

STORYTELLING AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILL

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Resumen

Este proyecto se basa en el impacto de la técnica de storytelling en la producción oral en lengua inglesa. Su implementación se llevó a cabo con estudiantes de grado tercero de una institución educativa pública en la ciudad de Pereira, Risaralda.

Los resultados demostraron que los estudiantes son motivados por los gestos y tonos de voz usados durante las historias contadas, lo cual incrementa su atención mientras se les habla en inglés. Como consecuencia, hay una mayor adquisición de vocabulario que les facilita la producción oral en dicha lengua.

Otro aspecto a recalcar durante el uso de storytelling es el diseño y creatividad de los materiales con base en las características de los estudiantes. Utilizar el sentido del humor de forma precavida también demostró ser de gran eficacia para motivar la producción oral de los estudiantes y mantener su atención en las historias contadas.

Abstract

Nowadays, English is considered the most important global language due to globalization and the fact that it is spoken by the dominant countries in the cultural, economic and political consumption worldwide. For this reason it is important to implement in the classroom methods that expose real use of the English language and thus enables students' motivation and the development of the language skills.

This classroom project analyzed the impact of storytelling on the oral production in the English language. Its implementation took place with third grade students from the institution La Julita in Pereira city.

The results showed that students in third grade of that institution are encouraged by the gestures and tones of voice used during the stories, paying more attention while teacher speaks in English leaving as result the increase of vocabulary which facilitates the oral production in the target language.

Another aspect to emphasize while using storytelling is the design and creativity of materials taking into account the characteristics of students. The use of sense of humor also proved to be effective in order to motivate students to produce orally and to keep their attention on the stories told.

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INTRODUCTION

In Colombia, English teaching is mandatory in high schools and in elementary schools. In that sense, the Ministry of Education has created some policies in order to improve English language in Colombian educational system. However, the level of English in Colombia is very low as shown by EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), which ranks a total of 63 countries and territories where Colombia is placed at number 62, confirming the low English level. In that sense, and as a way to prevent those low results, teachers need to provide learners with language that helps them to be involved in contexts in which real language is used.

One method used in order to improve communicative skills in a real context of the language is storytelling. Harmer (1998) proposed that teaching speaking must be focus on the real language use. For that reason, speaking as a productive skill on second language theories is considered as fundamental as the other skills when learning a language. According to Peck (1989) using the storytelling method learners are exposed to new vocabulary, real context, expressions and pronunciation to be used in oral production. Besides, storytelling method empowers and motivates learners to improve their speaking skill by presenting a tool that is not commonly used in Colombia in English classes.

Speaking in English teaching is referred as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Furthermore, Richards (1990) states that the mastery of speaking skill in English is seen as a priority for many EFL learners across the world because learners often evaluate their success in

language learning based on how well they have improved in their spoken language skill. Consequently, different approaches have been implemented in order to increase the performance of the speaking skill in EFL learners, especially for young learners.

Teaching speaking for young language learners (YLLs) is an interesting and challenging duty for teachers because YLLs are in the early age and they are interested in learning many new things, including a foreign language, and also because as Piaget (1970) stated, children are active learners and thinkers who construct knowledge from interacting with the environment.

The storytelling method incorporates the four communicative skills along each session and it integrates almost two communicative skills in each activity. Storytelling as a learner centered method takes into account student's characteristics such as the age and conceptual level of learners, their needs and interest, their language level and previous language-learning experience (Dujmovic, 2009). In storytelling, it is crucial to catch learner's attention by presenting them some previous activities to increase vocabulary, practice pronunciation, body language techniques and vocalization (Peck, 1989). While the story is developed, some dramatic pauses take place in certain times accompanied with voice changes and body movements to act characters and especial situations of the story.

This classroom project was conducted in a natural setting and it dealt with the participants' behavioral patterns concerning performance and perceptions towards the application of the storytelling method. It was implemented in a primary school in Pereira. In the institution la Julita, where the elementary students do not have an English teacher, the mentor teacher is in charge of giving English language, but in most of the cases, they are not qualified to give this instruction. In

the class, they were 38 students whose ages ranged from 9 to 13 years old and the practitioners were 2 students from English language teaching program at Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira whose ages are 23 and 24 years old. These teachers guided the students through the storytelling method, acting as a model to follow in order to motivate them to improve their speaking skill.

JUSTIFICATION

Nowadays, English has the status of international, global, and world language, which is learnt and spoken by millions of people around the world (Alsagoff et al, 2012). Accordingly, UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) expresses that learning a second language must be regarded as an essential part of total personality formation in the modern world, since it enables a person to live and move in more than one culture or linguistic community.

Speaking as a productive skill on second language theories is considered as fundamental as the writing, reading or listening skills when it comes to language learning. As Yorkey (1990) states, just as any other skill, speaking must be practiced as usual as possible in order to enhance communicative skills.

Moreover, it is important to mention that teaching a foreign language is to help students to be competent speakers in the language, which means the development of language competence. According to Harshbarger (2002), language competence is “the ability to use the grammatical, discursive, functional, socio-linguistic and strategic component of the target language appropriately in order to communicate effectively”. In that sense, learning a foreign language involves the development of a set of competences as established by the CEFR (Common European Framework), which are the pragmatic, linguistic and sociolinguistic competences. These components together form the communicative competence, being speaking one of the four language skills.

English teaching in Colombia is mandatory in high school and in elementary schools. The ministry of education has created some policies in order to improve English language in Colombia; one of those are the “ESTANDARES BÁSICOS DE COMPETENCIAS EN LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS: INGLÉS” which intends to give to English teachers, principals and parents the knowledge about the communicative competences that children are expected to develop in the English classes. The Ministry of Education defines the standards as criteria that establish the basic levels of quality that children have access to in Colombia regarding English lessons.

However, it is noticed that the level of English in Colombia is low. According to the results of Prueba SABER 11 2010, 83.3% of examinees ranked in the city of Cali, Colombia, were in the A- and A1 level. Gonzalez (2010) highlights that English in Colombia is mandatory in high school in elementary schools since few years ago. However, a typical Colombian citizen may say that English instruction in government schools is quite poor, and that actual learning of the language takes place in private schools, language centres or in higher education. Nevertheless, Gonzalez (2010), contrasts this statement with the fact that depending on the socioeconomic status of the population, proficiency in English may vary considerably.

For that reason the National Ministry of Education has implemented different programs in order to reinforce the bilingualism in the country. In 2006-2010 the Ministry of Education introduced the National Bilingualism Program; then in 2010 – 2014 executed the Strengthening to the Development in Foreign Languages Program. Finally, in 2015 as a government policy it has been outlined a plan for bilingualism in Colombia called National English Program 2015 – 2025, Colombia VERY WELL!, which aims that by 2025 the majority of people leaving school would have a B level of spoken English. Nonetheless, Corbett (2014) in Colombia Reports Magazine

shows that a Central Bank investigation from September 2013 found that 90 percent of secondary school students reach a maximum level of A1, a very basic level, and that only 6.5 percent of secondary education students finish with a B level. Besides, the fourth edition of the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), which ranks a total of 63 countries and territories, Colombia is the 62, placed in the low level of proficiency.

In order to prevent those low results, teachers need to provide learners with language that helps them to find the relationship between grammatical items and the contexts in which they are used. Nunan (1998) supports it when mentioned that teachers should avoid those exercises that just give students the formal use of the language instead of opportunities to explore the language in context. Harmer (1998) also proposed that teaching speaking must be focused on the real language use that learners are able to perform based on what they have achieved related to language learning.

In that sense, we need to complement form-focused exercises with an approach that helps learners to express themselves because it can happen that students know the grammar and the rules explicitly, but when they need to apply them in communication they fail. Harmer (1991) supports this idea when he says that students need to get an idea of how the new language is used by native speakers and the best way of doing this is to present language in context. Additionally, Thornbury (1999) mentioned that in the absence of context, it is very difficult to recover the intended meaning of a single word or phrase, being one of the problems why learners consider speaking as a demanding skill.

One method used in order to improve communicative skills in the target language is STORYTELLING. According to Peck (1989), using the storytelling method, learners are exposed

to new vocabulary, expressions and pronunciation to be used in oral production. For that reason, we intend to reflect upon how the storytelling method empowers and motivates learners to improve their speaking skill by presenting this tool. Difficulties presented during the learning process activities, especially speaking, can be avoided by designing interesting and contextualized activities for learners. Those activities should involve learner's interaction as much as possible in order to engage them to practice and to be exposed most of the time to the language (Ellis & Brewster, 1991).

Us teachers we need to go beyond traditional form-focused approaches because students need to be prepared for the communicative use of the language, since it is its purpose, and storytelling gives the opportunity to recycle language forms, and learners are engaged in the stories to make the links between form, meaning, and use.

In order to motivate students to produce orally, EFL teachers must implement learning strategies in the storytelling process, such as warm up activities, games, videos and images related to the story to engage learners to be aware of the main objective of a tale (Cry, 1998). Subsequently, this leads to more lively participation role in the teaching speaking ability. The relevance of previous activities is that learners are exposed to vocabulary, context, expressions and pronunciation used in the oral production; then learners are provided with body language techniques, vocalization and overstatement of pronunciation in order to increase students setting about what they produce when telling a story (Peck, 1989). Additionally, not only speaking skills are developed, also listening, reading and writing become an important part of the learning process using storytelling (Cameron, 2001).

In order to develop communicative skill during the learning process, the storytelling method provides different activities and tools that facilitate the development of learners' English language. As stated by Cameron (2004), the stories transmit a strong motivation that can be a perfect tool in the language experience for the language learner. For these reasons, stories should play a major role in learning English as foreign language. Moreover, the learning process becomes easier for learners in the sense that they integrate most of the communicative skills using the storytelling method in each activity, also teachers learn how to develop previous and later activities, how to design and implement it in a sequence according to the learning process and abilities of the learners (Cary, 1998)

To conclude, this project will have an impact on the learners' process since the content presented through storytelling will help them to develop and reinforce the interpersonal relationships because storytelling will benefit them to think more deeply about their social world. Besides, as stated by Mello (2001), telling stories in educational environments raises students' consciousness by engaging them in thinking critically and deeply about social issues. This process will have an influence on their discourse and reflections of the students, helping them to create relationships between themselves and their teachers while children develop individual perspectives. Therefore, these relationships will support and amplify the comprehension, listening, and interaction with others, especially in the Colombian classroom where classroom management is a relevant issue.

Finally, this project was reflected into three categories. The first one, the professional growth that was related to the aspects former into classroom management; the second one was students responses, which means a reflection on the students' participation, interest, engagement

and motivation in classes; and the third one, the linguistic outcomes, which was focused on students responses towards the language.

Objectives

Learning objectives

Implement storytelling in third graders students at la Julita School to improve their speaking skill.

Teaching objectives

Analyze the results of the implementation of storytelling in third graders students to promote speaking skill in the classroom.

Theoretical Framework

The objective of this section is to explore the concept of speaking skill through the contributions made by Brooks (1964), Richards (1990), Nunan (1991), Brown (1994), Harmer (1995), and Burns & Joyce (1997). In the second part of this section a brief history and definitions of storytelling are presented followed by descriptions of storytelling in classrooms and ending with theoretical foundations to support storytelling as an effective pedagogical tool.

Speaking

Speaking has acquired great importance along the history of English teaching since it is referred as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). English has become primordial worldwide for it has become a lingua franca. Therefore, it is the main source for communicating in many fields. Richards (1990) states that the mastery of speaking skill in English is seen as a priority for many EFL learners across the world. Moreover, he adds that learners consequently often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course based on how well they feel they have improved in their spoken language skill. Brown (2007: 237) states that social contact in interactive language functions is a key in which it is not what you say that counts but how you say it, what you convey with body language, gestures, eye contact and other non-verbal message.

Teaching speaking

A diversity of approaches has been implemented in order to increase the performance of the speaking skill in EFL learners. Given the fact that many languages do not have a written form, speaking is considered as the only source for communicating. It was argued that language is “primarily what is spoken and only secondarily what is written” (Brooks 1964). On the other hand, teachers found that the practical results fell short of expectations; students were sometimes unable to produce outside the classroom, and considered the audio-lingual procedures to be boring and unpleasing (Richards 2001).

An approach that has had a great impact on oral production is the Communicative language teaching (CLT). Unlike the audio-lingual method, the CLT helps students to create meaningful phrases instead of repeating and memorizing grammar structures. The communicative function of the language is seen as the main objective rather than the perfect knowledge of the system. The CLT encourages the development of the speaking skill by promoting interaction as a mean for learning a language. It instigates learners to use the knowledge of the formal aspects of the language to communicate successfully in real-life situations. Nunan (1991) mentions that one of the principles of CLT is to emphasize on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language. On the other hand (Harmer 1995, 16) adds that “the Communicative approach makes emphasis on a balance between fluency and accuracy and it is the most appropriate for those learners who want to improve and gain confidence with their speaking skills”.

Teaching Speaking to Young Learners

Teaching speaking to young language learners (YLLs) is a challenge for teachers. First, YLLs are in the early age and they are interested in learning many new things such as a foreign language. Besides and according to McKay, (2006) young learners seem to have the same proficiency in speaking, which is the novice level. This author states that the characteristic of novice level is the students' ability to communicate minimally with learned material and oral production consists of isolated words and perhaps a few high-frequency phrases essentially no functional communication ability.

Considerations for Teaching Young Learners

Children are active learners and thinkers (Piaget, 1970). The same author states that young learners construct knowledge from actively interaction with the physical environment and they learn through individual actions and exploration.

Children learn through social interaction. "Children construct knowledge through other people, through interaction with adults. (Vygotsky, 1962).

Children learn effectively through scaffolding by adults (Bruner, 1983). He mentions that the adult's role is essential in a child's learning process and the importance of "scaffolding" to guide a child's language learning through finely-tuned talk. (Cameron, 2001)

Characteristics of young language learners

Slatterly, M., & Willis, J. (2001) present some characteristics that describe how young language learners learn a second language. In the following table the main characteristics are shown.

YLS (under 7)	YLS (7-12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acquire through hearing and experiencing lots of English, in much the same way they acquire L1 - Learn things through playing; they are not consciously trying to learn new words or phrases - Love playing with language sounds, imitating, and making funny noises. - are not able to organize their learning - not able to read or write in L1;important to recycle language through talk and play - Their grammar will develop gradually on its own when exposed to lots of English in context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are learning to read and write in L1 - are developing as thinkers - understand the difference between the real and the imaginary - can plan and organize how best to carry out an activity - can work with others and learn from others - can be reliable and take responsibility for class activities and routines

Teacher researchers are still looking for new ways to promote spoken language in English classrooms. Some strategies or techniques that promote meaningful communication exchange are role-plays, interviews, information gap, games, pair work and storytelling. The implementation of these procedures or teaching practices attempt to ameliorate the success concerning oral production skills. In this project, storytelling is going to be explored in order to know how to use it to increase speaking skill.

Storytelling

According to Taylor (2000: 6) storytelling is a tale to one or more listeners through voice and gesture in oral telling, in which things are repeated with more redundancy, especially if the students are having difficulty following. Furthermore, Ellis (2001) adds that presenting vocabulary in a clear context and using illustration help to convey meaning and make it easy to remember. In addition, Zaro and Saberri (2006) argue that storytelling requires a certain level of interaction between storyteller and audience and between individual and listener.

Besides, McKeough et al (2008) state that storytelling is the transmission of events in words and images, used in every culture as a means of entertainment, cultural preservation, education and inculcating moral values.

In addition to this, Flora (2011) added that storytelling involves a two-way interaction between a storyteller and one or more listeners and this emerges from the interaction and cooperative, coordinated efforts of teller and audience.

Blaine (1990) articulates storytelling approach focused on speaking skill. The storytelling guides teachers to tell personalized stories to the learners in their foreign language, in this case English, this language teaching method is implemented by teachers all over the world especially in the field of Teaching English as a foreign language. This powerful foreign language teaching method empowers teachers to find that they can teach the language holistically without having to teach grammar rules. According to Blaine (2004) in storytelling grammatical accuracy is taught but not in the traditional way through verb conjugations. Language is learned by understanding messages in the target language. That means language is achieved through comprehensible input. This input refers to listening and reading materials that are understood by the learner.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) stated that grammar is not explicitly taught, but is learned by induction. It means that students are expected to acquire subconsciously the grammatical structure of the language by being exposed to spoken language input.

The pedagogical basis of Storytelling methodology is in The Natural Approach. According to Krashen, S.D. (1994), the natural approach is based on the theory that language acquisition occurs only when students receive comprehensible input. The focus of this input is on reading and listening comprehension for beginning students. Based on Krashen, learners acquire parts of language in a predictable order and acquire early certain grammatical structures while others are acquired later in the process. This hypothesis suggests that this is natural order of acquisition and teachers cannot change the order of a grammatical teaching sequence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have revealed that children who are in education programs that apply storytelling, as a language learning strategy, report progress related to the development of their language skills. A relevant study is *Using storytelling to promote language and literacy development* by Jackie Peck in 1989. In this study, it is shown how storytelling promotes expressive language development, speech (oracy) and written composition (Peck, 1989).

Peck (1989) describes the development of listening and reading comprehension and the enhancement of oral skills; storytelling is not the presentation of a memorized script, it is a story told in a natural manner with all the flavor and language of the particular tradition from which it comes. Peck (1989) states that storytelling offers the students two distinct learning situations: The first situation stated is the teacher as the storyteller, in case of which, students develop critical listening. The last situation is the student as the storyteller, providing opportunity for the development of oral and written expression. Peck (1989) explored both situations by studying a third-grade classroom between 8 and 9 years old in a public school in the United States. It consisted of telling tales, shared poetry and asking students to narrate their own stories in order to explore vocalization, gestures, movement and eye contact for the purpose of developing their ability to speak by telling a story. The methodology used in this study consisted of an amount of time for each session of 40 minutes, in which all the students read and told about one specific folktale. Then they had to write their own original story; after some sessions of revision, different students were asked to tell what they wrote without memorizing lines. Similarities and differences in the structures (beginning, middle, and end) were discussed to highlight settings and characters in each

story; body language, vocalization, gestures and eye contact were explored for the student recognition and how the use of those elements were when they were telling a story. Finally, in this study Peck creates a meaningful setting for the students to try their stories.

Peck (1989) reported in her results that students were able to integrate elements of language development through classroom storytelling and confirmed that active participation in storytelling enhances fluency and expression in oral language.

As it was shown in Pecks' study, students reinforced and improved speaking skill, especially interaction through storytelling. Interaction is one of the most important issues in the methodology of storytelling due to students are exposed to the real context of the language. Donahue (2009) states that learning is more effective when it takes place in social environments that provide authentic social cues about how knowledge is applied. Stories function as a tool to pass on knowledge in a social context. For that reason, this project is going to be focused on the prospects that storytelling provides to children with the improvement in speaking skill through communicative abilities such as body language, mimic, overdone pronunciation, vocalization, eye contact, voice projection and gestures.

Methodology

Storytelling method became a powerful tool for English teachers in order to provide a wide range of techniques and approaches during the learning process; this method incorporates the four communicative skills along each session and it integrates almost two communicative skills in each activity. Storytelling as a learner centered method takes into account student's characteristics such as the age and conceptual level of learners, their needs and interest, their language level and previous language-learning experience, and the degree of difficulty of language and activities Dujmovic (2009). Before storytelling starts, it is crucial to catch learner's attention by presenting them some previous activities to increase vocabulary, practice pronunciation, body language techniques and vocalization, Peck (1989) states that to introduce a main tale line, stories and poetry are shared in the first part of the session, then learners socialize aspects of the tale in order to create a context around the tale. Body gestures, eye contact and overdone pronunciation are techniques provided by the teacher to the students, so they can use them during their oral production; these previous activities incite and encourage learners to keep paying attention to the all activity.

During the storytelling process, teachers act as a model of how a story must be told using previous mentioned techniques to empower and motivate learners to produce orally and to keep their attention all the time, peck (1989). The opening of the story is the most important aspect to start the activity because by presenting an appropriate opening, the audience is more opened and disposed to pay attention if they consider it is interesting or not, this part involves the line of the tale, the topic, characters and relevant issues; "You hook the listener in by presenting a problem that encourages them to keep listening" DeNeen (2012). While the story is developed, some

dramatic pauses take place in certain times accompanied with voice changes and body movements to act characters and especial situations of the story. Interaction with questions between the learners and the storyteller during the story or at the end, make the story more interesting for listeners due to they can give their predictions about what is going to happen or how is the ending.

This same author suggest that after the end of the story learners should be asked to socialize in small groups relevant aspects of the story like main characters and their appearance, special moments and situations, their favorite parts and the principle idea of the story; after socialization learners retell the story in different ways into the subgroups to involve them in an active position, also writing down the main idea of the story or summarize it to the other learners. Peck (1989) states that the story should always be as simple as possible, trustable and creative, should have a problem and a solution or possible solutions and the most important thing is that should be easy to understand to continue the process of the storytelling it.

Hines (1995) found that using story theater in which stories are dramatized was successful in her second language classroom As students acted out a piece of text and told a story she claimed their affective filters were lowered so that language learning could more easily take place.

The idea of this project is to improve English speaking among primary students from a local public school through the design and implementation of storytelling method. We seek to understand the possibilities of fostering English speaking development among children who have not had opportunities to be exposed to a foreign language. According to the “ESTANDARES BASICOS DE COMPETENCIAS EN LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS: INGLÉS” primary students should have some language competences regarding listening, reading, writing and speaking;

because they are supposedly initiated on the process of learning English since first grade of schooling.

Following will be described the context in which the project was carried out, the participants that were involved into the storytelling, the instructional design that explains the purpose of working with storytelling, the procedure, the strategies (*See appendix 1*) that were used in order to improve English speaking through storytelling, the reflection stage and the resources used to develop the lessons.

Context

Participants.

This classroom project was conducted in a natural setting and it dealt with the participants' behavioral patterns concerning performance and perceptions towards the application of the storytelling method.

To reflect about the storytelling method as a strategy to promote speaking skill in young children's foreign language learning, this classroom project was implemented in a primary school in Pereira. English teaching at this school is oriented by the Estandares Basicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras "El Reto" (guía Nro 21) and English classes are taught two hours per week.

In this institution, the elementary school students did not have an English teacher, the mentor teacher was in charge of giving English language instruction, but in most of the cases, they

were not qualified to give this instruction. Students just received two-hour English session per week and this class was taught by the teacher who expressed that he has never studied English consequently, he was not qualified to be an English teacher and this subject was an academic duty for her.

The standards and the objectives the English teachers followed were supposed to be the ones established by the Minister of Education in Colombia, which are specified in the text "El reto". The objectives were previously designed by the school but only educators from the school had access to that information.

Other limitations at this institution were the classroom overcrowded of students, the high temperatures and very high environmental noise due to the range of the population in that school and the closeness between each classroom.

Students

The implementation of "*Storytelling As A Strategy To Increase Speaking Skill In Second Language Learners From A Public School In Pereira*" took place in a 5th grade in a public primary school. They were 38 students (13 girls and 25 boys) whose ages ranged from 9 to 13 years old. According to the Common European Framework, the group was supposed to be at A1 level; however, the group shows low language proficiency. Regarding the linguistic aspect, none of the students has a problem that requires special attention. The students prefer activities in which they are sitting still, and as a learning style have a tendency towards aural and visual activities,

especially for the visual because they like drawings, visual clues to remember and looking at books. Regarding the types of intelligence proposed by Howard Gardner in 1983, the students showed that most of them were intra-personal, it was evidenced specially when they had to work in groups or performing in front of the class. Additionally, students showed more interest when the activities and/or topics were related to something they previously knew, specially cartoons, stories or characters.

Practitioners.

The role the practitioners had during this study was to be participants as observers. According to Mac and Ghail (1996), participant observers could collect data while interacting in the daily life of the people they were observing. In addition, participants as observers could take advantage of the different situations and perspectives of the participants, and find meaning in them.

The practitioners were students from English language teaching program at Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira whose ages were 25 and 26 years old. These teachers guided the students through the storytelling method, acting as a model to follow in order to motivate them to improve their speaking skill. The development of this project took two hours per week during a semester.

Instructional design

This section aims to provide a brief and clear explanation of how the teacher planned, designed and implemented different classes in order to find out if the use of storytelling might

impact children's speaking development. The practitioners used materials such as big books, sequence of images, comic and oral reflections. The steps used in each class were pre-storytelling, while-storytelling and after-storytelling.

In order to introduce the first session we were focus on find out what the students had learnt before. Then to start storytelling, teacher provides pre-speaking activities to introduce the story by presenting characters, context, vocabulary, actions and places as suggested by Brewster, Ellis, & Girard (2004), after that based on the information collected we used a big book named *The Hungry Lion*; its content was about daily routines, colors and animals. The activity started by presenting the big book and asking the students what they thought the book was going to be about according to the title and the illustrations from the cover. The practitioner tells the story aloud taking advantage of the use of body language, gestures, voice projection and eye contact. Giving enough input to the students, asking questions about each event in order to check comprehension and keeping the students focus on the story; at the same time the practitioner showed the pictures in the book to familiarize the students with the content.

At the end of the story, every student was asked to remind and then retell or mention short parts of the story so they could perform it and construct the story told by the entire classroom, learners were free to introduce new characters, situations and actions without losing. The practitioners were monitoring and modeling this process as well as giving feedback after students' performance.

Procedure

The procedure for storytelling was roughly divided into three parts: pre-telling, while telling and post-telling (Wright, A. 1995). In the pre-telling part, guessing strategies were demonstrated and key words taught. The purpose was to guide the students into the new approach and ease anxiety about listening to English stories without any translation. The telling part focused on getting the message across; thus, visual aids and nonverbal cues were applied to facilitate comprehension. In the post-telling part the interaction between the storyteller and the students was maintained continually in order to monitor the students' understanding.

Pre - storytelling activities

It is essential to introduce the topic and motivate students to listen, think and speak about a story. These activities allow teachers to anticipate problems related with the language and present and teach new vocabulary and phrases, gives the opportunity for recycling language previously introduced, helps to provide a context for the story and introducing the main characters before telling the story.

It also permits to make a relation between the story and their own lives, in aspects such as famous places, animals they are familiar with, likes and dislikes, etc. involving students in predicting and participating in the story. (*See activities on appendix 2*)

While story-telling activities

In this part teacher can see if students understand the language of the story by asking questions about what is going on or ask them to mime the situation that is going to happen. Besides, students are encouraged to participate in the storytelling by repeating key vocabulary and some relevant phrases. (See activities on appendix 3)

Post - storytelling activities

After the storytelling takes place, teacher encourage students to create or retell the story in their own way, using techniques such as asking questions about specific situations of the story that can create controversy between students in order to increase participation and the opportunity to speak more. (See Appendix 4)

Reflection stage

The purpose of the project was to verify and explored the effectiveness of storytelling, observing whether the performance of their speaking changed after storytelling intervened in the group.

In this project, each practitioner had different observation methods for gathering data. One practitioner collected data taking notes about each detail, situation, or important issue that could occur during the activity. The participant as observer had to present the activity, interact with the participants and collect data working with the sample, using all the instruments required for the class such as: books, images, etc. Additionally, the participant as observer had to complete a

reflective journal, explaining the more relevant events presented before, during and after the session as well as her personal feelings, ideas, thoughts and opinions. A video recorder was used in each class with the purpose to reflect on the language development that student's show during their performance and two different reflection formats were used to analyse all the relevant information like Students' responses, professional growth and linguistic outcomes. (*See formats in appendix 5*)

Resources

English children's fiction or original texts, real colourful books, pictures and short videos were used to illustrate the topic and show authentic language.

Songs were used in activities such as gap filling and retelling the song in their own words.

Using masks related with the characters of the story (especially with animals) in order to make them feel part of the story.

EVIDENCE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

Pictures





Reflection formats

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OBSERVATION FORM OF STORYTELLING IMPLEMENTATION

Teacher: David Velasco Date: 10-05-15 Time: 45 min Grade: 5th
 Observer: Monica Boig School: Suroccidental Primary School

1. The storytelling was smooth, sequenced and logical.	N/A	4	3	2	1
2. The story was well paced.	N/A	4	3	2	1
3. Instructions were clear and concise and students were able to carry them out.	N/A	4	3	2	1
4. An appropriate percentage of the class was students production	N/A	4	3	2	1
5. The methods were appropriate to the age and ability of students.	N/A	4	3	2	1
6. The teacher knew when the students were having trouble to understand.	N/A	4	3	2	1
7. The teacher showed interest in and enthusiasm for the subject taught.	N/A	4	3	2	1
8. The teacher corrected appropriately students' error.	N/A	4	3	2	1
9. Examples and illustrations were used effectively.	N/A	4	3	2	1
10. The teacher positively reinforced the students process.	N/A	4	3	2	1
11. The teacher knew students' names.	N/A	4	3	2	1
12. The teacher moved around the class and made eye contact with students.	N/A	4	3	2	1
13. The teacher was able to control and direct the class.	N/A	4	3	2	1
14. How did the teacher do it? <u>He asked for silence</u>					
15. What strategies did the teacher use? <u>Calling noisy students</u>					
16. The students were attentive and involved.	N/A	4	3	2	1
17. Why do you think they were or weren't attentive and involved? <u>They were not interested, saying "in spanish", "no entiendo"</u>					
18. The students were treated fairly, impartially, and with respect.	N/A	4	3	2	1
19. The students were encouraged to do their best.	N/A	4	3	2	1
20. How? <u>asking them pay attention to get the answer.</u>					
21. Clarity, tone, and audibility of voice	N/A	4	3	2	1
22. The teacher was aware of individual and group needs.	N/A	4	3	2	1
23. What was the most notable strategy in order to control discipline? <u>Asking for silence</u>					
24. The teacher uses different methods to evaluate learners processes	N/A	4	3	2	1
25. The teacher uses good time management	N/A	4	3	2	1

Comments:
So said "no sabemos inglés" "no prof, en español"
so distracted easily
They were noisy
*Spanish

Adapted from teaching by principles. Brown, Douglas. 1994

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OBSERVATION FORM OF STORYTELLING IMPLEMENTATION

Teacher: Daniela Vilanova Date: 19-12-15 Time: 4:30 min Grade: 5^a
 Observer: Maria Eugenia School: Suroccidental Primary School

1. The storytelling was smooth, sequenced and logical.	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
2. The story was well paced.	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
3. Instructions were clear and concise and students were able to carry them out.	N/A 4 (3) 2 1	
4. An appropriate percentage of the class was students production	N/A 4 (3) 2 1	
5. The methods were appropriate to the age and ability of students.	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
6. The teacher knew when the students were having trouble to understand.	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
7. The teacher showed interest in and enthusiasm for the subject taught.	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
8. The teacher corrected appropriately students' error.	N/A 4 (3) 2 1	N/A 4 (3) 2 1
9. Examples and illustrations were used effectively.	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
10. The teacher positively reinforced the students process.	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
11. The teacher knew students' names.	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
12. The teacher moved around the class and made eye contact with students.	N/A 4 (3) 2 1	
13. The teacher was able to control and direct the class.	N/A 4 (3) 2 1	
14. How did the teacher do it? <u>Being quiet waiting for silence</u>		
15. What strategies did the teacher use? <u>Asking to talkative students</u>		
16. The students were attentive and involved.	N/A 4 (3) 2 1	
17. Why do you think they were or weren't attentive and involved? <u>Because they answered teacher's questions (in Spanish)</u>		
18. The students were treated fairly, impartially, and with respect.	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
19. The students were encouraged to do their best.	N/A 4 3 2 1	
20. How? <u>Teacher told them: you can do it or you know the answer</u>		
21. Clarity, tone, and audibility of voice	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
22. The teacher was aware of individual and group needs	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
23. What was the most notable strategy in order to control discipline? <u>Involving students who disrupt the class</u>		
24. The teacher uses different methods to evaluate learners processes	N/A (4) 3 2 1	
25. The teacher uses good time management	N/A 4 (3) 2 1	

Comments: At the beginning students were reluctant to participate. Good class relation. Teacher encourages them.

* Attention
* Involving students

Adapted from teaching by principles Brown, Douglas. 1994

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OBSERVATION FORM OF STORYTELLING IMPLEMENTATION

Teacher: Diana Villego Date: 24-02-20 Time: 4:00 PM Grade: 5th
 Observer: Yolanda Rojas School: Insurreccional Primary School

1. The storytelling was smooth, sequenced and logical	N/A	3	2	1
2. The story was well paced	N/A	3	2	1
3. Instructions were clear and concise and students were able to carry them out.	N/A	4	3	2
4. An appropriate percentage of the class was students production	N/A	3	2	1
5. The methods were appropriate to the age and ability of students	N/A	3	3	2
6. The teacher knew when the students were having trouble to understand	N/A	3	3	2
7. The teacher showed interest in and enthusiasm for the subject taught	N/A	3	3	2
8. The teacher corrected appropriately students' error	N/A	4	3	2
9. Examples and illustrations were used effectively	N/A	4	3	2
10. The teacher positively reinforced the students process	N/A	3	3	2
11. The teacher knew students' names.	N/A	3	3	2
12. The teacher moved around the class and made eye contact with students.	N/A	3	3	2
13. The teacher was able to control and direct the class	N/A	4	3	2
14. How did the teacher do it? <u>He stops until everybody was quiet</u>	N/A	4	3	2
15. What strategies did the teacher use? <u>body language by entering into the math</u>	N/A	4	3	2
16. The students were attentive and involved	N/A	4	3	2
17. Why do you think they were or weren't attentive and involved? <u>They were concentrated and laughing because of the story made by T</u>	N/A	4	3	2
18. The students were treated fairly, impartially, and with respect	N/A	4	3	2
19. The students were encouraged to do their best	N/A	4	3	2
20. How? <u>T encouraged them to say something no matter if it is wrong</u>	N/A	4	3	2
21. Clarity, tone, and audibility of voice	N/A	4	3	2
22. The teacher was aware of individual and group needs	N/A	4	3	2
23. What was the most notable strategy in order to control discipline? <u>Body language - Always so</u>	N/A	4	3	2
24. The teacher used different methods to evaluate learners processes	N/A	4	3	2
25. The teacher uses good time management	N/A	4	3	2

Comments:
Good rapport - So laughed with the story
* Good sense of humor.

Adapted from teaching by principles Brown, Douglas 1994

Task designs



TEACHER (S)	CLASS NUMBER	DATE (Day-Month-Year)	LENGTH OF CLASS	GRADE	STUDENTS' AGE
David valencia	3	10-03-2015	45 Min.	5 th	10-13 years old.

FOCUS		LEARNING AIM FOR THE LESSON (Communicative Goal)
Primary Skill	Secondary Skill (s)	By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to describe the main characteristics of a short story taking advantage of the use of body language, gestures and facial expressions that contribute to the meaning of the communication.
Speaking	Listening	

ESTANDARES BASICOS DE COMPETENCIAS (MEN)	
ESTANDAR GENERAL	
Digo un texto corto memorizado en una dramatización, ayudándome con gestos.	
PRIMARY SKILL	SECONDARY SKILL (S)
Speaking ✓ describo algunas características de mí mismo, de otras personas, de animales, de lugares y el clima.	Listening ✓ Entiendo la idea general de una historia contada por mi profesor cuando se apoya en movimientos, gestos y cambios de voz.
INDICADORES DE LOGRO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reconoce cuando se le mencionan las principales características de alguien o algo. ✓ Nombra en inglés las principales características de una historia contada. ✓ Identifica a los personajes principales de una historia. 	



STAGE (skill practice)	PROCEDURE (Teacher and learner activity)	TIME	COMMENTS
Pre-storytelling Warmer	As a warm up activity students may guess the name of the story by saying alphabet, each student will have the chance to participate and every wrong letter is making a part of a hangman, this hangman will be drawn as the main character of the story.	5 Min.	
While storytelling	Pre-service teachers will arrange the chairs in a big circle, then, students listen to a story and they may answer easy factual questions like - who (name the main characters), what (describe one action that a character in the story did), where (setting of the story) or when (make a linear timeline of the sequence of events).	20 Min.	
Post storytelling	In this stage, students will create their own version of the story. Pre-service teacher will encourage students to re-tell the story by changing one of the characters and replace it for their own character, it can be an animal or a super hero. They are allowed to write it in Spanish but they are ask to simulate a part of the story using simple sentences in English.	15 Min.	
CLOSURE (Extra-class work, announcements, things to consider)	For the next class, they are asked to draw the part of the story that liked the most.	5 Min.	

Material used during the implementation





Results

Even though storytelling is a way to improve speaking skill, its implementation requires reflection. The outcomes showed that storytelling as a method of improving learners speaking entails making modifications to traditional teaching practices, especially when planning classes. Also, it was evident that reflecting upon the manner storytelling is implemented provides different perspectives about the learners' process, particularly those regarding the speaking skill. The results of this section will be presented in terms of three aspects: professional growth, students' responses and linguistic outcomes.

1. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

1.1: Classroom management

1.1.1. Strengths

Good classroom management reduces negative behavior and establishes a good environment that engages students in academic and social learning. In this case, nonverbal communication was a strength because it was a useful strategy to engage students when using storytelling. For instance, in the second implementation, whose aim was to narrate a short part of the story helped by gestures, students could make connections and reduce anxiety when they did not understand the verbal message. This was evident because they were constantly concentrated, laughed during the amusing moments and asked questions related to the story in order to clarify

doubts. Johnson (1999) expresses that students can learn easily through the use of facial expressions and body movements because these are understood faster than the verbal language. Implementing storytelling gave us a new perspective about how to use our body language and a wide range of movements in the classroom. Facial expressions or different tones of voice can have an enormous value in the classroom. It was noticed when students showed interest on the story and they left behind distracting behavior, so the class was more enjoyable and productive. In addition, calls for attention and noise levels inside the class decreased notably, making the teacher's role easier because we spent less time in classroom management issues.

1.1.2. Challenges

In storytelling, the different tones of voice, gestures and the representation of the characters can make it more entertaining. However, using these strategies was challenging because their over-use led students to pay only attention to teacher's movements or gestures. That is, they seemed reluctant to teacher's lecturing without acting voices and movements, forcing us to play the role of storytellers all the time in order to capture their curiosity; otherwise, distracting behavior was evident. We could notice that situation when we asked students questions like: "*how do we say 'comer' in English?*", and they did not answer correctly despite the word had been used more than 6 times in the story. At the moment to say the word helped by gestures, most of them translated it immediately to Spanish (without asking them to do it), using phrases like: "*ella comía pescado o comía mucho*". In the second implementation, most of the students had fun with the story "*The poor little old lady*", but when checking language understanding, some students only remembered the teacher's gestures. Brown (2002) mentions that young learners have short attention span that

must be considered, especially if words do not capture their curiosity. For these reasons, it is important to balance body language, tone of voice and other related aspects in order to present stories in an entertaining way. However, as we noticed that students tend to focus on the most attractive way of using language (mime, gestures, body language, tone of voice...), we realized that a mixture of these techniques when telling stories accompanied by a balance between receptive and productive skills can make what is learned memorable through direct experience and keep interest for those learners with different learning styles.

1.2: Lesson Planning

1.2.1: Strengths

In this project, the design of the materials used was essential because these permitted to call students' attention and create expectations about the stories. For instance, in the second implementation, students were given different animal faces, so they could use them as masks, making the animal's noise, which helped to motivate participation through the materials. Richards (2010) states that well-designed materials can provide rich sources of learning input as well as facilitate teacher development. As teachers in development, we learnt that materials in language teaching play an important role that is sometimes underestimated because teachers only focused on printed material, e.g., worksheets. It cannot be denied that printed material is a useful tool for the classes; however, we noticed that there are different resources that can be suitable for students' interest and age, and those materials do not have to be expensive or revolutionary, but if you select them and adapt them appropriately, they will support the class content.

1.2.2: Challenges

When planning the lessons we think about the materials for our classes, and nowadays we can find an extensive variety of materials to be used in the classroom, but teaching-learning through story-telling requires selecting and adapting the material carefully since the materials play a crucial role in the development of the lesson. Selecting the materials for the implementation of this project was essential since they needed to fit to both students' age and story in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the lesson.

Adapting the materials was necessary because we needed to engage students and activate their background knowledge while the stories were either read or told, this in order to connect their personal experiences with the content of the stories. In this case, sometimes we adapted or created materials, especially to support Colombian stories, and we acquired knowledge about how to modify the materials available as well as the time required to select and adapt them. In that sense, during the first implementation we used books, flashcards and other printed material, which had to be appropriate to the story, for doing that, it was necessary to modify the content according to the story. Richards (2010) says that there are situations when commercial materials do not fit with learners' needs and teachers require either to adapt available materials or to design their own materials for a specific teaching-learning context.

Selecting and adapting materials was an important issue which showed us that materials mediate between the story and the learners because they influence the content and the process of learning. Besides, the conditions of this implementation taught us how to use appropriate and

engaging materials that were fitting according to our budget because some materials could be re-used in different classes.

2. STUDENTS' RESPONSES

The implementation's results showed that through the use of storytelling, students enhanced their communicative skills and their motivation to learn a foreign language. The strengths and challenges surrounding students' responses will be covered in this section.

2.1: Strengths

One aspect that contributed to the flow of the class was the positive humor in the classroom. It was a positive aspect because when planning the classes we thought how to engage students, and using the sense of humor was permitted to call their attention and let them feel less stressed or anxious. For instance, in the second implementation while telling "*The poor little old lady*", making funny voices or parodies in certain moments of the story was vital to have them involved in the story. Gatt (2000) states that humor in class "is the 'breathing-out of the students' soul" and it was notable in the implementation of our classes because when students laughed they seemed less anxious. In that sense, we learnt that a positive sense of humor provided a nicely atmosphere in the classroom helping students gain confidence, especially those students who were worried about making mistakes at the moment of speaking.

2.1.1: Challenges

Including the sense of humor during storytelling require to be done within bounds. The use of humor in the classroom could end up in an activity out of control. This situation can occur when the humor is used by the students instead of the teacher or without establishing ground rules. For example, in the first implementation where the “Patasola” story was told in a humorous way by exaggerating characteristics and showing droll images, some students were bullying a partner by relating the Patasola characteristics with her. Halliwell (1992) mentions that activities which over excite a student needs to be managed carefully. If the teacher does not establish the limits, activities will be uncontrolled. In the other hand what we learnt with this challenge was that the sense of humor in the classroom needs to be carefully implemented in the lessons bearing in mind that students tend to have a reckless behavior due to their ages.

3. LINGUISTIC OUTCOMES

In this section, we will show the students’ progress when using the English language. This issue will be addressed showing the challenges and the strengths which were noticeable when students started to use the target language during the implementation of this project.

3.1. Strengths

Throughout our classroom project we noticed that storytelling served as a tool to prompt learners to speak. It was presented with enough vocabulary that they demand in order to produce in English according to their level.

The stories presented during the sessions, were the grounds to start speaking due to these tells provided the students oral expressions and vocabulary they were familiar with in order to

reinforce it or new vocabulary in order to extend their lexis. For instance, in the second session we found that when students acted out an event from the story using the vocabulary that was reinforced (e.g. the poor old little lady has nothing to eat, just fruits and meal), speaking in the foreign language become more natural and easier for them.

Despite there were Spanish words in their speech, (e.g. the poor lady tenía grande garden and animals) we observed that they used vocabulary that was presented in the story through images and repeated many times (e.g. eat, fruits, meal, etc.). This idea is supported by liston (1994) who stated that students who interact with stories will retain the information much longer than with traditional presentation methods. In conclusion we learnt that storytelling support students to organize information in personalized ways and consequently to develop a better comprehending and retention of new information and concepts.

3.2. Challenges

The objective of teaching speaking through storytelling was to improve students' communicative skills, specifically, speaking. However, during the process we found some issues that interfered with the process. Some of the most relevant matters were incorrect learned pronunciation and intonation.

During the implementation of this project we noticed that many students had learnt some words with unsuitable pronunciation, or in some cases they made emphasis in the inappropriate part of the word changing the stress of the words. To this effect, based on students' performance

during this project the most common sources and types of errors regarding pronunciation were articulatory difficulties to produce particular English sounds or clusters of sounds (e.g., the /th/ sound) and receptive difficulties because it was hard for students to recognize or perceive certain English sounds, therefore it was difficult for them to produce (e.g., the /j/ sound, they produced instead the /tʃ/ which in Spanish language is the pronunciation of /CH/ like in *choza*). During the learners' English production, the words with the /th/ sound were pronounced with a Spanish /t/ sound. For instance, students did not say /θɪŋk/ for think, they said /'tɪŋ.k/ instead; in some cases they just said /'tɪn/. Additionally, when uttering words with /j/ sound as in show [ʃəʊ], students produced the Spanish sound of ch, saying chou [tʃəʊ].

According to Bonaventura *et al.* (2000) to provide the most appropriate feedback it is important to gather information about the source of the mispronunciation in students' verbalization and also to identify the areas of an utterance likely to contain pronunciation errors.

In this connection, being perceptive teachers provides the base for correction because you can keep track of the most common and generalized errors in pronunciation, sometimes quickly pointing errors in order to achieve the target or model of pronunciation. However, there are some errors that are just evidence of a marked non-native accent, in that case, this aspect was not so relevant because they did not hinder communication; besides, providing feedback for every possible deviation may cause that the student quickly becomes discouraged from the learning process. In this regard, to overcome pronunciation issues and taking into account students' motivation, we decided to provide general feedback to the entire class because in that way any student was not address directly, and they could free to participate in the drilling or choral pronunciation activity.

Another aspect that was a challenge, was related to the few opportunities students had to use the English language in and out the classroom. In the classroom because due to the amount of students (38) and time (two hour per week); therefore, in some activities it was not possible to check each student production to keep track on individualized progress. It is explained by Al-Jarf (2006) “Over-crowded classes have a negative effect on assessment. [...] testing students individually and orally in the speaking course is also very time-consuming, no matter how short the questions are” (p. 24-25).

Additionally, students did not have any other opportunities or spaces to be in touch with the English language out of the classroom, the only moment and place to do it was in the classroom during the English class. Al-Jarf (2006) also contributes to this when saying that in non-English speaking countries an educational environment needs to be created where students can use English language communicatively outside the language classroom. In this case, during the class students try to use the L2 as much as possible, but once they left the classroom they started using their mother tongue. Al-Jarf also states that “Out-of-class activities contribute to students’ involvement and the development of a communicative use of English within the institution or in the wider social environment” (p.45). In that sense, we were aware that learners use L1 in real world, unless they are encourage to communicate in English. For that reason, we talked to students outside the classroom in English as much as possible, doing this fosters students’ communication while creates rapport among teacher and students.

Conclusions

This classroom Project was set out to explore the implementation of the use of storytelling to develop the speaking skill in third graders in a public school in Pereira city. Mainly this implementation sought to articulate activities and strategies based on storytelling to help students to produce orally in the target language. After implementing this approach and making connections with theory, we can conclude that:

First at all, nonverbal communication engage students when using storytelling. Facial expressions or different tones of voice can have an enormous value in the classroom due to students show more interest on the story and they leave behind distracting behavior.

Second of all, the design of the materials used is essential specially if it is adapted or created for learners in an early age. For instance: colorful flashcards, realia (real objects) and videos. In addition, the material presented call their attention and increase participation in the target language during the stories due to it helps them to remember the vocabulary because they can see the image or relate it with something.

Thirdly, a positive sense of humor provide a nicely atmosphere in the classroom helping students gain confidence, especially those students who are worried about making mistakes at the moment of speaking. But it is important to mention that this can end up in an activity out of control when it is used by the students or without establishing ground rules.

Fourthly, the stories presented during the sessions, are the grounds to start speaking in the target language due to these tells provide oral expressions and vocabulary they are familiar with in order to reinforce it and new vocabulary in order to extend their lexis.

To conclude, storytelling provides students an array of benefits which include authentic and enriched language input what finally end up in an authentic language output due to the possibility to organize the information received through the stories in their own way using their own experiences.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

Some strategies will be taking into consideration in this project. These are mention below.

1. Stories can be used to reinforce conceptual development in children (for example, colour, size, shape, time, cause and effect, and so on).
2. Stories are means of developing learning. This major category covers:
 - Reinforcing thinking strategies (for example, comparing, classifying, predicting, problem-solving, hypothesizing, planning, and so on).
 - Developing strategies for learning English (for example, guessing the meaning of new words, training the memory, self-testing, and so on).
 - Developing study skills (for example, making, understanding and interpreting charts and graphs, making and learning to use dictionaries, organizing work, and so on).
3. Carefully selected stories can also be used to develop other subjects in the Curriculum, in particular:
 - Mathematics telling the time, numbers: counting and quantity, measuring
 - Science the life-cycle of insects, animals, outer space, how seeds grow

Appendix 2.

HANGMAN - students may guess the topic by saying alphabet, every wrong letter is making a part of a hangman.

WARMING UP – DISCUSSION: brief discussion about students' own personal experiences.

ANSWER AND PASS ON - each student has a piece of paper and must answer a question and pass it on, another student will answer second question and pass it on, etc. Example of questions are - who, where, when, what is he/she doing.

BRAINSTORMING - we can ask students to think about a topic and write down all their ideas.

ASKING QUESTIONS - is a good activity and we can use it a lot, but “a good question must be probing and motivate thought so that it encourages children to justify their responses, it must focus their attention and encourage observation, invite enquiry and stimulate because it is open-ended, it should be productive and seek a response and generate more questions”. (Ellis and Brewster, 2002: 20)

Appendix 3.

WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT - we stop the reading and ask questions to provoke students think about what they have been reading.

YES/NO QUESTIONS - e.g. Think about a character or a place mentioned in the story and students have to find out who or what it is by asking only 'yes/no' questions.

HOT SEAT - teacher is one character from the story, and students have to ask questions to find out, what has happened, or why, etc.

PANTOMIME - teacher act as some character and students have to guess who is it, other variation - one student act and the rest guess.

COUNTING - in this activity we may ask students to count how many times they hear a particular word or how many characters are there - it is good when a teacher tell the story or when we use a story on video.

A PART OF A STORY - students have one part of a story - first, last, or middle and they are asked to complete it or continue it.

A CAREFUL LISTENER - while students listen to a story, they may answer easy factual questions like - who (name the main characters), what (describe one action that a character in the story did), where (setting of the story) or when (make a linear timeline of the sequence of events).

Appendix 4.

SUMMARIZATION - students can summarize the story in their own words.

QUESTIONNAIRES - we can ask students questions belong to or come out from stories. Students' answers may lead to discussion.

RE – TELLING THE STORY - we can encourage students to re-tell the story from different position, e.g. from position of a particular protagonist's point of view, placing it in a different time and setting.

ROLE-PLAY OR SIMULATION – it is used to encourage general oral fluency, or train students for specific situations based on the story.

MAKE A VIDEO - this activity based on the read or heard story take much time, on the other hand it may be very motivated for students to make their own video, and they can use a wide variety of language in the process and the product of video-making. For students the product will be helpful, because they can see what mistakes they have made and they can find them and learnt from them.

CREATING STUDENT'S OWN STORIES - when we create an atmosphere in which stories are valued in human terms much more than in 'learning English' terms, we will encourage students to create their own stories. Main technique to help them is to ask questions. E.g. "tell me more!" 'But what do you mean?' 'Tell me how he walks when he is going to work.' 'Tell me how he walked on that particular morning'.

Comprehensible input to foster participation

Initial Reflection

At the beginning of the implementation, it was evidenced that children had not had too much exposure to the English language because once the pre-service teachers started giving the instruction in English students started complaining that teachers were using too much English and they did not understand what pre-service teachers were talking about because they (students) did not know English. Noticing those points, we were worried about the scarce understanding students could have through the development of the activities related to our classroom project. We desired to present the activity in a way in which we could catch their attention, minimizing disruptive behavior and encouraging them to participate actively in the activities.

We knew that students could feel frustrated when either they did not understand something or when they did not get the idea of what was read, all this due to the absence of exposure to the L2. Haskin et al. (2003) expressed that the frustration of the students obstructed their communication skills, especially to perform in front of their classmates. For that reason, body language and voice projection played an essential role during the reading.

Planning and action

Richards (2011) suggests that lesson planning is necessary if we want to have an effective lesson, in spite of the fact that the nature of the planning and the kinds of information can change largely. In this case, for planning the lesson, pre-service teachers followed the ESA (Engage, Study, Activate) method, proposed by Harmer in 1998.

We started by presenting the main vocabulary required for a better understanding of the story. We observed how learners reacted to the different stages during the storytelling. For developing the activity, we used books, flashcards and worksheets, a good body language and voice projection that we considered were useful for students as a listening strategy because with the tone of voice they could identify aspects such as feelings or characters mentioned in the story. D'Mello and Graesser (n.d.) stated that the linguistic channel chiefly transmits the content of the message; the function of nonverbal behavior is fundamental to express the affective states, attitudes, and social dynamics of the people involved in the communication process. In other words, body language provided the visual aspect for creating a connection between students and the story told. Students took advantage of those aspects and they started to get involved in the story, some of them started re-telling the story or parts of it in Spanish.

Observation

During the implementation of the lesson plan, one of the challenges faced was students' participation. Students were reluctant to participate; besides the opportunities they did it, they used L1. Most of the time students participated using Spanish even if the pre-service teachers rephrased in English what they said. The students were asked in English about events or characters in the story. In this case, as learning strategy, the pre-service teachers made emphasis using the voice to highlight important words or frequently used words.

It means that the linguistic outcomes were mainly in L1, some students were reluctant to participate, especially in English. Nevertheless, in L1 they were able to mention important aspects

of the story. In that sense, the assessment of the activity was done through oral questions (during the whole activity and at the end as well) and written questions. Additionally, other activities as sequencing events and matching descriptions were used in the class.

Reflection

After the implementation of this class, we consider that it is essential to provide enough input to the learners. Moreover, if we know how to provide it in an interesting manner they will feel more inclined to participate. Consequently, if we foster participation even in L1 afterwards they will participate in English if we provide the appropriate input taking into account their age, needs and preferences but this is a process and we cannot expect students to produce immediately, especially, if they have not had enough opportunities to be in contact with the English language before. To sum up, we need to provide a comprehensible input to the students, input that needs to be appropriate, accurate and most of the time redundant, on that way we are giving them language that is understood when they hear it or read it.

CIRCLE TIME TO DEVELOP ATTENTION AND INVOLVE STUDENTS

Initial reflection

It was evident that some students were reluctant to participate and that situation can affect in a negative form the development of class, due to the objective of this implementation is to analyze the improvement of storytelling in their speaking skill. For that reason, we planned an

activity where all of them were involved, in order to have all the students participating and not always the same students.

Additionally some students get lost during the activities because of their attention span; for those reasons, we were concern about the understanding through the development of the activity. We wanted to find the best way of encouraging students to participate actively in the activity, catching their attention and reducing the disruptive behavior. Those issues make that some students lose interest in the activity. However, storytelling gives the chance to monitor the students while the teacher is moving around telling the story.

Planning and Action

For developing the activity, we organized students in a circle. However, some students were switched in order to avoid indiscipline during the activity; each student was given a different animal's face, then the pre-service teachers started to telling a story about animal, and when the animal was mentioned the student who had that animal's face made the sound of the animal, and so on until all the animal were mentioned.

According to Mosley (1993) sitting in a circle is a special time to share chants and rhymes, songs, play rhythm instruments, read a story, and participate in movement games and relaxation activities. Circle time provides a time for listening, developing attention span, promoting oral communication, and learning new concepts and skills.

Observation

We could observe that some students felt shyness or ashamed when they had to make the noise while other students were not paying attention because they were playing with the material; for that reason, we noticed that sometimes some students need encouragement saying them that they can do it or that it does not matter if they make a mistake. After saying that, they participated in the activity.

Despite some students' attitude towards making the sound, we know that the implementation of this activity was successful because we noticed that they had fun because all of them had a role in the activity, besides they needed to be paying attention in order to know when they were mentioned in the story. We also realized that while the activity was being developed, those students who seemed to be shy started participating more actively, probably because the learners felt that all of them contributing to the development of the story.

Reflection

Finally, we consider that being aware about the affective factors of the students will help us to develop our activities with ease because we noticed that some of them pay too much attention what their classmates say. Moreover, if we know how to involve and motivate students they feel more confident when participating. Additionally, we also noticed that the relation that we as teachers create with our students is really important because they see us with respect but not with fear, in other words creating a good atmosphere in the classroom is vital for the teaching-learning process and its effectiveness.

SENSE OF HUMOR TO IMPROVE CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE

Initial Reflection

It was evident, when speaking in English or even in Spanish students felt shy, nervous or worried to make a mistake. That situation is not something new for us as teachers in development, we have experienced those emotions as foreign language learners and we know it can affect the learning process because students tend to avoid the active participation in the class. For that reason, we applied some strategies that we used to decrease anxiety when students produce language in a class.

Krashen (1982) wrote about the negative effects of anxiety on students' ability to learn. Taking to account that aspect, and as a solution for that issue, we made use of the rapport, in order to keep a comfortable classroom atmosphere. Taking advantage of the sense of humor when telling the stories and when contextualizing it, it can play an important part in helping students to feel relaxed and to overcome stress and nerves making them more receptive to learning.

Planning and action

One of the decisions made in order to reduce classroom anxiety was to make students laugh through the stories. The engagement part was crucial to catch their attention by introducing the story in a funny way, showing pictures, cartoons and comics related to the scenes of the story

and making associations of it with funny anecdotes of the real life was essential to increase the learner's motivation and self-confidence. When choosing the book we took into account the quote written by Shannon, (1993) who states, "As for stories, young children tend to enjoy humor books that were easier to read and they are more interested in humor based in characters' actions than humor of language and wordplay." When telling the story, imitations and funny voices was the key to keep them focus on the story.

Observation

The impact that the use of humor had in the storytelling was positive. It was evident in the active participation that students showed at the moment that teacher asks them to interact with the class, students also showed to feel more "closed" to the teacher, they showed more interest on the story and they were asking questions about the story most of the time. We could also observe that it is important to avoid jokes related to racial, cultural and religion issues because it can be a reason for bullying between students. In addition, we noticed how important is to keep our role as the manager of the class in order to maintain the students' respect because in some moments laughs turned into a chaos and students needed to be controlled by the teacher, but in general it was a successful strategy for storytelling since it helps in many aspects as motivation, concentration, participation and the most important developing their speaking ability.

Reflection

According to our experience we can deduce that if we used in the correct way, humor can decrease the 'distance' between teachers and students, and helps to remember the main aspects of the story motivating them to participate and to speak more because they are enjoying themselves. Therefore, the lesson needs to be well prepared adopting positive humor in the English classroom in order to help to achieve the planned that is to help the students to develop their speaking skill. We learned that humor can also help to improve the classroom atmosphere mostly for students who are worried about making mistakes or nervous about their speaking abilities. In addition, teachers can use humor to bring content to life making use of parody, or comical voices catching students' attention. This reflection coincides with Gatt (2000) who explains this situation by saying that "it is the 'breathing-out of the soul'. When during the lesson the pupils only listen to the teacher, who may be teaching in the same tone, then it is as if they only breathe in and have no opportunity to breathe out. They need humor, which the teacher can find in very different places".