

**Enhancing Fluency in Speaking Through the Use of Collaborative and Self- Directed
Speaking Tasks**

Universidad de la Sabana

Master in English Language for Self-directed Learning (Online Program)

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

The aim of this research project is to analyze the effects of the use of self-directed and collaborative speaking tasks on pre-intermediate students' speaking skill considering their reluctance to speak in English inside and outside the classroom. The strategy used was based on the implementation of ten speaking tasks, one per week, in which students self-directed their learning styles and strategies in order to work collaboratively and come up with prepared and/or improvised speaking tasks. After implementation the participants stated they had gained confidence and language skills, and they asked for including this kind of activities in their ordinary classes.

Key words: self-direct, collaborative speaking tasks, implementation, language skills

Resumen

El propósito de este proyecto de investigación es analizar los efectos que el uso de tareas orales auto-dirigidas y colaborativas puedan ejercer en la habilidad de la producción oral en estudiantes de nivel pre-intermedio de inglés teniendo en cuenta su renuencia para hablar en inglés dentro y fuera del salón de clase. La estrategia utilizada se basó en la implementación de tareas de producción oral, una por semana, en las cuales los estudiantes auto-dirigían sus estilos y estrategias de aprendizaje con el fin de crear un trabajo colaborativo que los llevara a desarrollar productos orales preparados o improvisados. Después de la implementación del estudio, los participantes afirmaron haber aumentado su grado de confianza y haber mejorado sus habilidades lingüísticas, y solicitaron incluir este tipo de actividades en sus clases.

Palabras claves: tareas auto dirigidas y colaborativas, tareas de producción oral.

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Introduction

Studying a foreign language might be perceived differently by students depending on the professional demands required in each of their majors. This view has created some rejection towards the importance of learning a foreign language and the commitment it implies with their own learning process due to their lack of planning in terms of goals, time and challenges. However, it is only when students start to lose job opportunities due to the lack of a second language that they become aware of how important it is for their professional and personal lives. Bilingual employees are the ones who have more chances to be hired in Colombia, and the ones with more possibilities of getting better wages.

Additionally, students' attitude towards the learning of a foreign language is different from one another since some of them have had the opportunity to be abroad either for studying or practicing the target language while others have never done so. Therefore, despite the fact they are placed in an English level in a standardized way, students' knowledge, strengths, aptitudes and attitudes vary. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that despite the fact that students are placed in any of the seven English levels offered at the University through standardized tests as an entrance requirement, it is still common to find that students' strengths and weaknesses differ from each other with the speaking skill being the most relevant to them. Those students, who have had the opportunity to travel abroad and are more fluent and with a more natural pronunciation, unintentionally may make the others feel ashamed to speak in the target language and take risks to make mistakes. Therefore, the main purpose of this research is aimed at providing students with useful tools that will help them become confident and fluent when speaking in English.

Research Question

How can fluency in Speaking be fostered in a group of ten Colombian students through the use of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks?

Research Objectives

- To implement a set of collaborative and self- directed speaking tasks which aim at enhancing fluency in speaking.
- To verify if a set of collaborative and self- directed speaking tasks are a useful source to enhance fluency in speaking.
- To promote collaboration and self- directed learning in the foreign language classroom.

Rationale

Learning a foreign language implies the acquisition of different communicative competencies, strategies, and cultural awareness that lead to successful language performance when communicating. Therefore, real and current contexts in which students perform should be considered so that they find foreign language learning as something appropriate and meaningful for their professional and personal lives. Despite the efforts that the Colombian Ministry of Education has made regarding this issue through the inclusion of programs such as “Colombia Bilingüe”, students in Colombia continue immersed in a monolingual context, which means a real challenge for both teachers and students to develop the necessary language competencies required to become prepared for the labor world.

Consequently, the relevance of this research study lies on the fact that through the use of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks, learners are expected to produce oral language not only with coherence and accuracy, but also, and for the purpose of this research, with fluency

Literature Review

Considering that the innovation of the present study is related to the creation and application of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks to enhance fluency in speaking, there are four main constructs that need to be revised: Task based approach, collaborative learning, self-directed learning, and oral fluency.

Task-based Approach

Scholars have been in an abiding search for the best method for English teaching and learning, and the task-based approach (TBA) to language teaching, also known as task-based language teaching (TBLT), has emerged as an important alternative for English teaching, and its popularity has increased since the last decade of the 20th Century. The emergence of the TBA is connected to what became known as the 'Bangalore Project' (Prabhu, 1987). This author stated that students were just as likely to learn language if they were thinking about a non-linguistic problem as when they were concentrating on particular language forms. What this means is that students do not have to focus on language structures but on tasks where they have to face or solve problems setting a priority to first establish a task and then the linguistic forms required to accomplish that task.

The proponents of this method argue that the most effective way to teach is by engaging students in real language use in the classroom, so teachers should provide students with a natural context for language use and this is possible only through tasks. The concept of task is used in many fields, but specifically in foreign or second language teaching it is defined as "a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward" (Long, 1985, p89). According to this author some examples of tasks are painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, taking a hotel reservation. In other words; we can say that task is

meant a lot of things people do in everyday life. Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.289) define task as:

an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative . . . since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake.

On the other hand, Prabhu, (1987) proposes a simpler definition: "An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process" (p. 32). Similarly, Ellis (2003, p.16) defines a pedagogical task as:

a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes.

Finally, (Nunan 2006, p.17) describes a task as “a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning”. The author also explains that a task should “have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, middle and an end” (p. 17).

Collaborative Learning

Working individually or in groups is either a personal decision based on learning styles and preferences or a social and/or academic option that might be seen as a strategy to get specific outcomes or even success. Nevertheless, it is necessary to learn how to work collaboratively and that is why it is worthy to define the term collaboration as a “coordinated, synchronous activity that is the result of a continued attempt to construct and maintain a shared conception of a problem” (Roschelle & Teasley, 1995, p. 70), and collaborative learning as a “situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together” (Dillenbourg, 1999, p. 1).

Collaborative learning is aimed to explore and take advantage of the strengths of each of the participants to put them together harmonically like in an orchestra. With each one’s contribution to the final melody, a space for joy is released. Moreover, collaborative learning enhances critical thinking skills which train learners to cope with different social, cultural and professional issues in a globalized world. This is supported by Cohen (1994) when stating that “shared goals and tools can strengthen positive student interdependence” (as cited in Van Boxtel, 2000, p.4).

As any other process in life, collaborative learning involves pitfalls that should be considered to guarantee positive results. Collaborative learning in speaking tasks, which is the target of this study, might become meaningless if participants are not equally involved and committed with the common goal within the group or when negotiation is not considered. Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs (1986) introduced the principle of “least collaborative effort” claiming that: “in conversation the participants try to minimize their collaboration effort” (p. 28), and this is quite common when learners feel they have the possibility to hide behind those who have stronger speaking skills. Thus, collaborative speaking tasks should be carefully thought and stated to allow each of the participants contribute with their own skills, knowledge and personal experiences which enrich and feed the final product. Continuous monitoring and feedback from peers and teachers might minimize such situation.

Buitrago & Ayala (2008) in their project “Overcoming Fear of speaking in English through Meaningful Activities: A study with Teenagers” show that the use of artistic and academic activities such as songs, games, sketches, dancing and poetry constitute useful tools for students to work collaboratively and participate actively while learning and using the language in real life contexts.

Self- directed Learning

Researchers have become interested in learning strategies throughout human development. Therefore, approaches to this important field have been broadly discussed and validated for the purpose of solving a never- ending task for specialists: successful learning. Nowadays special attention is being paid to learners’ own involvement in learning processes; that is to say learners’

decision to undertake systematic procedures as a means to address challenges i.e. this is called self-directed learning (SDL).

Firstly, self-directed are those who have the ability to initiate strategies which promote reflection on their learning objectives, materials to be implemented, and results. Knowles (1975) has broadly explained that self-directed learning involves learners' decision to carry out learning schemes, which could be taken independently or with someone else's assistance, allowing learners to identify learning objectives, establishing appropriate resources and self-evaluate either effective or unsuccessful results (as cited in Du, 2012, p.6). Similarly, referring to adopted strategies by adult foreign language learners to lead their own learning, Ellis (1994) denoted that knowing "what and how" to learn, choosing the required resources and goals to achieve that learning and reflecting about all these components, certainly are self-directed tactics.

Furthermore, literature about SDL shows important elements to be taken into account as part of planning appropriate and successful SDL strategies. Here, Merriam (2001) has clearly stated that having learners being aware of their needs and concerns, the promotion of learners' faculty to be self-directed learners, content, stages in the learning process and personal issues such as creativity, constitute central purposes and procedures within SDL.

Finally, studies have explored the advantages of SDL after learners being involved in such process. For instance, Du (2012) has declared that learners' efficiency levels are evidently increased. Moreover, learners' enthusiasm, participation and recalling as well as metacognitive skills are considerably strengthened due to SDL. All in all, regarding existing evidence provided by researchers, the benefits of SDL are clear and lead to supported application inside our teaching and learning contexts.

Paris S. & Paris A. (2001) in their project “Classroom Applications of Research on Self-Regulated learning” showed that SLR is “more likely when teachers create classroom environments in which students have opportunities to seek challenges, to reflect on their own process, and to take responsibility and pride in their accomplishments.”

Oral Fluency

Current society has demonstrated an extreme need for people who can use a second language in an accurate and fluent manner. Therefore, the present study seeks to promote oral fluency through the use of tasks that would make learners collaborate using English as a foreign language.

According to Brown (2003), fluency has been defined in a variety of forms. In the first definition proposed by Hartmann and Stork (as cited in Brown 2003) the most important characteristics of fluency are stated as the following:

a person is said to be a fluent speaker of a language when he can use its structures accurately whilst concentrating on content rather than form, using the units and patterns automatically at normal conversational speed when they are needed (p. 86).

Furthermore, Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) define some characteristics of fluency as “the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and the use of interjections and interruptions.” (p. 108). Even so, Richards, et al (1985, pp 108-109) go beyond and take into account the most important characteristics of fluency portraying them as the person’s level of communication proficiency included in main effective communication characteristics and stated in the following points:

1. Producing written and/or spoken language with ease.
2. Speaking with a good but not necessarily perfect command of intonation, vocabulary, and grammar.
3. Communicating ideas effectively.
4. Producing continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or a breakdown of communication.

The authors consider the importance of having in mind what they called the big “G”, or grammar, when addressing fluency. Additionally, Brown (2003) states that the big “G” is tied to fluency, but it is necessary to understand it in context. A fluent person is the one that is able to produce grammatically correct sentences, but this does not include the skill to write or speak fluently. Bearing in mind the previously mentioned statements, it is important to understand fluency, not in contrast to accuracy but as the complement to it.

In contrast, authors such as Cohen (1994) have explained that it is not easy to assess fluency because it is not possible just to simplify it with terms such as speed or ease of speech. A fluent person is not the one who has a native speech because even for a native speaker, speaking easily does not mean producing oral language appropriately. Kato (1977) discovered that some students he labeled as fluent were not good at having good grammar control and selecting appropriate vocabulary.

An important proposal is stated by Brown (2003), who explains a more integrated approach to fluency by including explicit aspects he considers to be vital for fluency development:

Table 1
Brown's Expanded View of Fluency. (Brown, 2003)

Communicative Language Tools	Communicative Language Choices	Communicative Language Strategies
Paralinguistic features	Settings	Using speed to advantage
Kinesics language features	Social roles	Using pauses and hesitations
Pragmatics	Sexual roles	Giving appropriate feedback
Pronunciation	Psychological roles	Repairing competently
Grammar	Register	Clarifying effectively
Vocabulary	Style	Negotiating for meaning

Fluency is a crucial part of learning a language and it is not the imitation of a native speaker's speech but the correct use of the language with the speaker's own pace. According to Binder, Haughton and Bateman (2002) speaking fluency also helps learners improve their learning process by contributing to three types of learning outcomes. The first is retention and maintenance which is described as the ability to retain knowledge after a course has finished. The second is endurance described as the ability to resist distraction for long periods of time. Finally application, the ability to apply what has been learnt in different situations and with more creativity.

Measuring Oral Fluency

As previously stated, fluency can be defined as the facility to express ideas taking into account factors like speech rate, silent pauses, frequency of repetitions, and self-corrections which make the speaker go on with the conversation line (Schmidt, 1992).

Fluency does not mean to be able to speak without interruptions or hesitations, even native speakers make pauses when talking; the key is to speak with confidence and security where

listeners do not keep too much waiting to hear the end of the ideas (Jones, 2007). Similarly, fluency in learners can differ depending on the surrounding conditions; if they feel confident, the result could be better than in threatening circumstances. According to Garcia- Amaya (2009), it is feasible to include diverse variables to measure fluency not only qualitatively but also quantitatively as:

- Words per minute.
- Words per second
- Syllables per second.
- Length of pauses measured in seconds (de Jong, 2011).

In combination with the production of “hesitation phenomena” unfilled and filled pauses can be considered. The hesitation phenomenon refers to the faltering in speech from learners when they are speaking; this is closely related to psychological factors like anxiety, stress and even motivation as stated by García-Amaya, (2009).

The factors considered above make possible to measure learners’ fluency performance through objective variables. Some researchers have proposed a variety of instruments to measure Fluency. Bloom and Cooperman (1999) for example, have proposed the following:

Table 2
Fluency Friday Plus: Timed Sample.

FLUENCY FRIDAY PLUS: Timed Sample	
Student: _____	
Age: _____	
Sample Date: _____	
Speaking Condition: play _____ monologue _____ conversation _____	
Communication Partner: clinician _____ parents _____ peers _____	
Was the student asked to use a fluency strategy prior the sample? Yes or No	
Instructions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use stopwatch to time the speaking sample (1 or 2 minutes): only time when student is speaking, turn stopwatch off when student stops talking or when you talk. 	

- Use clicker or mark with a pen the # of students during a period of time
- Divide # of stutters by # of minutes to get stuttered words per minute (swpm) (ie: 9 stutters in 2 minutes = 4.5 swpm, or 10 stutters in 1 minute = 10 swpm)

Sample 1: _____ swpm

Sample 2: _____ swpm

Sample 3: _____ swpm

Types of stutters used: (mark with X)

- _____ Word repetitions 3x or more and rapid
- _____ Interjections used as starters
- _____ Syllable repetitions
- _____ Sound repetitions
- _____ Prolongations
- _____ Blocks
- _____ Multicomponents of these

Further description of stuttering: (visible tension, pitch rise, 2ndary behaviors)

In the same vein, there are some authors who have done research to define this measurement. According to Lennon (1990) the concept of fluency can be referred to in two perspectives; the broader one describes fluency as a global oral proficiency to speak in the target language, whereas the narrow perspective considers fluency as one element of oral proficiency that is evaluated in most of language proficiency tests.

Thus, the present study has taken into account this narrow perspective to consider the measurement of fluency as supported on research literature. Measurement of fluency has been a topic of debate between researchers that claim it is not tested with objectivity, since the parameters to evaluate it rely on subjective judgments and perceptions of the tester, cramming the literature with impractical assessment strategies and highlighting the need for the establishment of clear components to assess fluency (Hieke, 1987).

Research on fluency measurement on second language learners' speech has been reported to follow three approaches. The first one dealt with temporal aspects of speech production (Lennon 1990, Mohle 1984), the second with temporal aspects combined with interactive

features of speech (Riggensbach ,1991) and the third with phonological aspects of fluency Heike, (as cited in Kormos and Dene`s 2004).

Conclusions from these studies revealed that the use of relevant quantifiers of temporal aspects of speech production enhance the objective assessment of a subjective concept like oral fluency and the similarities led to a selection of set of predictors of fluency :

- a. Speech rate: number of syllables articulated per minute.
- b. Mean length of runs: average number of syllables produced in utterances between pauses of 0.25 seconds and above. According to Leeman (2006) mean length of run is an “increasingly common measure of fluency” and it has been used in several studies (Riggensbach, 1991, Towell et all, 1996, Freed, 2000, Wolf, 2008)
- c. Stalls. Encompass silent pauses and filled pauses, progressive repeat and drawls, according to Heike (1987) empirical research shows it accounts for the figure of 90 percent of representation in interruptions
- b. Repairs: false starts and bridging repetitions.
- e. Parenthetical remarks: Brown (2003)

For the purpose of this study the researchers have decided to work on the design and application of ten self-directed collaborative speaking tasks in order to measure fluency, in quantitative terms, by counting the number of words and hesitations produced by students per minute. In addition, students and teacher’s perceptions regarding oral fluency will also be collected through questionnaires and reflection notes.

Research Design

Type of the Study

This study belongs to the field of action research given its explicit characteristics. It occurred within a specific classroom situation, it was conducted by the teacher as a classroom participant, and it aimed at solving a problem observed during the teaching practice by implementing an action plan that was later evaluated. As Nunan (1988), explains “Action Research is problem focused, mainly concerned with a single case in a specific situation, and tries to find solutions to the problem in focus” (p. 149). In addition, Action Research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out. (Carr and Kemmis 2005)

Thus, the center of attention in this type of research is to develop the teaching situation and the teacher-researcher rather than to generate new knowledge. Thus, action research generates findings that tend to be useful inside a specific context but not necessarily applicable to every teaching context.

Context

This research was carried out by a group of six Colombian teachers who shared some common patterns in their teaching contexts. The research members worked in different cities and towns of Colombia, such as Bogotá, Cartagena, Sincelejo and Santuario (Risaralda), having as a result a general context which included five public schools and a private university in which students have an average of three or four hours of English instruction per week. In addition, it is relevant to state that time is not enough to develop speaking proficiency as expected, even when

the Ministry of Education has implemented a bilingual policy which seems to be not sufficient for learners' needs and expectations to communicate fluently in this foreign language.

Researcher's Role

Researchers played different active roles during this research project: as diagnosticians when finding out students' needs and interests; as designers and implementers when planning lessons and carrying them out with students in and out of classrooms; as involvers when encouraging students to create knowledge together; as facilitators when providing students with the necessary tools to improve knowledge, develop competences and become autonomous; as counselors when providing students with positive and constructive feedback; as observers when watching and noticing not only students' behavior, performance, and attitude but the atmosphere around and its effects on students; as data collectors and data analyzers when putting together all the pieces of the puzzle; and as evaluators when reflecting on what has been observed in order to come up with real and affordable techniques.

Participants

The present study was an action research in which participants played an active role. Each researcher selected ten participants in order to obtain a final sample of sixty students selected at random. The sixty participants are teenagers who are in secondary school and university levels, whose ages range from 14 to 20 years old. Considering our current population, it can be stated that some of the participants have a medium or low social status, so their possibilities to access technological resources are limited mainly to the institution facilities.

For the purposes of this particular report, I worked with ten students placed in Level 3 which corresponds to a pre-intermediate or A2 level according to the Common European Framework (CEF) at a private university in Bogotá, Colombia. These students were enrolled in

different faculties but most of them belonged to the Social Communication School and their age ranged between 18 and 20. The student sampling consisted of eight women and two men who were willing to participate in this research project. Most of the participants of this study had just enrolled in the University and had been placed in Level 3 thanks to a placement exam they had to take as an entrance requirement to the University.

Ethical Considerations

At the beginning of the semester students were informed about the desire of carrying out a research project with them, and they showed interest and excitement about it. They agreed to participate and signed a Consent Form (See Appendix A) that clarified that their results throughout the process would not have any positive or negative effect on their current performance during the course other than what might come from the great opportunity they would have to improve their speaking skill. The Consent Form also informed of the time they would spend on this project and the instruments to be used. Their names will be kept anonymous for each publication that might arise from this research project and pseudonyms will be used if needed.

Instruments for Data Collection

After some online discussions, the members of the research circle designed and proposed the three main instruments that were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. First of all, oral fluency was measured in terms of a quantitative analysis by using a measuring sheet created by the research circle, whereas the students' and teachers' perceptions were analyzed qualitatively by using surveys and reflection notes. The instruments are described as follows:

Measuring Sheet. This instrument was used to register the amount of words and hesitations per minute that each one of the participants scored after each of the ten speaking tasks

they worked on. This measuring sheet (See Appendix B) was used later for the quantitative analysis of results.

Students' Surveys. This instrument was administered through a self-evaluation format (See Appendix C) which was composed of eleven questions in which they had to choose from three options - *absolutely, kind of or can be better* – the one they felt comfortable with regarding the process and the results they obtained with each of the speaking tasks worked during the study. It is worthy to refer to Dunning (2004) who defines self-assessment as an intrinsically difficult task since it involves several psychological processes that conspire to what he calls “flawed self-assessment” (p. 72). This is why students' assessment of their performance tends to agree only moderately with those of their teachers and mentors because students usually feel they always do well once they become overconfident with new learned skills which seem to be rapidly acquired, but without evaluating how much retention there was.

Reflection Notes. The last instrument used was the teacher's observations chart (See Appendix D) in which each teacher registered his/her perceptions, reflections, and suggestions about the performance of each of the participants in the study. The chart was composed of six questions aimed at analyzing how well lesson plans were designed, carried out and worked. Observation, although it frames a subjective perspective of the context around, provides researchers with the opportunity to see the research as a whole and in its very tiny parts at the same time since a main target is kept in mind.

Data Collection Procedures

A series of ten different speaking tasks which required self-directed and collaborative work were carried out for a ten-week period, one task per week. Classes were composed of three face-to-face and one virtual hour each week. The speaking tasks were implemented at the end of the

week once the topics in the syllabus had been studied and enough input in terms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation had been provided to students. Immediately after each speaking task, students had to fill in the self-assessment evaluation instrument in order to analyze their answers and come up with ideas that might fulfill their expectations and the objectives of this research project. The teacher's observation chart instrument was also updated after each speaking task to be compared to students' perceptions in their self-assessment evaluations. Each speaking task was filmed and some of them were analyzed together with students as part of the feedback process.

Pedagogical Intervention

Instructional Design

This pedagogical intervention took place during the second semester of 2012 and was divided into ten sessions that started in August and ended in October. Each of the ten speaking tasks was carefully described in a lesson plan format as shown in Figure 1. This format includes the tasks, purposes of the activities, suggested time, teacher's roles and kind of interactions during the class in order to guarantee that activities fulfill the aim of the lesson. Apart from this format there is some additional information regarding lesson goals, tasks, competences and objectives, learning goals, assessment criteria, materials and resources, and anticipated problems. (See Appendix E)

Figure 1
Lesson plan format sample

Teacher's role <small>(collaborator, model, encourager, etc)</small>	Stage	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activity	Interaction	Time
Model	Lead in/Preparation <small>(F3DL Learning Strategy highlighted)</small>	To reflect on the positive and negative points when interviewing.	Important information: Last class students were asked to choose a group of people from the ones in (PPT Slide 1) to be interviewed and come up with their dreams, ambitions and achievements. (See instructions for the activity in the PPT attached). Students will discuss on the difficulties they had with the interviews, if any, and will share their feelings about the experience of interviewing.	SS	(10 minutes)
Encourager Facilitator	Presentation Modeling <small>(F3DL Learning Strategy highlighted)</small>	To use models for further oral presentation To peer and self-correct	Step 1: Students will report on the information they got from the interviews they made. This is the data for being collected. Step 2: In the meantime students from the auditorium will peer-correct presenters in terms of grammar and vocabulary use as well as pronunciation, intonation and fluency. (Annex 2) Suggestion: Assign students just a pair of oral presentations to be assessed so that they can pay attention to the others.	SS	(20 minutes)
Encourager Guider Facilitator Monitor	Practice <small>(F3DL Learning Strategy highlighted)</small>	To use new knowledge in real contexts	Step 1: Students will discuss on the information they have just heard and will provide opinions about it. Step 2: Students will write a short reflection on the dream, ambition or achievement they liked the most and will explain why.	SS SS	(10 minutes) (10 minutes)
	Learner self-evaluation <small>(F3DL Learning Strategy highlighted)</small>	To make students aware of their own learning	Students will draw conclusions and express their feelings and final reflections. This will be done in the wrap up stage of the class.	SS	----
	Problem Identification/ solution <small>(F3DL Learning Strategy highlighted)</small>	To make students aware on the way of solving possible structure and tense mistakes	Students will be corrected after their oral presentations in terms of language and pronunciation.	SS	-----
Encourager Elicitor	Wrap up <small>(F3DL Learning Strategy highlighted)</small>	To draw conclusions by providing arguments that support opinions.	Students will self-evaluate how much new vocabulary they used and how fluent they spoke through the self-assessment questionnaire (data collection instrument)	SS	(5 minutes)
	Expansion/ Independent Study <small>(F3DL Learning Strategy highlighted)</small>	To make a general review of topics for their first partial exam.	Students will prepare an oral report about which ambition, dream or achievement presented in class was the most unusual or interesting for them, and which ones were the same to theirs. They will record their reports through Audacity and will save a MP3 file to be sent to the teacher's mail.	SS	(60 min)

The first speaking task required students to have a conversation about an important first event in their life related to one of some options provided: the first time they cooked, drove a car, rode a bike, climbed a mountain, washed the dishes, clothes or the car, studied for an exam, or broke a heart. These topics had been studied in previous classes as a starting point to introduce vocabulary of past actions. The purpose of this activity was to encourage students to use everyday vocabulary when recalling first time experiences and the purpose for this research was to measure students' fluency through the number of words and hesitations per minute as a pre-task.

The second speaking task asked students to work collaboratively in the creation of some TV news similar to one they had watched the class before. They chose the roles they would perform during their TV news; they planned together how they would present it; they were in charge of writing their scripts individually, and then all pieces were put together so that the group made the final revision and adaptations. The topic to be studied was the past continuous tense, so they had to focus their activity on what people were doing when something happened. The purpose of this activity was to make students contrast tenses in real life situations and sound as natural as possible while they were acting as journalists, witnesses, victims, presenters, etc. They also included live advertising.

The third speaking task encouraged students to talk about a specific first time event that they chose at random from a set of twelve pieces of paper with a first time situation in each. They had to describe it in detail by telling what happened, where, when, how, why, who was involved, and what this experience taught them. Classmates were in charge of expanding information or asking for additional information. The purpose of this activity was to encourage

students to express first time events using a wide range of vocabulary, expressions and grammar structures.

The fourth speaking task requested students to talk about their achievements. They had to look at some pictures about parent-child relationships, animal care, global warming, and friends in order to describe what the message behind those pictures was and explain what they had or had not done in order to help with those situations. The purpose of the activity was to encourage students to use present perfect in affirmative and negative sentences when talking about achievements.

The fifth speaking task encouraged students to talk about their dreams and ambitions in life. They had to choose one topic at random from a suggested list to give a one-minute talk about it. The topics were dreams and ambitions related to jobs, places to visit or live in, objects to be owned, money, a person to meet, an invention or discovery to make, marriage/children, sports, and learning about how to do something. No preparation time was allowed, so improvisation played an important role in this activity. The purpose of this task was to encourage students to give a clear presentation on topics related to dreams and ambitions and answer predictable or factual questions.

The sixth speaking task asked students to report on an interview about dreams and ambitions they had to make to any person who belonged to any of the groups suggested: retired people, undergraduate students, children, maintenance people, parents, chief executives, sportsmen, disabled people, young people, and foreign students. They had to choose just one group and they had work collaboratively once they put information together to come up with a complete report. The purpose of this activity was to encourage students to use the past participle

of verbs and present perfect structure as well as the language of negotiating when talking about dreams and ambitions.

The seventh speaking task challenged students to build a conversation based on sudden situations and personages and create simultaneously an improvised role-play. Two students were in charge of starting a dialogue based on a situation given and as long as they started to mention a new character a student from the class was randomly called to act out as him/her and so on until a large role play was created. The situation provided to the first pair of students encouraged students to talk about important firsts, achievements, dreams and ambitions; so the purpose of this activity was to use it as a closing activity that served as a review before partial exams.

The eighth speaking task elicited personal information from students regarding their important firsts, achievements, dreams, and ambitions through a collage they had to create collaboratively. The purpose of this activity was to encourage students to use a wide range of vocabulary, expressions and verb tenses required to express well-structured and coherent ideas. Students had to expand answers from questions asked by their classmates in order to clarify information or provide more details. Question making was also checked through this activity.

The ninth speaking task required that students give a three-minute oral presentation about special occasions and social customs of a specific city or country that students had chosen the class before. They had to support this information with short videos, role-plays, pictures or any creative idea they could come up with in order to make their presentations different from each other and easy to be followed. The purpose of this activity was to make students go deeply into cultural contexts different from their own in order to get other views from the world and make comparisons.

The tenth and last intervention was considered the fireproof one which was intended to prove how much students had improved their speaking skill. The task for this last intervention was suggested by students themselves some weeks before due to the motivation they acquired during the whole process. The last intervention was a role-play completely designed by students. They were the writers, producers and directors of their plays.

Data Analysis

This study was a mixed method research, which is defined by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) as the combination in a single study of techniques, methods, approaches and language of both quantitative and qualitative traditions (p.17). The main reasons why this research method was used was its fundamental principle which says that the strengths of one method may overcome the weaknesses of another method (Johnson and Turner, 2003, Gelo et al. 2008, p.274) and the triangulation which permits having different positions before converging results (Cresswell, 2003).

Initially, a quantitative data analysis was conducted using the first instrument, the measuring sheet which consolidated the ten speaking tasks of the ten participants in the study (See Table 3: Measuring Oral Fluency Scores). The students' names were replaced by a number, so Student 1 will be called S1, student 2, S2 and so on.

Table 3
Measuring Oral Fluency Scores

STUDENT	Pre-test		Intervention 1		Intervention 2		Intervention 3		Intervention 4		Intervention 5		Intervention 6		Intervention 7		Intervention 8		Post- test	
	#word	#hesit	#word	#hesit	#word	#hesit	#word	#hesit	#word	#hesit	#word	#hesit	#word	#hesit	#word	#hesit	#word	#hesit	#word	#hesit
Student 1	22	2	101	3	37	2	30	1	114	1	92	2	32	2	90	3	68	3	172	3
Student 2	34	4	48	2	48	7	56	1	63	1	120	0	81	3	112	2	73	4	123	1
Student 3	60	1	128	0	89	1	37	4	135	0	47	1	66	0	81	1	65	2	237	0
Student 4	15	1	71	4	42	2	86	1	53	1	79	0	54	0	73	2	63	2	217	1
Student 5	13	3	186	0	117	1	128	1	66	0	144	0	60	1	96	1	87	1	288	0
Student 6	120	1	101	0	38	0	36	2	48	1	46	0	72	2	66	2	94	2	135	1
Student 7	24	2	170	0	31	5	55	1	64	1	149	0	52	4	84	1	83	2	172	0
Student 8	81	1	90	3	68	1	43	1	53	4	122	0	38	2	62	2	93	2	182	1
Student 9	21	1	95	1	85	3	70	1	69	1	184	0	139	2	72	0	162	2	147	0
Student 10	46	5	92	1	60	0	56	1	58	0	201	0	106	2	64	1	87	2	288	1

Table 3 shows the number of words and hesitations that each of the participants produced during each of the ten speaking tasks held during the ten weeks of the study. According to the data gathered, some students spoke for less or more than a minute, so it was necessary to come up with a rule of three in order to unify scores. For example, let's say that a result is 87/43 in which the numerator refers to the number of words and the denominator to the number of seconds. So, the analysis made is: if there are 87 words in 43 seconds, how many words are there in 60? $(87 \times 60) / 43$ which are the scores in Table 3.

Figure 2
Number of Words per Intervention

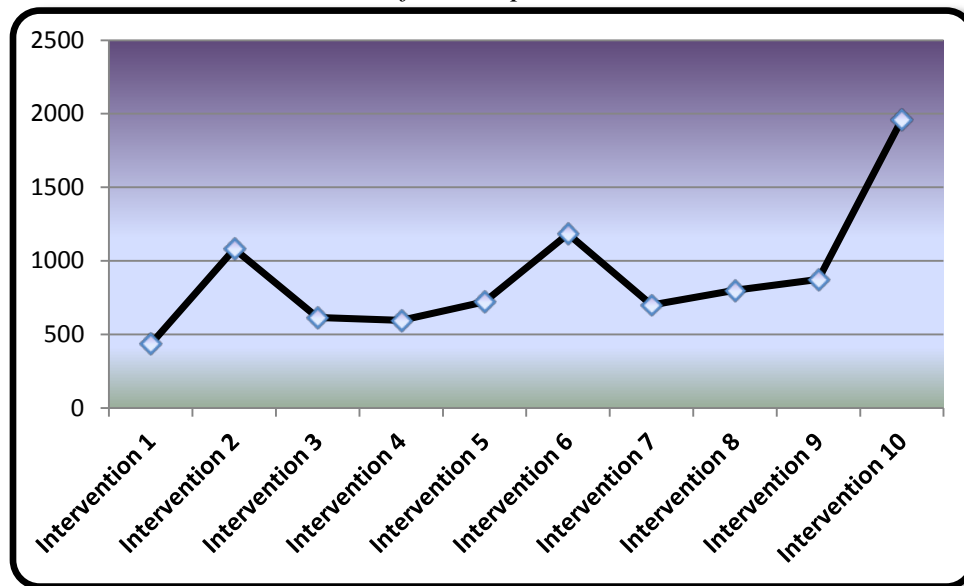


Figure 2 shows a significant evolution in the number of words per minute from the pre-task until the post-task. It also shows that after the first intervention whose results were very low served as a motivating challenge for students to improve in the second one. Despite the fact that speaking tasks throughout the ten weeks oscillated from simple to demanding tasks, from memory to improvisation and from short to long interventions or vice versa, students maintained a slight tendency to improvement until the last task in which they were the designers and performers. This might mean that outcomes become much more meaningful and successful when students are allowed to get involved in their learning process.

Figure 3
Number of Hesitations per Intervention

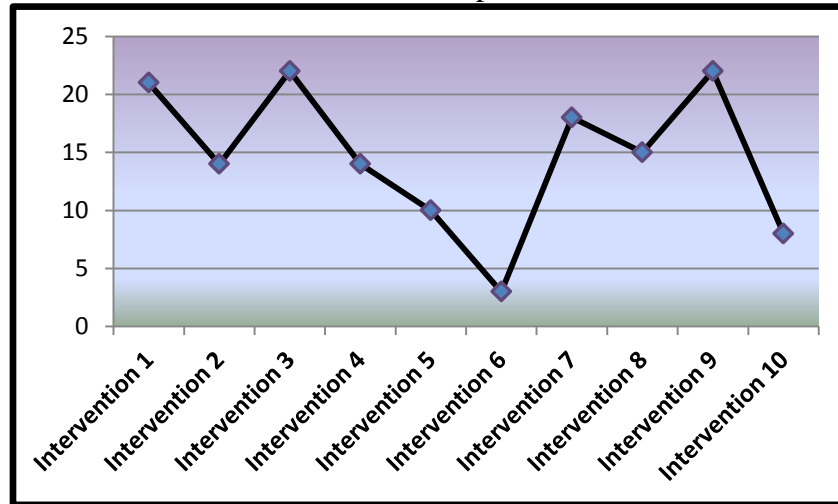


Figure 3 shows six from ten moments in which number of hesitations decreased considerably. Interventions 6 and 10 show an abrupt fall due perhaps to the kind of task required (refer to Instructional Design). Intervention 7 on the contrary shows a sharp rise which could be non-sense if it is considered that they left from a very rewarding intervention 6. The reason is clear and it is that intervention 7 challenged students to role-play situations that were being created at the same time they talked.

Figure 4
Comparison between pre and post tests

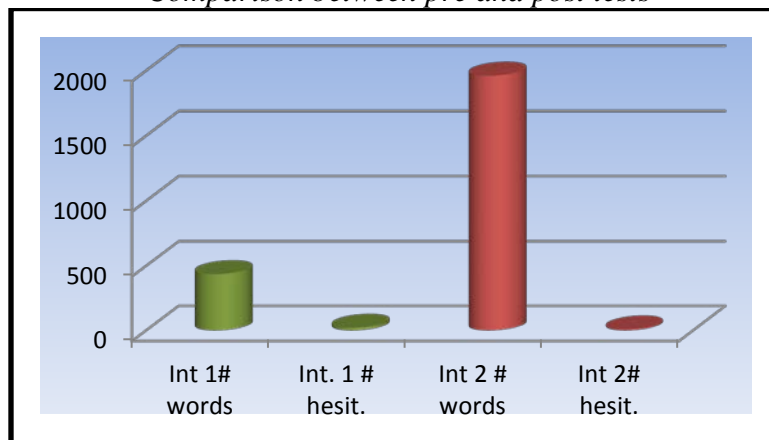


Figure 4 shows an abrupt improvement in terms of the number of words although the number of hesitations does not represent a meaningful change. During the first intervention

students were not aware of what fluency means, and their speaking production was the average one in a class of many students; just monosyllabic answers with some difficulty to elicit information from them. The last intervention was their opportunity to show themselves what they were able to do, and they just did it.

Categories

The data previously presented evidence of an increase in oral fluency, however and for the purposes of this study, it was necessary to consider students and teacher's observations or perceptions regarding the activities and the processes that led to this improvement. Thus, qualitative data was gathered from two instruments: students' survey and teacher's reflection notes. From this analysis some categories such as *team supportive work, implementation of own learning strategies, enthusiasm, self-esteem, and consciousness on their fluency performance* emerged demonstrating students' feelings and perceptions towards their performance in the target language based on their self-reflection. Table 4 shows the categories supported by the students' original notes.

Team Supportive Collaborative Work. This category emerged thanks to the requirement of each of the speaking tasks that encouraged students to work collaboratively, which was an aspect that they really enjoyed doing. Some of them commented: "*Mi grupo es colaborador y ayudamos todos en la actividad.*"(S1, Q), or "*El grupo trabaja muy bien juntos.*"(S8,Q). In the same way, I could observe that students assumed responsible roles within the team in order to come up with quality products, and they supported each other if needed.

Implementation of Own Learning Strategies. This category appeared thanks to students' observations about their own studying styles when preparing tasks. They had the opportunity to reflect on their learning process in order to come up with more appropriate and practical learning

strategies. Comments like *“I can work on vocabulary and I can speak more in class.”* (S2, Q) or *“Siempre empleo las mismas palabras, debo mejorar.”*(S4, Q) show their own reflection on their language performance. Similarly, I could perceive some gradual language improvement which might have originated from the strategies they implemented during their learning process.

Enthusiasm. This category was the most significant in this study because students felt truly motivated to work on their speaking tasks. Learners shared ideas like *“Estas actividades se han vuelto en una gran estrategia para que estudiemos con más amor y agrado.”* (S1, Q) or *“La actividad es muy divertida e interesante ya que tienes que pensar mucho en Inglés para defenderte.”*(S5, Q). In fact, it was observed that students were willing to participate and to listen to each other if they were competing for the best and most creative presentation. At the end of each speaking task it became usual to receive praises and positive feedback among themselves.

Self- Esteem. This category which is closely related to the previous one was also essential for improving fluency because as long as students feel they are able to produce oral language, they take more risks and they dare to use the language spontaneously. *“Me siento más tranquila y así puedo pensar mejor lo que voy a decir.”* (S9, Q) and *“Las actividades me han ayudado a controlar mis nervios.”* (S6, Q) are some of the comments written by students in the questionnaire. Furthermore, I could see how students’ attitude towards language production changed abruptly because while speaking students were not worried about the amount of mistakes they might make but about the effects their performances could have on the class. They were involved in an out-of-stress environment in which all of them were learning either by speaking or listening to what it was being said or acted out.

Consciousness of their Fluency Performance. Although at the beginning of the study students were not really aware of what fluency meant, speaking tasks and students’ surveys

through the self-evaluation format made this category emerge. Comments such as “*Mi compañero me interrumpió y tuve que improvisar.*” (S5, Q) or “*Las actividades me permiten perder el miedo y hablar con mayor fluidez.*” (S3, Q) support their idea of the importance of fluency when speaking. I could also observe that as long as tasks were applied, students’ fluency increased little by little and perhaps without them noticing it. Definitely, something to note in this category is that their increase in vocabulary range, enthusiasm, self-esteem, teamwork, and implementation of own learning strategies had a direct positive effect on their fluency when speaking in the target language. The table below presents a summary of the categories and exemplifies the way these categories and the data collected helped when answering the research question.

Table 4
Categories for Data Analysis

Category	How is it related to the research question?	How is it supported by the data gathered?
Team Supportive Work	Students’ ability to recognize their partners’ strengths allows them to make tasks as successful as possible. Commitment and support among each of the members in a group is visible. Respect to socio-cultural differences is evident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Mi grupo es colaborador y ayudamos todos en la actividad.</i>”(S1, Q) • “<i>Personalmente me parece que el grupo estaba muy comprometido.</i>”(S4, Q) • “<i>My classmate was so responsibility</i>” (S5, Q) • “<i>El grupo trabaja muy bien juntos.</i>”(S8,Q)
Implementation of Own Learning Strategies	Learners involved in their learning process either in the preparing or production stages of the tasks required are able to achieve the purpose of this study. The implementation of own learning strategies and resources in order to come up with a product is a required step for SDL. Self-evaluation of results after each task and design of personal plans for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Hice una buen preparación antes de la presentación.</i>”(S3, Q) • “<i>I can practice more English and speak more in English with friends.</i>”(S7, Q) • “<i>Have practice more to were more preparation.</i>”(S5, Q) • “<i>I can work on vocabulary and I can speak more in class.</i>” (S2, Q) • “<i>Siempre empleo las mismas palabras, debo mejorar.</i>”(S4, Q)

	improvement encourage students to improve fluency.	
Enthusiasm	Motivation is essential for improving fluency because it serves as a challenge to be better each day. When people enjoy what they do, there is no space for mistakes because they become less important than communication itself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Me gusta este tipo de actividades” (S4, Q) • “La actividad es muy divertida e interesante ya que tienes que pensar mucho en Inglés para defenderte.”(S5, Q) • “Estas actividades se han vuelto en una gran estrategia para que estudiemos con más amor y agrado.” (S1, Q) • “Me gusta este tipo de trabajos.” (S3, Q)
Self-esteem	Self-confidence which is closely related to motivation is also essential for improving fluency because as long as students feel they are able to produce language, they become more risky and they dare to use the language spontaneously.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Las actividades me han ayudado a controlar mis nervios.” (S6, Q) • “Estas actividades nos han dado mucha fluidez y seguridad.” (S3, Q) • “Me sentí mejor que en las clases pasadas.” (S5, Q) • “Se me facilita entender ahora lo que otros hablan.” (S4, Q) • “Me siento más tranquila y así puedo pensar mejor lo que voy a decir.” (S9, Q)
Consciousness on their Fluency Performance	The more students participate in speaking tasks, the more fluent they become. Fluency awareness becomes evident when hesitations and interjections are fewer every time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “La actividad fue más fluida esta vez.” (S2, Q) • “Últimamente me fluyen más las cosas.” (S4, Q) • “Mi compañero me interrumpió y tuve que improvisar.” (S5, Q) • “Las actividades me permiten perder el miedo y hablar con mayor fluidez.” (S3, Q)

Each of the categories presented above was taken from the analysis made of each of the students’ surveys held after each of the interventions in the study. The commonalities amongst them made possible to come up with these categories which are in the end closely related to the constructs of this study. It was very interesting to see how students became committed to improve their own learning and at the same time were responsible for their own roles while

working in teams. They mentioned they enjoyed the activities they worked on and they claimed they have improved their language performance. Lack of confidence and self-esteem were also an aspect that was defeated once students realized they are able to produce language if they seek actual opportunities to practice the language.

Procedures of Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by following a triangulation among the three instruments used in this study. First of all, quantitative data obtained from the number of words and hesitations per minute in each of the ten interventions by each of the ten participants was included in the measuring sheet designed for this purpose. Once the ten interventions happened, results were consolidated and scores unified within the same time frame, one minute. Quantitative results were compared and contrasted with the qualitative data obtained from the answers of the students' survey and the teacher's observations. Students' surveys were put all together and were classified into categories (see Table 4) according to the commonalities of their answers. Teacher's observations were consolidated in a table (See Appendix F) and compared with students' answers to find out how similar or different perceptions towards speaking tasks and analysis aspects behind them were.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

This study revealed that the inclusion of constant self-directed and collaborative speaking tasks in weekly classes does foster fluency in students due to the fact that they find new possibilities to increase their speaking practice overcoming a hidden obstacle of fear when

speaking in the target language. Furthermore, collaborative work allowed them to share knowledge and experiences growing in personal and academic contexts.

Pedagogical Implications

This study has positive pedagogical implications in the sense that results suggested that students have overcome their fear of speaking in public and of making mistakes. Students take risks because they understood that learning is born from mistakes and mistakes are born from taking risks. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to make of their speaking skill a personal strength when they care about communication and content more than form and detail. Students will also pay more attention to their fluency performance which will bring positive effects on their social life in face-to-face or virtual contexts. These students' attitudes and new behaviors towards their speaking performance in the target language shape an important group of pedagogical implications since they might have a positive impact on teachers who will be also encouraged to continue pulling students from their inside to extract the best of them in terms of communicative skills.

Limitations

This study also had some limitations that could have had some effect on the final results. First of all, the time for the study was very short to see a real improvement in the speaking fluency of students. However, and it might sound contradictory, because of the modern world tendencies, young people prefer fast, varied, easy and accessible things in their lives, different from what previous generations have lived. For this reason, having a speaking task per week might become monotonous in case a study lasted more than ten weeks.

Similarly, the speaking tasks were planned according to the syllabus of each institution, but due to the lack of time they were not carefully planned considering a progressive demanding level from task to task, and that is why results oscillated constantly. The real number of students in a class (from 25 to 30) is another limitation because just the students who are participating in the study feel they are under a critical eye while the others although they are taking part of the activities might feel relaxed and perhaps they are not really encouraged or challenged to improve.

Focusing classes on a specific skill makes the other three become weak. It is true that skills are linked to each other and they cannot be perceived in an isolated way; however, the time spent for applying speaking tasks and giving students the opportunity to speak, takes away the time to develop other competences which are not necessarily viable in virtual contexts. The modern world calls for virtuality, but as everything in life, every single thing has its space and moment to be done.

Further Research

It is recommended that further research be undertaken considering the progressive demanding level of speaking tasks in order to get a better understanding of how they affect fluency on students. This study has also shown positive effects on students' speaking ability, so it would be interesting to apply a similar study to the writing skill. Finally, additional research with a bigger sample will provide valuable feedback that will contribute to verify the validity of this study.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form


MASTER IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING TEACHING STRATEGIES TO FOSTER SELF-DIRECTED LANGUAGE LEARNING IN COLOMBIA RESEARCH PROJECT PART 2 (On-going Work) Scaffolds 2012

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Chía, 08 de agosto de 2012

Señores:
 Estudiantes nivel 3
 Programa de **proficiencia** en inglés
 Universidad de la Sabana
 Chía


Apreciados estudiantes:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada "How can fluency in Speaking be fostered in a group of 60 Colombian students through the use of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks?" Este estudio busca incrementar la fluidez en actividades de expresión oral por medio de tareas colaborativas que a su vez fortalezcan la auto-estima de los participantes y se logre una interacción armoniosa y un trabajo en equipo exitoso y significativo en contextos reales. Cabe anotar que dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Autodirigido –Programa Virtual- de la Universidad de La Sabana.

Por lo anterior, comedidamente solicito su consentimiento y colaboración como participantes de mi propuesta de investigación, que se llevará a cabo desde el 14 de agosto hasta el 30 de octubre. Esto implica la planeación e implementación de actividades orales colaborativas y de auto-aprendizaje, y la recolección de datos durante 11 semanas en las cuales ustedes responderán dos encuestas, participarán en tareas de expresión oral de manera individual o grupal una vez por semana, y registrarán dos reflexiones con respecto a su desempeño en actividades de expresión oral en un diario, una al comienzo y otra al final de la investigación. Ninguna de las actividades que se desarrollarán durante la investigación, tendrá incidencia alguna en las notas de clase.

Igualmente, se les garantizará el uso de seudónimos para mantener su identidad en el anonimato en todas las publicaciones que la investigación origine. Cabe anotar que el proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en las evaluaciones y notas parciales y/o finales del curso, por tal razón si usted firma la carta de consentimiento acepta voluntariamente participar del proyecto de investigación. Así mismo, usted puede decidir rehusarse a responder, participar, o abandonar el proyecto. Sin embargo, su participación voluntaria será de gran ayuda para llevar a cabo este proyecto de manera exitosa.

Agradezco de antemano su valioso aporte para llevar a buen término mi investigación.


MASTER IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Atentamente,

 Docente investigador

Acepto participar Nombre _____ Firma _____	Acepto participar Nombre _____ Firma _____
Acepto participar Nombre _____ Firma _____	Acepto participar Nombre _____ Firma _____
Acepto participar Nombre _____ Firma _____	Acepto participar Nombre _____ Firma _____
Acepto participar Nombre _____ Firma _____	Acepto participar Nombre _____ Firma _____

Appendix B: Measuring Sheet



Measuring Oral Production

Participant's Name: _____

Intervention # _____ Date _____

Oral fluency scores

Number of words per minute	
Average number of words per participation (specify on time)	
Number of hesitations/ interjections per minute	

Meaning scores

Number of overt errors (verb tenses and conjugation)	
Number of incomplete sentences per minute	
Number of broken words per minute	
Number of repetitions per minute	

Communication scores

Is there evidence of collaborative work?	
Is there evidence of interaction in the speaking tasks?	
Is there a communicative message in interventions?	

Adapted from <http://www.scienceDirect.com/science/article/pii/S0028393201002018>

Appendix C: Student's Survey






MASTER IN
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FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Student's Name: _____

Date: _____ Lesson Nº: _____

SELF EVALUATION


	ABSOLUTELY 	KIND OF 	CAN BE BETTER 
I followed all the steps proposed during the class.			
I liked the speaking activity proposed by my teacher.			
The activities offered helped me speak in English.			
I was able to use English to communicate with my partners.			
I was able to speak without hesitation.			
I was able to speak in English with fewer interruptions.			
I felt embarrassed while speaking.			
I liked working in teams or groups.			
I was able to work collaboratively while doing the speaking activities			
I played a specific role with responsibility			
I enjoyed speaking in English during the class.			

Comments

My strengths were

Areas I can improve

Appendix D: Teacher's Observation Chart

	MASTER IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING	
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES		
TEACHER'S REFLECTION NOTES		
Teacher's name:	Lesson N°:	Date of lesson:
1. What were the greatest achievements while carrying out this intervention? Why?		
2. Were the objectives reached? Explain. How did you realize of this? Support.		
3. Would you modify something taking into account the purpose of enhancing fluency?		
4. What was your personal perception regarding students' performance while speaking in English?		
5. Have you observed improvement in oral fluency while implementing collaborative and self-directed tasks?		
6. What other actions can be taken as part of your research validity?		

Appendix E: Lesson Plan Format

DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING TEACHING STRATEGIES TO FOSTER SELF-DIRECTED LANGUAGE LEARNING IN COLOMBIA RESEARCH PROJECT PART 2
(On-going Work) 2012

LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE FOR INTERVENTION

Adapted from Dr. Joan Rubin's Lesson Planner, COLT Lesson plan template and Weekly Planner 2012-03 Department of Language and Culture, Universidad de La Sabana

Name of co-researcher: ANGELA GAMBA									
University Code Number: 201111208									
Institution: SABANA UNIVERSITY									
Date of Class: DAY MONTH YEAR	Time of Class: 11 am. Length of class: 1h.								
Week No.: 6 7 09 2012	Time Frame: One class period.								
Class/grade: LEVEL 3 / PRE-INTERMEDIATE	Room: G-110								
Number of students: 20	Average age of Students: 19-20 years old								
Number of years of English study:	Level of students: A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2								
Lesson Number	Research Circle Leader:								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	CAROLINA CRUZ
1	2	3	4						
5	6	7	8						
Set Lesson Goals									
TASK: Talk about activities that have been performed through early life.									
COMPETENCES:									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express ideas about dreams, ambitions, and achievements. Give a clear presentation on topics related to dreams, ambitions and achievements and answer predictable or factual questions. Keep up a conversation on a fair range of topics related to dreams, ambitions and achievements. Intonate to sound interested 									
OBJECTIVE: To encourage students to use the past participle of verbs by recalling information from personal experiences.									

Language Goal Students will be able to use the participle of verbs in present perfect sentences when referring to achievements during their lives.	Assessment Criteria How well verbs were conjugated in the present perfect tense and how related they were with the time expressions used.
Learning to Learn Goal Establish a Learning to speak goal based on the use of background information and the activation of schemata.	Assessment Criteria Students will show evidence of the language goal in the moment they express achievements in real life contexts.
Identify a topic for the lesson Students will focus on " Achievements during early life ", so they will work with authentic personal material (photos, letters, videos) so that they find the new language real and meaningful.	
Materials and Resources	
Material 1 Handout	Rationale: This handout is aimed to make students identify the participle form of verbs and differentiate them from the past tense which is the tense they have been working on.
Material 2 Pictures	Rationale: These pictures are aimed to activate schemata in students so that they come up with ideas and develop the speaking task for today.
Material 3: Pieces of paper	Rationale: The sentences in these pieces of paper are aimed to elicit from students some information about personal experiences related to activities performed during early life such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of times they have been to places of warm weather; they have cried; they have felt embarrassed, nervous, frightened, frustrated, etc; they have celebrated special occasions, they changed their minds, or they have made the wrong choice. What they have done by their parents and by themselves; what they or people have done to save the environment, to protect animals or improve the world. in order to encourage them to use language.

Appendix F: Teacher's Observations – Consolidated Chart

CRITERIA	INTERVENTION 1	INTERVENTION 2	INTERVENTION 3	INTERVENTION 4	INTERVENTION 5
1. What were the greatest achievements while carrying out this intervention? Why?	Students were forced to speak in English for the first time, and they experienced lots of fear and were forced to use previous vocabulary which was generally basic.	Students participated actively and they got involved in the task. They used their creativity in a very productive way because they used new vocabulary and grammar structures within real life context.	Students used the new expressions to express first time events, and this helped them to make their stories sound natural. They also were more aware of past tense conjugation and use of connectors.	Students were encouraged to use the vocabulary and expressions checked in class, so they had the opportunity to see how meaningful and useful they were in real life contexts.	Students were able to talk without any extra help such as notes in papers, and fluency improved a little bit more. They were able to produce more words during their speech.
2. Were the objectives reached? Explain. How did you realize of this? Support.	Completely because the idea of the pre-test was just becoming aware of students' strengths and weaknesses.	Absolutely. In fact, my expectations were fewer. They were dressed according to the situation (journalists, presenters, and important and common citizens). They also considered relevant the decoration of the stage with a poster, music, video and pictures.	Yes, as mentioned in the question above, students used new expressions, vocabulary and transition words in their talks.	No. Although students were asked not to read, they felt unsecure about it, and they were not able to expand ideas apart from those they had already prepared. The grammar structure (present perfect) is still faulty.	Kind of, because although they were committed with the final product, there are still some pronunciation mistakes that might alter meaning.
3. Would you modify something considering the purpose of enhancing fluency?	Not yet.	Not at the moment. Although they used memory as a learning strategy which did not allow showing evidence of real communication, I consider it a very good outcome for being just the second intervention.	Yes, I would provide them with much better pictures that contain lots of details they could use to narrate important first events. The use of models before activities can also help them a lot.	Yes, it is necessary to reinforce reading in order to provide them with grammar and vocabulary in context that allow them to have more ideas and vocabulary when speaking.	Yes, it is necessary to reinforce practice on pronunciation of words, specially their endings.
4. What was your personal perception regarding students' performance while speaking in English?	Their English level is higher than the one I expected. In fact, students were eager to express ideas.	They made the mistakes (in terms of language and pronunciation) proper of their language level; however, I felt they enjoyed the task, owned their roles and cared for a good quality final product.	They did it fine because they received lots of input regarding voc and expressions; however, they still need to be more creative and proactive to develop ideas. They just work because they are asked to do it: I need to think on activities that make them feel motivated.	They made mistakes related to verb conjugation and there are still word choice mistakes. They lack of ideas and vocabulary to expand answers since questions are related to personal experiences.	They were free to produce verb conjugation and they were aware of including new expressions and structures studied during the course.
5. Have you observed improvement in oral fluency while implementing collaborative and self-directed tasks?	Not yet.	Not yet, because today's task allowed them to use memory and although they did it very fluently (excellent preparation), oral fluency with a communicative purpose was not evident. What I did observe was an excellent collaborative and self-directed work because each of them became responsible of their role and they were respectful and careless for the success of their group's presentation.	Today I did. Although last intervention was prepared, I think that students are already aware of the use of the simple past and past continuous tenses when narrating past events, and vocabulary that can help them develop ideas.	Not yet. Although today's task gave them a little time to prepare their talking, and this pushes them to improvise language, students are still frightened of talking and developing ideas. They still depend a lot on notes and do not take the risk of continue talking what has not been prepared beforehand.	Yes, today they showed evidence on the benefit of making speaking a regular practice in their weekly classes.
6. What other actions can be taken as part of your research validity?	None yet.	Perhaps making students see the videos so that they can reflect on their performance and think of aspects to be improved. They could contribute with more ideas and contributions.	I will ask them to suggest speaking tasks that might call their attention.	I will ask just to five students per class and the other five will do it as Independent work. I will rotate groups because students get bored when I ask each of them to participate.	Make students feel free to suggest and design their own speaking tasks that overcome their needs and interests.

CRITERIA	INTERVENTION 6	INTERVENTION 7	INTERVENTION 8	INTERVENTION 9	INTERVENTION 10
1. What were the greatest achievements while carrying out this intervention? Why?	Students were able to report on some information they had gathered through some interviews. In addition, they came up with elaborated and well-structured ideas.	Students did not have time to prepare their oral participation, just the context given in the precise moment of the activity	Students had to put in context all what they have learned so far, so they were able to see the meaning of structures in real life situations.	Students showed evidence of research and they learned about different cultures. New vocabulary was used.	Students became responsible of their own roles and they worked together to come up with a high quality product.
2. Were the objectives reached? Explain. How did you realize of this? Support.	Completely, because students reported the information with no great efforts in terms of pronunciation and grammar structures. In addition, they supported that information with Power point presentations and/or pictures.	Kind of, because some of them were not able to follow the guidelines stated for their roles because it depended on the others' work. With one student who did not follow the guideline, the roles of the other might be altered	Yes, although outcomes could have been better. Students limited to include a few expressions and structures just to fix the task requirements.	Completely. Students were innovative and visual aids were neatly designed allowing them to refer to their topic with no much trouble.	Completely. In fact, students came up with results beyond the ones expected. They made a great effort and results just demonstrated them.
3. Would you modify something taking into account the purpose of enhancing fluency?	Not this time. Students reported to have enjoyed the activity a lot because they had the chance to share ideas and know relevant information from people around.	Yes, instructions must be clear enough and perhaps models of what is expected from students should be provided. Improvisation, as it was the purpose of the task, cannot be planned; that's why its name: improvisation.	No this time although a rubric that could guide them on the minimums to be considered for final products could be shared in order to encourage them to go beyond the minimum effort.	Yes, it is necessary to encourage students to use their own language when talking about topics they had to read about instead of just copying information.	No this time.
4. What was your personal perception regarding students' performance while speaking in English?	They did it pretty well. They still need more practice in order to reach the expected range fluency; however, the activity just went smoothly and natural.	They tried to do their best to the extent they understood what they had to do. While improvising, common mistakes arose: verb conjugation, some missing subjects and word choice.	Students could have been much more demanding with their own work. Perhaps they are got tired because we are almost at the end of the semester.	Students did a great job. They worried about the information they would share with the class, and they learned what they were going to say.	I felt proud of their work. They worked alone in the writing of the script and performance.
5. Have you observed improvement in oral fluency while implementing collaborative and self-directed tasks?	Yes, today they showed evidence on the benefit of making speaking a regular practice in their weekly classes	Yes, despite the roles were not fully developed, they were able to adapt their role to the situation given.	Yes. This task included all the topics studied so far and students showed improvement of topics, vocabulary and grammar expressions. Communication was more fluent and real.	Yes, students feel much more confident each time and this is evident in their speech.	Completely. There were students who had to improvise their scripts, and they did it really well. Language production just flowed.
6. What other actions can be taken as part of your research validity?	Definitely, speaking tasks become meaningful once students feel they can see the world from very different perspectives, and they hadn't realized that different truths were around them.	Making speaking tasks every week becomes monotonous and instead of doing good things we can create a negative answer from students.	Combining speaking tasks with other skills in order to cover language learning as a whole.	Creating a checklist of items students might use to peer-assess their partners and create a peer-community for feedback.	Asking students to make a report of the process they lived before, during and after the final performance.