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THE APPLICATION OF USEFUL ACTIVITIES, TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILL IN A CONVERSATIONAL CLASS

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

With the increasing multiculturalism that the society is going through right now, where kids and people in general are very over-exposed to new languages and cultures every day; knowing more than one language is essential, not only for working purposes, but also, to face daily situations even with the purchase of products that might be in a different language that one person speak. With those important reasons, investigations related with language teaching in general are more than necessary. With that idea this investigation contains important information about the methods and strategies to teach speaking skill, while enhancing pronunciation.

The following investigation seeks useful speaking methods and techniques to teach speaking, as a general objective to apply useful speaking methods and strategies in a conversational class of tenth grade to improve speaking skill in Padre Eladio Sancho High School, in circuit 03 of the Regional Direction of San Carlos; as a specific objectives, to diagnose the student's limitation in a conversational class in Padre Eladio Sancho High School, in circuit 03 of the Regional Direction of San Carlos through an observation to the class and some oral evaluations, to apply 3 methods and 6 strategies to improve speaking skill while enhancing pronunciation in Padre Eladio Sancho High School, in circuit 03 of the Regional Direction of San Carlos, and to evaluate the improvement of the students in a conversational class to improve speaking skill while enhancing pronunciation in Padre Eladio Sancho High School, in circuit 03 of the Regional Direction of San Carlos through an oral assessment.

1.1 Abstract

The purpose of this study is to apply and to understand how students can improve in the target language, by applying oral activities as role plays, debates and oral presentations in a conversational class of tenth graders. Through the investigation, the researcher was focus on the research questions to have a better result at the end of it Which activities can be used to improve the speaking skill in the class? And How the activities improve the speaking skill in the class? Also, when looking for other investigations than can help to support this paper, there are many action researchers that are interesting on speaking, most of the time teachers

need to understand how to have students using the target language by having them talking, due to, there are people who just want to how to use the language in an oral way and that is it.

After applying the instrument, and just evaluate three out of eight activities, as a conclusion when deciding to use role plays, debates and oral presentations in a second language class, the use of the oral presentations could not work as good as the teacher thinks, students demonstrated that they like activities in which they can move or think about giving their point of view according to a topic, or to contextualized a topic by acting with their classmates.

1.2 Rationale

The main aim of this project, is the Application of useful speaking activities, in a conversational class to improve speaking skill, in Padre Eladio Sancho High School, in circuit 03 of the Regional Direction of San Carlos. During the investigation, the researcher diagnoses, applies and tests the progress of the students though different types of assessment and activities to clarify if the activities presented by the researcher can help the improvement of the students' skill.

When making the decision about the major someone wants to study at college, high school students are presented several different options. However, due to education is a characteristic that highlight the country from the others in the continent, one of the most popular majors in Costa Rica is teaching. There are many aspects that influence the selection of the subject in which students specialize their teaching practice, mostly related to their likes and interests. Due to, students have the necessity of learning a new language to have more opportunities in life as adults, English is the standard language, that most people around the world must speak in order to have a good communication among them.

This investigation provides important information that help language learners and facilitators around the world, to understand and to refresh the knowledge in some important aspects as methods and strategies to use in a regular English class, theoretically explain the methods and strategies that most of the time teachers do not know; sometimes understating

the why of things make the teaching experience easier. The benefits that this research has is for the students and the English teachers of the institution, due that the researcher gives to the teacher useful methods and techniques to put them into practice in the conversational class to improve the speaking skill.

1.3 Purpose

The main purpose of this investigation, is to investigate which oral activities can be used in a conversational class, to improve the speaking skill of the students. Taking into consideration, that students nowadays require a well performance in this communicative ability in the globalized world they are involved.

1.3.1 General Objective

To apply useful conversational activities in a conversational class of tenth grade to improve the speaking skill in Padre Eladio Sancho High School, in circuit 03 of the regional direction of San Carlos

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To diagnose the students' limitations in a conversational class in Padre Eladio Sancho High School, in circuit 03 of the Regional Direction of San Carlos through an observation to the class.

- To apply activities to improve speaking skill in Padre Eladio Sancho High School, in circuit 03 of the regional direction of San Carlos.

- To evaluate the improvement of the students in speaking in Padre Eladio Sancho High School, in circuit 03 of the regional direction of San Carlos through an oral assessment while the activities are being applied.

1.4 Research Questions

The main reason of this investigation is to apply conversational activities in a conversational class, and there are the following research questions:

- Which activities can be used to improve the speaking skill in the class?
- How the activities improve the speaking skill in the class?

1.5 Definition of terms

a) **Learning:** knowledge obtained by study.
b) **Strategies:** a long-range plan for achieving something or reaching a goal, or the skill of making such plans.
c) **Skills:** a special ability to do something

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

In the project did it for Urrutia and Vega (n.d) in the investigation called Encouraging Teenagers to Improve Speaking Skills through Games in a Colombian Public School, have the following abstract:

> Our project was implemented with tenth grade students of a public school located in the Usme Zone in Bogotá. We decided to develop this action research project because we were concerned about our students' difficulties when attempting to speak English. They felt inhibited with activities that involved oral interaction mainly because they were afraid of criticism and jokes about what they said.
>
> To develop our project we used video recordings, the teacher's journal and questionnaires answered by the students. The results showed that students felt better, free and confident when they participated in oral tasks, particularly during games. We saw collaboration, solidarity and interaction among them. In addition, they were relaxed and happy at the time they had to perform in small groups.

In this investigation, the researcher took it for the importance of the games in the English language teaching environment, thanks to this way of teaching, students can learn in a different way, the way they love thinking that they are wasting their time in the class.

Also, the same authors have the following conclusions:

> Games have been and will always be an important part of learning a second or foreign language. We have pointed out the importance of using games in the English learning process.
>
> Games are motivating and exciting experiences for students to develop the speaking skills in Encouraging Teenagers to Improve Speaking Skills through Games in a Colombian Public-School fun and comfortable way. Besides, we noticed that games helped students to believe in themselves, thanks to the creation of a good atmosphere inside the classroom.
>
> Through this innovative and action research project, we implemented some kinds of games: caring-sharing, guessing and speculative games and a story game. They encouraged students to communicate orally and to gain confidence in speaking. In addition, during the process of implementation, students overcame their fear of

making mistakes and perceived speaking as a natural process when they were playing. The majority of students could express and communicate orally without the pressure of time or constant evaluation.

Finally, we consider that games, in general, encouraged teenagers to improve their speaking skills, especially when these included group work, motivation and competition. Also, we discovered that games are more than a function in the classroom; they helped our students to perform better, to feel confident and free in order to improve their English-speaking skills.

Adding the importance of games in a TEFL class, there are many ways of implementing these types of techniques, students in this research could learn more and better thanks to these types of activities.

The investigator Manurung (n.d), in the investigation "Improving the speaking skill using reading contextual internet-based instructional materials in an EFL class in Indonesia," has the following abstract:

The aim of the study is to solve speaking problems of students in an EFL class using contextual internet-based instructional materials. The study employed Classroom Action Research design in a speaking class at an English Education Department at a university in Indonesia. The study consisted of two cycles. Each cycle consisted of planning, implementation, observation and reflection. The criterion of success was that $\geq 80\%$ of the students must gain speaking score of ≥ 75. The results of cycle 1 revealed that less than 80% of the students achieved the criterion; consequently, the revised plan for cycle 2 was implemented.

The results of cycle 2 revealed that more than 80% of the students gained score ≥ 75 and therefore the cycle was stopped. The design and development process of the instructional materials are discussed and the steps in implementing teaching integrated reading and speaking in EFL teaching and learning (TIRS) are proposed.

In teaching speaking, teachers can use many techniques, in this case the author used a reading technique to have students using the language. The importance of teaching by the heard is that, thinking about many different options to have students improving.

As well as, the same author has concluded the following:

> The implementation of contextual internet-based instructional materials improves the speaking skill of the students. The improvement in the speaking skill is seen in the individual student active participation in explaining or describing the chosen topic, the ability to play the assigned role in the classroom meeting and presentation, the ability to ask questions, the ability to answer or respond questions, and the ability to comment and argue during the discussion. There are two ways on how the improvement is achieved using the contextual internet-based instructional materials; The first is the procedure in the selection of the discussion topic which is contextual and based on the interest of the students found in website in the internet motivates students to actively participate in the classroom meeting and presentation; The second is the instructional procedure which allows the students to actively participate in the classroom meeting and presentation. The implementation of the three phase techniques in the instructional process allows the students to read the chosen topic individually and then in the small group prior to classroom meeting and presentation. The findings imply that TIRS potentially improve the speaking skill of the students in the Speaking class in EFL teaching at the university level.

The use of different techniques to teach speaking, is one of the most incredible things teachers can do, students most of the time argue because the teacher does not teach them how to speak in English, and using this type of activity they not only learn how to speak, but also how to read and the rest of the skills that are involved.

In the investigation did it for Kamonpan (2010) at the University of a Faculty of Arts, Silpakorn University, Nakhon Pathom, 73000, Thailand, with the name of the investigation, enhancing the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English, as an abstract has:

> The language is used to communicate among people, the skill that people like the most is speaking. For students in High School, is crucial to know to speak in English, and it is the main challenge for the teacher, to have students learning the target language and knowing how to communicate effectively using the standard language.

The same author for Kamonpan (2010), mentions the following conclusion about the action research,

> The confidence factor was gradually developed during the 15 weeks of a regular listening and speaking course. A task-based pedagogical design provided opportunities for the course participants to speak in different situations, which helped to make 'passive' vocabulary 'active' and also expanded the English lexicon derived from varied speaking topics. Creativity of topics was considered to be a speaking strength, and errors in pronunciation and grammatical structure were categorized as weaknesses of the research findings. Suggestions for speaking improvement for EFL learners mainly covered listening skills, which included listening to music, watching movies, and frequent practice of listening and speaking skills from multimedia websites. The task-based learning design in this qualitative action research could be applied to promote a particular skill or integrated-skill pedagogy in EFL/ESL and other language learning contexts.

Speaking is one of the four macro skills to be developed as a means of effective communication in both first and second language learning contexts. In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy environment, how to increase speaking competence and confidence for undergraduate students tends to be a crucial question among instructors. This concern led to a qualitative research design as an action study in a regular course employing a task-based approach.

The author has the following conclusion

> The result of the investigation provides some factors related to the motivation when learning a second language, and some suggestions that teachers and students can use to enhance the speaking skill, some of the pieces of advice given by the author are: which included listening to music, watching movies, and frequent practice of listening and speaking skills from multimedia websites. And an important method that teachers can use is the task- based learning.

The findings indicated that confidence, creativity of topics, and speaking competence were the key aspects of improvement when speaking to the audience.

The next researcher, Arung (2016), has the following investigation named, "Improving the Students' Speaking Skill through Debate Technique" and as an abstract has the following:

This study is based on the important of speaking skill. Speaking was important to be learnt because speaking is the way to communicate with other people in order to deliver opinion and express idea, but in fact, the students' ability in speaking English is low. It is caused by several factors such as the elements of speaking like vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and fluency that must be mastered by students in order to be good English speaker. In this research, the researcher used debate technique to improve students' speaking skill. The main objective of this study is to describe the implementation of debate technique in teaching speaking and to identify how much students' speaking skill improvement after being taught by using debate technique. This study is classroom action research that was done in two cycles. The data collection was done using test and observation. The data from the test and observation that had been taken from every cycle were analyzed quantitatively. The implementation of debate technique in teaching speaking at the second year of SMA Negeri 1 Lasusua was conducted in two cycles including cycle one and cycle two. The participants of this study were 29 students in class XI/IPA 2. The result of this study showed that using debate technique can improve students' speaking skill. This is proven by students' test score that improved in every cycle. In the first cycle, the students' average score was 64 and in the second cycle students got 78, 4. Debate is an appropriate technique used to improve students' speaking skill for the students at class XI/IPA 2. The result of this study is helpful information especially for the English teacher who is teaching at that class and all English teachers generally.

The use of the speaking skill is very important nowadays, people need to know how to communicate by using the second language, which is the standard language in the world. This researcher uses many types of strategies to have students improving the language, even though, he knows that students in high schools do not have a good level using this skill.

Moreover, the previous researcher has as a conclusion the following information, related to the investigation presented according with the data which has been analyzed in the previous chapter. From all the data analysis about using debate technique to improve students' speaking skill at of second Year SMA Negeri 1 Lasusua, it can be concluded that:

    a) The use of debate technique has been advocated in teaching speaking process. Typically, debate is very interested to be implemented to improve speaking skill. Students have a lot of opportunity to practice speaking and have active involvement in debate. However, they worked very cooperative and tried to defend their team, and they were more active to speak in classroom.

    b) Teaching speaking through debate can be enjoyable experience for both teacher and student.

In fact, students can improve their speaking skill after being taught by debate technique. It can be seen by students' achievement in speaking test in each cycle. In the first cycle the average of the students' achievement was 64. In the second cycle the average of the students' achievement was 784. Students' speaking skill increased as well as their motivation in speaking and they were interested speaking through debate.

The result of the research show that the students improve their speaking skill efficiently and effectively by using some speaking techniques that according to the author are very good. The most important technique for this researcher is the debate, he used the debate in his class and students improved the speaking level.

The last investigation, presented by Sari, Kultsum, & Armadi (2016) with the name "Using Communicative Games in Improving Students' Speaking Skills." As an abstract has the following:

The aims of the study are to know whether communicative games have an impact on teaching speaking skill and describe how communicative games give an influence on speaking skills of students at junior high schools in

Jakarta, Indonesia. Classroom Action Research (CAR) was implemented based on Kurt. L model. The procedures used were planning, acting, observing, and

reflecting. It was done into two cycles in each cycle consisted of three meetings. The researcher used collaborative action research with some of the English teachers.

In collecting the data, the instruments were interview, observation, questionnaire and test. The test only given to students. The rest of the instruments administered for both teachers and students. The result of the study showed the mean score's pretest reached of 60.42 to 69.02 and posttest's score reached up to 78.77. It is important to describe that there is a significant improvement of 13.9% to 41.7% in posttest 1 and 83.33% in posttest 2.

Therefore, the criteria of success had been determined. It is crucial to note that communicative games have contributed a positive impact on teaching learning process. This also implies the communicative games expected to enhance students' enthusiasm and motivation. Clearly, it gives positive improvement on students' active participation, confidence and their fluency in speaking skill. In short it can be described that the strategy of teaching and learning creates good, enjoyable circumstances and reduces the boredom and stress of learning process.

There are many ways to teach students how to speak a new language, in this case the use of games is one of the most useful ways, learners have fun, enjoy and are learning many things while they think that they are wasting their time in the class.

As a last conclusion, the same authors have concluded the following information, based on the data collection and all the previous analysis of all the material collected in the field:

The study revealed that using communicative game as means of instruction improved the students' achievement and results of speaking skill. Students enjoyed their lesson and got more motivation, interest and confidence through their learning. Therefore, communicative game should be applied as designed activities in teaching speaking skills. It is recommended that the study should be preserved and extended to other language skills.

When students are motivated to learn during the classes, is the best time for the teacher to have a good learning environment. As much motivated the students are, as much they acquire the target language. Students feeling motivated thanks to the activities, when

students have a motivation to attend to classes, everything is easier. Students need to be motivated to have a good result in all the learning process, especially in learning English, and the use of games or activities make students have fun and be relaxed during the language class, while students are having fun they are learning the language as well.

CHAPTER 3

Design and method

3.1.1 Research approach (quantitative, qualitative, mixed)

The research design corresponds to the documentary, because the research is focused on obtaining and analyzing data from printed materials such as books, theses, Internet articles, newspaper articles and magazines, as well as other types of documents to obtain appropriate information.

Also, this investigation is based on the qualitative research that says "The qualitative research that aims to find out people's opinions and feelings rather than information that can easily be shown in numbers. Cambridge dictionary (n.d)" According to the previous definition of the qualitative research, the current investigation is based on that specific type of research, because the researcher does not focus the results in any type of number or statistics.

3.1.2 Sources and subjects of information

3.1.2.1 Sources of information

It refers to the different places in which the information is taken. The information is taken from questionnaires, applied to the students of a conversational classroom through the instruments of data collection. This source of information is classified as a primary source, since it comes directly from the subject of study.

3.1.2.2 Subjects of information

For effects of this research, the researcher has taken a group of tenth grade students, in Colegio Diocesano Padre Eladio Sancho, in Ciudad Quesada, San Carlos, circuit 03 of the regional direction.

The information is also taken from secondary sources like books, articles, and web pages. These are secondary because they come from sources external to the institution being studied

3.1.3 Population and sample

3.1.3.1 Population

Population is the group of people you work with in order to obtain the qualitative and quantitative information, information that allows to have a representative sample, according to the statistic procedures being carried out.

3.1.3.2 Sample

The design of the sample determines the limits and boundaries of the investigation, the world of the population, and the representativeness of the study sample. The sample is the number of elements, taken not in a random way, needed to be able to resemble the characteristics of the population they represent. For the purpose of this investigation, the sample is constituted by a group of tenth graders.
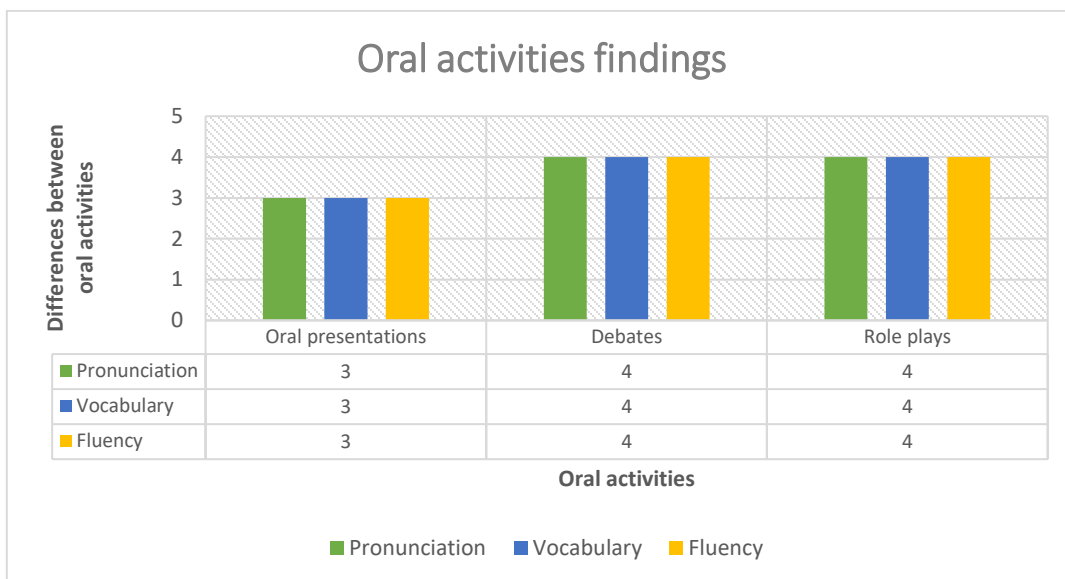
3.1.4 Data collection Procedures and tools

After the application of the oral evaluation scale, to get the information needed it to be analyzed, the information obtained proceeds to be analyzed by the researcher. Each of the instrument used to obtain the information consisted of five basic aspect to evaluate speaking. Once the instrument was applied, the answers obtained through these will be represented by means of graph which will be analyzed in order to stablish conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

4.1.1 Data (analysis)

The analysis of the instrument used to get the information for this research, were three oral evaluation scales. The scales were used for two of the specific objectives of the investigation, and the population who was chosen helped to obtain all the information needed, in this case, there was a group of thirteen students. The instrument had aspects to evaluate the performance of the students, while using the foreign language, in a spoken situation. After the application of the oral evaluation scale, to a conversational class of tenth grade there are the following results:

Oral activities findings

	Oral presentations	Debates	Role plays
Pronunciation	3	4	4
Vocabulary	3	4	4
Fluency	3	4	4

Oral activities

The researcher shows in the graphic just three of the eight activities applied in the conversational class. The number of students chose it to apply the evaluation scales were thirteen, and through the activities according to the graphic, students do not have a good use of the language in an oral presentation, the use of debates and role play can help students to improve the target language.

The average of students in the oral presentation was three, and it means that in pronunciation There are pronunciation and grammar mistakes, in vocabulary adequate vocabulary is used, and in fluency there is a little bit of pausing, but the message is understandable.

In debates and role plays, according to the average of students which is four, it says that in there are a few pronunciation and grammar mistakes, in vocabulary students use an adequate amount of vocabulary and according with the topic and in fluency the message is understandable.

As a conclusion, using the types of activities presented by the researcher, the oral presentations are not that good, rather than role plays and debates, in those two activities, students can express better their ideas and their thoughts can be expressed better.

4.1.2 Restatement of questions of results

At the beginning of this paper, the researcher made two research questions, to look for the results, and according to the application of the instruments to get the information required, these are the questions and the results collected by the researcher:

- Which activities can be used to improve the speaking skill in the class?
    - The researcher applied different activities to help the improvement of the students: oral presentations, debates and role plays. Each of those activities really helped to have students speaking the language, and thinking what they want to say, according to their thoughts.
- How the activities improve the speaking skill in the class?
    - The activities applied improved the performance of the language in different aspects, as the pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency. The was students spoke before these activities they used to have problems to express their thoughts, or the pronunciation of some words was a difficulty; after these activities, students had a better oral expression of the things they thought, and the pronunciation was a little bit better.

- Moreover, after analyzing the questions at the beginning of the investigation with the information recollected in the class, there IS new question for a possible investigation:
    - Can the debate activity improve the critical thinking of the students?

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions and recommendations

During the investigation process, the investigator has gotten the following conclusions:

a) Students need more attention in the performance of the speaking skill, usually the English teachers do not pay attention on the pronunciation of some words, and students continue committing the basic mistakes.

b) Students need attention on the use of the language, to communicate their thoughts, most of the time they cannot say what they are thinking about.

c) Ss need to study more vocabulary to express their ideas.

d) The speaking activities that students usually do in the class, most of the time are boring, and they get bored very fast. Also, the class is boring, because of the environment.

e) The use of the three strategies to improve the speaking skill helped too much to the performance of the language, students demonstrated a good performance in the skill during the application process.

f) The use of oral presentations, could not have the same interest for students, as debates or the role plays.

g) Students feel confidence working in groups, when they have to defend their toughs, so a debate can be a good activity to implement in the class.

5.1.2 Implications

"Research implications basically refer to impact that your research might have on future research or policy decision or the relevant field of interest of your study" Editage Insights (2017). According to the previous meaning, when the investigation took place the results show the following implications:

- Teachers should worry about how good or bad at students are to handle the speaking skill.

- Students need conversational activities to improve the skill, they really want to communicate using the target language.

5.1.3 Strengths and limitation

5.1.3.1 Strengths

- This investigation has the purpose to give the result of the analysis to the high school to help them improve the English classes.
- There are too many activities teachers can apply to improve the speaking level of students.
- Students have the enthusiasm to learn how to use the target language.

5.1.3.2 Limitations

- During the investigation process, there were some problems with the application of the activities, because of the strike that the country has been, the institution changed the schedules of some groups to wait the strike finishes.
- Initially, the group was going to be of twelve students, but at the end, thanks to the strike was the whole group of twenty-three students. So, the researcher had to choose some students to apply the evaluation scale.
- Another limitation was that the group did not belong to the researcher, it belonged to a colleague.

5.1.4 Recommendations

According to the conclusions presented, there are the following recommendations:

a) The English teacher needs to pay more attention in the performance of the speaking skill of her students, to let the opportunity to them to express their thoughts.

b) The English teacher needs to update the activities for her class, students need to be active learners, not passive. Moreover, the environment of the class should change, students really need to be focus on interesting activities to catch their attention.

c) The English teacher, has to improve the strategies, methods and techniques to help students enhance the use of the language.

d)   Students always have to be active learners, especially when teach speaking, they require activities in which the use of the language is fully accomplished.

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Annex

Evaluation Rubric for speaking skill
Padre Eladio Sancho High School

Universidad LATINA
LAUREATE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES®

Teacher: Jairo Porras Mendez.

Date: _____

Student's name: _____

Total points: 25

Obtained points:

_____

Criteria					
	1	2	3	4	5
Pronunciation	There are a lot of pronunciation and grammar mistakes. [ ]	There are many pronunciation and grammar mistakes. [ ]	There are pronunciation and grammar mistakes [ ]	There are a few pronunciation and grammar mistakes. [ ]	Student speaks near native pronunciation There are not pronunciation mistakes [ ]
Vocabulary	There is a lack of vocabulary, a lot of pausing and rewarding. [ ]	Minor use of adequate vocabulary [ ]	Adequate vocabulary is used. [ ]	Students use an adequate amount of vocabulary and according with the topic. [ ]	The studied vocabulary is applied in the appropriate context [ ]
Fluency	A lot of hesitation interference with the message. [ ]	There is a little bit of hesitation and pausing. The message is not well understood. [ ]	There is a little bit of pausing, but the message is understandable. [ ]	The message is understandable. [ ]	Student gives information in a logical, engaging and easy to follow sequence. [ ]

Observations: