

UNIVERSIDAD LATINA DE COSTA RICA
ESCUELA DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES
LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE INGLES
SEDE REGIONAL DE GRECIA



ENHANCING STUDENT'S ORAL PRODUCTION

ANDRES NUÑEZ ALFARO

December 2019

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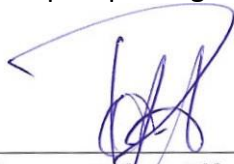
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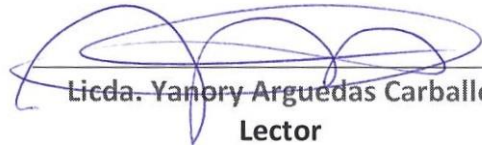
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Autor del: Action Research

Titulado: Enhancing Student's Oral Production

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
1.1. Introduction	3
1.2. Rationale	4
1.3. Purpose	4
1.3.1. General Objective	5
1.3.2. Specific Objectives	5
1.3.3. Research Questions	5
Literature Review	6
Design and Method	12
3.1. Research Method	13
3.2. Type of approach	13
3.3. The Context	13
3.4. Data Collection Procedures and Tools of Initial Research	14
a. Procedures of initial research	14
b. Instruments	14
c. Diagnostic Data Analysis	15
3.5. Action Plan	16
4. Findings:	17
4.1. Data Analysis	18
4.2. Restatement of questions and discussion of results	20
5 Reflections	22
5.2 Plan for further actions	23

6. Conclusions 24

6.1 Outcomes 25

6.2. Implications 25

6.3. Strengths 25

6.4. Limitations 26

7. Recommendations 27

7.1. References 28

Annexes 29

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is finding if there are factors that may be found outside or inside the institution that affect the students during the acquisition of a second language, specifically the oral production in English for communication classes. For this Action Research, the teacher chooses a class in tenth grade (10-4) in Puente de Piedra High School with a population of 23 students in this class and a total population of 630 students in the high school. In this class, there for the end of the school year, there are 13 women and 10 men. At the end of the research some of the findings were really interesting such as number of students in the class and how that affects the improvement in students, in some cases students do not count with support at home to improve their skills, lack of commitment from most students and the absenteeism that it is a big problem since those students do not get the information and most of the time do not know what to do.

In conclusion, the study provided enough information to correct some situations with students with those characteristics and some situations in the high school such as the implementation of technology and number of students per class.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In English teaching, for some students the oral production and class participation in a foreign language is hard. In public schools there are many factors that are affecting students in their learning process. This project identifies the main internal and or external factors that are negatively acting in student's learning process, also this action research analyzes and demonstrates students get distracted when they are taking very long English classes, and lacking their interest in the class. As part of this research is to motivate students to improve their effectiveness when using English in real situations, also to expand the use of a second language during and after classes. After getting the results, some techniques are going to be implemented to increase student's motivation and a better participation and English oral production during class. Once students find themselves proactively using the target language more and more, they will find how easy and fun English is, this way they will find more job opportunities because they manage a second language.

1.2. RATIONALE

When teaching a second language, for beginner teachers could be hard to identify and provide solutions to specific situations in class. This action research provides solutions to improve the oral production in students. It is known that for English classes, some students are not aware of the importance of learning a second language nowadays. For some of them is their own decision and sometimes that way of thinking comes from factors from outside. This action research identifies these students and search for most of the factors that are not allowing students to focus on learning English. This action research can find most of the detractors that are external and internal, then come up with some strategies to get those students to pay more attention during class and to be better in oral production. This study is going to be helpful for other teachers facing the same situation and who do not know what to do to finally help those students to improve their English level.

1.3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to get close to those students with difficulties in English classes; find what are the causes of not improving their English skills, work on those factors that can be external and or internal to find the best solution such as learning techniques and also to involve, if necessary, their parents, and to provide more support to help students reach the goal of improving their oral production.

1.3.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To improve oral interaction during English as a foreign language class.

1.3.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- a. To recognize possible external factors that may interfere in student's oral interaction and participation in English speaking classes.
- b. To apply different oral strategies to motivate participation and oral production in students.
- c. To evaluate students' improvement in oral interaction after the application of different oral techniques.

1.3.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a. What kind of factors are affecting oral interaction in English as foreign language in a tenth grade of Puente de Piedra high school?
- b. How does the application of different oral strategies improve oral interaction in English as foreign language?

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research has the purpose to identify students with difficulties in oral English classes and also to find the main factors students face when producing English orally. It is well known, every area of learning a foreign language process is important, but when the oral production and participation during class comes, some students find it very difficult and they prefer to avoid it; this is because different factors that this research is going to study.

This research is taking into consideration factors such as personality, motivation, English level, English background and environment where students are learning the foreign language, the results of the study will determine some of the factors that are affecting students to enhance their English oral production. The environment plays an important role when they have or not the right tools to learn and also the group of classmates in the class; also, if the student is motivated or not is going to be considered as part of this research.

Everyone who speaks a foreign language may consider that the oral production is probably the most important of the four areas. Also, for some people who spent a lot of time studying English who cannot achieve a good level of communication, during class, it is probably because a lack of motivation, poor oral practice, or maybe they do not have the correct tools or methods to learn inside the classroom environment.

Some important definitions to take in consideration are:

Definition of motivation: when looking for the meaning there are different definitions, in businessdictionary.com motivation is defined as internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to a job, role or subject, or to make an effort to attain a goal. In dictionary.cambridge.org motivation is enthusiasm for doing something.

Definition of speaking: According to a study developed by Lai-Mei Leong¹ & Seyedeh Masoumeh Ahmadi and published in March 20, 2017 ijreeonline.com/article-1-38-en.pdf speaking is defined as:

There are a lot of definitions for the word “speaking” that have been suggested by the researchers in language learning. In Webster New World Dictionary, speaking is to say words orally, to communicate as by talking, to make a request, and to make a speech (Nunan, 1995). According to Chaney (1998), speaking is the process of making and sharing meaning by using verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts. Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997) defined speaking as an interactive process of making meaning that includes producing, receiving, and processing information.

As every person during the process of speaking when people were babies, people first learned to speak and then learned the other areas. The importance of the foreign language acquisition targets the oral production and by understanding the meaning of the word “speaking”, it is easy to agree this is an interactive process that involves speaking, listening and respond to a request or conversation.

Definition of environment: In Cambridge dictionary in English environment is the conditions that you live or work in and the way that they influence how you feel or how effectively you can work.

According to a study research by Vaca Torres, A. M., & Gómez Rodríguez, L. F. (2017). Increasing EFL learners' oral production at a public school through project-based learning. *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 19(2), 57-71.

One of the major limitations that English as a foreign language (EFL) learners encounter in their language learning process is that they do not have many opportunities to practice speaking other than in the classroom. As they live in countries where the first language is not English (e.g., China, Spain, and Latin American countries), opportunities to improve their oral communicative skills are reduced. EFL learners can find ways to practice reading, listening, and writing as they have easier access to oral and written materials outside the classroom with the support of textbooks, short stories, and the Internet (news, songs, movies, digital books, magazines, and online courses).^{*} However, aside from the teacher, they can hardly find conversation partners to practice speaking their L2. Moreover, in EFL classrooms, where large groups of students exceed the ideal number to practice speaking and the hours allotted per week to study English are reduced (Urrutia León & Vega Cely, 2010), learners' speaking production is scarce and problematic. Therefore, many times learners confront negative feelings about speaking English due to the fact that they are not often

stimulated to adopt active speech roles, and have few contexts in which to speak it for communicative purposes (Khan, 2010; Savaşçı, 2014).

Based on this information those factors mentioned in the article are affecting the student's motivation and decreasing their oral production.

According to the International Journal of Research in English Education (I.J.R.E.E.) through this research they found some possible problems that teachers find in their English classes very similar to the problems in other classrooms in different countries.

There are some problems for speaking skill that teachers can come across in helping students to speak in the classroom. These are inhibition, lack of topical knowledge, low participation, and mother-tongue use (Tuan & Mai, 2015).

Inhibition is the first problem that students encounter in class. When they want to say something in the classroom they are sometimes inhibited. They are worried about making mistakes and fearful of criticism. They are ashamed of the other students' attention towards themselves. Littlewood (2007) expressed that a language classroom can also create inhibitions and apprehension for the students.

Also, it caught the attention that (I.J.R.E.E.) mentioned in their research "The final reason refers to the fact that if teachers regularly use their learners' mother language, their learners will feel comfortable to do so in their speaking class". It is truth that teachers especially at the beginning of the school year tend to use more Spanish

than English during classes causing students get into a comfort zone and by that they will not produce as requested in the target language.

This research is going to bring some important results and answers the question about why some students cannot produce English orally, and also will extend the study about what problems English learners find when they start the process of speaking a foreign language.

CHAPTER III
DESIGN AND METHOD

3.1. RESEARCH METHOD: (Action Research) In English classes this research answers to specific questions to try to help future students and teachers to improve their oral skills in English by pointing out to specific areas in which students are struggling most and to provide possible solutions to finally get students producing orally at a good level.

3.2. TYPE OF APPROACH: (Qualitative) This is a qualitative method because this research is concerned with human behavior and why students act the way they do.

3.3. THE CONTEXT: This research is conducted in Puente de Piedra High School in Grecia, Alajuela. The high school is located in a rural area where the economical level of most of the family is low. The high school has 625 students; as any other educational center there are students with many different personalities and contexts. In this area the temperature during summer is high and affects the students.

a. The chosen level is tenth grade who are taking “English for communication” classes in Puente de Piedra high school and the classroom is the 10-4.

b. The population chosen for this research is 23 students.

This research is taking into consideration factors such as personality, motivation, English level, English background and environment where students are learning the foreign language, the results of the study will determine some of the factors that are affecting some students to enhance their English oral production. For some students with problems when speaking in public or when they have to socialize

with their classmates not letting them to improve their speaking abilities in class. The environment plays an important role when they have or not the right tools to learn and also the group of classmates in the class; also, if the student is motivated or not is going to be considered as part of this research.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND TOOLS OF INITIAL RESEARCH

- a. Procedures of initial research: At the end of the first week of English classes, and after some vocabulary was provided to students with some examples to follow, teacher asked students to pass in front of the class and do a short oral presentation about personal information and also to talk about some personal interest. This way the teacher can observe how students handle English orally in front other people.
- b. Instruments: (Observations) In order to diagnose why some students are struggling when trying to produce English orally during the class, the teacher will be applying two different instruments such as Observations. By using an interview this research is going to find what students think and how they perceive the whole process of learning English and also if there are other factors outside the class that are affecting this process.
- c. Diagnostic Data Analysis: After the class activity of doing a short oral presentation, very valuable information was collected. First the class had some time to prepare the presentation, also the teacher helped them during the preparation, it was a good opportunity to gain more confidence among students, at the same time teacher noticed students wrote on a

paper everything they were going to say not just the most important ideas for the presentation. Then teacher asked if any student wants to be the first doing the presentation, but there was no answer, then he called every student by the list, some students refused to do the presentation and most of the class showed they do not know enough vocabulary or grammar, also they had many difficulties with the pronunciation. This first diagnostic is very important for this action research to have a start and work on improving students' oral skills.

3.5. ACTION PLAN

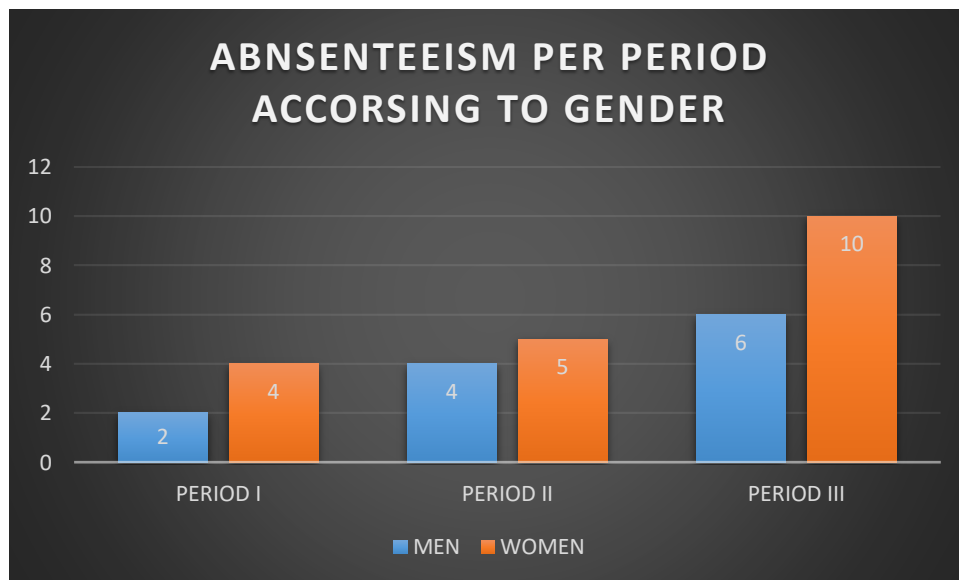
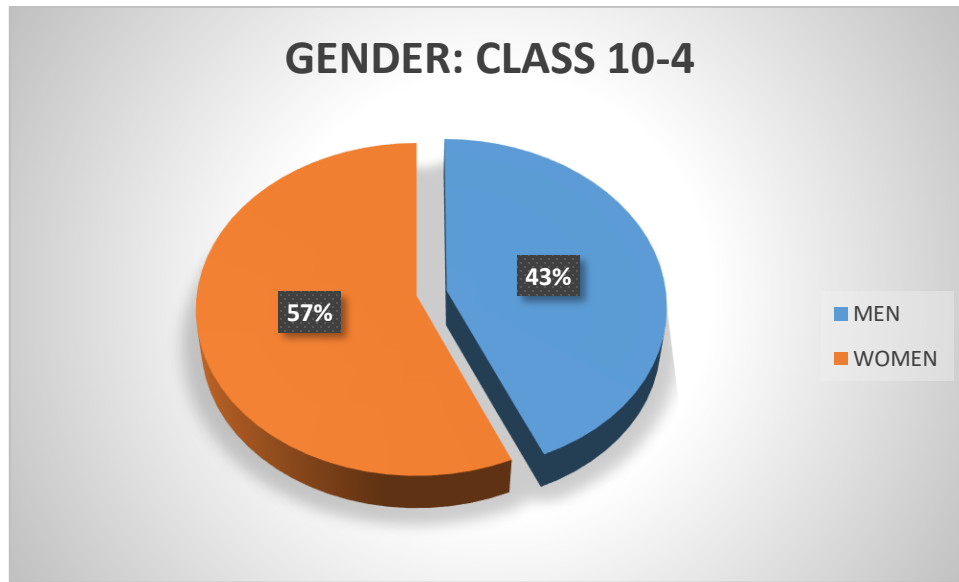
- a. The action plan to apply is a questionnaire to every student to gather enough information to start with some solutions. First, is to involve parents during the process, to do this, a paper with the information of teacher's intention to help the class to improve their English oral production is sent to every home to inform the parents of one-month project preparation for every student, at the bottom of the paper the parent signs with their commitment to supervise the student to comply with 3 hours per week studying and dedicating to the final project. Every week the teacher is giving some extra work to do at home. Second, during the process of providing the solutions, the teacher is observing the students during the class and comparing their improvement. Every week, during the class, students are going to prepare an oral presentation that could be individual or in groups.

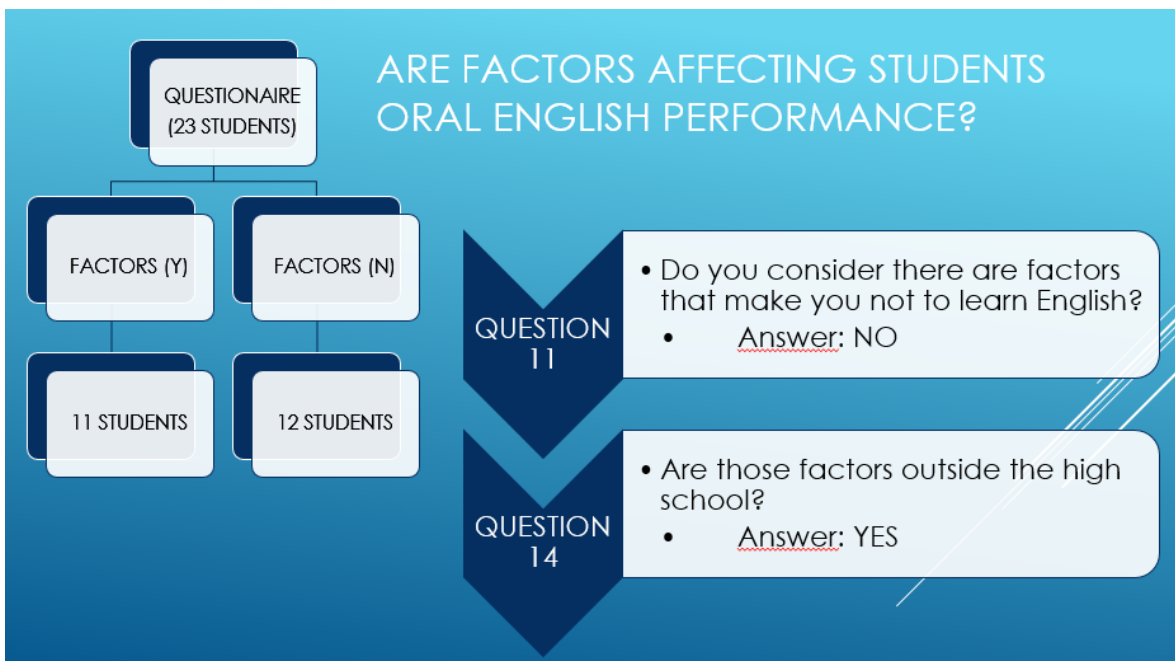
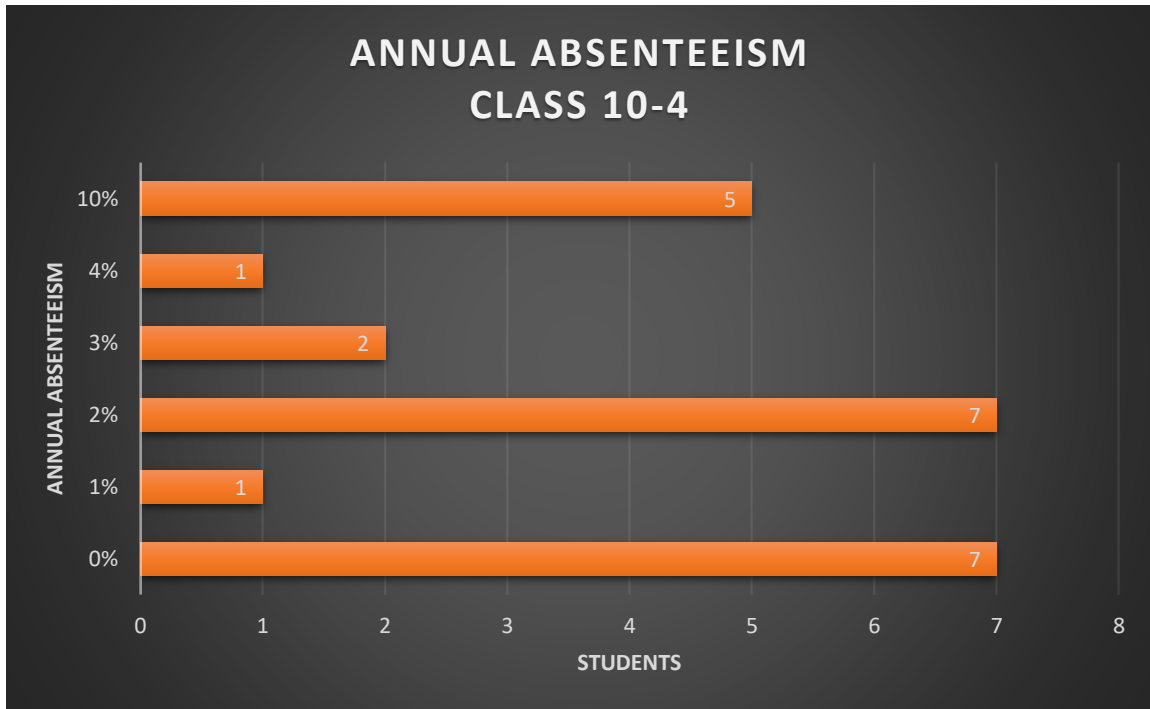
- b. The instruments used are questionnaires, roleplays, individual and group oral presentations, debates and observations.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1. DATA ANALYSIS





4.2. RESTATEMENT OF QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Before the Action Research the questions were formulated in order to find and possibly provide answers and solutions on a specific situation during English speaking classes; to find if there are factors internal or external to the class, a questionnaire was applied to every student, 11 out of 23 students agreed that there are factors affecting them in the English oral improvement, 12 students agreed that there are not factors affecting them. Some of the answers were a little confused since those students answered “no” on question 12 (do you consider there are factors that make you not to learn English?) and on question 14 (are those factors outside the high school?), they checked “yes”, I interpreted the answer as positive to the possibility for external factors that may interfere in the learning process and oral production in class.

After the identification of the situation, different strategies like role-plays, oral presentations, debates, short readings, were implemented in class to help students with their oral production, with the idea to provide them with more confidence to improve the speaking skill, sometimes they prepare a role-play during the class, also oral presentations about specific topics such as inventions or free topic, this gave students the space to prepare the presentation about something they feel comfortable to talk about. Sometimes at the end of the class and if there was some time left, most of the students asked for a debate, they chose the topic and got together to prepare a defense, it is very important also to let the students manage part of the class “it is fun for them”. After the activities and the observation of the class, the teacher provided feedback to the class in order to motivate more participation.

In every class during the observation was helpful to identify strong and weak areas to work in group and individually. Some students realized they are doing a lot better than before, some other students realized specific areas to work on and improve little by little.

At the end of the process, students returned the “contract” were parents sign to assure the student complied with 3 extra hours studying at home and to also prepare their final project (oral presentation), more than half of the class did not comply with the requirement. It is very important that parents get involve in the learning process inside and outside the school, nowadays I can see a lack of interest in many students, resulting in low grades and disinterest to enrich their knowledge. As teacher I agree in provide students spare time and games, but sometimes the school bring entertainment (table tennis or table football) that cannot control, resulting in students with high absenteeism.

CHAPTER V

REFLECTIONS

5.1. REFLECTIONS:

Through the process of this Action Research, the teacher at the beginning felt that at the end of the research he was going to obtain enough information to help students to improve their English oral production. Every week seemed to be almost the same as the one before, sometimes little or no improvement was shown in the class; as normal some students got more involved and felt more identified with some activities, taking this in consideration, the teacher sometimes repeated the same kind of activities. Also, teachers have to deal with the absenteeism, causing students do not understand the topics and having a lack of vocabulary and poor pronunciation. It is very sad to realized that for some students is better to skip the class when they forgot the homework than be responsible and obtain good grades. The experience of going deeper in finding a solution to a problem during English classes, lead to overcome obstacles to benefit students and provide better opportunities for their future.

5.2. PLAN FOR FURTHER ACTION

As course of action after the findings in this Action Research, to start the new school year, a meeting with the parents at the very beginning of the year is important in order to provide the findings of this research and request their support in the process of their Children's English improvement. After setting up the rules for the oral English classes, the teacher is going to involve actively the students to suggest some activities to work in class, these activities are going to be implemented in different topics were possible. Also, with the implementation of the new computer lab, the use of the technology is going to play a very important role in the learning process with some virtual classes and more proactive classes.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS

6.1. OUTCOMES

Very interesting information was found after this research, such as what students feel about their learning process, work together with them to find some possible solutions.

6.2. IMPLICATIONS

The implications in finding what factors are affecting the students in their oral production, and if are those factors internal or external was difficult for some students to identify, while for some students is a reality that they find some obstacles for improvement, for some others seem to be everything fine but still there is little or no improvement in their results, as teacher in this high school and other institutions is easily visible probably one of the main issues that is avoiding students best results in school, especially in English speaking classes, this is the use of cellphones during and after class, but for the young people is normal and considered as no inconvenient to pay attention during classes. When the use of cellphones was controlled during the class and close attention was paid to the classwork, the group performed better, but at the beginning of the class when students were informed that cellphones were not allowed during the class, some of them were not participating as they should.

6.3. STRENGTHS

As the classroom were controlled and not permitting too much time between activities, the students kept focus in the class, the participation was better, the use of the T.V to watch videos or movies is useful and students loved it and the activities after

those presentations were better accepted. Some of the students took the final project seriously and at the end their pronunciation and confidence was better.

6.4. LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations is working these classes with full groups, since working with many students make the learning process to take more time, also there is less individual participation during classes and it is more difficult for teacher to individually assist and help every student. The lack of a computer lab where students can practice better their listening skills, they could record their voice into a computer software and find for themselves where they need to improve. Another limitation is the absenteeism causing students feel lost every time they have to participate, by not attending to classes students are not practicing pronunciation and intonation and they are not learning new vocabulary or grammatical structures.

CHAPTER VII

RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The first recommendation is for the institution, for this action research the teacher had to work with complete classes with up to 26 students in every English for communication class. It is very important to work with the appropriate number of students per class, meaning less interruptions and more active participation, plus better individual assistance to each student. The second recommendation is for the teacher, at the beginning of the year teachers apply a test to find what the students remember from previous school year, additional to this test, is better to also apply an interview to find the degree of motivation of the students and also to identify possible factors that may interfere during the process of acquiring a second language. In conclusion, with some extra information about and from every student and also working with half of the class, we can assure students with better English proficiency.

7.2. REFERENCES

Definitions:

Definition of motivation: <http://www.businessdictionary.com>

Definition of speaking: <http://ijreeonline.com/article-1-38-en.pdf>

Definition of environment:

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/environment>

Researches:

Vaca Torres, A. M., & Gómez Rodríguez, L. F. (2017).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15446/profile.v19n2.59889>

International Journal of Research in English Education (I.J.R.E.E.)

http://ijreeonline.com/files/site1/user_files_68bcd6/sma1357-A-10-26-1-fefa0eb.pdf

ANNEXES

Survey

Survey_Students
(UNIVERIDAD LATINA de COSTA RICA)

The purpose of this survey is to know the degree of interest and if there are factors that affect the oral production in English of the respondent. This questionnaire is intended for the Bachelor's Degree in English Teaching at the Universidad Latina de Costa Rica. Full confidentiality will be granted at all times. Thank you for your cooperation.

High School: _____

Nivel 10 - _____

		YES	NO
1	Is learning English easy for you?		
2	Is there anxiety when you are studying English?		
3	Do you dedicate some extra time studying English at home?		
4	How do you practice English?		
5	Are you afraid of people make fun of you when saying something in English?		
6	Are you feeling nervous when speaking in English?		
7	Are you afraid of making mistakes?		
8	Are you using some English during and after classes?		
9	Do you have the right tools to learn English?		
10	Do you easily Getting distracted during the English for Communication classes?		
11	Does someone at home motivate you to learn English?		
12	Do you consider there are factors that make you not to learn English?		
13	Are those factors inside the high school?		
14	Are those factors outside the high school?		
15	Do you consider a class with too many students is harder to learn a second language?		

Survey conducted on tenth grade students who receive conversational English lessons (English for communication)

Commitment letter (parents)

INGLES CONVERSACIONAL

A quien corresponda:

Por medio de la presente, yo Andres Núñez Alfaro profesor de la materia Ingles Conversacional en el Liceo Puente de Piedra, les solicito de su colaboración en la siguiente situación:

Durante el transcurso del presente año he notado en ciertos alumnos muy poco interés en aprender a cómo comunicarse utilizando un segundo idioma (inglés).

Como parte de un proyecto que estoy realizando para la carrera en grado de Licenciatura en la Universidad Latina de Costa Rica, deseo determinar posibles factores que afecten a los estudiantes en la adquisición del segundo idioma, y así poder aplicar diferentes técnicas en clase con el fin de ayudarles a mejorar su expresión oral; pero para esto requiero de su apoyo en casa supervisando:

-Un proyecto que se le asignara a los estudiantes para presentar al haber transcurrido un mes a partir de la presente semana en curso. Para esto el encargado legal deberá constatar con su firma que la persona estudiante dedicó en casa un total de no menos de 3 horas a la semana en la investigación y practica oral para dicho proyecto, además de material adicional para practicar en casa.

A los estudiantes durante la clase de inglés conversacional del día martes 24 de setiembre de 2019, se les asignará el proyecto que realizarán y presentarán de forma individual al haber transcurrido un mes, teniendo este un valor para la nota final del presente trimestre; también se les dará a conocer la evaluación con la cual se medirá su desempeño.

Al finalizar este periodo de tiempo y presentado dicho proyecto oral en clase, estaré enviando un informe detallado al hogar del avance de los estudiantes.

Por medio de la presente yo,
_____ encargado(a) legal del (la)
estudiante: _____, y estudiante del
Liceo Puente de Piedra, me comprometo a supervisar el cumplimiento de lo requerido
por el profesor Andres Núñez Alfaro de la materia de Ingles Conversacional, para
lograr un avance positivo en la adquisición y producción oral de mi hijo(a) y de esta
manera brindarle mejores oportunidades laborales y personales.

Prof. Andres Núñez Alfaro
Materia: Ingles Conversacional

LICEO PUENTE DE PIEDRA
PROYECTO FINAL DE INGLES CONVERSACIONAL

-Hoja de control de estudio.

SEMANA	HORAS	FIRMA ENCARGADO LEGAL
1 (del 23 al 29 Setiembre)	3	
2 (del 30 al 06 Octubre)	3	
3 (del 7 al 13 Octubre)	3	
4 (del 14 al 20 Octubre)	3	
TOTAL DE HORAS:	12	

***Favor firmar cada semana una vez de haber cumplido con las 3 horas.

Final Project

PUENTE DE PIEDRA SCHOOL
(THE FUTURE IS NOW) III TERM
TEACHER: ANDRES NUÑEZ ALFARO
VALUE: 30%



STUDENT'S NAME: _____ GROUP: 10-4

OBTAINED _____%

PRESENTATION'S DATE: TUESDAY 22ND OCTOBER

PARENT OR GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE: _____

Objectives:

- Talking about technology.
- Research and present information of an interesting new invention.

Instructions:

Choose one invention and do the following aspects:

- Introduce the product.
- Short biography.
- Describe how it works and how it will help people.
- What is your opinion of the invention?
- Would you buy it?
- Can you predict any problems for the users?
- Do you think this idea will work, or is it simply a waste of money?
- Show pictures/video to your classmates.

SCALE

4. Excellent

3. Good

2. Fair

1. Poor

Rubric	1	2	3	4
Uses supporting material (pictures and a video)				
Delivers content with the appropriate information				
Avoids reading during presentations				
Manages the topic				
Speaks fluently and naturally				
Uses clear and intelligible pronunciation				
Uses accurate grammatical structures				
Total Points:				

Comments:
