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Research Paper:

Study Techniques Used by Students to Learn and Practice the English Language in Communication in 10th grade of High School at the Hermann Gmeiner School in the Afternoon Session During the Second Semester of the Year 2015

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Abstract

This research paper investigates study techniques to learn and practice the English language in communication. The study techniques were investigated and analyzed to know which are being used by students and what are the most effective for them. This work applies the qualitative research method to investigate student´s views. The instruments used were the interview and the survey, which were applied to students of high school at Herman Gmeiner School, in Esteli. The sample considered was of 20 participants from a population of 40 students. The data found that the most used tools by students are audio visual mediums.

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Dedicatory

This study is dedicated to God, to our parents, to teachers, and to all of those who are interested in students' growth.

Dedicatory

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Chapter One: Introduction

This research problem has been chosen for the great importance of English in the professional world. Thinking in all the opportunities for progress and social development, we consider speaking English not as a luxury, but also as a need for global communication, for business, education, work relationships, among others.

Our focus is on students, because most research is focused on teachers. We think that students have a very important role in English learning apart from the regular classes. They have to develop and implement successful study techniques in a personal way for improving English communication.

For us, study techniques are great resources to learn English, for that reason we have taken them in our research. We want to highlight and share the most efficient study techniques to make easier the English communication learning.

1.1 Problem Statement

This study is mainly focused on English as a communication method, looking for the most effective techniques to establish a basic conversation among students in High School; mainly, because at the present time the world is facing a great educational crisis at academic level. A relevant research elaborated by González (2014) explains that there are many factors that impact negatively the learning process; he mentioned factors such as starting learning English in late adolescence, little dedication to this subject, lack of interest from students and the lack of effective techniques used for practicing English in communication. For this reason, it is necessary to promote the interest in the English but also in the techniques required to learn this language in communication. According to Flores (2001) English techniques in communication are essential if students wish to be successful in school, and want to feel comfortable with the language and be able to converse without hesitation

The world is growing and also is changing step by step, people are experimenting new systems which are involving the whole society around the world, and an unbelievable change is the acquisition of a universal language which is the English language. Montrul (2013) says that the English language is the most effective means of communication for business around the world and currently there are some 400 millions of native people who speak English as their maternal language, and some 200 millions of people who have learned it as a second language.

This research is oriented for high school students because they are starting in a new and advanced world, where it is perceived as necessary to learn English as a second language or foreign language. It is becoming a communication language in the whole world.

Learning a foreign language is very important because it is a vehicle for students to pass to another level in their labor life. Therefore, study techniques used by students to learn and practice the English language in communication are important because it can improve students´ performance for progressing and developing personal´s skills better and to face different difficulties in speaking.

An interesting contribution by O´Malley and Chamot (1997), states that though students report using techniques, they are rarely using them in communication and often they only use study techniques that do not demand an active mental process.

In another important investigation elaborated by Dunlowsky, Rawson, March, Nathan and Willingham (2013), they found that many students are not showing successful results in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because they are not using effective techniques in their study.

Therefore, this study has been chosen with the purpose of giving better answers to the education environment. This research contents information about the importance of applying study techniques in communication, and presents some of the most important aspects of those techniques, mentioned and proved by some important researchers.

Study techniques to learn English are generally a series of all the different effective ways to do the learning process successfully. There are a variety of study techniques

which focus on the process of study organization, in taking and retaining new information, and obviously developing communicative skills in the English language.

1.2 Relevance of the Problem

This research is considered important because study techniques are indispensable to get a better communication level. Pour (2002) mentioned that study techniques are very important in English communication because they make easier the study process; also, these are tools to make effective what students want to learn in English.

Techniques are becoming a very important concept in the students´ world. Some traditional techniques or resources of teachers may not be completely successful in communication; therefore, it is necessary that students can develop and practice effective study techniques for improving their communication skills.

According to Oxford (1994), study techniques are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or strategies that students employ often consciously to improve their own progress in internalizing, storing, retrieving, and using the second language. For that reason, study techniques are very important for developing communicative skills in EFL learning.

It is important to mention that studying is a process which students have to develop daily, and it is in this process that is possible to understand what are the most effective techniques to better and make easier the communication process of students. It is important to reflect that effective communication is very important in life because it is the way of how people can communicate with others, for expressing feelings, opinions, and for developing a professional life around the world. Renade (2006) says that effective communication is essentially needed for every professional these days. Oral communication requires a lot of excellence in spoken skills.

Dulonsky (2013) says that effective communication learning is an active process which requires study techniques. Studying involves a progression to mastering the course material, for this reason it is precise to resort to study techniques which can help students to exploit the time and reduce actual time spent studying. Effective

study techniques can produce a sense of understanding, happiness, and mastery of content.

All of those benefits mentioned by Dulonsky show clearly the relevance of learning effective study techniques in communication. Study techniques help students to facilitate their memorization process and also it helps them to improve their English communicative skills. If students know about some techniques to learn the English, they can obtain better results in communication, and also it can be reflected in their academic performance in high school. It is fundamental to acquire some systematic knowledge, organized and logic, because disorganization interrupts assimilation and students forget things learned; for this reason, it is relevant the idea of making an investigation which contents and explains the importance of techniques and also brings to students some of the most effective techniques in the learning of a second language.

It is important to mention the contribution of Luo (2007) who says that there are different study techniques; some of them are not as useful as others. For that reason, students have to learn to identify which are the most effective for them according to their area of study.

Lewandowsky & Farrel (2010) say that students need to think about improving study techniques that are already highly used, changing them a little to make them better. That means that some techniques are not precisely wrong techniques, the problem could be a wrong implementation of them.

This research pretends to foster the improvement of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in communication through effective study techniques, not only showcasing the study techniques that are most likely effective, but also encouraging professionals to continue investigating the most promising techniques.

1.3 Background of the Problem

The methodology of this investigation is based on some works done previously by some authors who investigated this theme with a scientific character, showing

positive results through real experiments. One of them is Ramirez and Pamplón (2013), who, in a research in Mexico, states that study techniques are fruit of experience that helps improve the EFL learning in communication. Learning techniques in communication is to take advantage of strategies, creative tools and a variety of cognitive learning which enhances the communication in an integral way.

Also Ramirez in his research explains, student´s learning of a specific linguistic form is achieved with its use, and not only through memorization. It indicates that the uses of study techniques collaborate to improve learning in a course, and cooperative learning increase the communicative performance of students.

Another important contribution is the research of O´Malley and Chamot (1995) which has indicated the importance of study techniques in communication as a second language. They indicated that students used a variety of study techniques, but typically used more systematic techniques and applied them, but not in communication. Students were randomly assigned to receive training on vocabulary, listening, and speaking. Results varied depending on the training but generally indicated that study techniques could be effective for integrative language communication.

1.4 Organization of the Paper

This research is divided by the followings aspects, the first chapter is the Introduction, which is subdivided in three different parts. The first part of the introduction is the Problem Statement, in this part it is mentioned the research problem, which is ¨Study Techniques Used by Students to Learn and practice the English Language in Communication¨. This first part basically consists of the problem statement; the second one is the relevance of the problem, and the third and the last one is the background of the study.

The second chapter is the Literature Review; this chapter collects all the literary information about study techniques in English communication from different authors around the world who have published important books, magazines, articles, research and other types of information according to our research problem. It is divided by different aspects which support the research problem and research questions.

The third chapter is the Methodology which contents the Research design, which mentions the criteria for the elaboration of this research, the type of instrument applied in the research, and the criteria for choosing the universe, also the Methodology section the population and the sampling.

The fourth chapter is Result and Discussion, this chapter processes all the instrument results in a summarized way; then, those results are analyzed and discussed making a comparison with the literature review to establish the conclusion of the research paper. And finally, the fiftht chapter is the Conclusion; this chapter shares the main aspects found through the research process, answering mainly the two research questions. In this chapter it has been included, also, some limitations in the elaboration of this research paper, and some recommendations.

Key Terms

a) **EFL:** According to the Oxford Dictionary Express (2012), EFL for their acronyms means English as a Foreign Language.

b) **Study techniques:** For a better comprehension Study Techniques will be considered according to the Cambridge Dictionary (2015) as the different methods procedure or way something is done.

c) **Effectiveness:** Effectiveness, the Oxford dictionary (2015) defines it as the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result; it is the same that success.

d) **Communication:** Kumar (2010), says that communication is the process of expressing information or ideas by word and it is the interchange of verbal message between the sender and the receiver through the mouth.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The study of any science requires the use of techniques for developing skills, and it is more usual if the study is to learn English in communication. Study techniques are the formula which implicates an intelligent system to apply in the study process, and in English communication refers to a series of the most effective methods to learn communicative skills.

It is important to reflect that effective communication is very important in life in order to communicate with others, to express feelings, opinions, and to develop a professional life around the world. Renade (2006) says that effective communication is essentially needed for every professional these days and requires a lot of effective techniques for them to be successful.

Pour (2002) mentions that there is a serious problem in English communication, and it is not only for not using study techniques, but also for not using them properly. Actually, there are a lot of study techniques which students are using, but these techniques sometimes are not as effective as students believe, for that reason, when students practice these techniques they do not obtain exactly the desired benefit.

However, it is important to say that although students may not know about study techniques in English Communication, those techniques can be learned and applied by students generally in a short period. It is depending only on the will and dedication of students. According to Celse, Brinton and Goodwing (2006) there are a considerable number of EFL learners whose communication needs mandate a high level of intelligibility and therefore requires special assistance with pronunciation. The keys to effective communication rest in developing and using language skills such as developing ideas, formulating techniques, locating and developing sufficient support materials and organizing material in an understandable manner (Gupta, 2008).

Considering the relevance and trying to give better solutions in English communication learning, in this research it will be reflected effective techniques to get a successful English communication performance, according to some important studies. The purpose is that students can apply them, and this way they can improve their English communication learning.

2.2 Techniques for developing communicative Skills

According to Adekola (2007), techniques for developing communicative skills are a series of techniques for introducing a language to students; those techniques teach an efficient way on how to develop communication skills across different activities. Some of the most important techniques for developing communicative skills are:

2.2.1 The study group

It is very important to talk about the study group. This technique is considered an efficient strategy for practicing communication, and one of the most used at present. Through the interaction with others it is possible to clarify doubts sharing different ideas, forming this way a type of constructive teaching, where each student can provide information and to enlarge their English vocabulary. Lick and Murphy (2005) expressed that study groups produce effective learning, not only in group, but also in an individual way too. That is because with each one of the contributions among students it is possible to develop a constructive learning where everyone can contribute with each particular piece of knowledge. It is important in communication because classmates can strengthen their weaknesses in communication skills among themselves.

According to Sims and Sims (1995), the formation of groups can provide support to individual students who are having difficulty with specific learning stages. This way when a student has a difficulty in something, classmates can help him and together they can improve their communication skills.

The brothers Sims highlight that this study type also requires certain considerations from which to take advantage. For example, the place and the atmosphere of study

should be a pleasant place. Other important consideration is the appropriate behavior among students. They have to keep in mind the real reason of group meeting, for this is necessary to act seriously, and in the case of indiscipline there must be somebody who moderates the meeting.

In another contribution by Lassonde and Israel (2009) they realized that in study groups students can develop the social and the affective part, obtaining this way results in communication. Also, students can learn from others and with others. They divided the stage of a group in the follow parts which are ´´Forming Groups Process¨, it is the process when students meet among themselves; generally it is for motivation of relationships and not for working really. The second stage is ¨Storming Group¨, it is the part when students can contribute with their opinions about something in special. The third stage is ¨Norming Group¨, in this part they begin to acknowledge and accept differences among themselves. And the last stage is ¨Leadership Group¨ this is the part when the whole group appoints a leader, somebody who presents the necessary characteristics to lead the rest of the group.

In study groups, as techniques, students share time among themselves acquiring new knowledge, learning vocabulary, talking about different topics and dialoguing. It is successful because students feel well with the interaction, and it is an effective technique for improving their communication process. A great research made in New Jersey by Fjermestad and Hilts (1999) showed a relevant aspect to consider at the moment of studying and it is according to the number of members that a study group should have. He found that 63 % of students like to study in groups of 10 members, but with his experiment he concluded that is more effective working with groups of 3 to 5 members, because they observed that had more participation, a better analysis, effectiveness and a better communication.

2.2.2 Practicing Conversation

Lesser and Robinson (2006) say that the conversation as study technique is a form of interaction among students, which trains the communication process of a spontaneous way. Apart of being an important social aspect, the communication as a study technique in the EFL learning, allows students to develop the English language in an integrative way.

According to Miller (2007) the practice of conversations among students is an effective technique that facilitates the communication process through the interaction with other students. This technique is linked with to all of aspects of life, including the educational, the business and the personal. Conversation is one of the most relevant aspects to improve the communication process.

¨Conversation refers to a time when two or more people have the right to talk or to listen without having to follow a fixed schedule, such an agenda. In conversation everyone can have something to say and anyone can speak at any time¨ (Arthur, Nalasco & Lois, 1987, p. 4). Wiercinski (2011) says that conversation is an essential technique in communication, and that it can be practiced face to face or through communicative means as telephone or cell phone, to practice it there is no specific topic; students can converse about what they like, about difficulties or anything.

Huang (2010) says that the conversation is a learning technique that students can develop and continue practicing with new people. The art of conversation includes both abilities, to speak effectively as well as to listen attentively, both abilities are important to connect a message among students.

2.3 Techniques for retaining new information in the communication process

Grigorenko and Kaufman (2008) say that techniques for retaining new information in the communication process are methods involved in learning or the acquisition of new information for practicing and improving the communication process, those techniques consist particularly in extract important information from different sources, in short words, the information is transferred and received with the purpose of practicing communication. Some of the most important techniques for retaining new information are:

2.3.1 Using audiovisual means

The use of audio visual means, called too audio visual aids and instructional materials, is a popular study technique which works through the representation of anything. This study technique helps students to learn new things through the sound and the sight. Tigelaar, Dolmans, Wolfhagen and Vleuten (2004) say that this study technique facilitates the learning of knowledge in students of a most clear way than other techniques because it uses some of the most important human senses in learning, such hearing and seeing. This is important in communication because students can learn new vocabulary, phrases and pronunciation.

In an experiment, Seghayer (2001) examined which of the means could be better in English communication learning; she did a comparison between types of means: For example, radio, black and white board, text-books and videos among 30 participants, and she realized that the videos are effective in the learning process because those are entertaining. And for their visual movements students were able to learn new vocabulary and they could reflect it with their participations.

In another experiment by Song and Marchionini (2007) where 36 participants studied with the intention of doing 5 tasks choosing 1 of 3 different types of audiovisual means to improve the communication, the results showed that combined the visual and audio ways were more effective in communication learning process. Students were able to remember words, definitions and phrases easily when they could see and listen to everything.

The two experiments reflected that audio visual means are very important in the communication learning process, and are more effective when those are more creative. Audio visual means help make the learning process more effective and conceptual, allowing a better attention and interest for students. Also students feel motivated learning new things.

2.3.2 Practicing Educational Games

Newton, (2001) says that games are one of the activities which require an active communication among classmates, and it is a successful study technique in acquiring vocabulary when using unknown words. Students have to deal with

different vocabulary during their language acquisition. In order to learn and retain new words, learners should participate in different games whether it is a guessing task, a describing exercise or conversation making. This technique could also include vocabulary which especially focuses on helping learners develop and use words in different contexts by making the lessons enjoyable. Therefore, it is necessary to explore how students learn vocabulary effectively through games and how they learn it.

Newton (2001) refers to this approach as a way that can enable learners to manage their vocabulary meaning and develop their communicative skills at the same time. Huang, Kinshuk and Spector, (2012) come to a conclusion that learning through games facilitates spontaneity, reinforcing learning, improving intonation and building confidence and also it increases the motivation in communication.

Also some authors as Dunlop (2007), Dorry (1882), and Wu (2008) support that games collaborates to improve the vocabulary and there are a lot of games that can be successful to learn English communication, which can be applied according to the creativity of students. In this technique the teachers have an important role because they show games to students for developing the class, but when those games are interesting or fun for students they decide to practice them in their free time among themselves.

Uberman (1998) says that with games students cannot only be enjoyed and entertained, but also they can practice incidentally to get a better communication. He observed the enthusiasm of the students in learning through games.

In a study elaborated by Huyen and Nga (2013) 20 students were willing to use the games previously used by the teacher. The students liked especially games such as Hangman, which consists of guessing words that belong to topic of jobs. Huyen and Nga observed that the students felt entertained and they found that games are helpful for the communicative learning process.

In conclusion, games are a great study technique in communication learning because they are interesting, entertaining and very fun. The results of this research

suggest that games are used not only for mere fun, but more importantly, for the learning of new vocabulary in communication.

2.3.3 Practicing Reading

An important study technique for developing a great communication learning, according to Cox (1999) is reading, because with this technique students can obtain a bigger and a better vocabulary. Some of the benefits in reading are better pronunciation through repetition of words, better intonation, and better comprehension, and those benefits are very important in the communication process.

Also Cox says that reading is a way to warming up in the communication process because students through reading are able to analyze phrases at the moment of practicing conversation. He says that in high school students have to practice more reading than in primary school because it is a higher level. Gallagher (2003) says that students must learn to read with the purpose of learning new things, also she says that reading comprehension is the construction of the meaning of a written text through a reciprocal interchange of ideas between the reader and the message in a particular text, and through reading students are able of obtaining the information from the author, and the vocabulary used in the writing for practicing in communication.

2.3.4 Words wall

A Word wall is another of the activities to acquire a great vocabulary mentioned by authors as Perry, (2004), Kopp, (2010), Saldivar (2006), and Wagstaff (1999). It consists of making decoration with all the vocabulary possible in a part where students can be regularly. It is to say the environment where they stay, this place could be the own bedroom, the living room or another place.

Wagstaff (1999) says that practicing word walls is not only for decoration, it is a way for learning a constructive vocabulary where is possible to acquire a great number of new words according the time assigned. Students feel good doing this activity

because they can use their creativity and when they are decorating the place they are also learning unknown words for a bigger vocabulary.

The system used to learn vocabulary in wall words is through repetitions, students have to repeat each one of the words on the wall trying to remember and to learn it. There are a lot of ideas related to how a word wall should be organized, it could be by alphabetical order, grouped in topic clusters, grouped in subject area clusters, color coded, etc.

Koop (2010) suggests that a word wall has to have meaning. Students should write the words on cards, never have a word alone stands. Students have to be sure that the word includes a definition or explanation and an illustration to facilitate the memorization process.

2.4 Study organization Techniques

According to Karmakar (2011), study organization techniques have the function to manage what are the steps which follow in planning. It is a function in which the synchronization and combination of human and physical resources takes place. All the resources are important to get results. Therefore, organizational functions help in achieving results. It is important for EFL because students can distribute, on a productive way, their time to achieve a successful English learning process. Some of the most important study organization techniques are:

2.4.1 The schedule

The schedule is a technique which pretents to follow a respective plan. It is important in the study process because if students apply it is possible to establish an order in the time assigned for studying. Hendler (2014) says that it is the plan of a day by time activity. If students are able to get it as study technique, this technique can help them in the communication process because they can assign time for the study and clasify their activities according to their importance.

According to Serway (2014) the schedule is important to set the activities and to bring a programmed time to the study. A schedule defines what students have to do and when they have to do it. Serway and Vuille (2014) say that the schedule reflects the study priorities, the best sequence and a better integration of activities. He also says that practicing the schedule can impact students with a significant change in the quality of their work and if it is practiced appropriately, they can feel satisfied with themselves.

Richman (2006) affirms that if students practice a schedule, they can know what they are doing in a particular day and what they are doing in continuation. If they study any particular subject regularly, they will know what they need to do daily without forgetting anything. Hulett (2012) expressed that in developing a schedule is possible that students can carry out their activities because they now remember them easily and they become more efficient in what they do. For that reason, a schedule is important, because the brain can be able to focus on any activity at a time.

2.4.2 Taking Notes

Otto (2014) says taking notes is a study technique which must be learned and refined with the goal of remembering studied things. This technique consists of recording important notes and in communication is important because students can write words to learn them easily. Taking notes helps students to concentrate in class and facilitate a deeper understanding of a topic.

Chang and Li (2014) say that in taking notes it is important that students learn to keep notes logically and legibly, because if they cannot read their own writing a few days after taking notes, they are using them of a little productive way. Also they say that the best place to keep notes is in a private notebook. If students get notes in a notebook, they always are having important information with them.

In an important experiment by Morris and Smith (1995), they investigated the effectiveness of taking notes comparing differences of successful or less successful students in lecture. In the experiment 48 students were divided in two groups of 24 to participate in a conference. In being evaluated the retaining of information, they

noted that those who took notes had a better learning and were able to transmit the message of the information in a better way.

Summary

The contributions of all these researchers have shown the effectiveness of study techniques in communication. And being that English is so important in the professional life, we value study techniques to improve English communication skills. The great variety of study techniques can help students in their learning process and are free. In this research, study techniques have been classified in three categories which are, techniques for developing communicative skills, techniques for retaining new information in the communication process, and study organization techniques, with the purpose of giving better and organized information of alternatives to improve English communication.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter is shown the methodology of this research paper considering that it has an important role in the process of this study. The instruments were developed looking for answers to the two main research questions. It was determined to use the qualitative method, making use of the interview and the survey instruments. The instrument answers are analyzed to show the specific results. This design of this research was chosen because the opinion of students has been considered as valuable. This part, also, contents parts such as the ´´Universe´´ that is the total of all the possible participants according to a determinate place in researching. The following part is the ´´Population´´ which is a specific section from the Universe that has similar aspects to the sampling. The ´´Sampling´´ is the most specific section which will be studied and focused in the research. Also, the chapter contents the data collection, it describes the process of how the data are collected using instruments to get it. And the last part is the data analysis, this is the part which explains the way of the analysis and interpretation of the instruments information.

3.1.1 Research Questions

For purposes of this research paper, two main research questions are:

a. What study techniques are used by students at high school level to practice the English language in communication?
b. What are the most effective techniques identified by students?

3.2 Research Design

The present study followed the qualitative research design. In this design, qualitative researchers collect data at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. Moreover, in this design the information is gathered by interacting with the participants and evaluating their answers in questions. Furthermore, qualitative researchers usually collect data themselves through examining documents, or interviewing participants. In the entire qualitative research

process, the researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or writers express in the literature (Creswell, 2009).

The instruments were applied in Hermann Gmeiner School Estelí. The S.O.S Hermann Gmeiner School in Estelí is situated at the north part of the city of Estelí, in the Sandino neighborhood. It is a subsidized school founded by the Austrian Hermann Gmeiner (1919-1986), a kind man who founded schools and villages around the world to help poor children. This school is well known because most part of students there are orphans children, helped by the S.O.S Hermann Gmeiner Villages foundation; however this school has other students with low economic resources from near neighborhoods.

The school serves primary, secondary and technical courses. It had an initial enrollment of 1,788 students who are distributed according to levels. The school is under the administration of S.O.S Children's Villages, and works with a focus on the care and protection of children at risk, single parents and low income. This school assists children from neighborhoods such as Ronaldo Aráuz, Sandino, Los Angeles, Jose Santos Zelaya and the Camilo Segundo. Those neighborhoods are situated near the school.

There are a total of 42 teachers in regular primary school, 17 in secondary school, 8 teachers for Technical Courses. There are 23 classrooms that are used in both sessions for a total of 46 classrooms and with an average of 38 students per teacher.

The instruments required for the elaboration of this study were the survey and the interview, which content important questions about the two research problems. The sample for the survey instrument consisted of 20 students chosen by *purposeful sampling* from a population of 40 students that were the total number of students in the 4th year of high school, in the classroom ¨B¨ in Hermann Gmeiner School. From the 20 total students as sample for the survey, only 10 students are chosen to participate in the interview, following the *criterion-based sampling* which includes boys and girls.

3.2.1 Universe

The Universe of the study were the total number of students belonging to the two classrooms of the 4th year of high school in Herman Gmeiner School, which are 76 students in total, 36 students in the classroom ¨A¨, and 40 students in the classroom ¨B¨.

3.2.2 Population

The population of this study consisted of 40 participants, which corresponds to the total number of students of the 4th year of high school registered in the classroom ¨B¨ at Hermann Gmeiner School, in Estelí.

3.2.3 Sampling

Sampling, as it relates to the research, it refers to the selection of individuals units, and/or settings to be studied. The type of sampling to be featured for the survey was *purposeful*; this study consisted of a random selection of 20 students, which corresponded to the 50% of the entire population, and the interview used the *criterion-based sampling,* that is a sample that has the characteristics relevant to answer the research questions (Patton, 2001).

3.3 Data Collection

For purposes of this research, an interview and a survey were used. According to Kvale (1996) Interview are a systematic ways of talking and listening to people and are another way to collect data from individuals through conversations. The researcher or the interviewer often uses open questions. Data is collected from the interviewees.

3.3.1 Interview

Kvale (1996) says that the interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. It has been considered as an excellent instrument to acquire knowledge production emphasized in the problem research from students because through this instrument is possible to face students, to listen to them, and to analyze their answers in a personal way.

In this research the interview instrument contents 10 different opened questions which allowed to participants to answer freely their opinions and to collect data as well as to gain knowledge from individuals.

3.3.2 Survey

The other instrument used was the survey. According to Fowler (2013) it is a tool for consistently implementing a scientific protocol for obtaining data from respondents. For most social and behavioral surveys, the instrument involves a questionnaire that provides a script for presenting a standard set of questions and response options.

The survey contented 20 closed questions focused on study techniques to learn English communication with different options or responses where students have to choose the best answer for them. The questions were answer with closed options represented by letters from the roman the alphabet as a-), b-), c-), d-) etc.. The students have to circle the letter they best prefer. Those answers were represented, summarized and analyzed with a data table.

These Instruments, the interview and survey were chosen in this research because through them we were able to obtain personal responses from participants. The instruments involve questions and intend to elicit views and opinions from the participants. The survey and interview were designed and pilot tested before administering them to the research participants.

3.4 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. According to Creswell (2009), it involves "preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data" (p. 183). The data collected from the participants was organized and prepared, read through and processed. The two main research questions formulated will be the basis for the organization of the analysis.

The survey instrument was analyzed through a data table which contents all the different answers from participants according to our research problem and the two

research questions. That information was represented through data table, bar graphs and a pie chart as a visual support to show the results

The Interview instrument started analyzing and counting the distribution of answers question by question. The researchers selected some sections of participants' discourse for providing the desired answers to analyze them. Gubrium and Holstein (2002) says that the analysis takes the similar statements produced by participants, allowing this way variability of different statements from the participants about the particular research topic.

The interview used a method of analyzing qualitative data which consists in interpreting the answers; then, the answers were chosen according to similarities being systematized and summarized in a composition which included all the data gathered.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the main research results. The data obtained from the instruments featured in this study and literature reviewed in the second chapter are central in this section of the paper. The instruments used were the interview and the survey, these instruments in this part are analyzed and linked by similar responses to establish the effective study techniques to learn English in communication according to participants. These study techniques have been organized according to its function in categories such as study organization, retaining new information, and developing communicative skills in the English communication. The results are organized into two subtitles, which correspond to the two main research questions this study aims to answer.

4.2 What study techniques are used by students at high school level to practice the English language in communication?

The instruments were designed presenting different alternatives of study techniques and classifying them according to the techniques approached in the literature review. The study techniques focused were study group, practicing conversation, audiovisual means, educational games, practicing reading, words wall, schedule, and taking notes. The following bar graph shows the answers from the survey instrument to confirm their responses. Then, those answers were discussed, taking into account the answers to the interviews.
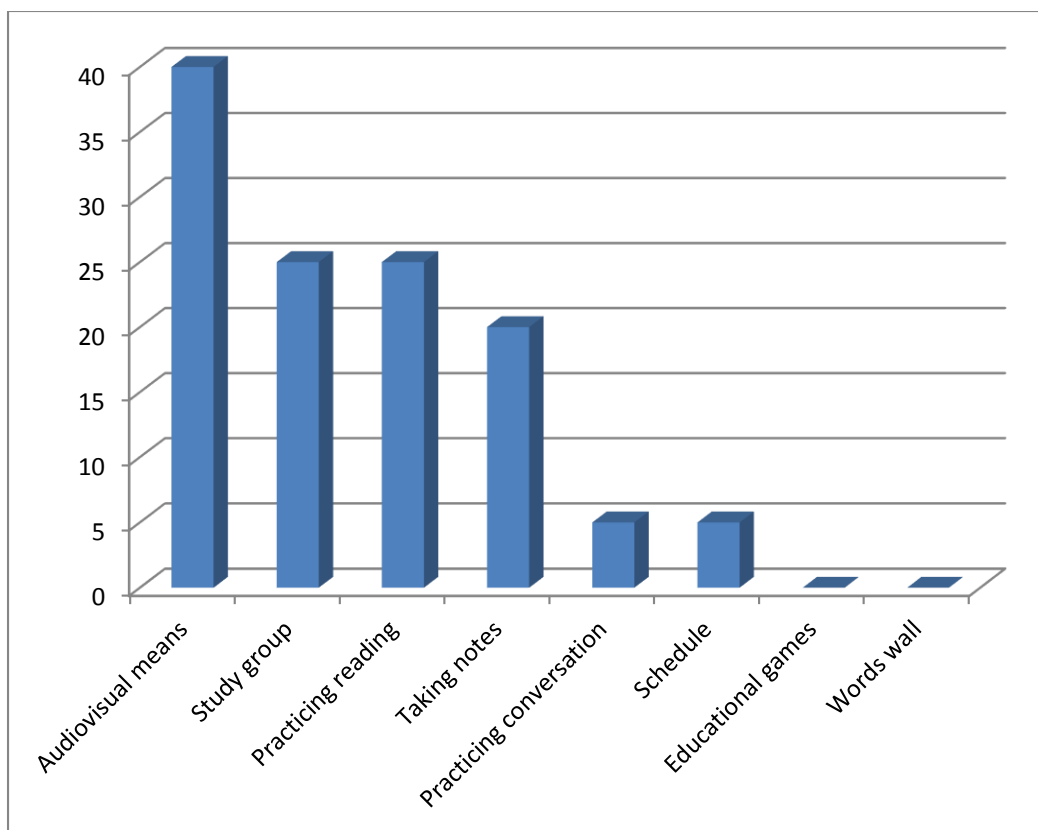
Graph 1 – Study techniques used by the students to learn and practice English communication

As mentioned in Chapter three (paragraph 3.2.3), the sample of this study consisted of 20 students, which correspond to the 50% of the population. The 40% of the students claimed to use audiovisual means as a study technique, the 25% expressed that they use study group, and the same percentage expressed to practice reading. Moreover, the 20% of the students stated that they take notes. The 5% of the students expressed that they practice conversation in English and keep an organized schedule to study English communication. However, none of the students claimed to use educational games or words wall as study techniques.

4.2 What are the most effective techniques identified by students?

In this section of this chapter, the effectiveness of the study techniques identified by the students were discussed. However, it is important to mention that not all the techniques have given a similar emphasis in the discussion. The three most used techniques by the students are in detailed discussed.

The survey administered to the students clearly showed that audiovisual means are effective study techniques identified by the students (the 40% expressed this fact). Some of the audiovisual means that the students claimed to use are computers, cell phones, English picture books, television, MP3 player. The least audiovisual means used by them is the radio. Moreover, they expressed that they do not use a DVD player.

Tigelaar, Dolmans, Wolfhagen and Vleuten (2004) explain that audiovisual means facilitate learning since they allow students to use several of their human senses, such hearing and seeing, at the same time. Moreover, Seghayer (2001) stated that audiovisual means are entertaining, motivating and challenging. The participants of this research confirm the benefits of audiovisual means in English language learning. They stated, for instance, that they liked to watch English videos and English movies; to listen to English music, and also, they mentioned that they used some cellphone apps that helped them improve their English, and they liked to use Internet for searching important English information.

The study group technique was the second most used by the students, according to the survey administed. However, this technique showed two counter opinions, being that the majority of the students thought that the study group technique help them to practice English communication among their classmates, and to help and benefit from others. As Sims and Sims (1995) suggested, the formation of groups can provide support to individual students who are having difficulty with specific learning stages. This way when a student has a difficulty in something, classmates can help him and together they can improve their communication skills.

Howoever, some other students stated that the study group technique was not effective because it had some disadvantages. They said that many times there was not a good communication among students; sometimes they could not concentrate when some students who were not interested in studying disturbed others.

The third most used study technique by student was practicing reading; 25% of the students expressed to use this technique. As noted in chapter two, Gallagher (2003) suggested that students must learn to read with the purpose of learning new things. Moreover, she said that by reading students are able to obtain general and specific

information from a text, and the vocabulary used in the writing for practicing in communication.

According to some of the students, reading in English is benefitial since it helps them in the English communication learning because they can learn new phrases and words, also they can analyze expressions in the target language. They stated that practicing reading helped them improve their fluency and pronunciation in the English language, and also reading helped them to understand the formation of words and phrases to express them in an oral way.

Regarding note-taking as a study technique, the participants answered that they used this technique because it helped them to improve their study organization. They considered that this technique helped them to remember important things. They answered that through taking notes they could organize what they were studying.

In relation to the practice of English conversation as a study technique to learn English communication, the instruments have showed a contradictory result. Despite the students' opinion that stated that it is an effective technique, the instruments reveal that it is one of the least study techniques used by them. As noted in the literature review, the practice of English conversation has many advantages. However, the students were not taking advantage of those benefits. Finally, the instruments clearly showed that the students did not use the educational games technique because some students considered that this study technique is not effective, and other students considered that it is effective but only with children.

Similarly, the words wall technique was considered effective by them, but they did not use it. It can be inferred that this technique was not used by students because they thought it is boring. As mentioned in chapter two, word walls are not only used for decoration, it is a way for learning constructive vocabulary for using in their English communication. The students are not benefiting by the use of such technique.

Finally, it is relevant to mention that in addition to the study techniques discussed above, it has been discovered also that many students use others techniques that are not reviewed in the second chapter of this thesis. Among those are singing English songs to improve their vocabulary, and rewriting words and phrases to

correct their mistakes in writing again to use them later orally. Students opinioned that these personal study techniques result effective for them in their communication learning process.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This study has shown that study techniques have many advantages in English learning and practicing English in communication. A variety of study techniques that can help students are benefitial for students since they facilitate learning through creative activities; also these motivate students both individually and collectetively with other students. The instruments have shown that each one of the study techniques studied are important for English communication learning because all have particular roles in the learning process. However, the students do not use all of them.

The most used study techniques in English communication learning are audiovisual means, study group, practicing reading, taking notes, practicing conversation and the use of schedule. However, an important finding in this research paper is that the participants in this research prefer to study through audiovisual means more than any other study technique. Most audiovisual means used by students are computer, cell phones, English books, television, MP3 player, and imagery.

They like to use audiovisual means in activities such as watching English videos and English movies; to listen English music, and also, inside these audiovisual means, students use phone apps that help them to improve their English, and internet for searching important information for their English communication learning.

Regarding the study group technique, the study has revealed that the study group technique is only effective when this is applied correctly with a good communication among students. Some students find it disturbing when their classmates are not interested in learning and interrupt their study process.

It has been found, also, that many students use other techniques which were not addressed in the literature review for improving their communicative English process. Some techniques such as singing English songs to improve their vocabulary and rewriting words and phrases to correct their mistakes in writing for apply them after orally. Students stated that these personal study techniques result effective for them in their communication learning process.

5.2 Limitations

It is relevant to mention that the present study had some limiting factors. For instance, at the moment of administering the survey and interview to the sample, some other students were curious and interrupted the students who were actually writing their responses.

5.3 Recommendations

In concluding this study, we want to invite to teachers and schools to promote the voluntary use of study techniques to students to improve their English communication learning, sharing their benefits and encouraging students to apply them. Finally, we want to finish motivating students to take advantages of all the effective study techniques to improve their English communication.

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Annexes

Research instruments

Interview about Study Techniques for Improving the English Communication Process

School: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

Objective: Determine the importance that students show about study techniques for improving the English communication process.

Definitions of support:

- *Audiovisual means: Are all the possible means which through audio and vision make easier the assimilation of a message. Example: TV, books, radio, music player, etc.*

- *Educational games: Are practical games, which have as purpose the transmission of new knowledge through creativity.*

Please respond carefully the following questions. Be honest in your answer.

1- How much important do you consider the English communication learning?

2- What do you mean about Study techniques for improving the English Communication process?

3- Do you use study techniques for developing the English communicative skills? Which?

4- Do you consider effective to study English in group? Why?

5- Do you try to practice communication in English language? When?

6- Do you think that audiovisual means are effectives for saving new knowledge? Why?

7- How much effective do you think educational games are for English learning? Why?

8- Do you think that practicing English reading is effective in the English communication learning process? Why?

9- Is effective for you to use a schedule for a good study organization? Why?

10- Do you think that taking notes help you for a good study organization? Why?

Survey about Study Techniques for Improving the English Communication Process

School: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

Objective: Evaluate the way that students are applying study techniques for Improving the English Communication Process.

<u>Definitions of support:</u>

- Audiovisual means: Are all the possible means which through audio and vision make easier the assimilation of a message. Example: TV, books, radio, music player, etc.

- Educational games: Are practical games, which have as purpose the transmission of new knowledge through creativity.

- Study techniques: Are Different methods that facilitate the study process.

Please analyze and respond the following questions.

1- How do you consider your English communication learning process?

   a-) Bad   b-) Regular   c-) Good   d-) Very Good

2- From the followings study techniques, which do you use to practice and to improve your communicative English?

   a-) Group study   b-) Practicing conversation   c-) Audiovisual means
    d-) Games   e-) Practicing reading   f-) Words wall   g-) Schedule
    h-) Taking notes

3- Do you think that is important to use Study Techniques for Improving the English Communication?

   a-) No   b-) Maybe   c-) Few important   d-) Very important

4- How often do you use Techniques for Improving the English Communication?

   a-) Never   b-) sometimes   c-) usually   d-) Always

5- How much effective do you think that is the practice of conversation in English communication learning?

   a-) Not effective   b-) Few effective   c-) Very effective

6- How often do you study English in group?

   a-) Never   b-) Sometimes   c-) Usually   d-) Always

7 -Where do you practice English communication with other people?

 a-) Nowhere   b-) Everywhere   c-) At school   d-) At home   e-) Others

8- How much effective do you consider to use words in the wall to learn English?

a-) Not effective   b-) Few effective   c-) Very effective

9- From the following audiovisual means, circle which do you more use for developing your communicative English learning.

a-) Radio   b-) DVD   c-) Television   d-) Computer   e-) MP3 Player   f-) Cell phone   g-) Imagery   h-) Books

10-How often do you use audiovisual means for practicing your English communication learning?

a-) Never   b-) Sometimes   c-) Usually   d-) Always

11- How much effective is for you to use games for acquiring new information?

a-) Not effective   b-) Few effective   c-) Very effective

12- How often do you use games for practicing your English communication learning?

a-) Never   b-) Sometimes   c-) Usually   d-) Always

13- How much effective is for you to practice reading in communication English learning?

a-) Not effective   b-) Few effective   c-) Very effective

14- How often do you read English text for practicing English?

a-) Never   b-) Sometimes   c-) Usually   c-) Very effective

15- Do you think that is effective to use imagery to learn new things?

a-) Not effective   b-) Few effective   c-) Very effective

16- How much effective is for you to use organization study techniques in English communication learning?

a-) Not effective   b-) Few effective   c-) Very Effective

17- How do you consider your study organization?

a-) Bad   b-) Regular   c-) Good   d-) Very Good

18- Do you use a schedule for organizing your studies?

a-) Never   b-) Sometimes   c-) Usually   d-) Always

19- Do you think that is effective to take notes for organizing information?

a-) Not effective   b-) Few effective   c-) Very effective

20- Do you use taking notes for organizing your information in English learning?

a-) Never   b-) Sometimes   c-) Usually   d-) Always

Data table about Study Techniques for Improving the English Communication Process

| Question	Possible Answers	Total Responses
1- How do you consider your English communication learning process?	a-) Bad	0
	b-) Regular	11
	c-) Good	7
	d-) Very Good	2
2-From the followings study techniques, which do you use to practice and to improve your communicative English?	a-)Study Group	5
	b-)Practicing conversation	1
	c-)Audiovisual means	8
	d-)Educational Games	0
	e-)Practicing reading	5
	f-)Words Wall	0
	g-)Schedule	1
	h-)Taking notes	4
3-Do you think that is important to use Study Techniques for Improving the English Communication?	a-) No	0
	b-) Maybe	1
	c-) Few Important	2
	d-) Very Important	17
4- How often do you use study techniques for improving your English communication ?	a-) Never	3
	b-) Sometimes	12
	c-) Usual	5
	d-) Always	0

5- How much effective do you think that is the practice of conversation in English communication learning?	a-) Not effective	0
	b-) Few effective	4
	c-) Very effective	16
6-How often do you study English in group?	a-) Never	4
	b-) Sometimes	12
	c-) Usually	3
	d-) Always	1
7-Where do you practice English communication with other people?	a-) Nowhere	3
	b-) Everywhere	0
	c-) At school	12
	d-) At home	2
	e-) Others	3
8- How much effective do you consider to use words in the wall to learn English?	a-) Not effective	2
	b-) Few effective	9
	c-) Very effective	9
9-From the following audiovisual means, circle which do you more use for developing your communicative English learning.	a-) Radio	1
	b-) DVD	0
	c-) Television	4
	d-) Computer	9
	e-) MP3 Player	4
	f-) Cell phone	6
	g-) Imagery	3
	h-) Books	5

10-How often do you use audiovisual means for practicing your English communication learning?	a-) Never	2
	b-) Sometimes	10
	c-) Usually	6
	d-) Always	2
11-How much effective is for you to use games for acquiring new information?	a-) Not effective	1
	b-) Few effective	6
	c-) Very effective	13
12-How often do you use games for practicing your English communication learning?	a-) Never	4
	b-) Sometimes	13
	c-) Usually	2
	d-) Always	1
13-How much effective is for you to practice reading in communication English learning?	a-) Not effective	0
	b-) Few effective	5
	c-) Very effective	15
14-How often do you read English text for practicing English?	a-) Never	4
	b-) Sometimes	11
	c-) Usually	2
	d-) Always	3
15-Do you think that is effective to use imagery to learn new things?	a-) Not effective	1
	b-) Few effective	5
	c-) Very effective	14
16-How much effective is for you to use organization study	a-) Not effective	0

techniques in English communication learning?	b-) Few effective	2
	c-) Very Effective	18
17-How do you consider your study organization?	a-) Bad	1
	b-) Regular	7
	c-) Good	10
	d-) Very Good	2
18-Do you use a schedule for organizing your studies?	a-) Never	3
	b-) Sometimes	11
	c-) Usually	4
	d-) Always	2
19-Do you think that is effective to take notes for organizing information?	a-) Not effective	0
	b-) Few effective	2
	c-) Very effective	18
20-Do you use taking notes for organizing your information in English learning?	a-) Never	2
	b-) Sometimes	8
	c-) Usually	4
	d-) Always	6

From the following audiovisual means, circle which do you more use for developing your communicative English learning.

Computer ■ Cell phone ■ Books ■ Television ■ MP3 Player ■ Imagery ■ Radio ■ DVD
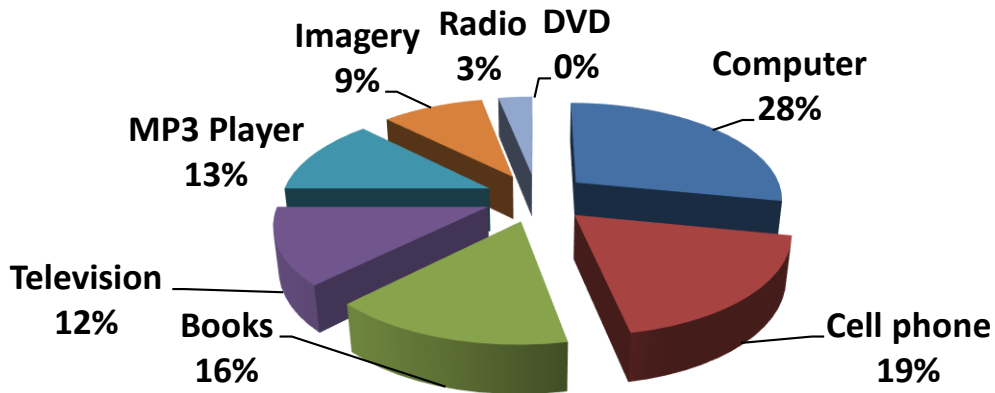
Imagery 9%
Radio 3%
DVD 0%
Computer 28%
MP3 Player 13%
Television 12%
Books 16%
Cell phone 19%

How much effective is for you to use organization study techniques in English communication learning?

Not effective 0
Few effective 2
Very Effective 18

0   5   10   15   20
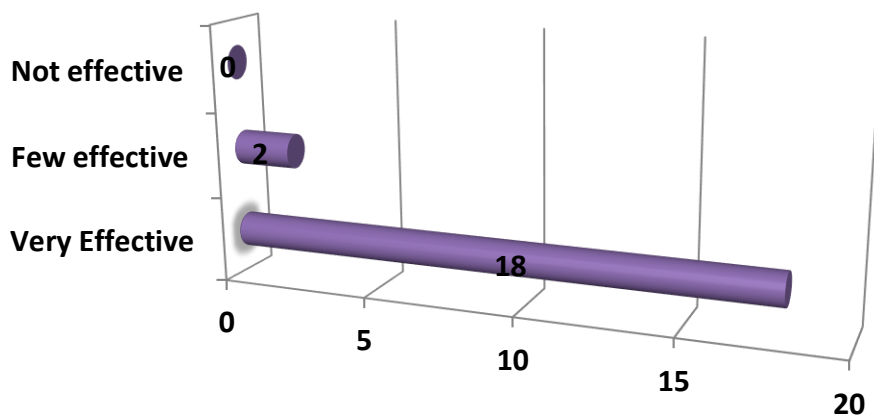
AERO VIEW OF HERMANN GMEINER

APPLYING THE INSTRUMENTS

Table of activities

Date	Activities
26/08/15	Complete the introduction and the Literature Review to be analyzed by the teacher. In this day we will work to improve the structure of the introduction.
28/08/15	In this day we will enhance the structure of the literature review.
29/08/15	Present to the teacher the Introduction and the literature review completed applying correctness. In this day we will finish to check the introduction and literature review.
01/09/15	Investigate what methodology is according to our research.
03/09/15	Define how we are using the methodology choice.
04/09/15	Elaborate a timetable of the activities that we are doing until finish the semester.
05/09/15	Present the methodology and the timetable to the teacher.
07/09/15	In this day we will discuss what we should know about the students according our literature review.
09/09/15	Elaborate a drafting of the possible questions to apply the interview.
10/09/15	Elaborate a drafting of the possible items to apply the survey.
11/09/15	In this day we will redact formally the interview and the survey.
12/09/15	Present the instruments to apply in our research.
14/09/15	Review the corrections of the teacher to improve the introduction and the literature review.
16/09/15	Apply changes in the introduction according the teacher's corrections.
18/09/15	Apply changes in the literature review according the teacher's corrections.
19/09/15	Present the introduction and literature review improved.
22/09/15	Verify the correct application of APA in our bibliography.
26/09/2015	Present the bibliography of the research with the correct APA STYLES.
28/09/15 **29/09/15**	Improve the methodology to collect and analyze the data of the instrument according the teacher's recommendationss.
30/09/15	Finish the instruments.
3/10/15	Present the methodology and the instrumentation.

5/10/15	Go to the school to ask permission to the school director, English teacher, students and parents to apply the research instruments.
6/10/15	Apply the survey
7/10/15	Apply the interview
8/10/15 **9/10/15**	Extract the data
10/10/15	Present the result of data
12/10/15 **13/10/15**	Analysis of the data interview
14/10/15 **15/10/15**	Analysis of the data survey
17/10/15	Present the analysis of results
19/10/15	Review the data of the instruments
20/10/15	Share and discuss our opinion about the results
22/10/15	Share and discuss our opinion about the results
23/10/15	Redact the final discussion of the results
24/10/15	Present of the analysis and discussion
27/10/15 **28/10/15**	We will improve the results of the analysis according to the teacher's suggestions s.
31/10/15	Present of the revision and practice
02/11/15 **03/11/15**	According the results of the data we will elaborate a drafting of the conclusions
04/11/15 **05/11/15** **06/11/15**	improve the conclusions according to the teacher's suggestions
07/11/15	Present the conclusions
09/11/15 **10/11/15**	Improve the conclusions
14/11/15	Revision of drafting
16/11/15	Elaborate the slides.
20/11/15	Practice the exposition
21/11/15	Pre-defense
23/11/15	Check the mistakes of the research According to the teacher's suggestions.
25/11/15 **26/11/15**	Improve the research
28/11/15	Revision of draft
30/11/15 **01/12/15** **02/12/15**	Looking for help of specialist to check our research.
04/12/15 **05/12/15** **06/12/15**	According the recommendations improve the research.
13/01/15	Final revision and final oral presentation