

ENHANCING LEARNERS' LISTENING SKILL THROUGH TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR)

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RESPONSE (TPR)

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ABSTRACT

The present classroom project aims to observe the impact of the implementation of Total Physical Response (TPR) as a method to enhance students' English listening comprehension and to help students to participate in speaking activities in the classroom. This plan was carried out in an English group of students in a private institution in Pereira, where was observed the low listening comprehension and students' reluctant in the participation in speaking activities. The participants were exposed to TPR activities compound by three stages: the input, processing stage and the output. The results showed that students' listening comprehension enhance when they used the movements and commands, this was evidenced in the output produced by the students at the end of each session. This implementation also allows reducing the stress that students go through in speaking activities due to their English level, increasing their participation in these types of activities.

RESUMEN

El siguiente proyecto de aula se da para observar el impacto que genera la implementación de Respuesta Física Total (RFT) como un método para mejorar la comprensión auditiva del inglés y ayudar a los estudiantes en la participación de actividades de habla dentro del aula. Este trabajo se llevó a cabo en un grupo de estudiantes en una institución privada en la ciudad de Pereira, donde se observó la baja comprensión auditiva de inglés en los estudiantes y una poca disposición para participar en actividades de habla. Los estudiantes fueron expuestos a actividades de RFT compuestas por tres pasos: la introducción del idioma, etapa de procesamiento y respuesta. Los resultados observados mostraron que la comprensión auditiva de los estudiantes mejoró significativamente al usar movimientos y órdenes; esto fue evidenciado en las respuestas dadas por los estudiantes al final de cada sesión. Esta implementación también permitió observar que el estrés que manifestaban los estudiantes al participar en actividades de habla debido a su nivel de inglés se redujo considerablemente, aumentando su participación en actividades de este tipo.

JUSTIFICATION

Being competent in a second language is necessary to adapt to a world that is constantly changing. Knowing two or more languages and using them as a mean of communication for acquiring knowledge makes people cognitively more flexible than those who are monolingual (UNESCO, 2005 p. 171).

The interest of the Colombian government for developing and strengthening the knowledge of English in the country has led to the implementation of the project Colombia Very Well (2014) in which the educational authorities present some initiatives for improvement of aspects such as the teachers' communicative competence in English, teaching methodologies, the pedagogical component, or the measurement of performance, among others. (p. 61).

However, the results are still far from satisfactory, since, as it is evidenced in the results of the Saber 11 Test, after so many years of studying English, 54% students still remains in a very low communicative level (A-) and only 6% of them reach a B1 level or higher. (Colombia Very Well, 2014)

The students' level depends on diverse factors such as the size of the group, the teachers' qualifications and communicative skills and very particularly on the pedagogical and methodological models used by teachers also influence the students' achievements and according to Bonilla (2012) many teachers still used the outdated methods they experienced as students and are resistant to change. Not all methodologies are appropriate for a particular context, for that reason is important to recognize the students' needs where the material and the activities implemented are adapted to them. Then, teachers must reflect and finally, relate theory into practice (Bonilla, 2012).

To select a methodology that fitted the group it was required observations and an analysis of the students' needs before taking a decision.

The group observed belonged to a private institution, and was composed by students who were between 6 and 12 years old and had an A1 or A2 level of English with low English aural comprehension showed in their low response to the input; students also showed reluctance to participate in some activities that involved the speaking skill.

An initial research of literature related to this type of problems showed us that, considering the needs of the students, the most appropriate methodology could be Total Physical Response (TPR) since this method has advantages such as the following: physical activities as a means for showing understanding, the development of the auditory comprehension, respect the students' silent period that helps them take confidence in their own knowledge. (MEN, 1999)

Cook (2008) states that learners cannot acquire a language if they never hear it. In this respect, TPR is a methodology that provides constant and abundant exposure to verbal input. Besides, listening to commands and carrying them out is an effective way for second language teaching and that the dynamic of TPR activities can help students to reduce the stress produced by speaking activities and others. (Asher, 1960 y 1968)

Considering that 6 lessons were designed following this methodology in order to achieve the following **learning goals**:

1. Help students to develop their vocabulary using TPR activities.
2. Develop their listening skill
3. Reduce the stress in the participation of activities that require a response.

In addition, the use of different activities that reinforce the rest of the skills was equally considered since students need to have a balanced development of communicative abilities.

OBJECTIVES

Teaching Objectives

- To identify students' progress in their listening skill using Total Physical Response (TPR) activities in the classroom
- To observe the behavior of the students' participation in speaking activities using Total Physical Response (TPR)

Learning Objectives

- To develop learners' listening skill using Total Physical Response (TPR) activities
- To enhance learners' participation in speaking activities through Total Physical Response (TPR)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Total Physical Response (TPR)

Asher (1960) describes TPR as a method that uses physical movement to teach students a new language. They react to verbal input while physical movement minimizes their blockage and also decreases their affective filter. TPR gives students the possibility to react to input without thinking too much.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) agree with Asher that TPR involves teaching a language through physical (motor) activity, but they also highlight that “TPR is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action”.

In addition to this, Garcia (2001) mentions two important concepts in TPR, which are that the use of TPR is closely related to the way people acquire their first language and the role of the right hemisphere of the brain in learning a second language by action.

Garcia (2001) affirms that TPR activities generate a similar process to the one we follow when we are learning our first language: the facilitator introduces the second language by giving commands; then, students listen and react to the utterances. Finally students are ready to start producing language. This facilitates the students' exposure to the linguistic input and allows them react to it with no need of oral production on their part, in the same way that a child experiments learning his first language at early stages.

The second concept is related to the importance of the right hemisphere of the brain in relation with language learning. Our brain is divided in two parts and each part of them has different functions and responsibilities. The right hemisphere controls the semantic cognition that

allows humans to understand meanings, store knowledge about items, and make associations between words and meanings (Thompson et al, 2016). TPR takes advantage of this characteristic by teaching through actions. Since actions promote learning in a not challenging way, the students' stress is reduced and their participation in oral activities that require responses increases (Asher, 1960).

In the following section we will present the concept of listening comprehension that guided the design and implementation of class activities in this classroom project.

Listening Comprehension

Listening is an important skill that is developed when learning a new language since it provides learners important linguistic input; it has an important role in human communication and even more in second language learners given the fact that listening is significant not only to understand the language but also to learn the language (Rost, 2002).

There are many definitions of this skill. Rost (2002) defines it as a method to receive, create and exemplify the meaning that allows us to negotiate and then respond to others. That is also Vandergrif t's (n.d, pp.1) view of this skill, since he affirms that "listening is an active process of interpretation in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know".

However, Wipf (1984) states that listening is a difficult process in which listeners need to differentiate numerous language items and interpret intention and context in a larger cultural society.

Listening requires practice: adults spend 40-50% of communication time listening (Gilman & Moody, 1984), and a great amount of the comprehensible input learners receive

comes through listening. However, in monolingual contexts there are few opportunities of listening meaningful input, what was a powerful reason for us to focus on this skill.

Listening is included during most of the stages of the TPR method: in the presentation of vocabulary, in students' aural recognition of said vocabulary and finally in the practice stage where the teacher gives commands or information students need to respond to in different ways.

A very interesting research done by Bergquist and Philips (1997) shows that we behave differently depending on our different modes of listening as showed in the chart below, which shows how non-verbal behavior, the focus of attention, signs of acceptance and empathy, probing, paraphrasing or summarizing and advising change when students listen effectively and ineffectively.

Characteristics	Effective	Ineffective
Non-verbal behavior	Positive posture, keeps attention and eye contact.	Looks uninterested and bored, avoids eye contact and maintains distracting manners.
Focus of attention	Keeps focus of her comments on the speaker.	Shifts focus attention to him.
Acceptance	Listener accepts ideas and feelings.	Does not accept speakers' ideas and feelings.
Empathy	Listeners empathize.	Listeners fail to empathize.
Probing	Listeners probe in a helpful way.	Listeners fail probe effectively.
Paraphrasing	Listener paraphrase to verify s/he understand the	Restate in their own words important statements made by

	information.	the speaker.
Summarizing	Listener summarizes the conversation in a good way.	Listener fails to summarize.
Advice	Listener gives a range of ideas, several numbers of alternatives.	Listener gives few ideas, suggesting one correct course of action.

Adapted from: William H. Bergquist, W. and Philips, S. (1997) A Handbook for Faculty Development, Volume 2. Washintong, D.C; Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges, p.207.

At this point, the information collected about the importance of listening input guided us to significant students' characteristic like learning styles which could help us to design the activities of our classroom project. In the following section, we will briefly present relevant definitions for this construct and one of the most popular inventories of learning styles.

Learning Styles

Stewart and Felicetti (1992) defined learning styles as those “educational conditions under which a student is most likely to learn.” Thus, learning styles are not really concerned with what learners learn, but rather how they prefer to learn. Going a little bit back in time, considering learning styles as a way to perceive the information given for others with a preferred modality, Keefe (1979) defines learning style as the composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment.

Learning styles inside the classroom have been considered by facilitators as an important way to facilitate students' achievement of their goals, given the fact that learners have a prefer way to receive the information and internalize it (Stewart and Felicetti, 1992). Taking into

account the preferred channel for learning, Fleming and Mills created in 1992 the VARK model, which refers to four different preferences of input: visual, auditory, reading and kinesthetic. It means that each person has a dominant channel for input and has a different way to receive the information.

For instance, visual learners prefer the use of maps, diagrams, use of colors, write what they are learning, also they can remember or retain more information based on Fleming and Mills (1992). Auditory learners retain more information when they hear or speak about what they are studying; it also includes talk out loud or with themselves. Read preference emphasizes in the use of texts in Internet, books, dictionaries, etc. they also need to write in different ways, such as reports, essays among others. And finally, the kinesthetic preference is related with the experiences and movements. They develop their knowledge through doing and need physical interaction with the reality through touch, taste, etc.

The knowledge of the learning style preferred by learners may help facilitators propose a set of activities that involve the different kinds of learning during a class and so reach the lesson objectives. According Felder et al. (2002) understand learning styles and how they work differently is necessary to design a plan and carry it out.

The above discussion provided us with some insight into how we could develop the learning of our students, taking into to account their learning style.

Kinesthetic learners

As our target group were between 6 and 12 years of age, it was easy for us to include activities that involved movement such as kinesthetic activities given the fact that, according to

literature, these students typically learn best by doing and they are naturally good for physical activities like sports and dance.

The use of the kinesthetic activities allows students, who learn better by using movements, to achieve their potential. Moving or doing something enforces a kinesthetic student's learning given the fact that these type of learners value more their own background of experiences (Fleming and Mills, 1992), so teachers can create projects or experiments to allow students to learn at the same rates as other learners.

Strategies suggest by Fleming and Mills (1992) for the kinesthetic learners are that students should be allow to take breaks during lessons and move around, also to write down their own notes if the topic is strongly based in reality. Incorporate kinesthetic activities in the class such as: surveys, demonstrations, dance, body games, field trips, role plays, charades, projects and puppet shows is also suggested because the details that requires these type of assignments (Fleming and Mills, 1992).

METHODOLOGY

In this section we will describe the context and population benefitted by this classroom project, the participants, the instruments used to collect data and the design implemented.

Context

The classroom project was carried out in a bi-national English institute located in downtown Pereira. The institute is well known in the Coffee region and also in the north part of the Departamento Del Valle. It has three branches in Pereira and one in Cartago; the institute has provided English language education for forty five years and has as a mission to contribute with the cultural and educational growth of the region through the support of diverse cultural expressions and the developing of academic programs oriented towards English teaching /learning as a foreign language.

The curriculum at this institution is structured in three strands, receptiveness to language, competence and confidence in using the language (communicative approach), and developing cognitive abilities through language and emotional aspects. Although the three characteristics are connected, the first two are aimed primarily at language learning while the other contributes to more general aspects of the child's development. The institution aims for promoting positive attitudes and appreciation of the value of language in the four different skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing and to develop the child's ability to engage appropriately in listener-speaker relationship.

The syllabus of the class that was selected as the scenario of this classroom project specifies that, a student finishing that particular course (2C) should be able to engage in conversation in relation with the following topics:

- Describe someone's typical day using simple present.
- Describe what someone is doing at the moment using present continuous.
- Describe their previous vacation using simple past.
- Making questions, positive and negative statements.
- Use adjectives to describe places and exciting situations as well as the biographic information about famous people.

Comfortable rooms, equipped with video beam, computers, copies and any material necessary for the activities were provided for the institution.

Participants

Our classroom project involved 15 literate students from 6 to 12 years old and with an A1 or A2 level of English based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR standards); these students belonged to the middle-upper class socioeconomic status.

The 2C course had an intensity of 4 hours per week and a total of 38 hours per course. These were students who studied English as an extracurricular activity on Saturdays, and were full time high school students during the week, with different schedules and also obligations such as sport clubs, dancing classes and free time activities like going to the gym or simply doing assignments for school. Students ranged from 3 to 6 grade and attended different schools in Pereira and one school at La Virginia.

About 5 of them attended private institutions and the rest belonged to public high schools in the city, nevertheless this was not an impediment for students to get along very well or share the same interests in things like music, TV shows, or things they like to eat and these were things that were evident during breaks or when topics were developed in class and students had to talk about their likes and dislikes.

Some issues we encountered were concerning the students, their reaction towards the activities, their motivation to work and that some students getting the idea faster than others, this could lead to frustration and perhaps a negative outcome of the activity.

In the classroom there were specific roles: the teacher and two observers. One of these students happened to be a teacher at this institution and was conducting the class with this course; he was the person in charge to direct the class and also to implement the activities that we designed previously. The two observers were in charge of taking notes, as well as recording and videotaping, also taking pictures and writing reflection reports; taking into account the necessary requirements that some activities need. The observers attended a minimum of 4 or 5 sessions for at least two hours each, what provided the necessary information and data to work with, in addition to the evidence that were collected on each observed class.

Design

This project is aimed at enhancing students' listening skill through the method of Total Physical Response (TPR).

Krashen and Terrell (2002) state that the purpose of TPR is teach a new language through actions and movements, what is very appropriate for those kinesthetic learners who learn better by doing following commands.

Our project also intended to reduce the stress of students when performing listening activities, since according to Asher (1968) TPR is a very effective method to deal with that particular issue.

The TPR activities involving students' listening skill that were developed in the classroom were action games, action songs, acting instructions and miming actions. They allowed involve students in outdoors activities, providing an extra motivation.

The activities combined movements with vocabulary and this helped to internalize easily the pronunciation and the meaning of the words, also to recognize the correct use of the language in certain situations.

The objectives for each class were to check the listening comprehension of the students by giving them commands to perform, also helped them to participate in speaking activities giving them the chance to conduct the TPR activities.

The implementation of each activity was conducted through the following stages:

- Input, where teacher gave the command and modeled it (using gestures, body and facial expressions, and if it were necessary using flashcards, etc.)
- Next, the teacher gave the commands each time he performed the action while students listened, observed and performed it too (processing stage).
- Finally the output, where teacher gave the commands without doing the action (using first some volunteers, then the whole group, depending of the activity). If students needed the teacher modeled the actions with the students again.

This implementation was for teaching vocabulary and was used for each new set of commands, and before start with a new one the previous commands were reviewed.

To have the students participating in speaking activities and for checking students' listening comprehension, after learn new commands, these strategies were used:

- One student was called to give commands to another.
- The students were giving commands to the teacher.
- Group activities where all the students participated and teacher made checking questions modeling the answers.

We present next an example of the activities implemented, that we titled *Throwing the ball*.

In this activity the teacher threw the ball to one student and said "Luis, catch the ball". When the student caught it, the teacher said "Luis, throw the ball back to me". Then, the teacher threw the ball to one of the girls in the group and said "Maria, catch the ball". After she did it, the teacher asked the group: "Who has the ball?" and modeled the answer "Maria has the ball". The teacher drilled some volunteers to repeat the answer. Finally, the teacher told Maria to repeat his actions and the statements used in the exercise. The teacher then monitored the performance of the activity and asked "Who has the ball?" every time a different S caught it.

Strategies such as modeling or mimicking the different activities, giving examples, choral and individual drilling of pronunciation, monitoring students' comprehension throughout the development of the activity and instructional scaffolding in which simple activities with abundant help of the teacher were progressively substituted by more complex were very important to facilitate the students' learning process.

Data collection instruments

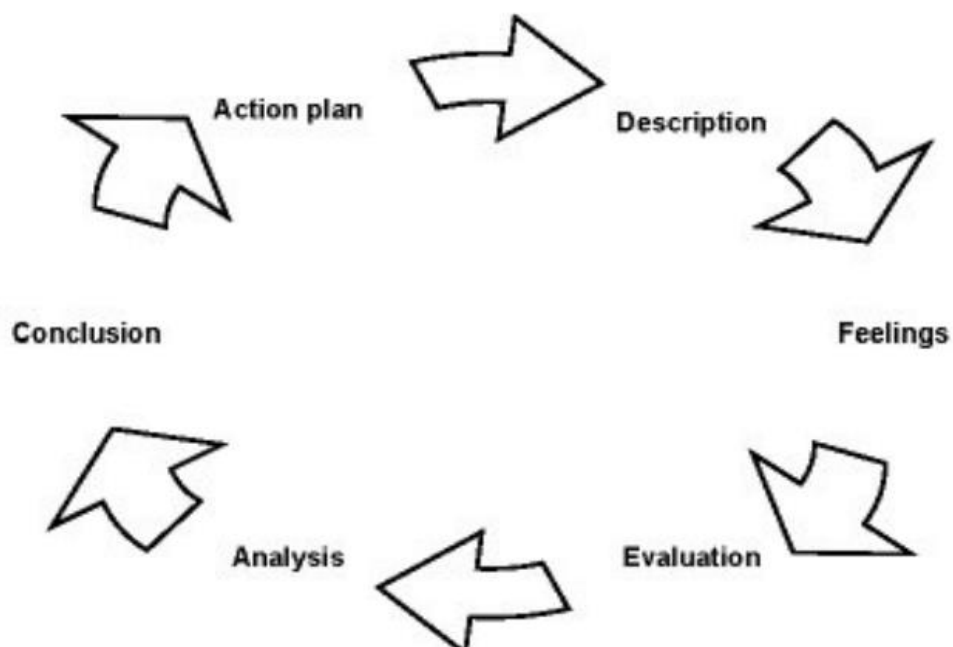
After each class we met to examine the events and results of the session in order to reflect on them. This process allowed us to analyze the experiences, the students' learning process and controversial issues happening inside the classroom to make changes based on those aspects.

The main instrument used for the reflective stage were a journal to report what happened in each class and the changes we should have done and the observation and reflection templates provided by the Professor in charge of the Practicum Subject. These reflection templates were focused in three elements: the students, the teacher and the language

It must be noticed that the sessions were video recorded to help the practitioners complete their journals and reflections.

According to Gibbs (1988) reflection is deliberate and purposeful, and intends to produce change and development as well as to bring the theory into practice.

The Reflection Model selected for the classroom project was "Learning by doing" proposed by Gibbs (1988), that proposed six stages shows in the chart below:



Gibbs' Model of "learning by doing" and the reflection stages that he suggests trigger some very important questions. The first question has to do with the "Description" or what happened in the class. In this section you do not make judgments yet or try to draw conclusions, you simply describe what you observed during the lesson. The second question has to do with "Feelings" or what were your reactions and feelings towards the class. Again, at this stage you do not analyze those feelings yet, simply identify and describe them. Later is the "Evaluation" stage, or what was good or bad about the experience. It is at this point where you make value judgments. The next step demands an "Analysis" that requires the teachers to try to see what sense they can make of the situation, bringing ideas from outside the experience to help them understand what was really going on in the class. At this stage it is important to compare if the experiences from the different people involved in the class were similar or varied in important ways.

Finally, this reflection model requires drawing some "Conclusions" from the experience, moving from the general to the specific, where the teacher decides what can be concluded in a general sense from these experiences as well as from the analyses undertaken. Conclusions must be also drawn about their own unique personal situation or way of working. With this information, the reflective practitioners should create a personal action plan about the changes that they would implement if a similar situation should present itself and the steps they would take on the basis of what they have learned.

The reflections focus on the students considered their responses and reactions to the lesson and activities implemented in the class, their participation, engagement, interest and the affective factors observed.

Reflections dealing with the personal growth of the teachers in relation with professional aspects of their profession looked into how to deal with classroom management challenges, the

consequences of institutional limitations (noise, policies, resources, classes canceled, etc.) and also those elements a teacher needs to take into account before entering a classroom: Lesson planning, material design, and the learning strategies that should be included in the lessons.

Finally, the reflections focused on the linguistic outcomes expected and obtained from students. This involved the observation and assessment of the learners' development of the communicative skills in the foreign language.

Resources

During the implementation of the classroom project, the following materials were used: a TV-set, a video beam, portable speakers, worksheets, authentic material (videos, newspapers, etc.) and some other technological gadgets that were useful at specific task. The Internet was also a great resource in our project.

REFLECTION STAGE

Professional growth

Challenges

During the implementation of this classroom project the main challenges we faced were related to the implementation of TPR activities, sitting arrangement, and time management.

Implementation of TPR activities

Including TPR activities in English classes for beginners is a useful strategy to promote students' confidence as language learners since this is a type of activity that does not require production in order to show understanding. This is also the view of the MEN (n. d) when it states, in the Lineamientos Curriculares, that TPR respects the students' silent period and uses physical activities for showing understanding, thus benefiting the development of auditory comprehension.

TPR activities were used during different moments of the class: at the beginning to engage students in the lesson, after a break in the session as a warm up to recover students' attention or at the end to observe the knowledge acquired after the implementation of teaching and learning activities.

However, we found three main challenges in relation with the implementation of the TPR activities: the difficulty to find activities that involved more than teaching vocabulary, the age difference among the students and their reactions towards TPR activities.

The main problem we faced in relation with the selection of TPR activities for the class was to find a sufficient number of them that involved more than teaching or practicing isolated

vocabulary. It was a concern for us having to repeat the activities and demotivating students if we had to use the same or similar exercises frequently.

Among the activities we implemented we can mention the following: action games, action songs, acting instructions and miming actions.

Since there was a limited amount of activities that responded to TPR principles, we decided to modify those already found and adapt them to the different topics we were teaching. For instance, "Simon says", a well-known TPR activity for practicing commands was adapted in two different ways:

The first was to work with the present simple through a short role play where students only knew their characters and a number of specific actions they would have to mimic. After having taught them their specific words, the teacher read the story for the students to listen and perform the actions assigned to them when they heard them in the story.

The second was used as a warm up activity where we used a short story, "The three little pigs". From the story we chose 6 nouns, and to each noun we assigned a different action that students already knew (Pig/Jump, Wolf/Clap, and House/Sit down, etc.). When the teacher explained the exercise and practiced with the students reading just the words, he finally read the whole story and every time students hear the word they should perform the action. The student who did not perform the action had to leave the game.

Other problems we faced in relation with TPR activities were the age differences among the students in the group because their reactions towards the activities were completely different. As it will be remembered, our students were all beginners, however their ages ranged from 6 to 12 years. This made our selection of activities challenging, since activities which were

appropriate for young learners were not so attractive for older students, who although being still children were already at a different cognitive level from that of their classmates.

In activities that required mimics and the performance of some actions, younger students were more participative than the older, while in those other activities than involved volunteering to write on the whiteboard and directing others, the older students took preeminence over the younger ones. That is why finding a balance to integrate all students was very complicated.

In order to improve the participation and to integrate the group we decided to have the older children as mentors for the younger (peer feedback), so the members of the different groups were able to help each other, compete in the games and establish a good rapport. With this strategy we were able to achieve also peer feedback, an aspect that was very important because it allowed students to take an active role in their own learning process, establish rapport with their partners and do the same activity at different levels. It also helped reducing the time revising students' products from class activities and increases the participation (Liu and Careless, 2006).

Another strategy to integrate the group was to have diverse activities, topics or games that involved the interests of the younger and the older students in different moments or at the same time.

From the implementation of TPR methodology we learned the importance of use different methodologies, strategies, and types of assessment in the classroom to engage students into the classes and encourage the participation with the variety of exercises proposed by the teacher. Also, how to deal with the different characteristics of the students, planning classes that benefits them and contributes with their learning process.

Use of the target language when working in groups

The second challenge we faced was to have students working in groups given the fact that in some occasions the sitting arrangement increased misbehavior during the classes and affected the development of the process. When it comes to teaching and learning we need to be aware of different techniques and strategies to have a good environment in the class,

According to Harmer (2008) it is important to use grouping in the classroom because this benefits students' relationship and increases students' talking time in the classroom, which helps them to increase their ability to use English communicatively. In addition, Brown (1994, in Jiang 2009) also mentions that group work gives students a positive affective climate, increases the students' self-confidence and self-esteem, and promotes students' social interaction.

These reasons led us to implement group work mainly during speaking activities to have students discussing their points of view on different topics. This strategy helped them to support each other in different activities, since although some students might not understand the instructions, seeing others performing the activity provided an aid for comprehension.

Sometimes, the students themselves formed "the group", but we selected how many students integrated each group. At other times we selected the group according to the activity, or we made activities where members were randomly selected.

Although we considered the use of group work very positive, in this specific class, we identified that in some opportunities the group activities had negative outcomes for different reasons. One of them was that students wanted to work always with their friends because they did not know very well other students or just did not get along. At those times, they were reluctant to use English during the activities. But then, while working with their friends they took activities leisurely and did not use the L2 since they felt comfortable using Spanish and did not feel the necessity of using English.

These problems affected the class work and sometimes the lessons could not be carried out successfully.

Facing this problem was frustrating because we did not know when to have students working in groups or in a different sitting arrangement due to the students' relationship. To cope with this difficulty, we planned different activities such as “stop” that let students to get to know each other in a more personal way: they had to share their hobbies, interests, and favorite things and we found that those activities helped them to become aware of common interest with other classmates and strengthened their bonds.

During this implementation we learned when to work in groups and individually as well as which kind of activities were more suitable for group work and felt at the end much more confident as teachers because we were able to see how students reacted when working with different people.

Time management in the classroom

As Francis (n.d.) states, time management is important to have a good class, to keep students engaged, and suitably challenged to develop better their language process. However, sometimes, a wrong calculation of the time necessary for carrying out an activity would cause a problem that affected the teacher's performance, the development of the class, and students' outcomes.

During our classes we dealt with two main time management problems:

The first was caused by our mistake in calculating the time of the activities in a very general way, without considering the specific duration of each activity, and the second was caused because the implementation of several activities in just one class.

Due to our inexperience, we had difficulties with calculating accurately the time that students would need to complete the exercises; sometimes we had too many activities for one class and could not finish our lesson plan and some others, our students completed the activities very fast and we had not enough to cover the whole length of the class.

Examples of this can be found in the following samples from our reflective journals:

April 11th, 2015: *“Students were learning the body parts so to engage students we prepared some activities such as songs and games. We considered that those activities were enough for the level of the students but they completed the activities before we expected, so the material was not enough and we needed to improvise, and this affected the pacing of the class.”*

“April 18th, 2015. Students had to complete body parts, labeling a picture of a full body male and female. There were a big difference in the age range in some of the students, 3 of them were very young in comparison to the rest of the students. The pace of these 3 students was different to the ones that were older, not because they did not know what to do, but because they had just learnt how to write; in this occasion the time was not enough, and to give feedback was not possible and this is a problem for the importance in the students' process”.

These problems with the appropriate estimation of the time for the activities led us to start considering the importance of time management during each activity and to deal with those problems we began to design our lesson and activities more carefully, taking into account those problems that maybe we were going to face (anticipated problems) and thinking about solutions to them. For instance, the first step was to design more activities in case that some students should complete their tasks faster than the rest of the group, and on the other hand, when time was not sufficient, we rather provided feedback to the activities developed and left some of the activities for the following class.

After the implementation of the classes with those anticipated problems solved we realized that the actions which were carried out had a very good impact in our practices, we were not surprised to find that classes took the time we expected.

We concluded that time management, planning classes and thinking in future problems, which may occur in the lesson, gave us a better understanding towards the class, and we found out that strategies implemented were really helpful and that planning involves not only the selection of the activities but also their management to have sufficient time and keep students' motivation.

STUDENTS' RESPONSES

Challenges

During the implementation of this classroom project the main challenges we faced concerning students' responses were their motivation towards TPR activities, work group and classroom management.

Students' motivation towards TPR activities

The main challenge we faced at the beginning was related to students' lack of motivation during the English classes and when we tried to implement some TPR activities, these aspects affected the learning process as well as the teaching process.

Students' motivation is important in language learning because it helps students to reach the goals proposed for the subject (Ruin, 1996) but in our group, at the beginning of the course we had different problems that were very relevant to conclude the students' lack of motivation; the first one was that in one of the classes a student approached the teacher to let him know that he was not feeling well and that he was not interested in the activity as well as his best friend creating a sense of indifference towards the activity in the rest of the group (Reflective journal, May 2nd, 2015).

Another relevant issue was when we overheard two students talking about how boring it was to get early on a Saturday morning to go to study English, and finally the other issue that was important when talking about lack of motivation was students getting frustrated and somehow angry because they were not able to understand the teachers' instructions in English, a

student even mentioned to have the instructions given in Spanish, her words were “*profe es que usted siempre habla inglés*” (Reflective journal, May 16th, 23rd, 20115).

We were able to see that the learning and the teaching process was affected because the teacher felt frustrated and focused his attention on the students that were not interested in the class and the rest of the students became a little distracted by the situation.

In order to motivate students into the classes we started finding out about the students' interests through a short questionnaire about likes and dislikes and from then on, we chose topics related with their interests. The results of the questionnaire also gave us important information to select the TPR activities; the activities selected include the whole group working together, supporting each other, to encourage students' participation. We also introduced activities where the teacher used the body to help students to understand better, and a final strategy was awarding them with some sort of prize when completing different activities.

When previous actions were implemented, the outcomes were very positive. Students' participation increased since they could have help of their partners in some of the TPR activities proposed (observing their partners acting or modeling the commands), and also the idea of competing for a prize enhanced their motivation.

In accordance with students' suggestions we started using technology and social networks and that created a sense of enjoyment when learning English. Technological devices, were very beneficial for the students and also for the teacher giving the fact that students' participation increased and they were enthusiasm of receiving or giving commands or instructions on a cellphone. This also improved rapport between the students and the teacher.

During these implementations we learned about the importance of knowing the students' interests when developing a class, how to create a good environment in the classroom that can be

evidence through good rapport, and finally how to motivate and encourage students to a different way of learning a second language.

Classroom management and work group

The second challenge we faced was classroom management due to the fact students' attitude towards group work; there are positive and negative aspects about working with your best friend versus talking to a person that rarely interact with in the classroom.

To have an effective and communicative class is important the rapport with the students but also the seating arrangement (McCorskey and McVetta, 1978). A good strategy of the classroom arrangement complemented with the right activities helps to have a good development of the class. Sitting arrangement plays a key factor when it comes to having a good communication with the students.

When implementing group work, we noticed that some students did not like to interact with other classmates because they were not their favorite person in the classroom so when the teacher asked them to work in groups they tended to group with the same people and if the teacher selected the group, the outcome of the activity was rather different, students did not participate as we expected.

The first possible solution we thought was to have students work with his or her best friend, for the relationship they already had, but instead of this during the first class we implemented an activity to get to know each other: students exchanged personal information, their hobbies and music preferences, to establish a good rapport between students and the teacher since the beginning. Students were engaged in the getting to know each other activity and they got to know a little more about their classmates so the activity was a success. With this action we

perceived that there were some positive and some negative aspects because it is really hard to tell when it is convenient to work in groups and when it is not.

Other possible solution was to start implementing different types of grouping to motivate students to work with different people. We also started to identify different activities which were positive when working in groups and which activities were not appropriate.

When the teacher used different strategies of grouping, students felt that the selection of the partner or partners was fair and it was not imposed by the teacher. However, in some classes we let them choose their partners but for short periods of time. We observed that this caused a negative impact because sometimes work with their best friend made them lost focus and they started either using Spanish or talking about something else, and the teacher had to be continuously reminding them about the activity in course.

Strengths

The relationship established after implementing some of our strategies

According to Brown (2000) it is important to take into account the relationship students have with their teacher because this could be a motivator for them to participate and to create a good environment in the classroom; these reasons were important for us to start taking actions on the first challenges we faced about students' responses during the first classes.

The rapid action on these problems helped us to establish a good rapport from the beginning with the students and to have a good atmosphere inside the classroom; this also led us to know that outcomes were very different in a positive way, as some topics were based on students' interests, their participation increased as well as their use of the language.

Based on these, we learnt about the importance of establish the rapport since the beginning with the students.

The variation of the activities

The amount of activities we found related with the principles of TPR was an advantage for us to use them as a warm up in each class we carried out, but in activities that involved more than teaching vocabulary there was a limited quantify so we decided to turn it into a benefit.

During some lessons we implemented activities that we found in internet or books and they worked rather well, but we did not want to be repetitive in the activities so we started modified them according to our needs; those activities were adjusting to the topics, the students' level and age.

These modifications gave us an advantage during the classes because each step during the lessons was carefully linked, so the topic presentation gave students a clear image of how the rest of the exercises were going to be. Also, planned the activities taking into account the students' level and age was a benefit for them because we could notice the activities were specific for them and their process, and they were development the skills we wanted to.

LINGUISTIC OUTCOMES

During the implementation of the TPR activities to enhance the listening skill we faced issues related with sitting arrangement, time management and students' lack of motivation that were mentioned in the previous reports, these complications led us to establish different actions to continue with the teaching process without affecting the study plan for that level.

It was observed that by the end of the process students were able to introduce themselves and talk about personal information. In addition, they could use the different topics they were practicing during the course, such as simple tenses (present and past tense) with little hesitation.

Language Skills

According to the observations made during the whole implementation related with the development of the four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing), it was noticed the following:

Listening Skill

In the listening skill the students had a noticeable advance. They were able to understand basic commands, teachers' instructions and questions related with their personal information. The teachers noticed this progress in the correct answers provided by the students when asked orally about these topics.

Speaking Skill

In the speaking skill, students' motivation increased since they could participate in different activities that helped them to reduce the stress that produced the use of a second language in the classroom. Their increased participation during the lessons, had as a consequence their improvement in pronunciation and fluency.

Reading Skill

The progress in the reading skill was not as high as expected, given the fact that students' age difference made it difficult for us to find materials and activities dealing with reading which were appropriate and interesting to such a diverse group. Among the achievements, however, we can mention that students could associate images with the vocabulary taught, in particular, sentences related with daily routines and past events that were the focus in that course.

Writing Skill

In the writing skill the advance was also minor in some cases because due to the students' age, they still needed too much time for writing. But during the process students showed progress in the way they wrote and they could answer questions about them, and write sentences or short paragraphs using the tenses teacher already taught.

Finally, it must be acknowledge that the use of TPR activities permitted a positive progress in the listening and speaking skills, but was not so appropriate for writing and reading. For this reason, we needed to complement the TPR activities with different exercises and activities that were focused in those abilities to guarantee that we could cover all the skills learners needed to progress in their linguistic process.

CONCLUSIONS

This project allowed observing the advantages and disadvantages of implementing a different type of methodology in an English class, in a private institution in Pereira, to develop the linguistic skills in the students, particularly the listening skill. Throughout this process, learners were exposed to TPR activities and their reactions towards them were recorded and analyzed.

The use of TPR activities proved to be an interesting tool to introduce vocabulary and to practice the listening skill considering that students could show understanding by physical actions and that this strategy respected the students' silent period, reinforcing in them the confidence they should have to start producing in a different language.

This project helped to enhance students' listening and their motivation since their results improved from what we observed at the beginning of our lessons: they enjoyed participating in activities where a physical response was required, and then when complex activities were applied, students' disposition to participate also developed.

Finally, although the TPR methodology was very useful to introduce vocabulary and to observe the understanding of our students by movements or some speaking responses, in some occasions TPR activities were not enough for students to practice the speaking skill or reading and writing in a communicative way.

REFLECTION FORMAT

Students' responses Professional growth Linguistic outcomes	Description (Description: describe critical incidents)	Reflection (Analysis & Evaluation: reference to theory. Conclusions for future practice: action plans)
<p>Reactions towards the implementation of your classes. The learning of English.</p> <p>The students participation engagement, and interest in the process</p> <p>The affective factors (anxiety, motivation, attitude)</p>	<p>The lesson started with a warming up activity that engaged students into the class using a topic they already knew to reinforce and practice vocabulary. Teacher elicited vocabulary about the type of snack they like, and the students' response was most of the time in English but when they did not know the concept they used Spanish to communicate.</p>	<p>Students' lack of motivation could be given to the fact that they don't understand presented in the class, and also because some activities were too long and they are decentralized.</p>

<p>Classroom management (ground rules, time management, grouping, disruptive behavior, teacher talking time- student talking time)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lesson planning (inclusion of standards, CLIL, stages of lesson, sequencing, pacing) - Material design (implementation and recycling of the material, learning styles) 	<p>A particular student did not want to take part of one of the activities, student stated that he was not feeling well; his best friend got the negative vibe and was also not happy to participate in the activity.</p>	<p>Teacher was a little demotivated but continued engaging all the students in developing the activity.</p> <p>To improve students' motivation in classes, the activities should be shorter, also use different sitting arrangement for instance pair and group work, this could help with students' concentration and participation. Vocabulary for instructions should be simpler for students to be able to comprehend</p>
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