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The conversation workshop:

A tool to practice SL

Oral production

**A thesis submitted to the School of Languages for the Degree of
LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS**

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Abstract

This thesis reports on a qualitative study concerning the conversation workshop as a tool to practice SL oral production. This study was carried out at a public university in a faculty of modern languages, which has a conversation workshop for SL learners. The primary objectives of this study were to investigate what motivates students to attend the conversation workshop, analyze students' behavior in an autonomous environment as well as to analyze the features that make the conversation workshop a good alternative to practice the oral production.

The research data was collect via observations and interviews that were applied to five students who attended the conversation workshop and that had different language levels. The research findings reveal that students that had attended the workshop had several personal and linguistic changes. In some cases, they became more confident when participating or speaking in front an audience. Others gained more vocabulary even they became more fluent. It was also found that students who attended the conversation workshop were more skilled to work in an autonomous environment and make decisions about their learning development.

Though the university gives students the opportunity to have more alternatives to practice the oral production, there are only few students who are truly aware of how this workshop can help them to develop several abilities to perform a professional job in the future. More results and implications are described within this thesis.

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TO GOD FOR NEVER LEAVING US ALONE

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Since humans started to evolve, the changes were remarkable in many aspects of their surroundings including social, affective and educational aspects. As a result, the necessity of communication grew parallel to this phenomenon causing with this the awareness of creating innovative and better systems to prepare new generations to face the changes. However, for some areas the search for better opportunities were based on learning other customs, behaviors or languages. Therefore, if students are more prepared professionally, their opportunities to increase their quality of life will increase as well. Giving them the tools to face the possible outcomes certainly will help them to accomplish not only their personal also their professional goals.

Learning a second language nowadays is a general concern among society and residents of the country. To have the opportunity of studying a foreign language is really important, but the process of learning and performing it has its own difficulties. This could be a reason why students must go beyond the classroom during their education development. In other words, they have to search for those alternatives that increase their professional opportunities.

When students are learning a second language, they were taught the four main skills, which are reading, listening, speaking and writing and sub skills as grammar and vocabulary. This thesis is focused on the speaking ability which is a productive skill that “consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning” (Allwright &

Bailey, 1991) and is considered one of the most difficult skills to learn for several reasons and it is because the production of the language involves as is mentioned above some aspects like, student self-confidence which is an attitude that allows individuals to have positive and realistic views of themselves and their situations. Students with high self-esteem trust in their own abilities, have a general sense of control in their lives, and believe that, within reason, they will be able to do what they wish, plan, and expect.

Therefore, a place that gives students the opportunity to practice outside the classroom and make them feel comfortable with the idea of doing it could be seen as good alternative to reinforce their learning and at the same time give students the opportunity to experiment and be in touch with the language in different situations and topics.

Additionally, the conversation workshop seems to increase many positive aspects among students, such as motivation, autonomous learning, self-confidence and necessity of interaction with other and so on. However, this research does not try to underestimate teachers' work inside the classroom only to present a new option for students to practice and manage their ability.

Through this investigation the intention is to understand why the conversation workshop is consider as a good option to practice the oral skill and which other personal aspects it fosters among students that have access to this particular place, with the finality of gathering as much information as possible to contribute to students learning development during their degree.

1.1. Methodology.

The methodology of this study was based on qualitative research with the finality of gathering information through observations and questionnaires. These two instruments were applied to students of a public university that were part of the workshop, and the data collection was analyzed in order to answer the main questions in which this study was based on.

1.2. Origin of the research.

The motives that encouraged us to choose our context and topic of investigation was our personal experience during the degree, which certainly made us think of how meaningful is to be able to practice what were learnt inside the classroom and to have the opportunity to develop more abilities which helped us in the production of the language.

Another reason for this decision, was the interest in new alternatives that not only give the space to practice the target language but also that guide students to new ways of learning, that motives them and of course that commit students in what they are doing. “Learners who accept the idea that their own efforts are crucial to their progress in learning and behave accordingly...” are closer to reach their purposes (Scharle & Szabó, 2000). As students, we should be conscious of the future responsibility we might have in our hands when we officially practice our degree.

1.3. Significance of the study.

While we can think in several reasons why this study could be significant for a second language context, for this thesis mainly two were considered. Firstly, our personal

significance, we believe that it is important to know what options would help us as a teacher to develop and perform our professional job as better possible. Secondly, the professional significance which is that knowing how the workshop helps students' oral production it could be promoted in bilingual universities with the purpose of increasing awareness among students regarding to their future role inside the classroom. As a result, it could encourage students to look for themselves for alternatives that can be tangible during their process of learning. In addition, as a final advantage of this study is to discover how the conversation workshop might foster personal aspects such as autonomous learning not only during the degree also eventually as part a professional environment.

1.4. Context of the research

This research is directly related to the oral production, which is one of the four skills taught inside the classroom but although speaking could be seen as one part of second language learning is influenced by many aspects including personal and environmental factors just as was mentioned previously.

Factors that could be identified by the use of the conversation workshop and which we will explain better in the next chapter. In autonomous learning students are learning from themselves and consciously searching for more alternatives to practice their target language outside the classroom demonstrating with this that they are aware of their future performance as teachers. Motivation is mainly the reason why these particular students attend to this workshop, what makes this place different from the classroom and what moves them to go deeper in their development. As it was mentioned above, self-confidence, attitude and anxiety also have an important role in students' behavior regarding

the use of the foreign language. According to the level of self-esteem, they presented particular characteristics that are useful and useless depending on the case. In the same manner learners' attitude and anxiety is a key for how fast they learn and how they produce the language.

However, the research is attached as well to other functional areas as the operation of the workshop that will help us understand how this place works. Group techniques used by the guides that help them in the management of the situation in order to control students behave in an autonomous environment and with the group interaction. In general words, how they elicit students' participation using their target language no matter which is their level.

1.5. Background of the researcher.

We were a bilingual students coursing a Modern Languages degree in the faculty and with interest in several areas related with teaching. In particular we have personal interest in students' oral production because in our own experience during school years, learning a second language, we noticed the lack of opportunities to practice the speaking outside the classroom.

1.6. Location of the study

The research was done in a public university in the faculty of Modern Languages, in which students were learning a second language. The sample of the students we observed and interview were a reduce group of students from different levels of target language. We decided to do this study with them because all they attend the conversation workshop of the

same faculty and had some features in common that fit with the purpose of our investigation.

The center of the investigation was the conversation workshop, which is a reduced class where there are no teachers. Only students guide it from higher levels of the same faculty and with high level of fluency, vocabulary and communication proficiency. These guides decided a topic per day. Most of them were related with daily life situation and they promoted students' participation with talks about personal experiences or opinions related with the chosen topic.

Previously, we mentioned that students who attend the workshop had many features in common. Some features we listed were: 1) students were familiar with the use of the target language, 2) they were aware of practicing the language outside the classroom, which is the principal reason why they attend the workshop and 3) they had disposition to learn. The three features unconsciously helped them increase other aspects of learning like autonomous learning, motivation, group work and so on.

1.7. Research objectives

In addition, this investigation had as objective four main points, which were the followings:

- a. To investigate what motivates students to attend to the workshop
- b. To analyze how the workshop operates
- c. To analyze students' behavior in an autonomous environment

- d. To analyze the features that makes the workshop a good alternative to practice the oral production.

1.8. Research questions

The investigation was based on three main questions. Answering the following questions, we intend to reach the purpose of this thesis. As an important comment, we refer to personal aspects to those qualities that were increased by the conversation workshop such as self-confidence, group work or even autonomous learning.

RQ1. How does the conversation workshop motivate students to practice their oral ability?

RQ2. What personal aspects does the conversation workshop increase among students?

RQ3. To what extent does the conversation workshop help students' oral production?

1.9. Conclusion

This first chapter presented the origin of this research as well as the significance, context, objectives and how the study was done. Additionally, it presented the research questions that we used to direct our research and in which we based the instrument of investigation. In the next chapter we will go deeper and it will contain all the information about previous research, theories and each concept will be defined in order to understand

better the importance and advantages that represent having a conversation workshop in a bilingual context.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.0. Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter the aim of this study was to understand how the conversation workshop helps students to practice the oral skill and at the same time how it promotes among students several personal factors that help them to acquire the second language. During our process of learning a second language, we realized that learning is a long process in which the absolute success not only depends in the learner's efforts. There are several reasons why students could acquire the target language a best possible and why they might have some obstacles in learning.

Teachers have to use many tools to ensure the learning like teaching techniques or strategies but in many cases, this is not enough. Learning is influence by many aspects that not depends of teachers work inside the classroom as the affective factors that could interfere with students' performance or could facilitate them their learning depending of the student. Motivation, attitude, self-esteem and anxiety are some of the factors that as we mentioned before interfere in the students learning process, so we think is important to maintain places where students can work their weaknesses in order to facilitate their learning and production of the target language and at the same time use these places as a method for learning how to control those factors that can interfere with their process.

The training as future teachers had fostered many good things among students. However, autonomous learning is one positive aspect that teachers hope to develop in learners of a second language. We can affirm autonomy is the reason why students are

aware of finding new alternatives to prove their advances and to practice what they learnt inside the classroom. In addition, during our training some skills were more difficult to develop than others. It is not new that oral production is one of the major problems for second language learners and the lack of opportunities for practicing make this problem worst, even though teachers applied some strategies inside the classroom to help them in some cases it had been useless. All we mentioned above, took us to this study with the finality of answering our research questions presented in chapter 1.

In addition, this chapter presents the study in the context of existing theories and studies. Thus, the chapter begins with a discussion of second language theory of the aspects that affect or influence learning and concludes with a description and discussion of voluntary language workshops as a means to practice foreign language skill. The first section of the chapter discusses elements particularly related to speaking skill, which is often influenced, by emotional factors as well as language skill factors. Since the voluntary workshop, concept functions within the area of independent and autonomous learning, section 2.3 presents the theories and studies associated with those concepts. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the theories associated with foreign language learning and developing the speaking skill.

2.1. Second language acquisition affective filter

To acquire any kind of knowledge involves many aspects, which are not only subjective or reflective. Learning encompasses the use of emotional factor that interfere directly in the learning process and that in many cases is hard for students to control during their performance or use of the language.

The affective filter theory is related with the affective factors that can impede students learning and performance of a second language. Despite the efforts that teachers or students can make during their process of acquiring a language these factors always are influencing students learning. Although, these affective factors also can work in a positive way is important to understand them and take into account their presence in any human being.

According to Krashen (1985), there are affective factors in language learning that are like a filter, which filtrates the amount of input in learners' brains. People with high affective filter will lower their intake whereas; people with low affective filter allow input into their language acquisition device. The four factors that Krashen (1985), discuss in his theory are motivation, attitude, anxiety and self-confidence that are explain more deeply in the next section. In the next point of this chapter, they are explained individually in order to facilitate the relation with this research.

2.1.1 Motivation

In addition, of what was mentioned above and to understand even more the role of motivation in a second language-learning context we will give the most relevant definitions according to some authors. Gardner (1985) defined motivation in learning a second language as “the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity”. Motivation is also defined as the impetus to create and sustain intentions and goal-seeking acts (Ames & Ames, 1989). Motivation is a desire to achieve a goal, combined with the energy to work towards that goal (Ngeow & Yeok-Hwa, 1998).

Many researchers consider motivation as one of the main elements that determine success in developing a second or foreign language; it determines the extent of active,

personal involvement in the learning process, which is important to maintain among students.

With the previous definitions is comprehend the reason why motivation is considered an affective factor which certainly dull students' performance and acquisition of the language if is presented in a low level. Furthermore, is not new that motivation is one of the main problems that teacher faced in a classroom and which in good levels can facilitated even more the learning.

On the other hand, motivation is not just a simple area that teachers and students should work on; it has its own complexity as well. Gardner and Krashen (1985), point out that there are two types of motivation, integrative and instrumental, which will be defined in the next section.

2.1.1.1. Integrative and Instrumental motivation

As it was said before, there are two categories of motivation; integrative and instrumental. "A learner is said to be integrative motivated when he wishes to identify with another ethno linguistic group" (Gardner and Lambert, cited in Larsen Freeman and Long, 1992, p. 173). Furthermore, William and burden (1997, p.6) claim, "An integrative orientation occurs when the learner is studying a language because of a wish to identify with the culture of speakers of that language". Also, Brown (1994, p.154) says that "an integrative motive is employed when learners wish to integrate themselves within the culture of the second language group, to identify themselves with and become part of that society" this means that in order to feel accepted in that specific group or society where the second language is spoken, students have a high level of integrative motivation.

Thus, integrative motivation refers to a desire to learn a foreign language because the students want to get along with a community; this means that identify themselves with the culture, customs, values, believes and all that language involves. This kind of motivation is created because of a desire to be in touch and to communicate with the people who speak the language they are learning. Another reason is that a person wants to know more about a specific country and feel part of it by learning the language spoken in that place.

On the other hand, instrumental motivation has as main purpose to use knowledge and take advantage of it as an instrument to get something else. Gardner and Lambert (cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1992 p.173) hold that “the learner is motivated to learn a second language for utilitarian purposes such as furthering a career, improving social status or meeting an educational requirement”. In addition, Brown (1994) claims that “instrumental motivation refers to motivation to acquire a language as means for attaining instrumental goals: furthering a career, reading technical material, translation, among other” (p. 153). In other words, instrumental motivation has as its main purpose to learn a language to cover a requirement; it could be at school or work. This is a desire to learn a language because of the achievement of functional goals. Students are motivated because they wish to carry out processes that most of the times are mandatory. It is important to realize that this motivation is the most common among learners.

Furthermore, it is essential to find a balance between these two types of motivation. Students do not know if they could work better if they use another kind of motivation besides the one they already have used. However, nowadays there are many strategies, which teachers can use to work students’ motivation inside the classroom.

2.1.2. Attitude

Based in the affective filter theory proposed by Krashen (1985), attitude is the second of the four factors that could difficult second language acquisition. As we know attitude refers to the way learners act in specific environments, student's attitude towards learning a second language could be wild different from ones to others. A common example of how the attitude can affect learning process, students learn a second language because they want instead of being obligate to do so. In the first case, studying a second language because he wants create a motivating atmosphere and of course a good attitude from student towards his learning rather than when he is obligated which certainly would cause a different effect in the student behavior and attitude; as a result, his learning most of the times is affected in several aspects like commitment or participation in class.

2.1.3. Anxiety

Gardner and MacIntyre (1989-1991, b) see language anxiety as “the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient.” There are some positive and negative emotions influencing second language learners. On the positive side, having a relaxed atmosphere where learners are not embarrassed and where they are able to have fun create a good environment for learning and to interact with others. On the negative side, material out of the grasp of the learners or fierce competition among learners can create an environment that is not conducive to learning. In addition, fierce competition can lead to anxiety.

Recently many researches indicate that language anxiety affects the second language acquisition and had stated that there are more aspects related with students' anxiety which

are: communication apprehension, fear of negative social evaluation and test anxiety which we will explain briefly.

Communication apprehension is an individual level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons; Fear of negative social evaluation refers to students' worries of others opinions in general words fear of being criticize; and test anxiety is when learners' experiences distress before, during or after a task or any kind of assessment even exams which lead them to have a bad or poor performance. These stages of anxiety are some of the reasons why learners have problems in acquiring second language.

2.1.4 Self- confidence

According to Coopersmith (1967 p. 4 & 5), "Self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in attitudes that individuals hold towards themselves. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behaviors." Every human being possesses some extent of self-confidence and belief in one's own ability to carry out a task, although the extent is different from each other.

In learning context, self-esteem also has an important role in the process of acquiring and performing the target language. MacIntyre, Dornyei, Clement and Noels (1998) suggested that self-confidence significantly contributes to the learner's willingness to communicate in a foreign language. In the affective filter theory proposed by Krashen (1985), he points out the importance of self-confidence in many aspects of human develop but as a major are in learning a second language. Self-confidence students dare to adventure to communicate in a foreign language and can gain more language abilities. While those

who lack self-confidence will lose the chances to practice their target language because they are afraid of losing face and making mistakes.

As in anxiety, self-confidence also has three stages in which it could be presented (Brown, 2000). Global self-esteem is the general assessment one makes of one's own worth or value over time and across different situation. Thus, it is, in a sense, an overall appraisal. Situational self-esteem involves one's self-appraisal in specific traits such as intelligence and athletic ability, or particular situations such as education, work and home. Task self-esteem refers to one's own assessment in particular task and particular situations. For example, within second language domain, task self-esteem might be related to particular language skill such as listening, speaking, writing and reading. Self-confidence contributes in diverse aspects of students learning but it is most exposed to the eye when the language is spoken.

2.1.4.1 Self-confidence vs. fluency

When we refer to the production of the language, we might refer as well to elements that are part of it as fluency. The relation between fluency and self-confidence is, if a student develops a good fluency in speaking, he will be able to behave with confidence in a spoken language situation.

As was defined in previous section self-confidence is an important cause of students' good oral production; as part of the affective filter proposed by Krashen (1985), in a good level it provide students with more opportunities to communicate according to their needs. Contrary to that, if students have a low level of self-esteem it will interfere in several aspects including fluency.

2.2. Other Personal factors

In classroom, teachers face many kinds of problems and boundaries that they solve most of the times. However, in a classroom there is also different kind of students with different personalities that teacher has to consider in order teaching students according to their needs. Gass & Selinker (1994, p. 260) state, “it is necessary to look more closely at how personality factors affect an individual in specific situation, rather than looking for global influence”. Personality factors in second language learning play an important role in the way students develop their target language.

As was explained in the affective filter theory, some of those personality factors identified by Krashen (1985) were motivation, anxiety, attitude and self-confidence but there are other personal aspects as: introversion, extroversion, risk taking, empathy and inhibition that I considered important to explain because they can also interfere in the learning process or to be more specific in the use of the oral ability.

2.2.1. Introversion and extroversion

“Introversion is the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfillment apart from a reflection of this self from other people” (Brown, 2000, p. 155); the main characteristic of introverted person is that their behavior is based on quietness. Introverted students are more reserved; they do not interact very much with people around them. They prefer doing things by themselves, without help from other. They are not very willing to talk so much. Contrary to introverted people, Larsen-Feeman and Long (1992) argue that “extroversion may not in itself lead to second language proficiency but it may encourage people to continue with their study, which in turn promotes second language acquisition” (p. 186). In other words, extroverted students have a high level of interaction

with other in a second language context, which in a long term it benefits student's communication in their learning process.

There are some advantages and disadvantages on being introverted and extroverted which certainly are reflected in the assessments. Depending of the assessment it could be required some characteristics of the introverted or extroverted personality. None of the two is better but it is important to make a balance to have the result that you expect.

2.2.2. Risk-taking

Risk taking is an important characteristic to be a successful learning a second language. "learners have to be able to "gamble" a bit, to be willing to try out hunches about the language and take the risk of being wrong" (Brown, 1994, p.140). "Successful language learners, in their realistic appraisal of themselves as vulnerable beings yet capable of accomplish a task, must be willing to become "gamblers" in the game of language that is a bit beyond their absolute certainty" (Richard & Renandya, 2002, p.12). Both authors agree about the risk taking characteristics and results. Hence, risk-taking represents a challenge in the students learning process.

Nevertheless, teachers have to take into account that if a student takes the risk it is because he is motivated to learn and face any possible boundary presented. Moreover, teachers have to let them know about all the factors and explain why they are important. Taking the risk is the first step to be successful; everything gets better through experiences and exercises; students learnt better, when they make mistakes and correct themselves.

2.2.3. Empathy

Hogan (1969, cited in Brown, 2000) defined empathy as “a relatively discrete social phenomenon recognizable in the experience of laymen and psychologist alike” (p. 309). In other words, empathy is to put you in the other person situation trying in this way to understand what is happening in order to understand why he or she acts in certain way.

Guiora (1972, p. 143 cited in Brown, 2000) defined empathy as “a process of comprehending in which the temporary fusion of self-object boundaries permits and immediate emotional apprehension of the affective experience of another”. With this definition Brown (1994), explains that “in order to understand better how the others think and feel empathy is used, empathy is usually described as the projection of the personality of a person into the personality of another one.”

2.2.4. Inhibition

As others, affective factors mentioned before inhibition also is an important concept to understand and defined in this research in order to find the relation and influence in students learning process. Ur (1996) claims that “learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or losing, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts” (p.121).

This personal factor is related with the self-esteem because if a student has a good level of self-confidence the inhibition feeling is presented in less degree also learners will control all the fears produced in determinate situations. Helping to decrease this feeling implies hard work for the teacher and student, but the results are more valuable.

2.3. Autonomous learning in second language acquisition

In this research, one of the purposes of this study is to determinate which personal aspects can be foster through the use of the workshop; besides how can it help students in specific areas as second language learners. Since the workshop is an extra and voluntary activity in which learners attend because of a desire of practicing their oral production one of the factors identified in this action is autonomous learning which according to some studies helps students to develop certain features that facilitated their learning and performance of the target language. Holec (1981, p.3) describes autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s learning.”

To provide students with places that not only support their learning or in where they can practice specific abilities but also in where learners unconsciously increase their autonomy should be a prior concern in higher education. Learning is a complicated process where all the participants have to look forward to develop more abilities, which guide them to succeed in their learning.

Even when we might think that an autonomous student is independent in all terms, this is a wrong conception because those who are autonomous in a certain level depend from other factors to develop their learning and as a result their target language. Little (1991, 1996 cited in Arnold, J. p. 142) shows that “second language learner autonomy presupposes interdependence because language development requires interaction.”

Through what was pointed before we can understand that learner autonomy is a capacity to work your capabilities further according to your necessities as learners and as

future teacher. This could be a reason why student attend to the conversation workshop; in order to fulfill their expectations, learners look for alternatives in where they acquire other type of personal an educational learning.

2.3.1. Advantages of promoting autonomous learning

There are two general arguments in favor of trying to make learners autonomous. First, if they are reflectively engaged with their learning, it is likely to be more efficient and effective, because more personal and focused, than otherwise; in particular, what is learned in educational contexts is more likely to serve learners' wider agendas.

Second, if learners are proactively committed to their learning, the problem of motivation is by definition solved; although they may not always feel entirely positive about all aspects of their learning, autonomous learners would look forward to find out a way to be motivated using different alternatives.

Promoting autonomy among learners of a second language make them willing to cooperate with the teacher and others for everyone's benefit. According to Ágota & Anita (2000, p.3) autonomous learners "consciously monitor their own progress, and make an effort to use available opportunities to their benefit, including classroom activities and homework." As fact, students' autonomy increases their opportunities to learn and perform the target language. Moreover, developing autonomous learning among students could have many advantages for a second language learner.

2.4 Conversation workshop

In everyday class activities, the teachers try to provide the best conditions for students to acquire new knowledge, which should be practice in a spoken form. This speaking practice has to be focused on activities that manage the knowledge the students have previously acquired in the class. The way which the students could have an opportunity to practice the language orally, might be by means of a speaking workshop.

According to Sanders (1994) a workshop is an area where a group of students are engaged in a special study, where ideas and practical activities are interchanged. Regarding to this, Olshtain (1996) says that a conversation workshop helps the students increase their abilities, putting into practice what they have learnt in the classroom, it provides them confidence on what they are going to do during the workshop.

2.4.1 Important elements of the workshop design

Several elements should be considered in conversation workshop. Suggested by Marchla (1996), the elements to can considered are monitoring an evaluating students' progress, providing of an affective atmosphere, maintaining discipline and giving information. In addition to this, other elements that should be considered are the organization of the activities, the session time, the method and techniques, the number of students, the material and so on. Cohen (1994) mentions that to design a good and effective workshop session requires careful planning with sessions focused on students' new challenges and group work.

Besides, the design of a workshop demands the guide to consider the large of the group. Fleming (1997) has observed that, when working with small groups there is more effectiveness and a good work environment, this promotes group interaction and encourages full participation. In this particular faculty in where the study was based on the conversation workshop is a reduce group. Fleming also argues that there are two important and successful parts of the workshop design. First, it combines instruction with experimental activities; the emphasis is more to be on skill training than on general principles. Second, it has to provide feedback taking into students' needs, attitudes and group size.

As part of the conversation workshop feedback is an important element that should be considered. Olshtain (1996) considers cooperative and collaborative learning to provide feedback. He quotes that collaborative learning is a structured process that requires learners to work together on a task, share information, encourage, and support each other. Collaborative learning is where individuals work together to construct knowledge rather than discovering objective truths. Whether the guide decides on using cooperative or collaborative learning in the workshop, it is true that both can be useful and can be applied to generate the practice of the language.

A conversation workshop might be designed to increase students speaking ability to provide the learners with more knowledge or maybe just to help them to get better notes. So whatever the reason is, we have notice until what extent this type of alternatives can help teachers to support their teaching but also how it helps students to develop certain personal factor and specific abilities.

2.5. The purpose of developing the oral production

Speaking in a second or foreign language has been viewed as one of the most important skills over the others because this ability is considered the basis for communication. It is important to develop the speaking ability among students because this skill is everyday situations and promotes the interaction with others.

The correct used of the speaking ability encompasses the use others language aspects like the use of vocabulary, the practice of sentences structures, fluency, and even self-correction. Besides the language points mentioned before other important reason for developing the speaking ability is to communicate with others not only at their school also from different cultures and be able to express their thought, desires and share experiences between other. Lemke (1989) for example mentions that in classroom, as elsewhere, talking is an important social process, talking is more than words; it is a social activity that includes the appropriate use of the language.

Whether the speaking ability is important for ones or for others, the fact is that when a person is learning a second language he always looks for ways to demonstrates their learning and speaking could be considered as one way in which learners can perform what they had learnt.

2.5.1. Oral production

The learning process of a foreign language involves the study of the four skills; however, in this study our main concern is speaking. In daily life, people have as a purpose to communicate with others in order to perform a series of activities; like expressing ideas, feeling and toughs. According to Cameron (2001, p.40) speaking “is the active use of language to express meaning so that other people can make sense of them.”

In order to develop the speaking ability learners must feel comfortable in the environment in where they are exposed to the language interaction. As we had stated in previous sections language is influenced by many affective factors, which certainly dull students' production. However, if learners are motivated most of the times the affective factors that affect students' performance can be control and manage in order to achieve their purpose.

Baley (1994), mentions that teachers must give students the opportunity to experiment and see how far they communicate in situations where the choices of language use are given in the language they are learning. In addition, for students having the opportunity of practicing outside or inside the classroom has an important significance for their learning. Furthermore, some gaps where they can communicate with other can be the only one during their formative development.

For that reason, it could be meaningful to create and support places as the conversation workshop where learner can prove their abilities and find alternative to develop other personal factors as autonomy between other; which definitely help them to reach their personal and professional goals.

2.6. Conclusion

After reviewing the topics related to this research and discussing the role, that each of them has in the learning process, we can conclude that there are internal and external factors that influence learning. In addition, there are also alternatives which students can make use of to control and guide these factors in a positive manner. Additionally, the role of the teacher is always important to guide learners in the formative development and as a result, students will have more tools and opportunities to communicate through the

language. Furthermore, facilitating the use of alternatives such as the conversation workshop increases motivation among students, which makes them willing to interact with others in a real context; putting by the side fears produced by the use of the target language.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHOD

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the procedure of how the research was carried out is presented. To be more specific, all the elements that were part of the investigation is explained in order to understand how we got the results. As it was mentioned in previous chapters this investigation was focused on the conversation workshop and how it helps students to practice the target language, as well of how it could possibly affect personal factors such as motivation and self-confidence.

After the discussion in Chapter 2 regarding the affective filter theory which explained in a vast way how the emotional side of each student can help or interfere in his learning process and of course in their production of the language, we considered it meaningful to observe some sessions of this particular group in order to analyze their advances and observe their learning behavior in an autonomous environment as the conversation workshop. In addition, and to complement the observations, interviews were applied to the participants with the purpose of knowing more deeply the participants' opinions, perceptions and feeling of the workshop.

3.1. Subjects

This research project was centered on the oral production of English as a foreign language; moreover, in specific aspects identified by the use of it. Self-confidence, fluency, motivation, autonomous learning among others are features that form part of the workshop and that can give students that attend to it the opportunity to develop more tools to perform

the oral production. Considering all, we have done our investigation with the participation of second language learners in a context where it provided us with the tools to answer our research questions. Therefore, we based our study on the conversation workshop, which is a reduced group of second language learners that had specific characteristics that fit into this investigation as described in the following paragraph.

The students who attend to the conversation workshop do it voluntarily without any predisposition of doing so. Considering this, the workshop can be judged as an autonomous learning environment where students attend because of a desire. Another particular characteristic to consider in an autonomous environment is that the sessions lack a teacher and are tutored by a person who only moderates the conversation, but who does not force any student to participate or request any type of task, which made me think that learners who use the conversation workshop have a high level of awareness and commitment to their learning.

The participants that were involved in the research also presented particular similarities among themselves. For example, the context: the participants were students of the same university studying English as a second language and some others were part of the extra courses provided for the same university to people from other places. In addition, learners who were part of our data collection process had the same interest for practicing and developing the speaking ability, which certainly motivated them to attend the conversation workshop. We observed five sessions of the workshop with the purpose of gathering more information that helped me to design and apply some interviews with the participants. The interview was applied to five students that attended to the conversation

workshop regularly and that share the features mentioned previously. The workshop is a place where students just focus on practicing the language without having any type of restriction; the participants who were part of our study were from different levels of target language.

3.2. Research methodology

In this section we will describe the methodology we used in our research, including the collection data instruments, how the instruments were designed and applied to the participants as well as our justification for using them in this study and how they helped us to answer the research questions.

The data collection process consisted of two sections. The first one was done through observations where we just observed five sessions taking in consideration only what happened during five sessions and collected the most relevant information like motivation, attitude, confidence, fluency, speaking and students' interactions among themselves and with the tutor. From that data, we designed an interview that we applied to the participants with the purpose of complementing the observations and identifying more specific emotional factors like confidence and motivation their opinions about the use of alternatives like the conversation workshop to practice the foreign language.

We decided to use observations and interviews because we truly considered they were the most suitable instruments for my research in order to have a general overview and on the other hand more particular information of how a workshop was carried out and how students felt using different options to develop their speaking ability as well as their opinions of how they felt in working in an autonomous context.

3.3. Data collection and analysis procedure

As is explained in the previous section we used two instruments to collect the information necessary to answer the research questions. In the first stage of our data collection, we used a quantitative method: observations and in the second stage of the research project, we applied individual interviews with the finality of having qualitative data as well. In section 3.3.1 the procedure followed to collect and analyze the data by the observations is explained step by step. In addition, in section 3.3.2 how the interviews were designed and analyzed is presented in order to have a clear idea of how our research was carried out.

3.3.1. Workshop observations

Taking into account all the information known so far of the workshop, we decided to perform our gathering using observations. As the research was based on speaking ability, we did the observations considering the aspects related to the oral skill as interaction, confidence, fluency, and material for example. Considering these elements, we designed a checklist to guide us during the observations and that helped us to focus on what our project was looking for.

The next points present the steps followed using the observation instrument.

1. For our observations, we design a checklist with certain characteristics that were part of a conversation workshop like: motivation, material, student attitude, speaking, confidence and fluency.
2. During the five observations of the sessions we used the checklist previous mentioned and we filled with what happened.

3. When we finished the observations we selected five of the most consistent students that attended the workshop to be part of the second stage of the data collection, the information gathered through the observations was analyzed in the following way:
 1. We used the program Microsoft Office Excel 2016 to enter the information collected from the checklist.
 2. We entered the information in a table designed to count the aspects that had the higher and lowest score.
 3. Using the information previous collected in the table we focused on the points that were more relevant to design the questionnaire.

3.3.2. Workshop participants' interviews

Second stage: we designed an interview with more specific questions using the information gathered during our observations. The purpose of these interviews was to know more personal opinions of what the conversation workshop was; the interviews carried out with the participants were recorded individually for more specific points of view.

1. From the five observations done in the conversation workshop, we selected five students. These students were selected considering their attendance and participation during the sessions.
2. Using the answers of the checklist we designed an interview of 15 questions, the questions asked more precise details about the function, thoughts and learners' expectations of the workshop.
3. The interviews were recorded in order to give more evidence to this research.

The participants' interviews were analyzed in the following manner:

1. Using Microsoft Office Word 2016 we transcribed the interviews of the participants selected.
2. We analyzed the answers and separated them in negative and positive answers.
3. In each category (positive and negative), we identified the similarities among the answers.
4. Using Microsoft Office Excel 2016 we entered the data and represented in charts and graphics.

During our data collection, we had many advantages and disadvantages as a researcher. Some of the positive things that we can mention is that students were willing to participate in this research and behave as always during my observations, which helped us to have trustful information, but one disadvantage was that as we had pointed out before, the conversation workshop was a place where students attend because of a desire. It was hard to find sessions where we could observe because in some cases the sessions were empty.

3.4. Conclusions

In the next chapter, the results of the data collection process are presented according to our data analysis procedure. In addition, the research questions will be answered according to the information collected.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, we will present the results collected through the observations and interviews applied to the participants. The conclusions about the results got from the research will be specified. In the first section of this chapter, the research questions are repeated in order to remind the reader about the questions that directed the research. Based on the three research questions we developed the instruments presented previously (Chapter 3) and applied them to a few students that were part of the conversation workshop. In section 4.2 the results got from our collection data process, using visual items as graphics and tables and explaining the interpretation of each of them is presented. In addition, as a final point the conclusions will be given according to the results and extra information resulting of the instruments.

4.1. Research questions

This investigation was performed with the finality of answering three main research questions. The research questions were based on the use of the conversation workshop as a tool to practice the oral production, which was the central concern of this particular research project. The questions were the following:

RQ1. How does the conversation workshop motivate students to practice their oral ability?

RQ2. What personal aspects does the conversation workshop increase among students?

RQ3. To what extent does the conversation workshop help students' oral production?

4.2. Observations results

In order to answer the research questions, we followed several steps that gave us general and specific information regarding the use of the workshop. First, we did five one-hour observations in the conversation workshop using a checklist in order to understand how this center works and to recognize the role of the tutor and students during the sessions.

The checklist we used to support our observations was divided in eight sections according to the points in what this study was focused on: 1) motivation, 2) attitude, 3) anxiety, 4) confidence, 5) fluency, 6) material, 7) interaction and 8) speaking. After observing, the sessions using the instrument we can infer that in the conversation workshop students are highly motivated to use the language they are learning. In addition, students are willing to participate in the activities performed during the session. Besides, we noticed that they were instrumentally motivated. According to Brown (1994) "instrumental motivation refers to motivation to acquire a language as means for attaining instrumental goals: furthering a career, reading technical material, translation, among other" (p. 153). We got to this statement particularly because we noticed that they are willing do their best in order to perform their role as better possible, probably thinking in their professional development.

In a general sense, students' attitudes towards the tutor were polite and vice versa, which certainly makes the sessions' environment very comfortable for the participants. As

a result, students' anxiety when using the foreign language was low compared to a normal classroom. Nevertheless, students still seemed to have a fear of negative evaluation when they participated, in general words fear: of being criticized.

Another aspect that we were interested of identifying in the workshop was students' self-confidence in an autonomous environment. We realized that most of the students were confident to speak and give their opinions. The type of self-esteem that we identified through the observation was "situational self-esteem" which involves one's self-appraisal in specific traits such as intelligence and athletic ability, or particular situations such as education, work and home.

Regarding their language fluency, there was a little difference among students because as we had mentioned before students were from different levels of target language; therefore, the ones with a higher level spoke more fluently from the ones from lower levels but in our personal opinion most of them spoke according to their respective levels. However, we had noticed that fluency in particular cases was affected by students' anxiety when using English.

In addition, we considered important to take into account the material during the observations because sometimes it is one of the things that call students attention during the class. However, in this particular workshop there was no material at all. The sessions were only carried out using the oral production but extra material was not provided to support the topic. We consider that in very particular occasions it could be meaningful for students to have certain types of additional material to use in the workshop. On the other hand, as the

name says, it is a place where students attend to practice any type of conversation more than others are activities.

Interaction among students is always part of a class and in the conversation workshop, there was more than one type of interaction. In some sessions, the interaction was only between the tutor and the students but in several times they were asked to work in pairs and discuss determinate topics and interchange ideas.

Finally, about speaking, during the observations we tried to measure the percentage of speaking turns students and tutor had as well as to know if they used Spanish during the development of the class. We noticed that 90% of the times they used English, only in particular occasion like giving a definition of a word or with students with low level of English that could not understand some instructions. In our personal opinion, we were surprised with this discovery because even inside the classroom, we use many Spanish for several reasons, but in the workshop all, the conversations were using the foreign language, probably because it was a reduced group and it was easier to identify when someone was trying to use Spanish.

Observing the five sessions of the workshop helped us to develop the interview for the participants, and which results will be presented in graphics and explained in the next section of the chapter.

4.3. Interview results

The second stage of the data collection process was to interview five students were selected from the workshop. The questions were designed taking into consideration the

information gathered from the observations. The interview contained 10 open questions in order to know more precise information about students' thoughts and opinions about the use and function of the conversation workshop. I have to mention that even though they were only five interviewees the questions were open so they gave more than one answer. The results that I got from the interviews were the following:

Question N1: Which is the main reason why you attend the conversation workshop?

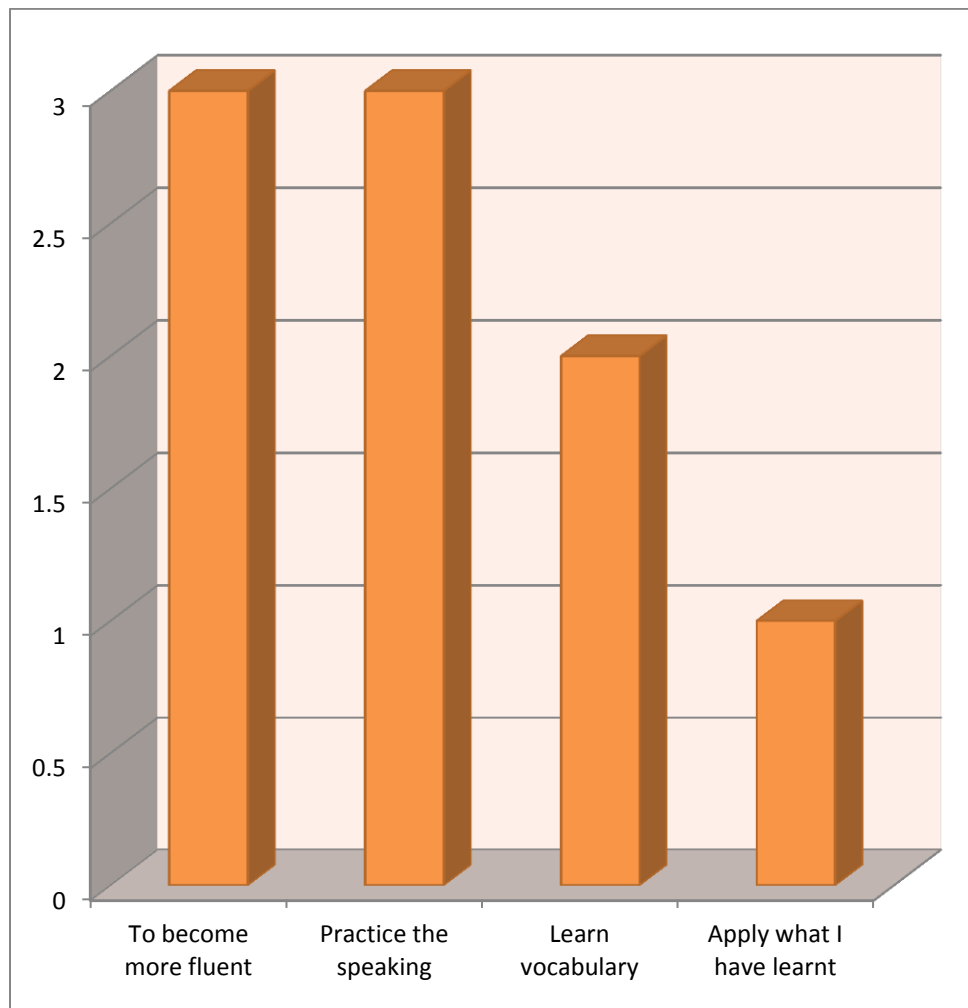


Figure 4.1 The main reason why the students attended the conversation workshop.

As you can identify in Fig. 4.1 above most of the conversation workshop to develop aspects that are related with the oral production of the language they are learning. Only one participant showed curiosity to apply in certain way what he is learning inside the classroom.

Question N2. What personal aspects motivate you to attend the workshop and practice the foreign language?

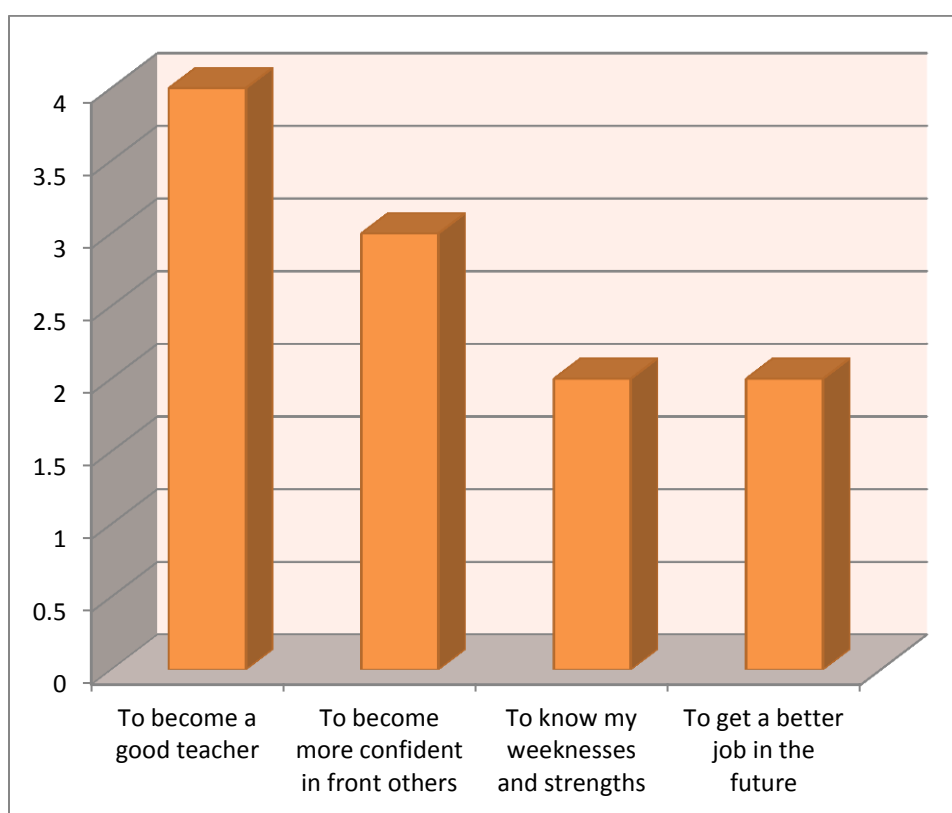


Figure 4.2 Personal aspects that motivate students to attend the workshop.

In Fig. 4.2 we can see that four of the participants' express awareness in becoming a good teacher, what motivates them to attend the workshop and have the opportunity to

practice their speaking. At the same time, they are conscious of how important is to gain more confidence when speaking in front of an audience. On the other hand, attending the conversation workshop for two of them is an effective way to notice their weaknesses and strengths when using English. Finally, two more want to practice their production for being able to get a good in the future

Question N3. **How do you think the conversation workshop helps you develop your autonomy?**

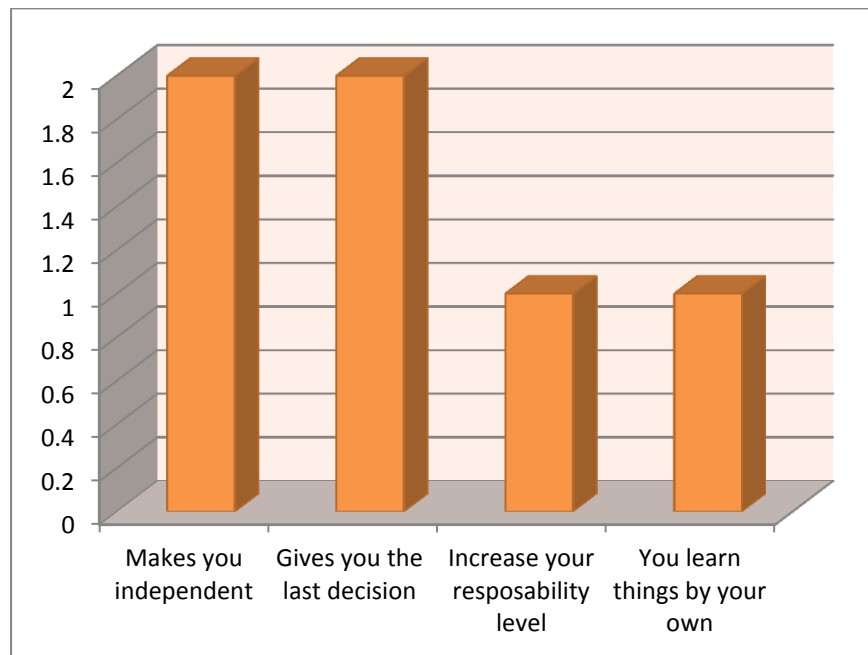


Figure 4.3 How the workshop developed students' autonomy.

The Fig. 4.3 above points out that as a fact the workshop help students to increase their autonomy. In addition, two students mentioned that working with this type of alternative represents a way to be independent because it gives you the last decision of how

you want to work. Besides, it helps you to develop your responsibility level by doing thing by your own.

Question N4. **What other personal aspects does the workshop had fostered in your person?**

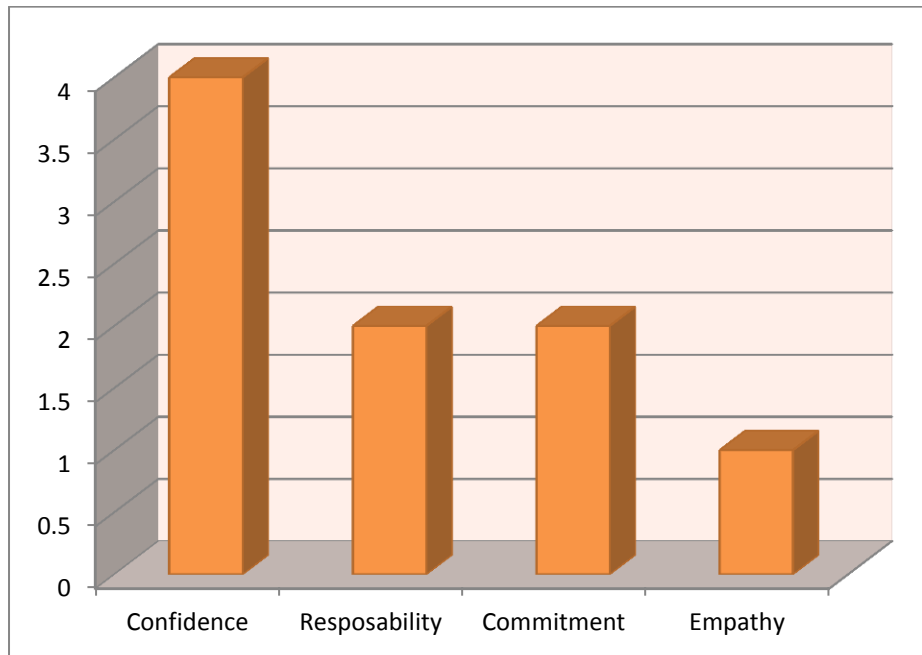


Figure 4.4 Personal aspects fostered through the workshop.

According to participants' answers, the personal aspects that had been fostered by the use of the workshop is their confidence. Four students mentioned that they feel less nervous when participating in class. Two said that now they are more responsible and at the same time committed with their learning. Only one referred to the conversation workshop as a place where you develop empathy for other students that have problems with their speaking (See Fig. 4.4 above).

Question N5. **In your opinion, which is the difference from participating in the workshop and participating in the classroom?**

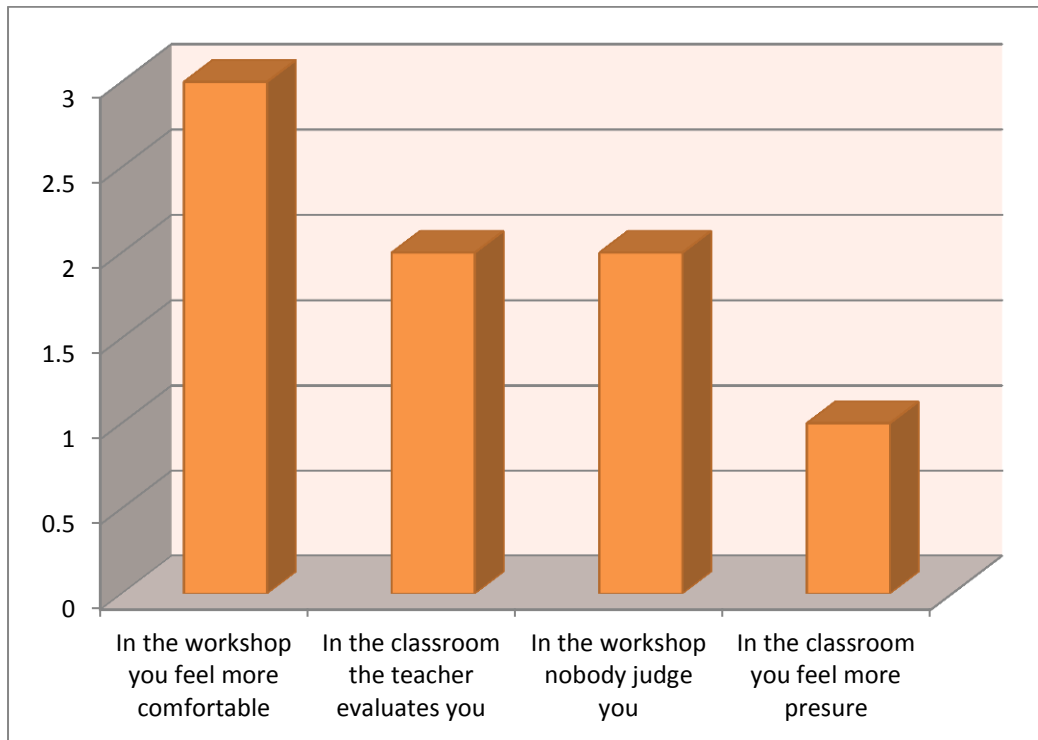


Figure 4.5 Differences between workshop and classroom participation.

According to Fig. 4.5 above, we can observe that students consider that in the workshop you feel more comfortable with three mentions. Two pointed out that inside the classroom you feel the teacher is always evaluating you. Similarly, the other two students mentioned that in the workshop nobody is judging you. One participant referred to the classroom as a place where you feel pressure to participate.

Question N6. **In your personal experience, do the activities used in the workshop help you to reach your goals?**

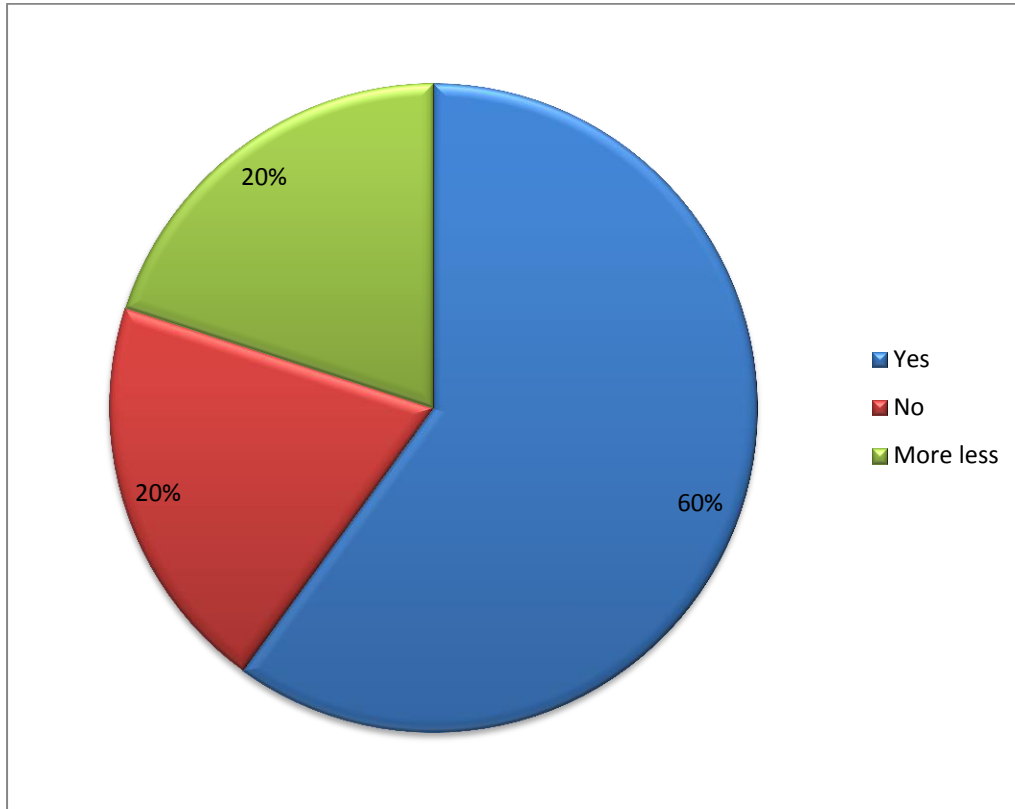


Figure 4.6 Usefulness of workshop activities

Regarding students experience, we can notice that the highest percentage was 'yes' (60% see Fig. 4.6 above). The students said that doing activities made the environment more relaxed and helped them to practice the oral production in a dynamic form. Twenty percent thought that it really does not make any difference because anyway without the activities you still practice speaking all the time. While 20% mentioned that they do not do many activities during the session but when they do it, the feels that everyone is more motivated to participate.

Question N7. **Do you consider that using a tutor rather than a teacher is better for the workshop? Why?**

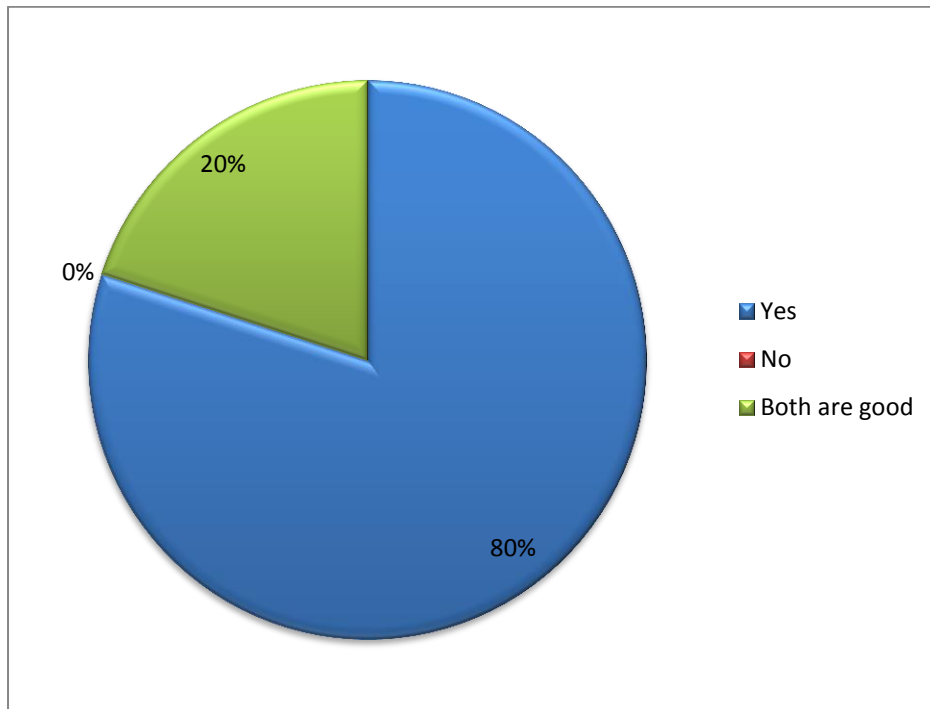


Figure 4.7 Students' opinions of using a tutor in the workshop

We can determinate that participants consider the tutor like the best option for carrying out a workshop with 80% responding so. Students added that with the tutor they do not feel like they are being evaluated and it make them feel more comfortable. Only 20% of the students thought that both could be a good option if they are both prepared to perform such work (see Fig. 4.7).

Question N8. **According to the time, you have gone to the workshop, what changes have you perceived in your oral production when using English?**

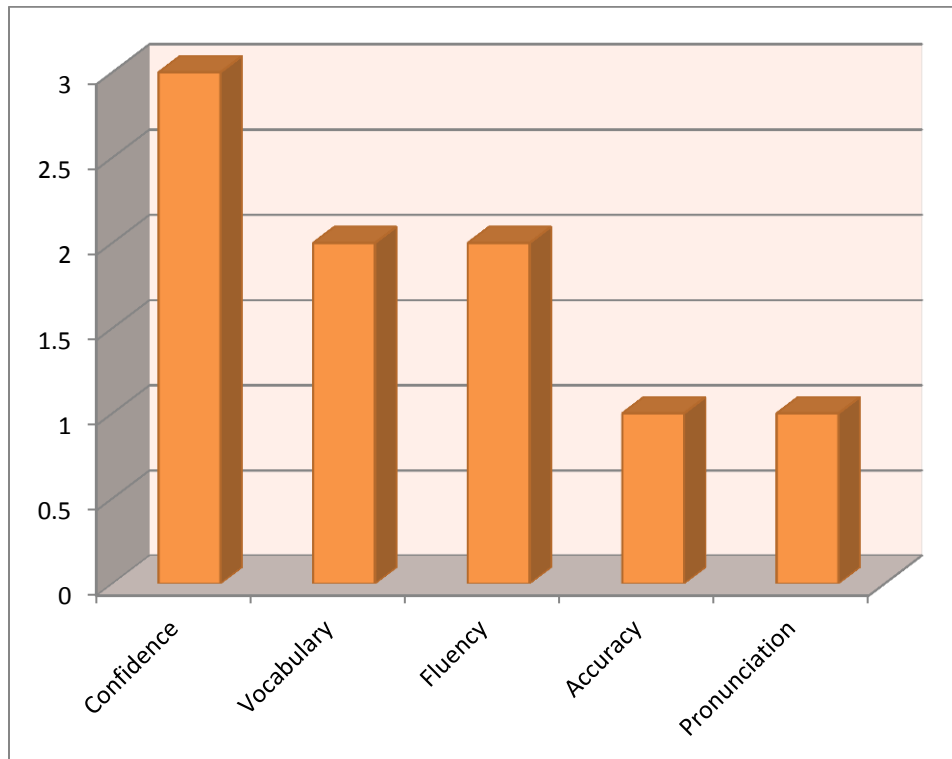


Figure 4.8 Changes perceived in students' oral production

According to students' perceptions, they have noticed most changes in their confidence when using English and speaking in front of the class (Fig. 4.8). Followed by vocabulary and fluency, for students in the workshop they have real context conversations which had helped them to increase their vocabulary. Now, they felt there were more capable of using informal English instead of academic only. Accuracy and pronunciation got less mention in this question.

Question N9. What changes would you do to the conversation workshop?

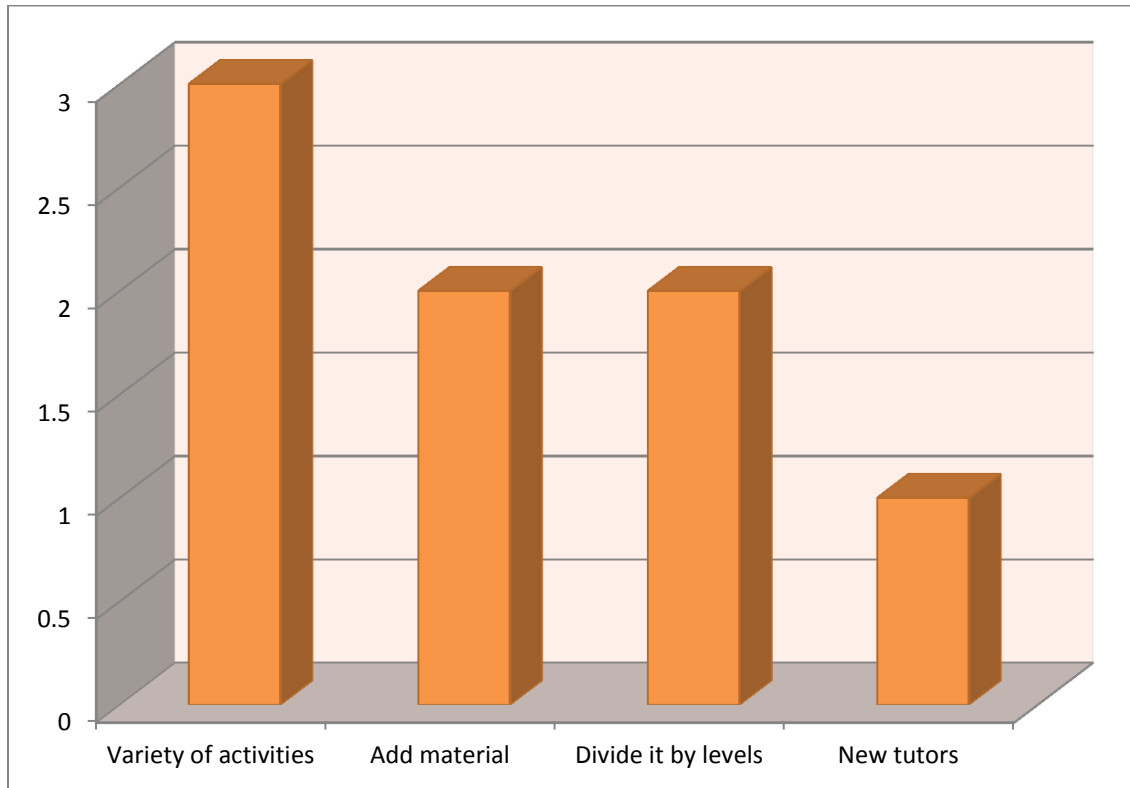


Figure 4.9 Changes that students would do to the workshop

In Fig. 4.9 we observe students' suggestions for changes to the workshop. The most common answers were regarding the variety of activities and adding material to make the sessions different. Two students also mentioned that it could be better organized if the sessions were divided according to students' levels. One student in particular advised that it could be better if every period the tutor was different. He said that there were many students that had many things to share, new ways of carrying out the sessions, techniques and even activities so it could be a way to refresh the workshop.

Question N10. **Do you think that the conversation workshop is a good alternative that should be promoted inside the university? Why?**

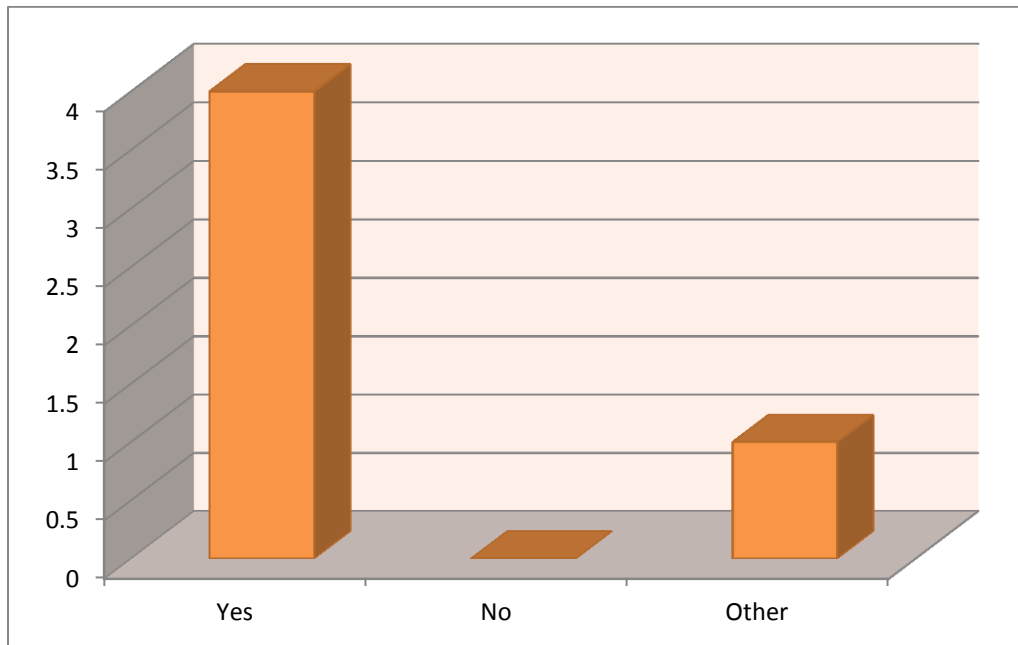


Figure 4.10 Students' opinions about promoting the workshop

As we can see in Fig.4.10, the majority of the participants agreed that alternatives like the conversation workshop should be promoted and recommended among students that are interested in practicing and developing more tools that help in their oral production. One even said that it should be mandatory to attend like a self-access center.

4.4 Conclusions

After presenting the results we got from applying the instruments to the participants, in the next chapter we will explain the conclusions as well as the significance and some possible suggestions resultant from the investigation.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

After presenting the results, we got from applying our instruments in previous chapter, in this chapter we will give the conclusions and answer the research questions in what this study was based on. In addition, other elements of the investigation as the aims and limitations of the study will be presented. In section 5.4 our personal reflection according to our experience will be offered in order to express what this work had represented to us and what we got from it. Finally, our possible suggestions will be given in section 5.5.

5.1 Findings and significance

According to the experiences during the time in the university, we have noticed that students have problems expressing their ideas using the language they are learning. In several occasions, they are in advanced levels and their oral production lacks a kind of consistence. Furthermore, they still feel nervous when using the language in front others, but most of this is not students' fault. During students' academic formation they only have the opportunity to practice during the class and several occasions' large number of students do not permit everyone to participate.

Therefore, we consider that the findings can be used to motivate students to use this type of alternative to practice their speaking not only inside the classroom but also outside. At the same time, to increase their opportunities to graduate well prepared to face the real work in the classroom. It is important to find more practical environments where students

also can be able to apply everything they learnt during their learning process; finally, we think that through this research, teachers could understand how meaningful it is to provide students with more alternatives rather than only the classroom.

5.2 Research questions answers

This study was developed through our personal interest in understanding how the conversation workshop works and how it helps students to practice oral production in an effective way. As a result, we established three research questions to be answered after concluding the entire investigation.

RQ1. How does the conversation workshop motivate students to practice their oral ability?

Concerning motivation, now we know that there are different types of motivation, and that according to each one students can have different performance. During the investigation, we discovered that students who attend the conversation workshop is motivated by several reasons. Regarding the language, their motive is to acquire more vocabulary, to gain fluency and at the same time apply what they had learnt inside the classroom. About this, we can say that they are looking forward to be better in what they are doing. This is connected with their personal motive, which refers to their desire of being better in a future job, as some of the students mentioned in their interview. Something really important to bring up is that we noticed during the study and with their interviews that they are instrumentally motivated; this means that they are aware about aspects that have to do with their learning and performance because their intentions of

continuing with their degree or for a future professional performance as we mentioned above.

RQ2. What personal aspects does the conversation workshop increase among students?

The research showed that the conversation workshop is not only a place where students are able to practice the oral production of the language they are learning, but also it is a place where they can acquire other aspects that help them to have better academic development. One important feature is that through the workshop they have the opportunity to become more autonomous (see Fig. 4.3), by doing things on their own and making decisions about their learning. In addition, they develop aspects like confidence, commitment, and responsibility among others; pointed out in Fig. 4.4. Considering this, we can say that the workshop is a place where students increase their opportunity to overcome fears and obtain tools to face issues presented in their learning process.

RQ3. To what extent does the conversation workshop help students' oral production?

One of the main purposes of the workshop is to give students effective alternatives to practice the SL oral production. However, students have the last decisions of attending or not, but those who had done it express positive progress in their oral production (see Fig. 4.8). According to the results, students noticed several changes in their speaking. Some of the changes were in their vocabulary, fluency, accuracy pronunciation and even in their confidence. It is important to mention that they expressed that these changes were gradual and little by little.

As we know, speaking is one of the most difficult abilities to improve for several reasons, like interference of personal issues, like low self-confidence or high inhibition. Therefore, we think that if students have perceived any type of change in their production, we should consider that the conversation workshop had accomplished its purpose.

5.3 Objectives of the study

As we pointed out in Chapter One this study had four objectives to accomplish. First, to investigate what motivates students to attend the workshop; second, to analyze how the workshop operates; third, to analyze students' behavior in an autonomous environment and last to analyze the features that makes the workshop a good alternative to practice the oral production.

During the investigation, we were able to achieve all the objectives previously established. Now we know that students attend the conversation workshop to develop their oral production, to be more specific to become more fluent, or learn vocabulary and even to become more confident. Besides, they are motivated in becoming more skilled in order to perform a professional job as best as possible.

The second objective was completed during the observations using a checklist (see Appendix A). We understand how the workshop operates since we observed five sessions. We found that the sessions are given by a tutor who gives students the topics and elicit students' participation. Additionally, students use the SL in real context conversations, but the most important is that students were not evaluated by the tutor. He

or she only works as a moderator to do the sessions in an organized manner and to let everyone have a chance to speak.

About the third objective, we noticed that students were willing to work in any type of environment as long as they are motivated and aware of doing a good work. As we had said in several occasions during this study, the workshop can develop students' autonomy and we confirmed by analyzing students' answers (see Fig. 4.3). The results showed that through the workshop students increased their responsibility level and become more independent.

Using the interview applied to the participants (see Appendix B) we were able to accomplish our fourth objectives. We noticed that students considered the workshop a good option to practice their oral production for two main features shown in Fig. 4.5; students felt more comfortable to speak in the workshop without someone who is evaluating as often happens in the language classroom because they felt that no one was judging them.

5.4 Reflective account

In this final section of this study project, we want to express our personal experiences in the realization of our thesis project. Doing our first formal research gave many satisfactions and made us realize how important is to be dedicated and committed with everything in what you are working on. We have to admit that it was not an easy process because there were many factors involved in it.

Before, as many students, doing our thesis we were overwhelmed because we did not know what to expect, how it was going to be or if we were able to perform such work. However, when we started to think of all the elements that were going to be part of the project, we understood that doing our own research project was a very challenging task and at the same time it was the way you can help others discovering or reinforcing previous research, which made me feel really excited.

When we started to work on our study, we wanted everything to turn out, as we wanted which made it hard when the data collection process did not happen as it was planned. We consider that overcoming the problems that you face when you are doing a research is the most difficult part of it, but in spite of everything, we are satisfied with the work we did. Besides, during the time we were in touch with the context that was part of our research, in this case the conversation workshop, we wanted to know more and more about it. In addition, all the objectives of our study were accomplished and we were able to answer the research questions, and that means that all our efforts were worthwhile.

5.5 Limitations of the research

During this investigation, we had some limitations that we had to overcome in order to finish our research. One was that it was difficult to observe the five sessions that were part of the data collection process and this was because the conversation workshop is a place where students attended because they wanted and on several occasions, there were no students that entered; however, we were able to observe the sessions after a few days of waiting.

The other limitations were when we applied the interview. The reason was that students were from different levels of target language, and two were from low levels, which we consider that it interfered with how much information they gave during the interview. Anyway, we got enough information to answer my research questions and get the results.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

This investigation can be adapted for analyzing the other three skills using the self-access center as the location of the research. Also, we think that it can be useful to do an experimental research where the student can develop his / her own workshop using determinate type of activities, her or his own program and even working with only a specific group of students; probably from basic levels.

5.7 Final comments

After conducting this project, we can say that the process of developing a research is a complex one. However, it is full of enriching experiences such as sharing time with our classmates about who we can improve our language development, how important is to improve skills; in that case, fluency in speaking and tools that we have around us. In addition, we have learnt how to research and to learn more about other factors that play an important role in our academic development as future teachers.

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APPENDIX A: Observations checklist

Hrs: _____

N. of students: _____

Date: _____

Motivation	Excellent	Good	Poor	Not at all
1. Students seem to be motivated to attend the workshop				
2. Students seem to be motivated to participate during the session				
3. Students seem to be...	<input type="radio"/> Integrative motivated <input type="radio"/> Instrumentally motivated			
Attitude	Excellent	Good	Poor	Not at all
4. Tutor's attitude is				
5. Students' attitude towards the tutor is				
6. Students' attitude towards their classmates is				
7. Students' attitude towards practicing the language is				
Anxiety	Excellent	Good	Poor	Not at all
8. students seem to have	<input type="radio"/> Communication apprehension <input type="radio"/> Fear of negative social evaluation <input type="radio"/> Test anxiety			
9. Students seem to be anxious when using the language				
Confidence				
10. When using English the tutor seems to have	<input type="radio"/> High confidence <input type="radio"/> Regular confidence			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Poor confidence ○ Not confident at all 				
11. when using English students seem to have	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High confidence ○ Regular confidence ○ Poor confidence ○ Not confident at all 				
12. Which level of self-esteem students seem to have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Global self-esteem ○ Situational self-esteem ○ Task self-esteem 				
Fluency	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Excellent</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Poor</td> <td>Not at all</td> </tr> </table>	Excellent	Good	Poor	Not at all
Excellent	Good	Poor	Not at all		
13. According to their level, students fluency when using English is	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				
14. Tutor's fluency when using English is	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				
15. fluency when using English seems to be affected by students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ motivation ○ attitude ○ anxiety ○ confidence 				
Material	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Excellent</td> <td>Good</td> <td>Poor</td> <td>Not at all</td> </tr> </table>	Excellent	Good	Poor	Not at all
Excellent	Good	Poor	Not at all		
16. Besides conversations, the tutor provides other type of material to support the topic?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				
17. The material used during the session, is an update material?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				

18. The material seems to be of students' interest?				
19. In this session which type of material was provided to students?	<input type="radio"/> Visual material <input type="radio"/> Printed material <input type="radio"/> Additive material <input type="radio"/> Other: <hr/>			
Interaction				
20. What type of interaction was done during the session?	<input type="radio"/> Pair interaction (among classmates) <input type="radio"/> Group interaction <input type="radio"/> Tutor – student interaction <input type="radio"/> No interaction at all			
Speaking				
21. During the session, in what percentage the tutor used English?	<input type="radio"/> 100% <input type="radio"/> 80% <input type="radio"/> 60% <input type="radio"/> 40% <input type="radio"/> 20%			
22. During the session, in what percentage students used English?	<input type="radio"/> 100% <input type="radio"/> 80% <input type="radio"/> 60% <input type="radio"/> 40% <input type="radio"/> 20%			
23. During the session, in what percentage the students had the turn to speak?	<input type="radio"/> 100% <input type="radio"/> 80% <input type="radio"/> 60% <input type="radio"/> 40% <input type="radio"/> 20%			

Comments:

APPENDIX B: Students' interview

1. Which is the main reason why you attend the conversation workshop?
2. What personal aspects motivate you to attend the workshop and practice the foreign language?
3. How do you think the conversation workshop helps you develop your autonomy?
4. What other personal aspects does the workshop had fostered in your person?
5. In your opinion, which is the difference from participating in the workshop and participating in the classroom?
6. In your personal experience, do the activities used in the workshop help you to reach your goals?
7. According to the time you have gone to the workshop, what changes have you perceived in your oral production when using English?
8. What changes would you do to the conversation workshop?
9. Do you think that the conversation workshop is a good alternative that should be promoted inside the university? Why?