies is that most teachers often focus more on writing production and reading comprehension than on listening comprehension and oral expression, and the former skills are not enough when aspiring to meaningful teaching. It means that most teachers, especially teachers from secondary schools, are trained in traditional methods, such as Grammar Translation, Direct, and Audio-lingual, etc. So that, teaching English

as a foreign language (TEFL) still continues being developed as a task of repetitions, memorizations, and mechanical exercises for students. For this reason, students do not have a real interaction and spontaneous communication in class; in other words, traditional approaches and methods are not effective because they do not encourage students to work together on academic tasks.

As a consequence, many adult students from academies, with background problems (such as economical, emotional, psychological, etc.) do not develop enough communicative competences in the foreign language. The truth is that after a long period of learning English, most Ecuadorian learners still cannot use it effectively as means of communication.

It is estimated that in a class of fifty learners, fewer than ten have the appropriate level that is needed to understand, write, or speak the target language as part of their learning process.

This can be seen in the case of students who enroll in this nurse program at Instituto Tecnológico Bolivariano located at Padre Solano and Boyaca avenue, in the majority of cases, people from low social classes, who do not speak English in the classroom, restricting the development of their oral proficiency. English teachers' perception and attitude towards the communicative language approach play an important role to develop the students' four language skills.

This means that they have to work hard every day to be able to pay the tuition of the institution. They see the nurse career as an opportunity to have a better way of living. The classes are a mixture of ages, students who are very young and students who are up to 50 years old study together and they must

learn the same theories and they must acquire the same skills. There is a huge probability that the students who belong to the forty to fifty group, have never studied English before. Not even to know simple and common words and phrases like greetings or basic vocabulary. To make it more challenging; for the majority of them many years have passed for the last time they were required to study for a quiz or to read an article to complete homework. This tells us that their learning strategies and skills have been forgotten, and in the worst of the cases, they were never learnt.

In some cases their methodology is not effective. In addition, some teachers do not have professional competences, so it has become essential to know their perceptions towards communicative activities in relation to the students' oral expression difficulties.

Teaching children is something challenging for many teachers, since there are the multiple intelligences, and learning psychological disadvantages that have been discovered, but this group is constantly being investigated. The teachers receive constant training on how to handle this. Any problem that a teacher faces in the classroom has already been investigated and analyzed by experts. Teen and adults have a similar situation. English is a business so there are lots of people who invest money here. On the other hand, the background information and research data for this topic is limited, but what can be found is that there are researches like Clive A. Wilson who have studied how the brains of people over forty years old work. Clive proved that it is not impossible for old people to learn; what occurs is that their brains work in a different way. Clive A. Wilson mentioned something is extremely important in his book. *“No One is too Old to Learn”*

“New discoveries about the brain cause great excitement and noticeable changes in disciplines that have applied the new findings. Many of old believe have now proven to be myth”

Clive A. Wilson. (2006). None is too Old to Learn. United States of America. Universe

It is a general believe that old people do not learn at the same speed as a young person. But what might happen is that they just learn in a different way. This might be the reason why adults avoid starting new learning activities. Some of them might think that learning a new language at their age is not necessary. We can observe in adults of this age a problem of self-esteem, phrases such as “I am too old for this”, “why do I have to study English, if I am going to be a simple nurse?” are commonly heard when they are told to take English lessons. They are afraid; they believe that they are going to fail and they talk to the teachers to tell them to be patient with them. Also, they say things like “it has been more than fifteen years since the last time I had to study” As it is mentioned, there is a negative perception about the course. There are many probabilities about the low performance that adults from 40 to 50 years old present in class. It can be a problem of self-esteem, since they are old; they believe their time to learn has passed. It can also be a problem of time since many of them are parents and grandparents who need to work hard to help the family economy. There is also the probability that they do not want to learn due to a previous bad experience in their learning process.

During the process of the research project, through preliminary observations, certain classroom problems are noticed in this institution:

First of all, the classrooms are not in good conditions, due to the lack of maintenance staff and resources, which contribute to a not very comfortable teaching environment. Secondly, there is lack of basic materials for teachers such as: markers, computers, cd players, desks, and chairs. Another difficulty is the large amount of students, as well as, their low levels of English and background problems.

This impedes the achievement of effective learning objectives. The students of this institution present a passive role when they are asked about something. They have several difficulties in the production of the target language. Some of them have comprehension problems; others develop incorrect pronunciation, wrong vocabulary and hesitations. Additionally, the time they take to formulate or produce a complete sentence is another problem. The teacher spends so much time explaining, writing or talking about a topic, that he forgets that students need to practice the foreign language as much as possible.

In other words, there is no balance between teacher talking time (TTT) and student talking time (STT). This means that most of the time the teacher plays an overly active role and students are not given tasks to reach an effective and communicative use of the foreign language, in this case English. It is important to estimate what a real and effective class requires in order to increase students' oral expression successfully. Conversely, it seems that the methodology and strategies applied in the classroom are not meaningful and communicative at all, and just develop more reading and writing skills. Learners cannot practice and develop their speaking skills and that limits students' interactions and communication in the classroom.

This research takes CLT activities as a tool to promote meaningful and effective communication, related to real-life situations which bring an active interaction from the students in the target language. For instance, information gap, jigsaw, task-completion, information-gathering, and so on. All those CLT activities offer a development of certain required aspects to improve students' oral expression.

1.2. Objectives: Broad and Specific

1.2.1 Broad Objective:

To determine the causes of the slow learning process of students who are around 40 to 50 years old by using pedagogical activities and resources to have a successful learning experience.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives:

- Identify and select the most appropriate CLT activities for this group to improve students' oral expression
- Increase students' self-esteem, and reduce the tension in the subject group by teaching them to take part in regular classes and be successful there.
- Create extra activities for these students where there will be clear explanations and communicative exercises for them.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Nowadays, studying English is essential in most of the professional and educational fields in Ecuador. One of the most important reasons is to trade and establish relationships with foreign people. At the present time, English is considered as an international language. It is also considered a “lingua franca” all over the world. So, in this age of globalization, it is essential for every citizen to know how to speak English to stay connected with the world. People learn this language for several different reasons such as: to speak to foreigners, to know other cultures, to study abroad, to apply for better jobs, and to do business.

Students living in a target-language community need to use English to satisfy their immediate practical and social needs. The purpose of this research is to improve students 'oral production in English and increase their participation and interaction through different activities. The usage of the functional language, the strategies, techniques, approaches, and the social cultural environment should be considered when the students are involved in the process of communication. Additionally, the reasons why it is hard for them to speak the target language, and what communicative activities can help them to feel confident during the teaching process should be taken into account.

It is schools responsibility to give appropriate educational programs. They should include all the students no matter their disadvantages to learn. That is their mission since they are in the educational world.

“Universal design is ... an enduring design approach that originates from the belief that the broad range of human ability is ordinary, not special. Universal design accommodates people with disabilities, older people, children, and others who are non-average, in a way that benefits all users.” (OWP/P Architects, VS Furniture, & Bruce Mau Design, 2011, p. 200)

As we observe here. This is the philosophical view of school. Then, in an institute or university the concern about this topic should be higher. All the students that take part of these classes should be able to accomplish the institutional goal. He also mentioned that “this means another level of complexity”. Here is where this project will try to help. This project will try to give the teacher a resource to handle the classroom problems which are really common in English classes with adults whose ages are from forty to fifty.

As a result, teachers and students realize how practicing in class through these CLT activities can increase the students’ oral proficiency easily even if they have a low English level. On the other hand, if these CLT activities are not considered in the learning process, students will not be able to produce the foreign language in dialogues or conversations, and they will limit their functional usage of the target language just by writing or reading.

Furthermore, this project provides an opportunity for adult students to maximize their autonomous learning and improve other skills during the learning process. Also, the insights of English language teachers' attitudes and beliefs are considered in the application of CLT activities as an approach in the foreign language classrooms to enhance students’ oral expression.

1.3.1. Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This project focuses on the CLT approach and the activities that can help students from Instituto Tecnico Bolivariano located at Padre Solano and Boyaca Avenue, Guayaquil to practice and produce the target language orally. The purpose of this study is to determine if this theory and the CLT activities, such as jigsaw, role-plays, information – gap, and so on, are effective. In addition, it seeks to explain how pair and group activities improve the communicative process, what difficulties students face when they are speaking, and what issues they need to improve or master in order to develop their oral expression.

Another important factor that is considered is motivation; how the application of CLT activities can succeed in a nice, warm and democratic atmosphere, so students feel self-confident and motivated. On the whole, this study does not emphasize the development of the writing and reading skills. It does not focus on grammar structures and mechanic tasks either, since they are not relevant as part of this process.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Communicative Language teaching (CLT) activities have been proposed and applied to improve the quality of Teaching English as a Foreign Language. CLT theory has been considered the main theme in this research. The Communicative Language Teaching Approach has its main roots in the so-called "communicative movement" which has been influential in foreign language teaching since the early 1970s. There is nothing new, of course,

about the basic idea that CLT places emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.

The literature review begins with an overview of several researchers, linguists, and educators' points of view towards Communicative Competence, such as: Littlewood, Berns, Browns, Harmer, Savignon, Richards, Rodgers, Nunan, Jacob, Farrell, etc. who are pioneers in English Language teaching. They provide the background of communicative approach to the present day, in order to find the most successful methodology, pedagogical strategies or techniques that can be adjusted to students' needs, so learners are capable of developing and performing this foreign language in real situations.

In addition, a brief background of CLT history is presented and then is followed by different researchers' points of view. The second section of this chapter places emphasis on CLT as one of the most recent discoveries in methodology, within this framework, the definition and principles of CLT are explored. Moreover, this research paper provides a review of the existing literature in CLT theory related to the Ecuadorian educational reform. The concept of oral expression, speaking skills and their functions are analyzed, and some CLT activities are described during the practice of different didactic games.

2.2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Communicative Language Teaching views

Richards has classified trends in language teaching in the last 50 years into three phases:

Phase 1: Traditional approaches (up to the late 1960s)

Phase 2: Classic communicative language teaching (1970s to 1990s)

Phase 3: Current communicative language teaching (late 1990s to the present, p. 6).

CLT as a successful development approach has encouraged big changes to syllabus design, course design and methodology over the last 50 years. During the 1970s and early 1980s, there was an increased demand for language learning, particularly in Europe. Because of the large number of European migration, there was a mass of people who needed to learn a foreign language for work or for personal reasons. Foreign Language Teaching has been influenced by many changes that came out from the communicative approach, so a lot of secondary schools offered language learning in those decades between 1960s and 1970s as part of a general trend of curriculum changes and modernization.

In Britain, the introduction of meaningful teaching and comprehensive studying meant that all children had the opportunity to study foreign languages. “The communicative approach could be said to be the product of educators and linguists who were dissatisfied with the Grammar Translation, Direct, and Audio-lingual methods” (Richards, 2006). The researchers Zainuddin, Yahya, Morales & Whelan (2011), argued that “language ability involved much more than grammatical competence”, for example: the grammar translation method focused more on writing and reading skills. The main purpose of this method

was to translate and learn grammar structures, repeat vocabulary and verb conjugations, but students were not able to produce the language orally.

The teacher's role was authoritarian and the interaction between teacher–student was mechanic. Students spent more time translating, and here, interference between the mother tongue and the second language came out, students got confused during the application of the Grammar Translation Method .After that, the Direct Method was developed as a reaction against the Grammar Translation Method. The Direct Method appeared as a result of the observation of child language learning (Gouin).

In fact, the idea is that the foreign language should be learned in a natural way, the same way as the first language. Maximilian Berlitz states that classroom instruction was conducted in the target language; oral production was developed in question-and-answer tasks; grammar was taught inductively; teaching was conducted in speech and listening comprehension; correct pronunciation was emphasized. According to the Direct Method, a second language could be learnt exactly the same way as the first. However, this method had a disadvantage; misunderstandings were very common. The application of the Direct Method in the classroom required high language proficiency from the teachers and intensive oral interactions in the target language from the students.

Later, the Audio-lingual also called the Army Method appeared. World

War II armies needed to become orally proficient in foreign languages. This method was the first to be based on linguistic theory and behavioral psychology. One of its main characteristics was that, students listened to a dialogue with key structures and they had to repeat and memorize them. A meaningful aspect of the Audio-lingual Method was student-to-student interactions; grammar tenses and new vocabulary were presented through dialogues.

In this method, oral production was emphasized, grammar explanation was avoided, and the learners' mistakes were prevented by the teacher, translations were not permitted in the early level. It means that the target language was taught by systematic attention to pronunciation and intensive oral drilling. As a consequence, scholars, educators, and linguists felt that students were not learning effectively and the foreign language was not applied in real life situations because L2 learners did not know how to communicate using appropriate social language, gestures, and expressions.

One of the main features of this method is the following: The teacher's role is a primary source of language learning, so the teacher is a guide, who controls the language behavior of his or her students. On the other hand, the students' role is limited because they imitate the teacher's model as rapidly as possible, and they produce the target language as exactly as the teacher taught it. In brief, meaningful communication was lost in the learning process of the language studied, consequently an interest in the development of communicative teaching style started growing up in the 1970s; authentic language use and classroom cooperative learning encouraged students to negotiate meanings in real situations. At the present time, the communicative approach has been adapted to the elementary, middle, secondary, and post-

secondary levels. In planning language courses within a communicative approach, grammar was no longer the starting point; new approaches to language teaching were needed indeed.

Structural and Functional Combination in Communicative Approach

The Communicative approach is considered a successful teaching method, which uses the target language, as a means of instruction and communication. It is important for students to focus not only on grammatical contents in studying a foreign language, but also on the real conditions where they are going to use the target language during the process of communication. In particular, it makes us consider language not only in terms of its structures, for example, grammar and vocabulary, but also in terms of the communicative functions that it performs.

In other words, we begin to look not only at language forms, but also at what people do with these forms when they want to communicate with each other. For instance, 'why do not you close the door?' might be used for a number of communicative purposes, such as asking a question, making a suggestion or giving a command. As a result, this enables us to provide a fuller account of what students have to learn in order to use language meaningfully.

Functional View in Communicative Approach

One of the important aspects focuses on the functional use of language in context. They must develop different learning strategies for relating these structures to their communicative functions in real situations and real time. On the whole, we must provide students with ample opportunities to use the language for communicative purposes.

Berns' point of view in CLT

Berns an expert in the field of CLT defined a communicative competence that is appropriate for learners and requires an understanding of the socio-cultural contexts of language use. In addition, the use of varied methodology has to meet an understanding of socio-cultural differences in styles of learning. At this point, language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context. She also concluded that the Communicative Approach emphasizes meaningful communication in the EFL classroom, and uses different communicative activities where authentic communication takes place in both its linguistic and social or situational contexts.

Another similar view is: Communicative language teaching makes the principle of learning by doing, which means the varied authentic communicative activities that are applied in class. The teacher sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life. Unlike the Audio-lingual Method of language teaching, which relies on repetition and drills, the Communicative Approach can give students' specific outcome of a class exercise, in other words, it introduces the authentic text into the learning situation which will vary according to their reactions and responses. The real-life simulations change from day to day. Students' motivation comes through their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics.

Littlewood's point of view in CLT

The structural view of language concentrates on grammatical rules, describing ways in which linguistic items can be combined. On the other hand, the functional view shows knowledge of the potential communicative functions of linguistic forms and the ability to relate the linguistic forms to appropriate social-linguistic knowledge.

The most efficient communicator in a foreign language is not always the person who is best at manipulating its structures. It is often the person who is most skilled at processing the complete situation involving himself and his listener, taking into account what knowledge is already shared between them. In conclusion, since the relationship between forms and functions is variable, the speakers' utterances could have different meaning according to different circumstances, so CLT focuses on the speakers' communicative competences, when students have oral expression practice; they have to decode messages from different speakers and negotiate meaning, and finally interpret and produce the comprehensible meaningful message.

According to Littlewood in the Communicative Approach, "language teaching makes use of real-life situations. "For example, situations that learners are likely to encounter in real life that need communication. Thus, students are provided with ample opportunities to get involved in communicative events by using the target language. Hence, the activities are developed in order to promote self-learning, interaction in authentic situations, peer teaching, negotiation of meaning, completing tasks through language, etc., in the classroom.

Richards and Roger's point of view in CLT

Most language teaching today focuses on oral communication, CLT is not an exception, and it is developed by specification with different scholars. Richards and Rodgers defined the three elements that constitute a method: approach, design, and procedure.

- Approach refers to the beliefs and theories about language, language learning and teaching that underlie a method

- Design specifies how theories of language and learning are implemented in a syllabus model and teaching and learning activities and materials in the classroom
- Procedure concerns the techniques and practices employed in the classroom as consequences of particular approaches and designs.

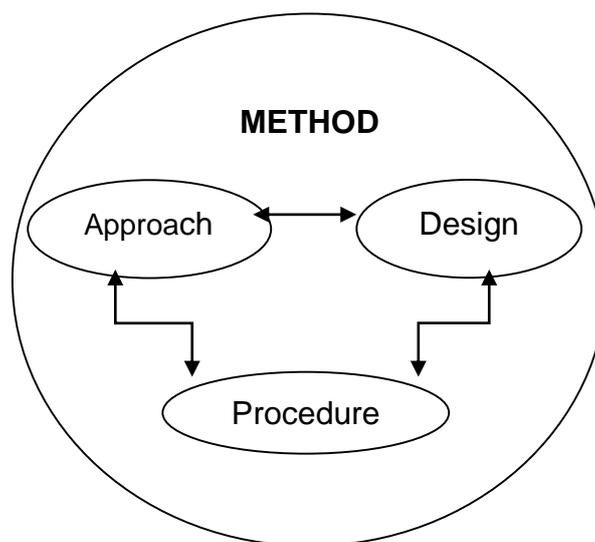


Figure. 1. "Concept of Method"(Richards & Rodgers, 1985, p.17)

CLT is a language teaching approach that emphasizes the communication of meaning rather than the practice of grammatical forms in isolation. The adoption of the principles of CLT brings innumerable exercise types and activities. These types of learning and teaching activities, considered to be some of the characteristics of CLT in practice, include learner-centeredness, focus on both meaning and linguistic forms in context, use of collaborative activities, promotion of authentic materials and of relevant and meaningful classroom activities. Richards& Rodgers stated that classroom activities are often designed to focus on completing tasks that are mediated

through language or involve negotiation of information and information sharing.

Approaches to teach speaking

Many language experts have been looking for the best approach to foreign language learning during years. Some believe in the old approaches, some welcome the use of current approaches to improve the teaching and learning process. The communicative approach has been widely designed and adopted by making a set of principles which match the goals of National English Curriculum Guidelines (2012). Communicative competence has the goal of foreign language teaching, and a communicative syllabus and methodology to achieve these goals. The following core assumptions underlie current practice of CLT.

- Native language is allowed as long as learners engage in interaction and meaningful communication.
- Learners negotiate meaning through the task, expand their language resources, and notice how language is used.
- Learning language is a gradual process involving creative use of language through practice and error. The goal of learning is using the new language fluently and accurately.
- Successful language learning uses communication strategies.
- The role of the teacher is a facilitator and learners learn through collaboration and sharing. (Richards, 2006)

Jeremy Harmer's point of view in CLT

Harmer stated that communicative language teaching stresses the significance of language functions rather than focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary. Nevertheless, there are recent findings cited by Harmer:

“Activities in CLT typically involve students in real or realistic communication, where the accuracy of the language they use is less important than successful achievement of the communication task they are performing. Plentiful exposure to language in use and plenty of opportunities to use it are vitally important for a student's development of knowledge and skill.”

Some successful CLT Activities are role plays and simulations. They are very popular in the classroom nowadays. An example of simulation could be a television program or a scene at an airport in which students create a real situation about the topic assigned. Later, they construct a real ask-answer dialogue and then they have to perform it in front of the class. Students must not think of themselves as students, but as real participants in the situation. On the other hand, role-plays are planned and conducted during the class by the teacher, in which students must take a specific role. For example they perform specific roles in a fairy tale, a scene of an action or romantic movie as well as a novel.

One of the purposes of the CLT activities that are mentioned above is to encourage students to communicate in the foreign language. Moreover, they should use it in a functional way rather than focusing on language structures, so the teacher should not interrupt the students during the activity, in other words his role is to facilitate the communication process. Additionally, the materials he prepares should not focus on specific grammatical patterns. Such activities should attempt to reproduce, create, and invent real communication.

Additionally, the materials he prepares should not focus on specific grammatical patterns. Such activities should attempt to reproduce, create, and invent real communication.

Harmer's Four Activities

Harmer gives four activities to promote the speaking skills. The first activity is an information gap in which two speakers have different parts of information, making up a whole. The second activity is called survey. The students can conduct questionnaires and surveys asking some questions about certain topics. They go around the class questioning other students and noting down what they say. The third activity is discussion. When the teacher conducts debates or discussion, he provides a specific conversation topic for a group of students who are encouraged to establish pro and cons about the principal idea.

The students should do some studies to figure out language inputs and facts about the topic. Finally, they can interact and feel comfortable participating in groups. The last activity is role play where the students are asked to imagine what they are in different situations and follow the plots.

Savignon's point of view in CLT

Savignon used the term communicative competence to describe the ability of language learners to interact with other speakers to negotiate meaning. Savignon&Wang (2003) referred that real communication is always informative, unpredictable, and unexpected. In order to teach real and meaningful communication in the class, the teacher must apply different strategies, for example, encouraging students to ask for information, using

different communicative activities in order to negotiate meaning and to speak in a functional way more than paying attention to grammatical structures. Therefore, the communicative approach is one of the most effective methods to teach English in this project.

Communicative Language Teaching Activities

Richards (2006) points out that “approaches to language teaching today seek to capture the rich view of language and language learning assumed by a communicative view of language”(p. 22). He also gives a brief explanation about the current tendencies in CLT. “Communicative Language Teaching today refers to a set of generally agreed upon principles that can be applied in different ways, depending on the teaching context, the age of the learners, their level, and their learning goals, and so on”.

This explanation gives the opportunity to take the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a tool and support to develop activities that can make teachers improve the quality of teaching and provide possible solutions to increase students’ oral expression. Some CLT activities such as information gap, jigsaw, information-transfer, information gathering are considered as part of this study. Teachers always need to innovate and apply different methodology, strategies and techniques to engage students, create a comfortable environment, get a meaningful teaching and learning in the classroom. So it is important that teachers keep a balance on the methods, strategies, and activities in order to maintain a class in an active interaction.

Additionally, CLT theory draws on a number of different educational paradigms and traditions. One of the important aspects of communication in CLT is the notion that students learn by interactions in groups or pairs, and the

classroom activities such as Information gap, Jigsaw, task completion, and role-plays involve real communication.

Thornbury's point of view

Many language learners consider that speaking is one of the first skills that should be developed, when they learn a foreign language. They regard oral production as an essential competence in terms of language learning and teaching. Thornbury (2005) suggests some activities to promote speaking. They are discussions and debates; drama, role plays, and simulations; presentations; classroom conversations and casual chats; outside-class speaking; and storytelling, jokes, and anecdotes.

Speaking involves three areas of knowledge which are mechanics, functions, and socio-cultural rules. This implies: using the right lexical items, the correct sentence patterns, and pronunciation; negotiating the meaning of the message, taking into account who is speaking to whom, and in what circumstances. Many teachers would agree that teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read outside the classroom, motivate students to talk spontaneously, they are good activities since they provoke the students to exchange information.

Presentations

Presentation is a planned talk that is arranged systematically. It can be done individually or in groups. It is usually followed by a question session which is its most challenging stage.

Classroom conversation and casual chats

Classroom conversation and casual chat are two different activities. Casual chat or talk is primarily interpersonal, unplanned communication, and tends to be natural since it is instinctual. But, not many students can speak naturally with their friends. Many teachers then organize conversation sessions in the classroom to encourage the students to speak English.

Outside-class speaking

Outside-class speaking consists of some activities done outside the classroom. These include tape diaries in which the learners record their voices and submit the recording to the teacher in order to get the feedback; video conferences in which the learners communicate via a live audio or video link over the internet; and human-computer interaction in which people talk by responding to written input like using chat room at MSN messenger and Facebook.

Storytelling, Jokes, and Anecdotes

Storytelling is a universal function of language and one of the main ingredients of casual conversation. Delivering jokes and anecdotes could be a funny exercise of speaking.

(Thornbury, S. 2005, p, 89-110)

Nunan's point of view

According to Nunan's point of view, fluency is the quality of expressing the foreign language easily, smoothly, and naturally. However, it does not mean that when the speakers speak fast they are fluent because sometimes pausing is important. Pause is an aspect of fluency which may be long but not frequent.

Moreover, when speaking fluently, speakers should avoid misunderstanding and be able to get the meaning of the message without taking into account grammatical patterns or other mistakes. Moreover, Nunan says that accuracy is related to the correct use of lexical, structural items and pronunciation.

Hemmer's point of view

In Hemmer "The practice of English Language Teaching" the teacher's role is defined in CLT. New language learners are easy to get lost or confused when they speak in public; they may feel nervous and may not think clearly. We can leave students to struggle out of such situations on their own, and indeed sometimes this may be the option to practice communicative competence by varied activities such as debates, discussions, simulations and role plays, etc. In addition, we may be able to help learners and the activity to progress by offering different suggestions. If this can be done correctly by the teacher, it will probably change the passive roles of students, and stop the sense of frustration and low motivation that some of them feel towards the foreign language. In this case, teachers should be good facilitators, motivators who help students to produce the language successfully.

Therefore, teachers have to work hard to create extra class activities, which are guided by specific objectives and are centered on speaking skills. When teachers activate the dialog with the students, TTT (teacher talking time) must be less than STT(student talking time), in other words, they should avoid being the protagonists during the discussion. They, as participants, could introduce the topic to facilitate the discussion, and they can enhance students' motivation, ensure continuous student engagement, and maintain a creative atmosphere. The teachers can participate in the classroom activities with the

students during the lesson if it is necessary.

For example, when a discussion is carried out, teachers can enliven inside the discussion as a member instead of always having to prompt or organize from outside the group. As an observer or monitor, teachers observe students' performances in order to give feedback. They can also evaluate the success of activities and materials during the teaching and learning process.

Brown's point of view

Brown (2004), states that teachers play an important role in language teaching. They may try to use various approaches to teach, and then select an appropriate approach which is suitable for their classes. It is necessary to connect teachers' experience during the teaching and learning process with the theory of teaching derived from research, so that it will help the teachers to comprehend when to use a certain technique, with whom it will work, how to adapt it for the students, and how to evaluate. He also suggests that teachers could use discussion activities which can promote some skills such as topic nomination, maintenance, and termination; attention getting, interrupting, floor holding, control; clarifying, questioning, paraphrasing, comprehension signals; negotiating meaning; intonation patterns for pragmatic effect; kinesics, eye contact, body language; and politeness, formality, and other sociolinguistic factors.

CLT in Ecuador

In Ecuador, the official language and the medium of instruction in the educational system is Spanish. At the present time, English is the only foreign language that is offered as a required subject at secondary levels of Ecuadorian education. The Ecuadorian government has changed the educational system

since 2009, and has encouraged the new policies that support and promote English teaching as a foreign language. The new National English Curriculum Guidelines (2012) states that the main objective of the secondary level of education is to improve the basic communicative skills of the learners through the integration of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing; so that learners can be engaged in successful communication in the target language.

As a result, the introduction of communicative language teaching was initiated when the English Language Teaching syllabus was revised to integrate Communicative Language Teaching into the curriculum. At the same time, the new National English Curriculum Guidelines was officially published in September, 2012 and it was implemented from grades nine to ten in basic general education and from first to third grades in high school students. However, these facts do not allow us to conclude that CLT is being implemented successfully in Ecuador.

The truth is that after a long period of learning English, most Ecuadorian learners still cannot use it effectively as means of communication. It is estimated that there are very few students who have the basic speaking skills to get a job that requires English such as: interpreters, tour guides, and English teachers. So that, CLT is very different from the traditional theories and practices in English as foreign language, and it is not surprising that, in some educational institutions, there is continuous resistance to the new changes proposed by the current English curriculum reform.

Additionally, students' English proficiency is low. They are not able to answer easy questions, and negotiate meaning or interact functionally in the

target language. The teachers' authority and students' passive roles, are the second obstacle to improve classroom interaction. Students are not in the habit of expressing their own points of view if teachers accidentally make mistakes, and learners cannot take part in simulated conversations. The third obstacle comes from the excessive number of students in Ecuadorian public schools. Such crowded classrooms do not permit English teachers to implement and develop communicative activities successfully. Moreover, students are in different proficiency levels and teachers cannot settle the needs of the students equally in class due to the limited numbers of teaching periods.

Ecuadorian Educational Reform, 2012

At the present time, English is becoming more and more essential for wide world communication. There is a growing need to communicate with others because of economic, social, and cultural reasons. It is not surprising then, to see the prevailing popularity of English as a foreign language in Ecuador. In 2009, the Ecuadorian educational system underwent a number of fundamental changes as a consequence of the *National Plan of Good Living* and the *Ten- Year Educational Plan* which are considered the guidelines for the educational reforms. All these changes came as a result of the *Ministry of Education Development Project*, which stated that education is the main tool to reduce poverty and to develop the country.

This project is also aimed at promoting effective English teaching in both public and private schools in the country. The main incentive behind this innovation also aimed to expose students to English longer than before through the implementation of communicative language teaching activities, so that they

can acquire it more successfully. VanDamme, Aguerrondo, Crespo & Campos (2013, September 10-12) cited by (Ministry of Education, 2012).

New laws for Education are based on four basic ideas:

- A. Contributions to the re-conceptualization of education as a right of individuals and communities,
- B. A profound change in the structure of the national education system,
- C. Strive to transcend the old paradigm of quality education and equal opportunities, to guarantee better learning for students,
- D. Revalorization of the teaching profession. (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador (2012). Marco Legal Educativo, Quito, Ecuador.)

National English Curriculum Guidelines

The Ministry of Education in Ecuador relates the English Curriculum Guidelines to the Common European Framework of Reference which take as its philosophy the Communicative Language Teaching approach.

The communicative competence components are involved through the development of the four language skills. However this research project focuses on the speaking skill as an essential matter of interest. So, the following charts specify this language skill in detail:

Speaking Production

A1 proficiencyLevel	A2 ProficiencyLevel	B1 ProficiencyLevel
Produce slow, hesitant, planned dialogues(i.e. communication still depends on repetition, rephrasing and repair).	Use a series of phrases and sentences linked onto a list to communicate in simple, routine tasks within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domains.	Sustain a straightforward description of a subject or a variety of matters within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domains rather fluently, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.

Speaking interaction

A1 ProficiencyLevel	A2 ProficiencyLevel	B1 ProficiencyLevel
Interact and participate in brief informal discussions in a simple way by asking and answering simple questions about the learners' personal, educational, and social background. Communication is dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing, and repair.	Handle very short social exchanges within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domains even though they can usually understand enough to keep the conversation going themselves.	Exchange, check, and confirm information to deal with less routine situations and explain why a problem has occurred. Enter unprepared into conversations on topics that are familiar, of interest, or pertinent to everyday life within the personal, educational, public, and vocational domain. A1

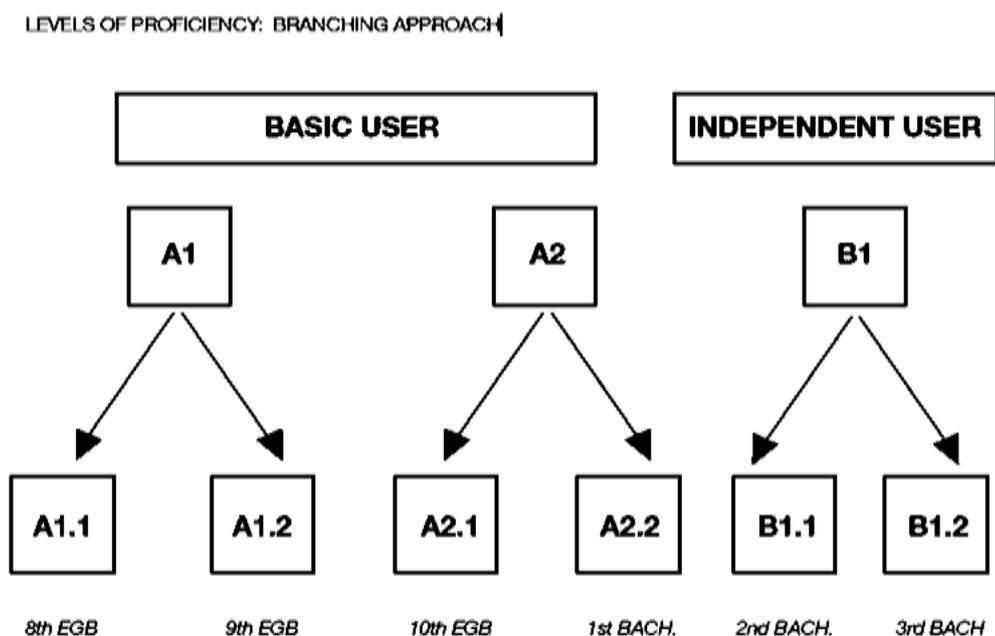
Chart. 1. Speaking production and interaction

Before the application of the new English National Curriculum, most Ecuadorian students graduated from high school with an A1 (elementary) or A2 (pre-intermediate) level of English. Over the next few years, the Ministry of Education expects all secondary students to get a B1 level (intermediate) as an exit requirement. The Ecuadorian government has considered the English Curriculum Guidelines (2012) to improve English teaching as a foreign language in Ecuador. In fact, the purpose of the Ecuadorian educational system is that students learn and speak the target language in order to interact and communicate in today's globalized world.

The main educational objectives of the current English Curriculum are based on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), which is an educational tool that offers guidance to language teachers. It facilitates assessment indicators for the language skills which are listening, writing, speaking, and reading. This educational resource has been taken by the government to improve EFL proficiency level. In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of research on Communicative Approach, which comprises theoretically well-informed set of principles about the nature of language and language learning and teaching.

Furthermore, in agreement with Richards and Rodgers (2001), The Ministry of Education set as a main objective of the present National English Curriculum Guidelines (2012) to help students develop their communicative language skills through the following principles: "Language is the system for the expression and the conveyance of meaning; the primary function of language is interaction and communication; and the structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses."(National English Curriculum Guidelines,

Ministry of Education, Quito, Ecuador 2012, p, 5) Six language proficiency levels have been proposed by the CEFR which are A1-A2 for basic levels; B1-B2 for independent users; and C1-C2 for proficient users of the language.



Adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment, by the Council of Europe, 2003.

Figure. 2 Level of proficiency and their application per school year (Ministry of Education in Ecuador, National English Curriculum Guidelines,2012, p.7)

This research project has as a main philosophy to include and implement the CLT activities in teaching English as a foreign language to make students deal with basic situations where they can speak and be exposed to the target language in order to develop their oral proficiency. According to: (Ministry of Education in Ecuador, National English Curriculum Guidelines,2012, p.1-8), the

new curriculum requires skilled teachers who are able to meet the needs of students.

One major implementation that took place had to do with the curriculum of education faculties. Education faculties placed more emphasis on the teacher training courses, and they upgraded the quality of pre-service teacher training programs, and teacher training departments were reshaped, increasing the number of methodology courses, as well as extending the teaching practice component to include both primary and secondary schools. The present National English Curriculum Guidelines (2012, p. 9-30) lays out a detailed description of the goals and objectives for each grade, which are given with their corresponding structural items.

The lessons are organized around different themes (History and Famous Places) that are illustrated with topics (museum, sculptures, art galleries, and shopping tourism), vocabulary and writing (describing towns and cities), skills to be acquired (listening for specific information, reading for general understanding), context (inter-personal dialogue, dramatization), language functions (booking a flight or asking for direction), and sample tasks and/or projects (creating flyers for historical places) to be carried out in class.

This curriculum mainly follows a functional-notional and skill-based syllabus. It also details the linguistic and communicative competence that students are expected to have acquired when they complete each grade level. At the present time, English is one of the main subjects in secondary levels of education in Ecuador. Five weekly class periods have been legally established for English classes for every school since 1993, and students receive and attend 45 minutes per class.

The new curriculum change has allowed students in every school year at least 120 hours per year (real time). Therefore, they will complete the B1 level for this curriculum change, and learners will have been exposed to at least 480 hours of English. (National English Curriculum Guidelines, Ministry of Education, Quito, Ecuador 2012, p.8)–Otherwise, most private schools tend to increase the number of periods in English teaching. For example, Kindergarten students start with three English periods a week, and the other grades have at least five English periods, or more in order to allow students to learn the target language much faster than their peers in public schools. Also, regular state schools are required to adopt the English course books that are locally prepared and approved by the Ministry of education. (Marco Legal Educativo, Quito, Ecuador, 2012)

Oral Expression-Type of classroom speaking performance

In designing speaking activities or instructional materials for foreign language teaching, it is necessary to recognize the different functions speaking performs in daily communication and the different purposes for which the students need speaking skills. According to Brown (2001), there are five types of speaking performances: they are imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive. In imitative speaking performance, learners imitate a word or phrase or possibly a sentence. The purpose of imitation is not for meaningful interaction but for focusing on some particular elements of language form. Drilling is a good example of imitative speaking performance.

An intensive speaking performance is related to the production of short stretches of oral language to demonstrate specific competences such as grammatical, phrasal, lexical, or phonological. Responsive speaking

performance is linked with short replies which does not extend into dialogues, for example standard greetings, simple requests and comments etc.

The last speaking performance is extensive (monologue). Extensive oral production can be in the form of reports, summaries, and speeches. It can be planned or impromptu.

Micro- and Macro-skills of Speaking

Brown distinguishes between micro-skills and macro-skills of speaking. The micro-skills refer to small elements in language producing such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocations, and phrasal units. The macro-skills imply the speaker's focus on the larger elements: fluency, discourse, function, style, cohesion, nonverbal communication, and strategic options. Brown (2004) continues to detail micro- and macro-skills of oral production as quoted below:

a) Micro-skills produce:

1. Differences among English phonemes
2. Chunks of language of different lengths.
3. English stress patterns, words in stressed, rhythmic structure, and intonation contours.
4. Reduced forms of words and phrases.
5. An adequate number of lexical units (words) to purposes.
6. Fluent speech at different rates of delivery.

Micro- skills also:

7. Monitor one's own oral production and use various pauses, fillers, self-corrections, backtracking to clarity of the message.

8. Use grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs etc.), system (e.g. tense, agreement, and pluralization), word order, patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.
9. Produce speech in natural constituents: in appropriate phrases, and sentence constituents.
10. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.
11. Use cohesive devices in spoken discourse.

b) Macro-skills

1. Appropriately accomplish communicative functions according to situations, participants, and goals.
2. Use appropriate styles, registers, implicatures, redundancies, and conversation rules, floor-keeping, yielding, interrupting, and other sociolinguistic features in face-to-face conversations.
3. Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as focal and peripheral ideas, events and feelings, new information, generalization, and exemplification.
4. Convey facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language.
5. Develop and use a battery of speaking strategies, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, providing a context for interpreting the meaning of words, appealing for help, and accurately assessing how well your interlocutor in understanding you.

Activities to Improve Oral Expression

The following activities are designed to help the students in learning to express themselves in more definite patterns and with some degree of variety.

ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE ORAL EXPRESSION

TEACHER'S ROLE	STUDENTS' ROLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tells a simple story.- Shows and describe some pictures or objects in detail.- Encourages students by asking questions.- Plays with words.- Says opposite of words.- Uses sentences to students interact.- Speech games.- Adverb games.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Retell the story.- Describe pictures and objects.- Use precise language to answer.- Guess what teacher says.- Develop complete sentences.- Interact and use precise language to speak.- Use verbs and adverbs.

(Stanislaus County-office of Education: handout)

Chart 2. Activities to improve oral expression: Teacher's role and Students' role

2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research paper is based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach in order to improve EFL students' oral expression. There are some theoretical issues which allow the researcher to compare the study's findings. The researcher is interested in the most relevant CLT activities for students at Instituto Tecnológico Bolivariano. It is known by current research that these activities provide an opportunity for students to practice and improve their oral production; they feel motivated to talk to each other, and share their ideas, thoughts or interests.

In fact, teachers can pay more attention to improve fluency and pronunciation aspects as well as design communicative and interactive lessons. In addition, researchers and L2 teachers are always interested in finding innovative ways to make students speak as much as possible. As Chapter 2 has presented, the learning process of English as a Foreign Language involves the development of

the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and their components: grammar, vocabulary, phonology, phonetics, and orthography. They are very essential components for learners to develop.

Nowadays, the Ministry of Education has paid attention to the curriculum reform in English Language Teaching and Learning. So it has aligned the National English Curriculum Guidelines (2012). It sets as a principal method the Communicative Language Teaching related to the standards of the Common European Framework Reference tool, which provides specific indicators for Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador. Nevertheless, recent findings are given more importance to the quality of the communicative language learning process itself. Because of this issue, this study has placed more emphasis on the development of oral proficiency than the others skills.

Chapter one has also mentioned students' problems, such as: poor communicative ability, low motivation in class, and an overemphasis on the study of grammatical structures as the main purpose of teaching English as a foreign language. As a result, students' oral production is limited. Moreover, Communicative Language Teaching activities can help students learn in a meaningful way in real-life situations, also it is necessary to emphasize on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.

Speaking is one of the most important language skills that should be developed by students. Ideally, in this process, students have to be given more opportunities to practice the target language and produce it orally. Moreover, they have to be able not only to speak English fluently, but also to develop their accuracy. That means: to pronounce phonemes correctly, to use appropriate

stress intonation patterns, and to use the target language in different situations or contexts.

In addition, students enjoy working in pairs or groups through didactic games and CLT activities such as: information gap, jig saw, dialogues, monologues, discussions, drama, role plays, etc. Through these activities, students interact and socialize in the target language with a specific purpose: to improve their oral proficiency. The University of Texas at Austin offers a variety of CLT activities that could be implemented by English teachers. (<http://coerll.utexas.edu/methods/>) According to some literature about CLT approaches to improve students` oral proficiency, the conceptual framework can be described as follows:

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method

Theory of language

Language refers to the communication purposes and linguistic competence, additionally, communicative competence implies the knowledge of social and discourse norms, which includes the knowledge of forms and meaningful interaction. Hymes defined: "communicative competence not only as an inherent grammatical competence but also as the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations, thus bringing the sociolinguistic perspective into Chomsky`s linguistic view of competence".(Jelena Mihaljevie D., Definition of Communicative Competence, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Osijek p.95)

Communicative Competence is identified with four dimensions:

- Grammatical competence which is related to grammatical and lexical items.
- Sociolinguistic competence that involves social contexts in which communication takes place.
- Discourse competence which interprets people's meaningful messages in a discourse.
- Strategic competence that has to do with the use of the target language by learners in order to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication.

Communicative Competence includes the following aspects of language knowledge:

- The use of the foreign language for different purposes and functions.
- The variation of the use of the target language according to the time, place and people who participate in that communicative process.(knowing when to use formal and informal speech, and when to use language appropriately either in written form or spoken communication)
- The production and comprehension of different kinds of texts.(Narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)
- The ability to keep the communication process in spite of the students' language difficulties and limitations.
- Social interaction and functional communication are the main development in this competence.

Theory of learning

It promotes activities that involve real communication and which language is used for meaningful tasks. Students learn the language in a functional way. Additionally, an alternative learning theory involves both cognitive and behavioral aspects:

- Cognitive attributes plans in the language system such as grammatical rules, vocabulary, and social interactions dominating speech for creating appropriate behavior.
- Behavioral refers to the control of the language system plans so they can be developed in a performance fluently in real time.

Teacher's role

Teachers should perform different roles when teaching English as a foreign language. Richards proposes two roles that must be played by teachers in communicative classrooms: facilitator and monitor. A facilitator means being a prompter, counselor, and guide. When teachers take the role of facilitators or prompters, they occasionally provide key words and phrases. It happens when students lose their fluency, so it will decrease the sense of frustration when some of them have difficulties to convey meaning. Teachers need to be sensitive and sympathetic, but without losing students' initiative.

As counselors, teachers are not only a good source of information for students, but also they could give advice to them about learning English in the best possible way or overcome their difficulties in any specific language skill. As guides, teachers combine the roles of prompters and counselors. Teachers work with individuals or small groups giving general guidance, and one thing

that should be taken into account is that teachers should not interfere too much because it can block the learners' autonomy.

As observers or monitors, teachers watch carefully their students' performances in order to give feedback. Teachers also judge their students' language proficiency and success of teaching strategies, activities and materials during the teaching and learning process. Another important role at the CLT class is that teachers must be good models. They do not only teach how to speak well, but also inculcate values.

Students' role

In CLT classrooms, the learners are active participants in their learning process. The methods, strategies and techniques are student-centered. As a result, students should play several roles in order to learn the target language appropriately. For instance, negotiators. Breen and Candlin describe this specific role in the following terms: The role of learner as negotiators - between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning- emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes. The implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way.

Another important role is collaborator; learners have to participate in classroom activities that are based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Students have to collaborate with their peers in group work or pair work tasks. During a cooperative task in group work, students are assigned specific roles as a pedagogical strategy in order to overcome their communication difficulties and succeed in their classroom activities.

The lists of roles described below are intended to be representative in a group activity.

- **Leader/Editor:** This student is responsible for organizing the final result of the task, be it a paper, a presentation, etc. He has to make sure that the project meets the standards set out by the instructor (often as a rubric), plus any extras stipulated by the group.
- **Recorder/Secretary:** This learner takes notes whenever the group meets and keeps track of group data/sources/etc. He or she provides these notes to the rest of the group highlighting sections that are relevant for the project.
- **Checker:** This is a member of the group who double-checks data, bibliographic sources, or graphics for accuracy and correctness.
- **Spokesperson/Press Secretary/Webmaster:** This learner is responsible for the technical details of the final result and has to be ready to summarize the group's progress and findings to the instructor and to other groups.

Possible Discussion Roles

- **Facilitator/Encourager:** This student keeps moving frequently by asking the other group members questions about what they've just said.
- **Timekeeper:** A member of the group who needs to make sure that the members of the group use an average amount of material in the given time period.

- **Summarizer:** This student gives a summary of the discussion for other students to approve.
- **Reflector:** A member of the group listens to what others say and explain it back in his or her own words, asking the original speaker if the interpretation is correct.
- **Elaborator:** This student looks for connections between the current discussion and past topics or overall course themes.

(<http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/cooperative/roles.html>)

Instructional Materials

A wide variety of materials can be used in Communicative Language Approach. These educational tools are seen as a way of influence on classroom interaction and target language use. Three kinds of materials are considered in CLT:

- **Text-based:** text book; supports, evaluates and has a sequence of language practice. In fact, this research takes into account the English textbook provided by the Ministry of Education which is related to the Communicative Approach.
- **Task-based:** variety of didactic activities adjusted to the textbook or students' interests. Eg. Role-plays, simulation, information gap, etc.
- **Realia:** authentic tools and real resources in the classroom. Eg. Pictures, magazines, maps, signs, charts, etc.

CLT paradigm

Jacob and Farrel suggest that the CLT paradigm has the following eight main changes in approaches to language teaching:

1. **Learner autonomy:** Students have the choice to learn by their own, both in terms of the content of learning as well as processes they might play.
2. **The social nature of learning:** Learning is a social activity that depends upon interaction with others.
3. **Curricular integration:** The connection between different strands of the curriculum is emphasized, so that English is linked to other subjects in the curriculum.
4. **Focus on meaning:** Meaning is viewed as the driving force of learning. Content-based teaching seeks to make the exploration of meaning through content the core of language learning activities.
5. **Diversity:** Students learn in different ways. Teaching needs to take these differences into account rather than trying to force students into a single mold.
6. **Thinking skills:** In TEFL, students do not learn a language for its own sake but in order to develop and apply their thinking skills in situations that go beyond the language classroom.
7. **Alternative assessment:** New forms of assessment are needed to replace traditional multiple-choice and other items that test lower-order skills. Multiple forms of assessment (e.g., observation, interviews, journals, portfolios) can be used to build a comprehensive picture of what students can do in a foreign language.

8. **Teachers as co-learners:** The teacher is viewed as a facilitator who is constantly trying out different alternatives, i.e., learning through doing. In language teaching, this has led to an interest in action research and other forms of classroom investigation.

CLT classroom activities

Communicative language teaching uses a lot of activities that engage learners in authentic communication. Functional communication activities and social interaction activities are always involved. Functional communication activities have as purpose that students use what they know about the target language in order to get meanings as effectively as possible. It involves mainly the sharing and processing of information. On the other hand, social interaction activities focus on the social contexts that the interaction takes place. Simulations and role-plays techniques are one of the most important to create a lot of social situations and relationships that can occur in the learning process.

Functional Communication vs Social Interaction

Functional Communication activities	Social interaction activities
Learners compare sets of pictures and note difference.	Conversation sessions.
Learners work out a sequence of events.	Dialogues and role - plays/Simulations.
Learners solve problems using shared clues.	Debates.

Chart 3. CLT main types of activities: Functional communication and Social interaction

Accuracy as well as Fluency

Accuracy and fluency are two important elements in CLT. Fluency is defined using spontaneous meaningful oral expression during a dialogue whether the grammatical patterns are used correctly or not. Accuracy means, using the right words in the sentence pattern with the right order, correct pronunciation, negotiating the meaning of the message, accuracy is reached by teacher's methodological instruction with guided practice. (Richards, 2006). Fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which students must negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings, and work to avoid communication breakdowns.

The differences between activities that focus on fluency and those that focus on accuracy can be summarized as follows:

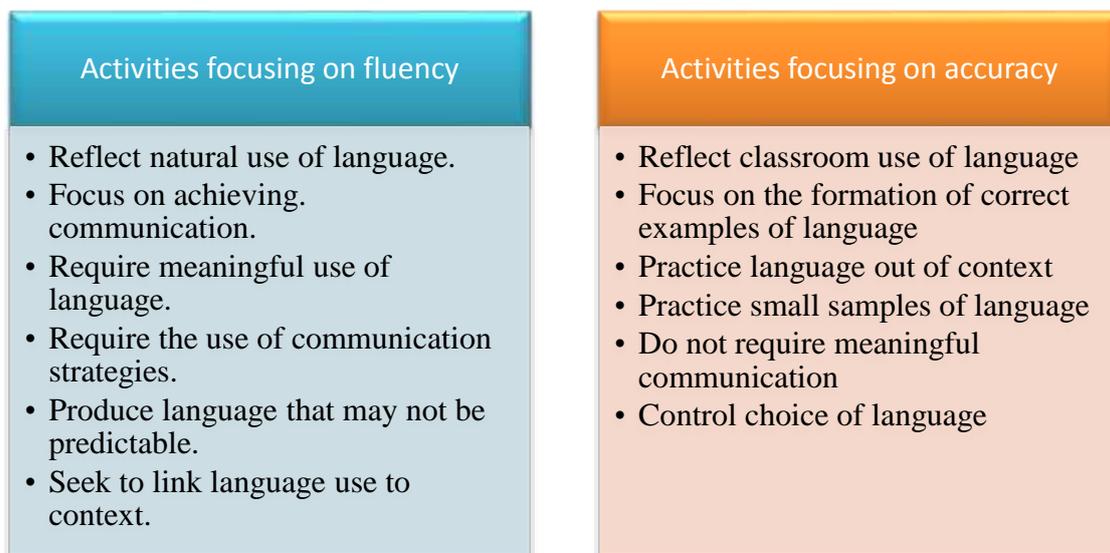


Chart 4. Activities focusing on fluency and accuracy (Richards, 2006, p. 13-14)

It is important for teachers to understand the different types of oral activities in foreign language teaching as well as the different goals of them. The goal of communicative activities is that students use the target language by interacting in pairs and groups as part of the communication process.

CLT Activities:

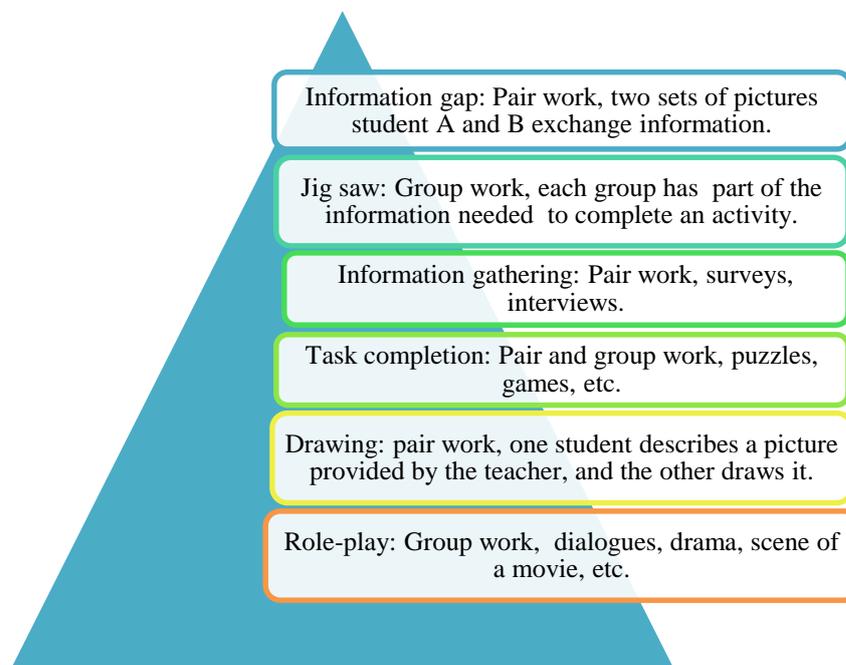


Figure. 3. Features of the most common CLT activities.

Advantages of CLT activities

- Use language as means of communication. Students have more opportunities to speak rather than writing in the target language.
- Object of learning by working in pairs or groups. Students get involved in the process of communication and interact with their classmates.
- Expression of meaning.
- Focus on interactions and use of the target language. Students are able to produce it naturally.
- Focus on meaningful tasks. Students learn through didactic activities with specific communicative purposes.

Disadvantages of CLT activities

- The communicative language teaching focuses on the use of the target language in functional aspects, but less on the grammatical structures. So students could limit their writing skill.
- Emphasis on learner's interest and needs implies that every teacher should modify the syllabus and adjust the content and activities to the students' needs.
- Not all classrooms are in the best conditions for group work activities and for teaching aids and materials.
- Pair and group work activities can limit certain students. It is possible that some of them are not accustomed to practice the target language in that way or they just feel uncomfortable or shy to share what they know with others.

2.4 Research questions

Can students learn from listening to the language used by other members of the group?

Is their motivational level likely to increase after applying CLT?

Will they have the chance to develop fluency due to CLT activities?

What could be the most appropriate CLT activities to improve students' oral expression?

What are some advantages or disadvantages of pair and group work in the learning process?

2.5. Hypothesis

The application of CLT activities will develop students' oral expression in the target language.

2.6. Variables and indicators

CATEGORY	VARIABLE	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS	INSTRUMENTS
Independent	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities	CLT place as its goal the teaching of communicative competence; it means the use of the language according to the setting and participants, how to produce and understand the different types of texts, and how to keep communication even with limitations in one's language knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers' academic preparation. - Teachers' proficiency in the foreign language. - Teachers' strategies - Students' perceptions about learning a foreign language - Interaction between students and teachers. 	Interview Questionnaires Observation form

CATEGORY	VARIABLE	DIMENSION	INDICATORS	INSTRUMENTS
Dependent	Oral expression	Oral Expression is the ability to relate wants, needs, thoughts, and ideas meaningfully using appropriate syntactic, pragmatic, semantic, and phonological language structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students' ability to communicate and interact in the target language. - Students' weaknesses in oral expression. - Students' strengths in oral expression. 	Pre test Post test Rubrics

2.7 Definition of terms

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

CEFR gives a basis for the development of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc., across Europe. It details what learners have to learn in order to communicate by using a language and what knowledge and skills they need to develop to act precisely.

Automaticity

Language is subconsciously acquired by children. Through an inductive process of exposure to language input and opportunity to experiment with output, languages appeared to be learnt without thinking about them.

Language Competence

It is a person's unconscious knowledge of the rules conducting the information of speech in their mother tongue. Also, it is the ability to use the knowledge in order to interpret and produce the target language. Linguistic, Grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic or sociocultural are components in terms of language competence.

Approach

It is a group of theories that deals with the nature of language, learning and teaching.

Method

Richards & Rodgers state that method is referred to "methodology", which is a generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives.

Techniques

Specific activities developed in the classroom in order to accomplish the objectives of the lesson plan, which is related to the method in harmony with an approach.

Meaningful Learning

It occurs when new information is related to the existing structures and memory systems. It makes better retention than rote learning in which new information is learned by memorization or repetition.

Teachers can prevent the dangers of mechanical learning such as too much grammar explanation, abstract principles and theories, repetition and memorization; activities with unclear purposes which do not contribute to accomplishing the goals of a lesson, chapter, or course; and techniques that are so rote that students get their attention on the mechanics without regarding on the language or meanings.

Language Ego

Language ego can be fragile, defensive, and inhibited because learners learn the foreign language as a second identity, a new mode of thinking, acting and feeling. Teachers should provide more attention to students who have those feelings. Teachers can show a supportive attitude to students. They can also help their students to realize that this uncertainty of establishing the second identity in the second culture is a common and natural issue.

Self-confidence

Self-confidence or self-esteem is a learners' belief that they can finish the task, it is one of the factors in their later successes in completing the task. Teachers should give positive support to learners. In addition, it is a good idea to order techniques from the easiest to the most difficult.

Motivation

As its most basic level, motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something. As Douglas Brown points out, "a cognitive view of motivation includes factors such as the need for exploration, activity, stimulation, new knowledge, and ego enhancement."(Brown, 2006, 160)

In discussions of motivation an accepted distinction is made between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, that is motivation which comes from outside and from inside.

Extrinsic motivation

It is caused by any number of outside factors, for example, the need to pass an exam, the hope of financial reward, or the possibility of future travel.

Intrinsic motivation

By contrast, it comes from within the individual, thus a person might be motivated by the enjoyment of the learning process itself or by a desire to make themselves feel better.

2.8. SUMMARY

This chapter deals with the background information about CLT history, and different points of view and opinions of those researchers; and linguists who contributed to the development of this theory. This chapter also tells about the evolution of teaching English as a foreign language from some traditional methods such as grammar translation, direct, and audio-lingual to a new approach: Communicative Language Teaching. Furthermore, this chapter focuses on the speaking skill and its most important components, which need to be, improved through these CLT activities.

This theory is a support for the teachers who can lead students' group and pair work activities through didactic games like information gap, jig saw, drama, role play, etc.; in such a way they can enjoy learning English. Moreover, the current CLT activities establish main aspects such as mechanical, meaningful, communicative practices used in the classroom. CLT places emphasis on the

quality of the “communicative language learning process” itself. Because of this issue, the teacher focuses more on speaking rather than the other language skills. This research project proposes different valuable CLT activities that can be applied in the classroom, and motivate students in a real and communicative environment for an optimistic development of the students’ oral expression.

Through CLT activities, students work together in an interactive environment, improving their oral expression, and creating a positive impact on their vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation. Working in pairs or groups help the students learn English effectively. So that, they have more chances to practice speaking with their classmates.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

3.1. Methods and Techniques

In this research a quantitative and qualitative study design were employed to obtain relevant and reliable data. This mixed methodology provided a more holistic picture on oral expression skills from Class N-29 at Instituto Tecnico Bolivariano. Mixed methods research involves the integration of the data, one or more stages in the process of research. Moreover, a quantitative and qualitative approach provided a broader perspective to the study. The qualitative data helped describe aspects that quantitative data could not address. Using both methods allowed researchers to generalize results from a sample to a population (quantitative) and to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of interest (qualitative).

This project was developed through observation before, during, and after the application of CLT activities; surveys were given to students; interviews were

administered to English teachers. Students were evaluated by a pre-test and a post-test that allowed the researcher identify students' oral expression problems (pre-test) and know how effective was the application of CLT activities to improve students' oral expression skill (post-test). These techniques allowed the researchers to obtain concrete data on: a) the ability of the students before and after the application of the CLT activities as the independent variable of this study, and b) the number of students who shared certain feelings, perceptions, and beliefs regarding English language teaching.

Observation

Through this technique, the methodology and the teacher's performances were analyzed and evaluated to determine if they were appropriate. The students' role and the interaction that they showed in the classroom was also analyzed. So, the researcher identified causes that this type of difficulty brought in students' oral expression and what kinds of methodology or activities were effective to make students communicate and interact spontaneously.

Interview

This technique allowed the researcher to get important information about two issues 1) teachers' experience and performance with this group of students, and 2) teachers' perceptions of how the students from this institute learned and internalized English as a foreign language.

Survey

Surveys were given to the sample group of students with different ages: they were around 19 to 50 years old. This technique let the researcher know about the students' difficulties, perceptions and preferences about learning English.

Pre -test and Post-test

Both tests were based on an evaluation rubric that provided the results of these groups of students before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the application of the CLT activities.

The pre-test provided valuable information about the main difficulties students had in developing their oral expression and made possible to establish specific parameters, students needed to fulfill in listening comprehension and oral expression.

The post-test was given to determine if the application of the CLT activities was effective and what CLT activities were the most relevant to students to improve their oral proficiency.

Procedure of the Research Study

The following steps were taken during the course of the research study. First, interviews were held with students from Class N-29 at Instituto Tecnico Bolivariano. It is important to mention that the interviews were conducted twice, before and after the procedure of the CLT activities. The teachers were interviewed individually and privately before class for about 20 minutes each. The researcher took notes gathering the teachers' responses because there was not a tape recorder. Questions about their experiences with the students were asked, in addition, to questions about their methodology and classroom management.

After that, observations were carried out in the group. The group was observed once before, during, and after the application of the CLT activities. Observation was done with a checklist that asked for specific information such

as planning, interaction, teacher's proficiency, classroom management, activity types, and materials. The observation lasted about 20 minutes of the class. During the observation, the researcher paid attention to students' oral expression, class participation, the teachers' methodology, and class activities.

Next, a survey was applied to Class N-29. This survey was composed of informative items, presented in two sections: the first section about the students' perceptions of learning English and the second section was about the students' preferences in learning English. The results supplied information regarding to the students' opinions about their own ways of thinking and their difficulties in learning English. Some questions, based on students' criteria, helped to design and develop didactic activities, for example, information gap, jig saw, and task completion.

Then, a pre-test was applied. This test helped measure and evaluate students' oral expression before the application of the independent variable of this study: Communicative Language Teaching activities. The pre-test was given as an interview to evaluate students' speaking ability in class. Each individual interview took approximately 5 to 6 minutes per student. Once the researchers knew the main difficulties students faced, the application of the CLT activities such as jigsaw, information gap, role-plays, and task completion were carried out in Class N-29. This study took four CLT activities that were already mentioned in Chapter 2. During this step, students were asked to participate in groups or pairs depending on the activity assigned by the teacher. These activities took around 10 or 15 minutes according to the topic and textbook content.

Finally, the post-test was applied after the implementation of CLT activities. The results of the post-test were acquired and analyzed with a statistical package. Graphical and statistical exploratory analyses were applied.

All these data provided valuable information that led this study to precise: a) Which CLT activities were more useful and applicable in teaching English as a foreign language in order to improve students' oral expression, and b) The impact of the application of CLT activities on the students' oral proficiency.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that both tests (pre and post-tests) were based on evaluation rubrics. These evaluation rubrics were detailed in 5 components of speaking (comprehension, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and accuracy) that measured the level these students had, and the difficulties they faced when they produced the target language orally. During the procedure of this quantitative data collection, an Excel program was required in order to get and detail the results from the surveys and evaluation rubrics (pre and post-tests).

In this study, the treatment given was applying communicative language teaching activities in order to improve oral expression. In the next sections, the data collection instruments and the data population characteristics are described in detail.

3.2. Research population and sample

This project was carried out at Instituto Tecnico Bolivariano. The researcher took a population of 40 students from Class N-29 that had an English level between A1 and A2, according to the Common European Framework.

This population was chosen because of the availability the researcher had to carry out the project in this institution and the need to know why most of the students from this institution present speaking problems at the age around 40 to 50 and how it could be possible to make these students improve their oral proficiency. It was necessary to emphasize that the researcher took this amount of students because of the reliability that could contribute to this research. Students were between 18 and 50 years old. The researcher interviewed teachers from the institution to have previous knowledge of their experience with this type of students, and find the problems they were facing during the learning process of English.

3.3. Research Instruments

This study was developed through a survey, a teacher interview guide, an evaluation rubric, lesson plans, and computer programs as instruments to gather reliable data and support this research in order to make adult students participate more and improve their oral expression through CLT activities in class.

Survey: It was composed of 18 informative items, presented in multiple choice formats. Furthermore, 3 or 4 choices per question were considered in order to evaluate the students' opinions about their own ways of thinking, studying, learning English and their possible difficulties, so the researcher could identify the most suitable CLT activities for the students' pedagogical needs and help them practice more the use of the target language to communicate each other.

Teacher interview guide: It was divided into two sections: the teacher's experience and the methodology. This allowed collecting important information from the teachers because it was based on their experience and performance

with these groups of students. It helped researchers to identify and determine the most effective CLT activities.

Evaluation Rubric: it supported this research to measure the students' level and detect the difficulties these students had. (Both Pre and Post -test). Also, it verified if the CLT activities had a positive effect or any kind of influence on their speaking skill.

Lesson plan: This provided in detail the procedure and development of the CLT activities that were applied in this study and the resources needed during the development of these activities.

Office programs (computer): These programs facilitated the writing of the project, supporting materials, elaboration of the statistical procedure of the data collection (surveys and rubrics), and the graphics required in this research paper.

3.4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Observations before CLT

The teachers from this institution did not seem to be accustomed to have all their plans all the time, but showed a good class management and sequence activities, even though the method that they applied were not the most appropriate for teaching English as a foreign language. One of them just opened the book and began reading the text, then started talking to the class. Most of the time the teacher was talking or doing any kind of exercise on the board rather than making students participate in the classroom. Obviously, the teachers' roles were more active than the students' roles during the interactions.

Teachers spent more time explaining grammar rules; the teacher from Class N-29 worked with them on the board and exercises on the book, so there were few interactions between teacher-student and student-student. On the other hand, the teacher from another group provided some exercises, the students had to practice small dialogues from the book; however, they had few interactions between each other. The teacher did not find the best way to give feedback, correcting pronunciation or grammar mistakes during the students' performances, so that they felt kind of frustrated and embarrassed.

Also, because of the large number of students and the little space in the classroom the teacher from could not provide enough feedback. Another aspect that influenced this problem was the materials required. They were not good enough to hold a successful English class and that affected their learning, even if students seemed to be comfortable about it. Teachers did not use CD players since that resource was not always available for them. All these limitations affected the development of students' oral expression and the application of some communicative activities for a better learning.

Teacher's interviews before CLT

The interviews were done before the application of the CLT activities. It referred to the teachers' personality and experience.

During the teacher interview, one of the questions was about their experience working with students at this age (adults between 18 and 50 years old). The teacher from group Class N-29 said: "I have always been working with students from high school, so I have no experience working with adults." The teacher from another group expressed: "I have little knowledge about applying

communicative activities, so it's easier for me to focus more on writing and reading skills rather than speaking.”

Both teachers liked being English teachers, but had little experience working with adults, and they did not have knowledge of communicative activities that were appropriate for the students' age. They described themselves as patient and understanding people but not dynamic enough in class. Both teachers focused on grammatical exercises to learn the target language, even if the topic was kind of difficult, the teachers used a lot of strategies for making students practice or produce the language in a written way, both of them said “exercises is the most suitable way these students can learn this foreign language.”

Also, some of the challenges they faced was the huge number of students they had per classroom, mixed aged students, and the lack of resources that did not let them teach a meaningful and communicative lesson. The second section of the interviews (the next six questions) referred to the methodology. Traditional methods like translations, memorization, and repetitions were still being employed in class. One of the most important questions was number nine which was about the communicative activities students performed during the class.

The teacher from Class N-29 said “My students practice and perform group work activities and dialogues in the classroom,” and the teacher from another class said “I try to make my students participate by writing exercises on the board and interact in pairs but the number of students makes quite hard they can speak English in class.” Some activities that the teachers used were more like drills: somewhat meaningful but not communicative. Most of the time

students produced their English by exercises (writing skill) and brief readings (reading skill) rather than by interacting and speaking. Both teachers had little information about these CLT activities.

Another important issue and the main support of this research is when the teachers mentioned the obstacles and limitations students had in order to learn the target language; the teacher from Class N-29 said: “most students do not have interest in this subject or simply they cannot speak this language because of the lack of knowledge or practice in class”. On the other side, the teacher from another class declared: “when students speak or try to produce the language through small dialogues, it is difficult for them to do it because of their pronunciation, fluency, lack of confidence, and grammar mistakes”.

As a result of the data collected from the teachers' interview, the researcher considered both teachers needed to implement new educational tools and communicative strategies as useful alternatives in education and students had to be active participants in the teaching -learning process, and at the same time, they had to be responsible for the construction of their knowledge.

Students' survey before CLT

Students' surveys: Below are the results from Class N-29 at Instituto Tecnico Bolivariano in order to get general information of students' perceptions about learning English as a foreign language. The survey is divided into two sections; the first section regards the difficulties students have during the teaching process, second one is about their preferences. All of the following graphs represent the entire Class N-29, (40 students).

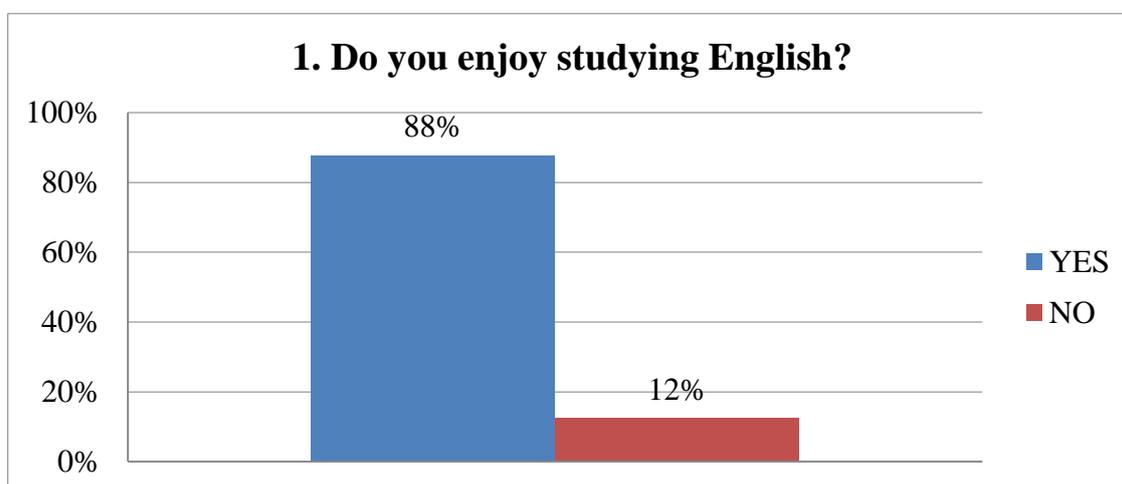
Survey Section 1: Students' difficulties during English learning

The first section of the surveys shows the perceptions of students towards English. The study shows that most students (88%) have a positive attitude about studying English; 97% of them participate in the class, and also most of them (89%) feel motivated about learning. On the other hand, there are a lot of demands on their time and few opportunities to practice their English: 60% of students find English difficult to learn; few students (14%) study in English academies, 85% of them consider that English learning environments are comfortable according to their needs; 74% of them think, didactic materials are enough in class and finally, most of them (89%) believe methods and activities are dynamic. These are the general descriptions of the next chart and the graph that shows the statistics in detail.

Survey Section 1: Students' difficulties during English learning

1.- Do you enjoy studying English?		
Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	88
no	5	12

Table 1 Source: Students survey Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 1 Source: Student survey
Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

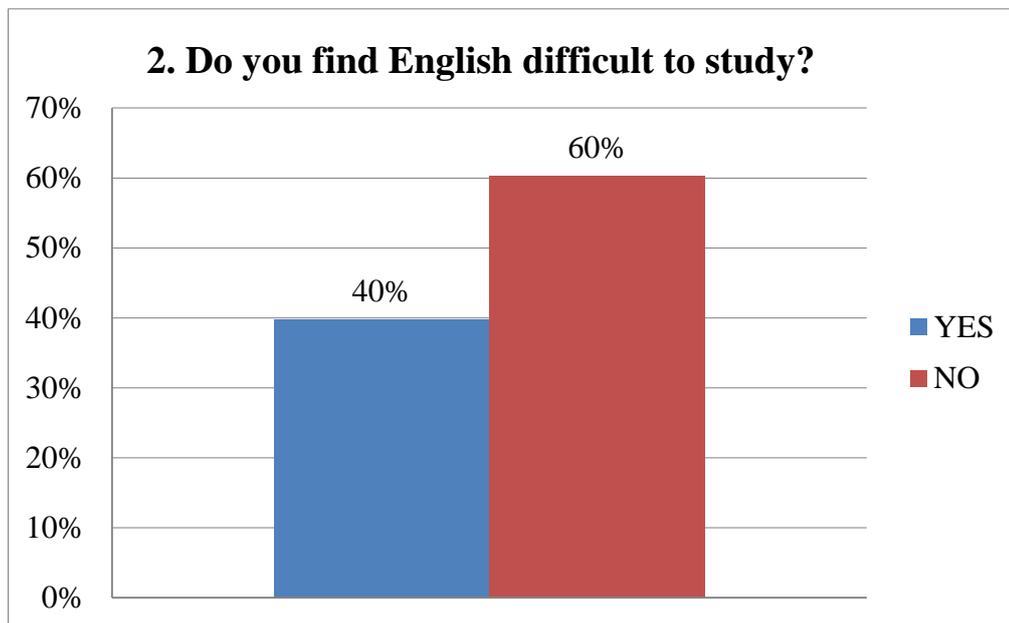
Analysis

This graph shows that most of the students (88%) are interested in studying English but (12%) disagree about it. This result provides positive acceptance of learning the target language for this research, so students are willing to achieve functional and social aspects of teaching English as a foreign language through new communicative strategies and activities.

2.- Do you find English difficult to study?		
Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	16	40
no	24	60

Table 2 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 2 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

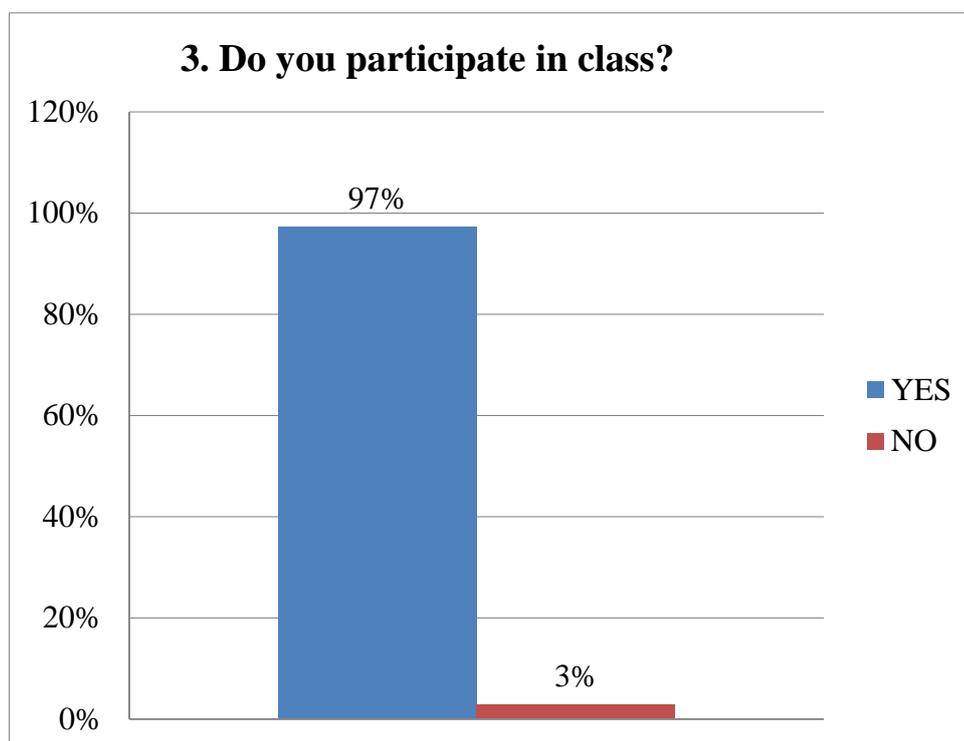
Analysis

This graph shows 60% of students do not seem to have any difficulty in learning English because they consider this language like another subject and part of their duty as students. However, it is important to estimate these are their perceptions about what they know of English even though 40% of them find hard to study it, so here is something that demonstrates the existence of a problem that needs to be analyzed.

3.- Do you participate in class?		
Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	97
no	2	3

Table 3 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 3 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

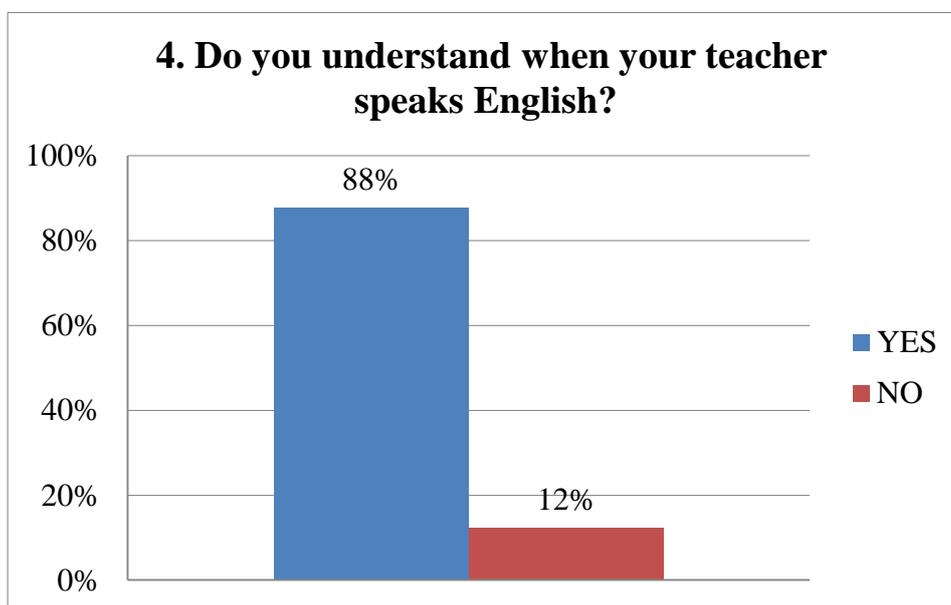
Analysis

This graph shows that most students (97%) participate in class activities but few of them (3%) do not practice at all. As a result, most of the students take part in the development of exercises, drills or translations as important components of the learning process but not with a communicative purpose.

4.- Do you understand when your teacher speak?		
Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	88
no	5	12

Table 4 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 4 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

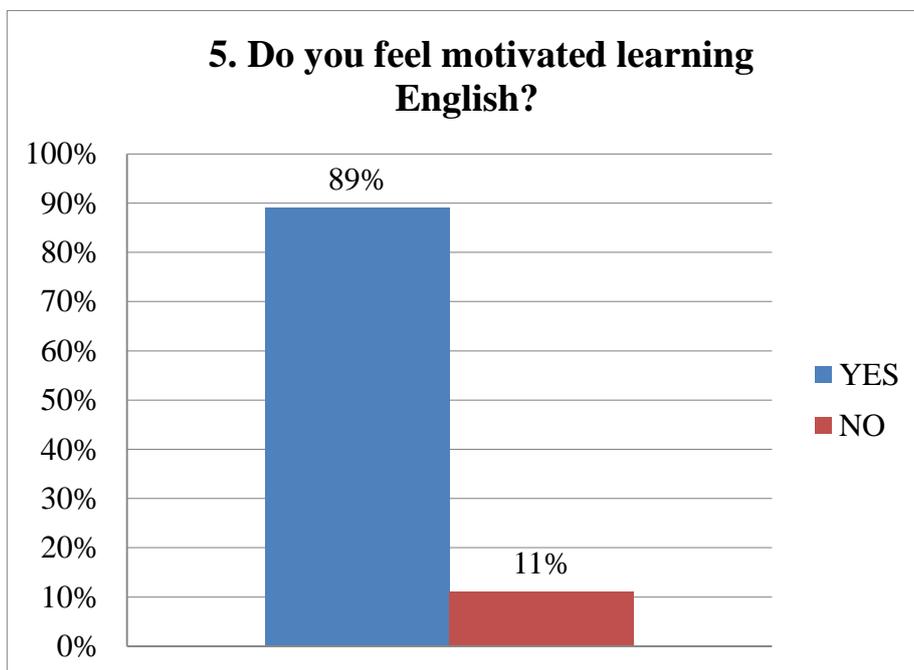
Analysis

The 88% of students can understand the teacher well. Students consider that the teacher speaks and uses common words, gestures, body expressions, and easy examples. On the other hand, 12% of them find kind of difficult to perceive what the teacher is speaking, so it can be concluded that there is not a frequent development of the listening skill in the classroom.

5.- Do you feel motivated when learning English?		
Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	36	89
no	4	11

Table 5 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 5 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

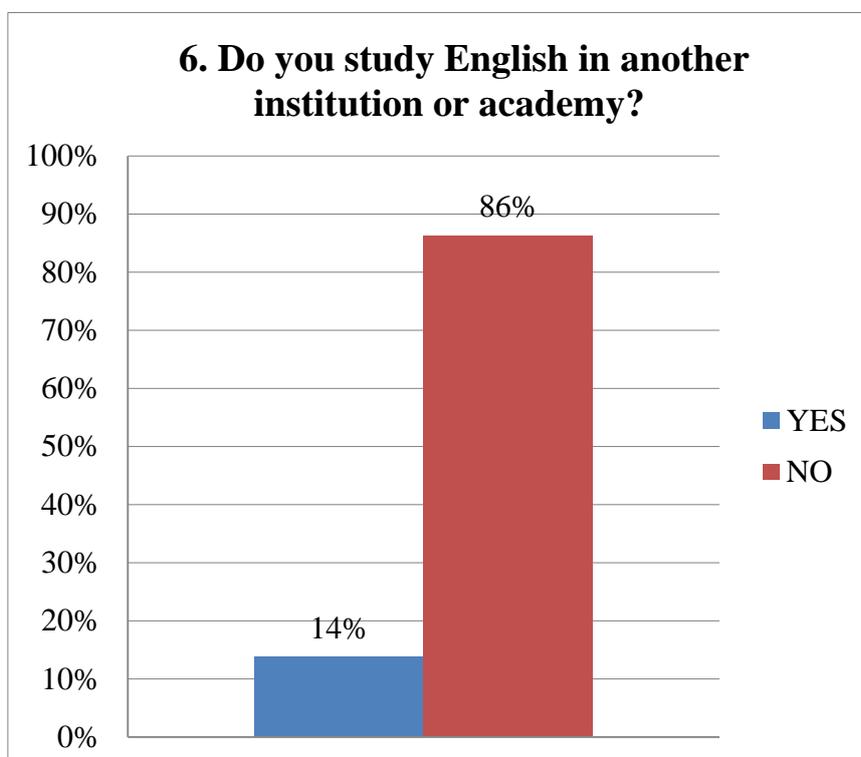
Analysis

The 89% of students are engaged in learning English but not all of them get involved in the learning process because of the different ways students learn something, some of them do not have interest or show acceptance for this foreign language, so that is the reason why 11% of them do not feel motivated.

6.- Do you study English in another institution or academy?		
Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	14
no	34	86

Table 6 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 6 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

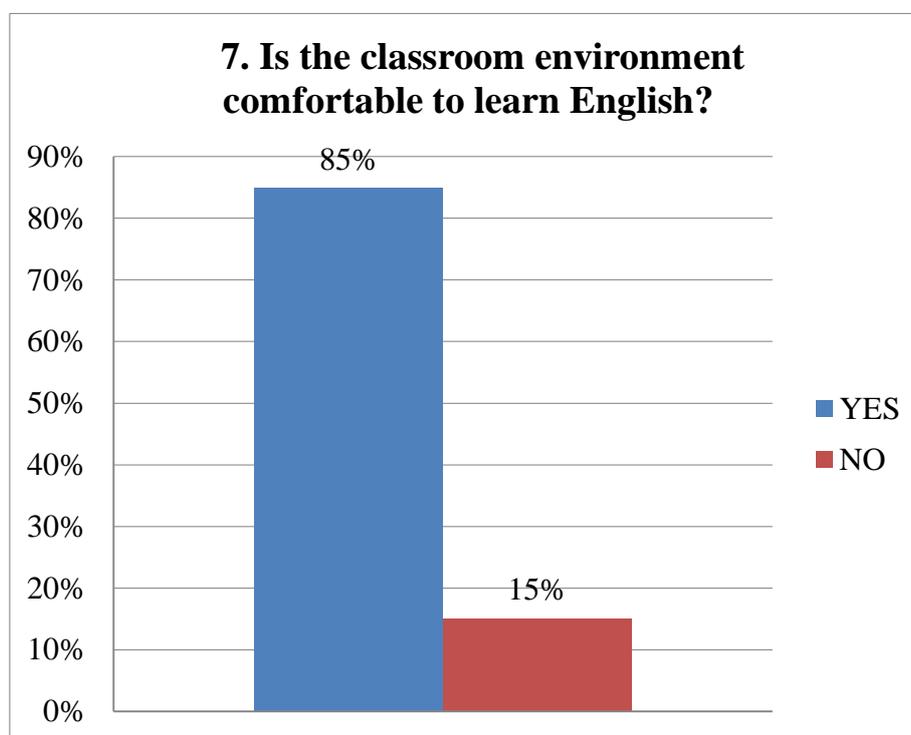
Analysis

The 86% of students do not practice and study English outside the class because of their culture, so they do not find necessary to take extra classes. In addition, most of them do not have enough money to pay for it. On the other hand, 14% of students seem to take some classes in other institutions as part of their learning process and also because they feel motivated.

7.- Is the classroom environment comfortable to learn English?		
Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	34	85
no	6	15

Table 7 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 7 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

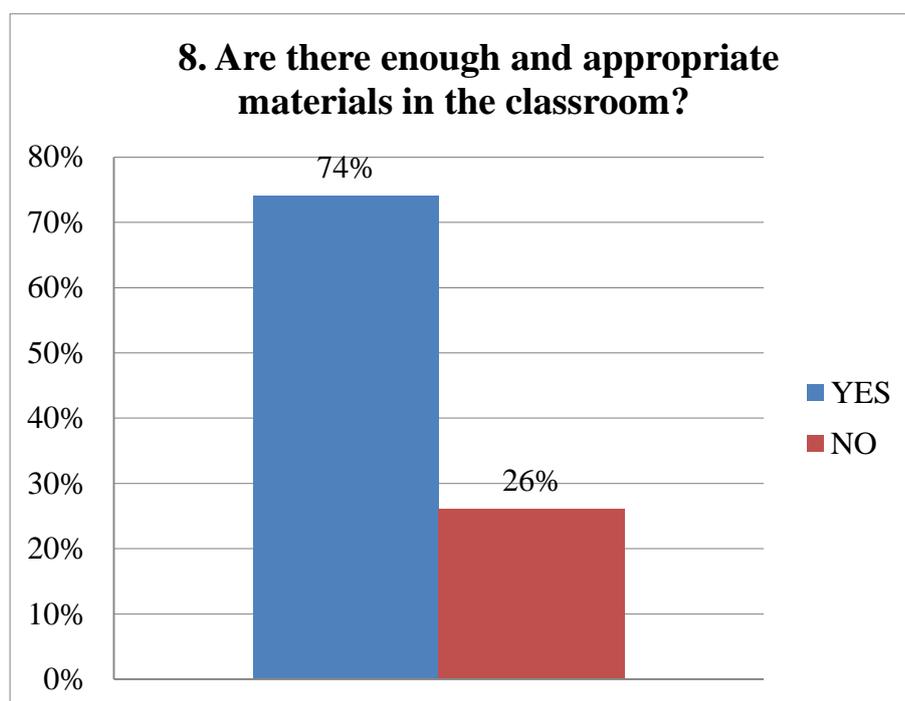
Analysis

This graph shows that the 85% of students consider that the learning environment is comfortable enough but few of them (15%) do not. The figures show a positive environment for learning English though, this study takes into account what is truly necessary and demanding to develop better teaching strategies and learning for students to improve their oral expression.

8.- Are there enough and appropriate materials in the classroom?		
Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	74
no	10	26

Table 8 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 8 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

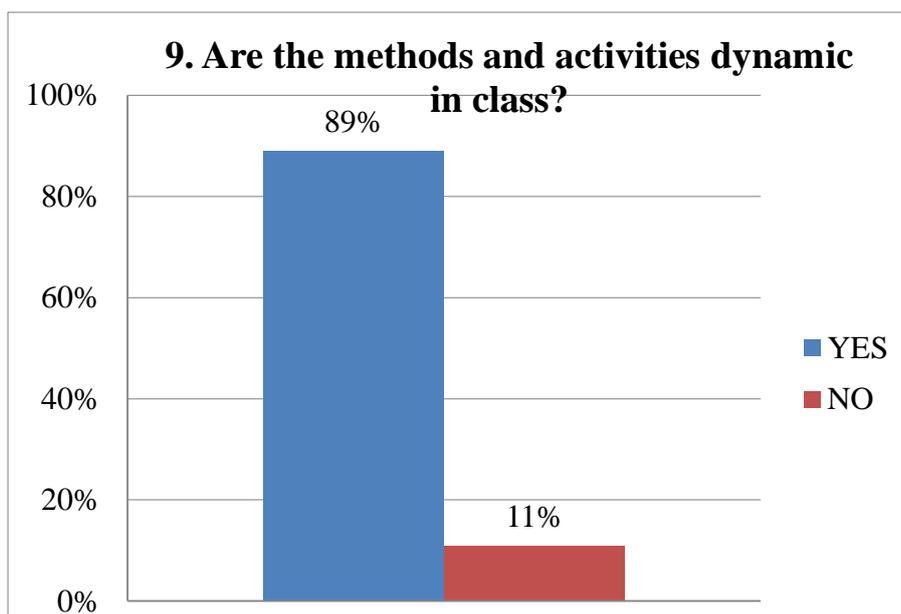
Analysis

Most students (74%) consider that all the resources they have in an English class, are the only ones they need. Although 26% of students do not think that those resources are enough. So this study also considers the most appropriate materials teachers should use in the classroom in order to facilitate the foreign language teaching process.

9.- Are the methods and activities dynamic in class?		
Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	36	89
no	4	11

Table 9 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 9 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

Analysis

Most students (89%) think the activities are dynamic because of the kind of methods (traditional), they are accustomed to be involved with; however few of them (11%) are not satisfied with them. Even though students consider that the activities applied in class are dynamic, most of them are more like mechanic and meaningless but not communicative. As a result, this study supports the application of the CLT theory and activities to promote more interaction and make students develop their oral expression.

Survey Section 2: Regarding preferences of students when learning English.

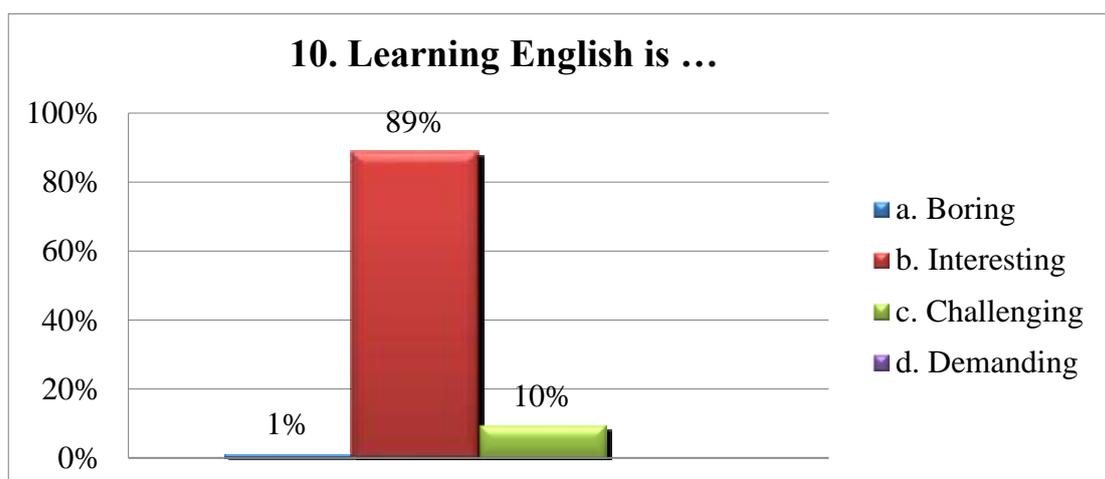
In the next section of the students' questionnaire, most questions are about the different preferences students are more likely to have about learning English. As well as the skills which they seem to have more trouble to perform, and how they can consider several activities and techniques to help them improve their speaking skill which is the one that is being taken as main part of this research paper.

10. Learning English is ...

OPTIONS	Class N-29	TOTAL	%
a. Boring	1	1	1%
b. Interesting	35	35	89%
c. Challenging	4	4	10%
d. Demanding	0	0	0%
TOTAL	40	40	100%

Table 10 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 10 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

Analysis

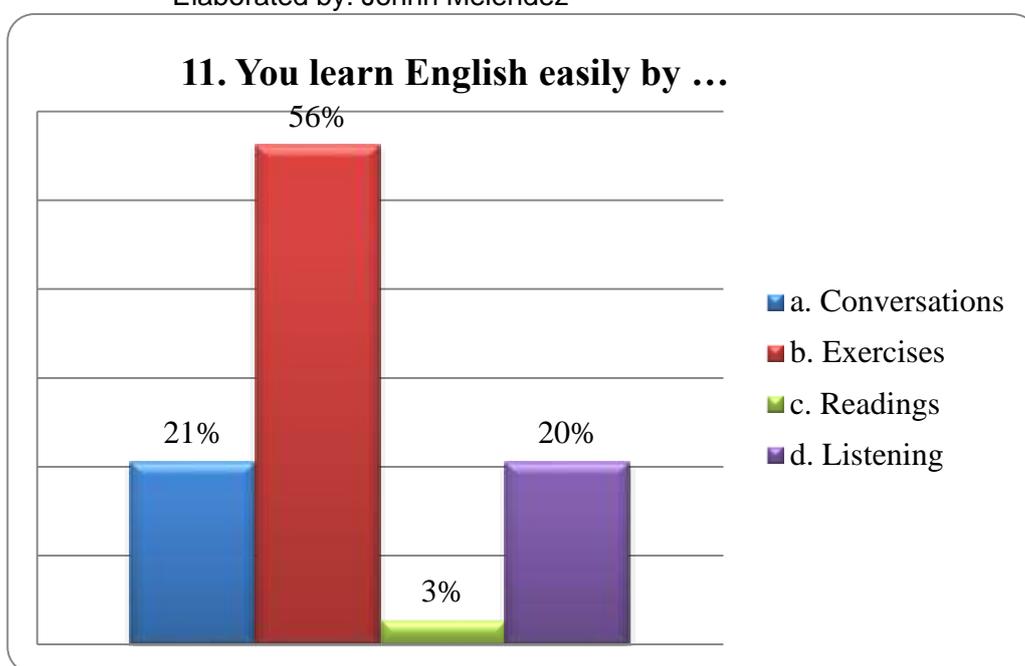
In this graph, most students (89%) have an optimistic perception about learning English and 10% of them think English is challenging. Here is estimated that most of the students have a considerable concern about the foreign language, and they are adopting a positive attitude to learn it.

11. You learn English easily by ...

OPTIONS	Class N-29	TOTAL	%
a. Conversations	8	8	21%
b. Exercises	22	22	56%
c. Readings	2	2	3%
d. Listening	8	8	20%
TOTAL	40	40	100%

Table 11 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 11 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

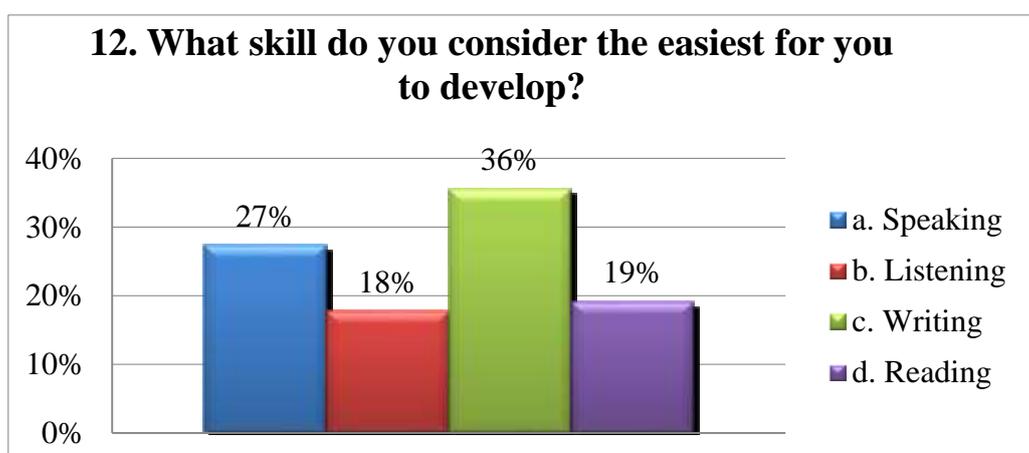
The 56% of students prefer to learn English by exercises, so students focus more their attention on grammar structures and vocabulary. That is why students are more comfortable and accustomed to practice English by doing (writing) rather than listening and speaking. 21% of students prefer conversations to be more active in class as well as 20% of them like more practice by listening that includes different kinds of techniques that students have the pleasure to select according to their needs.

12. What skill do you consider the easiest for you to develop?

OPTIONS	Class N-29	TOTAL	%
a. Speaking	11	11	27%
b. Listening	7	7	18%
c. Writing	14	14	36%
d. Reading	8	8	19%
TOTAL	40	40	100%

Table 12 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 12 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

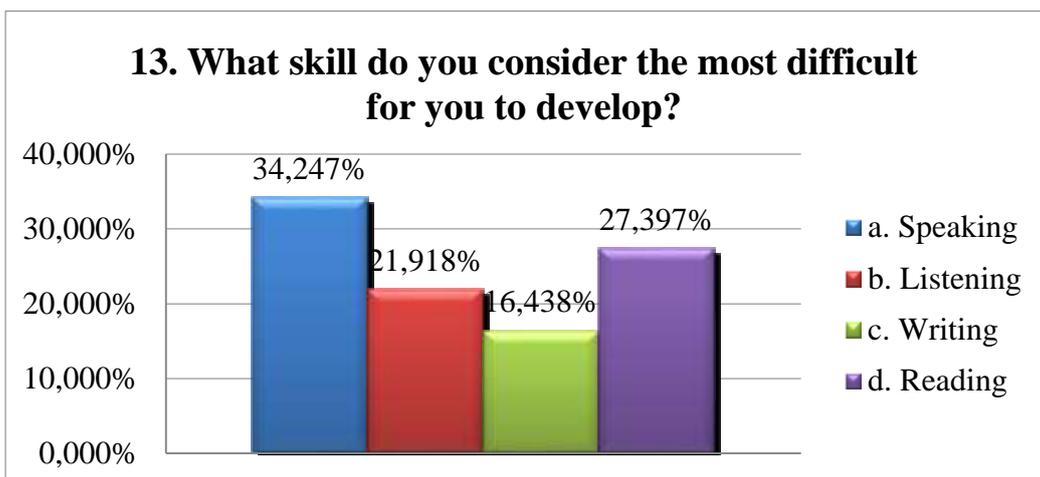
The four language skills are basic elements to learn English; this graph shows that 36% of students think writing is the easiest skill for them to perform, preceded by speaking with 27% of students who consider that this skill is not difficult to develop. Even though, most of the students demonstrate low performance at developing their speaking skills during the pre-test and this brief result is taken as important evidence to support this project.

13. What skill do you consider the most difficult for you to develop?

OPTIONS	Class N-29	TOTAL	%
a. Speaking	13	13	34,247%
b. Listening	9	9	21,918%
c. Writing	7	7	16,438%
d. Reading	11	11	27,397%
TOTAL	40	40	100%

Table 13 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 13 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

Analysis

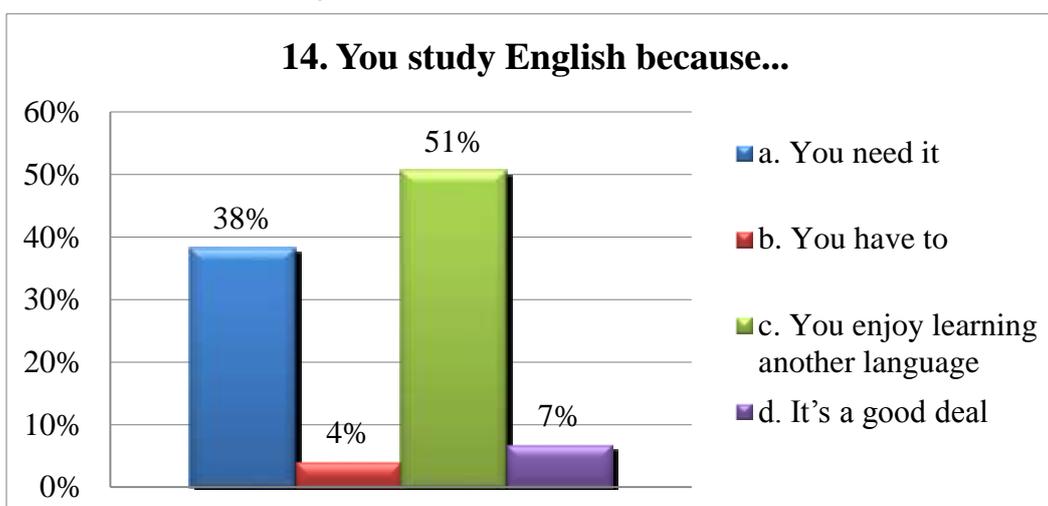
In this graph, 34,247% of students consider that speaking is hard to perform, so it is established as an essential basis for this research that students bring more limitations on practicing and producing this language skill rather than the others. As a result, the teacher is forced to design activities according to their level and needs using CLT theory. At the same time, reading (27,397%) and listening (21,918%) skills are also considered kind of challenging for the students.

14. You study English because...

OPTIONS	Class N-29	TOTAL	%
a. You need it	15	15	38%
b. You have to	2	2	4%
c. You enjoy learning another language	20	20	51%
d. It's a good deal	3	3	7%
TOTAL	40	40	100%

Table 14 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 14 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

Analysis

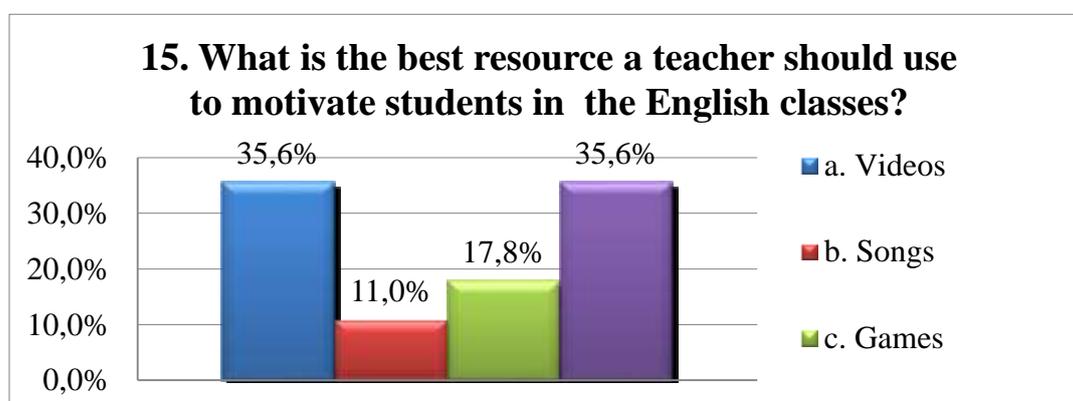
This graph shows that these groups of students from this public school feel more attracted to English. Almost half of students, 51%, are interested in studying a foreign language, 38% of them perceive English as something necessary. At the present time this language is required in the professional, educational, and personal fields. It means hope and better incomes for the future; however students keep their attention on studying this language because they like it and others because it is a duty for them.

15. What is the best resource a teacher should use to motivate students in the English classes?

OPTIONS	Class N-29	TOTAL	%
a. Videos	14	14	35,6%
b. Songs	4	4	11,0%
c. Games	7	7	17,8%
d. Communicative activities	15	15	35,6%
TOTAL	40	40	100%

Table 15 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 15 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

Analysis

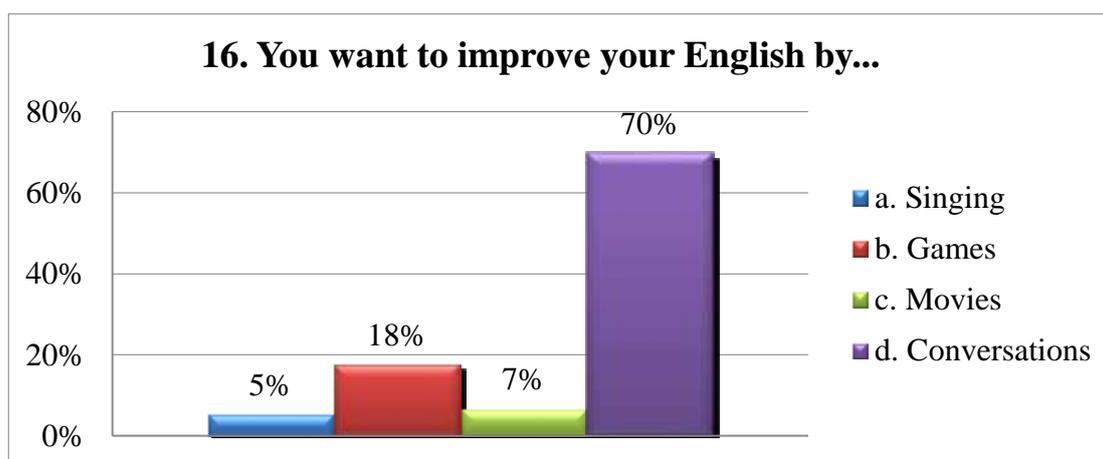
Most students like a dynamic class, 35,6% of them think that it is easier for them to learn English through videos. 35,6% of students prefer CLT activities to encourage and keep a balance of different strategies they can use to communicate each other in class. In conclusion, students feel more confident and involved during the learning process when the teacher uses the appropriate resources and pedagogical techniques.

16. You want to improve your English by...

OPTIONS	Class N-29	TOTAL	%
a. Singing	2	2	5%
b. Games	7	7	18%
c. Movies	3	3	7%
d. Conversations	28	28	70%
TOTAL	40	40	100%

Table 16 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 16 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

Analysis

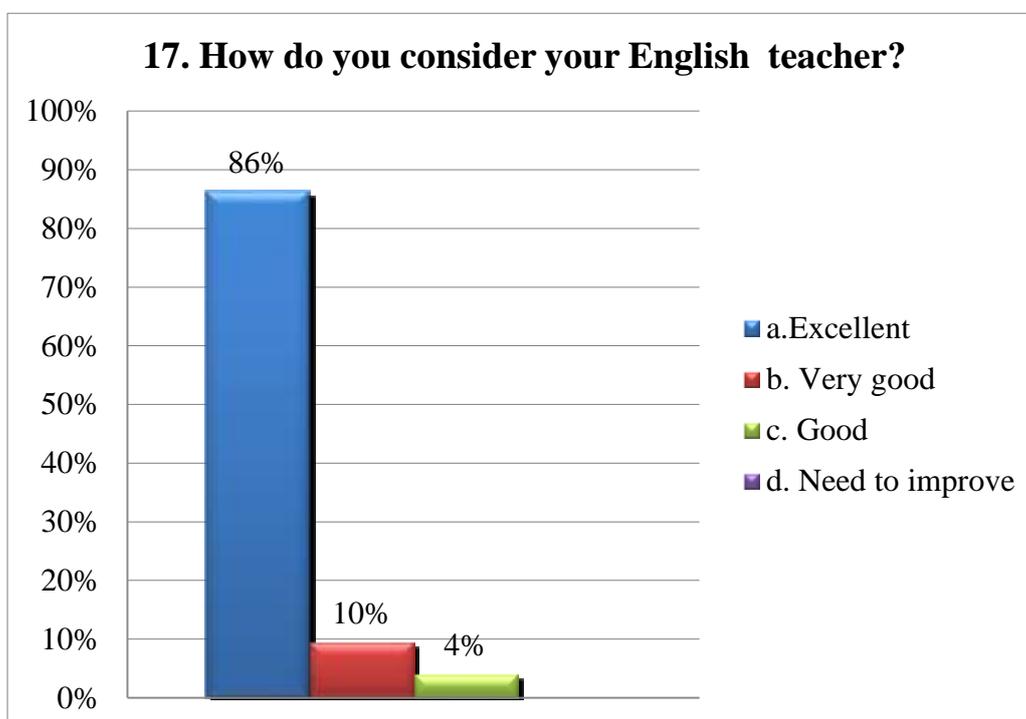
Most students (70%) like to improve their English through conversations because of the spontaneous interactions and communication they bring. Just the 18% of them prefer games because they are more likely to socialize.

17. How do you consider your English Teacher?

OPTIONS	Class N-29	TOTAL	%
a.Excellent	32	32	86%
b. Verygood	4	4	10%
c. Good	2	2	4%
d. Needstoimprove	0	0	0%
TOTAL	40	40	100%

Table 17 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 17 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

Analysis

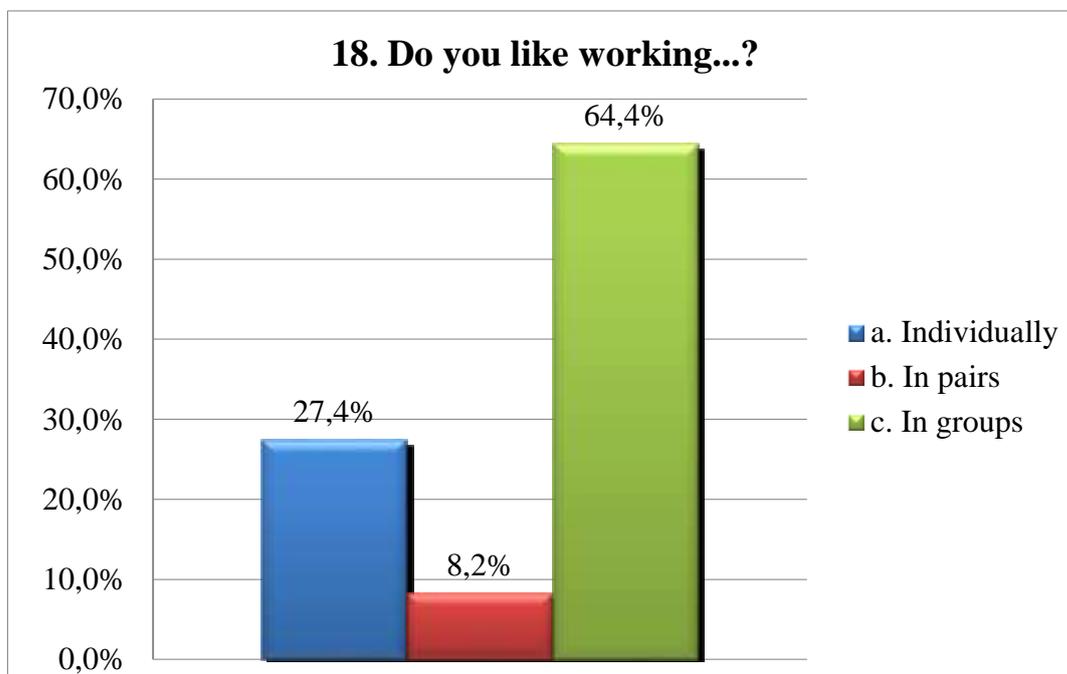
Most (86%) of students consider that their English teacher is excellent because of the confidence, personality, rapport and her way of teaching. In spite of the fact that the students practice and produce English through the traditional methods.

18. Do you like working...?

OPTIONS	Class N-29	TOTAL	%
a. Individually	11	11	27,4%
b. In pairs	3	3	8,2%
c. In groups	26	26	64,4%
TOTAL	40	40	100%

Table 18 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez



Graph 18 Source: Student survey

Elaborated by: Johnn Melendez

Analysis

The 64% of students like more working in groups, in this case, they consider that the interaction in the target language between teacher-students and peers is important. On the other hand, just the 27% of them think it is better to develop activities by themselves that means they are also more likely to work alone.

4. FINAL CONCLUSION

4.1. Conclusion

The main goal of the current study was to identify, determine, and give support to students enrolled in a nurse program at Instituto Tecnico Bolivariano who had oral expression problems, since they were not able to interact and communicate naturally in the target language. During the procedure, the researcher could notice that most students faced different kind of speaking difficulties, for instance, students were not able to pronounce correctly and formulate simple utterances in their oral practice.

On the other hand, the results showed that these students had a significant improvement in their listening comprehension and oral production after the application of the CLT activities. In the end, students felt comfortable and motivated performing the language through these activities instead of writing exercises, so that they could socialize and develop their fluency in the foreign language little by little, as part of the learning process. In other words, the improvement of the students' oral proficiency was influenced by the listening and speaking pair and group practice in the target language. For this reason,

the researchers considered the application of CLT activities highly relevant to the students' needs and interests.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggested that Jigsaw, information-gap, task completion, and role play activities which were the CLT activities applied in this project, had a great impact or influence in the students' oral proficiency. In spite of it, teachers have to innovate their methodology, and use these activities not only to develop the students' oral expression, but also to create a positive and dynamic environment where students are able to improve the other language skills.

4.2. Problems and limitations

This research paper is based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach in order to improve EFL students' speaking skill and create interaction in the classroom. The findings in this report were subject to at least five limitations:

First, there was not enough time during each session due to students were doing some extra activities and had to be evaluated, so it was quite difficult to start the research activities on time. As a consequence, it was difficult to go according to the programmed schedule established by the researcher, so the educational intervention about lasted two weeks because teachers and students had to comply with the programmed activities in the institute curriculum. Second, it took a lot of time to evaluate the students' oral proficiency because of the large number of learners, the researcher had to interview 40 participants one by one. It took around four days to complete this step.

Third, the selected sample had to be changed because the groups of students who were chosen by an agreement at the beginning were not available

in the data collection process .In fact, the teacher could not facilitate this group of students before starting the application of the research instruments because he had to finish some incomplete activities and give evaluations to the students. Finally, the researchers had to select another sample, even though they knew there was not enough time for changes. During the application of the CLT activities, there were some students who did not feel encouraged working in groups or pairs, they preferred to work alone. The teacher had to explain the purpose of the lesson to review lexical items and provide clear directions to students, due to the fact that, some CLT activities were really challenging and not familiar for them.

It is worth mentioning that this research took into account the students' different learning styles. So it required more time to the researcher to design the CLT activities based on the students' ages and pedagogical needs. The researcher also found out that the lack of listening comprehension exercises had seriously affected the students' communicative competence. It was the last problem; some students had serious problems in listening comprehension and oral production, are essential components of the communication process, because there was not enough practice in the classroom.

Even though, CLT activities had an essential and positive influence on these students; the researchers consider that more study could be conducted in this area in order to improve the quality of teaching English as a foreign language. The results of this research proved that CLT activities were effective for the improvement of the students' oral expression. On the whole, the researchers point out that this project was successfully elaborated, in spite of

the difficulties mentioned above, caused by the limited time and the sample selected.

4.3. Recommendations

It is recommended that further research be undertaken in the following issues:

A. EFL teachers should consider their students' preferred learning styles and their own perceptions of teaching English as a foreign language. So that, the teacher should choose appropriate methodology, techniques and tasks to get students work in pairs or groups in order to create a democratic environment, and be sure that they have the best partners to work with.

B. In addition, teachers should decide which roles to assign to each pair or group member, and explain the assignment to students clearly, in order to avoid misunderstanding, every student should have a specific role to perform without problems.

C. Mechanical, meaningful and communicative practices should be balanced in the learning process. It is also necessary to investigate and analyze a little bit more about these fields.

D. A meaningful comparison between the learning theories and communicative approach should be done in order to promote more sources of investigation and to develop more effective activities that can improve students' oral expression.

E. During the implementation of CLT activities teachers should make the best decisions in order to optimize the teaching process in the classroom. It is necessary to establish beforehand how the students should work in the class:

in groups, pairs or individually and how they could be exposed to real, functional communication and social interaction in the target language.

F. In addition, the listening language skill needs to be considered as another factor that affects some aspects of the students' oral expression, so the researcher should comprise and relate the whole components of speaking as well as certain listening aspects that are analyzed in this study.

G. It is also recommended to specify the different CLT activities that attain to increase interaction in the classroom environment and get students somehow use elementary English to communicate and improve their oral proficiency.

H. Future studies on the current topic are therefore recommended and can be included to improve students' oral expression, so, it might be possible to use different strategies or techniques which can involve and support both speaking and listening skills.

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APPENDIX



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INTERVIEW

Name:

Date:

Age:

The purpose of this interview is to get reliable information from the English teacher about the problem that adult students face when learning English.

ABOUT TEACHERS.

1. Why did you decide to become an English teacher?
2. Could you tell me about your experience working with adult students?
3. Describe the positive and negative aspects of your student-teaching experience.
4. List three of your strengths.
5. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges that teachers face today when they teach adults?

ABOUT METHODOLOGY

6. Do you make learning fun for students? How?
7. How can you make your teaching connect to students' real-world experiences?
8. What kind of communicative activities do your students perform in class?
9. Do you implement CLT activities in class frequently?
10. What are the benefits of using CLT activities?
11. What kind of materials and supplies would you need to do your job well?
12. Describe the biggest challenge you've ever had to face.



LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE UNIVERSITY

SURVEY

Date:

Age:

Gender:

Course:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out how you feel about learning English.

Circle "Yes" or "No"	Answers	
1. Do you enjoy studying English?	Yes	No
2. Do you find English difficult to study?	Yes	No
3. Do you participate in the class?	Yes	No
4. Do you understand when your teacher speaks?	Yes	No
5. Do you feel motivated learning English?	Yes	No
6. Do you study English in another institution or academy?	Yes	No
7. Is the classroom environment comfortable to learn English?	Yes	No
8. Are there enough materials used in the classroom?	Yes	No
9. Are the methods and activities dynamic in class?	Yes	No

Circle the best option

1. Learning English is ...

- a. Boring b. Interesting c. Challenging d. Demanding

2. You learn English easily by ...

- a. Conversations b. Exercises c. Readings d. Listening

3. What skill do you consider the easiest for you to develop?

- a. Speaking b. Listening c. Writing d. Reading

4. What skill do you consider the most difficult for you to develop?

- a. Speaking b. Listening c. Writing d. Reading

5. You study English because...

- a. You need it c. You enjoy learning another language
b. You have to d. It's a good deal

6. What is the best resource a teacher should use to motivate students in the english classes?

- a. Videos b. Songs c. Games d. Communicative activities

7. You want to improve your English by...

- a. Singing b. Games c. Movies d. Conversations

8. How do you consider your English Teacher?

- a. Excellent b. Very good c. Good d. Need to improve

9. Do you like working...

- a. Individual b. in pair c. in group

Write your comments if it is necessary to improve language teaching.

Survey Results				Percentage	
"YES" OR "NO"	YES	NO	TOTAL	YES	NO
	1. Do you enjoy studying English?	35	5	40	88%
2. Do you find English difficult to study?	16	24	40	40%	60%
3. Do you participate in the class?	38	2	40	97%	3%
4. Do you understand when your teacher speaks?	35	5	40	88%	12%
5. Do you feel motivated learning English?	36	4	40	89%	11%
6. Do you study English in another institution or academy?	6	34	40	14%	86%
7. Is the classroom environment comfortable to learn English?	34	6	40	85%	15%
8. Are there enough materials used in the classroom?	30	10	40	74%	26%
9. Are the methods and activities dynamic in class?	36	4	40	89%	11%



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PRE/POST-TEST RUBRIC

Point seared	4	3	2	1	0
Comprehensibility	Responses readily comprehensible, requiring no interpretation	Comprehensible responses requiring minimal interpretation on part of listener	Mostly comprehensible responses; may require interpretation	Barely comprehensible responses	No response
Fluency	Continuous speech with few pauses or stumbling	Some hesitation but manages to continue and complete thoughts	Speech choppy and/or slow with frequent pauses, few or no incomplete thoughts	Halting speech with long pauses or incomplete thoughts; interference from another language	No response; overwhelming interference from another language
pronunciation	Enhances communication	Does not interfere with communication	Occasionally interferes with communication	Frequently interferes with communication	No response
vocabulary	Rich use of vocabulary (this chapter and others)	Adequate and accurate use for this level	Somewhat inadequate and/or inaccurate use of vocabulary and too basic for this level	Inadequate and /or inaccurate use of vocabulary	No response
grammar	Total control of all required structures to date	Control of requiredstructures	Emerging control of required structures	Inadequate and/or inaccurate use of basic language structures	No response
taskcompletion	More than fulfills task; beyond requirements	Fulfills all parts of task	Fulfills 1/2 to 3/4 of task	Fulfills 1/3 to 1/2 of task	Fulfills less than 1/3 of task



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PRE – TEST/POST – TEST FORMAT

The purpose of this test is to measure student's speaking skill and identify the main difficulties he/she presents.

Hello, good afternoon...

1. How are you, today?
2. What's your name?
3. How old are you?
4. What's your phone number? Can you spell that, please?
5. Can I ask you another question? When's your birthday?
6. Do you have brothers or sisters? How many?
7. Do you have many friends?
8. Do you have a dog? What's its name?
9. Do you like listening to music? What kind of music do you like?
10. Do you like studying English? Why?

Photos

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ENFERMERÍA



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The advertisement features a smiling female nurse in blue scrubs with a stethoscope around her neck, leaning forward to interact with a patient. The background is a blurred clinical setting.





REPOSITORIO NACIONAL EN CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGIA

FICHA DE REGISTRO DE TESIS

TÍTULO Y SUBTÍTULO:

pedagogical strategies to enhance communication in 40-50 year old adults learning english at instituto tecnologico bolivariano

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INSTITUCIÓN: Universidad Laica Vicente Roca fuerte

FACULTAD:

Ciencias de la educación mención Ingles

CARRERA: Ciencias de la educación Mención: Ingles

FECHA DE PUBLICACIÓN:

Sept/2/2016

No. DE PÁGS: 98

TÍTULO OBTENIDO:

Licenciatura en lengua inglesa con mención en lingüística y literatura

ÁREAS TEMÁTICAS: (el área al que se refiere el trabajo. Ej. Auditoría Financiera, Auditoria, Finanzas)

Educación

PALABRAS CLAVE: (términos con el que podría ubicar este trabajo)

Pedagogical strategies

RESUMEN: (de qué se trata, para qué, por qué?)

Most Ecuadorian teachers are always looking for the best teaching methods, techniques, and strategies that can help students learn English as a foreign language. Communicative language teaching activities have been considered an essential tool for this study, because they set as a main goal, the use of the foreign language in different contexts, so students could effectively develop their abilities in the target language, focusing on the oral expression and communicative interaction. It is not only important to be aware of the grammatical rules, but students also need to face different language contexts, situations, and negotiate with meaningful codes at the moment of communicating.

On the whole, this research has taken as a sample, a group of students from Instituto Tecnológico Bolivariano who had problems in their oral production. This project has proposed some CLT activities that adjust to the students' needs in order to promote a significant improvement in their oral proficiency. This research paper has also considered the advantages of developing communicative language teaching activities in class as an instrument to contribute with the development of new communicative strategies.

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