



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

Facultad de Lenguas

Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés

**IMPLEMENTATION OF SPEAKING ACTIVITIES TO
IMPROVE STUDENTS' ORAL SPEECH IN
LENGUA META I**

**A thesis submitted to the faculty of Languages for the degree of
Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés**

by

Arantxa Flores López

Thesis Director

Dra. Leticia Araceli Salas Serrano



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This thesis has been read by the members of the Thesis Committee of

Arantxa Flores López

and it is considered worthy of approval in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of

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Thesis Director



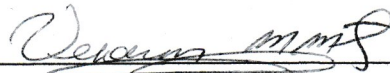
Dra. Leticia Araceli Salas Serrano

Committee Member



Dra. Rebeca Elena Tapia Carlín

Committee Member



Mtra. Verónica Guadalupe Morales Martínez

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla

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“What we learn with pleasure, we never forget”

-Alfred Mercier

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Abstract

Using a Foreign Language can be a challenge when language learners are asked to speak in public or to follow a conversation, as several factors such as: pronunciation, intonation, stress, word choice, among other elements are present in oral communication and it is often difficult for language learners to integrate all of them in their speech. As speaking is one of the most difficult abilities to develop in non-English speaking countries due to the lack of the English input that exists in those countries. It is important to emphasize the use of speaking activities in and outside the language classroom to enhance communication among learners in their target language.

The purpose of this study is to identify and demonstrate that the implementation of speaking activities can provide an input for students in *Licenciatura de Enseñanza del Inglés* to enhance communication in the target language during their studies at university. The activities used in *Lengua Meta I* were oriented to the improvement of students' oral production at an early stage of language learning. The method used in the study was Action Research in order to analyze the information obtained from the study as it had both quantitative and qualitative data. It focused on evaluating the improvements that students had after the implementation of speaking activities in *Lengua Meta I*. Pronunciation, use of vocabulary, syntax and fluency were evaluated before and after applying speaking activities in order to analyze how much students improved their oral speech during their first semester in LEI.

Keywords: Speaking Activities, Speaking & Listening skill, Competence, Performance, Communicative Language Teaching.

CHAPTER I

1.1 Introduction

In a globalized world, being able to speak in English is needed for the understanding among nations and human beings. English is one of the most spoken languages around the world. There are 400 million native speakers of English and 400 million speakers of English as a Second Language (Crystal, 2000). Therefore, being able to communicate in English is necessary to get a job, travel or increase professional and academic opportunities. The concern about having competent people working in different parts of the world has had a great impact in order to hire prepared workers to successfully accomplish different tasks. It does not depend on the proficiency level but on the competence level the person has.

In the modern world, communication has played a key role in diplomatic, educational and professional relationships between nations. Since the start of civilization, human beings have been trying to communicate. Once communication flourished, it provided a boost to the development of societies. (Crystal, 2000) Therefore, it is very important that people speak at least one more language besides their mother tongue. The concern about raising and teaching human beings with the ability to communicate in a foreign language has been increasing in recent years. Several organizations such as United Nations (UN) or The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) worldwide talk about the economic, cultural and academic profits that globalization and the exchange of labor force implies in a globalized world in which collaboration among countries develops progress. However, this could not be possible if people were not able to communicate in several languages. (British Council, 2013)

In an international perspective, the Council of Europe was founded in 1949 and increase interest about the relevance of Language Education, as part of its efforts to promote mobility and cultural understanding. The European Union stated that language learning is an important priority, since learning languages is considered a relevant activity the Language Policy was created, and it is based on respect for linguistic diversity in order to put mutual respect in practice. The Language Policy promotes teaching and learning of foreign languages and it is focused on the mobility of every citizen through dedicated programs for education and vocational training. Foreign Language competence is regarded as one of the basic skills in order to improve students' educational and employment opportunities. (European Council, 2013).

As the European Council designed the Language Policy, it also created the Common European Framework for Languages, which helps people studying other languages. The CEFR was created to provide the same reliability worldwide about the different mastery levels that exist in the use of language. The levels are A1-A2, which are considered beginner. B1-B2 considered Intermediate and C1-C2 that are considered Advance. These levels can provide a better insight of the abilities that a learner has. The CEFR allows an accurate and reliable placement for learners in different parts of the world. (European Council, 2001)

As stated before, studying a language became an important part of education, but the need of implementing a performance framework became a need. Due to this need, the Intergovernmental Symposium held in Rüsclikon, Switzerland in November 1991 defined that a performance framework was needed to provide a greater exposure of language teaching and learning in order to increase mobility, more effective communication. It was also needed to promote and facilitate cooperation among schools in different countries.

In Mexico, The National Association of Universities and Higher Educational Institutions (ANUIES) consider important the collaboration among universities, which result in the creation of the National Mobility Program with the purpose of granting the exchange of different academic experiences in all modalities.

To understand the importance about Academic Mobility for future professionals is important define what it is. Academic Mobility refers to a period of study, teaching or research in a country different from the students' country of residence. This period of study is limited, and the student must return to its country of residence at the end. Academic Mobility can be achieved within exchange programs set up for this purpose and it can also be achieved online. (UNESCO, 1988).

Academic Mobility helps students to broaden the perspectives of vocational training through the exposition of different academic and cultural contexts. It is also considered to improve graduates' national and international competitiveness. Therefore, students can acquire knowledge through different learning methodologies and processes from the ones in their context, as well as improving a second language and using different equipment and technology used in their educational setting. (Fresán, 2009)

In a world in which plurilingualism has become highly important to better working opportunities, students' mobility is gaining importance in Mexico, different universities started implementing different mayors related to the study and teaching of languages. In response of the world changes that were happening due to globalization and internationalization In 1984, the *Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla*, (BUAP) created the *Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés* (LEI). Its mission is to provide training to future professionals in the area of English teaching- The program aims to provide wide theoretical-practice knowledge in language teaching and critic abilities in a

communicative environment. The students will become English Teachers and they will be able to apply different approaches, methods, strategies, techniques and technologies to enhance English learning in different modalities, contexts, levels and formative environments. The *program Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés* is formed by 42 subjects, in which 39 are obligatory and 3 are electives. It is organized in two levels: basic and formative. It also had 16 subjects without a requirement, which is the 38% from the total of subjects and 26 have requirements, which is the 62% from the total of subjects. (LEI Program, 2009)

The basic level consists on establishing the base for theory-methodology of general and disciplinary training. It had 12 obligatory subjects which is 29% of the total of subject with 960 academic working hours. To obtain this level, the student should have already taken the following subjects:

Chart 1. Basic level subjects LEI Program 2009

BASIC LEVEL			
Area of General University Education	English Lengua Meta Area	Teaching area	Linguistics Area
Skill development for Higher-order Thinking	Lengua Meta Ingles I	Pedagogy	Phonetics and Phonology
Skill development for the use of ITC's	Lengua Meta Ingles II		Academic Writing
Humanistic and Social training	English Workshop I		
	English Workshop II		
	English Workshop IV		

The formative level has the purpose to strengthen the knowledge and use of English, the linguistic and pedagogical knowledge, as well as researching skills, attitudes and values that allow students to correctly perform in the teaching field. This level is

formed by 30 subjects, 27 are mandatory (64%) and 3 electives (7%) which correspond to 2896 hours and 720 hours of critical professional practice. To achieve the purpose of this level, the subjects that formed it are:

Chart 2. Basic level subjects LEI Program 2009

FORMATIVE LEVEL				
English Lengua Meta Area	Teaching area	Linguistics area	Research area	Culture area
Lengua Meta III	General Didactics	Language Acquisition	Research Methodology	English Literature I
English Workshop V	English Teaching Methodology	Morphology and Syntax	Research Seminar I	English Literature II
Lengua Meta IV	Skills development	Pragmatics	Research Seminar II	Historical Evolution of the English Language
Lengua Meta V	Design of Teaching Materials Workshop Learning Evaluation			

1.2 Problem

In *Lengua Meta I*, students are not provided with enough speaking activities to be able to communicate in English during the class. Throughout the course, most teachers are focused on finishing several units in a semester, which leads to improve writing, reading and grammar in ten hours per week of English classes. This might be a cause of the low development and focus on the speaking skill. *Lengua Meta I* purpose is to develop receptive skills (listening and reading), productive skills (reading and writing) and the sub-skills (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) of the English language, so students can

apply them to ease their professional and academic performance. (Olguín et al, 2016). But the reality is that most of the time in class is mainly focused on the book, and oral activities are left behind because of the lack of time or pressure to finish a program. Those are the causes that lead the study to focus on the development of oral skills in *Lengua Meta I*. Therefore, the research is mainly concerned with oral skills and the aspects related to oral communication.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The study aims at the identification and further implementation of speaking activities. The study may also provide suggestions to the English teachers in LEI to plan and enhance additional speaking activities in the classroom within the *Lengua Meta* class. It may also provide a solution for the lack of exposure that students must commonly use English to express themselves in class.

1.3 Rationale

The interest in developing a research about the reinforcement of speaking abilities began when I was starting my major in 2014. At that time, I could observe that just a little attention was being paid to Oral activities in the classroom which made my classmates take more time to develop those productive skills. Due to the fact the Speaking is the ability that it is often forgotten in class as the number of units or content that has to be reviewed before the evaluations, I decided it could be a good idea to carry out a research focusing on the implementation of Oral activities in order to improve the speaking skills in LEI students of *Lengua Meta I* as that was the skill they needed to improve the most.

1.4 Objective

The main objective of this research is to identify and implement speaking activities under the belief that these speaking activities may reinforce and improve students' oral production by applying their knowledge of the language features and the ability to process information. The study will also provide suggestions to the English teachers to implement more speaking activities during their classes.

1.5 Research questions

In order to lead the study, four research questions were created:

1. What types of activities would help students to increase their exposure and production of the target language?
2. How do oral activities help students reinforce their oral skills?
3. Which speaking activities can be used in *Lengua Meta I* at LEI?
4. Which speaking activities help students' oral production?

The study aims to answer the research questions through the literature framework and the making of the study.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study might be significant for the EFL field since the research will identify appropriate additional speaking activities in *Lengua Meta I* as well as to provide suggestions to students and the English Academy at *Facultad de Lenguas BUAP* to encourage the use of speaking activities during the subjects of *Lengua Meta*. It may improve the oral performance of students from *Lengua Meta I* and encourage students from the university to be willing to practice the language inside and outside the classroom. In this way, *Facultad de Lenguas* could generate a different mind-set among their members

and hopefully it might help to change attitudes towards the use of English among students of the *Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés*.

1.8 Theoretical context of the research

The study was done at *Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla* at *Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés*. It was developed in Spring 2018. The classes were given from January until April of the same year, as part of the Professional Practice subject in front of a group of *Lengua Meta I*. Giving 60 hours of class in front of the group plus some mentoring and 160 hours of planning. The students were in their first semester and the group was formed by 30 students. From the thirty students who participated in the study, 1 of them abandoned the major in the first month; other four students were retaking the subject. Therefore, they were not considered for the results of the research. At the end of the course, twenty-six students remained in the group.

1.8 Overview of the study

This document is organized in five chapters, in Chapter 1, the introduction focuses on presenting the background of the study and it presents the objective of the research. In Chapter 2 the Literature Review is focused on different Approaches to English Teaching are presented as well as different topics that can provide previous knowledge to the reader. Chapter 3 is the Methodology of the study; it presents the types of study and research. It also provides the context in which this study was developed, the description of the participants and the instruments that were used in the collection of data. The results of the study and the answers collected from the instrument are also stated in Chapter 4. Finally, the research questions and the results of the study are answered and discussed in Chapter 5.

1.9 Conclusions of the chapter

Being able to communicate in written and oral form are important for students to achieve communicative competence. Since writing and speaking are crucial for communication, it is relevant for future teachers to dedicate time to design their classes, find activities and create materials to reinforce those abilities in LEI. In order to develop a better proficiency level among students and a change in perceptions about the use of the language at LEI in *Facultad de Lenguas*, the study was designed. In the following chapters, the theoretical framework and the process that the study followed in order to complete the study will be presented.

CHAPTER II-The Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter deals with the theoretical framework of the study. Some of the topics that will be covered are about the different approaches to English Teaching throughout history in to explain what Communicative Language Teaching is and its role at *Facultad de Lenguas BUAP* to deeply understand the characteristics that the program had for Generation 2014. The material covered in this chapter will provide the foundations for answering the research questions previously stated.

2.1 Approaches to English Teaching

For several decades, English Teaching has played a key role in different parts of the world. During the 19th century, people in Germany and France needed more dynamic and practical ways of learning English and as a result of that need the Direct Method flourished as an alternative to Grammar Translation Method. Direct Method became popular throughout Europe but still this was not what learners were looking for due to the fact that it was constantly comparing the process in which the mother tongue is acquired with the way a second language is learned, in which it was seen that the immersion technique did not work with all students. Even though the Direct Method paved the way for more communicative, oral based approaches, which help to the development of language teaching, (Alkhateeb, 2016).

The importance of English teaching is stated since World War II as Germans were demanded to learn English and the Audiolingual method emerged. This method is known for the use of drills, focused mainly on pronunciation and memorization of words, as well

as the use of different dialogues to form habits in learning that will later help them to develop quick and automatic responses. The Audiolingual Method considered language simply as a form of behavior to be learned through the information of correct speech habits (Tugrul, 2013). This method was developed under the linguistic and psychological theory of 1940 as behavioristic psychologists discuss conditioning and habit formation models of learning that could be applied to Foreign Language Teaching.

In 1960, Gattegno created the Silent Way Method due to his believe that a foreign language could just be learned by artificial methods in schools. This method considered learning as a problem-solving skill and a discovering activity. Silent Way relies on more cognitive than effective argument, the fact that Silent Way considers language learning as a more cognitive process helped teacher at that time to focus on the humanistic approach to education. Silent Way can also be identified by the problem-solving approach to learning, which led students to learn through inductive processes that allow them to acquire meaningful learning through different activities that included discovery and creation to the acquisition of a foreign language. Gattegno was also aware about the role of discovery-learning procedures and as a result the creation of independence, autonomy and responsibility were fundamental characteristics among students in this method. (Gattegno, 1972)

The Natural Approach was originated once Krashen's views were manifested in Theories of Second Language Acquisition in 1982. Krashen claimed that delaying production until speech emerged would be beneficial for learners as they needed to be as relaxed as possible in the classroom and it will conclude in the production of the language. ...” The Natural Approach was aimed at the goal of basic personal communicative skills” ... (Krashen, 1982). The teacher would provide learners the input in order to enhance production with the language, anticipating some errors and finally the last stage focusing

on the production of the language but without errors. But the most controversial aspect of this method was the silent period in which learners are not forced to produce right away but rather wait until they feel ready to speak.

Those were the approaches mainly used for English Teaching, but they have changed during time and the learners' needs throughout history. Communicative Language Teaching is one of the approaches that started to be implemented in order to provide students with communicative competence, which helps them to use the language in different contexts as well as being able to understand the language in multiple situations.

2.2 Communicative Language Teaching

When psychologists and behaviorists were the prevailing influences in language teaching methods and materials, they considered the students in a passive role during the class; in which EFL teachers were describing reading and listening as passive activities and speaking and writing as active activities. After a couple of years of research and new mindsets, other teachers started talking about the four skills. (Speaking, listening, writing and reading)

Nowadays, any of these skills is considered passive, they are all considered active instead because students do not act as passive learners and they must be participants in the negotiation of meaning during a conversation. (Murcia, 2001). The skills needed to engage in speaking and writing activities are now known as productive, whereas listening and reading skills were known as receptive. For students to be able to communicate, they need grammatical structures as well as pragmatic knowledge, for them to be able to develop communicative competence. Therefore, it is highly important to engage students into conversation activities in order to provide them pragmatic and grammatical opportunities to practice the language. In 2001, Savignon focused on communicative competence to

define the ability of language learners to recite the dialogues or perform on discrete point tests of grammatical knowledge, (Savignon, 2001). It allows understanding the reason Communicative Language Teaching was one of the preferred methods for professors to teach English, this method allowed them to practice grammatical and sociolinguistic competence, which are necessary abilities to communicate in every language.

In 1970, a reaction to traditional language approaches began and old teaching methods were questioned about their usefulness. Grammar competence even though it was important started to be questioned because grammar itself could not provide students with communicative competence (a concept that was later used). The concept of communicative competence was later developed in the discipline of linguistics, term which refers to the appropriate use of the language in different circumstances. (Richards, 2006)

Within the last 25 years, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been put forth around the world as the “new” way to teach English as a foreign language. Teaching materials, course descriptions, and curriculum guidelines proclaim a goal of communicative competence that is the main purpose of any institution which wants their students to be able to compete and work in a globalized world. For example, at *Facultad de Lenguas, BUAP* graduates from the major need to be versatile and flexible teachers, intercultural competent and they must have a B2 English language level in accordance with the provisions of the Common European Framework for Languages. (*Plan de Estudios, 2009*)

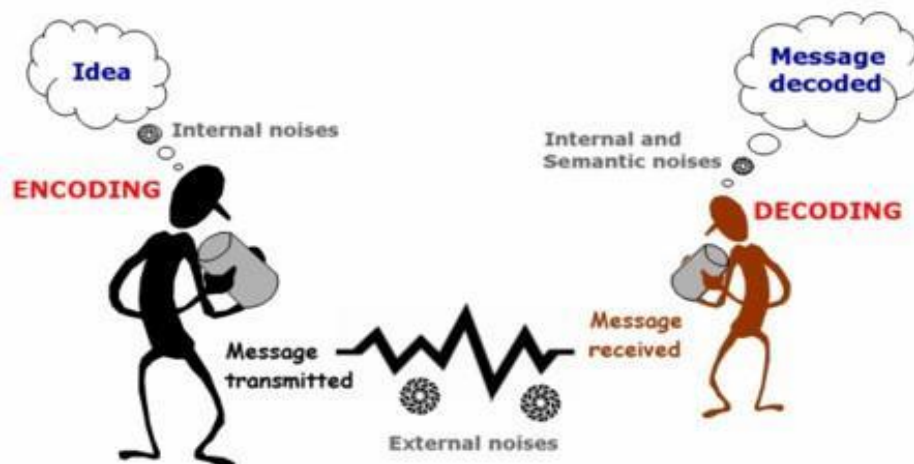
In recent years, there have been many proposals in curriculum planning to offer both novice and veteran teachers a different approach to language teaching, such as songs, games, board games, yoga, among other techniques. The use of computer-mediated

communication has also increased to encourage online chat rooms, information and interaction online. (Murcia, 2001)

2.3 The process of communication

First, communication can be defined as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another, (Keyton, 2011). The word communication comes from Latin which means common. The next figure represents the process of communication.

Figure 1. Communication process based on Keyton 2011



The communication process has several elements. The sender is the person who starts communication and the receiver is the person to whom the message is sent. The sender encodes the idea by selecting the appropriate words and choosing the right gestures or symbols which can be verbal or non-verbal. The message is the result of the encoding process of the sender, this message must be sent through a channel or medium which can be spoken or written and finally the receiver decodes the message into meaningful information in order to reply and answer or provide feedback. External noises can play a key role in communication because it can distort the message causing the communication

to be less effective. These elements can determine the quality of communication and therefore, make it very effective or less effective according to the circumstances (Lunenburg, 2010).

Communication is the main goal of learning any language, but it could not be possible if listening and speaking skills are not developed in the same level of efficiency in order to have effective communication and there is where the awareness of the importance of the productive skills are from. One of the most important aspects to have effective communication is to understand the importance of ongoing communication contemplating formal and informal communication. Although communication can be defined as verbal and non-verbal, the study will focus on verbal one.

Multiple efforts have been done to increase the exposure to the language and development of English proficiency. One of the techniques used is the European Language portfolio, which is a document that students use to record evidence of their improvement throughout the course and reflect on their language learning and intercultural experiences. (Council of Europe, 2001)

Developing speaking is still the most difficult skill to improve in a foreign language context. Therefore, it is important to enhance and collaborate through research in this area. (Khan, 2010) As it was stated before, Communicative Competence was a concept introduced by the Communicative Approach where productive skills were developed and it is known as one of the most important characteristics to determine whether someone is proficient in the use of the language.

2.4 Competence and Performance

One of the main difficulties for beginner students is that they are not prepared for spontaneous communication which means they must memorize phrases in order to

communicate with people. Therefore, communicative competence is a crucial aspect when learning a second or foreign language. Throughout the years the concept of “Communicative Competence” has been changing and evolving with time but even though it has changed several times, it is important to explain the different perceptions that multiple authors had about the concept.

Noam Chomsky was the first author who drew the distinction between performance and competence in 1965 in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, where he states that competence is the speaker-listener’s knowledge of the language, meanwhile performance is the knowledge in concrete situations, which he emphasized the theory of syntax. Chomsky considers language as a cognitive growth instead of a mean for communication as many other authors established. Therefore, it can be mentioned that Learner’s Communicative Competence eventually change due to the fact that acquisition involves change and as a result the learner might not have a defined understanding on how some grammatical structures, forms and sentences are used, which cause new forms that are added to the language, change the Learner’s Communicative Competence. (Brown, et al, 1996)

In disagreement with what Chomsky stated about communicative competence, Hymes developed another idea of Communicative Competence in 1972. This theory defined Communicative Competence not only as grammatical competence but also took into consideration the use of Grammatical Competence in different communicative situations. Communicative Competence is the ability to communicate in everyday situations and includes structural and functional aspects of the language. Hymes divided Communicative Competence into four dimensions: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.

1. **Grammatical Competence** includes rules of phonology, orthography, vocabulary, word formation and sentence formation. Whether something is formally possible, linguistic competence agrees or disagrees with grammatical rules and structures.
2. **Sociolinguistic Competence**, it includes rules for the expression and understanding of appropriate social meanings and grammatical forms in different contexts). This dimension implies social and cultural rules of language use.
3. **Discourse Competence**, it is concerned about cohesion (how sentence elements are tied together via reference, and repetition. When an utterance is not grammatically correct, but it can be understandable, then it can be considered feasible.
4. **Strategic Competence**, it is concerned about a repertoire of compensatory strategies that help with a variety of communication difficulties. It tells whether the utterance is appropriate to the context or not.

In contrast with Hymes theory, Riley in 1985 states four deficiencies in Hymes theory in Developmental sociolinguistics and the competence / performance distinction. Riley established that the first deficiency in Hymes theory is that Communicative Competence is neither dyadic nor intersubjective, meaning that is crucial the collaborative construction of intersubjective meaning in order to communicate. It is important to for teachers to be able to teach learners that conveyed meaning in crucial for understanding. The second deficiency she pointed out is Communicative Competence is intentional, not hermeneutic. It refers to the fact of having known the context in which a conversation is taking place as well as the meaning of the utterances mentioned by the participants, without context, communication may not be effective or understandable for the listener. The third deficiency is related with communicative competence idealizes performance but does not theorize it, which explains that performance of acts cannot be understood by themselves without the negotiation and interpretation of meaning. This negotiation and

interpretation allow the learner to be able to identify whether an utterance is marked as a greeting, command, threatening, among others. Finally, the fourth deficiency is related to situational determinism rules out rhetoric, redefinition of the situation and metaphorical classification of situations. The last deficiency focuses on learners to be considered sociolinguistic automates, who have no control over the various situations in which they have to use the language. They have to use it not only to communicate with each other but also as a form to limit their own communication with specific people at specific circumstances. For example, speaking Japanese and English in a place in which not everyone speaks Japanese or vice versa. (Brown et al, 1996)

Saussure also gave his own concept of “langue” and “parole”. Langue meaning language and parole meaning the products of speech, with these two concepts, it can be defined that performance or “parole” was totally dependent on competence. Competence also depends on performance in order to communicate and therefore, the acquisition of linguistic competence depends on the correction and exercise of performance. (Brown, et al, 1996). If competence depends on performance and on the exercise and correction of it. Then, it is important to provide learners with as much practice as possible in and outside the classroom. In this way, learners will be able to acquire a pragmatic competence that will allow them to use grammatical competence and exercise performance in order to develop pragmatic competence efficiently.

In Krashen’s language acquisition theory, he established five different hypotheses about language acquisition. The first one is the acquisition-learning distinction which makes a notorious distinction about acquisition that is the unconscious process of acquiring Communicative Competence without learning grammatical rules, the learner usually develop a “feeling” of correctness and errors feel “wrong” but it is not aware about the reason. Meanwhile, learning is differentiated since learners are usually conscious or aware

about all the grammatical rules. The acquisition-learning hypothesis claims that learners cannot acquire a language during adulthood. It cannot be assumed that adults will be able to achieve native-like levels in a second language, but they can access the same natural language devices that children use. (Krashen, 1982)

The Natural Order Hypothesis establishes that some grammatical structures are acquired before other ones. As children who are learners of another language tend to compare and use similar grammatical structures that exist in their mother tongue with the ones that are acquired in the second language. Therefore, teachers should take this into consideration when explaining or introducing new grammatical forms to learners of a second or foreign language.

The Monitor hypothesis explains that if learners are monitors to produce well-structured grammatical utterances, as well as a fluent speech, the student will later on develop communicative competence. When the student has developed Communicative Competence, it is more likely that the learner will be able to communicate effectively with others and that explains us the importance of implementing speaking activities that allow students to practice the language during the class.

The Input Hypothesis states that learners acquire the language once they have understood language that contains structures that are a bit beyond what they currently know. This happens when the learners can use knowledge from their context, their linguistic competence and extra linguistic information to help them understand the language. The theory states that fluency is not something that can be taught but instead, it emerges over time with practice, what the teacher can do to enhance the development of the ability is to provide the learner clear and comprehensible input and the speech will arrive once the learners is “ready” to use the language. (Krashen, 19982)

The Affective Filter Hypothesis states how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process. It is stated that learners with high motivation, self-confidence and low anxiety levels tend to perform better in a second language. Therefore, teachers should be aware not only to provide comprehensible input but also generating the correct situation to encourage learners the use of the language with low anxiety levels.

Now that the definitions of performance and competence are clear, as well as their importance in the field. It is also crucial to understand the role that communication skills have inside the class in the target language and how communication skills relate to performance and competence development in class.

2.5 Communication Skills

Communication Skills are crucial in learners' lives not only in their mother tongue but also in their second language. As language serves different purposes, it is important for teachers to design activities that help learners to use them appropriately in different circumstances and contexts. Communication skills are the mean by, which people can not only share information or contact each other but rather a way to share ideas, feelings, and discoveries, among other ones.

These communication skills are divided into four different categories: speaking, listening, reading and writing, among these skills there are ones that are considered receptive as listening and reading, as well as productive such as reading and speaking, but they are commonly taught as they are used in real life. This means that listening is related to speaking in order to make them work simultaneously as in real life. Also reading and writing are commonly taught together in order to achieve effective written communication. Developing learners' Communicative Competence requires that teachers provide students enough opportunities for them to use the language in different situations. In fact, by

implementing and designing activities that allow students use the four skills will highly make them increase communication effectiveness but it is important to keep in mind that the mastery of the language is a gradual process, which requires gradual exposure of the learners to more challenging tasks and materials (Sadiku, 2015).

2.6 Importance of teaching Listening and Speaking Skills

In order to introduce what Listening and Speaking Skills are, it is necessary to define what a skill is. A skill is the ability to do something efficiently (Loban, 1976). He has found that the students who have low abilities in oral language will also have low abilities in reading and writing. Therefore, it is important to teach Speaking and Listening Skills inside the classroom. The main objective of teaching those skills is to help students become communicatively competent to successfully accomplish different tasks in real life.

As it was already mentioned, Communicative Competence and the ability of being able to perform in a Target Language are necessary for students to be able to communicate in different circumstances that are the explanation of teaching speaking and listening skills during *Lengua Meta I*. Implementing those types of activities students will have more input and guidance along the major and they can improve their performance and communicative skills to be able to develop efficient communications among others (Hymes, 1972).

2.7 Listening Skill

As Rivers said in 1996, speaking cannot be considered communication unless what one person said, is being understood by another person. This is the reason teachers should focus on the comprehension of spoken speech, in this way learners can visualize the importance of the communication process and the pragmatic relevance in conversation. In

order to teach speaking, it is primarily important to help students improve their listening skill to be able to understand and participate in a conversation. Additionally, we can expect to listen twice as much as we speak, four times more than we read, and five times more than we write (Rivers, 1981) this makes listening ability crucial for better communicative processes when learning a language but teachers cannot take listening for granted if they do not practice comprehension with their students.

Therefore, it is important to highlight that teaching listening is crucial for students to be able to develop a communicative competence because without listening, students will not be able to express themselves, understand others and follow the conversations. Belasco in 1964 expressed his concerns as follows: “I was rudely jolted by the realization that it is possible to develop so-called “speaking ability” and yet be so virtually incompetent in understanding the spoken language” ... (Belasco, 1964, pp. 4-5). Most of the time students are taught to audio-comprehend certain dialogues but are not actually able to understand ideas in a conversation” ... (Belasco, 1964 pp.4-5). Students are often taught to comprehend recorded voices in an audio, but this is the explanation of the lack of original contexts provided by teachers to enhance spoken language in real life with several different factors as: accent, speed, pronunciation, among others.

Listening is most of the time considered a passive activity, but it is one of the most complicated abilities to perform as it is the listener’s choice to interpret the information that is received and decoded into information that the listener can make connections with or relate to. The conceptualization of listening as a passive role was rejected by Anderson and Lynch in 1988, they argued that such perspective failed to account for the interpretations listeners make as they hear the spoken text according to their own purposes for listening and their own store of background knowledge” (Anderson & Lynch, 1988). Meaning that learners can actively listen if they background knowledge and purpose is

present in the conversation. If there is none, then it is difficult for learners to enroll and participate in conversations.

In *Lengua Meta I*, it is important to include activities that help students to develop their listening skill, to let learners improve different types of interaction as well as providing them several contextual settings. Teachers can use three different modes at the moment of instruction, which are Bidirectional, Unidirectional and Auto-directional Listening Mode. Teachers should take into consideration the different interactions to teach Listening appropriately. The three different interactions are presented below. (Murcia, 2001)

1. **Bidirectional Listening Mode** is the one there is a speaker and a listener face to face or via telephone. The participants necessarily take turns to be able to participate in a conversation.
2. **Unidirectional Listening Mode** is the one the input comes from one source that can be an announcement, a recorded message or media. Of course, the listener is unable to interact, but it can answer, and we do it every day as we leave a message in a voicemail for example.
3. **Auto-directional Listening Mode** is the one the speaker and the listener retell or recreate a conversation to listen to it again or remember information and it is a process that they usually do on their own.

It is important for teachers to be able to use the different types of Listening Modes in conversation activities. In this way students will have more practice in different contexts, which allows them to develop different strategies to listen and respond. The different activities that teachers use in a class should be transactional and interactional, which means that content and convey information is as important as the establishment and maintenance of cordial social relationships in a real context.

Listening becomes the door to promote communication, however, speaking is not encouraged to be practiced in class, then, the results of a good communicative competence and performance will not be observable. Therefore, there should be the same amount of practice for listening and speaking skills in the classrooms, to be able to develop communicative competence.

2.8 Speaking skill

Speaking is an ability that most students struggle with, but teachers do not realize the level of difficulty that speaking represents for students in order to communicate. Since speech is the most basic means of human communication but in a second or foreign language is usually the hardest to develop due to the extensive grammatical rules, pronunciation patterns, abbreviation of words, linking sounds and imitation of accents. All these characteristics make the language learners feel overwhelmed about the fact of trying to communicate in a second language which may cause the delay in oral speech.

...” For some people, speaking another language is synonym of knowing the language, but when talking about a second or third foreign language, speaking is often viewed as the most visible and demanding of the four skills” ... (Bailey & Savage 1994, p. viii). According to Brown, it is the most demanding of the four skills because it contains reduced forms, contractions, vowel reduction, and elision, among other characteristics. (Brown, 1994). In oral production, learners need to be able to use contractions, vowel reduction, elision, stress, rhythm, intonation, among other abilities in order to improve their speech.

This means that there is a variety of demands that the learner need to fulfil in order to be able to interact with others as: monitoring and understanding other speaker/speakers, formulating their reply, producing they reply, motoring its effect, and so on, which can

lead to stress for the learner as they need to practice and perform several tasks at the same time while they are communicating. Here relies the importance in developing the language in different contexts and with different purposes in order to communicate and fulfil different needs but it is also quite demanding at early stages in the learning process and it is even more difficult if learners are adults. This happens since the critical period has already passed, and adults need to memorize rules and comprehend everything about the language when they are learning. Learning a foreign language when students are adults can be quite challenging and it is just a matter of imagining trying to speak in English, Russian or French to be able to communicate, it can be frustrating when students are just starting to learn, that is the reason why speaking is considered to be the most demanding skill of the four ones.

As there are different students in a common classroom, which means there are several different learning styles and needs that must be fulfilled and attend in class. Therefore, it is complicated for teachers to assess and plan every single class so that students can achieve communicative competence in their own way. However, teachers have the duty to adapt and organize their classes so that students can be able to perform their best during class, taking into account the different subskills that are required to be developed at the time of learning a foreign language, if teachers provide enough practice for learners to use the language, better results can be obtained and greater self-confidence in a foreign language is achieved.

2.9 Sub-skills of speaking

Speaking as stated above is one of the most difficult skills to improve since English is considered a Foreign Language in Mexico (EFL) and learners do not have enough opportunities to practice the language outside the class and the time in class is not enough

for them to practice. Speaking is a skill that is formed by other sub-skills such as: pronunciation, fluency, syntax and vocabulary.

First, students need to be able to use and pronounce words and structures correctly in order to be understood and this is the reason why it is later considered in the evaluation rubric for the project. Pronunciation is important in order to avoid misunderstandings between the speaker and the listener. The students cannot say that speakers have a wide knowledge of the English language if he/she does not know the correct pronunciation of words or phrases to enhance clear and easy communication. (Gilakjani, 2016)

Second, fluency is one of the most difficult sub-skills to develop because it cannot be taught but it is rather a process that will improve over time and practice, but it is important to consider because it is one basic characteristic in order to effectively and appropriately communicate with other people in different socio-cultural environments.

Third, students need to know a wide variety of words and grammar in order to have the ability to choose the correct word to use in each situation for a specific task or topic. They should be aware of words and structures for a specific task or context and then the teacher can ask them to use those expressions correctly. Here it is contemplated grammatical competence and discourse competence, as students need to know how and when to use the expressions taught before in order to effectively communicate with other participants in the process of communication.

Finally, the four sub-skills mentioned are essential parts of the speaking skills and they should be considered when designing and implementing speaking activities during the English sessions, so students can improve their communicative competence, as well as their performance. (Lackman, 2010) When teachers include the sub-skills to be developed during the sessions, it is going to be easier for learners to communicate and produce an

accurate and fluent speech. Teachers are aware of the importance of the sub-skills in speaking; however, there are more aspects to be considered at the time of planning a lesson, as multiple intelligences and their role in lesson planning.

There are many ways to promote oral skills in the EFL classroom. Multiple speaking activities can be implemented in the classroom in order to practice speaking in the classroom as discussions, speeches, role plays, conversations and audiotape oral journals.

2.10 Multiple intelligences

Multiple Intelligences is a theory proposed by Howard Gardner in the early 1980's which proposes that humans can learn in seven different ways through language, logical-mathematical exercises, spatial representations, musical thinking, moving around or using the body to solve different problems, understanding other people and themselves. In a world which assumes that everyone learns in the same way, it is highly important to create awareness that there are different kinds of intelligences. Howard Gardner recognized that learners have several intelligences that are developed in different ways, ones may be more developed than the other ones, but they help individuals to understand the world and have a better concept of what they are capable to do.

The use of Multiple Intelligences in classrooms can reach a higher impact on students that it was thought before. A study conducted by Bas and Beyhan in 2010 showed that students who are taught through Multiple Intelligences project-based evaluations score higher than the group which was taught with a traditional approach. (Bas & Beyhan, 2010)

It is important to consider the implementation of different Multiple Intelligences in the classroom, to be able to improve students' achievements and interest about the different subjects. By increasing the exposure that students have on different skills they will be able

to improve their intellectual abilities and developing different learning styles to solve problems in learning.

2.11 Learning styles

In 1995, Joy M. Reid defined learning styles as the individual's natural, habitual and preferred way of absorbing, processing and retaining information skills. Learning styles are cognitive, affective and psychosocial behaviors that served as indicators of how learners perceive, interact and respond to the learning environment (Curry, 1981). There are four different styles mentioned in VARK's model; Visual, Auditory, Reading or Writing preference as well as Kinesthetic.

The Visual learner is the one who tends to understand information through charts, diagrams, pictures, videos, among others. On the other hand, an Auditory learner is the one who can easily grasp information from podcasts, videos, conferences, conversations and several others. The Reading or Writer learner is the one who can comprehend information through reading in different sources; they can be either physical as books or online as web pages and blogs. Finally, the kinesthetic learner is the one who has to manage information through the use of his body in order to learn how to do things; this usually requires experimentation and modelling.

Those learning styles can improve students' performance in class. Giving students the opportunity to decide how they want their learning process to be can give them the necessary tools to achieve a higher level of performance and enrich their knowledge. If teachers set those characteristics in their classrooms, students are more likely to obtain meaningful learning and collect their knowledge to produce something which allows them to share what they know.

2.12 Meaningful learning

To talk about the importance of enhancing meaningful learning in the classroom, it is crucial to define what meaningful learning is. In 1978, Ausubel developed the concept of “meaningful learning” due to his belief that learners must relate new learning with previous knowledge or experiences. As meaningful learning involves recognition of the links between new and previous information, it has the privilege to be transferred in long term memory. He also stated that in an academic context it is difficult to be able to learn through experiences, and the best option to increase meaningful learning was through discovery learning and deductive reasoning, which can offer learners a greater chance for acquiring learning that they will not forget just to pass a test.

It is important to consider that meaningful learning has five attributes; it should be active, constructive, intentional, authentic and cooperative. Meaningful learning should be active because humans learn through experiences and those experiences let them understand better some concepts or procedures. It also must be constructive, new experiences can create confusion between what the learner knows and what he understands. Therefore, it is important to emphasize reflection during this process, in this way students can create their own mental processes. Meaningful learning is intentional, every behavior is goal directed as well as learning should be, and all the technological tools students have should be used with a specific purpose. Learning should also be authentic; several teachers adapt their content so students can understand it easily and that is basically what authentic speaks for. Being able to adapt, adopt and create new ways of delivering content to learners in an innovative way.

Finally, meaningful learning is cooperative, all human beings learn through collaborative work and that is the way in which strong connections between new and previous knowledge are made. Those five attributes will help learners to develop higher

and lower critical skills. When teachers consider the five attributes of meaningful learning the lessons can be easily recall by students as well as the information reviewed in class.

Enhancing meaningful learning in classes is not the only challenge that teachers have to face but also handle the audience they are teaching. Teaching adults has always been a topic for discussion through several decades due to the specific characteristics and issues that represent teaching at this level. Therefore, reflective teaching can become a useful tool for teachers to evaluate themselves and their classes. A study called *Meaningful Learning in Practice* was performed in 2014, in which 28 students from *Institut Baltasar Porcel* in Spain developed a Geography meaningful activity in which students needed to create a mural about Balearic Islands. The study states the importance of collaborative work and meaningful learning as well as the role of social skills to carry out different tasks; the results demonstrated that students were able to successfully complete the task with joy and motivation of learning. (Bellester, 2014)

As meaningful learning is crucial for teachers in order to create successful lessons, it is not the only aspect to take into consideration when planning a lesson, it is also important to consider reflective teaching into practice because it will increase the possibilities of designing, developing and performing work sessions, as it will be described below.

2.13 Reflective Teaching

Reflective Teaching is a personal tool that teachers can use to observe and evaluate they have in the classroom. It can be a personal reflective process, or it can be shared with co-workers. The aim of reflective teaching is to improve the teaching practice in the classroom. Reflective teaching means more than just summarizing what happened in class,

it is a more systematic approach in which patience and self-awareness is extremely important.

In 1990, Jack Richards defined reflection or “critical reflection, refers to an activity or process in which an experience is recalled, considered, and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose. It is a response to previous experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action. (Richards, 1990)

In 1990 Bartlett, pointed out that becoming a reflective teacher involves moving beyond a primary concern with instructional techniques and “how to” questions and asking “what” and “why” questions that regard instructions and managerial techniques not as ends in themselves, but as part of broader educational purposes. Asking “what and why” questions give us a certain power over our teaching as Bartlett, (1990, p. 267) has expressed.

Reflective teaching is one of the most common ways to assess teachers’ performance, but it has several approaches, which can be: Practical reflection focuses on improving teaching and learning in a specific course or class. Strategic reflection involves paying attention to general knowledge or teaching strategies and identifying their applicability to different teaching contexts. Epistemic reflection involves recognizing the cognitive awareness of one’s reflective processes and what may impede reflection (McAlpine & Weston, 2000).

There are different ways to evidence reflection as filming or audio recording classes, reviewing the Whiteboard, looking at students’ notebooks, asking students, or re-writing a lesson plan. All these techniques help teachers to improve their lessons as well as

the organization of the activities. Reflective teaching is a helpful tool to remember, correct, adapt and re-create lessons and improve them.

Self-assessment can also be helpful for pre- and in-service teachers, and it requires different techniques as reflection journals, teaching inventories, video recorded teaching practices and teaching portfolios. On the other hand, there is the external assessment that has two main tools students' evaluations and peer evaluation which can improve teachers' performance and results in classes.

In conclusion, reflective teaching can ensure a better teaching practice, in this way the teachers can widely observe the areas of opportunity to improve in a lesson, which can lead to improvement in teacher practice. Reflective teaching is now not just a tool but a necessity in order to improve lessons and increase the effectiveness in teaching.

CHAPTER III: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will provide an insight of the methodology chosen for the study and it will describe the best method for the research. Afterwards, the steps of Action Research will be explained in order to justify the decision of the method chosen. During this chapter, the research approach, the method chosen for the study, the process of data collection, the design of the instrument and the aspects taken into consideration to design the instrument are presented.

Specific information about the participants, the setting, the instruments and the techniques used during the research are provided. The process of data collection and analysis is also described, as well as the results and their analysis. In this case, several instruments and techniques were used to evaluate the students' performance, which will be described. This chapter explains the overall methodology used to carry out the study.

3.1 Research

Before explaining the type of research and how it was done, it is important to provide a definition of what research is. As it is defined by Creswell (2012) research is a process of various steps used to collect and analyze information to increase the understanding about a specific topic or issue. Research as stated by him consists of three major steps:

- a) Stating a question
- b) Gather data to answer the question
- c) Validate the data to answer the question

A research is the pursuit of truth with the help of study, observation, comparison and experiment. The best way to find a solution to a problem is research and that is the

main reason that people make researches in order to provide solutions to common or uncommon problems. In our field, a research was done in order to provide a solution to a need during *Lengua Meta I* course.

There are several research approaches used in language and teaching processes that can be helpful according to the aim of each one of them. In the following paragraphs, some of the approaches will be explained in order to present and justify the approach and method chosen for this study. For research inside the language teaching and learning field, several approaches can be found but there are three major ones, which are:

3.2 Quantitative approach

In 2002, Creswell established that the quantitative research is based on measurements of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity. The data collected can be rigorously selected by rigorous analysis and rigid fashion. Quantitative research can be sub-classified into inferential, experimental and simulation approaches to research. The quantitative studies describe problems through the description of trends; they also allow the creation of statements, research questions and hypotheses which are narrow, measurable and observable. Finally, the results are often analyzed using statistical analysis.

3.3 Qualitative approach

The Qualitative approach is concerned with qualitative phenomenon related to or involving quality or kind. It is concerned to the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviors. This type of research has to do with the researcher's impressions and insights. Qualitative research is usually used when the researcher is mainly focused on generating results either in non-quantitative form in the forms which are not subjected to rigorous

quantitative analysis. The techniques that are commonly used in this type of studies are: group interviews, projective techniques and depth interviews. (Creswell, 2012)

3.4 Mixed method

The Mixed Method is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analyzing and integrating quantitative and qualitative data. This Research is used when the integration of qualitative and quantitative data provides a better understanding of the research problem than either of the each alone. By mixing both approaches, the researcher gains a better understanding of the situation, while offsets the weaknesses of both approaches by themselves.

The approach chosen for this study was the Mixed Method (Qualitative and Quantitative) due to the orientation of the study and the type of information collected from the study. The study aims to analyze the efficiency of the activities implemented during Target Language I course in order to improve the students' oral skills during the semester.

3.5 Action Research

There are several methods to carry out a research in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Action Research, Case Study and Narrative are most commonly used in this field, among others.

In 2000 Ferrance described Action Research as a process, in which participants systematically reflect and analyze their own teaching practice, using several research techniques. (Ferrance, 2000). According to Yin (1984) Case Study is a research method that deals with empirical inquiry that is willing to investigate a phenomenon within its real-life context. In those types of researchers, the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 20) define narrative research as “a way of understanding experience” involving “collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus”.

In this study, action research was the most appropriate approach since the practitioner, was also the researcher for the study. Action research allows the practitioner or teacher to delete the barrier between the students and the research by being part of the process, giving it a more dynamic perspective and the teacher can actively participate in the situation meanwhile it is conducting the research.

There are 5 phases in Action Research, each one of them allows the researcher to plan, organize ideas, implement them and make changes if necessary, depending on the stage of the research. It is highly important to mention that it is a constant process in which you can change certain things after you have reflected on it. The Action Research can be better explained in the following diagram.

Figure 2. The steps in Action Research (Brown, 2004)



Action Research is a process as it must follow five different steps:

Planning: In this phase, the researcher needs to identify a problem that can be measured at a long term. Next, the researcher must make a literature review to have a better understanding of the situation and finally the design process is made. Here is where the researcher established the data methods, consider ethical issues, get permissions, create deadlines and set up systems.

Action: The researcher engages multiple cycles of experimentation and data collection. The data collection might include qualitative data like observations, interviews and artefacts. There can also be quantitative data, that might include rubrics, squares, surveys or achievement data.

Analysis: It often starts by organizing the data in charts or graphs meanwhile looking for specific trends. Discussion with peers, journals, or cluster maps can also be used before writing the results. Reflection is also used during this stage in order to widely analyze the results gathered from the study and be able to explain whether or not the study agree or disagree with the hypotheses stated at the beginning of the study.

Conclusion: In this phase, the research is shared to the world and the researcher can reflect its own practice, this process will lead in the last phase.

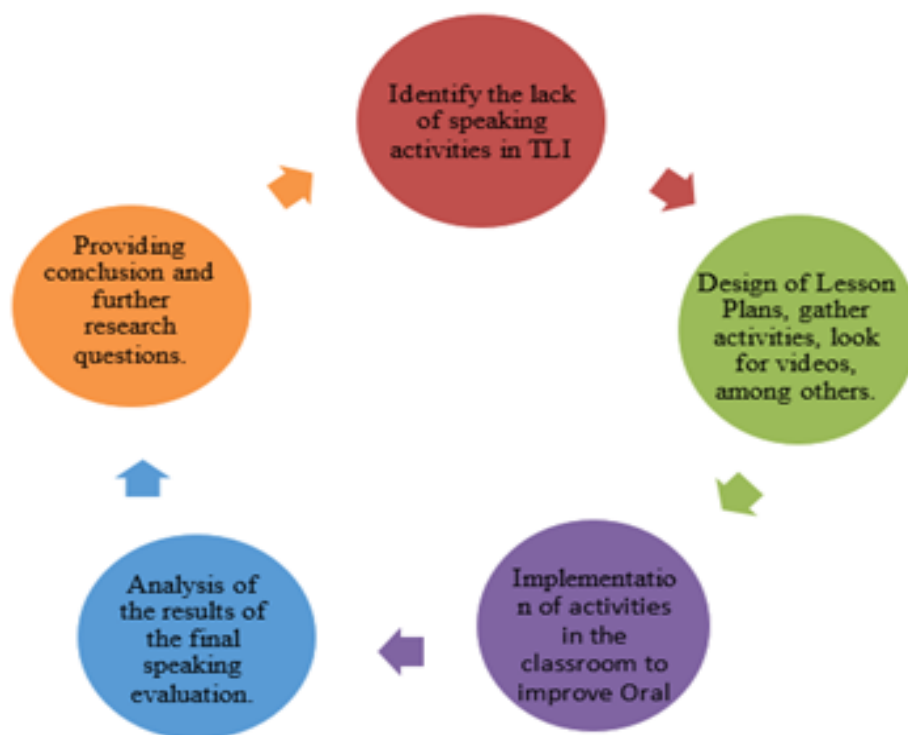
Next Steps: In the last phase of the research, new questions are set, and the cycle will continue as the researcher refines the craft as better and creative teacher.

3.6 The methodology of the study

This is an action research, mixed method study. Action Research seems to be the most appropriate method due to the characteristics of the study. During the semester, the five

phases of Action Research were used in order to implement activities, collect data and analyze it. The next chart the research process is shown during January to April 2018.

Figure 3. The stages of planning for *Experiencia Profesional* lessons



From January to April 2018 the five phases of the research were accomplished. The research started the identification of a need, it continued with the design of lesson plans and research of material for the classes. After all the planning, the practitioner implemented the activities and models which were previously authorized by the mentor and tutor during Professional Practice. The following step was the analysis of the data at the final evaluation in April in order to make the appropriate conclusions and improvements to the original plan.

3.7 Description of the steps of Action Research in the study

Planning: A problem was identified in LEI; students did not have enough oral practice during *Lengua Meta* sessions, to solve this problem it was necessary to create a plan to provide a solution for the lack of practice students faced during the career. In consequence, after thinking about a solution, it was decided to provide different strategies to develop speaking in *Lengua Meta I*, while the researcher performed her Professional Practice at *Facultad de Lenguas, BUAP* in the *LEI* program in January 2018. The syllabus was already given by the tutor of the group but the content as well as the activities were based during the timespan of Professional Practice (January to April 2018).

Action: Before the implementation of the activities, the students were previously interviewed in order to obtain data of their speaking performance in the moment they got into the *LEI* program. Once the results were obtained, the process of analyzing, correcting and adapting of the activities implemented in the classroom began. Using weekly reflective journals, the researcher started to evaluate the class performance as well as class development. It was noticeable that some activities did not work or did not accomplish the expected objective for that class, so it was necessary to replace them for other types of activities. During the semester, several modifications were made in order to reinforce the oral skill in *Lengua Meta I* and accomplish this objective.

Analysis: Once the period of Professional Practice finished, the students were evaluated with a final interview to evaluate their improvement. Once the data was collected, it was analyzed and interpreted in order to obtain the results and conclusions needed for the study. This analytical process was useful for further suggestions about this specific study.

Conclusion: The final examinations of the analysis and the analysis of the results in the final interviews were obtained; these results will provide suggestions for pre-service teachers as well as in-service teachers to improve their practice in EFL classrooms.

Next steps: During this stage of the study, more questions were originated to complete the study in the future if someone would want to work with the same topic. Some topics were also provided as further investigation to provide a better understanding of the importance of implementing speaking activities in the classroom. Finally, some other approaches are mentioned in the study as further literature and research.

4.8 Description of the context

The study was carried out at *Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla*, more specifically at *Facultad de Lenguas*. There is a major program called *Enseñanza del Inglés*, in which the faculty staff prepare future English teachers. The program lasts four years and it is formed by several subjects related to the following areas: research, language and teaching. This major is mainly focused on providing students the necessary tools to develop professionally in different teaching contexts.

3.9 Participants

The study was conducted from January to April 2018. The study took place in the Department of Languages at BUAP, in the major *Licenciatura en la Enseñanza de Inglés*. The group chosen was Target Language I and it was realized meanwhile the practitioner was developing Professional Practice. The classes were given on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. The students were from Generation 2017.5 and Generation 2017. The group consisted of thirty students, five of whom were re-taking the subject. The students were between 18 and 26 years of age. It is important to highlight that

the students from cohort 2017.5 did not have a good average on the admission test. Therefore, it was important to encourage them to study harder and to overcome their difficulties during the course.

In order to choose the participants who were going to be part of the study, a purposive sample was chosen. The purposive sample was the best sampling technique for the study based on the knowledge of the population, in order to elicit data that was relevant for the study. As the results may change if all participants were considered it was decided to allow to the study just the ones who were *in Lengua Meta I* section 001 were selected. The group of participants was examined at the beginning of the major in January 2018 and it is highly important to mention that from 30 students in the group. From the thirty students 20 were females and 10 males. Three out of thirty students were re-taking the course and they were excluded from the study. Another student got out of the major and another was transferred to another *Lengua Meta*, leaving 26 active students during the research. The age range was 18 to 26 years old and all of them were full time students at that time.

3.10 Data collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, which enables to answer the stated research questions. Primary data was it the one which the researcher collects himself for the purpose of inquiry or study. The data is original in character and is generated by surveys conducted by individuals or research institutions.

There are different types of data collection in which interviews, questionnaires, surveys, observations, focus groups, ethnographies, oral histories, case studies, documents and records. Among those types of data collection, interviews were the data collection

process was chosen due to a small sample of participants chosen for the study. (Ferrance, 2000)

The survey method is the technique of gathering data by asking questions from people who have thought to have the desired information. Interviews can either be structured or open ended, if they are open-ended it requires more interpretation and analysis, plus they need to be carried-out by well-trained observers.

Convenience Sampling was used in order to choose the participants of the study as stated by Creswell (2012), convenience sampling is helpful when the participants are willing and available to be studied, as happened in this research. In this time span, the primary data was a diagnostic test which was provided by the mentor of the group. This was highly important in order to provide a starting point to the study and began the planning of several activities carried out during the research. The data collection at the beginning and end of the research was mainly focused on a rubric that was previously explained. A post-test and a final interview were tools that helped the collection of data from the students who were taking *Lengua Meta I* during Spring 2018.

3.11 The Instrument

In order to collect the data, a diagnostic interview was necessary at the beginning of the course to place the students in the CEFR. A rubric was used in the diagnose test as well as at the end of the course for their final interview at the end of the course. It is important to mention that a KET test was also used to at the beginning and at the end of the semester in order to have more reliable results in the research. At the end of the semester, each student had an individual interview with the mentor and the practitioner in which a set of audios were collected in order to keep a portfolio with evidences of the students' progress.

As the study is mainly focused on the reinforcement of Oral Skills in *Lengua Meta I*, as the purpose of the program is to develop receptive skills (listening and reading comprehension), productive skills (oral and written expression) and sub- English language skills (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) to apply comprehensively to facilitate students' personal and professional performance in common contexts and family members as well as in university academic environments for the achievement of the A2 + level. At level A2 +, the student excels with a more active participation in conversations in social life with some help and certain limitations in social functions; also, of considerable capacity to maintain monologues. He is also able to understand frequently used phrases and expressions related to areas of expertise that they are especially relevant (basic information about himself and his family, shopping, places of interest, occupations among others). (Olguín et al, 2016)

As it is demonstrated with the objective of *Lengua Meta I* course, even though the oral production aims are considered in the course, there is still a lack of opportunities for students to practice and this is where the study gets relevance. In order to demonstrate that by the implementation of speaking activities students' oral production will improve.

It was considered appropriate to make an interview to evaluate students' before and after progress during the semester. The recordings provide the study more opportunities to re-listen and gather more information in order to obtain information later, because it might be difficult to pay attention to small details that might have been not noticed during the evaluation.

3.12 Description of the instrument

For this research, a rubric was designed in order to evaluate the students' final performance in Speaking skill, the rubric was designed according to the objectives that students will be able to accomplish at the end of *Lengua Meta I*, which consists of achieving an A2 level according to the Common European Framework. The instrument consists in a rubric which has four categories: Pronunciation, Fluency, Syntax and Vocabulary which were the aspects taken into consideration for the evaluation. Each category has its own indicators and sub-indicators which are:

- **Pronunciation** is the first category present in the rubric due to its relevance in developing a good communication. In this category, word stress, sentence stress and intonation were the indicators taken to evaluate. The indicators mentioned above had different sub-indicators to make the evaluation more reliable.
- **Fluency** was the second aspect that was important to design the rubric, fluent speech was the indicator that provides us the following sub-indicators: speed, cluttering and stuttering in order to evaluate.
- **Syntax** is the third category that is part of the rubric that was designed in order to evaluate the students' performance. The indicator chosen was Sentence structure and it had three different sub-indicators: grammar, order and connectors.
- **Vocabulary** is the fourth category which is part of the rubric and it was taken into consideration to evaluate whether the students were using the vocabulary that they have learnt during the course. The indicators were adjectives, adverbs of manner and time, as well as frequency adverbs. It is important to mention that these indicators had sub-indicators to evaluate the form, meaning and use. (See Chart 3. Speaking sub-skills).

The performance was evaluated from a scale from 1 to 3 (which one had the lowest value and three the highest). The rubric also had a scale (good, regular, bad) to provide a summary of each one of the indicators and categories in order to simplify the researcher's task. At the bottom of the rubric, a space was left for the evaluator to make comments as well as recommendations for the students being evaluated. The first rubric can be seen in Appendix I.

Chart 3. Speaking Sub-Skills

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	SUB-INDICATOR
PRONUNCIATION	Word stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loudness ● Vowel length ● Vowel clarity
	Sentence stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Normal sentence stress ● Logical sentence stress ● Emphatic sentence stress
	Intonation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Speech Melody ● Sentence stress ● Rhythm
FLUENCY	Fluent speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Speed ● Stuttering ● Cluttering
SYNTAX	Sentence structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grammar ● Connections ● Order
VOCABULARY	Adjectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Form
	Adverbs of manner and time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meaning
	Frequency adverbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use

It is also highly important to mention that the rubric was modified after correcting a few mistakes during the design of the rubric. The sub-indicators: loudness, vowel length, Emphatic sentence stress, Speech Melody, Rhythm and Stuttering had misspelling errors that were corrected after the first evaluation of the instrument. The final rubric can be seen in Appendix II.

3.13 Description of data analysis/ procedure

The final instrument was administered to all the twenty-six students from *Lengua Meta I*. The students were interviewed individually to have a better perception of their performance, during the evaluation the mentor and the practitioner were presented, and both listened to the students' responses, making appropriate comments in the rubric in order to have a reliable evaluation. The interviews were conducted by the practitioner, which oversaw the group at a time. Afterwards, the instrument was scored, and the responses were uploaded to a database to have better control of the information gathered.

3.14 Validity criteria research

In 1991 Smith defined validity as the degree to which the researcher has measured what he has set out to measure, which can be interpreted as measuring what you are going to need in your study. After designing the study, it is highly important to prove that the results of the study are valid so the results can be credible or believable. Therefore, there are several types of validity including content, face, construct, criterion-related, and predictive validity. (Smith, 1991)

Criterion-related validity refers to the extent to which tests used in a research study are comparable to other well-established test of the construct in question, as the study was willing to test oral proficiency among students from *Lengua Meta I*. To provide validity,

several documents needed to be considered as the programs of Target Language and the European Framework. Based on the following documents, the instrument could have validity as well as the results gathered from the implementation of the rubric.

3.15 Conclusion

The Mixed-Method approach was selected in this study due to the characteristics of the research and Action Research was the method used to carry it out. The research was mainly focused on the improvement of the students' Oral Skills through the use of certain planned activities. Then, a rubric was used in order to have a better insight of the improvements in that area as well as deficiencies in oral speech. The results of the data collection will be presented and explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

1.1 Introduction

The following chapter is concerned with presenting the results that were obtained during the study, through the rubric that was described in Chapter III. The results of the study will be presented in several graphs that show the students' progress during Spring 2018 after the implementation of the activities described in Chapter II. The results are expected to provide suggestions to the English Academy at *Facultad de Lenguas BUAP* in order to plan and implement oral activities inside the classroom.

This chapter is mainly focused on the progress that students from *Lengua Meta I* had during Spring 2018, starting from January and ending in April of the same year. It is important to mention that the study tried to provide more ideas and activities for teachers to focus more in Speaking during the classes of *Lengua Meta*.

The chapter is organized in the following sections, pronunciation, fluency, syntax and vocabulary results in order to evaluate Speaking performance in students in *Lengua Meta I*. The sections that will be explained are part of the instrument described in Chapter III and they will be explained in the following paragraphs.

- Pronunciation was the first variable taken into consideration to be evaluated. In pronunciation, word stress, sentence stress, and intonation were the main aspects to be analyzed at the end of the semester. They are highly important in the communication process.

- The second variable was fluency, it was divided in three different aspects regarding to speed, cluttering and stuttering. Those aspects are crucial for the research because they were part of the evaluation that took place at the end of the course.
- The next variable was syntax, regarding to accuracy while speaking, which was subdivided in three categories: grammar, connections and order. These sub-indicators help the study to overlook the way syntax is used by students while speaking. It is an important part of the speech and due to its relevance, it was important to take it into consideration for the evaluation.
- Finally, vocabulary was the last variable that compounds the study. This variable was divided in the use of adjectives of manner and time, frequency adverbs and adjectives, as well the appropriate use by students while expressing themselves during a personal interview.

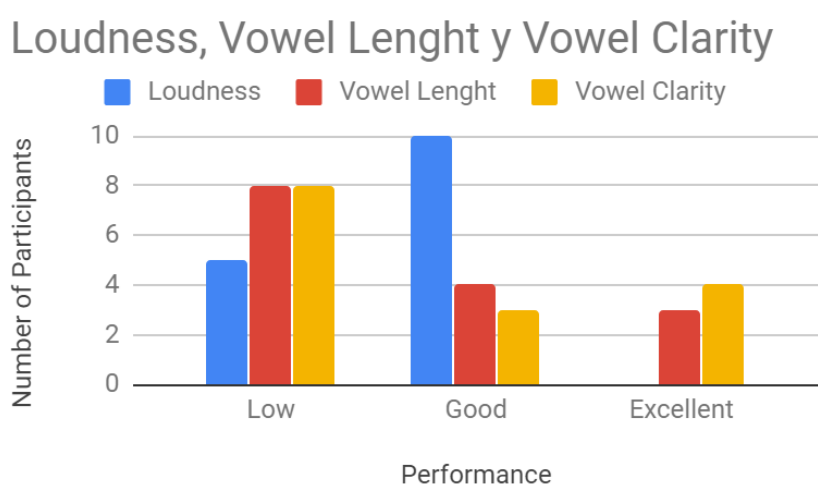
The results of each one of the previous stated variables will be explained in the following pages, as well as the interpretation of the results.

1.2 Presentation and discussion of the results

Before the implementation of the oral activities in *Lengua Meta I*, a diagnostic oral test was implemented to evaluate students' performance. The results from the diagnostic test will be compared to the ones after the implementation of the oral activities during one semester in *Lengua Meta I*.

The first category to be evaluated was pronunciation, it was important for students to develop a good pronunciation while learning a foreign language. In pronunciation, there were three main aspects to be evaluated: word stress, sentence stress and intonation. Each one of the aspects had sub-indicators to be evaluated as well, as you will be able to observe in the following graphs.

Graph 1 is related to word stress and its sub-indicators: loudness, vowel length and vowel clarity. Word stress is an important part of the English language because it helps speakers to communicate rapidly and accurately, even in difficult conditions, for example when you are talking to someone over the phone. Word stress help students communicate; therefore, it is important for them to be able to produce correct sentences using correct stress.



Interviewer: What do you do from Monday to Friday?

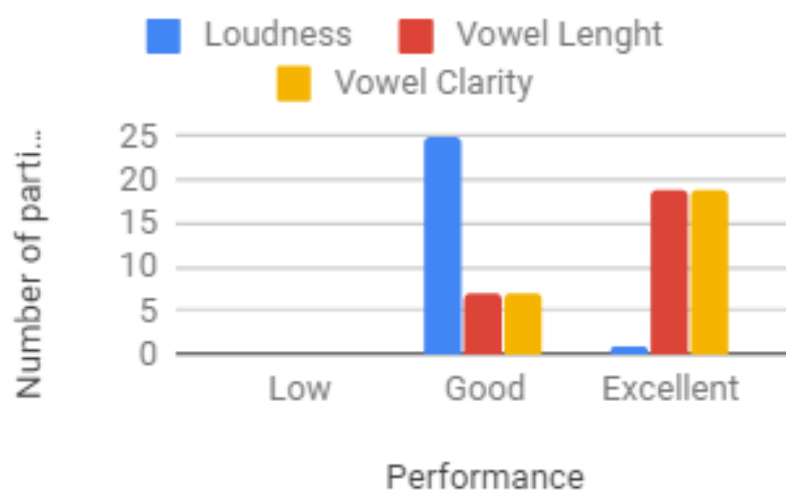
Participant #1: ... “(silence) ammm.... I don’t know” ...

Interviewer: At what time do you wake up? At what time do you have breakfast?

Participant # 1: ... “amm... this...since o’clock **I’m go** school 7 o’clock, 8’oclok **Monday**”

It is important to mention that the participant spoke quietly, and the responses were not totally understood. Vowel length, vowel clarity and loudness were constantly wrong in most of the utterances.

Graph 2. Results of students' word stress



Interviewer: What do you do from Monday to Friday?

Participant #1: “ammm... I go to school from Monday to Friday”

The participant improved loudness, vowel clarity and vowel length, which were complicated for the participant.

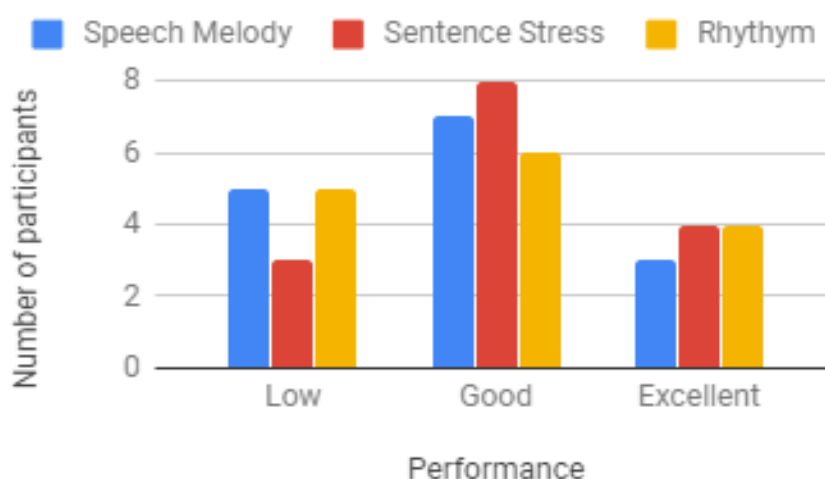
It can be observed in graph 2 that majority of students had a good performance in loudness, which slightly change after the implementation of the oral activities. In graph 2, it can also be observed that vowel length was improved by students after the implementation of the oral activities during the semester, in contrast with Figure 1, vowel length almost all the students got an excellent performance in their final interview.

Finally, vowel clarity reached an outstanding performance, achieving a better level among students after the implementation of the oral activities. It cannot be fully true that all students achieved an excellent performance but almost all of them did better. After the

implementation of oral activities, students were able to improve two out of three aspects related to word stress, which can suggest that the activities had a positive impact on students' performance throughout the semester.

Graph 3 is related to sentence stress which allows speakers to emphasize certain words in a sentence to provide relevant data to the audience or to make an idea clear enough to be understood. As it is decking with meaning and pragmatics it was important to evaluate students' use of sentence stress in order to communicate effectively. (Note: The stress of specific words from the utterances are presented in bold letters)

Graph 3. *Diagnostic students' use of sentence stress*



Interviewer: What is your favorite food?

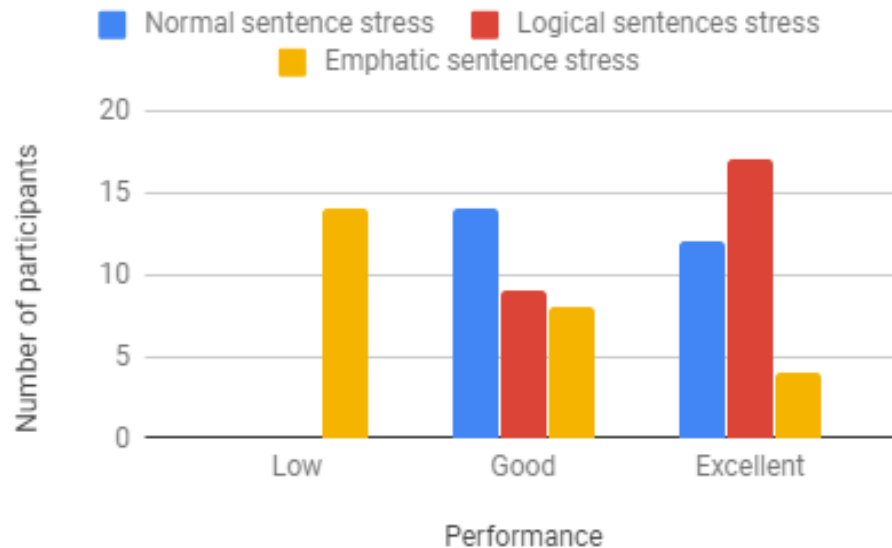
Participant #2: My favorite food is **spaghetti** and I don't know maybe salad...

Interviewer: ok. Do you **usually** eat salad?

Participant #2: Amm... **yes**. I **eat** salad but no regul...regul...

Interviewer: Regularly....

Graph 4. Results of students' use of sentence stress



Interviewer: At what time do you wake up?

Participant #2: I wake up at 5:00 o'clock.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you usually eat in the morning?

Participant #2: I usually eat eggs and coffee.

Graph 4 shows improvement in normal sentence stress, the students' performance reached a good level in performance, which allowed them to communicate better and easily during their interviews. Meanwhile, logical sentence stress also had an increase in the level of their performance, starting from a good level to an excellent one after the implementation of the speaking activities during the semester. Finally, emphatic sentence stress was not used by students at the time they provided responses or information during

the interviews and that will be the explanation of a low performance, because participants neither use it nor do they use it correctly at the time of speaking.

Once again, it can be observed that students increased their performance in two out of three categories in sentence stress which allowed them to have successful interviews with fewer errors in the categories mentioned above. The third graph related to pronunciation focuses on intonation students had before and after the implementation of the oral activities. Intonation has a huge importance since conveys meaning and it is also one feature evaluated in IELTS or CAE assessments. Students not just had to understand an interviewer, but they had to provide a response using appropriate intonation.

Graph 5. *Diagnostic students' intonation*



Interviewer: Which is the most beautiful city know?

Participant #3: I guess... It is **Playa del Carmen** because there are a lot of stores.

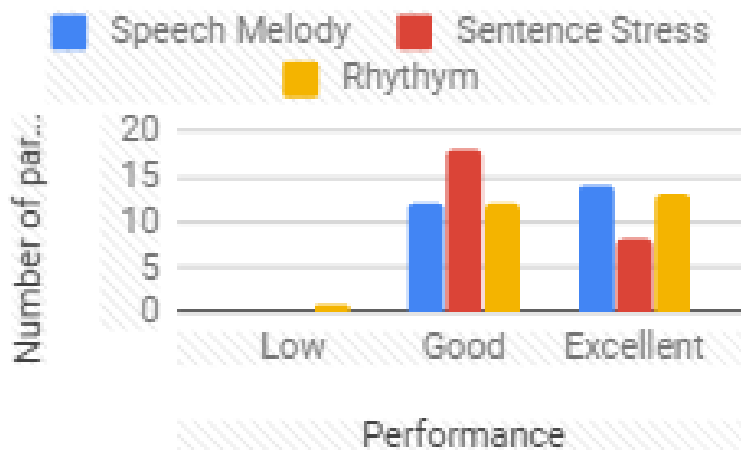
Interviewer: What **did** you **do** in **Holy week**?

Participant #4: I **go** to a place like amm... like a **resort**...

Interviewer: Where?

Participant: In Ixtapa.

Graph 6. Results students' intonation



Interviewer: Which is the most beautiful city that you have visited?

Participant #3: I think... the most beautiful city that I visited it was **Playa del Carmen** because there are a lot of stores and I **love** the beach.

Interviewer: What **did** you **do** in **Holy week**?

Participant #4: I **go** to a place like amm... like a **resort**...

Interviewer: Where?

Participant #4: In Ixtapa.

Interviewer: What **did** you do?

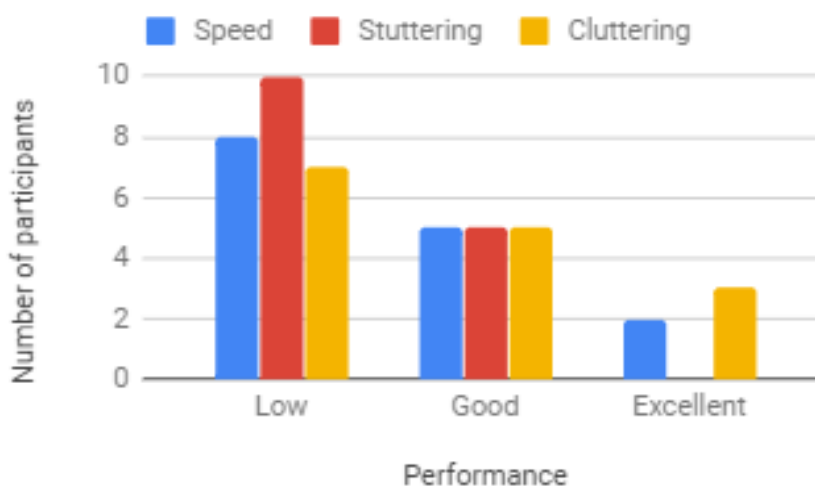
Participant #4: I **do** some snorkel. I visit... **visited** some beaches and I **went** to some restaurants, I... I **ate** fish...

In graph 6 it can be observed that speech melody improved in most of the students after implementing the speaking activities during the semester. Meanwhile, sentence stress kept the same performance even though; there were activities to practice it. It can be

inferred that sentence stress cannot be improved through those types of activities. Finally, rhythm was improved by more than 50% of the students and low performance was almost eliminated.

The second category to be evaluated was fluency; it is constantly evaluated in different international certifications. Students should develop fluency in the early stages of learning; therefore, it was considered one of the main aspects to be evaluated in the study. Fluency is really hard to achieve when you are learning a foreign language but with the implementation of speaking activities since *Lengua Meta I*.

Graph 7. Diagnostic students' fluency



Interviewer: How can you describe yourself?

Participant #5: I consider myself to be funny and smiley and charismatic.

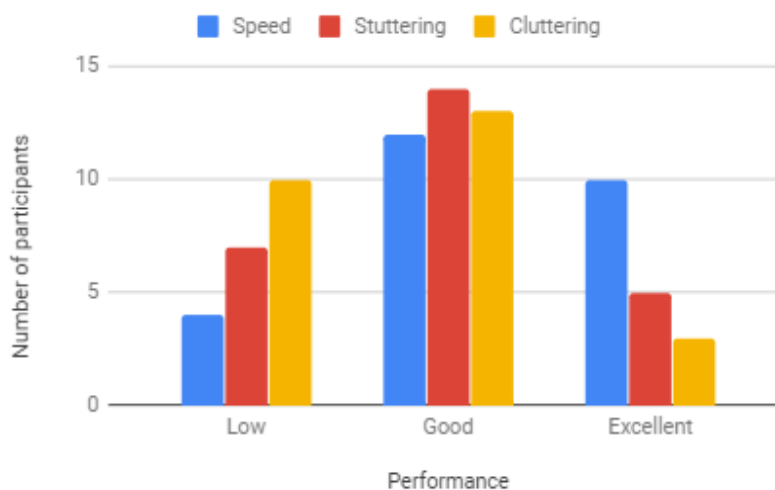
Interviewer: Are you a hard-working person?

Participant #5: Yes, I consider...

Interviewer: Why?

Participant #5: Amm. Because amm.... working the weekend with my family and the

Graph 7. Results of students' fluency



school and... amm.

Interviewer: How can you describe yourself?

Participant #5: I consider myself funny and smiley and charismatic.

Interviewer: Are you a hard-working person?

Participant #5: Yes,

Interviewer: Why?

Participant #5: Because I work with my family, I also study a lot at school. I try to help my parents at home.

It can be observed that speed had improved from a low to a good performance during the implementation of the speaking activities; some of the students could achieve an excellent level in performance. Stuttering also decreased in students' speech, they could

organize their ideas better, as well as producing complex messages with some errors, still for some of them, they had difficulties to reduce or avoid stuttering.

Finally, cluttering was the last sub-indicator to be evaluated, the performance improved in more than 50% of the students' population and some of them even reached an excellent level, which will mean that the activities could possibly help their performance after one semester.

In conclusion, most of them developed a more fluent speech after the implementation of the oral activities due to the amount of practice and frequency the activities were presented during the semester.

The third category to be evaluated was syntax and it was evaluated in written and oral form. Syntax is the grammar structure, or order of the elements in a language statement. Therefore, it is important to evaluate if students can make correct sentences. Sentence structure had three different sub-indicators: grammar, connections and order, the results of the diagnostic test and the results will be presented below.

Graph 8. Diagnostic students' sentence structure



Interviewer: How often do you go shopping?

Participant #6: uhm. I go shopping sometimes... I go with my sister or my mother. I buy jeans. T-shirt but I sometimes, I buy scarfs. I don't like caps.

Interviewer: Do you buy a lot of shoes?

Participant #6: No.

Interviewer: Tell me something about you last summer vacation.

Participant #7: My last summer vacation... I was go to the beach with my family and goes Acapulco but I was at working in the Isla Shopping Village.

Interviewer: Did you visit some places? Were you with your friends or family?

Participant #7: uhm.... no...

Graph 9. Results of students' sentence structure



Interviewer: How often do you go shopping?

Participant #6: uhm... I sometimes go shopping. I go with my sister or my mother. I like to buy jeans and t-shirts, but I sometimes buy shoes.

Interviewer: Do you buy a lot of shoes?

Participant #6: Yes.

Interviewer: Tell me something about you last summer vacation.

Participant #7: My last summer vacation... I went to the beach with my family and we went to Acapulco, but I worked there.

Interviewer: Did you visit some places? Were you with your friends or family?

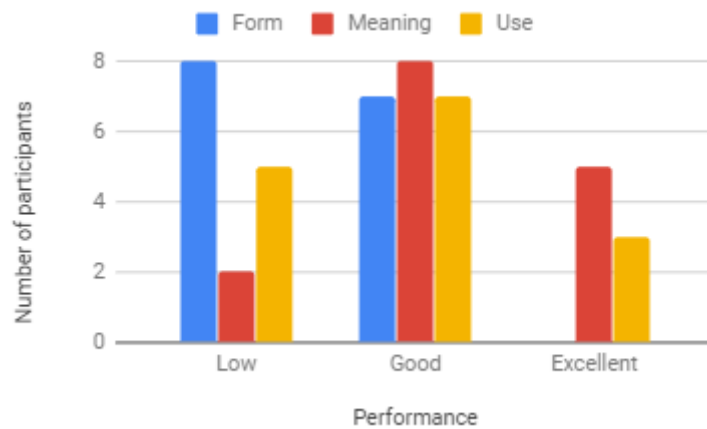
Participant #7: yes, I went to the beach with my family and we had a lot of fun.

After the implementation of oral activities, it can be observed that the use of grammar improved among students, some students achieved a better performance and the low performance considerably reduce during the semester.

The use of connectors, as can be observed in both graphs, did not achieve a good level of performance and the activities did not help students to improve the use of connectors, but some students could achieve a good level of performance and just a few could achieve an excellent level. The order structure improved throughout the semester, and most of the 80% of the students could improve their performance efficiently. The activities could encourage students to practice order or structure in some tasks set in the classroom. Overall, it can be inferred that two aspects were improved through the speaking activities done in class and students could also be aware of their own progress at the end of their interviews.

Vocabulary was the fourth category considered in the study, considering that in basic levels is highly important to encourage students to learn and memorize vocabulary to make it wider. This category had three different sub-indicators: form, meaning and use, the following charts showed the progress in the graphs below before and after the oral activities.

Graph 10. Diagnostic of students' use of vocabulary



Interviewer: Can you describe yourself?

Participant #8: No...

Interviewer: What do you like to do? What's your name? How old are you?

Interviewer: What's your name?

Participant #8: My name is _____

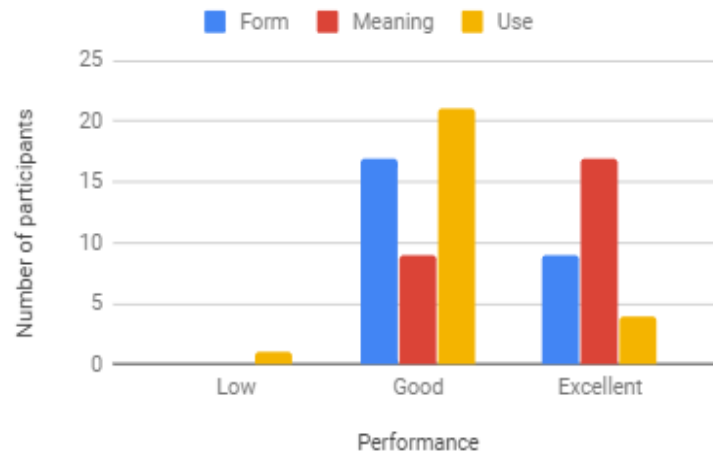
Interviewer: How old are you?

Participant #8: I am 20 years old...

Interviewer: What is something that you are watching in Netflix?

Participant #8: I haven't TV.

Graph 11. Results of students' use of vocabulary



Interviewer: What is something that you are watching in Netflix?

Participant #8: I am watching two series Riverdale and Stranger Things

Interviewer: Why Stranger Things?

Participant #8: I really like it and recommend it even though I watched just some episodes.

The students were able to improve the form in which they could use their vocabulary from a low performance to a good one; there were even some students who could achieve an excellent performance throughout the semester. On the other hand, meaning improved consistently in most of the students, some of them could achieve a good level of performance and none of them achieve a low performance. In conclusion, use and meaning of vocabulary words were better used by students during their final evaluation, which can be a signpost about the efficiency of the activities.

1.3 Discussion

Throughout the study, it was evident that students' vocabulary, fluency and sentence stress improved, which allows thinking that the implementation of oral activities allowed students to practice and improve their speaking production. As Brown mentioned in 1994, both fluency and accuracy are important goals to develop a correct use of the language and improve the communication process among new learners of a foreign language. As fluency is often a common goal in language teaching courses, accuracy is achieved by allowing students to focus on grammar, phonology, and discourse, which were the tools used in the classroom to develop communicative abilities in foreign language. (Brown, 1994)

The interactive nature of the language is one of the most challenging processes among learners due to the collaboration of the participants in a conversation and negotiation meaning that people must establish a communication process. This is the reason; the study focuses on the correct use of the vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation and fluency in oral activities. It is important to teach students what to say and how to say things in order to communicate properly. David Nunan in 1991 mentioned that a communication process might get difficult when one participants' ability is not good enough to be able to be understood, which adds another obstacle for students to communicate as they have a 50% role and responsibility in the conversation.

Overall, fluency, syntax, pronunciation and vocabulary were improved after the implementation of the speaking activities, thus the results showed that the improvement exists, it suggested that the activities help to reduce cluttering and stuttering in students' speech, once they are used to practice in class, learners tend to reduce these type of practices in oral speech. It also helps them to understand the use of vocabulary and practice word order in the creation of utterances.

1.4 Conclusion

After the study was completed, the results showed that the implementation of the speaking activities may help students improve pronunciation, fluency, syntax and use of vocabulary. The improvement which was previously shown in the graphs above can suggest that if teachers take time to add speaking activities in their planning, it could create a huge impact on students' oral performance. Most of the students also increased their self-confidence while speaking in English and the four skills also improved throughout the semester.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Introduction

This study was undertaken in order to provide evidence that the implementation of speaking activities in *Lengua Meta I* improve students' oral production. The study might provide a change in the way classes are commonly design, to be able to provide in-service and pre-service teachers some suggestions to make classes more productive in the oral skill in a public university as it is *BUAP, Facultad de Lenguas*. The research might be a tool for teachers to analyze and evaluate the scoop of speaking activities in *Lengua Meta*, providing some examples of activities and the expected improvements among students after the application.

5.2 Answers to the research questions

The structure of this chapter follows the next sequence of research questions:

- 1) What types of activities would help students to increase their exposure and production of the target language?
- 2) How do oral activities help students reinforce their oral skills?
- 3) Which speaking activities can be used in *Lengua Meta I* at LEI?
- 4) Which speaking activities help students' oral production?

At the beginning of the research, these four relevant questions were established in order to verify whether the activities were able to make students increase their exposure to the language and explain how oral activities could improve students' oral skills. Throughout the study, it was shown that implementing oral activities in *Lengua Meta I* could not only benefit teachers to make their classes more interactive but also over 85% of students showed significant improvement in pronunciation, fluency, syntax and use of

vocabulary after a semester working with different types of oral activities such as: role-plays, interviews, questionnaires, board games, among others, already mentioned in Chapter 3.

Overall, the results taken from the diagnostic test made in January and the final test made in May showed positive results in the students' oral performance, which can be attributed to the implementation of more speaking activities in 10 hours per week for over 5 months with the positive results, as shown in Chapter 3.

5.3 Summary of key findings

Board games, role plays, presentations and interviews helped students to improve their oral skills due to the types of interaction they had during the semester. Collaboration and peer work enhance students to participate during class. It was observed that students engage more in activities that require collaboration and board games were the perfect activity for them to practice and develop their skills.

On the other hand, providing more time to oral practice in *Lengua Meta*, allows students to improve pronunciation, fluency, syntax and vocabulary. The constant use of the target language creates a need for students to communicate which can make them struggle a bit, but it also encourages them to use the language in circumstances in which they will need it.

The findings reveal that the implementation of speaking activities allowed students to improve pronunciation word stress, sentence stress and intonation. Most students achieve a good performance in each one of the categories evaluated from the rubric.

Fluency was also evaluated, more than 50% of the students achieved either good or excellent performance at the end of the semester. It can be inferred that the activities allowed students to improve self-confidence to speak in English.

Syntax was one of the categories that evidenced big improvements, participants starting in January 2018, showed a major development of sentence structure and better employment of grammatical structures as well as variety to use them. The use of vocabulary is also attached to the development of the participants' language skills and greater improvement in the meaning, use and form of the words in English.

5.4 Recommendations

As there was no previous research about improving oral speech in beginner students in the same context, resources were complicated to find. After gathering data and collecting information through the diagnostic test and final test at the end of the semester, it was easier to collect information related to the improvement of beginner students in their oral speech. At the end of the analyzing process and interpretation of data, it can be confirmed that the implementation of speaking activities in low levels such as *Lengua Meta I* have a significant impact of students' performance in oral speech, as a result they could achieve the parameters that the CEFR requires for and A2 level in English and all of the students from *Lengua Meta I* could continue with the next subject, which is *Lengua Meta II*. The students fulfil and a regular or excellent performance all the sub-indicators that were evaluated during the interviews.

5.5 Limitations

As mentioned in the last paragraph, finding resources about how to improve basic learners' oral speech was demanding due to the lack of resources at the library and lack of research about this topic. During the study, it is assumed that students did not have any kind of

tutoring while they were in *Lengua Meta I* but it would have been necessary to collect more information about their learning background, to check if they were either taking more classes at CELE or private English tutoring. The study did not consider the hours that students were asked to practice in the Self-Access Centre at *Facultad de Lenguas, BUAP*, which may have affected the results obtained during the semester. It is important to highlight that self-study as well as self-assessment could be variables that may cause changes in the results at the end of the study.

5.6 Directions for further research

In order to have significant data about the improvement of Oral speech in beginner students, it is recommended to apply a diagnostic test at the beginning of every course, as well as implementing a mid-term test and a final-term test to correctly verify the students' performance during a year of study at *the Licenciatura. en la Enseñanza del Inglés*, basically in *Lengua Meta* classes, which are the ones that provide more practice for students to be able to learn the language.

The implementation of CLIL could be a good resource to enhance students' participation in more contextualized circumstances and the implementation of Neuroeducation in order to understand the learning process through short thinking processes that can either promote or delay the learning of a foreign language.

It is important to keep a record of the information collected during the process, it is recommended that if interviews or any kind of oral tasks are implemented, the researcher should keep short clips of either audio or video form in order to have enough material to the justification of the results and improvements achieved throughout the research.

5.7 Final conclusions

The study confirms that the implementation of the speaking activities in *Lengua Meta I*, helped students improve fluency, pronunciation, syntax and vocabulary in oral speech. They also increased the students' exposure to the language as they have more opportunities to communicate in English throughout their course and they could also review grammatical structures needed in the level A2 which is a requirement at the end of *Lengua Meta I* in they LEI program. Some of the activities used in class were board-games, role-plays; fill in the blank's song worksheets, presentations and individual interviews. (Some samples can be observed on Appendix 3). These types of activities contributed to enhance interest among the students for the English language and its use in the classroom, as well as helping students to improve their oral production in the class in order to obtain a better score than the one they had in their KET test at the beginning of the semester.

5.8 Reflection

Research is a long and complicated process as higher order thinking skills are developed, even though it was a rough path to take and it required the greatest effort for me to complete my project. I think research has helped me to overcome certain difficulties as finding reliable sources, dealing with procrastination, independent learning, among other difficulties that at the beginning of the career were difficult approach.

Research has been the opportunity for me to deeply explore a topic I was fascinated about, and it also gave me the chance to initiate an interest to continue researching about more topic related with English Teaching as Foreign Language, as in Mexico is relatively "new" research field. I truly think that this process will help me out in the future to study a master abroad.

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Appendix I

Speaking evaluation rubric

The following speaking rubric was used with students from the 1st semester, generation 2018 to evaluate their speaking performance before and after the implementation of the speaking activities in *Lengua Meta I*. It was divided in four main sections: pronunciation, fluency, syntax and vocabulary. Each of those sections was subdivided into different parameters to be measured. Finally, each sub-parameter was score as good, regular or bad.

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	SUB-INDICATORS	PERFORMANCE			SCALE
			1	2	3	R E G O L D A R
P R O N U N C I A T I O N	Word stress	Loudness	It is very difficult to listen to the student with a low voice	It is a little bit difficult listen to the student because of his/her voice volume	The student has a good voice level and it is easy to listen to him/her	
		Vowel length	The student never gives vowel length to words	The student sometimes gives vowel length to words	The student always gives vowel length to words	
		Vowel clarity	The student never gives vowel clarity to words	The student sometimes gives vowel clarity to words	The student always gives vowel clarity to words	
	Sentence stress	Normal sentence stress	The student never uses normal sentence stress.	The student sometimes uses normal sentence stress	The student always uses normal sentence stress.	
		Logical sentence stress	The student never uses logical sentence stress.	The student sometimes uses logical sentence stress.	The student always uses logical sentence stress.	
		Emphatic sentence stress	The student never uses emphatic sentence stress.	The student sometimes uses emphatic sentence stress.	The student always uses emphatic sentence stress.	
	Intonation	Sentence stress	The student never makes the correct sentence stress.	The student sometimes makes the correct sentence stress.	The student always gives a good sentence stress.	
		Speech melody	The student's speech melody is never appropriate.	The student's speech melody is sometimes appropriate.	The student's speech melody is always appropriate.	
		Rhythm	The rhythm is always incorrect	The rhythm is occasionally incorrect.	The rhythm is always correct.	

F L U E N C Y	Fluent speech	Speed	The student has a really low speed while speaking	The student has a slow speed while speaking.	The student has an appropriate speed while speaking.	
		Stuttering	The student has a lot of difficulty to organize complex messages.	The student has moderate difficulty to organize complex messages.	The student has no difficulty to organize complex messages.	
		Cluttering	The student has a lot of silent repetitions while speaking.	The student has a few silent repetitions while speaking	The student has no silent repetitions while speaking.	
S Y N T A X	Sentence structure	Grammar	The student doesn't use the sentences appropriately.	The student sometimes uses the tenses correctly.	The student always uses the tenses correctly.	
		Connections	The student never uses connectors to link ideas.	The student sometimes uses connectors to link ideas.	The student always uses connectors to link ideas.	
		Order	The student always makes mistakes in word ordering	The student sometimes makes mistakes in word ordering	The student never makes mistakes in word ordering	
VOCABULARY	Adjectives Adverbs of manner and time Frequency adverbs	Form	The student never uses the correct form of words.	The student sometimes uses the correct form of words.	The student always uses the correct form of words.	
		Meaning	The student never identifies the meaning of words	The student sometimes identifies the meaning of words.	The student always identifies the meaning of words.	
		Use	The student never uses the words correctly.	The student sometimes uses the words correctly	The student always uses the words correctly.	

COMMENTS:

Appendix 2

KET Diagnostic Test

This test was presented by students from LEI Generation 2018. The test was presented in February 2018. The data shows that students could barely obtain level A1 in English and there are some recommendations provided by the CAA, so students would be able to improve their writing and listening abilities during the semester. The finality was for students to be able to achieve an A2 level in English at the end of the semester.

REPORTE DE SEGUIMIENTO DE RESULTADOS EXAMEN KET

Maestra:

Fecha: 02 /02/2018

Grupo: META 1

Aplicador: Lic. Alicia Cabrera

El siguiente reporte describe brevemente posibles dificultades a las que se enfrentaron los estudiantes durante la aplicación de su examen KET (Cambridge English: Key), por lo cual se sugieren algunas acciones para que los estudiantes mejoren sus habilidades lingüísticas de lectura, escritura y audio.

El examen se divide en 2 secciones:

- **Reading and Writing Paper** comprende 9 partes con un valor total de **55** puntos.
- **Listening** se desarrolla en 5 partes, con un valor total de **25** puntos

Al finalizar, la sumatoria de los resultados obtenidos de cada uno de los estudiantes se identificó que la mayoría de los estudiantes alcanzaron con

dificultad el **nivel A1 de inglés**. De acuerdo con el **Marco Común Europeo de las Lenguas** para ser candidato a examen PET, el alumno debe de alcanzar el nivel **A2**.

La siguiente tabla proporciona una referencia del nivel que se tiene con respecto a los resultados obtenidos:

KET	
80 POINTS	
SCALED SCORE	TOTAL SCORE
RANGE	
77-80	100 %
70-76	90 %
61-69	80 %
58-60	70 %
54-57	60 %
50-53	50 %

Entre los posibles problemas podrían ser que el alumno:

- No comprendió las ideas principales del discurso por falta de vocabulario.
- No comprendió textos redactados con vocabulario y Phrasal Verbs de uso habitual.
- No logró redactar textos.
- No utilizó una correcta estructuración gramatical.

De todo lo anterior se invita y al mismo tiempo se sugiere a los estudiantes que hagan uso del centro de Autoacceso (CAA), para que a través de las diferentes salas como: Lecto- escritura, diagnóstico y evaluación, medios digitales y talleres multi-formato, las cuales proponen una diversidad de recursos y actividades interactivas para que los estudiantes puedan reforzar sus habilidades lingüísticas de forma autónoma y así logren alcanzar un mayor nivel de inglés. Puede consultar los horarios, los materiales, asesorías y talleres que se imparten a través de www.facultaddelenguas.com/caa

Appendix 3

Samples of Speaking Activities

Board games were constantly used during the course; they allowed students to follow rules and procedures. Board games also allow creativity, independence and higher order thinking which helped students to easily grasp a grammatical rule or concept during their lessons. Thus, it is a control practice, it is recommended for beginner levels.



Songs with fill in the blanks.

These types of activities help students not only to improve listening skill but also helps them to improve their pronunciation and ability to learn the language as their interest is specifically taken into consideration in order to implement these types of exercises. As their interest increased, possibilities of greater participation appear.



1. Choose the right word:

I'm starting/hurting/hurrying baby,
 I'm breaking/broken/rocking down
 I need yours/your/you're loving, loving
 I need it how/know/now
 When I'm about/without/in doubt you
 I'm something week/wink/weak
 You got me betting/begging/wedding, betting/begging/wedding
 I'm on my keys/knees/news

2. Fill the gaps with the words you hear:

I don't wanna be _____ your love
 I just wanna be _____ in your love
 And it's killing me when _____ away
 Ooh _____, cause I really don't care _____ you are
 I just wanna be _____ where you _____
 And I gotta _____ little _____

3. Fill the gaps with the antonyms of the given words::

Sugar
 _____ please
 Won't you _____ and put it _____ on me
 I'm right _____, cause I need
 _____ love and _____ sympathy
 Yeah you _____ me _____ loving
 Make it _____
 Need a _____ _____ in my life
 Sugar
 _____ please
 Won't you _____ and put it _____ on me

4. Choose the right spelling:

My broken peeces/pieces/pisces
 You peek/pik/pick them up
 Don't live/leave/leeve me hanging, hanging
 Come geeve/gave/give me some
 When I'm witouth/without/without you
 I'm so insecare/unsicure/insecure
 You are the one tingh/thingh/thing, one tingh/thingh/thing
 I'm leeving/leving/living for




up(x2)	bad	sourness
no(x2)	go(x2)	big(x3)
there	wrong	hide




Roleplays

Roleplays are commonly used in EFL classrooms, as they allow students to practice the language in real-situation contexts. These types of activities may help to increase their self-confidence using the target language. It is recommended to assign these activities in pairs or small groups.


STUDENT A

You are a foreign student writing a thesis about the modern way of life in your country. You have a grant for a month so you want to get as much information as possible. Don't forget to include: food, night life, currency, royal family, health...




STUDENT B

You are hosting a foreign student for a month. Try to give him as much information as possible about your country. Answer his/her questions as accurately as possible




STUDENT A

You've run over an old man driving a motorbike who crossed over without looking. You are very angry with him and tell him off for what he did. He doesn't hear very well and you notice that he doesn't understand well



either

STUDENT B



You're an old man whose sight and ear are not as they were, but you insist on driving your motorbike. You've been run over by a young person. You don't want to admit that you have caused the accident. Besides you can't hear him/her very well

STUDENT A

You and your partner are going to travel round Europe. You can only take a small backpack with a 20 kilo limit. You can't live without your guitar, your hairdryer and your special magnifying mirror. Reach an agreement on those objects you can't leave behind



STUDENT B



You and your partner are going to travel around Europe. You can only take a small backpack with a 20 kilo limit. You can't live without your laptop, extra virgin olive oil and your brown teddy bear. Reach an agreement on those objects you can't leave behind

Structured interviews.

Structured interviews can help students to learn specific parts of a sentence or practice some grammatical structure that is being reviewed in class. Students can practice the language by interviewing their classmates and recording the interview. Afterwards, they can listen to the recording again and pay attention in specific parts of speech.

Here are some job advertisements:

<p>1</p> <p>Gardener Part time gardener required to maintain gardens and general gardening duties, including: planting, grass cutting, weeding, watering and hedge trimming. Previous experience necessary, qualifications preferred. Driving license and own transport required, as gardens are in various locations. Wage dependant on experience and qualifications. To apply send your CV to: John Oakend 1 Heather Close Bradford BD1 2AB</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Morning cleaners required for an office building. The position is 15 hours per week, 6 to 9am, permanent. Uniform and Training provided. Pay rate meets national minimum wage requirements. CRB check at the expense of the employer. Phone 0800123456 for application form</p> <p>3</p> <p>Temporary Full Time Sales Assistants required for a busy working environment in our new shop in the town centre. Some previous experience preferred but not required as full training will be given. Pay rate at £6 per hour. In order to apply, drop into the shop for an informal chat with the manager. Address: Post-Box, 1 Station Road, BD1 2AB</p>
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Read them and answer these questions:

1. Which advertisement is for a full time position? _____
2. Which advertisement is for a part time position? _____
3. Do you need experience for the cleaner's job? _____
4. Where do you need to apply in person? _____
5. Which job will be better paid if you have experience? _____
6. Where will they find out if you have any criminal convictions? _____
7. Where do you get a uniform? _____
8. In which job will you need a driving licence? _____
9. In which jobs will you receive training? _____
10. Which job is permanent? _____
11. Which job is temporary? _____
12. Which advertisement tells you the pay rate? _____
13. In which job will you work in more than one place? _____