

**The Implementation of Social Interaction Activities to Improve the Speaking Skill in
the Knowledge Construction Process**

Pedagogical Proposal Research Project

Submitted to: Msc. Iván Mora Hernández

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TRIBUNAL EXAMINADOR

Este **proyecto de graduación** fue aprobado para el estudiante **Yerlin Arroyo Ávalos** por el Tribunal Examinador de la carrera de **La Enseñanza del Inglés** requisito para optar por el grado **Licenciatura**.



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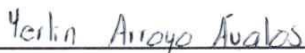
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Abstract

The present alternative methodological proposal is featured under the title of “The Implementation of Social Interaction Activities to Enhance the Speaking Skill in the Knowledge Construction Process.” This proposal is intended to benefit eight graders of the Costa Rican public high schools and the purpose is to propose a pedagogical action to enhance the speaking skill through the implementation of social interaction activities. The necessity of improving the speaking skill in high school students was noticeable because learners were graduating high school without being communicative competent in the English language. To accomplish the purpose of this proposal, three different variables that are Social Interaction, Knowledge Construction Process, and Speaking Skill with its corresponding indicators are created with the intention of demonstrating how social interaction activities can be implemented in an innovative way to enhance the speaking skill based on the English syllabus and using three innovative teaching strategies. In addition, three different data collection tools: diagnostic test, pre-test and posttest are presented with the purpose of helping teachers when implementing the proposal. To conclude this alternative methodological proposal the reflections, conclusions, and recommendations are provided for the teachers to guide their learners to improve their speaking skill.

Keywords: social interaction, speaking skill, knowledge construction process, oral interaction, action-oriented approach.

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Dedictory

We would like to dedicate the completion of this project to our heavenly father for giving us the strength to finish this research project. To our families that have supported and encouraged us, for all of the patience you have had in our hard days and for celebrating our good days. To our friends who were always there for us, motivating us to continue and not give up.

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Chapter I

1.1 Introduction

The development of this action research proposal emphasizes the importance of improving the speaking skill in students through the implementation of social interaction activities in the knowledge construction process. In Costa Rica, English has become a key language in terms of education and socialization. That is why the education in the country is giving importance to teaching English; in addition, the Programa de Estudios de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) known as MEP explains that “the purpose of studying English in the Educational System is the development of the learner’s communicative competence as well as the knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and competences of a 21st century citizen.” (p.23) This explains that the knowledge construction process that the students are exposed to pretends to create not only competent students in terms of using the language but is also determined to incentivize the students to become active citizens in society.

One of the goals of the Ministry of Public education is to create innovative methodologies that are communicative based that will help the students to improve their language. As a result of these methodologies, the knowledge construction process is changing; making discussions and debates are part of the plan and allows students to have that interaction (the English Syllabus, Programa de Estudios de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada, from Ministerio de Educación Pública [MEP], 2016, p. 45). For that reason, it is important to allow students to have more interaction that allows them to become more communicative competent.

An important part of becoming active citizens is having social interaction that is part of everyone’s life; according to Greifeneder, Bless, and Fiedler (2018) social interaction can

be defined as “people trying to get acquainted with each other, to achieve social influence, to buy or sell products, to evaluate performance or moral conduct; as they compare themselves and their own group to others and other groups, in dating, fighting, or deception episodes” (p.193) and the learners being known as social agents interact each day with other students; that means that learners start to become more aware of the changes in reactions while sharing ideas will help them to communicate more effectively. Moreover, when referring to social interaction, Frith and Wolpert (2004) state that “social interaction involves by definition a bi-directional perspective and is concerned with the question of how two minds shape each other mutually through reciprocal interactions” (p. xvii) and it is that not social interaction does not involve only talking to other but to understand how a person feels and thinks is also part of social interaction.

An important characteristic of social interaction is the fact that students are involved in group activities; these are beneficial for students. In fact, Wa (2017) states that “students noted that group discussions would be used as a relatively formal way of interaction inside the classroom while group projects enabled them to complete an academic task cooperatively outside the classroom (p.91). In addition, when working in teams not only the students are engaged, but also, they feel backed up by their classmates and have the possibility to learn from their peers. Many times, students feel embarrassed to use English and participate in the class, so with the implementation of group work in the learning construction process will prepare students to have more confidence to speak and contribute to the class.

Chapter one presents some of the essential aspects that contribute to the understanding of the importance of integrating social activities in the English class. This chapter contains the rationale that explains the importance of including social interaction in the knowledge construction process, and it is that as stated by Wa (2017) students are “more

likely to communicate when doing group discussions, cooperative learning through group projects or presentations (p.91). The purpose of the study, which explains the reasons why this action research project is going to be developed is also stated so that the readers can understand the goals that the researchers try to accomplish, in fact as stated by Johnson and Christensen (2014) the purpose of the study “expresses the researcher’s intent or the study’s objective. Making it ensures that you have a good grasp of the specific problem you wish to investigate” (p.160). and in the purpose of the study, it is explained the prior knowledge of the topic and why the topic was selected and what is expected to achieve from the present research.

In addition, the chapter incorporates the general and specific objectives which are the plan of actions that the researchers are going to take during the research with the hypotheses, which will describe what the researchers intend to achieve in the development of the research. These objectives are used as a guide for the alternative methodological proposal and what is expected to achieve. Furthermore, nine different research questions are going to be stated with the purpose of being answered throughout the research helping the researchers and the readers to have a clear understanding of what is expected to include throughout the research. After the research questions, the hypothesis of this alternative methodological proposal will be stated with the purpose of prove or decline the initial idea of the research. Finally, this chapter also contains the conclusion that will synthesize the main ideas exposed during the different segments of chapter one. The next segment in this chapter analyzes the rationale which explains the importance of the action research being developed.

1.2 Rationale

English has become a language that is used in many countries around the world and that allows people to communicate and share different cultures. In fact, Programa de Estudios de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) states that

Millions of people all over the world with the most diverse languages and cultural backgrounds are using English to interact in person and digitally. In 2008, English was declared a national interest to improve the country's competitiveness to bolster the productive sector. (p. 9)

Having this though in mind, the education of Costa Rica started to see that speaking English fluently is important to develop the students' opportunities in the future. Moreover, the Programa de Estudios de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) explains that education in Costa Rica started to include English as part of the subjects to be taught, however, it was not giving the results that were expected because students receive English for ten or eleven years and when they finished high school their knowledge about the language was minimum. That is why the approach changed and try to focus on foster the ability to communicate in students using debates, conversations, or activities that allow interaction among learners (p.17). For students to be able to communicate it is necessary that they experience interaction with their peers to improve their knowledge.

In order to improve students' vocabulary and knowledge social interaction is one of the essential aspects to develop the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process, students need to have the chance to improve their speaking skill and with the implementation of social interaction activities that allow them to interact and work with their classmates, they can improve their speaking knowledge, in fact, Wa (2017) explains that "interaction and communication enhance learning through constructed activities which allow individuals to

learn from inquiry and personal experience rather than direct instruction” (p.32). The idea of this action research paper is to allow learners to improve their speaking skill by listening to their classmates and by sharing ideas as a group in which they will benefit from each other.

Moreover, it is necessary to prepare students not only for the environment inside the classroom but also for what they will face in the future; that is one of the reasons why this alternative methodological proposal is developed because of the need for students to learn to communicate effectively and collaborate inside and outside the class; Jenks and Seedhouse (2015) point out that

The classroom may be understood as preparation for English use in the outside world and/or as a place to get a qualification. It can be investigated as a location where learners produce systematic and thus analyzable interlanguage data, including errors, or where they display learning strategies. It can be seen as a place where teachers teach, make pedagogical choices, display teaching strategies or beliefs, respond to learner talk (including error treatment) (p.03).

The purpose is that students through the implementation of social interaction activities in the class where they interact with their classmates, will prepare themselves for the outside interaction. It is a need as explained before those students become communicative competent in the English language, in fact, Burns and Siegel (2018) point out that the “English syllabus lists areas of competency and performance for each skill and age range. For speaking, it indicates communicative purposes involving authentic academic material” (p.82) and with the use of social interaction activities where students interact and collaborate with each other they will improve their speaking skill and prepare for the future.

Overall, English is a language that is gaining popularity and many people around the world is using English to communicate; when it comes to the educational system, it is a need

for students to be able to communicate effectively using English, that is why this alternative methodological proposal will be developed in which the focused is for students to use the language is a collaborative environment where they can interact with their classmates and learn from their classmates that will be beneficial for them in the classroom but it is also going to help them to have a conversation and interact outside the classroom. Through the implementation of these activities, students will improve their speaking skill. To continue with the development of this chapter, the next segment which includes the purpose of the study will be explained.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this action research project is to determine how the implementation of social interaction activities reinforce learner's speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. The main principals when teaching English is to learn the meaning of words, sentence structure and pronunciation, this is important but not at all the whole view of learning a new language. Learning a new language means to give the language context and sense to what one wants to express.

The integration of language and content is a concern for teachers working in many different contexts. In each context, teachers are concerned about developing models for second language instruction that are embedded in the context and make an effort to use discourse from the real world in the classroom. (Murray & Christison, 2010, p. 152)

Therefore, it is essential to state the need to enhance learner's speaking skill, substantiate conceptually social interaction activities to reinforce leaners speaking skill and plan sequential activities for the implementation of social interaction among students in the knowledge construction process.

It must be understood that when teaching, it is imperative to consider the meaning of a sentence or word in its literal meaning and also in its figurative meaning. This helps students express themselves in a better way when having to interact with native speakers. It should be noted that social interaction affects people's day to day way of living. As it is the case of the Bronze Age Euracia "state of "ordered variation" in the practices of these groups produced diverse scenarios for social interaction" (Franchetti, 2009, p.151). Where it is observed that even in the Bronze Age social interaction meant living the way others did in order to adapt to the area and to others social life. On the other hand, people also have a choice when creating a social interaction environment. Often, people look for others with similar interest because it makes social interaction easier to deal with. It is this research purpose to enhance student's social interaction, knowledge construction process and students speaking skill. In order to achieve this Fedicheva mentions that "a lot of time can be wasted if the teacher omits to give students vital information or gives conflicting and confusing instructions" (2011, p.91). Time can be an issue for teachers since there are so many things to do other than teaching.

Although time can be a stone in the way of teaching, planning a class that meets students social needs is also a problem since they have different interests and needs. It is interesting what Enfield and Stivers state about this "is not just, indeed not primarily, about giving and receiving information but about navigating social relations." (2007, p.19). Consequently, another purpose of this action research project is for students to become communicative competent despite their compensation. In order for this to happen, they must handle aspects such as grammar structure, pronunciation and vocabulary to implement social interaction activities that will help students become more fluently.

Moreover, when students have the knowledge in the previously mentioned macro-skills, they will become more fluent when interacting with others. For this reason, social interaction activities must be well-planned in order to suit learners' social needs. Classes become interesting and uncomplicated for students to understand since they are familiar to their reality. In the book *Person Reference in Interaction*, they mention that "The case of person reference suggests that, if anything, practices of information transfer are in the service of social-affiliative action." (Enfield & Stivers, 2007. p.19). Overall, the purpose on this research is for teachers to be able to teach the second language in a way that students will be able to interact and enhance their speaking skill through the knowledge construction process. In order to comprehend the previous aspects, the next segment contains the general and specific objectives for the implementation of social interaction activities in the knowledge construction process.

1.4 General Objective

To develop a proposal for pedagogical action that involves the implementation of social interaction activities to reinforce learner's speaking skill in the knowledge construction process.

1.5 Specific Objectives

- To state the need to enhance learner's speaking skill through the application of social interaction activities in the knowledge construction process.
- To substantiate conceptually social interaction activities to reinforce learners' speaking skill in the knowledge construction process.
- To plan sequential activities that allow the implementation of social interaction activities to reinforce learners' speaking skill in the knowledge construction process.

1.6 Research Questions

In a research project, there are some questions that are established to be answered throughout the investigation; these questions are called research questions. The concept of research question as stated by Patricia Leavy (2017) is explained as “the central questions that guide a research project. They are the questions you seek to answer or explore” (p.71). This means, that before starting to look for information for the literature review, the researcher needs to create or formulate questions that are intended to be solved with information related to the topic. In addition, the purpose of creating research questions relies on establishing different goals or areas of inquiry that will contribute to solve the problem of the research. (Borer & Supino, 2012, p.18). Before developing the research questions, it is important to extract different subtopics of variables that are essential to investigate throughout the research. From the creation of these variables, the research questions are developed focusing each question on a variable and indicator that will help the process of investigation. Lastly, in the present action research proposal nine different research questions were developed in order to help the researchers divide the necessary information about the impact that implementing social interaction activities have in the speaking skill during the knowledge construction process. These topics will be investigated or included into areas of inquiry as explained above; this with the purpose of answering each one with reliable data.

The chart shows how variables as the social interaction, knowledge construction process, and speaking skill were divided into indicators; this with the purpose of formulating nine research questions related to the research project that will be answered throughout the investigation.

Variables	Indicators	Research Questions
Social Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Centered • Teamwork • Meta-social 	How does student centered activities help to improve social interaction skills?
		How is social interaction improved by implementing teamwork in the learning process?
		How is social interaction affected by meta-social learning?
Knowledge Construction Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Oriented Approach • Didactive sequence • Task 	How does the action-oriented approach help to improve pupils knowledge construction process?
		How is the knowledge construction process improved by the use of didactive sequence?
		How does the implementation of task improve the knowledge construction process?
Speaking Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation • Oral Interaction • Fluency 	How is the speaking skill affected by learners' compensation?
		How is the speaking skill affected by learners' oral interaction?
		How does fluency help to improve learners speaking skill?

1.7 Hypothesis

In this section the hypothesis of this research is exhibited in order to prove or disprove the general and specific objectives of this action research proposal. The purpose of this hypothesis is to have a better understanding of the implementation of social interaction activities to enhance the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. Establishing a hypothesis is an important step as stated in the book *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step guide for Beginners* “almost every great step [in the history of science] has been made by the ‘anticipation of nature’, that is, by the invention of hypotheses which, though verifiable, often had very little foundation to start with.” (Huxley, cited in Cohen & Nagel 1966, P. 197, as cited in Kumar, 2010, p.81). For this research the hypothesis is: the implementation of social interaction in the knowledge construction process helps enhance learners’ speaking skill. According to Kumar “hypotheses bring clarity, specificity and focus to a research problem” (p.81). Which is the ultimate aim of this action research. As mentioned previously the hypothesis is used to show if what was proposed will work or not.

1.8 Conclusion

English teaching in Costa Rica has been changing. In summary, this chapter explains how the educational system gives the opportunity for students to acquire the necessary English knowledge to be active participants in society. It is also easy to recognize that teaching has revolutionized and due to this change, as previously explained, the speaking skill is being emphasized in the EFL class. Students are becoming more fluent when communicating among others through the implementation of social activities such as debates and small group discussions. Moreover, the social interaction process helps students to develop their speaking skill gradually that will help learners in future situations; however,

this interaction can also be affected by a limitation such as time. For this reason, teachers need to be careful at the time of creating the activities to avoid affecting the communication process in the EFL classroom. Consequently, it is crucial to understand and diagnose the learners' speaking skill when implementing social interaction activities and assess them in the knowledge construction process.

As exposed before, social interaction is not a concept that students are learning, but instead it is evolving, particularly in the English teaching. For this reason, teachers need to adapt and create new activities to enhance this interaction in the class to give the chance to students to practice and improve their knowledge and their ability to communicate. As previously stated in the purpose of this chapter, social interaction provides language meaning to the learners to have the opportunity to be coherent and fluent when interacting with other people. This is achieved through the implementation of speaking activities that are carried out by the teachers. These activities not only provide the literal meaning of words and sentences but also the figurative meaning for students to express themselves in an effective way. Implementing social interaction activities in the EFL classroom allow students to become more competent in the speaking skill and facilitate the knowledge construction process for the teacher and the learners. With the help of the research questions and a hypothesis this research will obtain the necessary information in order to find out if the implementation of social interaction activities will enhance students speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. In the next chapter, which is the literature review, it will be analyzed and investigated each variable and indicator to support the ideas that will be developed in this action research project.

Chapter II Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The present chapter is going to cover one of the most substantial parts of the research, this chapter is called literature review. In the literature review is where most of the research takes part; that is the reason why Patricia Leavy (2017) defined as “the process of searching for, reading, summarizing, and synthesizing existing work on a topic or the resulting written summary of the search” (p.56). In this point, it is important to highlight that in the literature review all the theory is exposed for the learners to have a better understanding. Another aspect to focus on is that the literature review is essential to the researchers because as Marczyk, DeMatteo, and Festinger (2005) stated the literature review “can help guide the researcher in an appropriate direction by answering several questions related to the topic area” (p.33) giving emphasis to the research questions that are developed to help with the research. In short, the current chapter is fundamental to the development of the research and the questions created.

The purpose of this literature review is to demonstrate how social interaction activities can benefit students to improve their speaking skill in the knowledge construction process and also for the future outside the classroom. One of the purposes of the Costa Rican education as stated by the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) is for students to “communicate effectively in the global context and to face the challenges of an interconnected world, they need to possess a number of competences” (p.14), so the idea is to provide evidence on how this alternative methodological proposal and social interaction activities can help the students by sharing understanding in activities as role plays or discussion or even presenting a work to their classmates or working in groups to plan an action or to take an action (Programa de Estudio

de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada, 2016, p.35) that allow the students to interact and learn from their classmates.

As part of the literature review and the research, three variables were created such as Social Interaction, Knowledge Construction Process, and the Speaking Skill. These variables are fundamental to the development of the research since the purpose is to demonstrate the impact the social interaction activities have in the knowledge construction process. The first variable that is going to be developed in this chapter is Social Interaction, in fact, Cummings and Blatherwick (2017) believed that social interaction is “the main driver for second language learning” (p.302). As part of social interaction, three important indicators will be explained in order to support the variable; the first indicator is student- centered, the idea of having student-centered activities is that students put into practice what they know and can benefit from each other in an environment where they are the main character of their process of learning, as stated by Leow (2015) in a student-centered environment the “responsibility of learning is on the student, and their role is to come prepared to class to practice what s/he has learned” (p.276). The second indicator that is part of social interaction is teamwork; working with their classmates will benefit students because they will learn from each other and interact with each other which is one of the focuses of this alternative methodological proposal and as explained by Smith (2013) “working with others to formulate and solve problems and accomplish joint tasks is critical to success” (p. xi), so working as a team will help student to succeed not only in the class but also in the future. The last indicator of social interaction is meta-social; it gives learners the opportunity to interact and as the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) explains to “cooperate, work with classmates, coach each other” (p.52) which is going to help the students in the process of constructing their English knowledge.

The second variable to be developed in this action research project is Knowledge Construction Process; in this case the construction of the students' knowledge in the English language. The process of creating their own knowledge is fundamental for student in the educational field, that is why the Programa de Estudios de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) is focused on "learners know and do to communicate successfully by completing tasks, using general and specific competences in meaningful context and real-life scenarios" (p.28). For this variable three indicators were created to support the knowledge construction process; the first indicator is Action Oriented Approach that is the approach implemented by the Costa Rican educational system to teach English, in which real life activities are implemented in the development of the class and as stated by Martinez (2012) "real-life-like activities are to bridge the gap between the learning situation and the normal use of language" (p.10). The second indicator is task, through the use of tasks students can put into practice the knowledge that they have and use situations that will likely face in the future, and it is explained by Samuda and Bygate (2008) with the use of tasks students use "themes or topics that learners encounter outside the language" (pp.54-55). At last, didactic sequence is another indicator that will be explained to support knowledge construction process; the use of a sequence is beneficial for students because they will have an order of activities that will follow in order to have a better understanding of the topic being learned; it helps to "organizes information" (p.59) as pointed out by Zuñiga and Marino (2006).

As part of the development of this literature, a third variable is going to be defended; this is the Speaking Skill. It is also explained by the Programa de Estudios de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) that the "speaking English fluently is one of the abilities a 21st Century learner must develop to have access to better life opportunities" (p.06) and for that reason in the current literature review the speaking skill being a fundamental

ability to be developed. As part of the speaking skill as same as the other two variables three different indicators were created to support the variable. The first indicator is compensation; having the opportunity for students to use the language without being afraid of making mistakes will give freedom and confidence for them to keep participating, and as stated by Schunk, Meece, and Pintrich (2014) when students are “engage in a task, expend effort, and persist are likely to achieve at higher levels (p.13). The second indicator is oral interaction; this is fundamental to achieve the goal of this alternative methodological proposal; oral interaction allows students to listen to their classmates and give their own experiences and prepares them for the interaction outside the classroom, the whole purpose of oral interaction as stated by Jamshidnejad (2020) is “giving and receiving information in communication” (p.10). The last indicator for this variable is fluency; it is quite important that students are able to use the language effectively and fluency helps to achieve the goal; and it is that fluency is defined by Gotz (2013) “as an overall oral proficiency in speech” (p.01) and the purpose is that students become proficient in the English language. In summary, the literature review is fundamental to answer the questions that were developed and it is where most of the investigation takes place; in addition, throughout this literature review, three variables with their three indicators are going to be reasoned and explained for the readers to comprehend the relation to how social interaction activities help improve the speaking skill in the learning construction process. To continue with the literature review, the next segment will start with the explanation of the first variable, social interaction and how its three indicators help the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process.

To conclude, effective learning takes place when social interaction is included through student centered classes, teamwork activities and meta-social interactions in the learning construction process. In this first variable it is expose how the different elements

can be used in order to enhance students speaking skill through social interaction activities. Examples have been displayed for a better understanding of each indicator. But most importantly, the benefits that students are exposed to. Social interaction comes from sociology, the study that uses humans as its subject of study. As Anthony Giddens states in his book *Sociology*, humans must be seen as social beings (2006, p.4). This is why social interaction cannot be ignored in the educational process. It must be highlighted that the Costa Rican ministry of education is working on creating a drastic change in education in order for the English teaching and learning to become effective and efficient in the lives of their educators and most importantly, students. Overall, social interaction is an approach that will not only help learners in a classroom. This is an approach that will help students even after high school graduation and throughout their lives. This is why this first variable is so significant to point out, because it is a skill that will prepare young people to face real life situations. Education must not end at graduation, it must continue; specially for English learners in an EFL environment. Giving students the ability to become auto didactive is the best gift educators can give their apprentices.

2.2 Social Interaction

When teaching English, social interaction is a significant aspect to consider and the components to focus on are Student Centered activities, Teamwork and Meta-social interactions in the knowledge construction process in order for the social interaction approach to be effective and meaningful for students. In the past, students and teachers in Costa Rica have experience a particular way of learning and teaching the English language. The aims of the 2005 English syllabus known as “*Relanzamiento de la Educación Costarricense*” were “communication, gain transferable skills, cooperation, concentrate on meaning and process,

focus on fluency.” The desire goals in this English Syllabus were far from the reality that many students lived during the process and implementation of this curriculum. This was a problem, hence the necessity of the Costa Rican government to incorporate a new curriculum for the English program in order to provide new generations with an improved curriculum where students would be able to be competent in the English language.

Now, there is a new syllabus called “*Educar para una Nueva Ciudadanía*” that gives teachers the opportunity to use the Action Oriented Approach method and develop activities that are more interactive to enhance students’ speaking skill in the knowledge construction process in the English language. With this new Syllabus teachers have the opportunity to focus on developing student-centered activities in the classroom in order for learners to become active participants in the English language. This also includes having students interact with each other and work in teams. This is essential since a direct strategy of the 2016 English Syllabus, Programa de Estudios de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada is to “allow students to interact with others” (p.49) by using meta-social. This English syllabus gives teachers the opportunity to use social interaction activities to create interactions among students in the classroom. Brady (2006, as cited in Haing Wa, 2017) mentions that

At the final stage of enhancing student-student interaction, teachers should prioritize the Interactional Dimension of teaching strategies that encourage social interaction through working together. These group strategies have common features: they require students to interact with one another in groups; they need students to participate in self-directed activities interactively; and they develop students’ communication skills through increased student collaboration (p.112).

It is the schools' job to prepare students for their life outside of school. By applying social interaction activities students are able to interact with each other in a real-life scenario. The environment in a classroom is ideal since students are not confident enough to use the language outside of school. In school, students do not have the pressure of using the language correctly, but instead they are able to practice their speaking skill to prepare themselves for future interactions outside their comfort zone. Also mentioned by Brady (2006, as cited in Wa, 2017) "these strategies can provide opportunities for diverse learners to learn how to cooperate and construct knowledge together" and to "accept divergent opinions" (p.112).

At first glance social interaction and speaking look the same and people can also think they are the same. In reality, although they seem similar, they are very different one from the other. The objective of this section is not to explain the differences or similarities, but instead to acknowledge how social interaction and speaking can complement each other by implementing student centered, teamwork and meta-social in school activities to improve the speaking skill. As state by Fitch and Sander (2005) "people succeed far more often than not in saying things that are coherent entails that they make them coherent by speaking in such a way, at such junctures, to and among such people, as to make their meaning recoverable" (p.2). When a person starts the process of learning a new language it is far more important for them to interact instead of worrying about the pronunciation and grammar. When interacting, being coherent at the time of speaking is not the most important aspect in order to get a message across, but instead to be able to do so despite the persons language gaps. The act of speaking without a proper preparation is purely the act of being an active social agent. Thus, how does social interaction help improve students speaking skill? Giving students confidence to speak the L2 to express their thoughts can be achieve through social

interaction activities and this way learners are able to improve their speaking skill by constantly practicing it and continuing with their knowledge construction process in the second language to fill the gaps.

Furthermore, when enhancing social interaction activities, mixing innovative online applications with real life scenarios help students since the learning process is focusing on their real-life events and online applications that are also part of the daily life of a 21st century student. As mentioned by Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Wa, 2017) it is important to include students experiences in the classroom activities because “the basic principles of constructivism rest on the assumption that firsthand experience (through activities) helps shape learners’ learning and understanding” (p.32). By mixing innovative online application and real-life events learners are constructing their knowledge instead of just taking in information. National events are a reality for learners; this allows them to reflect on those experiences and be able to build their own illustrations and include new information into their exiting knowledge. As mentioned by Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Wa, 2017) “social interaction theory posits that collaborative social interaction and communication enhance learning through constructed activities which allow individuals to learn from inquiry and personal experience rather than direct instruction” (p.32). Including realistic scenarios in students’ activities helps them relate their experiences to the second language and this will help them better understand concepts of the second language that they are learning. Having this said, the first component to consider when including social interaction activities in the classroom is the Student-Centered indicator.

2.2.1 Student Centered

A Student-Centered classroom environment allows students to play an active role in their learning, they are focus on the students. Teachers encourage students to participate in tasks that include all four skills; speaking, reading, listening, writing and collaborating with other learners. It is necessary to acknowledge what a student-centered environment is in a classroom in order to understand why it is a key component in the social interaction variable.

A learner-centered environment *is* different. It requires students to take on new learning roles and responsibilities that go far beyond taking notes and passing tests. It is an environment that allows students to take some real control over their educational experience and encourages them to make important choices about what and how they will learn. In learner-centered classrooms, collaboration is the norm (Doyle & Tagg, 2008, p.16).

Social Interaction consists on sharing ideas, discussions and collaboration from students in their learning process, to mention some positive aspects. Student-centered activities give learners the freedom to be spontaneous but also as mention before it requires students to be responsible and play an active role in their education.

In such environment students are expected to make decisions on their educational process. It is also important to mentioned that many times students are not mature enough to make these decisions or do not know what is the correct step for them. This is why David Nunan explains that

A learning-centered classroom is designed to carry the learner toward the ability to make critical pedagogical decisions by systematically training them in the skills they need to make such decisions. Such a classroom is constituted with complementary aims. While one set of aims is focused on language content, the other is focused on the learning process. Learners are therefore systematically educated in the skills and

knowledge they will need in order to make informed choices about what they want to learn and how they want to learn. (p.53)

In this proposal the aim is to apply social interaction activities base on student center. Students will make most of the decisions in order to complete their tasks but, teachers can not disappear, they must be the facilitator and accompany the students in the completion of the tasks. As experience adults, teachers are able to show student the pros and cons of the decisions they want to make when asked to complete a task.

Suppose the students are told to do a funny version role play based on Romeo and Juliet. This gives students the opportunity to comment among themselves what was the original play about, think and plan how they are going to reinterpret the play and present their new version of Romeo and Juliet to their classmates and teacher. They also choose the vocabulary they want to use and work with people who they have not worked with before. This kind of activities require social skills to be developed and at the same time teachers are depositing some responsibility of the knowledge construction process on the students. Along with the student-centered activities it is not possible to leave aside teamwork in the classroom for a better social interaction development in students. As facilitators teachers can provide useful information for the completion of the task, such as – jokes and colloquial language of a specific region in order to guide the students. In this process students are given the freedom to be creative when presenting the new Juliet and Romeo role play. Some qualities of learned-centered are as mention by Huba and Freed (2000, p.22-24, as cited in Driscoll and Wood, 2007) that it promotes “high expectations, respects diverse talents and learning styles, coherence in learning, involves students in learning and promotes adequate time on task, provides prompt feedback to students and fosters collaboration” (p.35).

Being able to create an innovative activity that includes the student-centered method is not sufficient. Although the method is focus on the student that teacher play an important role. It takes a skilled educator to be able to achieve a learner centered environment in its classroom. Teachers must take into account different factors of students' life. Some students may not have much academy background; their emotional, social and economic situations can influence in making it difficult to create a student-centered setting. This is why Doyle and Tagg (2008) state that

Despite all of the potential factors that, on any given day, can negatively affect students' learning, teachers who know how to create community, engage students actively in their learning, make content challenging and interesting, teach students how to learn the content, give students choices about what and how they learn, and make the learning meaningful, do positively affect students' learning. (p.3-4)

Creating a student-centered environment will help student to engage in the learning process in order to increase their motivation and promote a meaningful learning experience that can lead to a higher level of critical thinking to enhance student decision making in their educational process. It empowers students to practice the speaking skill to build an effective future for themselves. Moving on, the teamwork method is another important component to the social interaction variable.

2.2.2 Teamwork

Assigning activities to students in teams have positive consequence when talking about social interaction. Although, teamwork is not something that is taught as a specific subject, in schools many of the activities used in different subjects include team collaboration. Teamwork is a basic need in people's everyday life, and it is known as soft

skills. “Soft skills are personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people.” (Nagy, 2019, p.6). Knowing this, how is social interaction improved by implementing teamwork in the learning process? Being able to work with others and rely on them for tasks, are part of teamwork. For example, in a research project, students have to be able to communicate with each other. Be able to harmoniously communicate what needs to be improved, what looks good and at the same time trust that everyone will deliver their part of the work on time. The soft skills are necessary since they help build profitable relationships in a professional and personal level. People who are able to acquire soft skill are able to lead groups in a given situation.

In a high school level “guess what” is an activity that improves social interaction in the learning process. Even though this activity is non-verbal it has features that go well with working with a team. It requires students to have a leader that will guide them and give them the right clues. The team needs to also be aware of the non-verbal communication in order to guess what this person is trying to describe. As noted, teamwork is part of people’s lives and it is a skill that will help students even in their adult life. Teamwork is not only beneficial for students but also for teachers. As cited by Wa (2017) “grouping students to work together to establish a sense of common identity is helpful for teaching diverse learners” (p.112). It is common that in a classroom some learners have lots, some and none knowledge in the topic been taught. By putting students in groups, it allows the teacher to move forward with the class subject. It is also beneficial for the students that have no knowledge in the topic to work in groups because they have the chance to observe and listen how their classmates understood the topic and that could help them understand better.

As already mentioned, some benefits of teamwork are that, it is a needed skill for people’s daily lives, it helps teachers move forward with the topic and at the same time it

benefits the students that have little to no knowledge in the topic been taught. Having students work in teams also has its challenges; if the group is not accustomed to work in teams Doyle and Tagg (2008) state that there are some questions to answer when applying this method. The state that some

questions such as the following all need to be answered if the group work is to be successful, regardless of what the research says about how group work can benefit learning:

- Do the students understand why I want them to learn in small groups?
- Do they know how to work together in small groups?
- Do they know how to communicate with each other without my guiding the interaction?
- Are they able to figure out on their own what roles each member is to play in the group?

(p.2)

This method provides students with great benefits but it is important to also take into account that many students do not have the ability yet to work in teams and they need to be guided in order for them to understand the concept and how this will benefit them individually.

It may sound contradictory to mention that teamwork provides individual benefits but they do. As described by Mills (2019) there are seven traits that characterize unstoppable teammates

These are the general traits required—the must-haves for powerful team dynamics—regardless of the team's

1. COMPETENCE—a curiosity to learn new skills and develop mastery of new subjects

2. PERSPECTIVE—thoughtfulness about the way past experiences and challenges have shaped attitudes, beliefs, and behavior
3. COMMUNICATION—the ability and willingness to express ideas and emotions
4. DRIVE—a can-do spirit, a strong work ethic, a hunger to succeed
5. HUMILITY—inclusiveness, self-awareness, and respect for others
6. FLEXIBILITY—an openness to new perspectives and the adaptability to let go of one idea or belief to embrace another
7. SELFLESSNESS—a willingness to serve others and to place the truth and others’ interests above self-interest

All of the mentioned traits are individual qualities that help a person build a strong team. As mentioned before teachers play the role of a guide for their students. These are some the characteristics that teachers can help embrace in students or even help them see that they have these qualities. It may take time but once the teacher is able to highlight these traits it will become easier to build a strong teamwork environment. Laterally to teamwork, meta-social is also a key component in the implementation of social interaction activities.

2.2.3 Meta-Social

In The Costa Rican English Syllabus, Programa de Estudios de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) explains that meta-social “Allow learners to interact with others. Cooperate, work with classmates, coach each other, questioning, and empathizing, questioning for clarification” (p. 49). Meta-social is not just a key component in the development of social interaction activities to enhance the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process but instead element that must be used in the other indicators for this first variable. In this case meta-social allows learners to be critical thinkers. For so long Costa

Ricans had been just listening to their teacher and writing down things or reading information off a text book in the English learning process. With the 2016 English Syllabus the Ministry of Public Education is implementing the Action Oriented Approach that requires teachers to incorporate real life activities in the development of the class.

It is very positive that the Costa Rican educational system offers the Meta-Social strategy, actually Cummings and Blatherwick (2017) mentions that “school reform should offer students a schooling program that nurtures the 4Cs: creative thinking, curiosity, critical thinking and collaboration” (p. 31). It allows learners to acquire knowledge with more freedom. Guidance is important but showing pupils that they have the power to be creative and be able to analyze what is surrounding them is showing them a real perspective to real life. Critical thinking is not exclusively linked to the English teaching but to any subject, it allows learners to be rational and think in a clear way since it allows students to be able to solve problems efficiently. When students are able to be critical thinkers, this not only contributes to their academic live but also in their personal live. Critical thinking permits learners to link ideas, recognize the importance between arguments and be able to recognize errors in reasoning. Critical thinking increases “your awareness of it and help you to develop analytical and critical skills”. (Judge, Jones and McCreery, 2009, p.2). Pupils have the chance to collaborate with their own ideas and opinions.

In the book *Critical Thinking Skills for Education Students*, they explain that Critical thinking is the capacity to think about your own thinking in such a way as to recognize its strengths and weaknesses, re-present the thinking in an improved form and to do so you need the ability to be: willing to question your views and to be open-minded to the ideas and views of others (p.2). As mentioned before, schools have some responsibility to provide necessary knowledge and skills to students in order for them to be successful. As guiders, teachers can

show learners that other people also have good ideas and/or better ones. That the way they see things is not the only perspective and that it is important to keep an opened mind when it comes to education and working with others. Students can learn that recognizing their weaknesses is not really a weakness but instead a strength. This will help them make changes to become a better critical thinker in different situations in and out of school. Altogether, these three components are essential to the development of social interaction when teaching English.

To conclude, effective learning takes place when social interaction is included through student centered classes, teamwork activities and meta-social interactions in the learning construction process. In this first variable it is expose how the different elements can be used in order to enhance students speaking skill through social interaction activities. Examples have been displayed for a better understanding of each indicator but most importantly, the benefits that students are exposed to. Social interaction comes from sociology, the study that uses humans as its subject of study. As Anthony Giddens (2006) states in his book *Sociology*, “humans must be seen as social beings” (p.4) this is why social interaction cannot be ignored in the educational process. It must be highlighted that the Costa Rican ministry of education is working on creating a drastic change in education in order for the English teaching and learning to become effective and efficient in the lives of their educators and most importantly, students. Overall, social interaction is a method that will not only help learners in a classroom. This is a method that will help students even after high school graduation and throughout their lives. This is why this first variable is so significant to point out, because it is a skill that will prepare young people to face real life situations. Education must not end at graduation, it must continue; specially for English learners in an

EFL environment. Giving students the ability to become critical thinkers is the best gift educators can give their apprentices.

2.3 Knowledge construction process

The process of learning is presented in every person throughout his or her life. The term knowledge construction process not only involves going to school, high school, or the university and learning about different subjects; in fact, Schunk (2012) explained that the process of learning includes “acquiring and modifying knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. People learn cognitive, linguistic, motor, and social skills, and these can take many forms” (p.02). A person does not learn only math or science; they learn about socialization and how to communicate with the rest of the society, they form their attitudes based on what they learn and form their beliefs based on experiences and learning. It is said that an example to recognize when someone has learned is when they start to do something in a different way, when there is a change on people’s behavior or the way they react; that is why people use the term *learning involves changes* because it is noticeable that there is learning and new acquisition of the knowledge based on the outcomes (Schunk, 2012, p.04).

In the case of the learning construction process of a language; being a foreign language as English, there is a process behind the target. When it comes to learn English, it is necessary to take into account that there are four skills that students need to learn, which are speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Indeed, it is explained by Scrivener (2011) that “no area of skill or language exists in isolation, there can be no speaking if you don’t have the vocabulary to speak with; there’s no point learning words unless you can do something useful with them” (p.27). For the previous reason, students need to master the four skills in order to be successful in the construction of the knowledge since the main goal is for student

to be able to communicate ideas and communicate with their classmates and use the vocabulary they learn in the classes. However, there are times where the students have some difficulties putting into practice the English language. As an example of these Scrivener (2011) stated that:

The purpose of learning a language is usually to enable you to take part in exchanges of information: talking with friends, reading instructions on a packet of traditional food, understanding directions, writing a note to a colleague, etc. Sometimes traditional teaching methods have seemed to emphasize the learning of a language systems a goal in its own right and failed to give learners the opportunity to gains realistic experience using the language knowledge gained. (p.29)

Moving forward with the knowledge construction process; one of the main focuses of this research is the speaking skill. This skill is having some problems when it comes to its development because as Jamshidnejad (2020) explained the speaking skill “unlike reading, writing, and listening, which can be performed individually, speaking requires interlocutors, preferably competent ones” (p.75) and students do not have the vocabulary or sometimes are not ready to speak using the target language causing a failure when trying to communicate among each other. Nonetheless, according to Burns and Siegel (2018) this problematic is not only due to the lack of vocabulary that students have but also “are due to a lack of curriculum emphasis on oral development, teachers’ limited English proficiency, examination systems that do not emphasize oral skills, class conditions which do not favor oral activities and limited opportunities to practice outside of class” (p.82). In this case, the curricular system is failing when referring to learning to speak in English since the teachers, the materials, and the methodology is not giving the expected results for the students.

On the other hand, the knowledge construction process is related to social interaction in the classroom. In the knowledge construction process is essential the interaction since the environment of the classroom is considered to be dependent on communication, where the students exchange information with the teacher and accept or argue about different topics since this interaction help the student to acquire more knowledge through interaction (Hjorne, van der Aalsvoort, and Abreu, 2012, p.04). The process of learning and teaching are based on the interaction that exists in the classroom among the students and between the students and the teacher. As an example, Hua, Seedhouse, Wei, and Cook (2007) stated the following:

language learning and teaching are social acts – the roles and relationships of the learner and the teacher are socially constructed; their social identities are formed and transformed by the very process of learning and teaching; the knowledge of language that is being acquired and taught is social knowledge that is affected by the roles, relationships, attitudes and ideologies of the learner and the teacher. The actual process of language learning and teaching is furthermore seen as social interaction, and consequently relates to other kinds of social interaction in institutional and non-institutional contexts. (p.01)

Social interaction is fundamental when it comes to the development of the knowledge construction process since it is presented inside and outside the classroom and the environment of a class is supported by interaction.

To continue with the development of this variable, three different indicators are going to be developed to support the knowledge construction process; these indicators are Action Oriented Approach, didactic sequence, and task. Since 2016, Costa Rican education is implementing the Action Oriented Approach or AoA as the main approach to teach English.

The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) explains this new approach as “one of the latest communicative language methodologies which places emphasis on what learners know and do to communicate successfully by completing tasks, using general and specific competences in meaningful context and real-life scenarios” (p.28). On the same direction, this approach implements the use of tasks that according to Piccardo and North (2019) they need to “draw on a variety of competences, both communicative language competences and general competences” (p.14). In fact, as part of the development of this action research proposal the implementation of social interaction activities to improve the speaking skill in knowledge construction process; this is going to be achieved through the development of tasks that are real-life based and help the construction of the knowledge.

Finally, the last indicator to be developed is didactic sequence. With the implementation of the AoA, students need to follow an order of task during the class know as sequence. In the case of the speaking skill that is the focus of this research there is a sequence when students practice their speaking skill in the knowledge construction process; this sequence starts with planning where the students can planned some questions to be developed, then they continue with organizing, in this stage students organize their ideas to put into practice; after they organize, the next stage is rehearsing, in here students practice their conversation or dialogue before they get to the last stage that is describing, here is when the students present their work to the class (Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada,2016, p.70). These steps are essential for the students to develop their speaking skill in the best way possible and help their knowledge construction process.

To conclude, learning is not only related to a subject such as math or science; it involves the beliefs, the attitudes, and skills that form a person. When it comes to the process

of constructing the English knowledge there are four skills that are fundamental for the learning to be effective; these are as mentioned before reading, speaking, listening, and writing; they cannot be isolated because all of them are necessary to learn. However, there are some challenges that the process can face such as traditional methods that do not encourage students to learn and do not give them the opportunity to use the target language. The problematic is faced by the speaking skill that is not developed as an individual way and needs interaction, sometimes students do not feel comfortable enough to use the language in the classroom, or the methodology that is implemented because it does not help to the development of it. On the other hand, it is shown how social interaction helps the knowledge construction process since in every classroom there is interaction among the students and the teacher, this interaction helps learners build their knowledge which is the whole point of this research. As part of this second variable, three indicators are presented to support the knowledge construction process; they are Action Oriented Approach, didactic sequence, and tasks that are fundamental to the development of the present chapter. To continue with this research proposal, the next segment is going to be focused on the Action Oriented Approach.

2.3.1 Action-Oriented approach

The first indicator that helps support the knowledge construction process is Action-Oriented approach or AoA. This approach is changing the way teaching and learning English has been developed. The knowledge construction process in the past was focused on the teacher as the main character in the class, and the students' role was to pay attention and ask questions only when necessary; in fact, Scrivener (2011) described the traditional way of learning as:

The teacher spending quite a lot of class time using the board to explain things- as if ‘transmitting’ knowledge to the class- with occasional questions to or from the learners. After these explanations, the students will often do some practice exercises to test whether they have understood what they have been told (p.14)

Since the implementation of AoA, this process of learning has changed. Learners are no longer just sitting listening to the teacher and clarifying doubts when they have the opportunity or it is necessary; the students with this new approach are seen as “social agents” who develop different tasks that resemble real life situations with a communicative purpose since they are part of the society (Piccardo & North, 2019, p.04). In the process of developing the English knowledge, for students to have the opportunity to use the language in situation that they will face in the future is fundamental not only because they have the vocabulary to encounter the situation but also because they will know how to handle a similar situation in terms or attitudes or behaviors.

Moreover, the Costa Rican education was not left behind when it comes to the process of learning English. In 2005, Costa Rica implemented the “*Relanzamiento de la Educación Costarricense*” as the main syllabus to teach English; however, in 2016 they decided to change the syllabus because as the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) explained “learners need an updated curriculum that reflects the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to communicate in a range of language use contexts and to succeed in the information age as 21st century learners” (p.14). Based on the thought that learners need to be able to communicate using the target language, in this case English, the Ministry of Public Education made the decision of changing the syllabus for the one that teacher know today that is “*Educating for a New Citizenship*” implementing the AoA as part

of the new syllabus. In this approach learners are seen as social agents that are aware of the knowledge, they are gaining with the implementation of communicative activities that are real-life based which gives the students a sense of citizens in a society; all these activities develop use authentic materials to help the learners to comprehend the topic as much as possible (Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada, 2016, p.28). In short, the AoA has changed the way students see the knowledge construction process.

Moving forward with the implementation of the AoA in the current construction of the knowledge process, the speaking skill being one of the focuses of this research proposal has also been influenced by the AoA. One of the characteristics of this approach is that it is based on the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) which main goal as stated by Piccardo and North (2019) is

to provide a common metalanguage to assist language professionals in their respective practices and missions. It provides a common foundation upon which to organize the entire range of language proficiency with six general levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2), expressed using positive descriptors of communicative language activities of reception, production, interaction, and mediation that learners perform through meaningful tasks that draw on a variety of competences, both communicative language competences and general competences, for example acquired through general education and experience. (p. 14)

In the case of the speaking skill, it is rated according to the six general levels and the learners at the end of the high school process need to be between a B1 or B2 level in the English-speaking performance. This is beneficial for students since they are going to have the level

to understand and communicate using the target language inside and outside the classroom. In fact, the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) highlights the importance of speaking in the AoA and the learning construction process when it is emphasized that “communicative activities become actions that the learner/social agent performs in order to build up general competences and communicative language competences” (p.34). In brief, the speaking skill is highly emphasized in the AoA to help the students to become more competent when using the language.

The last point to focus as part of this action research proposal is how the AoA is related to social interaction since it is one of the pillars of the research. The AoA gives special emphasis to communication in the class, indeed, the CEFR as cited by Martínez (2012) stated that the AoA “describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively” (p.10). Students in this new approach need to communicate with the classmates and have this interaction in order to use the language and develop the necessary skills and knowledge to communicate and use English effectively. Following the same direction, in the current syllabus of teaching English in Costa Rica, exist the term oral interaction as part of the speaking skill and as the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) points out “collaborative strategies are constantly employed during interaction” (p.48). The AoA helps the interaction in the class as mentioned above by different activities or different tasks that the students need to develop with their classmates as part of this interaction and focus on the AoA in the knowledge construction process.

To close with the current indicator, the AoA is born due to the necessity of the knowledge construction process, to develop in students a sense of autonomy and help them

to become part of the society as active citizens. The AoA is focused on real-life situation that will benefit learners to encounter future situations. Due to this change, the students' role in the class has changed since they are viewed as social agents that take part in their own construction of the knowledge. In addition, the Costa Rican education also changed due to the AoA, importance is placed on the speaking skill that is currently rated using the six different level created by the CEFR that help pupils to expand their knowledge and become more competent. This approach is innovative since it brings authentic and modern materials to students to help their learning process. Not only the speaking skill is benefitted in the knowledge construction process through the AoA, but interaction also exists as part of this approach where different activities are used to bring and improve the interaction among students. The main advantage that this approach conveys to the knowledge construction process of students is that it brings innovative ways for students to learn and to improve the speaking skill to become efficient. It also prepares students for the interaction they will have outside the class as part of society. Therefore, in the next segment the didactic sequence is going to be presented to continue with this variable.

2.3.2 Didactic sequence

The present segment is going to expose how didactic sequence is existent in the knowledge construction process and how it helps learners to develop the speaking skill in the process of learning. People go through different sequences in life when it comes to learning something; the process of constructing knowledge is not the exception. As a matter of fact, Zúñiga and Marino (2006) suggest that students “progress through stages of language development” (p.71); learners need to follow a sequence of actions in order to learn the language to be competent in it. In addition, Burns and Siegel (2018) describe what is the

process that teacher follow when introducing speaking or a sound to the class. The sequence is the following:

Teachers proceeded by first reciting the rhythmic activity a number of times, depending on how quickly the majority of pupils were able to voice the sounds, letters or words intelligibly. The pupils repeated the items after the teacher before an activity such as a singing a song began. This activity was done with the whole class first after which the teacher divided them into smaller groups to practice and rehearse the rhythmic activity, which later was performed demonstrating and displaying accompanying actions (p.89)

Pupils learn through sequences; they start from the basics by practicing the language with the help of the teacher. Then they start to be more independent and begin to interact with their classmates once they have mastered the vocabulary or the topic. This is why sequences are important in the knowledge construction process because the learners have a sense of order and repetition in the process of learning.

In Costa Rica educating with the new application of the AoA, students receive their class in a specific order. In the case of the speaking skill which is the main skill to develop in this action research proposal, the AoA emphasizes how sequences are presented in the knowledge construction process; for that reason the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) highlights that “lessons can follow a task-based sequence that will focus on items such as: phonemic awareness, language forms, vocabulary, oral or written comprehension and oral or written production” (p.36). For students to become competent in the speaking skill they first need to master sounds and be aware of each one of them. After that, they move on to vocabulary or sentences until they have the knowledge to produce the language by interacting with their peers.

Moving forward, in the actual syllabus the speaking skill is divided into spoken interaction and spoken production and when one of these components is developed there are a sequence of steps that teachers and students must follow which is highlighted by the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) as the following “*Spoken interaction* (planning, organizing, rehearsing, and interacting) and *spoken production* (planning, organizing, rehearsing, and producing)” (p. 39). As mentioned previously there is an order to cover production and interaction in the process of construction. The oral knowledge of the pupils in the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada gives a clear idea how the learners start from planning what they are going to do based on the task given by the teacher, and then they start to organize how to include their ideas and to practice it either alone or with their classmates. Finally, presenting interacting or producing which helps the students because they feel secure and motivated when they know what they are doing and as Schunk, Meece, and Pintrich (2014) pointed out “motivation is an important quality that pervades all student activities. Motivated students display interest in activities, work diligently, feel self-confident, persist on tasks, and perform well” (p.03)

All things considered, it is noticeable how having an order or a sequence can help in the knowledge construction process of pupils. Sequence not only exists in education, but also in aspects of daily life, for instance, at work there is an order to do tasks and education is not the exception. It was explained how in education students have sequences to develop their activities starting from the most basics to the most advance, when they have finally mastered all aspects mentioned before. Moreover, in Costa Rica the Ministry of Public Education is implementing didactic sequences when it comes to learning and in the case of learning English the students begin by recognizing sounds and being aware of the vocabulary until

they have the ability to be competent in the language and produce their knowledge with their peers by first planning, then organizing, to finally practicing and presenting their work. This process helps students, not only because they have an order and are motivated to keep working on knowing what they are doing but also because they have the chance to interact with their peers which is one of the targets of this action research proposal. Didactic sequences indeed help the knowledge construction process of the learners. To continue with the development of this variable, the last indicator is task that is going to be described in the upcoming segment.

2.3.3 Task

The current segment is going to emphasize how tasks are helpful in the knowledge construction process of pupils. Tasks are presented in many aspects that people develop during the day and that are normal or regular to do; in fact, Burns and Siegel (2018) stated that

One has only to consider daily tasks, such as conducting a transaction at a bank, going to a movie, interacting with friends or colleagues or using social media where listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are intimately connected and dynamically employed, to know that the divisions are artificial. (p.2)

In the case of the knowledge construction process according to the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) tasks “are defined as any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfill, or an objective to be achieved” (p.29); students are exposed to different activities here they have to put into practice what they have learned in order to accomplish a goal or in the case of the knowledge construction process to master a topic. The tasks that the students perform are purposeful, that means that

they will help them not only in the classroom but also outside the class where they are becoming active citizens; in fact, Piccardo and North (2019) highlights that

tasks in which learners/users/social agents are involved are authentic in the sense that they span life both within and outside the classroom as the examples given in the CEFR – for instance playing a game of cards or preparing a class newspaper through group work– show. It is no longer a question of preparation for the future, it is the idea of using the language now in a real-life scope, in real situations, with other real social agents. (p.247)

In view of the fact that students practice with the knowledge they are acquiring by playing a game or developing a role-play is going to prepare them for future situations; this is an example of how tasks help students in the process of learning.

In the knowledge construction process, tasks are fundamental since they are the basis for students to use the target language; for this reason, Samuda and Bygate (2008) explained that:

the role of tasks in second language learning, our starting point is the assumption that the aim of second/foreign language teaching is to develop the ability to use the target language. By ‘use’ we mean that the language is used not only to practise or show mastery, but also for information (personal and professional), for social, political and artistic purposes, as well as for aesthetic pleasure (p.07)

By implementing tasks, students open a variety of options in which they can use the language, as mentioned before. They can use the target language in the class and outside the class and this gives a sense to belonging to the students because they are able to communicate with

other people even native speakers due to the tasks that they develop in their knowledge construction process.

Tasks also help improve the speaking skill in the process of constructing the knowledge. In the AoA there are some examples stated by the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) that can be considered as tasks such as “writing a class newspaper, obtaining certain conditions in the negotiation of a contract, playing a game of cards, and ordering a meal in a restaurant” (p.29). An example as ordering a meal in a restaurant put into evidence how much knowledge the students have about the topic and if they are ready to face a situation like this in the future outside their classroom. As a matter of fact, the tasks that learners develop when practicing speaking involve the interaction among their peers, that is why the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) points out that “learners have to perform real life tasks that can be used in real exchanges out of the classroom setting. Therefore, more of the speaking tasks must have an interactive and spontaneous outcome” (p.49) Pupils have the change to interact and not to worry for the mistakes, but for the outcome they will have in the future. Moreover, the use of tasks improves the competent level of learners since they are exposed to different scenarios that help them improve their level; indeed, Piccardo and North (2019) highlight that the implementation of tasks “draw on a variety of competences, both communicative language competences and general competences” (p.14). In short, the use of tasks helps the learners in the knowledge construction due to the previous mentioned reasons.

Overall, it may be said that tasks are not only presented in terms of education or learning, but daily activities are also considered tasks and people are not even aware of them because it is normal for them to develop the different routines. In the knowledge construction process tasks not only bring a sense of citizenship to learners since they are exposed to tasks

that may be faced in the future such as ordering a meal in a restaurant or writing for a newspaper, but it also prepares students for what it comes next which is quite important in their development. Finally, the speaking skill is also benefited due to the implementation of tasks; there is interaction among students in the development of tasks and the learners become more competent in the language when they develop or perform tasks in the classroom. Good tasks and development of them bring the opportunity for learners to grow not only academically but also socially. The upcoming segment is going to expose the third and final variable necessary for the development of this action research proposal, this variable is the speaking skill.

2.4 Speaking skill

The third variable is the speaking skill, a skill that is fundamental and one of the principal goals of learners to master. In this section, there are three indicators which are compensation, oral interaction, and fluency. The intention of this research is to inquire how the mentioned indicators benefit the development of the speaking skill through the implementation of social interaction activities in the knowledge construction process. In the syllabus Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) it is stated that the speaking skill is “not limited to isolated words. The learner has to be taught survival language and fillers to negotiate and get meaning across in and out of the classroom” (p.46). It is pointless for someone to learn a new language and only be able to use it in the classroom. This is why in the 2016 English Syllabus students are exposed to real life situations that will ensure survival language in order to get meaning across as detailed before. Certainly, in this section, the research objective is to understand how compensation, oral interaction, and fluency help the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. Before

explaining the previously mentioned components it is also important to understand why the speaking skill is important and mostly desired to be acquired by L2 learners.

As it is known people want to learn English for various reasons such as work, travel, school, or just because they want to acquire a new skill; the fact of the matter, as stated by Uso and Martínez (2006) is that “new language has to be organized by the learners so that it “interfaces” with their strategic needs and purposes.” (p.161). At a young age people start developing the speaking skill and it starts by babies babbling, as children grow, it evolves and becomes understandable language. When formal education starts, it is when learners start to improve their language. It is also worth mentioning that the speaking skill can be reinforced with the help of the other three skills, listening, writing, and reading. Burns & Siegel (2018) introduce their book *International Perspectives on Teaching the Four Skills in ELT* by expressing that:

The four language skills are at the heart of current practice in English Language teaching. It is now usual in course books to find sections dedicated to listening, speaking, reading and writing alongside the more traditional activities of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. This focus on skills is the result of a confluence of factors, including: communicative competence as the main aim of language teaching and learning; improved understandings of genres and their importance in social practice; and theoretical insights into how we listen, speak, read and write (p.xiii).

In Costa Rica teachers use listening, writing, reading, spoken interaction and spoken production in their lesson plans in order to give students the opportunity to be exposed to all the skills. By using all the skills, it empowers students to act using linguistic means. (Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada, 2016, p.37).

The different skills are usually worked individually in the knowledge construction process in order to blend with each other; in fact, the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) states that “listening is one important language skill and has to be developed in the early stages of language learning. Learners must be prepared to listen, understand, and answer in an appropriate way, which is essential for effective communication” (p.41). Listening is one of the reasons L2 learners start getting interested in the English language. For this reason, Burns and Siegel (2018) states that

The four language skills are at the heart of current practice in English language teaching. It is now usual in course books to find sections dedicated to listening, speaking, reading and writing alongside the more traditional activities of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. This focus on skills is the result of a confluence of factors, including: communicative competence as the main aim of language teaching and learning (p.xiii).

All four skills separate provide students with great attributes. The reading skill is a great way to have pupils practice the language with vocabulary they are not regularly exposed to. The writing skill is kinesthetic and it helps beginners to brainstorm, put ideas together, be corrected and be able to look at the mistakes to be able to correct them. Learners also apply grammar structure and the listening skill gives them the ability to hear sounds and develop phonemic awareness. All of these contribute in the growth of the speaking skill which eventually improves the pronunciation when students are developing the speaking skill.

It is important to take into account the listening, reading and writing skills and how they contribute to the improvement of the speaking skill. Nation and Newton (2008) mention that there are four strands called:

meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. A well-planned language course has an appropriate balance of these four strands. It is through these four strands that learners achieve the learning goals of a language course, namely fluent control of the sounds, spelling, vocabulary, grammar and discourse features of the language, so that they can be used to communicate effectively (p.2).

It is considered a mistake to focus just on one skill since they complement each other and provide learners with a better performance in the speaking skill and vice versa. Although the other three skills are important to enhance the third variable, the aim of this particular section is to understand the speaking skill and how compensation, oral interaction and fluency will benefit in the speaking skill.

Retaking on the speaking skill, which in the English Syllabus is divided into spoken interaction and spoken production and in this research proposal the researcher are focusing on the spoken interaction. The previously mentioned indicators are influencers in the knowledge construction process since they promote students to continue their language learning process. Compensation encourages students to use the L2 despite their lexical gaps, this can be difficult because Uso and Martinez (2006) describe that it is harder for an EFL student “to openly address lexical gaps” this was observed during interviews and informal encounters (p.204). Indeed, teachers can create scenarios to expose students to the language and encourage them to use it since everyone is in the same process. When teaching English, Burns and Siegel (2018) explain that it is “the key concern is to provide opportunities for oral interaction that aims for comprehension of the deeper meanings and implications of the text.” (p.186). Creating openings where students can practice the oral interaction can be achieved by adjusting their class activities. Lastly, fluency is the last ability a person usually acquires

when learning a new language, since it assures the speaker that they have achieved a high language level. As mentioned before the four skills are needed to enhance different abilities in the L2 learning process. As mentioned by Nation and Newton (2008) “in this strand, the learners are helped to make the best use of what they already know” (p.09). These indicators help the speaking skill since they encourage students to continue their learning process even when they have reached a conformity stage.

Overall, when learning a new language, it is a satisfactory feeling for the learner to be able to get a message across despite the imperfections or language gaps. Mastering the technique is something that will require time and patience. Being able to convey a message motivates learners that they are on the right path and to continue with the learning process. A recommendation that Nation and Newton (2008) give students is that “communication strategies, dictionaries, or previous input to make up for gaps in their productive knowledge”. They also advise teachers to “look critically at a language course to see its strengths, weaknesses and gaps.” (p.5). Both pieces of advice encourage teachers and students to continue building the knowledge construction process because it is beneficiary to the speaking skill.

As a conclusion, it is also important to mention that the four skills are a complement to each other since the listening skill is fundamental to understand what others have to say. The reading skill help students to learn new vocabulary that they will use to express their ideas; the writing skill improves the ability to organize ideas and thoughts; the speaking skill takes advantage of the other skills to improve and put into practice the knowledge students have. Giving students activities and tasks that include the other skills will indeed help the speaking skill. Moreover, as part of the speaking skill compensation is fundamental for students to develop the speaking skill and help the knowledge construction process because

students feel motivated to use the language even if they have mistakes. Pupils do not feel afraid of speaking or making a mistake since the teacher encourages to use the language despite the gaps. Oral interaction is mentioned as another important aspect to take into account since students are exposed to real-life scenarios that will prepare them for the future. The last indicator exposed is fluency that encourages the students to continue learning and to put into practice what they already know. In brief, the speaking skill is fundamental since it gives the vocabulary and the organization necessary with the help of the other skills for students to improve the process of constructing a language. Moving on, the first indicator to focus and that helps the knowledge construction process is compensation.

2.4.1 Compensation

Compensation is the first indicator that will help students in their speaking skill during the knowledge construction process. According to the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) the function of compensation is that it “allows learners to use the language despite knowledge gaps” (p.49). This is very clear and quite important, no matter how much English a learner knows; the teacher must encourage them to use it. Even in a real-life situation, students can be exposed to talking to an English speaker asking for a direction. Even if the student does not speak the language but knows some words, he or she might be able to tell the receiver where they need to go. Compensation as explained by the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) means that it can be used in class by “coining new words, guessing, overcoming limitations in production” (p.49). Activities in class are key to provide students with new vocabulary and improve their pronunciation. This is important because by reinforcing learners knowledge it will benefit the speaking skill.

Furthermore, when teachers are able to identify students compensation it becomes easier to prepare a class teaching plan. Not only this, but getting to know the students will also help teachers not only to plan a class but to be able to plan it with what interests his or her students have. This will give teachers an advantage to strengthen learners knowledge construction process in the speaking skill. As teachers, something to look out for is if students are really learning and filling the knowledge gaps or if they are just memorizing. Nagy gives his personal experience where years later as a working citizen he realized that he had knowledge gaps because he was always focusing on good grades and not actually learning (Nagy, 2019, p.135). It is the goal of the new english syllabus Educating for a New Citizenship for students to achieve a certain level of english. This involves compensation because if teachers are not paying attention this can happen to their students. The key component of compensation is for students to continue practicing the language despite their knowledge gaps, not for students to continue having a knowledge gap. The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) states that “to prevent student’s failure and allow timely intervention, assessment allows teachers to detect learning gaps, so that learners can receive the support needed to be successful” (p.50). Without a doubt, identifying students’ knowledge gaps will certainly help them in their future.

In addition to identify knowledge gaps, an activity that helps apprentices fill these gaps are giving students dialogs to interpret with their peers, this activity not only helps them use vocabulary they do not use or know about but it also gives teachers a view of student’s fluency and pronunciation. Filling compensation is not a concern only from the teacher’s side but also from the student’s side as stated by Uso and Martinez (2006) “students’ aim seems to be chiefly to overcome lexical gaps” (p.196). When working to fill lexical gaps many times the activities teachers look for are speaking activities. This is good since it really gives

students the opportunity to enhance the speaking skill. As a country where English is taught in an EFL environment, speaking activities in the class have great value since it might be the only place, they will practice the new language.

Subsequently, the speaking skill is affected by learners' compensation in a positive way because teachers focus their teaching on filling those gaps and the way to do is by speaking activities. Some interactive activities that the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) recommends are "casual conversations, informal and formal discussion, debates and interviews" (p.45) within many more. All of them as noted puts the speaking skill into practice. Circling back to a real-life situation where a person is in an unplanned position to give directions is also a good activity to practice in class. It puts learners in a real-life situation where the speaking skill is also put to the test. A test does not require a one hundred but instead great satisfaction that the message was communicated.

It is very clear that compensation is the use of the L2 despite the language gaps; this does not mean that the learner can not learn more and will only use the language they currently have. It is required for teachers to work with students' compensation to land on helping student become communicative competence. As stated by Geeslin and Long (2014)

Communicative competence includes an ability called strategic competence, which refers to the ways that learners compensate when there are breakdowns in communication. This last ability is especially important for beginners, who will need to learn to paraphrase when they do not know a form that is needed to express a given meaning and who will also need to learn how to interpret the social situation in order to use language appropriately (p.5).

In this action research proposal, while students gain and are taught the needed knowledge to be competent in the English language, they can use their current knowledge to be able to express themselves and paraphrase their message.

In summary, compensation is an indicator to be improved itself but in the process of filling in the knowledge gaps the speaking skill is involved, and this is where it contributes to enhance the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. Even if students do not know a lot of vocabulary related to a certain topic, with some words they can put into practice sentences and be able to transmit a message. In this indicator teachers play the role of facilitator. In occasions, students can tell what their language gaps are but do not know how to approach them. This is where teachers play an important role in providing opportunities and guiding learners through the implementation of classroom activities that enhances students speaking skill. Teachers can identify what the student compensation is and provide opportunities to improve student's language use without students fear of being corrected in a rude manner and be able to enhance the knowledge construction process. Compensation is a very particular indicator because it enhances the speaking skill and at the same time the speaking skill contributes to better students' compensation. All in all, compensation gives students the chance to speak while improving the gaps they have and enhance the speaking skill in the process of constructing knowledge. To continue with this action research paper, oral interaction is related to the speaking skill, and it is the next indicator to be developed within this variable

2.4.2 Oral interaction

The second indicator that helps to reinforce the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process is oral interaction. Interaction exists every day in the most common situations such as going to the supermarket or talking to a friend or relative. In the case of

English, it is used by a lot of people around the world to interact; in fact, the Barbaroux, Attour, and Schenk (2016) points out that interaction exists “between partners, customers, suppliers, research laboratories, universities, financial institutions and governmental agencies” (p.ix) this makes reference that people are not only interacting face to face with someone else, but they are taking advantage of all the benefits that technology brings to their lives and they are using it to interact. In the case of education and the knowledge construction process; the concept of interaction in the classroom seems like a new concept that has been applied in recent years; however, Howatt and Widdowson (as cited by Jenks and Seedhouse, 2015) stated that “the practice of learning through conversation has many historical precedents, whilst the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw the introduction of several teaching methods (Natural Method, Conversation Method, Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching [CLT]) which were dependent on classroom interaction” (p.01).

When talking about oral interaction, it is essential to highlight that the interaction starts with the teacher and then it moves to the students; indeed, Hjerne, van der Aalsvoort, and de Abreu (2012) explain that “the teaching-learning process consists of the teacher’s and students’ joint construction of a shared meaning of the school subject matter” (p.16). In order to learn a new language, the teacher and the students need to communicate in order for the students to have a better understanding of the subject being taught. Students construct the knowledge of a second language with the purpose of being able to communicate not only inside the class but also outside the classroom. In fact, Burns and Siegel (2018) state that when referring to speaking and oral interaction:

it indicates communicative purposes involving authentic academic material. More specifically, it contains vestiges of a notional-functional as well as a communicative-based design combined with cross-curricular content, probably because learners are

not only studying the language as a subject but also using it during instruction across the whole curriculum and sometimes for sustained out-of-school communication.
(p.82)

This is an example of how the speaking skill and the interaction that the students have with their classmates help them to become more competent in the classroom and in their social life. It prepares them for future situations like an interview where interaction is present and a specific vocabulary is also implemented.

Moving forward with this indicator, in the case of the Costa Rican education, the speaking skill uses oral interaction as part of its development. Speaking is actually divided into spoken interaction and spoken production; the spoken interaction involves the learners to be speakers but also be listeners because they need to listen to their partners' ideas and then be able to answer or give a response based on what they heard. In fact, the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) states that in the spoken interaction is when "the language user functions as a speaker and as a listener. There is participation of one or more interlocutors. Different socio-cognitive and collaborative strategies are constantly employed during interaction" (p.48).

Moreover, there are some examples that are implemented in the new syllabus *Educating for a New Citizenship* such as transactions where the students give an idea, and their classmates need to give an answer based on a real-life situation like a transaction in a bank or restaurant. Another example is casual conversations like a conversation with a friend or an interview or debate when the learners need to interact pretending, they are in a real-life scenario that they will face in the future. (Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada, 2016, p.48). As a final point, oral interaction and communication motivates students and help them to become more confident about their ability to speak.

Young and Travis (2012) explain that “good, solid communication skills allow us to move through life with self-confidence and a feeling of accomplishment” (p.04). The fact that students are interacting among each other brings them a sense of confidence and that they are able to do it; they are able to use the language. In short, oral interaction prepares students and motivates them to continue learning.

As a conclusion, oral interaction is presented every day in people’s life to go to the supermarket, to do a transaction, or something as simple as talking to a friend or someone close in your family. The concept of oral interact has existed for many years and it has transformed the way people communicate because people not only use face to face conversation, but they also interact with someone using a computer or a cellphone. When it comes to the educational sector, oral interaction has benefits for students in the knowledge construction process. Oral interaction gives students real-life scenarios that they will use in the future such as an interview where they are exposed to interact with someone else, in this case the employee. In addition, in Costa Rica the syllabus is implementing spoken interaction where students have the opportunity to learn by listening and speaking to their classmates and implementing situations that may face. As a final point, motivations which is very important when it comes to the knowledge construction process is also part of oral interaction because when students interact and participate in the class, they gain confidence to use the language more frequently and less afraid. Overall, oral interaction helps to improve the knowledge construction process of students by giving opportunities to use real scenarios and by gaining confidence. In the upcoming segment, fluency will be exposed to demonstrate how it helps the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process.

2.4.3 Fluency

The third indicator that helps to support the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process is fluency. The term fluency can be described as the capacity to speak fast a second language or the capacity to speak like a native person; Housen, Kuiken, and Vedder (2012) define fluency as “learner’s or user’s global language proficiency, particularly as characterized in terms of the ease, eloquence, ‘smoothness’ and native-likeness of speech or writing” (p.04). Moreover, when it comes to education it is noticeable that when learners are constructing the knowledge for a second language, one of the purposes is to be able to communicate fluently. Indeed, one of the goals of the new syllabus of the Education in Costa Rica as stated by the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) is that the student “can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party” (p.27). The new syllabus pretends that students can use the language efficiently to the point that they interact with native speakers, and one of the aspects necessary for that to be accomplished is fluency.

Being fluent in a second language can be understood as being communicative competent; there are times where the learner speaks very fast and conveys the message; that is the reason why Gotz (2013) points out that:

The overall goal in English language teaching is to prepare language learners to be able to engage in “successful communication” in the target language. In this context, therefore, [f]luency is mainly of interest because it is related to communicative effectiveness (p.01).

Nevertheless, it is important also to highlight that being communicative competent does not involve only fluency, it also involves accuracy that according to Housen et al (2012) can be defined as “the extent to which an L2 learner’s performance (and the L2 system that underlies this performance) deviates from a norm (i.e. usually the native speaker) Such deviations from the norm are traditionally labelled ‘errors’” (p.04), in this way fluency can be seen as the ability to use the language similar to a native speaker rapidly, but accuracy is the ability to use the language without making mistakes.

As part of the speaking skill, students are expected to use the language pretending to be in a real-life scenario with the purpose of using it in the future. By practicing and using the language they become more fluent; in fact, Pritchard (2007) explains that:

If students are to attain fluency, they need to use their language skills outside the classroom. For effective L2 teaching, there must be active use in authentic contexts; the purpose of language instruction is to allow the learner to understand language outside the classroom, so that ultimately, he or she can utilize the real world, as well as the classroom. (p.34)

Moving forward with this indicator, in the new English syllabus Educating for a New Citizenship there are tasks that students need to perform being as fluent as possible in the speaking skill; in fact, Gotz (2013) states that in order to help learner to build their fluency, teacher can include a “mixture of various teaching and learning forms, e.g. role-play, interviews and different presentations forms to ensure the internalization of different speech segments for different communicative tasks” (p.142). The idea is that students implement real-life situations trying to be fluent not only to express their first ideas but also to respond to what their classmates have to say; in this way, fluency helps the interaction the class.

As a final point, the fact that the students are able to communicate trying to be fluent or in a fluent way helps to motivate them to continue learning. In point of fact, Pritchard (2007) points out that:

becoming fluent in an L2 is often seen as a special achievement rather than the norm, even though it is common in many parts of the world for individuals to speak more than one language. Some cultures accept learning more than one language as a simple fact of life; others consider it a relatively rare and difficult event. (p.63)

Knowing that developing the knowledge of a second language is a rare situation will motivate them to continue learning and grow their knowledge related the process or learning a second language.

Overall, it may be said that fluency is not the same as accuracy since fluency is more related to the ability that a person has to use the language without pausing or to use the language at a fast rate while accuracy is speaking without making mistakes in vocabulary or grammar. In addition, in the educational field it is said that one of the main goals or purposes is that students can interact with fluency among them using real life scenarios that will help them to face future situations with a native speaker of English or someone that uses the language, and for students to become fluent and communicative competent they have to be ready to face situation inside the classroom but also outside the classroom. At last, fluency brings motivation to continue learning to students because being fluent is seemed as something rare or difficult to achieve, so they feel motivate when they realize that learning a second language brings benefits to them. To conclude, fluency helps the knowledge construction process because it improves the oral interaction giving the chance to students to use the language inside and outside the class and it also helps to motivate the students during the knowledge construction process. To continue with this action research paper, the

conclusion of the present chapter is developed to synthesize the main ideas addressed during through the variables with their indicators.

2.5 Conclusion

As a final analysis, it can be concluded that the first variable being social interaction is achieved in the classroom through student centered classes, teamwork and meta-social. All these contribute to have an educational process focus on a real-life scenario where students are daily having to socialize. Social interaction is enhanced in the classrooms where various skills are developed, and socializing is one of those abilities that can be taught and practiced before stepping out to a working environment or university career formation. This is being achieved by having classes be student centered as this will allow students to have freedom in their knowledge construction process alongside by having teachers be a guide and facilitator. The new syllabus Educating for a New Citizenship aims to have students work in teams since this help students reinforce the social skills in communication. Following this, meta-social allows learners to interact with each other and, also contribute to the building of a social interaction environment in the class that eventually will contribute to the lives of students in the classroom and out of it. The first indicator for the variable social interaction is student centered which contributes to the development of social interaction is a student-centered class.

Learner centered classes are valuable for students because it gives students the opportunity to make decisions on what and how they would like to learn. This contributes to more independent individuals when it comes to making important decisions in their lives; remembering this is an ultimate goal of the educational system, to have social but critical thinking individuals. Student centered activities will provide learners with a sense of

responsibility and at the same time having to coordinate with classmates to conclude a task. Role playing is a good activity to allow student to make various decisions. They can choose what they want to present, how they want to present it and if they want to make changes on the original play and at the same time, having to work with peers to prepare for a final presentation. This helps to enhance the social interaction in the class and prepare them for the future. Hand by hand with student centered classrooms, there is teamwork that is necessary to achieve the different task.

Teamwork has been defined as a basic need in human lives. As much as you want to do something on your own at some point people always end up having asking for help. An example was given of a group of people working on a project and how they need to work harmoniously by communicating and thrusting each other that everyone will complete their part on time and effectively. Nonetheless, in teamwork feedback it is required from peers to get better results. As mentioned, many times in this chapter, the educational system is helping students learn the English language as part of a course but most essentially for their lives outside the school. Teamwork is a skill that will help the knowledge construction process and a lifelong skill. In addition to this meta-social is described as the main component for this first variable, the glue that sticks everything together. Meta-social is described as allowing learners to interact with each other, cooperate and coach each other. It has it all in order to increase the social interaction among peers and between students and teacher. Altogether, these three components are essential to the development of social interaction when teaching English. On the other hand, it is seemed how social interaction helps the knowledge construction process since in every classroom there is interaction among the students and the teacher. This interaction helps the leaners to build their knowledge which is the whole point of this research.

In the case of the second variable that is knowledge construction process it is concluded that learning is not only related to a subject; it involves the beliefs and skills that form a person. When it comes to the process of constructing the English knowledge there are four skills that are fundamental for the learning to be effective; these are as mentioned before reading, speaking, listening, and writing; they cannot be isolated because all of them are necessary to learn. However, there are some challenges that the process can face such as traditional methods that do not encourage students to learn; some of the problematics are faced by the speaking skill that is not developed in an individual way and needs interaction, but sometimes the students do not feel comfortable enough to use the language in the classroom, or the methodology that is implemented do not help in the development of it. On the other hand, it is seemed how social interaction helps the knowledge construction process since in every classroom there is interaction among the students and the teacher. This interaction helps the learners to build their knowledge which is the whole point of this research.

As part of this variable AoA or Action Oriented Approach is taken into account to support the knowledge construction process. This approach is developed due to the necessity of helping the students to become part of the society. The AoA sees the students as social agents that are part of their process of learning and through the use of real-life situations it will prepare them for future situations and citizenships. The Costa Rican education had an impact to this approach since it is giving emphasis to speaking rating it into six levels to see how competent learners are. One of the advantages is that it brings interaction to the classroom and innovative ways for students to learn and use the language using authentic materials and authentic scenarios that will prepare them for upcoming scenarios. The didactic sequence also helps to develop the knowledge construction process since for pupils having a

sequence and order is fundamental when it comes to learning a language or daily life activities such as work or tasks at home. In the case of learning English, there is an order that students have to follow, they start from the basics of the language until they are ready to move forward and get to the advanced part of the language. In Costa Rica, as it was explained, the speaking part is divided into four different steps that are planning, organizing, practicing, and presenting. Using this sequence, students first plan the vocabulary they will use in the conversation, then organize all the ideas that they have; once they have organized the ideas, they begin to practice their work to finally presenting to the class, which motivates them because they know what they are doing.

The last component of the process of constructing a language is task. Tasks are presented every day in the housework or in the class and sometimes people are not even aware of them because it is part of their everyday routine. In the case of education, tasks help students to gain confidence and feel that they are part of the process and part of society since the tasks are exposed to prepared them for situations they may face in the upcoming years. Students are becoming more competent because tasks bring interaction in the class for students to improve the language. Finally, the knowledge construction process and its 3 indicators are fundamental in the development of this action research paper because learners are exposed to real-life situations, they feel motivated to continue learning and interacting with their peers using a new syllabus that sees them as agents' part of the society that have interaction with other citizens.

The third and last variable is the speaking skill, in this section it is described how all four skills must be taken into account in order for the speaking skill to be optimized. It also allows the reader to view the different activities within the other three skills and how they contribute to the development of the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process.

The first indicator is compensation, which means that most EFL learners have gaps in their knowledge about the new language but despite this it is actually a good aspect since the teachers are obligated to practice the speaking skill with more frequency in order for the linguistic gap to start closing. Next is the oral interaction indicator which can be said that it is an easy indicator to apply in the classroom since learners are constantly communicating with friends, family or outside their home for basic needs. In this case oral interaction, it is presented to students as everyday tasks but in a different language. It places the learner in a real-life scenario where they can relate to the situation. It constructs an event that happens and helps in the knowledge construction process of the learner. The last indicator for this variable is fluency. As mentioned before this is the one on the high levels to reach when learning a new language. It motivates and encourages students to practice the language. When reaching to become fluent this contributes to the knowledge construction process since it improves the oral interaction giving students the chance to use the language inside and outside the class.

Linguistic Gaps are a reality in the EFL learning programs. Compensation allows students to be able to communicate despite their lack of vocabulary. This is a particular indicator since compensation itself must be worked on in order for it to be an accent to the speaking skill. The particularity is that in order to fulfil the knowledge gaps speaking activities must be introduced. In short, the speaking skill helps compensation and compensations make learners speak in order to fill the linguistic gaps; it is a win-win relationship. As part of the speaking skill, oral interaction plays a fundamental role since it is presented every day when someone goes to the bank, the supermarket, or talk to a friend or relative. In the educational field, interaction is developed when constructing the English knowledge; students are exposed to situations that they will face in the future such as doing

a transaction and they interact with their classmate to construct their knowledge together. This interaction among the learners motivates them because they feel comfortable to use the language and speak in the class. Oral interaction helps the knowledge construction by giving opportunities to learners to use real vocabulary in real contexts and helping the students to feel more confident.

As same as oral interaction, fluency helps the speaking skill in the process of constructing knowledge. Fluency as explained before is the ability to use the language without hesitating or pausing and trying to speak very fast. When it comes to learning English or the process of learning English fluency helps students to use the language in scenarios that are pretended to prepare them for the future since they are created based on reality, so they are ready to use to use the language outside and inside the classroom. The final point mentioned is that fluency helps students to feel motivated; this is because being fluent or speak a second language is not presented in every culture, thus, when someone can speak a second language fluently it is seemed as something rare and that not everybody achieves it. In summary, fluency helps the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process by allowing students to use the language in situations that are realistic and by motivating them since it is not common to speak a second language. In the upcoming segment, the third chapter of this action research paper will be presented to explain the research method, the type of approach used, the data collection tools, and the instruments necessary to develop the action research paper.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In every research conducted, a fundamental part is the methodology that is going to be used to carry out the research. When designing the research methodology that a research paper is going to have, it is similar to the steps to construct a house because a structure needs to be built. In fact, Leavy (2017) states that “think of research design as building a structure or plan for your research. Just as architects work with many different general types of structure—single-family homes, multifamily homes, nonresidential buildings, and so forth”. There are specific steps that a researcher needs to follow when constructing a research design as the research method that is going to be implemented, the type of approach to carry out the research, all the data collections tools and instruments that are necessary to create and implement during the research. Each of these steps are going to be explained and covered in this chapter.

Research design as explained by Creswell (2009) “is also based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers’ personal experiences, and the audience for the study” (p.3). In this case, based on the problem that the researcher is going to study, the researcher chooses the correct research design. In the present research, what the researchers want to analyze is if the implementation of social interaction activities helps improve the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process; to complete that purpose it is necessary to see what the correct method is to use and then the approach that helps to analyze the information that will be gathered. In addition, the process of choosing the research design and the other elements Leavy (2017) points that the process “relies on deductive designs aimed at refuting or building evidence in favor of specific theories and hypotheses” (p.87), that is the reason why the researchers first develop certain hypotheses

because they will help to define what is the research design to be implemented and to answer some of the questions in order to be answered during the research. Indeed, Kumar (2011) explains that

the main function of a research design is to explain how you will find answers to your research questions. The research design sets out the specific details of your enquiry. A research design should include the following: the study design per se and the logistical arrangements that you propose to undertake, the measurement procedures, the sampling strategy, the frame of analysis and the timeframe. (p.41)

Moving forward, it is important to mention the reason why it is important to include a research design or methodology in a research paper. Since there are some questions created in order to be answered during the research paper; choosing a correct research design is essential for the findings because a good design provides good results; in fact, Kumar (2011) points out that selecting the correct design

is crucial in enabling you to arrive at valid findings, comparisons, and conclusions. A faulty design results in misleading findings and is therefore tantamount to wasting human and financial resources. In scientific circles, the strength of an empirical investigation is primarily evaluated in the light of the research design adopted. When selecting a research design, it is important to ensure that it is valid, workable, and manageable. (p. 41)

In short, selecting the correct design contributes to the correct development of the research paper conclusions.

As part of the present chapter and as explained before, there are some steps or considerations that researchers need to take into account when creating the design for the research. One of the first aspects to consider is research method. Research methods as

explained by Leavy (2017) “should be selected on the basis of their ability to best address your research purpose and to help you test your hypothesis or answer your research questions” (p.93). Starting from the fact that the purpose of the present research is to analyze the effectiveness of social interaction activities to improve the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process, the method that is going to be used is the action research approach because as stated by Burns (2010) action research “identifies a ‘problematic’ situation or issue that the participants – who may include teachers, students, managers, administrators, or even parents – consider worth looking into more deeply and systematically” (p.2). For the development of this action research paper, there is a problematic that is the speaking skill in students during the knowledge construction process and as part of a solution that will help to overcome the problematic, social interaction activities are proposed to improve the speaking skill during the process of constructing the English knowledge. A type of approach will also be expose in the forthcoming of this chapter.

Furthermore, there are three types of approaches when conducting a research, those are qualitative, quantitative and mixed. It is important to define the type of method to be used since the data that needs to be gathered needs to be anticipated for the research process. Ferrance (2000) mentions that “Multiple sources of data are used to better understand the scope of happenings in the classroom or school” (p.11). In the case of this research the quantitative approach is the most suitable for this investigation since it is a proposal and as Kumar explains (2011) “psychology, epidemiology, education, economics, public health and marketing are more inclined towards quantitative research” (p.14) this does not mean that a qualitative approach or mixed approach cannot be used but that it is more common. It will provide specific information that is needed in order to improve the speaking skill in the

knowledge construction process. Hand by hand to the approach being used in this action research it is important to consider the data collection tools.

One of the steps of an action research is data collection, this is indispensable in order to search, detect and look for solutions or ways to improve a certain situation, in this case to improve students speaking skill with social interaction activities. There are many ways to collect data and, in this section, the various data collectors will be explained. Collecting data is important in order to “design a plan of action that will allow you to make a change and to study that change” (Ferrance, 2000, p.12). Once data is collected the information will be reviewed to start the creation of the instruments to be used. Ferrance (2000) also states that “the collection of data is an important step in deciding what action needs to be taken” (p.11). This collected data then needs to be interpreted and analyse to give a solution. According to the data collected the instruments are created in order to create an action plan and be able to use it as a proposal for this action research.

For this action research proposal the instruments to be used are diagnostic test, pre-test and a post-test. These instruments are useful since they are usually used in a quantitative approach research. The information on these test must be well planned in order to understand what the problem is and how with the help of the social interaction activities the speaking skill can be improved in the knowledge construction process. Burns (2010) states that “quantitative data analysis means presenting your data in numerical form” and that “A quantitative analysis is used: to gain a concise numerical picture of the issues” (p.118). The instruments mentioned are all going to provide the researchers with a score that will help determine the actions that need to be applied. The diagnostic test will indicate the level of knowledge and will expose the linguistic gaps that the students have. On the other hand, it

will also show where the teachers need to reinforce their lessons plans. Following this, before applying any social interaction activity a pre-test must be completed in order to be clear on their academy level in the specific topic. After the social interaction activities as given a post-test will be given to see if the score is higher than the pre-test.

The methodology of a research paper requires various steps to follow in order for the research results to be clear. Choosing the correct method, in this case school-wide action research where the implementation of social interaction activities can be implemented to all English learners. Then, the type of approach, which in this case the quantitative approach has been chosen to have a better perspective of the instruments that are going to be suggested for this proposal. This approach offers numerical results that can be improved after the application of the instruments. All in all the approach gives the researchers a clear idea of what they need to do and how to do it. Data collection tool will provide to the creation of the instruments that are another important steps in the designing of the research paper since it contributes directly in the finding of the problem or problems in the speaking skill and allows the researcher to give a solution. Overall, the design of a research will contribute to the development of the research paper final results. In the next section the research method is described in detail.

3.2 Research Method

Defining a research method is a fundamental part in every educational research paper that is related to a second language. Research methods are being used with more frequency now, in fact, King, Lay, and May (2017) state that:

research methods in language education have blossomed, diversified, and matured in the decades between the first edition of the Encyclopedia of Language and Education,

published in 1997, and this third edition. This maturation is evident in the development of increasingly sophisticated theoretical approaches as well as the adoption and refinement of specialized data collection and analysis techniques (p. ix)

Moreover, it is important to state the difference between research method and research methodology. Research methods are all the techniques that a researcher uses to conduct or develop research; for example, for a library research one method to be implemented is the analysis of documents. On the other hand, research methodology is understood as the way to understand how research is done, so it is said that research method is a part of research methodology (Kothari, 2005, pp.7-8).

When analyzing research methods related to the innovative educational field, there are three basic methods that are used depending on the focus of the research; these are correlational, experimental, and action research. A correlational research method is when the researcher analyzes each one of the variables without manipulating or modifying them; indeed, Crano, Brewer, and Lac (2015) explain that a correlational research method is “used to reveal the strength of association among non-manipulated variables, as the researcher does not interfere with respondents’ characteristics and normal behavior” (p.22). In other words, during a correlational research method, the researcher is a passive observer that does not interfere in the investigation. On the other hand, the experimental research method is understood as the contrary of the correlational research method since as explained by Cash, Stankovic, and Storga (2016) the experimental research method “relies on the control of the experimental environment and it relies on the control of key variable” (p.v) in which the researcher is seen as an active observer that has a very active role during the research process.

The last research method mentioned is action research; this is the research method that is going to be implemented in the present action research paper. Action research or AR is focused on a problematic that is affecting a sector and then try to look for a way to solve or overcome the issue. In addition, Burns (2010) points out that:

the central idea of the action part of AR is to intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring about changes and, even better, improvements in practice. Importantly, the improvements that happen in AR are ones based on information (or to use the research term, data) that an action researcher collects systematically (p.2)

The present research is focused on the improvement of the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process through the implementation of social interaction activities; it is identified as a problematic the speaking skill of the learners and the improvement to put into practice is the implementation of the social interaction activities.

Action research allows teachers or researchers to study the behavior of the learners and the environment of the classroom. Based on the study of the behavior, a situation is going to be analyzed to look for a solution for the problem or situation; in fact, Mertler (2017) defines action research as

any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, administrators, counselors, or others with a vested interest in the teaching and learning process or environment for the purpose of gathering information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how their students learn. More important, action research is characterized as research that is done by teachers for themselves. It is truly a systematic inquiry into one's own practice. Action research allows teachers to study their own classrooms—

for example, their own instructional methods, their own students, and their own assessments—in order to better understand them and to be able to improve their quality or effectiveness. (p.37)

Based on this information, teachers are in charge of seeing the weaknesses in the knowledge process that they are helping the learners to construct in order to improve those aspects for the learners to overcome the problem they are facing in the knowledge construction process.

When it comes to action research, there are four different types of action research; Ferrance (2000) explains that the types are individual teacher research, that is based on helping the curriculum and the way to give assessment, collaborative action research, focuses on a problematic that is faced by one or more classrooms, school-wide action research, this involves the involvement of parents and the evaluation of programs to overcome a problem, and the last type is district-wide action research, that involves the use of resources and the study of the structures. (Ferrance, 2000, p.06). In the current research an individual action research is going to be applied. The reason is that there is an issue that is going to be analyzed in a single classroom in which data will be collected either in a quantitative way or a qualitative one and the results are going to be used to implement some changes in the class in order to see the effectiveness of the changes in the knowledge construction process; indeed, Shiksha (2013) explains that in an individual action research the problems or difficulties can be addressed on an individual basis but the teacher may have to seek support of the school administrators or external agencies. The teacher collects data either quantitatively or qualitatively or both. The results after analyzing and interpreting the data lead the teacher to implement changes in the classroom at his own level which determine the success and usefulness of the research in improving the area of focus in the classroom. (p.15)

The main goal of the current action research paper is to analyze the effectiveness of social interaction activities to improve the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process; based on this goal it is stated that the problematic or weakness is the speaking skill, and the solution is social interaction activities. During this process the students will benefit because they will improve the oral skill but the teacher will benefit as well since they discover new ways to improve, in fact, Ferrance (2000) points out that “Through action research, teachers learn about themselves, their students, their colleagues, and can determine ways to continually improve” (p.14). Moreover, Mertler (2017) explains that one of the benefits of action research “is that it is reflective and collaborative and that it can ultimately lead to improvements in educational practice” (p.58). This means that if a teacher studies a problem and the solution offered gives positives results, this teacher or researcher shares the knowledge and the results with other researchers or educators to improve the educational field in general. In short, action research gives the chance to learners and facilitator to be benefitted from the results obtained in an action research paper.

As a conclusion, research methods are being used with more and more frequency in the educational field to collect data and analyze different strategies of investigation. There are different types of research methods as explained before, however, for the purpose of this action research paper, and action research method that is individual will be implemented. Action research focuses on a problematic that is affecting the process of constructing the knowledge in students and based on that problematic seeks for a solution that overcomes the weakness. Furthermore, one of the benefits that action research brings to the knowledge construction process is that the teachers have the chance to learn about what they are doing, the learners are doing and look for more ways to improve the process, and all the positive results that are gathered are shared with other researchers or educators to improve the

weakness in a more general way. In short, the present paper implements an action research method due to the fact that there is a weakness when it comes to the speaking skill and through the implementation of social interaction activities it is expected that the speaking skill is improved for the process of constructing the knowledge in learners. Moving forward with the present chapter, in the following segment the approach implemented to carry out the action research paper is going to be exposed and explained.

3.3 Type of Approach

In the previous segment of this third chapter the action research method was explained and the benefits of it were given. It was also mentioned that when doing research, it was similar to an architect's work, since a specific design depends on the structure that is going to be build and it requires specific steps depending on the structure chosen. In this case the approaches are a valuable step that cannot be overlooked, since without them the steps will not be achieved. The types of approaches that are used are qualitative, quantitative and mixed. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain that

Research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This plan involves several decisions, and they need not be taken in the order in which they make sense to us and the order of their presentation here. The overall decision involves which approach should be used to study a topic (p.40).

As mentioned before choosing the right approach will indeed ease the decision of making the steps of the action research design.

Choosing an approach to work with is complicated because certain tools will only give you a limited amount of information and that will determine if the research is successful or not. It is explained in the book *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology* that

The most well-designed study is meaningless and a waste of time and resources if the independent and dependent variables cannot be identified, conceptualized, operationalized, and quantified. The validity of measurement approaches is therefore a critical aspect of the overall design process. (Marczyk et al., 2005, p.107).

The correct approach will definitely facilitate the result that the researcher is looking for. This is why many researchers decide to use a mixed approach; choosing the right approach also depends on how well the researcher planned its hypothesis, variables, indicators and research questions. Investigators need to have a clear idea of what is being looked for in order to choose the correct approach.

Although choosing to work with a mixed approach can be beneficial it can also clutter the research with unnecessary information that is overwhelming. Implement a qualitative approach has advantages and Pelton (2010) states that

qualitative data sources are captured through narrative description of what students and teachers do and say. Images (videos, photographs, and artwork), physical objects, and audio recordings are also potential qualitative data sources. These data sources often provide rich descriptive and contextual information about the people, actions, and interactions that occur in classrooms. (p.30).

This approach provides the facilitators with an inside view of the students. It helps to get to know the person and understand attitudes towards the speaking skill and what is holding them

back in the learning construction process in the English language. Most importantly the teacher is able to give a humanistic approach to the issues. In contrast to the qualitative approach is the quantitative approach.

The quantitative approach is an alternative to the qualitative approach and offers researchers with a numerical view of the knowledge construction process of students. In fact, Pelton (2010) describes it as “quantitative data sources are more easily captured with numbers.” (p.33). For instance a yes or no survey gives researchers a better angle of students linguistic gaps in the L2. VanderStoep & Johnston (2009) state that “quantitative research is that the findings from the sample under study will more accurately reflect the overall population from which the sample was drawn” (p.7). When using the quantitative approach it is faster to collect information and the information is easier to analyse. For this research proposal the instruments to be used are a diagnostic test, pre-test and post-test. These are instruments that will give the research a numerical view of the students knowledge in the speaking skill; it will help the research plan what social interaction activities to implement and be able to test the students to check if the activities worked or not.

Moreover, investigators also have the option to use a mixed approach, Creswell et al. (2018) explains that a mixed method research

is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the integration of qualitative and quantitative data yields additional insight beyond the information provided by either the quantitative or qualitative data alone (p.41).

The advantages of using a mixed approach are more than using just one approach. It will give you both a humanistic and numerical view of the subjects of study in order to better understand and find a solution for the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process.

In summary, the three types of approaches presented in this segment gives this research proposal options to choose and trace the path that is best suitable for the wanted results. The selection of the approach will determine the success of the research in the end. A qualitative approach gives a humanistic view which is an important aspect to take into account when working with people. The quantitative approach gives the research a numerical view that is easy to analyze and make decisions upon those results. Lastly, the mixed approach provides researchers with both views. Researchers need to be careful when using a mixed approach since they could collect more information than needed because this can cause confusion. Hand by hand to the choosing of the approach for the research is the data collection tools that are exposed in the following segment to be able to better formulate the instruments.

3.4 Data Collection Tools

Doing research takes more than just looking for information to support the topic and the ideas that the researcher has. A researcher needs to look for ways to collect information to prove that the hypothesis created at the beginning of the research is correct or not. In fact, Olsen, (2012) states that

Research consists in more intensive study, usually involving getting information that would surprise some audiences, and analyzing the information carefully before writing up the results. The best research uses data in an original way or offers some new and exciting interpretation of existing data. Excellent research has to use

evidence very carefully. Sophisticated data collection offers ways to plan and execute the best kinds of research. (p.03)

That is why a very important part of a research is the data collection section where the information and evidence are collected in order to be analyzed.

Data collection places a crucial role in an investigation because depending on the method and approach implemented, the data collection tools are designed to collect the information and answer the necessary question to give conclusions and results; Lapan, Quartaroli, and Riemer (2012) state that “each researcher must decide which tools to use in order to answer study questions, how the tools should be implemented to the best effect, and who should implement them” (p.92). The process of collecting data is not only to decide tools, but the researchers as explained before taking into account how the tools are going to be implemented in order to have a positive result or positive effect. In addition, there are some aspects that the people in charge of the investigation need to consider as the research questions created at the beginning of the research, the skills or strengths that the researchers have to implement the tools, how much time is available to carry out the implementation of the tool, and if necessary the money that the researchers have available for the investigation (Lapan., et al, 2012, p.92).

When it comes to research, there are several types of data collection tools which are surveys, interviews, observations, and tests. The first one to be mentioned is survey; according to Phillips and Phillips (2008) a survey is defined as “a specific type of questionnaire with several applications in measuring program success. Surveys are used in situations in which only attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are captured” (p.01). Surveys are divided in different questions that are designed by the researcher depending on the questions that are necessary to analyze data and give results. In fact, most of the times the questions

that are developed are yes or no questions for the students or participants to choose only between the options and not to give a large answer or the questions can be also stated in a five-point scale that goes from strongly agree to strongly disagree. (Phillips and Phillips, 2008, p.02). Moreover, one of the benefits of using surveys is that a large population can be used and for that reason the results are going to be more reliable; in fact, Axinn and Pearce (2006) point out that:

Survey methods can be used to take a census of a population or to interview a large representative sample of a population. This is generally considered a positive aspect of surveys, because inferences based on large and representative samples are known to be more reliable than inferences based on small or nonrepresentative samples. (p.25).

This gives a clear example of how surveys that are based on big populations are effective and give more confidence for the researchers and the readers.

The second type of data collection tools is interviews. The concept of interview is well-known since when applying for a job people are involved in an interview. Interviews involve interaction between two or more people. Indeed, Kvale (2007) define interviews as “an interchange of views between two people conversing about a theme of common interest” (p.05). In the case of action research, interviews are done because people in charge of the investigation are interested in hearing the opinion of the participants. The views that the participants have are important for the purpose of the investigation. Seidman (2006) explains that “At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p.09). In this case, the researchers want to know the experience of students based on a certain problematic, so they implement the use of interviews to collect the data.

Observations is the third type of data collection to be mentioned. People are constantly observing, observing people, things, animals, or situations that happen in life. When it comes to the research process, observation does not have the same characteristics as the process of observing in daily life; when research is being developed, observation is analyzed very carefully and everything has an order and is recorded not only in mind with the purpose of been studied and analyzed; indeed, Sapsford and Jupp (2006) state that

Observations are systematically recorded rather than stored only in personal memory, and are carefully interpreted and analyzed, again employing systematic and planned procedures. Moreover, the data produced by observational research are subjected to checks on validity so that we can be more confident about their accuracy than is usually the case with observational data produced routinely in everyday life (p.58)

Using observation as a form of collecting data, provides some advantages for the researchers and the investigation as well. The first benefit is that the researcher has the chance to look and analyze the behavior of students without trusting what anybody else say; in addition, the observer sees aspects that are not visible for students or participants because for them is difficult to describe something that is normal, and they see every day. The last advantage is that the information gathered during an observation works as support from information gathered from any other sources of data collection tools. (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006, p.59). In short, observations provide more accurate answer to what participant are not able to respond.

The last data collection tool and the one that is going to be developed for the purpose of this action research is tests. Students are exposed to tests since they start their academic education. Phillips and Phillips (2008) point out that “an improvement in test scores shows the change in skills, knowledge, or attitude attributed to the program” (p. 13). In the case of the present action research, three tests are going to be developed in order to analyze how the

proficiency level of the speaking skill before and after the execution of the implementation of social interaction activities to the students. An important aspect to highlight related to test is that they help to see how the participant students are and what needs to be improved in order to help the students to overcome the problematic faced; in fact, Axinn and Pearce (2006) point out that:

test gives the investigator first hand knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the data collection plan, it allows the investigator to discover dimensions of the data collection plan that are not working as planned, and it allows investigators to make changes to the data collection plan to insure that the final implementation is in fact successful (p.58)

Researchers have the chance with tests to analyze and work on different strategies to help in this case the process of constructing a knowledge for the student related to the speaking skill which is the purpose of the present action research.

All things considered; data collection tools are an essential part of every research that is going to be developed because they are the way to find answers to the questions stated by the researchers previously. Data collection tools are going to give the results that people in charge of the investigation need to finish the process. Moreover, there are some considerations that need to be made to choose the correct data collection tools such as how the tools are going to be used, the ability that the researchers have to implement the tools, the time that there is available to implement the different tools, and the money if is needed to carry out the tools. Researchers need to consider all these aspects before choosing which tools to use in order to have a successful investigation. As mentioned before, there are different types of data collection tools that can be implemented when carrying out research. The first is surveys that is going to be quick since the answers are going to be yes or no or a

five-point scale in which the students need to answer; the second is interviews where the conversation and the experience of the participant are taken into account. Observation is another way to collect data in which observers have a chance to look at situations in a different form, as the students involved in the research; the last type is tests that help to measure a specific aspect on students and based on that create a solution to help them overcome their weaknesses. The implementation of this action research pretends to create tests that help the researchers to identify problems and to find a solution, in this case the implementation of social interaction activities. To move forward with the present chapter, in the next segment the instruments that are going to be developed will be exposed for a better understanding.

3.5 Instruments

Hand by hand to data collection research's next step is to choose the research instruments, as stated by Wilkinson & Birmingham (2003) "research instruments are simply devices for obtaining information relevant to your research project, and there are many alternatives from which to choose" (p. 93); it is imperative to be aware of the instruments to be used in order to answer the questions previously prepared, prove or denied the hypothesis and be able to find the problem and offer a solution to it. Suppose a cake needs to be prepared from scratch, if the baker uses the incorrect ingredients for the preparation, the result will not be a cake. As Kumar mentions (2011) "in terms of measurement procedures, therefore, validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure" (p.178). Choosing the instruments for a research project helps to achieve the wanted results. If choosing the wrong instruments, the research question will not be answered, there is no chance to prove or deny the hypothesis and most importantly, there will be no solution for the

problem, which in effect is the most important aspect of this action research. On the other hand, choosing the right instruments will facilitate all the mentioned.

Furthermore, there are different instruments to used based on the type of approach elected for the research. In this case, the action research aims to propose the use of social interaction activities to enhance the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. It is vital for the researcher to understand under what conditions they are in order to better choose the instruments for the research; as explained by Colton & Covert (2007) “being aware of the conditions that affect your results, you can create an instrument that effectively meets your need for information because the research has demonstrated that some approaches to instrument development can increase the accuracy and dependability of responses” (p.4). By having this information, the investigator will find out how the activities that can be implemented and what topics to strengthen. The approaches to choose from are quantitative, qualitative for this action research proposal.

In a qualitative approach the most common instruments to use are questionnaires, surveys and observations. The qualitative approach is described by Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger (2005) as

Qualitative research involves studies that do not attempt to quantify their results through statistical summary or analysis. Qualitative studies typically involve interviews and observations without formal measurement. A *case study*, which is an in-depth examination of one person, is a form of qualitative research. *Quantitative research* involves studies that make use of statistical analyses to obtain their findings (p.17).

Questionnaires are used in order to view people's point of view, in this case in the speaking skill. It is important for the researcher to formulate the questions in a form it will not influence the answer. The "surveys can assess consumer behaviors, client satisfaction with services, employee attitudes, and the general public's values and beliefs" (Colton, et al., 2007, p.3). This gives the investigator a wider view of the person's attitude towards the topic. Lastly, observations, this can help the researcher get a sense of what is missing in order for the learners to be more interested in class when the speaking skill activities are presented.

On the other hand, there is the quantitative approach that "involves studies that make use of statistical analyses to obtain their findings. Key features include formal and systematic measurement and the use of statistics" (Marczyk, et al., 2005, p.17). In this case, diagnostic test, pre-test and post-test. These are the instruments chosen to use in this action research. These instruments provide the researchers information needed in order to propose an answer to the research questions, prove or disprove the hypothesis and give a solution to the lack of knowledge in the speaking skill. As mentioned in the previous segment these instruments give researchers a better sense of the knowledge gaps in the L2, a pre-test allows investigators to be able to identify the problem and the post-test will tell the researchers if the social interactive activities help the learners or not. All of the instruments measure and give clear data of the results. For instance in the diagnostic test the researchers notice that the students did not manage the "meet my family" topic very well. Then they are able to apply a diagnostic test to see exactly the gap and be able to apply the activities and then perform a post-test to make sure that the students learned and understood the topic.

Other than the importance of the instruments and what instruments to use it is equally important to mention the validation of the instruments chosen. As stated by Abell, Springer and Kamata (2009) "Successful execution of a validation study requires conceptual

understanding of each analytic component and the capacity to anticipate related implications during design of the draft instrument and the various studies required to generate information and data for subsequent analyses” (p.12). When creating the instruments, it is imperative to write down questions that will avoid ambiguity in order to have better results. Otherwise the research will be stuck with unwanted answers as mentioned by Creemers, Kyriakides and Sammons (2010)

researchers should develop instruments measuring the functioning of factors that provide data about both qualitative *and* quantitative characteristics. To do so, not only should the construct validity of the instruments be examined but also the validity of the measurement framework, and this should be done by making use of Classical Test Theory and/or the Item Response Theory (p.32)

Creating a form of rubric in order for the researchers to check if all the aspect of the instrument at included. Being able to establish reliability and validity in research is fundamentally to guarantee that the data is replicable, and the results are precise.

3.5.1 Diagnostic Test

Teachers are constantly looking for ways to assess the knowledge the students are acquiring the knowledge related to the topics seen in class. Students are constantly under different forms to diagnose their knowledge construction process; indeed, Holmes and French (2019) point out that “teachers and schools measure student performance through tests, performance assessments, and behavior ratings” (p.01). Moreover, one of these forms is diagnostic tests. Diagnostic tests are a common way to measure the knowledge people have before applying a strategy to improve a certain weakness. In fact, Leighton and Gierl (2007) state that a diagnostic test is “designed to measure specific knowledge structures and

processing skills in students so as to provide information about their cognitive strengths and weaknesses.” (p. 03). In the case of the current action research; one of the goals is to develop a diagnostic test to see how proficient students are when it comes to develop the speaking skill in the English class.

Diagnostic tests play an important role in the learning construction process because they help the teacher to have a better understanding of the progress of the students regarding a specific skill or a specific subject. In their book, Holmes and French (2019) explain the following:

The purpose of diagnostic tests, then, is to provide information regarding the level of attribute mastery for each individual completing the assessment. In this context, mastery can mean the attainment of certain knowledge or skills, as with cognitive/achievement tests (p. 313).

As explained before, teachers can take of advantage of this kind of tests and apply them to see if the students master a certain topic or skill that is going to be fundamental to develop during the learning construction process of learners.

Diagnostic tests can be applied in terms of education either as an educational context or as an individual level. In fact, Frey (2018) explains that

a diagnostic test in education aims to assess criteria in the field of teaching and learning. This can be learning conditions such as knowledge, competences, motivation, self-regulation, learning disabilities, and learning achievements, or more general, such as intelligence or school qualification. At an individual level, they may be used to assess students’ learning characteristics such as knowledge, skills and

competences, motivation, learning difficulties, or learning and work behavior. Teachers can use the results to enrich their judgments about individual students as well as adapt and optimize their teaching with regard to their students' weaknesses and strengths. (p.1325)

The implementation of diagnostic tests provides help to the teacher because weaknesses are identified, and the teachers are able to look for different strategies to overcome the weakness or problematic based on the information they gathered from the test.

As a final point, there are three points that researchers need to take into account when developing a diagnostic test; these are validity, reliability, and objectivity. In the case of validity, a test is valid if it measures what needs to be measured and not any other skill or aspect. Reliability is present when the results gathered from the test are stable. The last point is objectivity, a test is objective if the test is the people involved in the exam get similar results; this is seen when the results are being compared. (Frey, 2018, p. 1326). In this action research all these concepts are fundamental and are going to be taken into account because the diagnostic test is going to be implemented to see how the speaking skill is developed and how the students deal with speaking in the English class.

3.5.2 Pre-test

When there is an implementation of a treatment or a process to improve a specific skill or area that is important for the process of constructing the knowledge in students, a pre-test is essential because it gives an idea to the researcher or what improvements can be done to the process to be implemented that will help to improve the skill. In fact, Axinn and Pearce (2006) state that:

pretest gives the investigator first-hand knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the data collection plan, it allows the investigator to discover dimensions of the data collection plan that are not working as planned, and it allows investigators to make changes to the data collection plan to ensure that the final implementation is in fact successful. (p.85)

Based on the results gathered from the implementation of the pre-test, researcher see if the plan has some weakness to be improved before implementing it and give the results.

In the process of implementing pre-tests, there is a traditional way which consists of the researchers taking some people of students of the target population in order to get some data, analyze it, and makes some improvements. A similar way to develop pre-tests is explained by Floyd and Fowler (2014) stating that “experienced interviewers taking 20 to 50 interviews with respondents drawn from a population the same as, or similar to, the population to be included in the survey. Interviewers are observers of the data collection process who are asked to report back to the researchers about any ways in which the procedures and survey instruments could be improved” (p.106). It is important to highlight that one again the possibly of making some improvements to the instruments or the plan is considered.

One of the purposes of pre-test is that learners give their opinions or answer the questions formulated by the researcher in a free environment and without being concerned of doing it right or wrong because what the researcher wants to obtain from the test is what the weaknesses are in order to be addressed. That is why Gray, Williamson, Karp, and Dalphin (2007) point out that the subjects known as students:

should be encouraged to comment freely about the questions themselves, as well as about the issues they address. The pretest often suggests necessary or desirable

changes in wording, format, or layout; identifies ineffective questions that should be deleted; and sometimes uncovers new issues to which additional questions should be addressed. (p. 138)

Researchers should pay closely attention to the results gathered from the pre-test so they have a better understanding of how to continue with the rest of the investigation and the data collection process.

When it comes to action research, there are some advantages that pre-test can bring to the research. First, time is needed to fill the instruments at the beginning of the investigation; this means that a person who does not have a lot of time or does not want to make an effort is going to find this aspect as a disadvantage. Since the participants are involved in the pre-test they can anticipate what comes next making this an advantage because they will work on the aspects they had some issues before. The last aspect to be mentioned is that if the students start asking questions about the topic it is possible that the treatment can be influenced since the students are going to have an idea of what is going to come next (Creswell, 2012, p. 297). It is important to highlight that in this action research paper, a pre-test is going to be taken into consideration to analyze what is the role of social interaction activities during the development of speaking skills in the process of constructing the knowledge of students and if the students are facing any kind of difficulty or challenge that will affect the rest of the data collection instruments and for that reason it needs to be modified. Pre-tests are an important tool for researchers to see the issues that need to be addressed.

3.5.3 Post-test

After a treatment or a process is being implemented and finished, there is another test that is implemented to see if the process works or not; this test is called post-test. Creswell (2012) defines post-test as “a measure on some attribute or characteristic that is assessed for participants in an experiment after a treatment” (p. 297). A post-test is implemented to the participants at the end of the treatment of the procedure; for example, if students were exposed to a treatment in which social interactions activities were implemented in order to improve the speaking skill, at the end, they are going to take a test in which the effectiveness of social interactions is going to be tested for the treatment to have a positive or negative result. The main goal of a posttest as explained by Phillips and Phillips (2008) is to “obtain data to compare with those from the pretest” (p.78); the idea is that the researcher takes the information and the results that were obtained from the pre-test and analyze it and compare it to the results from the post-test so see how the treatment influenced in the skill being tested.

Another aspect to mention is that since students are exposed to a pre-test gives them a sense of confidence to what comes in the post-test and to analyze what they did in the past, so they can improve and not make the same mistake again. In fact, Johnson and Christensen (2014) point out the following:

the experience of having taken a pretest may alter the results obtained on the posttest, independent of any treatment effect or experimental manipulation intervening between the pretest and the posttest. Taking the pretest does a number of things that can alter a person’s performance on a subsequent administration of the same test. Taking a test familiarizes you with the content of the test. After taking a test, you might think about errors you made that you could correct if you took the test again.

When the test is administered a second time, you are already familiar with it and might remember some of your prior responses. (pp. 393-394)

This is an important aspect to consider because if the students try to correct the mistakes, the results of the post-test are going to be positive and thus the results of the research are going to show that the implementation of the treatment worked for the students.

Having students taking a posttest despite that they already know the content is not all negative. This gives students the opportunity to learn something having conscience of the content. Students have an increase in knowledge that is the goal of this proposal, for learners to enhance the speaking skill despite language gaps or previous knowledge. This kind of tests are an important tool for researcher and teachers as Creswell & Creswell (2012) explain “after the treatment, the researcher selects a comparison group and provides a posttest to both the experimental group(s) and the comparison group(s)” (p.233). The results to the group that received the treatment should be the ones with the better result; although this is not always the case, this is why the posttests are important to do since it gives vital information to the research project. The posttest is the responsible to prove or dine the hypothesis since it is the end of the instrument applicating to create change and provide investigators with the ending results; results that can be positive or negative. Either or, this gives researchers the chance to identify a problem and propose a different solution.

As a conclusion, instruments are a fundamental part in every action research paper. As mentioned previously, the implementation of instruments is fundamental since they help to answer the questions that were created at the beginning of the investigation, and they are also used to prove that they hypothesis created was correct or not. There are different instruments that can be applied based on the approach implemented. When it comes to qualitative research questionnaires, surveys, and observations are the most commonly

instruments used since they allow the researcher to take into consideration some aspects that will probably be missing by everybody else. In the case of the quantitative approach, diagnostic test, pre-test, and post-test are one of the most common instruments implemented. It is seen how diagnostic tests are implemented to see what is the progress that students have in a specific skill or subject during their knowledge construction process. In the case of diagnostic tests, they are implemented to see if the students master a certain topic or skill and if not, the teacher can look for certain strategies or solutions to overcome the problem. When developing a diagnostic test, validity, reliability, and objectivity are aspects very important to consider. Moving forward, the pre-test is also important instrument that was mentioned previously; in the case of the pre-test, it is implemented before implementing a certain instrument or progress into the knowledge construction process of students. A pre-test allows the researcher to have the students answering to questions or giving their opinion without the fear or making a mistake being afraid of a grade. In fact, this kind of test, help the researcher also to see if there is something that needs to be changed in the instruments or the treatment. The last instrument is post-test. In the case of this test, it is implemented when a treatment or progress has finished in order to see if the treatment has positive results on the students or not; there are some aspects to consider such as the fact that students already took a pre-test, so they are familiar with the process, and this may help them when taking the post-test. In the present action research, the diagnostic test, the pre-test, and the post-test are fundamental because the speaking skill needs to be measured to see if the students are getting the level that they should have or not to look for a solution that will help the weakness or weaknesses.

In the following segment, the conclusion of the present chapter is going to be exposed in order to review important points from every aspect mentioned.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the methodology of this action research project was exposed. Talking about the importance of choosing the correct tools in order to succeed and be able to achieve the wanted results for this project. The example of a constructor who needs to be aware of what type of home he will be building before making construction plans was exposed in order to give a better understanding of the importance of the research methodology structure. There are detailed steps that an investigator needs to follow when constructing a research design as the research method that is going to be implemented, the type of approach to carry out the research, all the data collections tools and instruments that are necessary to create and implement during the research. The main objective of this methodology design is to analyze is if the implementation of social interaction activities helps improve the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process.

It is also explained the differences between methodology and method, being method part of the methodology of a research project. The differences between the different type of methods to use are expose and why the action research is the one to be used in this research project. That is because the AR method is focus on a problematic that is affecting the population sector in education. Action research permits researchers to study the behavior of the students and the environment of the classroom. Based on the study of the behavior, a situation is going to be studied to look for a solution for the problem. To provide teachers and school staff with a solution that will not only help that class but future alumni. It is also stated that there are four types of action research, but the one to focus on the individual action research is going to be applied .

The type of approach is also exposed in this chapter and how different approaches will lead the researcher in different paths and results. The quantitative approach provides researchers and readers with a numerical result that would be easy to read and understand. The qualitative approach gives a wider view of student's emotions and attitude towards the speaking skill in an EFL classroom. Lastly the mixed approach that provides researchers with both views but investigators need to be careful with it because they might end up with unwanted and useless information that will tangle them. The approach is imperative because this helps researches into collecting data that is necessary for the research and the creation of instruments. In this case the quantitative approach was selected because this is an action research proposal. Selecting an approach is challenging since each approach only gives a limited amount of information.

In order to apply the instruments, the researcher must look for the data collection tools to prove that the hypothesis created at the beginning of the research is correct or not. The data collections tools will provide with information in order to correctly create the instruments that will be applied. The four types of data collection tools were exposed and described why depending in the approach chosen one is better than the other. In this case the approach chosen was quantitative and this is why the test will work better. Finally, the instruments are exhibited in this chapter to give a complete view of them. Choosing the correct instruments to implement is as having the correct ingredients when preparing a cake; with the right ingredients, the cake will taste delicious. The implementation of the appropriate instruments will help the researcher to get de desire results. Depending on the approach chosen by the researchers, the instruments will change, on a qualitative research observation, surveys, and questionnaires are the most used. In the case of a quantitative approach tests are often used as instruments to be develop. In the case of this action research paper, the approach

is quantitative and for that reason a diagnostic test, a pre-test, and a post-test were developed previously in the chapter.

Diagnostic test was the first test developed. There are different ways to measure the students' progress such as tests, performance, or others that help the teachers to analyze the weaknesses or difficult situations faced by learners. When applying a diagnostic test, the principal goal is to get information or data of how the learners master certain aspect of their process of constructing knowledge and based on this the teacher can identify problems and look for possible solutions or a way to address the aspect so that the students improve in that skill or subject. The pre-test is developed in order to get information before applying a treatment in order to make some changes in the treatment or the following instruments. The pos-test is implemented at the end of a treatment to see the effectiveness of the same. In the current action research paper, it is going to be seen how the diagnostic test, pre-test and post-test will indeed help with the ending results of the implementation of social interaction activities to enhance the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process.

Chapter IV: Findings

4.1 Introduction

The process of constructing the English knowledge on students starts with the teacher and the way the class is developed. Teachers as explained by Erben, Ban, and Castañeda (2009) have to “modify, adapt, and make the appropriate pedagogical accommodations within their lessons for this special group of students. This is important: students should remain included in the cycle of everyday learning and make academic progress commensurate with grade-level expectations” (p.14). The role of the teacher is fundamental despite the skill or topic seen in class. In this process, one of the fundamental skills is the speaking skill since is the primary way of communication. Being able to communicate in a second language is a challenge for the learners; in fact, Jamshidnejad (2020), states that many learners

frequently complain about the lack of opportunities and resources that would enable them to learn how to communicate their message or intended meaning. Even advanced language learners can suffer from a lack of sufficient preparation to communicate beyond the classroom. Consequently, they prefer to keep silent whenever they are not sure whether they can manage the communication successfully (p.02).

Taking into consideration that students feel fearful to speak using the English language, the goal of this action research project is to provide learners with social interaction activities that enhance the speaking skill in the construction of their knowledge.

Social interaction activities as explained in the previous chapters provide learners with the chance to interact with their classmates while learning or reviewing a topic. One of

the purposes of the 2016 syllabus applied by Ministerio de Educación Pública is that learners will be communicative competent when leaving high school; in fact, Jenks and Seedhouse (2015) point out that “the classroom may be understood as preparation for English use in the outside world and/or as a place to get a qualification” (p.03) making reference that the idea that the students learn to communicate in English during the construction of their knowledge is not only for educational purposes, but also for business, work, or entertainment resolutions. In the case of the knowledge construction process, interaction is fundamental for learners because as stated by Pritchard (2007) “students learn through interaction with others and, in so doing, develop strategies of communication” (p.27). This interaction that students need to have is developed through activities that allow them to give their ideas and express their thoughts and listen to their classmates; these activities are focused on social interaction.

In addition to what was already mentioned, interaction has been implemented in the new syllabus “*Educating for a New Citizenship*” where oral interaction is one of the focuses when it comes to the speaking skill. In this new syllabus, with oral interaction is intended to give learners the chance to use the language in a collaborative way developing different activities as casual conversations where they can express their feelings and ideas, debates, or interviews where they are going to put into practice real life scenarios that are going to prepare them for life after high school (Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada, 2016, p.48). The idea of this action research paper is to provide students with social interaction activities that are based on real-life scenarios where that can put into practice what they know and feel engaged in the process of constructing their own knowledge. It is very important that students have contact with real life tasks because as explained by Thomas and Reinders (2010) students “engage with real-world authentic language use; they focus on any or all of the four language skills; they engage learners in

cognitive skills in order to accomplish them; and they have a defined communication-based learning outcome” (p.02). All in all, providing students with real-life activities engage learners in the process of constructing the knowledge; and these activities are going to be developed within a social interaction context.

In the present chapter, there are aspects that are important to take into account and develop to strengthen of this action research paper. One of these aspects is the justification of the proposal; the purpose of this proposal is to implement social interaction activities to enhance the speaking skill in the learners during the learning construction process. Wayne (2006) points out that social interaction activities bring to students “to have many feelings such as: belonging, acceptance, and confidence” (p.06) and through the justification part the purpose of implementing these activities and how they help the process of constructing the students’ knowledge will be explained. As same as a justification, the alternative methodological proposal with its importance, necessity, and scopes. The creation of the proposal is essential because Johnson and Christensen (2014) point out that “proposal is a good first step in conducting a research study because it forces you not only to think about the rationale for the research study but also to think carefully through each step of the study” (p.177); in this case, the necessity which is needed for students to be able to communicate in English is going to be analyzed and how it is important to enhance the skill through the implementation of social interaction activities to help the learners.

Moreover, the third aspect to be developed on this chapter is the alternative methodological proposal implementation. In an action research paper, it is important to decide what is needed to be done in order to accomplish the proposal, in fact, Johnson and Christensen (2014) explain that “develop some plan or strategy that will give you the information needed to provide an answer to your research questions and test any hypotheses

you might have stated” (p.181). The purpose is to develop an innovative way to overcome the weakness that have been detected and for that reason three different teaching strategies are going to be explained with the sequence that is going to be followed and the evaluation to assess the effectiveness of each strategy in the process of improving the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. The educational impact that this action research and its proposal will have before and after the implementation of the strategies in the knowledge construction process is going to be explained. One of the purposes of stating the impact that the proposal will have on the educational field is that it will give insights and ideas to change the method of applying activities in the class over the time. Wiseman and Baker (2006) state that analyzing the impact of a proposal gives the research a “degree of stability, isomorphism, and homogeneity in educational development, institutional theory provides fuller comparative accounts by virtue of its empirical tendencies toward change over time, differences, and heterogeneity” (p.06). The last aspect to be explained in this chapter is the conclusion of the chapter and a critical analysis that will focus on the advantages that the modern teaching methods have over the traditional methods and the reason why it is important for teachers to change the idea that they have about teaching and adapt to changes. In short, all these aspects will help the researchers and the readers to analyze the impact that social interactions activities have in the speaking skill when it comes to the students’ knowledge construction process.

As a conclusion, being able to speak a second language is a challenge for students because they feel shy to make mistakes, so they prefer to stay silent and do not participate. In this case, the role of the teacher is fundamental because the teacher has the responsibility to provide students with activities that will motivate them to participate and be part of the process of the construction of their knowledge. That is the reason why this action research

paper is focused on the implementation of social interaction activities to enhance the speaking skill. In the new syllabus implemented by Ministerio de Educación Pública, the speaking activity is being reinforced and the students have the chance to use the language with their classmates through interaction. As mentioned before, the purpose is to implement social interaction activities that will motivate students to participate and become communicative competent not only inside the classroom but also outside. In addition, as part of this chapter, a justification, the alternative methodological proposal, the alternative proposal implementation, the educational impact, and the conclusion and a critical analysis will be explained to reinforce the chapter and the action research paper. In short, with the implementation of these activities and the strategies to be developed, students will improve their speaking skill and the ability to communicate using English.

4.2 Title of the Proposal

The Implementation of Social Interaction Activities to Improve the Speaking Skill in the Knowledge Construction Process

4.3 Justification of the Proposal

It is the purpose of this segment to justify the implementation of social interaction activities to improve the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process and how these activities help learners. In the past, the costarican education was centered on teachers and not on students. In the case of the English teaching the teacher was in charge of all the talking in the classroom. This is why it is no surprise that Parris, Fisher and Headley (2009) observed that “students are expected to sit hour after hour, taking notes, and answering the occasional question with little interaction with peers” (p. 70). In today’s world social interaction is an

important aspect for learners. They are constantly posting on their social media their events, problems, accomplishments and many more. Keeping in mind that learning is a social activity, why not bring this essential aspect to the classroom when teaching a new language. Students are the ones learning, give them the opportunity to do the talking, do research and propose an interesting topic for their next class.

This research proposal aims to develop a pedagogical action that involves the implementation of social interaction activities to reinforce learner's speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. It is important to understand that in Costa Rica international businesses are growing and employers are constantly looking for English speaking personnel. Even for a person who wants to start a business, knowing ingles helps in the building of its business. This is mention since educators, government authorities and students themselves are constantly thinking about the future and preparing for it as stated in the English Syllabus Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016)

The development of communicative competence in English is an aspiration and a request of the Costa Rican society upon the educational system. Speaking English fluently is one of the abilities a 21st Century learner must develop to have access to better life opportunities. The Costa Rican educational system is committed to achieving this goal of having bilingual citizens in two or more languages by means of a comprehensive, articulated curriculum from kindergarten through high school (p.4).

In order to achieve this, teachers have many methods to use when it comes to classroom interaction such as the Natural Method, Conversational Method and Communicative Language Teaching. All of these methods help teachers enhance the speaking skill in their

classroom and prepare students for the future hand by hand with the Action Oriented Approach.

It is the case of many young adults that have no experience in the working field after high school graduation that are able to find a job because of their English knowledge, they get excellent job opportunities with competitive salaries. This is just one of the benefits that a second language give Costa Rican students. Social interaction activities help students to prepare themselves for future events. Take for example the conversational method, where teachers can have students make a pretend phone call were, they will need to make a doctor's appointment or even ask for information on a new technological gadget. This is exposing them to real life scenarios and helps them improve their speaking skill. In the book *Techniques and Principals in Language Teaching*, Corder (1981, as cited in Larsen, 2000) "affirmed the importance of the use of language in real situations to perform authentic communicative functions and he recommended an approach to language teaching where L2 learners are given these opportunities" (p.11). It is very clear that real-life scenarios in an EFL classroom are central in order to improve students speaking skill.

Social Interaction is present in people's day to day life. As active citizens students prepare themselves with knowledge and skills that are helpful in their everyday life, for this to be possible teachers must give students the responsibility of their own learning. Students must be the writer, reader, listener and speaker in the classroom, this allows them to become actively engage in social interaction with others. Thinking about the future Palmer (2013) makes some interesting observations and asks the following questions

What skills are most useful in the world beyond our K–12 classrooms? What will our graduates be doing, and what must they all be able to do successfully, no matter what field they are in? I would argue that the answer is communicate (p.5).

It is no surprise that Palmer indicates that communication is the answer since that speaking skill is the one that is necessary in all aspect of people's lives. Conversation and social skills can promote positive interaction and communication and this can help learners to successfully communicate their wants and needs.

Overall, social interaction activities are necessary and important in student's knowledge construction process because it gives them the tools to succeed in their future plans. Students must face social interaction in their daily life routines and with the rapid growth of international business in Costa Rica the English language has become a necessity for the population. Enhancing the speaking skill through social interaction activities in the classrooms help students to feel comfortable and be able to speak the language outside the class. These activities also provide students with the opportunity to be expose to real life scenarios. It helps build learners confidence when being expose in a real-life situation. Knowing a new language gives them the chance to explore other cultures, make new friends, become active citizens in the Costa Rican society and search for better opportunities in their adult life. Other than the benefits mentioned being socially active in another language, it makes people feel good about themselves knowing that they were able to learn a new language and amplifying their knowledge to that extent. In the next section the alternative methodology proposal is expose in order to have a strategy that will help with the resolution of the research question and test the hypotheses.

4.4 Alternative Methodological Proposal

The process of constructing the English knowledge for students is a critical stage in their education. The way the class is developed is going to bring learners a sense of interest and confidence in the process. In fact, Cremin (2009) states that “teaching and learning English is, at its richest, an energizing, purposeful and imaginatively vital experience for all involved, developing youngsters’ competence, confidence and creativity as well as building positive attitudes to learning” (p.01). The purpose is that learners feel engaged and find the process of learning English as a positive experience that is going to benefit them not only during their education but also in the future. English as explained by Phillips (2007) “has become one of the most popular languages in the world. Proper English skills are becoming a valuable asset in business around the world” (p.01). Learning how to speak English is basically a necessity due to the popularity that the language is acquiring all over the world.

The need for students to learn to communicate using English during the construction of their English knowledge, brought the idea of creating this innovative alternative methodological proposal that has the purpose of allowing learners to interact with their classmates while becoming proficient in the English language. In Costa Rica, the educational system is committed to form in students a sense of bilingualism that will help them after they finish high school. The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) states that

The Costa Rican educational system is committed to achieving this goal of having bilingual citizens in two or more languages by means of a comprehensive, articulated curriculum from kindergarten through high school. Given this mandate, the new curriculum has been sequenced so that learners reach a minimum level of English

proficiency of A2 when completing primary education and B1 or B2 (depending on the study plans) when completing secondary education. (p.06).

In order to achieve this goal and for students to reach the B1 or B2 level of English proficiency, students need to be exposed to the English language and practice with their classmates, and with the implementation of this alternative methodological proposal learners are going to be able to use the language and improve to become communicate competent.

Taking into account the explained above and the necessity to develop the speaking skill in students during their knowledge construction process, the current alternative methodological proposal is made of three different strategies based on the eight level. The first strategy is called “That’s How We Celebrate”, and it is focused on the use of student-centered activities to improve social interaction skills in students while asking questions to their classmates about different holidays, celebrations, festivals and answering different question from their classmates. The second strategy to be developed is “I Know what I Want, but Where?”. This strategy was created to reinforce the speaking skill on learners through oral interaction. This strategy pretends that students have the chance to have a conversation with their classmates about shopping and formulate questions that will ensure that the other person understands what is the information given. The last strategy of this alternative methodological proposal was created under the name of “What was I Thinking”. This strategy is focused on teamwork where students are going to work in groups or in teams to explain an unforgettable event in their lives. The purpose of having them work in groups is that they can construct their knowledge by teamwork activities that will allow them to improve their speaking skill and ask for help from their classmates when needed. By

implementing these three strategies, learners will increase their speaking skill but also, they will feel more comfortable working with others and applying social interaction activities.

4.4.1 Importance

Being able to understand and communicate a second language motivates people to go into English classes. However, being able to master the speaking skill represents a challenge for learners since for them it is considered the most difficult skill to learn; in fact, Jamshidnejad (2020) points out that

becoming a fluent speaker of a new language is the main dream that motivates a large percentage of learners to take language courses. Still, many language learners perceive communicating skills such as speaking the most challenging skills to master. This even becomes worse since oral skills are usually employed as the first criterion for assessing the effectiveness of second/foreign language education programmes (p.01).

Students feel afraid of using English to communicate in the second language. That was one of the main purposes to create this alternative methodological and the three different strategies to be implemented for students to gain confidence, improve their knowledge and their speaking skill.

It is important to improve the students' knowledge constructing and the speaking skill through this alternative methodological proposal for three main reasons. The first reason is that through the implementation of the different strategies' students have the chance to interact with their classmates. Interaction in the class as stated by Schwarz, Dreyfus, and Hershkowitz (2009) includes "actions, shared understanding, intersubjectivity, argumentation and especially succession of activities" (p.02). By sharing understanding or

following a sequence of ideas or thoughts, students put into practice their knowledge and interact which is one of the focuses of this alternative methodological proposal. For learners it is very important that they have interaction with their peer in a conversation of a dialogue as explained by Bilbrough (2007)

all learning is dialogic. That is, learning is jointly constructed through the interaction between the learner and a 'better other' (whether parent, sibling, peer, teacher or supervisor). This process of joint construction is conducted largely or entirely through dialogue, and has occurred throughout the history of human interaction" (p.08).

Since learning is construct through dialogues, interaction plays an important role during the knowledge construction process of students and the strategies for this alternative methodological proposal.

Teamwork is essential when it comes to the process of constructing the knowledge for students. That is why it is important to highlight teamwork as an important aspect to develop in this alternative methodological proposal. Teamwork is defined by Welty (2009) as "Together Everyone Achieves More. This simple idea of working together to accomplish more than any one person could do alone is the essence of teamwork" (p.13). Students when working as a team can accomplish and learn more and this will benefit them. For the implementation of these strategies, to develop activities in which teamwork is emphasized is essential because Schwarz, Dreyfus, Hershkowitz (2009) point out that "group work has therefore been promoted in many countries as a key component of teaching" (p.93) and being known as a key component of the process it is vital that it will be developed to help students in the process of constructing their knowledge.

The process of learning should be seen as a fun environment where students are allowed to make mistakes and learn from them and where students feel free to participate.

This is the third reason why the implementation of the alternative methodological proposal and the three strategies are important. Students should be the center of a classroom where they are involved, and they can learn to grow inside and outside the classroom. That is why Ming-tak and Wai-shing (2008) mention that a good teaching environment “refers broadly to all activities that teachers carry out in the classroom. It aims to promote student involvement and cooperation. It emphasizes the educational value of promoting the growth of students” (p.03). Developing the three strategies mentioned in the alternative methodological proposal is going to give the opportunity for learners to be involved in their own construction process with activities that will develop their cooperation and interest.

4.4.2 Necessity

The knowledge construction process for students is not easy. Students face challenges that sometimes make it hard for them to accomplish the goal that the educational system wants them to achieve. Some of the difficulties that students face as explained by Jamshidnejad (2020) “low self- esteem, fear and shyness of making mistakes, anxiety, attitude and motivation have been of great difficulties or obstacles in L2 oral communication” (p.16). There is a need that students can feel motivated and lose the fear when speaking or participating in order to achieve the goal and be communicate competent. The role of the teacher is fundamental for students to become confident and be willing to participate; in fact, Green and Cherrington (2010) state that

the relationship between students who thought their teachers cared about them and the impact that these perceptions had on their motivation to learn. She found that if students perceived that their teachers cared about them they were more likely to engage in classroom learning activities. (p.11)

Facilitators have the responsibility to bring activities to the class that allow learners not only to expand their knowledge, but also activities in which they feel like the teacher created the task for them to be engaged.

In the Costa Rican educational system it is highlighted that students need to be able to communicate in English; The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) emphasizes that “speaking English fluently is one of the abilities a 21st Century learner must develop to have access to better life opportunities” (p.06), this is why it is necessary to develop this alternative methodological proposal that focuses on learners’ development of the speaking skill not only for academic purposes but also to prepare them for the future. Having mentioned this, learners should not learn English just because it is a subject in high school; in fact, they need to learn it for life because they do not know the use they can provide to the language in real-life context. It is a need that students develop skills such as being able to argue a point of view, or take part on a debate, activities that will give students a real-life context as an informal discussion with a friend, or a discussion more formal that gives the sense of a meeting; learners should develop the capacity of taking part on these kinds of tasks that will prepare them for what comes after high school. (Piccardo & North, 2019, p.240). With the implementation of this alternative methodological proposal and the strategies, the purpose is to focus on the necessity that students have and help them to feel more confident when speaking with the help of teamwork and the interaction with their classmates.

4.4.3 Scopes

The present alternative methodological proposal pretends to help students to improve the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process through the implementation of three

different strategies. One of the focuses is that students work together and help each other to feel more confident when speaking in English and they feel motivated since motivation is a key point on the process of constructing the English knowledge; in fact, Harnett (2016) states that “motivated learners are more likely to undertake challenging activities, be actively engaged, enjoy and adopt a deep approach to learning and exhibit enhanced performance, persistence and creativity” (p.05), if students are motivated and engaged in the class, the process is going to be more appealing and easier for them.

As same as motivation, teamwork plays an important role in this alternative methodological proposal. The purpose is that students learn to work in groups to help and motivate each other because students learn from each other when they work together; The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) points out that students need to develop the “ability to communicate effectively with others and promotes an aptitude toward teamwork and social skills” (p. 21). Taking into account the previously mentioned, this alternative methodological proposal also focuses on preparing students for teamwork outside the class because they do not know if when they get to work, they will need to work in groups; learners need to see teamwork as a family as explained by Welty (2009) “in a machine, each part has a specific task to do in order to function properly. While team members do have roles, a team is more like a family than a machine. Team members, like family members, must interact with one another in order to get things done” (p. 46). These kinds of activities will prepare students for future situations in which they need to put teamwork into practice. At last, having students developing different dialogues and conversations will give them the chance to interact since as mentioned by Schunk, Meece, and Pintrich (2014) “dialogues have the advantage of using actual interactions”. Giving

students the chance to develop these activities in the strategies, will give them a sense of interaction that is one of the goals of this alternative methodological proposal.

As a conclusion, this alternative methodological proposal pretends to help students to improve their speaking skill with the implementation of three different strategies that will be focusing on oral interaction, teamwork, and student-centered. As it was mentioned before, learners in the Costa Rica educational system are expected to achieve a certain level of proficiency in the English language that will allow them to communicate inside and outside the classroom. The purpose is that with the implementation of this alternative methodological proposal learners will take advantage of the strategies in order to achieve the goal. Students feel afraid of speaking and they lack of motivation and engagement when it comes to the English class; in the implementation of this alternative methodological proposal, there are three main reasons why it is important to be implemented; the first one is that it is essential that students interact among each other and learn from each other; the second one is teamwork that is very important to be developed since working in groups makes things easier for learners and they feel more comfortable when participating. Moreover, there is a necessity to help students to develop the speaking skill and to be ready to what comes after high school. Learners as mentioned before, need to feel motivated and willing to participate; as stated before, learners need to be able to communicate using English and that is why the necessity of developing this innovative alternative methodological proposal, to enhance the speaking skill and support the process for students. At last, the main goal for students to improve their speaking skill, but not only for academic purposes, but also for life purposes. Based on that, a good environment in which students do not feel afraid of participating, working in groups where they act as a family and everyone has a role, and having activities in which interaction is implemented are the main scopes of this alternative methodological proposal. To continue

with the present chapter, the next segment is the Alternative Methodological Proposal Implementation that is going to be covered in which a brief introduction of each strategy that is going to be developed will be presented.

4.5 Alternative Methodological Proposal Implementation

When talking about implementing strategies it is vital to firstly understand what the speaking skills is. It allows people to communicate effectively and it gives the ability to transfer verbal information. It also allows listeners to understand the message by using fluency, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. They all go hand by hand when enhancing the speaking skill in an EFL classroom, which is the intended reason for this proposal. All of these are important to keep in mind when talking about the alternative methodological proposal implementation. It is the intention of this segment to explain the different parts of the strategies for the implementation of the proposal. Understanding that such things will give a clear view of the intended population, unit, assessment strategy and didactic sequence of the activities being propose. This is key in order to achieve the wanted results in this action research proposal and in order to enhance the speaking skill through social interactive activities.

For this action research proposal each strategy is sustained with the level, unit, theme, assessment strategy and didactic sequence that has been chosen from the 2016 English Syllabus "*Educating for a New Citizenship*" which is currently the syllabus use in Costa Rica. The level being used for this proposal is eight grade and in this occasion the units which are also known as scenarios in the 2016 English syllabus are "Something to Celebrate", "Going Shopping" and "Unforgettable Events." Along with the mentioned units are the themes "Let's Celebrate Holidays with my Family", "Getting What I need at the right place"

and “A Day I’ll never forget in my personal life”. In addition to this, the assessment strategies are “Ask and answer about local holidays, celebrations, and festivals”, “Ask appropriate questions during a conversation to ensure the other person understands point being made or information being given” and “Ask for assistance”. These assessment strategies are focus on the spoken interaction skill in order to implement social interaction activities to enhance the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. The mentioned, are projected with its specifics in order for the educators implementing this proposal to have a clear idea of the topics propose by the researches. All of the mentioned above need to go hand by hand with the didactive sequence. By applying the didactive sequence set in the English syllabus “*Educating for a New Citizenship*” is how the process of this proposal is intended to be reached. Spoken Interaction includes “planning, organizing, rehearsing and interaction” (Programa de Estudios de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada, 2016, p.25). In other words, didactive sequence is a process that is made in a specific order to achieve competence in the language been learned. Without an order the new language becomes difficult and confusing for learners.

As well as that, each strategy is designed in order to test the hypothesis and accomplish the main objective established in the first chapter of this action research paper. The strategies are composed of name, objective, process, evidence and Evaluation according to the assessment strategies previously mentioned. The first strategy “That’s how We Celebrate!” And the objective of it is: To implement student-centered activities asking and answering questions to improve social interaction skills about local holidays, celebrations, and festivals. In the process of this strategy, it is expected for learner to be able to perform an interview by asking questions about their classmates’ favorite holiday and vice versa. In

the evidence a video about two people having a conversation about holidays will be provided and, in the evaluation, it is expected to observe how well learners pronounce the given vocabulary given when doing the interview.

The second strategy “I know what I want, but where?” and its objective is: To reinforce the speaking skill through oral interaction by means of asking questions during a conversation. In this case the process is that learners are expected to go around the classroom asking for directions to a specific clothing store. A map created by the teacher will be provided as evidence of the activity and in the evaluation, is projected to observe that students are asking the appropriate information in order to obtain correct directions to get to the wanted place. Lastly, the third strategy named “What was I thinking!” and the objective is: To implement teamwork activities in the knowledge construction process to improve social interaction through asking for assistance. In the process of this strategy in small groups students will tell a crazy story that happened to them and the listeners will make notes and help each other in order to make a sequential chart to tell the story to the rest of the class. The notes taken by the classmate will be provided as evidence of the activity. In the evaluation it is expected to observe how well were the receivers are paying attention to the receptor when telling the story that was told to them. These objectives help organize the process and have a goal to be reached.

In conclusion, having an organize plan helps the researcher and the teachers implementing the proposal. It is beneficial for all, learners, teachers and researchers to follow through with all of the planed in order to keep the learning process in an organized way and not leave anything forgotten in process of enhancing the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. This organizational process not only helps the teacher and researcher

but also the student, they can be aware of what has been learned and what is expected next. The strategies are intended to be applied to eight graders in an EFL classroom specifically in Costa Rica with its specific units, themes, assessment strategies and a didactic sequence for the spoken interaction skill. The strategies have received a name that matches the units and themes. Other than this, objectives have been set to have a clear view of what needs to be reached. All of the activities are planned carefully to include social interactive activities in each strategy. In the next segment, the first strategy “That’s how We Celebrate!” will be exposed in detail to see the exact process of the strategy mentioned.

4.5.1 Description of first teaching strategy

Name of the Strategy:

That’s how We Celebrate

Objective:

To implement student-centered activities asking and answering questions to improve social interaction skills about local holidays, celebrations, and festivals

Variable:

Social interaction

Indicator:

Student-centered

Level:

Eight grade

Number of the unit:

Three

Scenario: Something to Celebrate

Theme:

Let's Celebrate Holidays with my Family

Assessment Strategy:

Ask and answer about local holidays, celebrations, and festivals.

Didactic Sequence

- Checking
- Planning
- Using
- Elaborating
- Interacting

Implementation of the First Strategy

The first strategy proposes the implemented of student-centered activities by asking and answering questions to improve social interaction skills about local holidays, celebrations, and festivals. The strategy “That’s how We Celebrate” allows learners to choose specific details and to tell an audience how they like to celebrate Christmas with their family. The teacher provides some guidance, but it is up to the students to speak about their personal experience, help each other to organize ideas and have control of over their educational process. In this activity students are encouraged to ask, and answer questions related a

specific holiday. Having this said, this activity gives students the freedom to play an active role in their knowledge construction process since they are responsible of organizing their ideas, formulating the questions and answers and at the same time collaborating with each other. Additionally, this activity also provides a space where other classmates can ask additional questions, this gives a natural social interaction with others outside the planned scripts. This is an important aspect because students are able to see that they can do tasks on their own and be able to walk out of their comfort zone and be able to answer questions that were not planned. It also gives them a boost on their self-esteem and encourages them not to be afraid if a similar conversation happens outside of school.

Checking

For the first part of this didactic sequence, the teacher explains to the students that they are going to create a brainstorm related to holidays. The teacher draws on the board a party hat and then she asks the students about what holiday do they celebrate with their family. The teacher writes the ideas given by the students inside the party hat.



Planning

For the second stage, the teacher mentions to the students they will watch a video about a girl describing how Christians celebrate Christmas. After watching the video, the teacher provides to the students a list of vocabulary about Christmas. Once the students review the vocabulary given, the teacher explains that they are going to work in groups of 3 students. In each group, one student is going to be an interviewer and the other 2 are going to be interviewees. Learners will discuss the role of each person in the group.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTn2bMkMGL4>



Using

In this part of the didactic sequence, the teacher hands a little box with some papers in it. The papers have different categories related to Christmas such as: food, decorations, place, family members, activities. The teacher explains to the students that taking turns they are going to take a piece of paper from the box and based on the category given, they are going to give their ideas; the teacher mentions some examples of how those categories can be used.

Food: Me and my family love to eat tamales during the Christmas dinner.

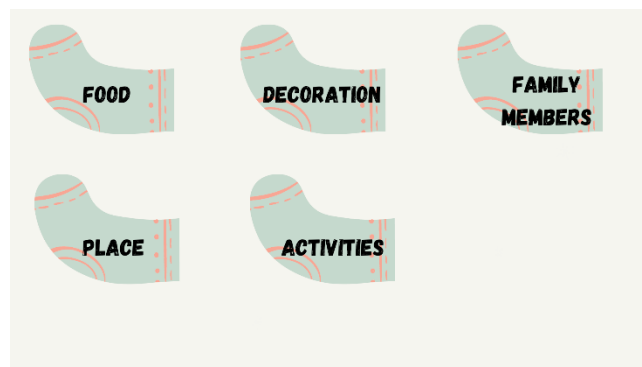
Decorations: The Christmas tree is the only decoration in my house in Christmas.

Place: We always go to my uncle's house.

Family members: All of my family on my mother's side get together on Christmas day.

Activities: We exchange gifts and listen to old stories.

In a sheet of paper, students are going to have the categories for them to write the ideas mentioned by their classmates or their own ideas.



Elaborating

For this part of the didactic sequence, the teacher mentions that they are going to create a TV Show and in this TV Show one student which is the interviewer will have two guesses to talk about how they celebrate Christmas in their families. The teacher explains to the students that since it is a TV show at the end of the interview, they can have questions from the audience; the other students in the class. In the groups formed, with the help of each other and on the worksheet given students are going to create different questions that can be asked during the interview based on how they celebrate Christmas with their families. At the same time, they will read and provide possible answers to match the categories mention given by the teacher. At the end, they are going to create a name for their TV Show

Student's Name: _____

FOOD

ACTIVITIES

DECORATION

PLACE

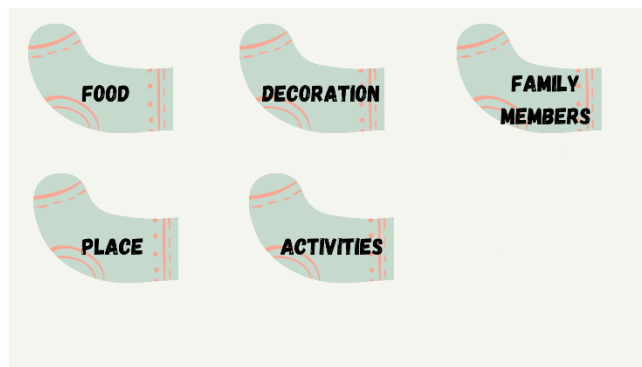
FAMILY MEMBERS

Interacting

During this stage of the didactic sequence, the students are going to practice their interview. Once they are ready, students will go to the front of the class to do a live interview about how they celebrate Christmas with the elaborated questions and answers previously prepared. At the end, they will have a space for the rest of the class to ask questions or give some comments related to the interview from their classmates.

Evaluation

In order to make sure that students understand and handle the topic in the activity previously developed. The teacher asks the students to stand up forming a circle; after that, the teacher explains that they are going to play Jenga. Some of the blocks of the jenga have the categories food, decorations, place, family members and activities. If a student chooses one of the blocks that have a category, she/he must formulate a question regarding the category and chooses a classmate to answer the question.



4.5.2 Description of the second strategy

Name of the strategy:

I know what I want, but where?

Objective:

To reinforce the speaking skill through oral interaction by means of asking questions during a conversation

Variable:

Speaking skill

Indicator:

Oral interaction

Level:

Eight

Number of the unit:

Four

Scenario:

Going Shopping

Theme:

Getting what I need at the right place

Assessment strategy:

Ask appropriate questions during a conversation to ensure the other person understands point being made or information being given

Didactic Sequence

- Planning
- Organizing
- Rehearsing
- Interacting
- Describing

Implementation of the second strategy

The second strategy pretends to help the students to develop oral interaction in the class by asking questions in a conversation to make sure that the other person understands the message given to help the learners to improve their speaking skill. The strategy “I know what I what, but where?” gives students the chance to create their own store to sell products and allows learners to interact with their classmates while selling possible products. During this strategy, learners are going to interact and help each other to create their stores giving ideas and listening to their classmates’ ideas and asking questions during a conversation that will enhance the understanding of the ideas created. In addition, this strategy gives students the chance to use grammatical structures that are necessary to formulate questions that will help students in the classroom and outside of it. The main idea of this strategy is for students to be able to have a conversation in which they give their ideas and also ask questions related to the topic.

Planning

For the first stage of this didactic sequence, the teacher asks the students 3 different questions. What do we need when going to the beach? What do we need when going to the mountain? What do we need when celebrating Christmas? The students are going to give their ideas out loud for the rest of the class to listen to. After that, the teacher will show a video to the students on how to create an Instagram account as an online store. After watching the video, the teacher divides the class into three different groups to carry out the next stages.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOpW0zVOn_Y

Organizing

In this stage, each group will have a store section for example a summer store, a winter store, and a Christmas store. In their groups, students organize what articles are sold in their stores based on their category. Teacher shares a vocabulary sheet of possible article for each store. Students need to think about the price of each article, the amount, or articles available, pictures, the variety they have, and the name for their store. After this, the students need to choose who will be the store administrator and the other students will be the buyers. The buyers can choose to buy in the other stores and not the one they helped to create.

Shopping Categories



Winter Store



Jacket/coat
Scarf
Gloves
Boots
Snowboard
Mittens
Skis
Raincoat



Summer Store



Dress
T-shirt
Swimming Suits
Flip-Flops
Sunscreen
Sunglasses
Surfing Board
Towel



Christmas Store



Candles
Candy Canes
Christmas Lights
Christmas Tree
Stockings
Wreath
Garland
Bells



Rehearsing

For this third stage, students are going to create their own business Instagram account with each other's help and the teacher if needed. After this, they will create questions to ask to the other groups using how much and how many. For example, how much does this cost? How many of these do you have? After creating the questions, the students are going to practice them in their own groups to make sure they understood how to use the structures. With the help of the teacher students can create different question related to the topic to be asked.

What kind of articles do you sell?

Do you have my size?

Does this article have a return policy?

Do you know where else I can get a similar article?

Interacting

In this stage, the students who are the administrators of the store, will have a stand in the class. The rest of the class is going to walk around and have a conversation with each administrator about their stores where they ask the questions created previously accordingly to the articles sold by the stores. In the end, the administrators will also have the chance to have a conversation and ask questions about their classmates' stores.

Describing

For this part of the didactic sequence, in the original groups, students are going to create a Tik Tok video where they explain to their customers why people should buy from their stores and the articles they sell. Students need to use the modals should and shouldn't. Once they

are ready, they are going to show the video to the rest of the class and their classmates can ask questions related to the video.

Evaluation

In order to evaluate students' knowledge about the topic, the teacher will use an online application called "Bamboozle". The teacher asks the students to work in pairs. Each pair is going to take turns and choose one number from the online application. Each number will contain a different item related to the ones used previously in the creation of the stores. In pairs, students will have a conversation in which students ask information about a need article to buy from the chosen number. The other student will explain where the person can buy the item, the price, and important details to consider. Each pair should ask questions in order to ensure that each person in the group understands the message and the ideas given.

<https://www.baamboozle.com/game/690046>

4.5.3 Description of the third strategy

Name of the strategy:

What were we thinking?

Objective:

To implement teamwork activities in the knowledge construction process to improve social interaction by ask and answer questions about a family event.

Variable:

Social interaction

Indicator:

Teamwork

Level:

Eight

Number of the unit:

Five

Scenario:

Unforgettable Events

Theme:

An Event I'll Never Forget: with My Family

Assessment strategy:

Ask and answer questions about a personal, family, national or worldwide event.

Didactic Sequence

- Planning
- Organizing
- Rehearsing
- Interacting

Implementation of the Third Strategy

In this last strategy named “What were we thinking?” has been planned to improve the speaking skill through teamwork activities by asking and answering questions about a personal, family, national or worldwide event. The main goal is for students to implement teamwork activities in the knowledge construction process to improve social interaction by asking and answering questions about a family event. It is a reality in Costa Rica for many students to receive virtual classes and this is why, the strategy has been planned to be used in a face-to-face class and with just a twist it can also be used in a virtual class environment. Having this said, teamwork has a special role in this activity. Teamwork enables students to harmoniously communicate with each other by questioning decisions, making suggestions and trusting others. In this strategy learners are given a scenario and are told to create a fiction story based on the objects or food brought from home. Asking students to bring something from home and having them do it shows the other team members that they can be trusted. They are also responsible to choose a representative that will lead them and also pretend they are a family. By doing this, students need to work as a team in order to make a decision that

will benefit the group. It is important for each student to be aware of their role in the story and to participate. In the creation of the story, students can give creative suggestions to make the story interesting for the listeners. They are also responsible to make a call-in a given period of time. Teamwork gives students a sense of responsibility, commitment and to look for a mutual benefit instead of an individual one. This activity gives students a realistic view of how a working environment could be in their future.

Planning

For the first stage of this didactic sequence, the teacher explains to the students that they are going to have a virtual camping adventure using WhatsApp to share their Voki links. The students were previously told by the teacher to bring an object or food that reminds them of an unforgettable event with their family. The teacher divides the class in four different groups and assigns to each group a different location inside the high school for them to have the camp. The teacher provides a list of indicators of time that the students can use when telling the story. The teacher also provides an example of a story created by him/her to show the students how to use the indicators, how to create the story and a sheet with a list of vocabulary with other indicators of time that can be used besides the ones in the example. After showing and reading the example the teacher also asks questions to the students based on the teachers' example and student must answer them to show they understood.

Teachers Example: *A Day I will never forget with my family was when I was at the beach on a New Year's Day. It was my birthday. All my cousins, aunts, uncles, my mother, sister, and brother were in Playa Ventanas celebrating my birthday. **After** having lunch, my family got together to sing happy birthday. **Then**, I remember blowing my birthday candles when suddenly I had cake, eggs, and flower all over my*

body. **Finally**, me and my family were laughing and screaming of joy. I must say, this is a tradition in my family. **The year before**, they did the same thing at the river. This is an event I will **NEVER** forget with my family. **WE HAD A BLAST!**



Organizing

For this part of the didactic sequence, in groups and in their assigned location students will show the objects or food that they brought. Students will pretend to be a family and will create a story using the objects or food they brought to class. Students need to use the indicators of time to create the story and every student must participate. Students also create 4 questions based on the story for the others to answer. Each group will choose a representative to be in charge of sharing the questions and the link of the Voki character to

the other representatives of the other groups in a period of time given by the teacher. The Questions are sent via voice recording on a WhatsApp message. To create the Voki character, students watch a YouTube video on how to use the application.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8vpl7pCjto>

Rehearsing

For the third stage of the didactic sequence, students practice the story among themselves and help each other with the pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Once they are ready, they can record the story in the Voki application, all the student must participate in the recording. Students will send the recording of the questions and the Voki link to the teacher to receive feedback.

<https://www.voki.com/site/create>

Interacting

In this part, the representative of one group will share the link of the Voki and questions recorder with the other representatives of the groups via WhatsApp. The groups listen to the story and by recording a WhatsApp audio the other groups will respond to the questions sent. Once they are finish, the other groups can ask questions about the story told or give their opinions about the story.

Evaluation

In order to evaluate this strategy, the teacher will use “Wheel Decide”. In the wheel, the names of the students are shown. The teacher will spin the wheel and the student selected will tell the unforgettable event with their real family using the object. Once the student

finishes, the teacher will spin the wheel one more time and the student chosen will ask a question to his/her classmate related to the story previously told in order for his/her classmate to answer. This continues until all students participate.

<https://wheeldecide.com/>

4.6 Educational Impact

In Costa Rica English has been taught to the population for many years now. It has been mentioned in previous chapters the importance of a second language, specifically English in Costa Rica. It is clear that the English language can provide Costa Ricans with larger opportunities to become successful in a working environment after graduation. Throughout the years MEP, which is the Public Educational Ministry of Costa Rica, has been improving the English Syllabus to help learners reach a higher level in this second language. MEP has worked hard to leave an educational impact in children and teenagers. It is mentioned in the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) that the Philosophical view is for

These curricular considerations see the learner as a social agent at the center of the curriculum who is active, independent, critical, reflective, creative, innovative, inquisitive, and respectful of human rights and socially committed to their community, country, and the world. To achieve this aspiration, the learning environments and experiences promote dialogue and the search for creative responses and solutions to real-life problems. Pg.17

On paper all of the above sound fine, but has it been transferred into the classrooms? It is why providing students with a real education impact is important for the researchers of this

proposal. It is imperative to understand the importance of education in a society and why a quality education can have a positive impact that contributes to a better life looking at it from an innovative point of view.

A well-educated society other than having better job opportunities is also capable of knowing and respecting laws and regulations. It also contributes to showing people the importance of hard work to grow as a society. Education is important, but a quality education empowers students to develop their skills to become active citizens in a society. Hilton and Pellegrino (2012) state in their book *Education for Life and Work* that

To achieve their full potential as adults, young people need to develop a range of skills and knowledge that facilitate mastery and application of English, mathematics, and other school subjects. At the same time, business and political leaders are increasingly asking schools to develop skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and self-management—often referred to as “21st century skills” (p. sum 1)

According to Hilton and Pellegrino education is facing more challenges today than it did in the past and this is why an innovative educational impact on students is central. It is important to understand students' educational impact since this will allow teachers to evidence if students are able to learn and improve their speaking skill through the innovative proposal presented in this investigation. Innovative education provides the students with wider opportunities to enhance their speaking skill in the knowledge construction process.

These innovative strategies give students additional opportunities to develop their skills in a new language and deliver an educational impact. This is why in the strategies

presented, technological applications are suggested. These applications demonstrate that the activities can contribute to the knowledge construction process in a way that students feel attracted to. In the book *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* (2007) the authors Biggs and Tang explain that students need an emotional impact and mentions that word 'grabber' meaning to catch students' attention and cite, "Starting a class with a cartoon, an interesting slide or video clip elicits interest in the topics to follow. Whereas the advance organizer is conceptual, the grabber is affective, appealing to shock or to humour" (P. 94). When constructing the knowledge process in a student it is imperative to take into account their interest, specifically their emotions since it is easier to grab learners' attention. When something is appealing to them, they are able to show extra interest in the topic. Technological tools are something that they are familiar with; teachers can demonstrate how applications can help them learn. Bringing innovative educational tools into a classroom lesson help learners learn to interact and work in different ways and improve the knowledge construction process in the speaking skill of the English language for real-life events. As mention in the English syllabus (2016) "The learner is not speaking or writing for the teacher or pretending to speak or write to another person, but rather speaking or writing in a real life context for a social purpose." (p. 26). Innovative strategies allow learners to have a realistic perspective of their possible future interactions.

With the proposal of this innovative project, it was very clear that the main problem of students graduating high schools in Costa Rica is that they are not competent in the English language. As stated in the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) "*Communicative language competences* are those, which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means." (p. 37). This is why the researchers were

motivated to make a proposal that will help students improve the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process through social interaction activities. In this occasion the Spoken Interaction skill was chosen to develop the strategies since it was the main issue. As mentioned previously in this section, it is important to take into account students' preferences in order to get them interested in the topics and promote the knowledge construction process. Three indicators have been chosen to make the strategy proposals. Those are, Students-Centered, Teamwork and Oral Interaction, the ones investigators are focusing to provide an improvement after vision of the students.

The first strategy proposed, pretends to implement student-centered activities asking and answering questions to improve social interaction skills about local holidays, celebrations, and festivals. In this case students are responsible for making certain decisions in the development of the activity but not all the decision because as mentioned by David Nunan (2013)

It is often a mistake to assume that learners come into the language classroom with a sophisticated knowledge of pedagogy, or with a natural ability to make informed choices about their own learning processes. (This is what I characterize as the 'strong' interpretation of learner-centeredness.) In fact, there are relatively few learners who are naturally endowed with the ability to make informed choices about what to learn, how to learn it and when to learn. They have to go through a process, and often a lengthy process, of learning how to learn, and they can usually only do this with the assistance and guidance of the teacher (p.53).

With the guidance of the teacher this strategy gives learners the opportunity to build confidence and have some control over their education. In this occasion students must decide

which information they want to share with others. By observing students' social interaction with others and how well they are able to make decision in a group and individually it is possible for the teacher to notice if the strategy plan has left an educational impact in the students.

Furthermore, the second strategy has the objective to reinforce the speaking skill through oral interaction by means of asking questions during a conversation. This activity gives students the opportunity to work with others in the creation of a store, meaning that a lot of communication must happen. As mentioned by Skidmore & Murakami (2016)

Language is a tool for communication. Every concrete instance of language use involves an address to some other participant in the act of communication, whether that be a friend, partner or work colleague to whom we are speaking directly in a face-to-face encounter, or the implicit readership of a written text that might have been set down centuries ago by an unknown hand (p.4).

This strategy can point out how communication can affect the interaction with others, in a positive or negative way. When applying this strategy, the goal is for students to verbally coordinate with each other on different aspect and if something is not clear they must ask questions. The outcomes are visible and this is where the teacher can see if students' speaking skill is improving in the knowledge construction process in order to determine if there has been an educational impact.

Lastly is the third strategy that seeks to implement teamwork activities in the knowledge construction process to improve social interaction by asking and answering questions about a family event. This last activity that involves teamwork, goes hand-by-hand with student-center and oral interaction. The reason why this is important to address, is

because the activities have been planned-out to have a sequence in order for one skill to help the other and have higher probabilities of a successful educational impact. It has also been exposed in this forth chapter that teamwork is a necessary skill not only in an educational environment but must importantly in a working environment, which learners are been prepare to face as cited by Biggs & Tang (2007) “Developing group skills, working with colleagues. Many professions require Teaching activities for functioning knowledge teamwork... It might be noted that such teamwork takes place in a workplace-like context, unlike much group project work” (p. 153-154). Once more, by observing the outcomes of the activity the teacher can see the organization, communication and thought put in the creation of the story and prove the educational impact in the students. The strategies proposed are from different units of the 2016 English Syllabus, but also as noted the have a sequence to create an educational impact. First, with Student-Centered the strategy it is intended to show the student that they have certain control over their education that will build students confidence. Then, whit Oral Interaction students have enough confidence that they are able to propose ideas and be able to ask question if need. Lastly, with teamwork they are able to harmoniously organize a story telling event. This is how the education impact is pretended to be with the application of the innovative strategies.

4.7 Chapter’s Conclusion Critical Analysis

The creation of this alternative methodological proposal is an attempt to give learners an innovative way to improve their speaking skill in the knowledge construction process and leave behind the traditional methods and techniques since as stated by the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) the traditional methods “fails to specify the English language proficiency level that students are expected to attain at

the end of each cycle” (p.14). As explained previously on this chapter, with the implementation of the strategies developed, students have the opportunity to improve their speaking skill through interaction with their classmates and implementing teamwork as part of social interaction. These strategies are based on the current syllabus following the didactic sequence of oral interaction which helps teachers to implement them in the classroom with the use of innovative materials that will engage students in the process of constructing their speaking knowledge. Having stated the main purpose of this alternative methodological proposal, as part of this critical analysis, it is important to mention the advantages that modern teaching methods have and the importance of changing the way of thinking that teachers have about teaching.

First of all, due to the necessity of changing the way students are learning and putting into practice the language, the strategies previously explained in this chapter were focused on an innovative approach where students communicate and use the language in an interesting way. Modern teaching methods and the innovation in the knowledge construction process are very important to improve the opportunities that learners have; in fact, OECD (2016) states that “changes are needed to increase efficiency and improve the quality and equity of learning opportunities” (p. 09); giving the opportunity to students to experience these changes will allow them to improve their level and learn in a more efficient way which is the whole purpose of the educational system, learners to learn efficiently in order to achieve goals. Moreover, in this alternative methodological proposal, social interaction was focused as the main way to achieve the goal that is for learners to communicate; modern teaching methods provide students the possibility of developing skills that they need as part of the society. OECD (2016) points out that “education can also foster innovation in society at large

by developing the right skills to nurture it. These skills, including critical thinking, creativity and imagination, can be fostered through appropriate teaching, and practices such as entrepreneurship education” (p.09); all of these skills help the students to go beyond what they are told and to be able to give their opinions and be part of the society.

The traditional methods as mentioned before failed to give the learners real scenarios for them to achieve the expected level when they graduated from high school facing some challenges when facing university or real world. That is one of the reasons why Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) points out that “learners need an updated curriculum that reflects the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to communicate in a range of language use contexts and to succeed in the information age as 21st century learners” (p.14) and it is that since students are seen as social agents they need to have the right abilities and the opportunities to communicate using the language in the best way. For that reason, innovative teaching methods are focused on communication as a very important aspect on education; that is why Gregersen and MacIntyre (2017) explain that the “collaborative and communicative nature of foreign language learning and teaching and the need for positive interpersonal skills in intercultural communication are particularly important skills for language teachers and learners” (p.110). Innovative teaching methods provide learners with the chance to communicate to achieve their goal not only for educational purposes but also for social purposes.

Changing the teaching methods is an important step to offer effective ways to students to improve their knowledge, however, not only the teaching methodology needs to change the way teachers develop their classes and the way they think about education also needs to

be transformed. As stated before, modern educational methods look for communication and ty to focus on the students' needs but Forlin (2010) states that

While there is enormous diversity across the world in the needs of students and in the way they respond to their teachers and there is a general acceptance that these needs have become more intense, demanding, and more difficult to respond to placing considerable demands on teachers; there has been relatively little by way of radical changes to teacher preparation and professional development to facilitate this. (pp. 3-4)

It is true that teachers did not expect the changes that education is having in the current time, but as mentioned by Gregersen and MacIntyre (2017) the role of the teacher in the implementation of these innovative ways to teach is “to construct new identities. Reflection, inquiry, and critical discussion are keys in this construction process” (p. vii). Teachers need to give learners the chance to express and have discussions in the class where learners are the protagonists.

As a final point, these modern ways to teach are written proposals but Moloney and Ling Xu (2016) explain that teachers “are the leaders driving innovative pedagogy” (p.04). Teachers are the ones in charge of making a change in the way students learn. In addition, teachers when changing their way of analyzing education, they face some challenges; Moloney and Ling Xu (2016) mention that in order for teachers to adapt to the modern methods of teaching they need to

un-learn previous practice, then learn how to teach effectively to local learners, gain understanding of the school system, the domestic culture, the characteristics of the

students, and gain a new critical view of both themselves and their local colleagues (p.07).

In order for the new methodologies to be successful, teachers need to collaborate and start thinking about the benefits for learners during the construction of their knowledge if they change the way of thinking about education. That is why for this alternative methodological proposal to have the expected impact on students, teachers need to adapt to the use of technology and the use of social interaction activities that will enhance the speaking skill on students. Having students interacting and listening to their classmates gives them the opportunity to learn and lose the fear of speaking; indeed, teamwork as mentioned in the previous chapters motivates students and they are willing to participate which will benefit the process of constructing the speaking knowledge. At last, implementing innovative ways for students to learn and communicate and with the collaboration of teachers, students will improve their speaking skill. To continue with the development of this action research paper, the fifth chapter which is reflection will be explained.

Chapter V: Reflections

5.1 Introduction

It is intended with this project proposal about The Implementation of Social Interaction Activities to Improve the Speaking Skill in the Knowledge Construction Process to highlight the importance and purpose of this proposal. In previous chapters it has been mention the problem found in the Costa Rican high school graduates, that is, that they are leaving high school without being competent in the English language and it has been mention the importance of correcting this issue. It is important to acknowledge the problem but also to understand and plan the means to change it and for this reason, this methodology has been proposed. As mentioned by Ranjit Kumar (2010) “The difference between research and non-research activity is, as mentioned, in the way we find answers to our research questions. For a process to be called research, it is important that it meets certain requirements and possesses certain characteristics” (p. 7). For this section of reflections, the researchers have a set of nine questions to be reflected on in order to have a better understanding of what is envisioned with this proposal project and what questions need to be answered after applying this proposal in order to observe if the main objective has been reached and if the students were benefit from the presented project proposal.

The importance of reflections in a project proposal as mentioned by Dawson (2009) is that “It is useful to include this section because it shows that you are aware of the wider picture and that you are not trying to cover up something which you feel may be lacking from your own work” (p. 140). It is important not to only focus on what the research has knowledge on but to be able to comprehend and be willing to find out more about the proposal and to offer different perspectives on how to enhance students speaking skill through social interaction activities in the knowledge construction process. Reflecting on the research

questions are a sample of stepping out of the researchers' comfort zone to analyzed in a critical way and find answers that will help the teachers applying the proposal project. It gives the researcher and the person applying the proposal a wider view of what is expected from them and the student throughout the application of the strategies previously proposed.

In this action research proposal, the purpose is to enhance the speaking skill and it will be observed through the development of the reflections and how social interaction activities give the researcher the possibility to create a proposal that will not only help students graduate from high school but also develop a skill that is important in their life after high school. In the book *What English Language Teachers Need to Know* by Murray and Christison (2010) it is exposed that

Language is a means of communication; consequently, successful language learning and teaching should emphasize functional literacy. Second language acquisition takes place when learners interact with others using language that they comprehend to accomplish specific tasks. The use of language in the real world requires the use of different language modalities simultaneously (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing); therefore, young language learners need to develop language abilities using an integrated approach by participating in activities that require multiple modalities (p.72-73).

It is clear that leaning is a process and students need to be exposed to this process in order to become competent in the English language. Because leaning is a process and it requires certain steps to be followed in the next segment the researchers will provide reflections with a critical point of view about the indicators used to enhance the speaking skill through social interaction activities.

5.2. Reflections

In this section the research questions are going to be answered in the following order. The first variable is Social Interaction that is composed with the indicators Student-Centered, Teamwork and Meta-social. The second variable is Knowledge Construction Process that is composed with the indicators Action Oriented Approach, Didactic Sequence and Task. Finally, the third variable is Speaking Skill and this variable is composed with the indicators Compensation, Oral Interaction and Fluency.

5.2.1 Social Interaction

Social Interaction is the first variable exposed in this research proposal; this is a necessary skill for students to develop during their school years since it is a skill that contributes to peoples' social environments in and out of school, it is the communication that exists between two or more people. In this research proposal Social Interacting is divided into three different indicators that are students-centered that focuses on students' needs and preferences but also makes them responsible of their own learning. Teamwork which is a skill that allows people to interact harmoniously and effectively. Meta-social allows learners to take responsibility in their education by cooperating with their classmates. With the social interaction variable, the following questions will be answered based on the mentioned indicators.

- **How does student centered activities help to improve social interaction skills?**

A learner centered classroom is not the conventional setting as many people know it. Doyle and Tagg explain that a student-centered environment “requires students to take on new learning roles and responsibilities that go far beyond taking notes and passing tests” (p.16). Student-centered classroom gives learners some control on their education and the

teacher is a facilitator. Allowing students to actively participate in a social interaction activity empowers them for a future conversation in and outside of the classroom. Nunan (2013) states that the second language should be taught not only for a professional setting but also for “recreational and tourist activities. It is important to be aware of this historical background because communicative approaches are currently used in many different contexts and situations” (p.19). This means that social interaction activities are used in all aspect of students’ lives and it is important to incorporated to classrooms in order for students to feel comfortable when they are exposed and must use the social interaction skill outside of school.

- **How is social interaction improved by implementing teamwork in the learning process?**

Teamwork is not a new concept in the Costa Rican education since it is used in writing, reading, listening and speaking activities in schools. It is an essential skill that contributes to active listening and effective speaking. As stated by Partridge (2007) in a team

everyone works to achieve common, shared goals. They also work together, collaborating and co-operating, to enable them to make progress. A team combines the energy, motivation, experiences and expertise of individuals for a shared purpose so that the team achieves more than the sum of the talents of its individual members (p.2).

There cannot be social interaction with just a person. It must happen in a group of two or more people and this is why social interaction activities are excellent to incorporate when working with teams. Teamwork improves social interaction since much communication must go on in order for everyone to move forward with the task and be able to complete it by effective communication and listening to others’ ideas.

- **How is social interaction affected by meta-social learning?**

In the 2016 Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada explains that meta-social allows learners to interact with each other, cooperate, work with each other and questioning for clarification (p.49). It is important to mention that meta-social gives learners the opportunity to become critical thinkers as mentioned in the 2016 syllabus, meta-social allows learners to question for clarification or to give different responds. It is part of socialization to think differently and it is alright to disagree with others. When educators are helping learners become social interactive it is essential for teachers to help students understand that becoming critical thinkers helps them examine ideas and information as it is mentioned by Judge, Jones and McCreery (2009)

Critical thinking is essentially a questioning, challenging approach to knowledge and perceived wisdom... critical thinking involves examining ideas and information from an objective position and questioning this information in the light of your own values, attitudes and personal philosophy (p.1).

Meta-social affect social interaction in a positive way since it provides learners to be confident if they have different opinions or ideas about a specific topic or when working together in a task.

5.2.2 Knowledge Construction Process

As part of this action research, knowledge construction process was one of the variables explained throughout the research. It is important that during their process students feel comfortable and learn in the best way possible the vocabulary and the structure that is needed for them to communicate effectively. Knowledge construction process was divided

into three different indicators that support this variable and show why it is necessary that teachers implement each one of them in the process of teaching the speaking skill to learners. These indicators are Action Oriented Approach being the approach implemented in Costa Rica to teach English, tasks giving real meaning to the process of constructing the pupils' knowledge, and didactic sequence giving an order to students when it comes to developing a specific task.

- **How does the action-oriented approach help to improve pupils' knowledge construction process?**

One of the indicators that knowledge construction process is divided into is Action Oriented Approach. It was noticed that it helps students to improve learners' knowledge construction process because it sees students as "social learners" that are capable of construct their knowledge with the guidance of the teacher. Action Oriented Approach is based on the communication that the learners will have with their classmates; in fact, the Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) states that the AOA is

one of the latest communicative language methodologies which places emphasis on what learners know and do to communicate successfully by completing tasks, using general and specific competences in meaningful context and real-life scenarios (p.28)

That is one of the reasons why Action Oriented Approach helps the learners in the process of constructing their knowledge. In addition, with the implementations of this approach, learners will be exposed to real life scenarios which is going to help learners to improve their knowledge not only for class purposes, but also for social purposes; that is why Martinez (2012) explains that "In the action-oriented approach, real-life-like activities are to bridge

the gap between the learning situation and the normal use of language” (p.10). Being exposed to activities that students face in real life are going to give context to what they are doing and help the process of constructing their English knowledge by making connections with real experiences.

- **How is the knowledge construction process improved using didactic sequence?**

The second indicator of knowledge construction process is didactic sequence. It was found that to have an order for students is beneficial because they acquire the knowledge in an effective way. That is why in the current syllabus, the speaking skill when it comes to oral interaction follows the sequence of planning, organizing, rehearsing, and interacting so they can understand each stage and the activities in each one before they move to the next stage of the didactic sequence. (Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada, 2016, p. 315). The purpose of having a didactic sequence is that each stage has a purpose for students to manage a topic or a structure as Piccard and North (2019) point out when they explained that

a sequence of tasks based around one specific topic, each task with its own outcome or purpose, which culminate in a specified end-product that can be shown to others, displayed or made public in some way, for others to appreciate (p. 143)

During each stage of the didactic sequence students need to develop an activity or task with the purpose of mastering a topic and at the end when it comes to interacting, they will feel prepared and comfortable presenting their work in front of other because they know exactly the process and what to say. That is why having a didactic sequence helps the knowledge construction process, because students are part of their learning knowing and participating in each stage.

- **How does the implementation of task improve the knowledge construction process?**

The last indicator that was developed during the explanation of knowledge construction process was task. It is noticeable that tasks give a purposeful meaning for students; in fact, Samuda and Bygate (2008) point out that “a task engages holistic language use: through engaging with the task, learners are led to work with and integrate the different aspects of language for a larger purpose” (p.08), so in this way, students are not developing a task just because they were asked by the teacher, but they are putting into practice their knowledge to be used also outside the classroom. The use of tasks help students to build their autonomy and the ability to give their opinions about topics that they face or will face in the future; Piccardo and North (2019) state that

tasks try to capture this breadth of the learning process by overcoming the limits of the classroom and bringing real life into the teaching/learning process, thus fostering learners’ awareness and autonomy. Purposeful outcome-oriented tasks involving realistic action as well as language, agency, personal engagement, and collaboration as well as practice, are implicit in the AoA. (p.18)

That is why the use of tasks help students because they will face real life scenarios and it is going to be easier for them to put into practice their knowledge and they can have the help of their classmates through collaboration and interaction which was one of the focuses of this action research paper.

5.2.3 Speaking Skill

The third variable that was focused throughout the action research paper was the speaking skill. It is important that students feel comfortable and become communicate

competent during the process of high school to accomplish the desired level according to the Common European Framework of References. In order to help students, become communicative competent and that they will be able to communicate without fear and three different indicators were explained in order to understand how they help the speaking skill. These indicators are compensation; which allows learners to use the language without being afraid of the mistakes they will make, oral interaction, which plays an important role since it is necessary for students to interact with their classmates; and fluency, which allows learners to use the language effectively to communicate.

- **How is the speaking skill affected by learners' compensation?**

Making mistakes is part of the process of constructing the students' knowledge. Compensation gives the opportunity to learners to use the language and not to think about the possible mistakes that they are making, as explained previously during this action research paper. It is noticeable that students feel more comfortable when they build their own knowledge; that is why Cummings and Blath (2017) state that

Motivation comes from a combination of autonomy, mastery, and purpose, then affording time for students to follow their own interests and develop their own queries with us there. To offer skills to master, engages and empowers students to own and drive their learning (p.33).

It can be said that compensation gives autonomy and motivation to the students because they will develop their own questions and they will learn from their mistakes in order to master them.

- **How is the speaking skill affected by learners' oral interaction?**

As stated in the previous chapters, interaction is part of people's lives. When it comes to the speaking skill and the knowledge construction process of students when learning English; oral interaction plays a very important role. It was found that oral interaction allows learners to share their knowledge in an environment where they can learn from each other and help each other to become communicative competent; in fact, Barbaroux, Attour, and Schenk (2016) state that

Knowledge management then consists in not only keeping knowledge and to organize access to it, but also, to favor the creation and sharing of this knowledge via the interaction between individuals. (p.21)

It is very important that students learn to communicate to have interaction because they will face scenarios in the future in which they need to interact and as Sue Young and Travis (2012) point out that people “communicate to initiate or improve relationships, get things we want, negotiate the best price, conduct business, meet people, function in teams, and learn new things” (p.3-4). That is why interaction plays an important role and improve the speaking skill because students learn from each other and learn to communicate effectively.

- **How does fluency help to improve learners speaking skill?**

The last indicator that supported the variable of speaking skill is fluency. Regarding this indicator, it was found that since one of the purposes of teaching speaking in the class is for students to be able to communicate with their classmates and to prepare them to communicate effectively outside the classroom; in fact, Gotz (2013) explains that the

overall goal in English language teaching is to prepare language learners to be able to engage in “successful communication” in the target language. In this context, therefore, [f]luency is mainly of interest because it is related to communicative effectiveness” (p.01)

Being fluent gives the students the means to be able to communicate in the class but as Pritchard (2007) states “fluency takes the learner outside the classroom and into the community” (p.116). That is the reason why fluency helps to improve the speaking skill because it provides the opportunity to use the language outside the classroom and communicate in an effective way in the target language.

Chapter VI: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the conclusions of the variables Social Interaction, Knowledge Construction Process and Speaking Skill are exposed through the indicators of each variable to provide the teachers applying this project proposal about The Implementation of Social Interaction Activities to Improve the Speaking Skill in the Knowledge Construction Process a much narrow perspective of what is expected the learners to gain during the knowledge construction process of this proposal research. As stated by Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005) “it is important that researchers make only those conclusions that can be supported by the data analyses. Going beyond the data is a cardinal sin that researchers must be careful to avoid” (p.14). In order to provide this research with the conclusions below the researchers carefully planned out the methodology and strategies hand by hand with the research questions created from the variables and indicators. The purpose of these conclusions is to highlight what the teacher performing this proposal project should be able to observe from his or her students.

These conclusions are important because they show why the indicators proposed of the previously mentioned variables are essential and how they help improve the speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. The reason why researchers and teachers applying this proposal are able to draw conclusions is because “An image, perception or concept that is capable of measurement – hence capable of taking on different values – is called a variable. In other words, a concept that can be measured is called a variable” as stated by Ranjit Kumar (2010, p.62). With the help of the indicators the research is able to manipulate the wanted results. Finally, conclusions are drawn to give the researcher a final say on the investigation based on data as stated by Nather (2016) where he explains that “conclusions should be

reasonable based on the data collected” (p.21). For the first variable that is Social Interaction, the conclusions are based on the indicators Student-Centered, Teamwork and Meta-Social.

6.2 Conclusions

- **Student-Centered**

It is concluded that student-centered activities in the classroom help improve social interaction skills because it helps students build confidence and prepares them for outside of school situations in a usual environment. The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) as (cited in Fried-Booth, 2002) states that learner-center “projects allow students to be in contact with authentic language and learning experiences that go beyond the classroom setting” (p.27).

- **Teamwork**

Teamwork is a skill needed in many aspects of life, hence the importance of including it in school tasks and projects; this is why it is concluded that social interaction is improved by the implementation of teamwork in the learning process because students are able to communicate effectively by “working together in a supportive way” and be able to listen to others’ ideas when “working to achieve common goals” as stated by Partridge (2007, p. 4).

- **Meta-Social**

Meta-social leaning is collaboratively and this is why it is concluded that social interaction affects meta-social learning because it provides learners to be confident in expressing if they have different opinions or ideas. As mentioned by Judge, Jones and McCreery (2009) “it is likely that we will all be tackling similar tasks. Therefore, it makes sense for us to consider

challenges together. The group members we are working with will bring to the discussion their individual experiences of education” (p.17).

For the second variable that is Knowledge Construction Process, the conclusions are brought based on the indicators Action Oriented Approach, Didactic Sequence, and Task.

- **Action Oriented Approach**

It is concluded that Action Oriented Approach helps to improve students’ knowledge construction process because this approach sees learners as social agents that are capable of building their knowledge based on what they know and what they can do to communicate with the help of real-life scenarios; that is why Martinez (2012) states that the AoA “describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively” (p.10).

- **Didactic Sequence**

It is concluded that the knowledge construction process is improved by the use of didactic sequence since students have an order of activities and until they master one stage, they will move to the next one and the most important aspect is the each part of the sequence has a purpose to show the result at the end; in this case the interaction among students; for that reason, as Martinez (2012) explains “teachers decide on the content and straightforward start thinking of how to present it and how to sequence the activities” (p.138) because that sequence plays a very important role.

- **Task**

It is concluded that the implementation of tasks improves the knowledge construction process in students since they give students the ability to use the language with a purpose and to prepare them to use the language not only inside the classroom but also outside the classroom by real-life scenarios that students will face in the future; in fact, as stated by The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) “tasks are set in a context that learners would face in everyday life within scenarios and domains” (p.29) helping and preparing the students to use the language in social contexts.

For the third variable that is Speaking skills the following conclusions are drawn based on the indicators Compensation, Oral Interaction, and Fluency.

- **Compensation**

It is concluded that compensation affects in a positive the speaking skill in students because students feel motivated to speak when they are not afraid or making mistakes while speaking, which gives them autonomy and learn from the mistakes they are making at their own time; as stated by Lagabaster, Doiz, and Sierra (2014)

if a student believes that his or her success in learning a foreign language is due to the amount of effort, he or she has put into learning the student will expect to do well the next time he or she approaches similar tasks assuming that effort can determine the outcome (103)

That is why compensation helps the speaking skill because students learn from their mistakes and improve their knowledge.

- **Oral Interaction**

It is concluded that that the speaking skill is affected in a positive way by the oral interaction that students perform in the class since learners learn from each other and help to construct their knowledge together as a team having interaction; as stated by Jamshidnejad (2020) “students’ interactions with classroom contexts are also a negotiation between students in regards to the legitimacy to talk, i.e., who should speak and who should listen” (p.35) and by listening and speaking students help and learn from each other.

- **Fluency**

It is concluded that fluency helps to improve the learners speaking skill because it helps the students to become communicative competent in the target language and also prepares the students to use the language outside the classroom in an effective way; as stated by The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) “development of the learner’s communicative competence as well as the knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and competences of a 21st century citizen” (p.23) and that is possible with the help of fluency.

Chapter VII: Recommendations

7.2 Recommendations

During the process of this research methodology proposal the researchers have organized many steps in order to have accomplished a main goal, that is, to develop a proposal for pedagogical action that involves the implementation of social interaction activities to reinforce learner's speaking skill in the knowledge construction process. It was found that many Costa Rican students graduating from public high schools were not competent in the English language after receiving English classes since their early school years. This was a problem and the need to create an innovative proposal was necessary. After many chapters of organization, data collection, analysis and reflections, this chapter brings the recommendation section. This section is important because as stated by Catherine Dawson (2009) the recommendations section "could be the most important part of the report" since "this section lists clear recommendations which have been developed from your research" (p. 139). Recommendations are an important portion of this research proposal because this is where the suggestions to the teachers applying the proposal project are addressed. These recommendations are given based on the data collected and the suggested strategies.

The purpose of this section of recommendations is to indicate directions that can be taken when applying the proposal and its importance in the knowledge construction process of the learners. In the book *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology* (2005) the authors state that it is necessary to "make specific recommendations regarding appropriate modifications" (p.258) based on the reflections and conclusions of this pedagogical proposal research project. Recommendations are given to the teacher applying the proposal to give him or her a better understanding of the path traced in order to achieve the general objective of the proposal and to land on the conclusions given. For this first variable Social Interaction

and its three indicators Student Centered, Teamwork and Meta-social, the following recommendations are given to teachers from public high schools in Costa Rican public education that will apply this alternative methodological proposal.

- It is recommended to the teacher to implement student center activities in the classrooms to build students confidence for in and outside school situations. As stated by Nunan (2013) teacher are not expected to “hand over power, responsibility and control to the students from day one” (p.53) but instead to guide and provide learners with classroom activities where little by little student become confident enough to make decisions in their learning process.
- Teamwork is a skill that is necessary to develop since it is a need skill in real life situations such as a work place. It is recommended to give students the chance to perform in teamwork tasks to improve communication in the L2 and listen to others suggestions. As stated by Hing Wa (2017) “Working in groups, students can cooperatively achieve a desired learning goal through the joint efforts of their learning group (p.113).
- Meta-social contributes in students’ lives since it gives them the chance to be critical thinkers. It is recommended to allow students to collaborate with their own ideas and opinions in order for learners to become confident in expressing what they think. As mentioned by Judge, Jones and McCreery (2009) “critical thinking is essentially a questioning, challenging approach to knowledge and perceived wisdom” (p.1).

For the second variable Knowledge Construction Process and its three indicators Action Oriented Approach, Task, and Didactic Sequence, the following recommendations are given

to teachers for public high schools in Costa Rican public education that will apply this alternative methodological proposal.

- It is recommended that teachers use Action Oriented Approach in order to give students scenarios where they are seen as social agents capable of building their own knowledge by providing real life scenarios where students can demonstrate the knowledge they already have and what they need to learn to communicate effectively because as The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) states with AoA “students develop communicative competence, gain knowledge of various English cultures, and develop their full potential as national and global citizens” (p.28)
- It is recommended for teachers to implement the use of tasks during the class to give a purpose to what students are learning and putting into practice to use the language in real-life scenarios, since the purpose of tasks is to prepare the students to use the language not only inside the classroom but also outside the classroom because as Martinez (2012) states “real-life-like activities are to bridge the gap between the learning situation and the normal use of language.” (p.10) and the use of tasks help students to use the language effectively.
- It is recommended that the tasks developed during the class have a sequence since it gives an order to the students, and they will master one stage before moving to the next one; and also every stage is going to have a purpose that ends in a final result which is also purposeful for students and it is that as explained by The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) the purpose of

having a sequence is to “carry out a set of purposeful actions in a particular domain with a clearly defined goal and a specific outcome” (p.35).

For the third variable Speaking Skill and its three indicators which are Compensation, Oral Interaction, and Fluency, the next recommendations are given to teachers from Costa Rican high schools of public education to be considered for the future implementation is this alternative methodological proposal.

- It is recommended for teachers to allow the students to use the language despite the mistakes they can have, so in that way learners will feel motivated to speak and to participate and by giving feedback on the mistakes they will learn and communicate in a more effective way, as stated by The Programa de Estudio de Inglés Tercer Ciclo y Educación Diversificada (2016) allowing learners to use the language despite the knowledge gaps they can have will help them “overcoming limitations in production” (p.52).
- It is recommended for teachers to implement activities during the class that will enhance the oral interaction among students since by having interaction students can benefit from each other and learn from each other in an environment where they can construct their knowledge and negotiate by listening to their classmates and by stating their ideas and opinions and as explained by Hing (2017) the success of the learning process depends on “student involvement and interaction in contributing to discussion” (p.110).
- It is recommended that teachers apply activities that enhance the fluency when students are speaking since implementing fluency in the class allows students to be communicative competent and to develop the necessary skills to be not only

communicative competent in the class environment but also the skills to be a 21st century citizen; as stated by Burns and Siegel (2018) activities that promote help to “strengthen vocabulary development, reading rate and general language acquisition” (p.8)

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