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FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

**“INTERACTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING ACTIVITIES THAT
ENHANCE THE ORAL SKILL”**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Languages for the degree of
LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS**

BY

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**“INTERACTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING ACTIVITIES THAT ENHANCE THE
ORAL SKILL”**

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Presentation

Speaking is one of the four necessary skills to have an effective communication in the mother language and especially when we are learning a foreign language. Goh (2007) describes that “speaking plays a key role in facilitation language acquisition and it is vital in language communication skill” (2007, p.1).

English oral skill must be developed enough as writing, listening, and reading to enhance communication with native speakers of English and with an international community; however, many teachers are not aware of the contribution of this skill and continue putting more emphasis on grammar aspects. Speaking seems to be the least skill practiced in the English classroom.

Then, why students are not be able to communicate in a comprehensible and effective way in English? Many students find difficulties to communicate in English. These difficulties are caused by many factors that we have to take into consideration. *Anxiety* is one of the most important factors that affects language learning because it is common that students have feelings and worries about their performance in English and may become anxious when they make errors. Horwitz and Cope (1986) conceive “foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (1986, p.128).

A second factor is *motivational problems*. Students need to be motivated to learn a foreign language, with security, interest and energy to accomplish personal and professional goals, and lack of motivation may affect language learning. Crookes and Schmidt say that “Motivation for language includes not only a goal orientation, but also the desire to learn the language whatever the reasons or attitudes toward the language- learning situation and the activity of language learning and the effort to achieve such goals” (1991, p.474, 475).

Regarding the external factors, teachers have identified that the method and activities they use can provide appropriate opportunities to improve the students’ competence. According to Richards and Rodgers “a Method is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about those particular skills

to be taught, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented” (2001, p.15).

As we can see, the method is important in the teaching language process so, it is necessary to select the most appropriate method according to the students’ necessities, the skills that we want to improve and the way in which the content will be presented. These elements are of great help in the accomplishment of specific objectives. The selection of a method has to do also with the selection of the learning activities because each language teaching method has different approaches and objectives. Richards and Rodgers stated that “differences among methods at the level of approach manifest themselves in the choice of different kinds of learning and teaching activities in the classroom” (2001, p.26). However, if teachers are not focusing on the method that they use, skills and specific objectives of the class could not be developed and accomplished.

There are many types of language learning activities and these are related to methods and approaches so they will differ according to the intended skill. For example the audio-lingualism method uses dialogues and pattern practices to develop the listening and the speaking skills. The silent way uses problem- solving that involve color charts to accomplish correct pronunciation. Communicative language teaching employs information gap tasks that engage learners in communication, interaction and in the sharing of information (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

But what are interactive activities? This research will focus on these, so in order to understand well about interactive activities we have to start defining the concept of interaction. According to Rivers “Interaction takes place when interest (attention to the communicate act) is present. If there is no interest, there may be a perfunctory exchange of words, but communication of personal messages does not take place” (1987, p.XIV). Some social interactive activities, according to Richard and Rodgers, include conversation, discussion sessions, dialogues, role plays, simulations, skits, improvisations, and debates (2001, p.166).

1.2 Description of the problem

Many university students nowadays are not be able to communicate effectively in English classes. When they are asked to make a presentation in front of the class they find themselves lost, due to the lack of practice and familiarity to communicate using the English language. Many times the teachers are not aware to enhance this skill in their students because they are more focused on grammar aspects. The duration of the class does not allow practicing speaking or the activities that they provide to their students do not promote interest to interact with their classmates and therefore practicing speaking is scarce.

1.3 Research questions

1.3.1 Main research question

- What are the interactive language learning activities that enhance the English oral skill?

This research sets out to answer the following questions:

1.3.2 Specific research questions

- How to enhance oral skill and self-confidence when using interactive language learning activities?
- How effective are interactive language learning activities about developing fluency in speaking?
- Do interactive language learning activities influence other skills besides oral skill? If so, which are those skills?
- What are the advantages of using interactive language learning activities?

1.4 Aims of the research

This research aims to investigate those interactive language learning activities that enhance oral skill in language learners. It also expects to contribute as a guide for the teacher so, he/she can use it to organize their methodology, and for students to practice speaking and develop fluency.

1.5 The importance of the research

It is important to mention that throughout my experience with English classes in high school, it was realized that the classic method to teach a language was using grammar rules so at the time of producing the language, speaking was forced and sometimes was not comprehensible, thus it was not easy to start a conversation and communicate in a comprehensible and effective way. This research will provide some interactive language learning activities that contribute to enhance oral skill in language learners, as Rivers stated "in interaction, students can use all that they possess of the language, all they have learned or casually absorbed in real-life, exchanges where expressing their real meaning is important to them" (1987,p.4). Similarly, Richards (2006) stated that "Learners set themselves demanding goals. They want to be able to master English to a high level of accuracy and fluency". Additionally, this study pursues to contribute to the teaching field to make learners effective communicators in English, also it will be helpful for students who want to improve their command in English to face the great challenges of a globalized world.

1.6. Delimitations of the research

This study will be focused only on interactive language learning activities for university students. This activities are expected to enhance the oral skill in the classroom.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Abstract

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section describes the aspects that make English a global language and its importance in a globalized world.

The second section deals with the definition of the oral skill and its characteristics, as well as speaking in the language classroom.

In the third section factors affecting the oral skill are investigated. This includes negative factors as well as positive factors such as foreign language classroom anxiety, language classroom motivation, and empathy.

The fourth section is focused on communicative language activities and the description of the approach.

The fifth section is focused on the importance of interaction in language learning that is, the advantages in language learning.

Finally the sixth section presents the most important interactive language learning activities. It involves the description of these activities.

2.2 Importance of learning language in a globalized world

Richards (2006) considers that nowadays the need of communication in English has grown and in turn has created a great demand for English teaching around the world. A globalized world involves many challenges for which students must be prepared so Educational systems have the necessity to enrich the culture of the students and that they recognize the existence of other cultures and languages as well as expanding opportunities in the workplace (UNESCO 1996, cited in PNIEB 2011).

When a language gets considerable importance and recognition in other countries in which that language is not the mother tongue, we can say that is a global language, as English which is the language most widely taught as a foreign language nowadays in many countries such as China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil.

For some language teachers, English has a great prominence nowadays around the world and this is manifested by many elements of the everyday life usually by the

diffuse of outdoor media such as marketing, shop signs, commercial announcements, and radio which is an important media, radio sets around the world the importance of English in the popular music scene before and today and by this many people make their first contact with the language, as well as on International flights and sailings and hotels, now is more frequent find information about emergency procedures and directions to major locations in English. Other important aspect is the demand or requirement to use English that has grown because the increasingly welcomed foreign students in universities and colleges, then in lecturers have found themselves faced with mixed-language audiences (Crystal, 2003).

2.3 The oral skill in language learning

Speaking plays an important role both in communication and in the language acquisition, hence it is important for those individuals who are interested in learning languages. Many people will agree that children learn their first language by being exposed to the language in daily interactions, learners are supposed to talk to be helped by their interlocutors' feedback and input.

To understand well about what speech involves, it is appropriate to consider the speech process. (Bygate, 1998 cited in Goh, 2007) identified three phases of the speech planning and production. The first phase is *conceptualization*, a process in which speakers select the information to be expressed. The message to be communicated may exist in an imprecisely way, as a general mental representation or idea and the information selected will depend on speakers' conceptual knowledge and other kinds of previous knowledge.

The second is *formulation*. According to Goh (2007), it refers to the fact that speakers have to formulate utterances often in real time to express the selected information. This process is focused on word choice and grammar. This author considers that meaning is transmitted through forms when the words are connected in the correct syntactical order. *Appropriate lexical items* are also essential if meaning is to be communicated with precision. It is probable that some ideas consist on formulaic expressions instead of individual words. In this process, the speaker has to adequate knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. And the third is *articulation*. In this process, individuals formulate spoken utterances. To formulate utterances it is necessary the

activation and control of specific muscle groups of the articulatory system: vocal tract, larynx and lungs (Goh, 2007).

Speech does not consist only in articulation, as many people will agree, it has various cognitive processes which are essential for the speech to be accomplished. These processes may be easy for native speakers of determined language but language learners can have problems during one or more of these processes, then the aim of teaching should be to help learners to be spontaneous in these processes to make their speech fluent and accurate.

2.4 Factors affecting the oral skill in language learning

There are many factors that affect positively or negatively the oral skill production in language learners. This can lead to encounter barriers in communication. Therefore, it is useful to know the factors that could contribute to the improvement of this skill and those negative factors that do not allow to develop this skill inside the language classroom.

Baker and Westrup (2003) consider that some of the most important barriers to communication are *cultural differences*, social rules and roles for speaking since they can be different in each culture. For example, in some cultures students cannot speak until the teacher says so. Also sex, age, social status and level of education of the speaker may have influence in language learning especially by the vocabulary, kind of specific words, the formality and informality of the speech that the speaker uses with different kind of people, as well as the roles, who starts and who finishes the conversation. All these aspects may cause that students feel ashamed provoking mistakes or offences in a foreign language. *Personal differences is another factor*. Learners are different each other, while some like trying new things and are not afraid to make mistakes, others feel anxious and fear about new situations. It is useful to ask students to think about how they feel when they express ideas in their mother tongue, because it is probably that those who are confident in their mother tongue will also be confident as foreign language learners. In the same way, shy speakers in their mother tongue are prone to be shy and anxious in a foreign language. However, these situations may change, confident learners may become hesitant if they find difficulties and shy speakers may be able to express better their

ideas in a foreign language and hide their shyness. Knowing what kind of language learners are the students is useful, so we can help them to focus on areas they need to work on. *Lack of confidence*, language learners have to know that not all the students are ready to listen and answer when they are trying to communicate in a foreign language and sometimes their answers or questions may be misunderstood by the pronunciation or because do not t put their ideas in order.

Dealing with a big challenge is another factor that can influence students when they start learning a foreign language. Some may be lucky to be taught in small and guided steps but others may find difficult to remember and understand many topics or vocabulary.

No time for speaking represents another factor. This factor is also very common in language classrooms since teachers and students are focused on developing writing skills to be prepared for examinations. A section of speaking is most cases is not included.

Similarly, *preparation for speaking is also an important factor.* Students may be anxious when teachers ask them to speak because speaking is a quickly process and they have to respond fast and they may not know what words to use to express their ideas.

Finally interest *in the topic.* Students can find difficulties to maintain a conversation about a topic that they do not know or that is not interesting for them. An option to attract students to a conversation is by giving them topics about everyday life activities or the option to choose a topic interesting for them. Baker and Westrup (2003)

2.4.1 Foreign language classroom anxiety

A negative factor that is very common in language classrooms is foreign language anxiety. Many students mention that they have a mental block against learning a foreign language and their minds go blank. As a result, this reaction may hinder their ability to use the language in the classroom. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) state that anxiety is a combination of feelings of tension, fear, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.

However, when this reaction is only present in language learning, it enters in the category of specific anxiety reactions. This term is employed by psychologists to make a difference of people who are generally anxious in different situations from those who are only in specific situations.

There are some clinical experience that have identified that the symptoms of the anxious foreign language learners are the same for other specific anxiety. Usually these symptoms are worry, dread, and lack of concentration, forgetful, excessive sweating and palpitations.

Teachers find more common the presence of anxiety in students in two language skills: listening and speaking but the most frequent cited by foreign language students is speaking.

Over studying is related to foreign language anxiety. Many students who are good students in the language classroom may become anxious when they make mistakes in their performance. In occasions, anxious students who strive to be better and do not see good results, drop out language classes in order to alleviate their anxiety.

According to the same authors, foreign language anxiety takes place when a language learner is expected to perform in a foreign or second language within a social and academic context. It is appropriate to make a relation with three related types of performance anxiety. First *communication apprehension* which is the shyness that people presents about communicating with people. This includes speaking in a group, in public and even when listening spoken messages. Second *test anxiety*. It is present when learners encounter fear about conducting a perfect test and if there is minimum mistake they will consider it like a failure.

And finally *fear of negative evaluation*. This anxiety may occur in different social situations. It could be in an interview job or just speaking in a language classroom. It refers to the fear to the negative expectation that people will have about oneself performance.

According to Oxford (1999) (cited in Arnold 1999) there are factors correlated to language anxiety. These include personal aspects, as self-esteem, to procedural aspects as teaching activities and methods. *Self-esteem*, is a self-judgment of worth or value about feelings of efficacy about oneself. It can be an inherent personal

characteristic or a state present in a particular situation. In language learning, usually unsuccessful learners have lower self-esteem and may not handle easily with their anxiety. Contrary to this, successful learners, may have higher levels of self-esteem. For example, for a student whose priority is learning a language and when realizes that is he/she is not successful in the language that he or she wants to learn, can affect his or her self-esteem.

Competiveness is another factor that occurs when students compare themselves with others who maybe excellent language learners because of their pronunciation and the large knowledge of vocabulary that they have. This situation can lead to experience language anxiety in language classrooms.

Identity and cultural shock also play an important role in the development of the speaking skill. Young (1992) (cited in Oxford 1999) agree that when a student feels identified and comfortable with the language group it is because they have similar interests or likes. In this regard, anxiety is lower than when the student is not identified with the language group. But this situation can be the opposite with other learners because when they are very identified with the language group, they feel that they are losing personal identity.

Classroom activities and language methods. Especially oral presentations are considered to be the most anxiety-producing phenomena (Kotch and Terrell 1991 cited in Oxford 1999). These researchers found strong correlation between anxiety and these factors.

Similarly, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986); Koch and Terrell (1991); Price (1991); Scarcella and Oxford (1992); Young (1990) (cited in Oxford 1999) pointed out that instructor-learner interactions lead to language anxiety. Sometimes teachers are not aware of students' feelings or believes when they correct mistakes in a harsh way and ridicule and expose students.

As a conclusion, foreign language anxiety is a factor that affects language learning performance. Within this factor, there are many elements that may cause this reaction in language learners, therefore teachers should consider that anxiety may cause different students' behaviors. To improve foreign language teaching, teachers should recognize and cope with this reaction. According to Oxford (1999), (cited in

Arnold 1999) there are specific techniques that teachers may use in order to reduce anxiety in language classrooms as helping students to understand anxiety, providing a variety of opportunities to perform in the classroom, reducing competition between students, encouraging risk taking and tolerating ambiguity in order to make a comfortable environment in the language classroom.

2.4.2 Language classroom motivation

According to several researchers, motivation is one the most important variables that the language learner make use to succeed (Gardner and Lambert, 1959) (cited in Crookes and Schmidt 1991 and Ushioda 2001). These researchers affirm that motivation has to do with the learners' orientation toward the goal of learning a second language. According to Gardner, motivation is divided into two components, *integrative* that is the interest that the learner has to interact and to be part of a community, and *instrumental* that refers to the interest about the gains obtained of second language proficiency as getting better opportunities of job or a higher salary. Apart from social and pragmatics dimensions of second language motivation, new components were added in order to extent the gardnerian construct. They are: *Intrinsic motivation* that is conceived as a natural interest about something, an internal compensation that is the satisfaction of doing a particular activity and *extrinsic motivation* which refers to actions or behaviors that lead to obtain extrinsic reward such as good grades. Cognitive theories view motivation to be a function of a person's thoughts rather than of some instinct, need, drive, or state; information encoded and transformed into a belief is the source of action.

According to Weiner (1992), (cited in Dornyei 1994) there are three principal cognitive conceptual systems:

The first one is Attribution theory, the main objective of this system is know how past events as bad experiences and fails in the process of language learning affect new and future goals.

The second system is self-efficacy which refers to the judge about oneself of the ability to do or perform a specific actions. Attribution of past accomplishes are useful to develop self-efficacy as well as reinforcement of parents and teachers.

Within this system is also self-confidence which refers to the believe in oneself about the ability that one has to accomplish what is proposed, produce results or perform activities effectively. It may be similar to self-efficacy, but is used in more general sense.

The third system *is the need for achievement* which represents a personality trait which affects every facet of life including language learning.

There are motives and motivational conditions which are focused only on learning situations. According to Dornyei (1994) they are *course specific motivational components*. It includes the syllabus, teaching materials, the teaching method and the learning tasks. Along the same lines, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) suggest four motivational factors that describe second language classroom motivation: *Interest* which concerns to the internal curiosity to know about him or herself. *Relevance* which is related to the importance that the learner gives to the classroom instruction and content as conducive to achieve the goal, mastering the second language. *Expectancy* which concerns about the expectations that the learner has about the tasks and efforts required to accomplish something.

Similarly, Satisfaction is the combination of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation such as enjoyment and pride and compensations resulted from an achieved activity.

The second section is related to the *teacher-specific motivational components*.

This section includes affiliate drive which refers to students' need to do well in school in order to obtain teachers and parents' approbation. A second component is the teacher's authority type. It is when the teacher is the authority in the classroom, involves students in decision making, gives points of view, ideas, choices and let enhance students' intrinsic motivation (Dornyei, 1994).

2.4.3 Strategies to motivate second and foreign language learners

There are strategies that teachers use to motivate language learners. They are not rules but suggestions that can be modified as the teacher believes if they are convenient or not.

Dornyei (1994, p. 281) classified these strategies in three categories: language level, learner level and learning situation level. In *language level* teachers can include social components that share positive experiences related to the language in the syllabus, some examples can be showing TV shows, films or inviting native speakers to the classroom.

Regarding the *learner level*, teachers can motivate students by developing their self-confidence, decreasing students' anxiety and by creating a supportive environment in the classroom.

Concerning the learning situation level, teachers can provide a proper environment on order to establish an appropriate atmosphere to learn a language.

2.5 Communicative learning activities

Communicative language teaching has the purpose of developing communicative language competence that is, the use of the language for useful and meaningful communication. According to Richards (2006) communicative competence involves components of language knowledge such as knowing how to use the language in a variety of purposes and functions, how to use the appropriate language according to the situation and participants and the ability to follow a conversation even when there are difficulties and limitations in one's language knowledge by applying different kinds of communication strategies.

In order to develop learners' communicative competence there are activities that can help to achieve this purpose. Among the most important are the following:

Fluency activities which are useful to interact in a meaningful way and maintain a comprehensible conversation despite a limitation in communicative competence.

Fluency activities have the following characteristics: Express natural use of the language, require meaningful use of the language and communication strategies, link the speech to the context and produce language that is not predictable.

Littlewood (1981) (cited in Richards 2006) suggested two kind of activities: pre-communicative activities which include structural activities and quasi-communicative activities and communicative activities which include functional communication activities and social interactional activities. Functional activities are those that require students' knowledge of the language to fill information in a gap or solve a problem. Social interactional activities, on the other hand, require that the student pay attention to the context and the roles of the people involved in the conversation no matter what kind of language they use (formal or informal). *Information-gap activities*, require that students communicate with others in order to obtain information that they do not possess. These activities can help to convey more authentic communication in the classroom because students may go beyond practicing language forms and use.

Jigsaw activities are another types of communicative activities. These kind of activities are based on information gap principles. In this type of activity the classroom is divided into small groups and each one has information needed to complete an activity.

Task completion activities are other examples of communicative activities. These can be games, map-reading, puzzles etc. The focus of this activity is that student applies language resources to complete the task.

Opinion-sharing activities. In this kind of activities, students share and compare opinions, believes, values.

Information gathering activities are activities related to surveys, interviews, and searches that students will do using their linguistic resources to collect information.

Information-transfer activities are activities in which students have information presented in different forms about certain topics.

Role play is the most popular communicative activity. In this activity a role is assigned to each student, then they must improvise a scene or exchange information.

These are some communicative activities that teachers can implement in the language classroom to develop communicative competence; however, they can be modified according to students' age and necessities.

2.6 The importance of interaction in language learning

Language learning not only has to do with grammar rules and vocabulary. The learner needs to be prepared to use the language effectively to achieve their interactional goals. Any setting in which we use language is a social context with its own rules and patterns, therefore learners need to have knowledge about social uses of language to be prepared about how to use language beyond the classroom. (Bayley & Schechter, 2003 cited in Adams, R. 2018).

Interaction is a common word used in the area of in language learning and teaching, especially when the learning process occur in a communicative setting. Following the same lines, interaction is considered as a key contributor for the process of communication. Rivers (1987) stated that when someone has something to share with another person and that person is interested and attentive to hear the information, then, interaction occurs. Interaction requires receiving and expressing messages; however, this phenomenon takes place when there is an interest about the communicative act and also when there is a comprehension of the other members of the process, that is, one listens, one responds and others listen and respond.

Why is interaction important in language learning situations? Rivers (1987) affirmed that through interaction students can enhance their linguistic abilities as they listen or read real linguistic material. They can also use all the language knowledge that they possess or have learned in real life exchanges by understanding messages.

Interaction becomes essential in cultural aspects because it is useful to contextualize situations since interactive activities prepare students for the real world outside the classroom.

Gass & Mackey (2006), (cited in Adams, R. 2018), for example, pointed out that “when language learners are engaged in meaningful communication in a second language, they are able to focus on meaning, negotiate to make input comprehensible, and to try out new language forms as they produce language”.

2.7 Interactive language learning activities

There are activities that can be applied in the language classrooms in which students can interact in order to solve a problem by exchanging meaningful communicative resources. Some interactive language learning activities according to Krashen (1987) (cited in Rivers, 1987) are the following:

Group decoding of a text. This activity is adequate when teachers assign a reading activity as individual homework. In this activity, students make a circle in the classroom and make a brainstorm by mentioning lexical items they find relevant to understand the reading. In this activity it is important that teachers write all students' contribution on the board. During the time that the teacher assigns activities to the students there is a total control of the discourse. The teacher suggests to link all the items to have a more complete understanding of the discourse and the students suggest which items can be linked and in which order. Finally the teacher provides feedback by recapitulating and linking all the students' suggestions.

Teaching face-saving gambits. In this activity many sentences can be practiced, as teacher explicitly involved students in a group routine conversation. For example, appropriate ways of opening and closing a conversation, and polite ways of interrupting, making a request or making a negative comment. The teacher will write on the board three or more alternatives, such as "I have a question", May I ask a question, May I interrupt or a second? , I would like to ask something. The whole group repeats the sentences to practice intonation, then students practice the sentences individually applying them with a classmate or the teacher when there is an opportunity within the limits of the lesson.

Interpreting a story. This activity can be used when students have a story to read. First, the story has to be chosen. Then the teacher will write on the board an open-ended question that allows many possible answers. Students will do a brainstorm and all the contribution will be recorded on the board. The list will offer many perspectives about the subject that can be discussed in the group.

Gathering information. This activity can be modified due to its versatility.

2.7.1 Characteristics of interactive language learning activities

Interactive language learning activities, according to Kramsch (1987) (cited in Rivers 1987) must be attractive to catch student's attention but also use the target language not only to deal with subject matter but also to regulate interaction by offering models of how to use interactional gambits in natural discourse, build the topic of the activity based on student's contributions and interest because for teacher some topics will appear irrelevant but for students may be very relevant from their perspective.

In brief and taken into account the literature, we can say that interactive language learning activities should have the following characteristics:

- Allow interaction between two persons or more.
- Catch students' interest
- Activities should have a clear goal
- Activities in which students are asked to solve a problem, make decisions, or create something like a presentation, picture.
- Activities in which students can put into practice their communicative abilities, gambits and phrases that they have learned
- Activities in which students try out new language functions, for example: appropriate ways of opening and closing a conversation, and polite ways of interrupting, making a request or making a negative comment, defending an argument, etc.

These are general characteristics of interactive language learning activities, but teachers can make the necessary changes according to the student's needs as well as the goals that teachers want to achieve with the activity. Hendra & Jones (2018) stated that it is helpful to take into consideration the following terms to create the specifics of the activity. These are related to the language used in a given activity and the activity outcome and the student interaction required to reach that outcome. So teachers may choose between focused or unfocused, closed or open, convergent or divergent, and consider the language needed for the activity.

2.7.2 The teacher's role when using interactive language learning activities

Interactive language learning must promote the desire to interact among students. Rivers (1987) pointed out that the teacher must appreciate the uniqueness of each student and their needs without manipulating or deciding how students can learn. He also has to promote learning by encouraging them to build up their confidence and enjoyment of what they are doing. Teachers must demonstrate themselves as an indirect leadership with emotional maturity in order to make students feel comfortable to express themselves in the classroom. Teachers must be flexible in interactive language activities accepting all kind of opinions and being tolerant of errors that students make when they try to communicate in the foreign language.

Adams, R. (2018) suggests some characteristics that the teacher should adopt when using Interactive language learning activities.

Before the activity teachers may first worked with the class to create a positive and collaborative environment in order to direct students in the course to encourage one another, be patient and help each other. Before star off the activity, teachers let students know what the goals of the activity are, so they can stay focused, this involves understanding the instructions of the activity and the language and content learning goals around the activity(for example the use of specific vocabulary in a specific situation, or conversation, etc.).

During the activity commonly students won't ask the teacher their doubts in front of the class, so teachers should check briefly students to make sure they know what they are doing, during this check teacher also can provide hints, explanations, encouragement and help to keep going. Teachers should have knowledge about their student's level in order to spend more time with those with lower proficiency, but also pay attention to the higher proficiency students that may finish early so in this case during the activity teacher may be able to find ways to extend the activities (for example: students compare their ideas with other students).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Abstract

In this chapter the methodology of the research will be presented. The chapter is divided into five sections, the first section deals with the definition of the research approach as well as the reasons why the approach was chosen. In the second section the participants of the research are described and the reasons for their selection. The third section presents characteristics of the research setting in which this research was carried out. The fourth section is focused on the research instruments, it includes a short definition and advantages of the instruments, its purposes in the research and how the instruments were designed and finally the fifth section which deals with the procedure that includes the steps to collect the data of this research.

3.1 The research approach

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2007), a mixed approach is an integration of both qualitative and quantitative research. The mixed approach recognizes how important these traditional researches are by themselves, but also offers a third paradigm option that would provide more complete (useful, informative and balanced) results. So, in mixed method the researcher makes a combination of qualitative and quantitative elements, for example, the use of viewpoints, data collection, and analysis and inference techniques for general purposes about breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.

In order to select which is the appropriate method approach of a research, we need to understand and know what are the elements, advantages and disadvantages of using certain approach.

This research used a mixed approach method. It aims to know what interactive language learning activities enhance the oral skill according to language learning students, so mixed approach would provide to the research more complete results, detail answers and personal stories or anecdotes where can be collected information of student's feelings and perceptions about their language learning experiences and their proposals about how to be confident in the language classroom.

3.2 The participants

The participants involved in this research were students from the Faculty of Languages BUAP, that were studying the Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI). These students were in second semester of the degree. They were taking target language II (10 hours per week as well as other classes in which they were supposed to take the class in English language). The group selected to answer the questionnaire was integrated by 25 students, 3 males and 22 females. Their ages range from 18-23 years old with a schedule of classes from 2 pm to 8 pm. On the other hand, the students selected to answer a second instrument which is an interview. It was integrated by 10 students, 3 males and 7 females, from 18-20 years old. They were also studying the second semester of the degree with a schedule of classes from 2 pm to 8 pm.

These participants were chosen because both groups have from basic to intermediate level of English what would facilitate them answer the questionnaire and the interview. Also because they have experience about some interactive language learning activities that their teachers have implemented in the previous semesters which is useful for this research to know their opinions about what of these they think are working on them.

3.3 Research setting

This research took place at the Faculty of Languages. This institution is a public university which has two degrees: Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés y Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Francés. It is located in the neighborhood named Humboldt in 24 Norte Street, #2003 in Puebla City. The Faculty has approximately 2000 students (being mostly females) and 120 teachers, it has 80 classrooms each one has interactive whiteboard, a led display with internet connection, individual tables and chairs for students. The students of both degrees in this university are trained to be professionals in linguistic, communicative, sociocultural, technological and labor competencies required to promote intercultural communication in the different languages to face the challenges of the globalized world.

The Faculty of Languages also offers the open degree, master's degree in English language teaching and have a center for International certifications and accreditation (CCIA) responsible for certifying foreign language proficiency through internationally recognized exams, endorsed and accepted for purposes of exchange and academic, professional and work mobility.

3.4 Research instruments

In order to determine what interactive language learning activities are helpful to enhance the oral skill in English language, questionnaires and interviews were administered to students of target language two. According to (Zohrabi 2013, p.254) "Questionnaires are doubtless one of the primary sources of obtaining data in any research endeavor". These are, according to empirical authors, some of the most efficient means of collecting data on a large-scale basis. They can be sent or applied simultaneously to a great number of people which make them a time efficient way of collecting data from many people. Due to the respondents will be anonymous, this would lead them to share information more easily. When similar questions are administered simultaneously to a large number of people the acquired data are more identical, correct and standard.

The student's questionnaire included 15 questions; 13 of them were closed and two were opened questions. This questionnaire was written in English. The first three questions were focused on teacher's activities used in the classroom and the role that she or he takes. The following five questions were about language student's feelings about their performance when speaking English, and finally the last seven questions were focused on students' thinking about interactive language learning activities. The questionnaire's purpose was to know what interactive language learning activities language students think that enhance their oral skill as well as their perceptions and experiences in speaking skill in English language.

The second instrument was the interview, Burns (1999, p. 118) contends that "Interviews are a popular and widely used means of collecting qualitative data." (Flick 2006, p. 160) adds that the purpose of interview "is to reveal existing knowledge in a way that can be expressed in the form of answers and so become accessible to interpretation' 'The student's interview included eight questions and was performed

in Spanish because the students decide that in this way they will be more comfortable and they would be able to answer with precision. Three questions were focused on teachers' activities in the classroom, in the following three questions it ask for language students' experiences when speaking English language, the last questions ask for language students' opinions about the importance of using interactive language learning activities, what are the advantages of these and which are the most useful according to their experiences. The purpose of the interview was to explore their points of view about how useful can be interactive language learning activities are in the classroom, with this interview it was possible to collect wider perspectives about interactive activities in the language classroom.

3.5 The procedure

First of all, questionnaires and interviews were designed and then reviewed by the thesis advisor of this research. At the beginning I had to change two questions of the questionnaires in order to be easier for the students. As for the interview, I only had to add three questions more for get it more complete. Later, after the instruments were reviewed I looked for two different groups to apply the instruments, first I choose the groups and then I asked for permission to the teachers. The questionnaires were answered by the students in class and it took approximately 15 minutes. The next day I applied the interview, it took approximately 10-15 minutes for each student, in order that students do not lose their class, they were called to the interview in turns, when one student finished other came and so on, I took notes of the student's answer and I also use a recording voice to save the data. After that the data obtained by the instruments will be processed on the computer for it analysis and interpretation in order to get information to select the most appropriate and useful interactive language activities for students.

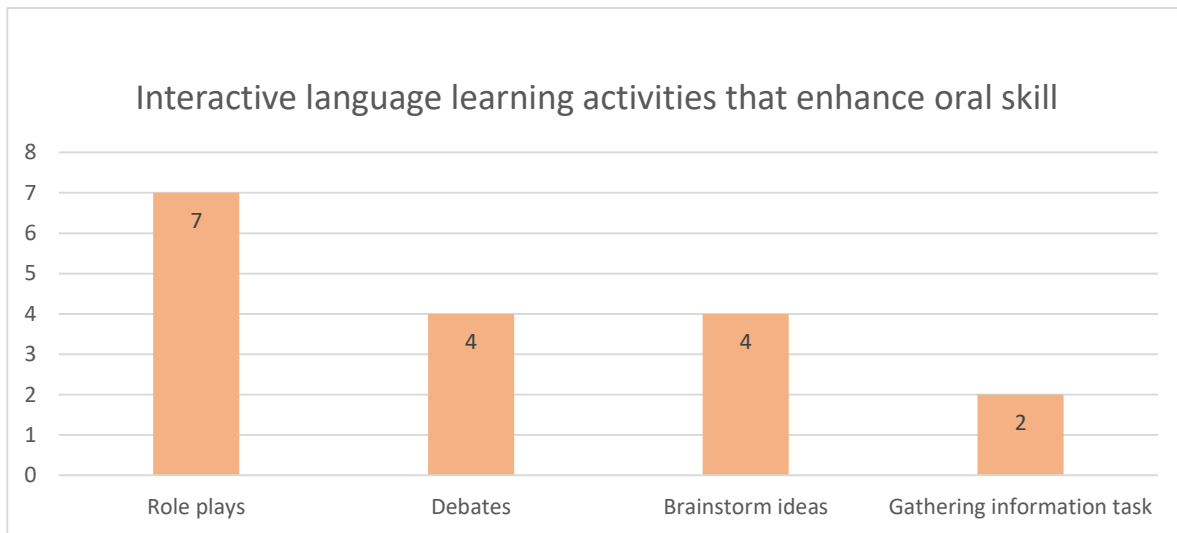
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Abstract

This chapter is focused on the results obtained from the research instruments as well as the interpretation of the results presented in graphs.

4.1 Interactive language learning activities that enhance oral skill based on the questionnaire

As you can see the data collected from the questionnaire displays that role-play is the most effective activity that enhance the oral skill in the English language classroom. The graph below shows its highest point of the role play. Seven students ranked this activity as high. Similarly, debates and brainstorm ideas stay at the same level with four students, while its lowest point is in gathering information task with two students.



Graph 4.1 Interactive language learning activities that enhance oral skill

Based on the students' perceptions, the most important interactive language learning activities are: first role plays, second debates and brainstorm ideas and finally gathering information task.

The existing literature displays that role play is an activity in which a role is assigned for each student and they must act to improvise a scene, exchange information, and reproduce a dialogue, according to the role assigned. In this activity students can put into practice communicative abilities, gambits and phrases that they have

learned applying them in real or fictitious situations, for example telephone conversations, ordering in a restaurant, interview in a TV program, theatre play etc. Role play is a dynamic and interactive activity where students can experiment different and new behaviors without fear to make mistakes because the situation they are acting is just a performance, therefore, students could speak and express freely which lead assume the role easily. Role-plays has many benefits for students, for example if teachers decide to use them to play fictitious characters as in a theatre play. Role plays may be useful to enhance confidence in students while having fun, on the other hand, if teachers implement role plays in real life situations, they could serve to students like a training to know how these situations are, how act, and what kind of words, phrases or expressions use.

4.1.1 Interactive language learning activities that enhance oral skill based on the interview

According to the students interviewed the main language activity is the Debate because they expressed that they liked and preferred an activity in which they have to choose a topic and then develop it by explaining and giving their view points. For example, one student said:

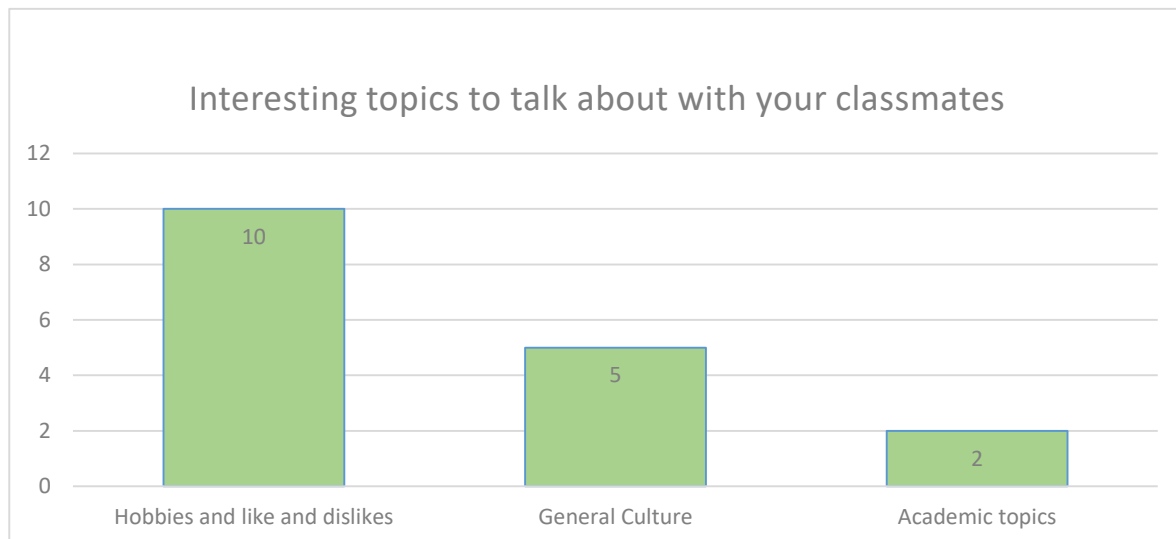
“Me gustan actividades en las que tengo que desarrollar un tema de un contexto real, dar diferentes puntos de vista y que haya competencia entre equipos ya que motiva a querer hacer mejor la actividad”.

After interviewing the students, it was found that most of them feel motivated to speak when there is a competition in the activities, because everyone wants to participate and be the best, having the best answers or arguments. Also most of the students agree that they like to speak about real situations in the world like social problems. Taking into account the content of the answers, speaking activities must be a little bit challenging in order to arise interest in students to participate. A proposal that was found interesting in this interview is that students want to talk about real situations of the world and it could be useful because apart from leading students to express their ideas and practice, as university students, it is important to know about what is happening about economic, cultural and political aspects in our city and the world.

4.2 The way to enhance the oral skill when using interactive language learning activities based on the questionnaire

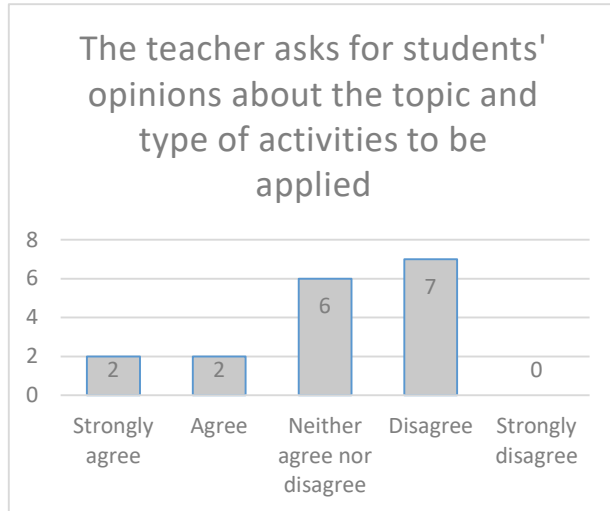
Regarding the second research question that addresses the way to enhance the oral skill by interactive language learning activities, students agreed that teachers must catch their attention with attractive topics in the activities in order to make them interested to speak and thus enhance oral skill. The data collected from the questionnaire points out, that the most interesting topic to use when students interact in language classroom is Hobbies, likes and dislikes.

Considering the information displayed in the graph, Hobbies, likes and dislikes reach a peak with 10 students. In a second place we can find general culture with five students and the lowest point of the graph with academic topics with two students.

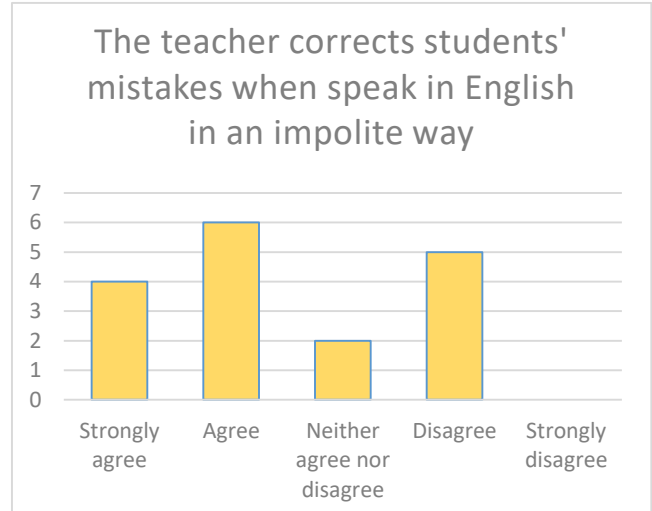


Graph 4.2 Interesting topics to talk about with your classmates

4.3 Enhancing self-confidence when using interactive language learning activities based on the questionnaire



Graph 4.3 Teacher's way to involve students in the class



Graph 4.3.1 Teacher's way to correct students' mistakes

The two graphs above have to do with two aspects that the previous literature suggests that affect students' confidence in the language classroom. I consider important to know if students are being affected by these aspects which would not let them be confident when they interact and speak in the language classroom.

The information collected from the questionnaire points out that the teacher does not ask students for opinions about the features of the activities to be applied. The graph 4.3 shows its highest point in the word "disagree" that means, seven students say that teachers do not ask them for opinions about the activities to be applied, following by "neither agree nor disagree" with 6 students and at the lowest point "agree" and "strongly agree" with 2 students each one. The data also indicates that teachers are correcting students' mistakes in a rude and impolite way. The graph 4.3.1 shows a peak in the word "Agree" with six students and "strongly agree" with four students. As a result 10 students say that teachers are impolite when correcting mistakes. In the second place, we have "Disagree" with five students, and at the lowest point of the graph "neither agree nor disagree" with two students.

The results in the graphs shows that students confidence is been affected by teacher's way to involve students in the classroom and teacher's way to correct mistakes. So, teachers may be aware about this negative aspects.

So, to make students feel confident and comfortable in these kind of activities, the teacher may encourage students to be active participants, by asking them for opinions about the topic of the activities. On the other hand, teachers must be respectful and polite when correct mistakes in order to enhance students' self-confidence.

4.3.1 Enhancing self-confidence when using interactive language learning activities based on the interview

Students have different opinions and proposals about enhancing self-confidence by using interactive language learning activities, but most of them agree that a positive environment in the classroom is very important to feel confident when speaking in English. For example one student said:

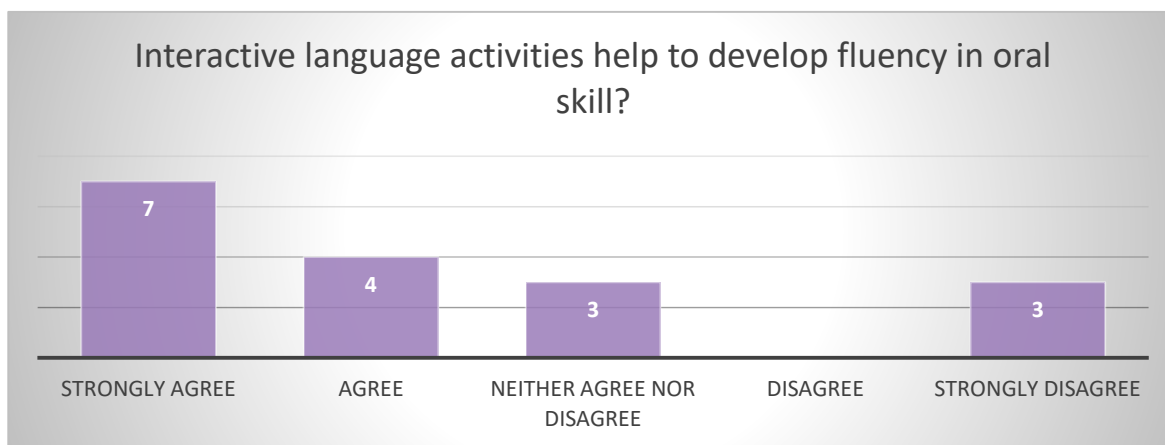
"I think a way to be confident when we speak in English is respect each other and don't judge, just speak, doesn't matter if we have mistaken and think that not all people are perfect"

I agree with this viewpoint because many times, students are rude with those who make mistakes, so, students have to be aware that in the learning languages mistakes are part of the process. Students also considered that practice and repetition of words pronunciation, may be useful in order to have a better pronunciation when they are working with interactive language learning activities, and avoiding classmates' jokes about their mistakes. I consider useful giving a space before and after using interactive activities to practice and correct pronunciation. In this way, students will feel ready and confident to speak. Students consider that speaking about interesting topics could generate self-confidence in the language classroom and motivate them to interact. I agree with this point because when there is an interesting topic, students feel motivated to express their opinions and their participation increases, so it can lead to create a comfortable environment. Finally, students suggested to establish a specific schedule for speaking activities. This

action could help enhance students' confidence, because the more they speak, the more they lose shyness.

4.4 Contribution of interactive language learning activities about developing fluency in speaking based on the questionnaire

According to the information obtained from the questionnaire, students find interactive language learning activities very useful to develop fluency. As we can see in the graph below, seven students strongly agree with this statement and four students selected that they agree with the statement. In total, 11 students confirmed that interactive language activities help to be fluent in English. Three students perceived that neither agree and three students strongly disagreed with the statement.



Graph 4.4 Interactive language learning activities help to develop fluency in oral skill

Regarding students' answers in the open questions included in the questionnaire, they mentioned that interactive activities are helpful because they are good means to acquire better pronunciation and intonation. For example, one student wrote:

“Cuando hablo en este tipo de actividades puedo practicar mi pronunciación así como la entonación de las palabras que digo ya sea que este preguntando algo o me sorprenda, lo cual siento que es importante si quieres escucharte natural cuando hablas inglés”.

This student mentioned some elements that lead to gain fluency, such as pronunciation and intonation, which are important in oral skill.

Another student expressed:

“Con estas actividades tenemos la oportunidad de hablar e interactuar con nuestros compañeros, aunque todavía no sepamos mucho vocabulario creo que lo importante es hablar aunque tengamos dificultades podemos improvisar y no quedarse callados creo que eso hace que cuando hablemos se escuche natural”

This viewpoint is wise, because fluency occur when students are able to maintain communication despite their limited vocabulary by using communication strategies.

4.5 Interactive language learning activities’ influence in other skills apart from oral skill

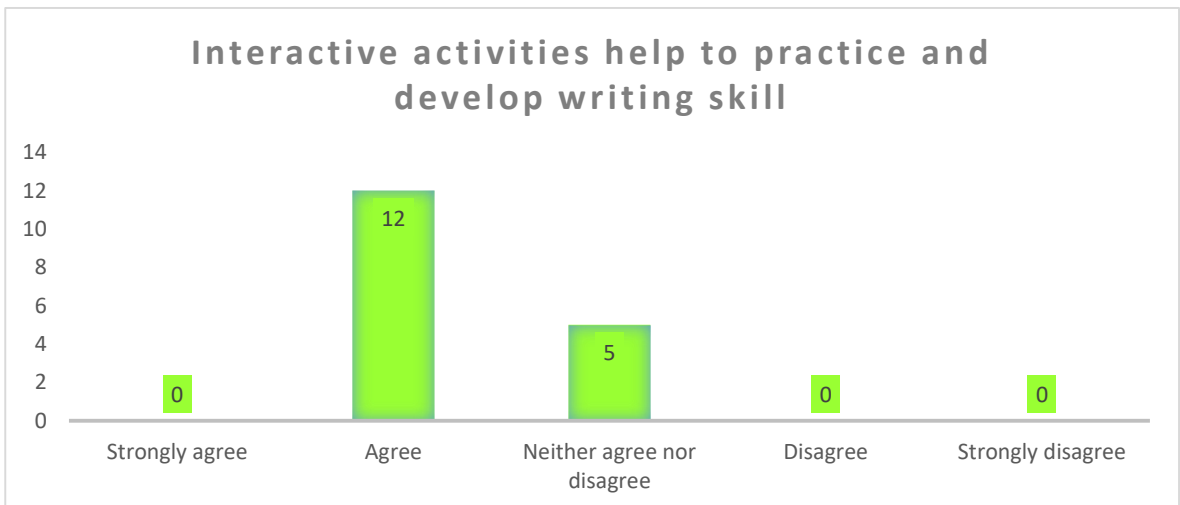
Regarding the fifth research question, the graphs below display the skills benefited by these kind of activities. First *listening*, 15 students indicated this is the skill that is most benefited by this kind of activity. Second *reading* with 12 students who agreed and finally writing with only 10 students who agreed with the statement.



Graph 4.5 Interactive language learning activities contribution to practice and develop listening skill



Graph 4.5.1 Interactive language learning activities contribution to practice and develop reading skill



Graph 4.5.2 Interactive language learning activities contribution to practice and develop writing skill

Based on the information displayed in the graphs, listening is the most practiced and developed skill apart from the oral skill. This is when students work with language learning activities. The listening skill is closer associated to the oral skill, without this, oral skill could not occur. Listening is the first skill that occurs in a natural order of mother tongue acquisition, so in any process of second language learning students must start from the receptive skills listening or reading to later develop speaking and writing. I agree with students, because while students interact some of them speak and others listen. In this way they enhance and develop listening by recognizing distinctive sounds of the language by developing oral comprehension strategies

such as detection of key words or by guessing the meaning of words the context, etc. at the same time, they are prepared to speak in a more complete way.

4.6 Advantages of using interactive language learning activities based on the questionnaire

In the questionnaire applied, I include the following open question " Do you think interactive language learning activities are important in the language classroom? Why?

Students answered that some of the advantages of these activities are the following:

- They help to make entertaining and dynamic classes.
- Help to avoid monotonous classes.
- They help to practice speaking and develop fluency in the language.
- They indicate that interactive activities let students interchange ideas and information. This leads to a better learning.
- Interactive activities are a good mean to place students in a test environment which is useful to learn how to act in real situations and recognize different communicative functions.

4.7 Advantages of using interactive language learning activities based on the interview.

The main advantages of using interactive language learning activities based on the interview are: acquisition of vocabulary and adequate pronunciation, for example one student said:

"With this kind of activities in which I have to speak, the teacher can listen to me and correct my pronunciation, and that's good because it helps us to express better in English and be good speakers",

This statement is true because feedback contributes that students enhance their oral expression. The second advantage for students is that "interactive activities are useful to decrease shyness, because everyone in the classroom need to speak in order to fulfill the activities so students feel more confident. I agree with this students' viewpoint and I consider useful to implement more interactive activities in language classes in this way all students will get involve in the oral skill.

4.8 Summary

This chapter described the data obtained from the students' questionnaire and the interview. The results were displayed graphs in order to answer the research questions. The sections included information regarding interactive language learning activities that enhance oral skill, the way to enhance oral skill and self-confidence, the skills developed apart from oral skill, and the advantages of using these activities.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Abstract

This research project explored the main interactive language learning activities that enhance the oral skill, the way to enhance self-confidence when using this kind of activities, their effectiveness about developing fluency, and the benefits of using these activities according to students' opinions and perceptions. In this chapter general conclusions and suggestions are presented as well as the practical implications of the study. Finally limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are presented.

5.1. General conclusions

The conclusions of this research were drawn after analyzing the applied instruments. I obtained very useful information in my research project that was focused on answering five research questions. They are presented and answered in this section.

RQ1. What are the interactive language learning activities that enhance oral skills?

In order to answer this research question a questionnaire was administered to students, the results showed that the interactive language learning activities that enhance oral skill are the following:

1. Role plays
2. Debates
3. Brainstorm ideas

These activities are the most useful for students to enhance oral skill, activities that can be adapted for large and small groups.

RQ2. How to enhance oral skill and self-confidence when using interactive language learning activities?

To answer this research question I applied a questionnaire and an interview in order to obtain more complete answers. To enhance students' self-confidence when using these kind of activities students consider important the following aspects:

1. Classmates' respect and tolerance
2. Teachers' way to correct students' mistakes

3. Teachers' way to involve students in the class

RQ3. How effective are interactive language learning activities about developing fluency in speaking?

Students strongly agreed that interactive language learning activities are very useful to develop fluency in speaking and their reasons are the following:

1. It is a good way to acquire better pronunciation and intonation
2. In these kind of activities, students are be able to maintain communication despite their limited vocabulary by using communication strategies.

RQ4. Do interactive language learning activities influence other skills besides oral skill? If so, which are those skills?

The main skill that interactive language learning activities influence besides oral skill is Listening skill.

RQ5. What are the advantages of using interactive language learning activities?

The advantages of using interactive language learning activities according to students' perceptions:

1. Make an entertaining and dynamic class
2. Help students to be fluent in the language they are learning
3. Lead to a better learning
4. Place students in a test environment for further real situations
5. Are useful in the acquisition of vocabulary and pronunciation
6. Are helpful to decrease shyness in students

5.2 General suggestions

The findings above may help teachers and students of the Faculty of Languages of the BUAP. It will be useful that teachers consider using these activities that students have proposed to interact in English. Nowadays the Faculty of Languages requires that students have a knowledge of English so, these students could be able to interact in English easily. Implementing these activities since the beginning of course, could have many advantages. During the journey of this research project some participants of this study mentioned "the sooner we start to interact in English the better", and that is true, with the time, students become more

confident and enhance their pronunciation, acquire more vocabulary and develop good communication strategies.

5.3 Practical implications of the study

It was found that role plays are the activities that help to enhance the oral skill for the students. Also, the way to enhance students' self-confidence is that teachers pay attention to students' feelings and perceptions, as well as the relevant benefits of using these kind of activities.

The results of this study will be helpful for FL teachers. They can use the information of this research before designing the curriculum of a language course. Interactive language learning activities have many advantages so, implementing these activities in their language classroom may foster students' participation and in this way enhance their oral skill. This research may be useful also for independent students so, they can find some strategies and activities to practice oral skill.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The journey of this research project had some limitations. First, there were some difficulties with regard to the selection of a topic, because many ideas were contemplated. Secondly, at the beginning of the writing of the literature review some difficulties appeared about the selection of the appropriate topics, and many information that would not be useful was being taken into account for this research. Thirdly, questionnaires and interviews were carried out in order to get the results in this process. For me it was difficult to design the appropriate questions. Another limitation was the time to apply them, because the class of the research participants overlapped with my work schedule; however, the schedules were organized and with the suggestions of the thesis advisor these difficulties could be solved.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

During the research project some suggestions emerged from the limitations that it has. First it would be useful to carry out the activities in a certain period of time to prove its effectiveness in this way the results may be more successful. Also to expand the number of the participants and call for different contexts in order to get a broader panorama. Other suggestion would be investigate in depth about the problems faced by students who have difficulty in expressing themselves in the target language, problems that could trigger in the weak of oral skill enhance. Future researchers about this topic could explore the impact of this activities designing a curriculum which includes interactive language learning activities with some of the recommendations to enhance self-confidence. During the interviews with the research participants I realized that most of them agreed with comments and how helpful it could be dedicated time for pronunciation before interactive activities. Due to pronunciation is related to oral skill I think it will be great that future researchers consider investigate about pronunciation activities and strategies.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire for students

The following questionnaire was designed to gather information about the use of interactive language learning activities in the classroom. The information collected will be kept confidentially and it will serve for research purposes. Thanks for your participation. 😊

Age: _____ (F) (M) Quarter: _____ Level of English: (beginner) (false beginner) (intermediate) (advanced)

I. Instructions: Underline the option that best answer the question according to your experience.

1. The teacher uses speaking activities in the classroom.

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

2. The teacher asks to the classroom for opinions about the topic and type of the speaking activities to be applied.

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

3. The speaking activities that the teacher applies in the classroom are attractive to me:

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

4. When I speak English in the classroom I feel comfortable and secure:

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

5. When I speak English in the classroom I feel anxious and nervous:

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

6. Speaking activities help me to be fluent. If yes, explain why.

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

7. The teacher corrects my mistakes when I speak in English in a soft and gently way:

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree
8. The teacher corrects my mistakes when I speak in English in an impolite way:

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

9. I consider that interactive activities help me to practice and develop listening skill:

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

10. I consider that interactive activities help me to practice and develop writing skill:

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

11. I consider that interactive activities help me to practice and develop reading skill:

a) Strongly agree b) agree c) Neither agree nor disagree d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree

12. Lists from the most (1) to the least (4) the following interactive activities according what do you like the most:

- () Gathering information task
- () Debates
- () Brainstorm ideas
- () Role plays

13. List from the most (1) to the least (4) the following topics according which are the most interesting to you to talk about when you interact with your classmates:

- () Hobbies and like and dislikes
- () General culture
- () academic topics

14. Do you think interactive activities are important in the classroom? Explain Why.

15. How do you think you will be more confident when you speak in English?

Appendix 2. Interview for students

1. Does or did your teacher use interactive language learning activities in your language class?
2. Do you like them?
3. What type of activities that use interaction do you like?
4. How do you feel when you speak in English during these kind of activities?
5. Do you think interactive language learning activities are helpful? Why?
6. What are the main features of interactive language learning activities that your teacher uses?
7. What resources do you think that can help you to be more confident when you speak English?
8. Which skills do you think interactive language learning activities help you to develop?