

Información Importante

La Universidad de La Sabana informa que el(los) autor(es) ha(n) autorizado a usuarios internos y externos de la institución a consultar el contenido de este documento a través del Catálogo en línea de la Biblioteca y el Repositorio Institucional en la página Web de la Biblioteca, así como en las redes de información del país y del exterior con las cuales tenga convenio la Universidad de La Sabana.

Se permite la consulta a los usuarios interesados en el contenido de este documento para todos los usos que tengan finalidad académica, nunca para usos comerciales, siempre y cuando mediante la correspondiente cita bibliográfica se le de crédito al documento y a su autor.

De conformidad con lo establecido en el artículo 30 de la Ley 23 de 1982 y el artículo 11 de la Decisión Andina 351 de 1993, La Universidad de La Sabana informa que los derechos sobre los documentos son propiedad de los autores y tienen sobre su obra, entre otros, los derechos morales a que hacen referencia los mencionados artículos.

BIBLIOTECA OCTAVIO ARIZMENDI POSADA
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA SABANA
Chía - Cundinamarca

ENHANCING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING THROUGH THE USE OF
COLLABORATIVE AND SELF- DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS

2

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

Katia Contreras Gutiérrez

Research Report submitted

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master in English Language Teaching for Self-directed Learning.

Directed by Carolina Cruz Corzo

Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures

Universidad de La Sabana

Chía, Colombia

2013

ENHANCING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING THROUGH THE USE OF
COLLABORATIVE AND SELF- DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS

ENHANCING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING THROUGH THE USE OF
COLLABORATIVE AND SELF- DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS

3

Acknowledgements

I give thanks to God for the strength and wisdom given to finish this project, this work is the proof that those who believe intensely in him become bearers of his strength. I would also like to acknowledge my research leader Carolina Cruz Corzo for her assistance in writing reports, for sharing her expertise and academic suggestions; I specially appreciate her understanding during the difficult days I had to go through.

I am deeply and forever indebted to my parents Jorge Contreras and Maria Gutierrez for their love, support and encouragement throughout this process. My gratitude goes out as well to all the professors in the Master Program at Universidad de La Sabana and Anaheim University, Claudia Acero, Patricia Ayure, Ken Beatty, David Nunan, Rod Ellis, Kathleen Bailey and Frances Byrnes, for providing me with their valuable insights on the art of teaching a language, their attitude to research inspire me to continue the pursuit of answers in this beautiful profession.

ENHANCING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING THROUGH THE USE OF
COLLABORATIVE AND SELF- DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS

4

Abstract

The aim of this research project is to analyze the effect of the collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks on speaking fluency. Subjects involved in this research were ten university students from a local university in Sincelejo Sucre with reported insecurity in the speaking activities, their ages range between 20 and 21 years old. The strategy focused on the use of collaborative tasks as a way to improve fluency in English and monitor their own learning.

The intervention consisted of ten speaking tasks that combined collaborative and self-directed activities. After the implementation stage, participants expressed their motivation towards the activities and quantitative results evidenced an improvement in their speaking fluency.

Key words: self-directed tasks, collaboration, speaking, fluency

ENHANCING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING THROUGH THE USE OF
COLLABORATIVE AND SELF- DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS

5

Resumen

El objetivo de este proyecto de investigación es analizar el efecto que el diseño y la implementación de actividades de producción oral basadas en el trabajo colaborativo y las estrategias de autodirección tienen en el mejoramiento de la fluidez oral en lengua extranjera.

Los estudiantes involucrados en esta investigación son estudiantes universitarios entre 20 y 21 años de edad de la ciudad de Sincelejo Sucre, quienes expresan sentir inseguridad y temor al momento de realizar actividades orales en inglés.

Los resultados indican que la implementación de actividades de producción oral basadas en el trabajo colaborativo y las estrategias de autodirección incrementaron el nivel de fluidez en un 152% al final de las intervenciones así como también la motivación de los estudiantes hacia la realización de actividades de producción oral en lengua extranjera .

Palabras clave: tareas de autodirección, trabajo colaborativo, *actividades* de producción oral en lengua extranjera, fluidez.

ENHANCING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING THROUGH THE USE OF
COLLABORATIVE AND SELF- DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS

6

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
Resumen	v
Table of Figures	viii
Table of Tables.....	ix
Chapter One: Introduction.....	10
Research Question.....	11
Research Objectives	11
Rationale	12
Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework	14
Task- based Approach.....	14
Collaborative Learning.....	16
Self- directed Learning.....	18
Oral Fluency.....	19
Measuring Oral Fluency.....	22
Chapter Three: Research Design.....	25
Type of the Study	25

ENHANCING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING THROUGH THE USE OF
COLLABORATIVE AND SELF- DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS

	7
Context	26
Researcher’s Role.....	26
Participants.....	27
Ethical Considerations	27
Instruments for Data Collection	28
Measuring Sheet.....	28
Students’ Surveys.....	29
Reflection Notes.....	29
Data Collection Procedures.....	29
Chapter Four: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation	30
Instructional Design	30
Chapter Five: Results and Data Analysis.....	36
Categories.....	43
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications.....	57
Pedagogical Implications	59
Limitations	61
Further Research	62
References	64
Appendix A.	69

ENHANCING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING THROUGH THE USE OF
COLLABORATIVE AND SELF- DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS

	8
.....	69
Appendix B.1	70
Appendix B.2	71
Appendix C.	74
Appendix D	75
Appendix E.....	77
Appendix F.....	78
Appendix G.....	86
Appendix H.....	87

Table of Figures

Figure 1.	38
Figure 2.	38
Figure 3.	40
Figure 4.	49
Figure 5.	50
Figure 6.	51
Figure 7.	53
Figure 8.	54

ENHANCING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING THROUGH THE USE OF
COLLABORATIVE AND SELF- DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS

Table of Tables

Table 1. Brown’s Expanded View of Fluency.....	21
Table 2 . Fluency Friday Plus: Timed Sample	23
Table 3. Measuring Oral production Chart.....	37
Table 4. Coding Sample 1.....	41
Table 5. Coding Sample 2.....	42
Table 6. Coding Sample 3.....	42
Table 7. Categories used in the research.....	43

ENHANCING FLUENCY IN SPEAKING THROUGH THE USE OF COLLABORATIVE AND SELF- DIRECTED SPEAKING TASKS

Chapter One: Introduction

English has increasingly emerged as a medium of communication or “lingua franca” all over the world, this reality has forced countries like Colombia to improve the level of performance in the different English skills, specially the productive abilities as a way to guarantee competence in a globalized world.

Speaking as a productive skill should receive a great amount of attention since it is essential to real life exchanges and as Rivers asserts , (1981) speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing, according to Richards and Renandya's (2002) : "A large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking" (p. 201). For authors like Burnkart (1998) speaking constitutes for learners the evidence of truly knowing a language.

However, when considering speaking and proficiency of a language, many factors that enhance the oral production must be taken into account, and in order to do so students are expected to show their ability in several speaking components such as comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. This last component regards the easiness to communicate ideas. This study addresses the fact to overcome speaking fluency difficulties in a group of 10 students from CECAR university where the researcher has been a teacher for more than four years, class observations from this particular context evidenced that although students were willing to participate in speaking activities, nervousness, anxiety, and frustration when it took them a long time to express ideas, made them abandon the oral tasks, this situation affected

students` academic performance since it led them to obtain low scores in most of the assessed oral activities .

An initial survey was administered and most of them mentioned some aspects like self-study, practice, commitment, interest and willingness to be more relevant in the process of learning a language than depending on a teacher`s instruction ,they also favored teamwork as a strategy that could help them improving their performance in the speaking activities. In this regard Thornbury (1999) poses an interesting view on how fluency can be improved when the learner is able to produce language without consciously thinking about it, as they can fulfill their objectives when working together collaboratively with a communicative aim in mind.

Students` reported interests and needs in team work and aspects like self - study and commitment towards learning English were taken into account to design a pedagogical strategy that would tackle three relevant issues drawn from observations, participants` behavior and survey information, the first two issues were need for oral fluency improvement, more responsibility and managing on their learning while the third one was related to their proposed interest on working by groups. As a result ten pedagogical interventions whose main purpose was to provide opportunities to enhance oral fluency and self direction were designed in order to answer the following research question:

Research Question

How can fluency in Speaking be fostered in a group of A2 university students through the use of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks?

Research Objectives

- To implement a set of collaborative and self- directed speaking tasks which aim at enhancing fluency in speaking.

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

Rationale

Learning a foreign language implies the acquisition of different communicative competencies that lead to a successful language performance and whose main aim is to communicate and socialize ideas, feelings and cultural backgrounds in order to continue growing within personal and professional fields. This aim has been adopted for the Colombian Ministry of Education as the main reason to cope with the need to be able to communicate in English with comparable international standards “in order to insert the country within processes of universal communication, within the global economy and cultural openness” as it is stated in the National Bilingual Program 2004-2019.

The fact of being considered a capable speaker compared against international standards entails the challenge of communicate with a flowing and natural discourse in which oral fluency is the feature that determines the “smooth, rapid, effortless use of language” Crystal (1987, p. 421), and as Brumfit (1984, p. 56) posits “the natural language use”.

However, developing speaking fluency skills within a monolingual context like the Colombian one becomes a real challenge for both teachers and students who are constantly struggling with negative factors that impede this goal, such as the low number of hours devoted to English in the curriculum, students’ anxiety when doing speaking activities and additionally as Hieke (1985) suggests limitations in the methodology that lead to lack of progress in fluency acquisition.

Therefore, the relevance of this research study lies on the fact that through the use of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks, learners are expected to produce oral language not only with coherence and accuracy, but also and for the purposes of this research, with fluency as a component of the language performance needed to be competent when communicating in a foreign language and thus fulfill the educational goals of the Ministry of education ;to educate individuals able to communicate in a foreign language .

Researchers and teachers audience of this study would find this proposal as a useful, innovative strategy that combines collaborative learning and self direction with the enhancement of oral production practice, this latter considered a critical issue within the Colombian context.

Furthermore, the findings of this study can inform teachers on how to design effective communicative activities to promote overall language proficiency as well as point of departure to evaluate the current teaching practices that have been used in their contexts.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

The current chapter deals with the theoretical concepts and constructs that guided the decisions made in this study, it is important to mention that in the existing literature, there is no evidence of previous studies that combine collaborative learning and self direction to improve oral fluency thus, considering that the innovation of the present study is related to the creation and application of collaborative and self- directed speaking tasks to enhance fluency in speaking, below you will find three main constructs that need to be revised Collaborative learning and self-directed tasks as well as Oral Fluency and its objective measurement.

Task- based Approach

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

The proponents of this method argue that the most effective way to teach is by engaging students in real language use in the classroom, so teachers should provide students with a natural

context for language use and this is possible only through tasks. The concept of task is used in many fields, but specifically in foreign or second language teaching it is defined as "a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward" (Long, 1985, p89). According to this author some examples of tasks are painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, taking a hotel reservation. In other words; we can say that task is meant a lot of things people do in everyday life. Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.289) define task as:

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

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

a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design

of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes.

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

Collaborative Learning

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

Collaborative learning is aimed to explore and take advantage of the strengths of each of the participants to put them together harmonically like in an orchestra. With each one’s contribution to the final melody, a space for joy is released. Moreover, collaborative learning enhances critical thinking skills which train learners to cope with different social, cultural and professional issues in a globalized world. This is supported by Cohen (1994) when stating that

“shared goals and tools can strengthen positive student interdependence” (as cited in Van Boxtel, 2000, p.4).

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

Pattanpichet (2011) conducted a study to identify the effects of using collaborative learning on students English speaking achievement, the participants of the study consisted of thirty-five undergraduate students at Bangkok University, findings revealed that knowledge-sharing and useful feedback, confidence and encouragement allowed the improvement of the students’ speaking performance.

Self- directed Learning

Researchers have dedicated numerous and committed studies to learning strategies throughout human development. Therefore, approaches to this important field have been broadly discussed and validated for the purpose of solving a never- ending task for specialists: successful learning. At this point, special attention has been paid to learners' own involvement in learning processes; that is to say learners' decision to undertake systematic procedures as a means to achieve erudition challenges which broadly outlines self-directed learning (SDL).

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

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

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

Oral Fluency

The current society which is looking for bilingual individuals has demonstrated an extreme need of people who can use the language in an accurate and fluent form. Therefore, the present study seeks to promote oral fluency through the use of some tasks that would make learners collaborate using English as a foreign language.

According to Brown (2003), fluency has been defined in a variety of forms. In the first definition proposed by Hartmann and Stork (1976 as cited in Brown 2003) the most important characteristics of fluency are stated as the following:

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

Furthermore, Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) define some characteristics of fluency as "the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and the use of interjections and interruptions." (p. 108). Even so, Richards, et al (1985, pp 108-109) go beyond and take into account the most important characteristics of fluency portraying them as the person's level of

communication proficiency included in main effective communication characteristics and stated in the following points:

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

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

In contrast, authors such as Cohen (1994) have explained that it is not easy to assess fluency because it is not possible just to simplify it with terms such as speed or ease of speech. A fluent person is not the one who has a native speech because even for a native speaker, speaking easily does not mean producing oral language appropriately. Kato (1977) discovered that some students he labeled as fluent were not good at having good grammar control and selecting appropriate vocabulary. Kellem (2009) suggests a set of principles to develop oral fluency in a classroom such as incorporating repetition, preparing before speaking, and ensuring appropriate level of activities.

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

Table 1.

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

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

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

Measuring Oral Fluency

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

Fluency does not mean to be able to speak without interruptions or hesitations, even native speakers make pauses when talking; the key is to speak with confidence and security where listeners do not keep too much waiting to hear the end of the ideas (Jones, 2007). Similarly, fluency in learners can differ depending on the surrounding conditions; if they feel confident, the result could be better than in threatening circumstances. According to García-Amaya (2009), it is feasible to include diverse variables to measure fluency not only qualitatively but also quantitatively as:

- Words per minute.
- Words per second
- Syllables per second.
- Length of pauses measured in seconds

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

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

Table 2.

Fluency Friday Plus: Timed Sample.

<p>FLUENCY FRIDAY PLUS: Timed Sample</p> <p>Student: _____</p> <p>Age: _____</p> <p>Sample Date: _____</p> <p>Speaking Condition: play _____ monologue _____ conversation _____</p> <p>Communication Partner: clinician _____ parents _____ peers _____</p>
<p>Was the student asked to use a fluency strategy prior the sample? Yes _____ or No _____</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <p>Use stop watch to time the speaking sample (1 or 2 minutes): only time when student is speaking, turn stopwatch off when student stops talking or when you talk.</p> <p>Use clicker or mark with a pen the # of students during a period of time</p> <p>Divide # of stutters by # of minutes to get stuttered words per minute (swpm) (ie: 9 stutters in 2 minutes = 4.5 swpm, or 10 stutters in 1 minute = 10 swpm)</p> <p>Sample 1: _____ swpm</p> <p>Sample 2: _____ swpm</p> <p>Sample 3: _____ swpm</p> <p>Types of stutters used: (mark with X)</p> <p>_____ Word repetitions 3x or more and rapid</p> <p>_____ Interjections used as starters</p> <p>_____ Syllable repetitions</p> <p>_____ Sound repetitions</p> <p>_____ Prolongations</p> <p>_____ Blocks</p> <p>_____ Multicomponents of these</p> <p>Further description of stuttering: (visible tension, pitch rise, 2ndary behaviors)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

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

Thus, the present study has taken into account this narrow perspective to consider the measurement of fluency and its review on research literature. Measurement of fluency has been a

topic of debate between researchers that claim it is not tested with objectivity, since the parameters to evaluate it rely on subjective judgments and perceptions of the tester, cramming literature of impractical assessment strategies and highlighting the need for the establishment of clear components to assess fluency (Hieke, 1987).

Research on fluency measurement on second language learners' speech has been reported to follow three approaches. The first one dealt with temporal aspects of speech production (Lennon 1990, Mohle 1984), the second with temporal aspects combined with interactive features of speech (Riggenbach, 1991) and the third with phonological aspects of fluency Hieke (1987 as cited in Kormos and Dene's 2004).

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

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

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

Chapter Three: Research Design

This chapter introduces the elements that constitute the research design: type of study, the researcher's role, the context and participants, the instruments for data collection and the procedures used for the study.

Type of the Study

This study belongs to the field of action research given its explicit characteristics. It occurred within a specific classroom situation, it was conducted by the teacher as a classroom participant, and it aimed at solving a problem observed during the teaching practice by implementing an action plan that was later evaluated. As Nunan (1988), for example, explains "Action Research is problem focused, mainly concerned with a single case in a specific situation, and tries to find solutions to the problem in focus" (p. 149). Thus, the center of attention in this type of research is to develop the teaching situation and the teacher-researcher rather than to generate new knowledge. Thus, action research generates findings that tend to be useful inside a specific context but not applicable to many different situations.

Context

This research was carried out by a teacher at Corporación Universitaria del Caribe CECAR located in Sincelejo –Colombia, the institution is a private university in which students have an average of four hours of English instruction per week. In addition, it is relevant to state that this time is not enough to develop speaking proficiency as expected, even when the Ministry of Education has implemented a bilingual policy which seems to be not sufficient for learners' needs and expectations to communicate fluently in this foreign language.

Researcher's Role

The implementation of the activities required different roles from the teacher as being a researcher demands to act and react to an identified problem from different perspectives based on the different stages of the research process. Duckworth (1987, as cited in Freeman, 1998) points out that the teacher's role as a researcher demands being more than a merely observer

Designer. Teacher prepared, planned and analyzed lesson plans and materials that had to comply with the requirement of collaborative and self-directed activities, as well as with students characteristics and needs. This role could be performed better after researcher held in depth reading on collaborative tasks and self-directed learning that provided her the theoretical basis for informed lesson planning on SDL.

Facilitator. Teacher designed group activities which required student-to-student collaboration and problem solving. The facilitating process was carried out by specifying lessons' goals, scaffold activities and giving feedback.

Monitor. Teacher checked that all requirements for tasks implementation were fulfilled e.g. number of participants in groups, scheduled time, roles' compliance.

Encourager. Teachers gave motivation and spirit students that could build their confidence and motivate them to participate. This role was mostly present at the beginning of the implementation process since most of them felt anxious or nervous.

Participants

This project was an action research study where the participants had an active role. The researcher selected ten participants at random. Considering our current population, it can be stated that some of the participants have a medium or low social status, so their possibilities to access technological resources are limited mainly to the institution facilities.

For the purposes of the present research report, the sample chosen comprises ten students of the Corporación Universitaria del Caribe -CECAR, Sincelejo, who are undertaking the Licenciatura en Básica primaria; they take four hours of English per week as part of their syllabus component. The last report of Oxford placement test, which was applied at the institution, classified them as A2+ levels in the CEFR and they self-reported themselves as just beginners in fluency speaking in the survey. Their ages range between 20 and 21 years old.

According to the initial survey's results (*See Appendix A*) gathered during this study, students liked the activities that involve speaking, but they reported to feel insecure and stressful when doing them. All of them consider English as important in their lives, when asked why they said that English is important because they like it, it helps to get more qualified positions, travel to another country and achieve professional goals.

Ethical Considerations

For this study participants were first briefed on the development of a classroom research project and then informed of its main purpose, the type of study, the activities that would be

carried out and their willingness to participate. Institutional authorities granted permission to conduct the study (*See Appendix B.1*)

Consent forms (*See Appendix B.2*) were signed by participants only after the issues of confidentiality and willingness were discussed, they were also told that any of the activities carried out in the process would affect their grades. Finally all of the participants of this study were of legal age above 18; therefore parents' permissions were not required. Finally, taking into consideration confidentiality, students' names were changed and the information was only used for research purposes.

Instruments for Data Collection

The present study involved the use of three main instruments which were designed to measure oral fluency in quantitative terms as well as surveys for students and reflection notes taken by the teacher in order to collect qualitative data which was useful to obtain personal viewpoints from the participants. The instruments are described as follows:

Measuring Sheet. The measuring sheet was designed in order to keep track of the individual performance of students in each intervention and it was fulfilled with the data obtained from students' recordings.

The design of this instrument took into account the perspective of measuring fluency through objective assessment with fluency predictors like

1. Number of words per minute for each subject in each intervention.
2. Number of hesitations per minute. Including grammatical, pronunciation and coherence mistakes. (*see Appendix C*)

Students' Surveys. Students' perceptions on the tasks were elicited through an open survey administered after each lesson, where they described how they felt during the implementation, they also self-reported their perceptions of improvements or difficulties within the lesson and then returned to the teacher in completion. (See Appendix D)

Reflection Notes. Reflections served as a way to register teacher's perceptions on all the observations and analysis of the students' reactions, behaviors and outcomes, they were fulfilled after each intervention and basically consisted of a set of questions the researcher answered immediately to the end of each intervention (see Appendix E)

Data Collection Procedures

This action research process started with the identification of the problem, an initial survey was administered in order to obtain some insights on the possible factors that were influencing the fluency problem within the population, aspects like motivation towards the subject and the types of activities carried out by the teacher were explored through the set of questions.

The interventions were organized throughout ten sessions which were previously planned and designed to foster collaborative and self-directed learning as a way to increase students' fluency. All interventions were recorded with a professional voice recorder and then quantitatively analyzed.

A pre-test was administered as the first lesson in order to diagnose the initial level of fluency of students; it was analyzed according to the objective assessment with fluency predictors like number of words per minute and number of hesitations per minute. Similarly, a post test was administered during the last lesson and its results were aimed at checking students'

fluency improvement. Students' final surveys and teacher's reflections notes were collected at the end of each intervention.

Chapter Four: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

Instructional Design

Ten interventions were implemented within sixteen weeks starting at the end of September 2012 and ending in February 2013. Lesson plans for these interventions were designed using an official format adapted from Dr. Joan Rubin's planner, the ICELT lesson plan template and the Weekly Planner 2012 from Department of Languages and Cultures, Universidad de La Sabana (*See appendix F*). Collaborative and self-directed learning strategies were taken into account when designing every activity, the production stage of each lesson plan complied with the idea cited by Lennon (1990) of impromptu speech in which no recitation or prepared and learnt by heart oral production was recorded as data to be analyzed, instead unrehearsed activities were the sample recorded

Lesson plans were uploaded to Virtual Sabana platform for previous peer (co-researchers) and research's tutor revision, these revisions were aimed at ensuring the designed tasks stayed in line with guidelines to approach the aforementioned issues, after approval, lessons were implemented.

Image 2
Sample of a lesson plan uploaded to virtualsabana peer`s and tutor`s several feedback

The screenshot displays the VirtualSabana forum interface. At the top, the header includes the Universidad de La Sabana logo and the name 'VirtualSabana'. The user 'KATIA CONTRERAS GUTIERREZ' is logged in. The breadcrumb trail shows the path: HOME > MY COURSES > SDL RESEARCH PROJECT _1 > SPEAKING, CAROLINA CRUZ > KATIA CONTRERAS GUTIERREZ'S INTERVENTION > CONTRERASKATIA_LESSON PLAN_INTERVENTION 1.

The main content area shows a post titled 'ContrerasKatia_Lesson Plan_Intervention 1' by KATIA CONTRERAS GUTIERREZ, dated martes, 7 agosto 2012, 9:52. The post includes a document link 'Contreras Katia_LESSON PLAN Intervention 1.docx' and the text: 'Dear professor Here is my first draft of lesson plan ,there are still some aspects I dont have clear, Best, Katia'. A 'Reply' button is visible at the bottom right of the post.

Below the main post, there are several replies from other users, each with a list of feedback points:

- Reply 1:** 'Dear Katia, Thanks for sharing your content and... Please find my comments, as it is below. There are no other comments, I would like you to consider:
 - The goal is insufficient, it has to be more specific, but you say that you will provide materials, it is better to say that you will provide materials, so that the teacher can see what you will provide.
 - The methodology is not clear, it is not enough to say that you will use authentic materials and speaking activities, it is better to say that you will use authentic materials and speaking activities.
 - The materials are not specified.
 - The evaluation is not clear, it is not enough to say that you will use authentic materials and speaking activities, it is better to say that you will use authentic materials and speaking activities.
 - The lesson is not clear, it is not enough to say that you will use authentic materials and speaking activities, it is better to say that you will use authentic materials and speaking activities.
- Reply 2:** 'Dear professor, I have your case file and I would like to know if you have any other comments...'
- Reply 3:** 'This is a very good work, I would like to see it...'
- Reply 4:** 'Dear Katia, I am not speaking in the case and you are wrong. Please know that the following is correct:
 - Insufficient, it has to be more specific, but you say that you will provide materials, it is better to say that you will provide materials, so that the teacher can see what you will provide.
 - The methodology is not clear, it is not enough to say that you will use authentic materials and speaking activities, it is better to say that you will use authentic materials and speaking activities.
 - The materials are not specified.
 - The evaluation is not clear, it is not enough to say that you will use authentic materials and speaking activities, it is better to say that you will use authentic materials and speaking activities.
- Reply 5:** 'I would like to see your lesson plan with your suggestions, it is better to say that you will provide materials, so that the teacher can see what you will provide...'
- Reply 6:** 'Dear Katia, This is a very good work, I would like to see it...'

The interface also features a navigation menu on the left with options like 'Home', 'My profile', 'My courses', and 'Last Minute Information Forum_Prof.'. There is also a search bar and a 'Display replies in nested form' dropdown menu.

Intervention number 1 required students to work collaboratively in order to discuss the best decisions to get out of a place based on peers' suggestions. For the self- direction strategy students were encouraged to reflect on the type of vocabulary they already had (self-evaluation) in a KWL chart and the additional vocabulary they needed or would like to have and share their reflections. Students had also to search for the pronunciation of new words (self-instruction)

In intervention number 2 students were grouped by trios, and then they were asked to do a search for an interesting destination and collaboratively prepare a four minute commercial to convince the other groups to go on a trip to that place. Each member of the group was assigned a different role and was in charge of:

- a) Looking for the features of the place, food etc.
- b) Places to visit or stay in, consult airlines, accommodations (inns, and youth hostels, hotel packages etc.

After all commercials were presented, each student had to speak for 3 minutes about their choice by giving reasons. This was the sample activity to measure fluency ,in order to promote two strategies of self- direction (self-evaluation and self-instruction) each member of the group had to watch three touristic advertisement videos and complete a KWL chart on new expressions and vocabulary learnt from the above mentioned videos.

For intervention 3 students had to collaboratively make up a funny story about a foreigner visiting a new country, students assigned roles themselves for vocabulary, pronunciation check, sequencing etc. each group had the opportunity to pass from table to table (three tables) telling the anecdote three different times.

- a) The first time each group used the planned nine minutes.
- b) The second they used only five minutes to tell the anecdote to the second table.

- c) The third time each group had only three minutes to tell the anecdote to the third table, this way each participant talked during one minute. This last was the sample activity to be recorded.

In intervention 4 students got into trios in order to discuss what they consider the main problem in their city was. Students were required to take notes on interesting facts on some web pages (news) after; students were assigned roles in order to look for vocabulary expressions topics etc. Finally, after presentations were made all the groups were required to explain the class the reasons leading to the choice of the particular problem they talked about and its causes. This was the sample activity recorded. As a self- directed strategy students took their own recordings home and listened to them. They had to analyze their performance and submit a list of changes they would like to make to the language or expressions they used when talking about the problems in the city.

For intervention 5 students were asked to select one of the major problems their classmates described in the last session in order to suggest ways to solve that problem, they watched some videos as models in order to gain vocabulary and new expressions to use in their proposals. Each group had to post the list of new words to use on a wall wisher link to share them with their classmates. In groups of three students discussed optional strategies to solve the chosen problem. Every group took turns to stand in front of the class and tell the class the suggested strategies to solve a problem they chose (two minutes each).

In intervention 6 students were asked to get into groups of three or four and choose the name of a country; each group was to play the role of a committee representing a particular country attending the “Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro, an event organized by the United

Nations Organization. In the middle of the conference a 12 year old girl interrupts to give a very critical speech. After this speech each group of representatives (they) had to intervene in favor or against the girl's ideas. The collaborative strategy was aimed at preparing the response .Every group took turns to present their reaction to the speech, all members of the committee had to speak two or three minutes each, three different times to each committee of the ONU (conformed by the other groups) and the last one was the sample activity.

Intervention 7 consisted of a discussion about the end of the world with the question: *what would you do if the world ended?* The teacher explained a situation where the world has ended and told students they belonged to a group of four people that was trying to escape to another planet; in order to get to the next shelter each group needed to decide on five items from a given list. Every team had to rank the items and give an explanation to the whole class regarding the order in which they categorized them from essential-for-survival to not-so-important. Each member had the possibility to speak during two minutes.

During intervention 8, students had to make suggestions and recommendations to a foreigner who is traveling to their home town Sincelejo, collaborative work was evidenced on the preparation stage and the roles they assigned to look for accommodation, food, health services etc. The sample was recorded without any preparation since the likes of the foreigner requirements were changed in the same lesson.

For interventions 9 and 10 students talked about the dreams or achievements they have fulfilled in life, talked about their "first time "in life and they added comments on the things they would have changed.

Chapter Five: Results and Data Analysis

Grotjhan (1987 as cited in Nunan, 1992, p. 4) suggests that qualitative- quantitative distinction in research is an oversimplification and that several considerations such as “The method of data collection (whether experimentally or none experimentally), the type of data (qualitative or quantitative) and the type of analysis conducted (whether statistical or interpretative)” must be taken into account when classifying a study. Thus, this study presents a mixed analysis considering it is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative features in its design since it includes both kinds of data collection procedures and analysis; the qualitative data was collected through student’s recordings, teacher’s notes and student`s surveys whereas the quantitative collection and analysis presents the measuring of words and number of hesitations per minute. This combination is explained by Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner (2007, p. 123):

“Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration”.

The selection of this research type yields on the consideration of the approach selected to answer the research question which suggests an objective measurement of fluency (Hieke, 1987) as well as informed conclusions on the factors that could have enhanced or hindered the outcomes.

The following table presents the general quantitative analysis in which the number of words and hesitations per minute during each one of the ten implementations are presented.

However, a more detailed analysis is discussed in the upcoming paragraphs.

Table 3.
Measuring Oral production Chart

Participant	Pre-test		Intervention 2		Intervention 3		Intervention 4		Intervention 5		Intervention 6		Intervention 7		Intervention 8		Intervention 9		Intervention 10	
	# words	# hesitations	# words	# of hesitations	# of words	# of hesita	# of words	# of hesita	# of words	# of hesita	# of words	# of hesita	# of words	# hesita	# of words	# of hesita	# of words	# of hesita	# of words	# of hesita
1	32	7	40	4	48	5	53	3	50	4	65	3	43	1	59	3	65	2	63	2
2	26	5	28	4	37	3	42	3	35	4	45	1	49	1	58	2	62	3	61	2
3	27	8	29	7	36	5	45	3	42	2	51	3	66	2	60	3	64	3	70	2
4	31	5	38	4	45	5	69	4	45	1	63	3	58	0	81	2	86	2	90	1
5	20	4	30	3	36	2	45	3	40	2	46	2	54	2	63	1	62	2	68	1
6	16	10	18	8	26	7	31	4	30	5	42	3	39	4	41	3	36	3	42	4
7	34	6	38	4	56	4	52	3	43	2	65	2	62	1	72	2	54	2	73	2
8	22	5	26	5	35	6	45	6	52	5	38	3	50	3	42	4	55	1	62	3
9	26	8	35	6	33	5	48	5	39	4	46	2	35	2	48	2	53	2	54	2
10	17	7	18	5	29	5	25	4	32	2	46	3	35	2	45	3	54	2	52	2
total	251	65	300	50	381	47	455	38	408	31	507	25	491	18	569	25	591	22	635	21

In the following section a quantitative analysis will be first carried out in order to evidence an objective measurement of fluency enhancement; that supports and backs up the findings from the qualitative analysis, as it is claimed in the literature review addressing speaking fluency (Hieke 1987, Garcia-Amaya 2009) and thus the validity of the results that will set out later.

Figure 1.

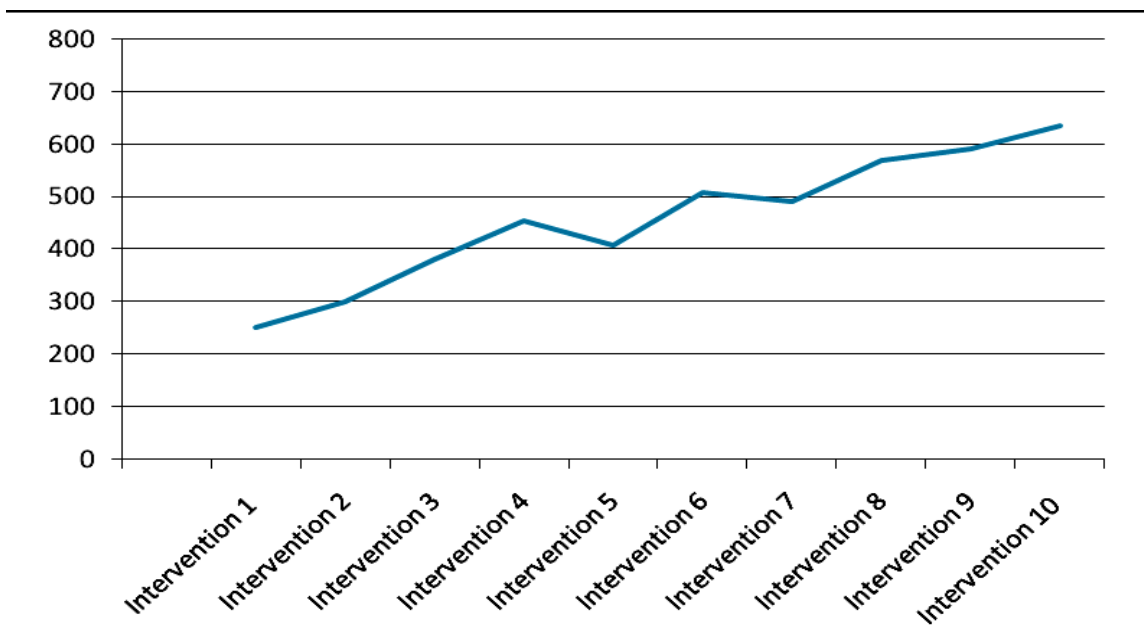
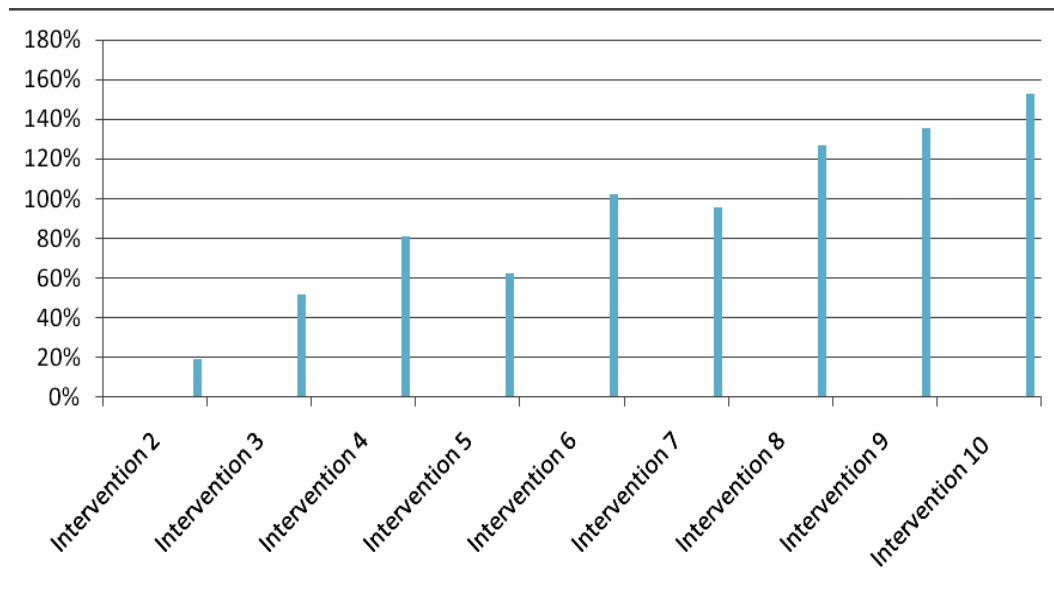
Number of words per intervention

Figure 2.

Percentage of word increase per intervention

Figures one and two as well as table 3 show how an increase of 152% took place between the first and the last intervention, where the initial number of produced words per minute was 251 and the last one 635(see figure one and table three), as it can be seen on figure two the percentage of words increased gradually between interventions with the following statistics that represent the results obtained by the entire group:

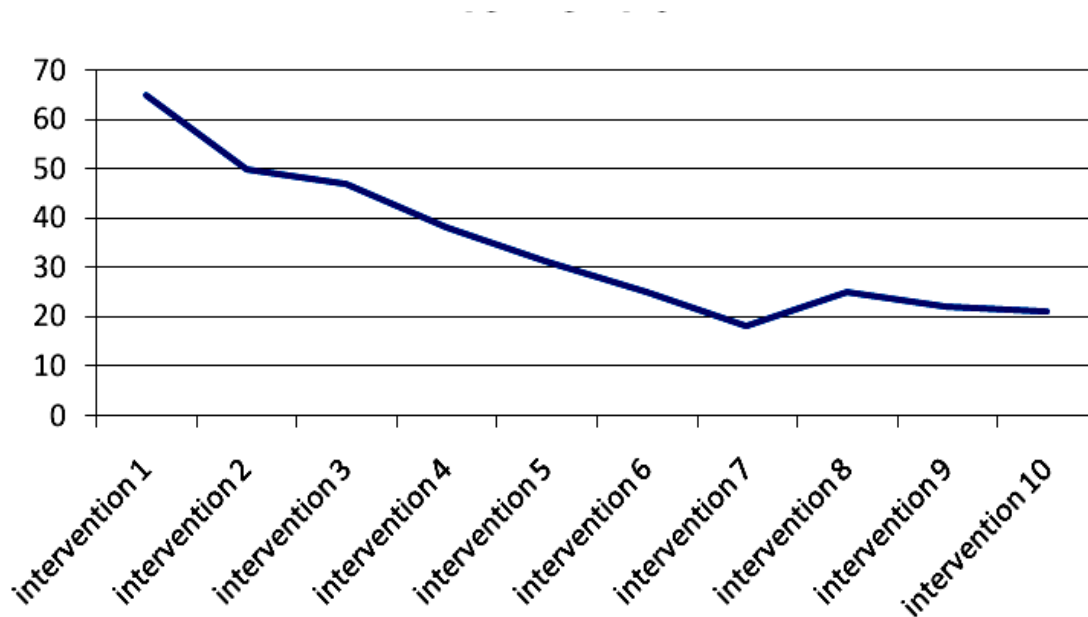
- 19, 52% from intervention one to intervention two.
- 51, 7 9% from intervention one to intervention three.
- 81, 27 % from intervention one to intervention four.
- 62, 54 % from intervention one to intervention five.
- 101 % from intervention one to intervention six.
- 95 % from intervention one to intervention seven.
- 126 % from intervention one to intervention eight.
- 135 % from intervention one to intervention nine.
- 152 % from intervention one to intervention ten.

It seems that intervention number two did not represent a big difference to the first one (19, 52%).It might be that the first two interventions corresponded to early application of the strategies where obviously sudden improvements were not expected ; however interventions number three, four, six, nine and ten evidence a strong upturn in the efficacy of the implemented methodology that accounts for figures above 60%; a strong evidence of the impact it had on students' oral production, although interventions five and seven show a slight decrease on the

above figure, they still represent more than 60% of word rising, which does not contravene the idea of fluency improvement.

Figure 3.

Number of hesitations per intervention



As presented in the graphic above, number of hesitations decreased at a rate of 67 % with a difference of 44 words form intervention one to intervention ten. Figure three shows an invariable decrease from intervention one to intervention seven, interestingly intervention eight rises again up to 25 hesitations and it can be due to the sudden changes the activity had ,something that could affect students performance .

Validity is a crucial research aspect that establishes whether the results we obtained have credibility in the research community, as Nunan and Bailey (2009) state “it has to do with the truth or value of our claims” (p.61).According to Denzin (1970) and Burns (2010) one useful way to guarantee the claims of validity and ensure the strength of a study is triangulation,

additionally, Patton (2001as cited in Golafshani, N. 2003, p. 247)offers a descriptive way in regards to the way triangulation can be developed when analyzing data. The author explains that “triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches”

In this mixed method study, several sources and type of data, quantitative and qualitative data were gathered in order to obtain a broader perspective of the information provided, as well as to cross verify the findings. This part is devoted to the analysis and findings of the qualitative data collected from two instruments: students’ surveys and teacher’s reflections.

In this second stage, the analysis of this type of data was carried out taking into account coding and categorizing procedures from Strauss and Corbin (1990) who explain that by using open coding relevant patterns are identified and labeled after analysis of salient aspects. Similarly, through axial coding, codes are related in order to identify broader codes emerged from the data, then they are sorted into groups called categories, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) these categories serve as a support for giving answers to the initial research inquiry.

The following are samples of how first codes were identified:

Table 4.

Coding sample 1

Student 3. Student`s reflections on intervention 2	Codes
<p>“Me siento muy contenta por la clase , las actividades no son monótonas, uno comparte ,se divierte y aprende a hablar con los compañeros ,soy consciente de que no soy excelente haciéndolo pero eso me ayuda a perder el miedo cuando hablo en inglés “</p>	<p>Liking the activities. Learning with others. Reflecting on her performance. Connecting activities with lowering anxiety</p>

Table 5.

Coding sample 2

Student 6. Student`s reflections on intervention 7	Codes
<p>Me pareció excelente, una estrategia para mejorar cuando hablamos en inglés, me doy cuenta que si seguimos los pasos de intercambiar ideas en el grupo, asumir los roles, y fijarse en lo que uno necesita todo mejora. Yo ya puedo evaluarme y decir que me expreso con mayor facilidad .El tema escogido por la docente me gustó mucho fue muy motivador y diciente con lo del fin del mundo, uno puede imaginarse en esa situación y quiere hablar mas.</p>	<p>Liking the activities. Awareness of following a strategy. Working in groups Self-evaluation. Identifying improvement in fluency. Connecting the design of the activity with speaking enhancement.</p>

Table 6.

Coding sample 3

Student 9. Student`s reflections on intervention 10	Codes
<p>“Siento que he avanzado , una de mis fortalezas es la disposición para las actividades en inglés ,esta me gustó mucho porque me permitió crear con mis compañeros una historia en donde todos aportamos y aprendimos , al mismo tiempo me doy cuenta que hablar con mas fluidez también me ayuda entender cuando me hablan mas rápido en inglés ,como si el cerebro se acostumbrara“</p>	<p>Change of attitude towards the activities. Creating and learning with peers. Relating effect of one skill in the enhancement of other. Self -reflection</p>

This first stage allowed the researcher to reflect upon the most salient aspects or comments that provided enough evidence of concurrent topics that might fit into key elements that, when connected, led to answer the research question.

After this analysis the following categories emerged: working collaboratively, managing my learning, awareness of improvement, affective factors.

Categories

This part is aimed at analyzing the findings by using the emerged categories listed above. Working collaboratively, managing my learning, awareness of improvement, affective factors and how they contributed to the central phenomenon of this study “Enhancing Fluency in Speaking Through the Use of Collaborative and Self- Directed Speaking Tasks “

Table 7.
Categories used in the research

CATEGORY	HOW IS IT RELATED TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION?
Affective Factors	If the student feels confident and secure his/her production in speaking will be better and faster. If students are intrinsically motivated to express their ideas, it is easier to get more fluency than when they are forced to speak
Working Collaboratively	Collaboration among students makes them find the way to express their thoughts more easily since their peers help them to build the language needed to pursue communicative tasks.

Managing Learning	Intrinsic motivations together with autonomy are variables positively affecting improvement of fluency, the awareness of students on their strengths and weaknesses help them improve their speaking skill.
Awareness of improvement	The students analyze language areas that need more attention and based on this, the extra class activities are focused on improving them.

Working Collaboratively. Collaborative work as stated by Dillenbourg (1999) refers to the construction of learning by working simultaneously within a group. It is important to consider that speaking is a naturally social act in which the participants express among themselves and it is through this interaction that learning occurs. The idea of working in a collaboratively way was positively perceived by students as a strategy to support language learning components and therefore have a better performance in the fluency tasks. As it is presented in the excerpts below, participants reported collaboration as a tool to tackle individual problems regarding pronunciation, vocabulary or expressions, something that could enhance their fluency performance.

Excerpt 2 :

Strengths:

“Siento que he mejorado en fluidez porque antes me demoraba pensando que necesitaba una palabra o se me olvidaba, en la actividad todos aprendimos en el grupo, por ejemplo la colaboración en el wallwisher me ayudó a aprender palabras y hasta sinónimos de ellas, esto es muy bueno, cuando tuve que hablar de cómo resolver el problema de alcantarillas quería utilizar sewer pero me salió gutter; la que escribió Rosella, mas rápido.”(S# 4, SA #5)

Excerpt 3 :

Your Strengths in the activity :

“Partiendo de que no soy muy bueno en la pronunciación ,creo que mejoré en esta actividad mucho comparado con lo que hice en la anterior , por el apoyo que se tiene con el trabajo grupal”(S#6, SA #3)

Excerpt 4 :**Your Strengths in the activity :**

“Todos teníamos s el mismo objetivo y todos aportamos en su consecución lo que hizo que trabajáramos aprendiendo del otro, expresiones para utilizar ,conectores etc. y así se me hizo mas fácil usar el condicional y por lo tanto la facilidad para hablar”(S#7 , SA #9)

Excerpt 5 :**Your Strengths in the activity :**

“ ...La responsabilidad de todos en el grupo hizo que la actividad oral fuera un éxito, saber que puedo recurrir a mis compañeros cuando tengo problemas con el idioma es una gran fortaleza para mi ,por eso me fue mejor en el speaking”(S# 5, SA #7)

*gathered data was kept in its original form including mistakes.

These responses show how learners could make connections between the use of collaborative work and the improvement of linguistic features that enhanced the easiness to speak in an oral task within a given time. They also referred to sharing goals as a relevant aspect in the completion of the task since the success of the oral production activity is bound by the success of all members of the group, resulting this in commitment and equally contribution as it is evidenced in excerpt five. This interpretation can be related to the concept of positive interdependence. According to Collazos, Guerrero, Pino& Ochoa (2003, p.357) “Positive interdependence is the heart of collaborative activities that define collaboration and transform group work into teamwork”.

Collaborative work was also evidenced in part A of the same self- assessment instrument from intervention one to intervention ten, where they self-reported their likes towards working in teams and being able to work collaboratively while doing the speaking activities .

Managing Learning. This category deals with the influence self- direction processes had on the enhancement of student`s oral fluency. According to Sheerin (1997, p.54) language learning has better effects when learners “are active in the learning process, assuming

responsibility for their learning and participating in the decisions which affect it". The interventions designed for this study included techniques and instruments to foster students' self-direction as they were aimed at having students check their oral performance, weaknesses and strengths.

At the end of each lesson students had to complete a KWL chart (See Appendix G) in order to reflect on what they already knew and what they will need to know to fulfill the tasks. Additionally students were required to complete the self-assessment instrument after each implementation in which they reported comments on their strengths and areas to improve (See Appendix D).

The evidence of this category emerges from the comments on the self-assessment instrument. The following excerpt shows how the managing on their learning was gradually achieved;

Excerpt 6 :

Areas to improve :

" Yo no sé por que me fue mal ,se me olvidaba lo que iba a decir ..." (S#10, SA #1)

Excerpt 7:

Areas to improve :

"reconozco que me faltó un poco mas en pronunciación para mejorar en fluidez pero me puedo ayudar con los modelos de Word reference".(S#10, SA #6)

Excerpt 8 :

Strengths: *" He mejorado la actividad se me hizo mas fácil con la práctica de pronunciación y el vocabulario..."* (S#10, SA #8)

*gathered data was kept in its original form including mistakes

In intervention one the participant showed lack of further reflection over the problem he identified in his oral production, apparently he is aware he forgot what he intended to say but he did not analyze the reason so as to make plans for improvement.

In intervention six the same participant reported a different way to express his problem by recognizing the specific weakness and proposing an alternative plan or strategy for overcoming it. This can be taken as an attestation to claim that student's awareness of taking management over their learning have a greater impact on the results of the tasks.

As it also can be evidenced in the next excerpts self- reported oral fluency outcomes were achieved through the conscious process of self- managing, self- monitoring and self- modification of participants on their learning.

Excerpt9 :

Strengths:

"le dediqué un poco mas a mis falencias en cómo conectar ideas y eso me ayudó a expresarme con mas soltura " (S#8, SA #7)

Excerpt 10 :

Areas to improve :

*"Ser mas serio con el chart * e identificar lo que me falta en vocabulario ,en la actividad pasada me fue mejor , en esta no lo llené "* (S#9 , SA #3)

Excerpt11 :

Strengths:

"la facilidad para expresarme ... decidí buscar videos en youtube sobre reuniones de la ONU me ayudó en la facilidad" (S#3, SA #6)

*He refers to the KWL chart

Teacher's reflections notes also provided evidence of self-directed learning and the influence on the speaking tasks.

Excerpt12 :

What were the greatest achievements while carrying out this intervention? :

"B)...Recognizing my student's responsibility on the tasks to a point where they do not ask for pronunciation ,vocabulary or other need ,it seems t hat they are now more able to link their own efforts on learning with the positive results in speaking"

Teacher`s reflection intervention 6

Affective Factors. This category makes allusion to the role that motivation and self-confidence play on students' enhancement of speaking fluency. Richards and Smith (2002, p.343) define motivation as “the driving force in any situation that leads to action”. In the same vein, Xiao-Qing (2002) explains that motivation is a relevant factor that determines if attempts to learn a language become a successful or a failing experience. The results obtained from the self-assessment provided valuable information that allowed the researcher analyzed how motivation supported fluency development.

Excerpt13 :

Strengths:

“...me gusta esta forma de aprender ingles, usarlo así de chévere en estas actividades me ayudó a desenvolverme al hablar y a hacerlo cada vez mas sin tener en cuenta mis problemas en pronunciación” (S#1, SA #3)

Excerpt 14 :

Strengths:

“En la clase no me dio miedo hablar porque disfruté de ella y esto me permitió participar mas en Inglés, aunque sé que cometo algunos errores” (S#7, SA #4)

Excerpt 15 :

Strengths:

“Una de mis fortalezas es la disposición para las actividades en inglés ,esta me gustó mucho porque me permitió crear con mis compañeros una historia en donde todos aportamos y aprendimos , al mismo tiempo” (S# 9, SA #10)

Excerpt 16 :

Strengths:

“El tema escogido por la docente me gustó mucho fue muy motivador y diciente con lo del fin del mundo, uno puede imaginarse en esa situación y quiere hablar mas. (S# 6, SA #7)

As illustrated in the excerpts above students' motivation was expressed as the factor that strengthened their desire to continue working on the activities even when being aware of the difficulties they had to face to complete the tasks. Students also reported factors such as liking

the type of activities and lowering anxiety as causes for being motivated towards the diverse tasks. This aspect can also be evidenced in the analysis of the questionnaire included in the self-assessment instrument where questions two and 11 were designed to find out whether students liked and enjoyed the proposed activities. The following figures show the high level of interest in regards to the likeness and enjoyment they self- reported after each task. Data from teacher`s reflection instrument also revealed how motivation allowed students to persist on the communicative goal.

Figure 4.

Number of students who liked the speaking activities proposed by the teacher

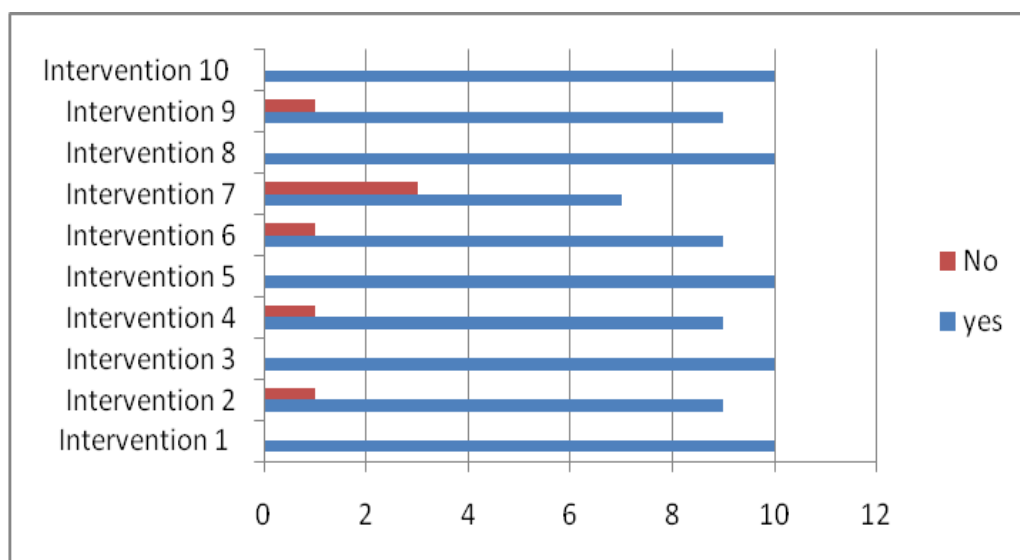
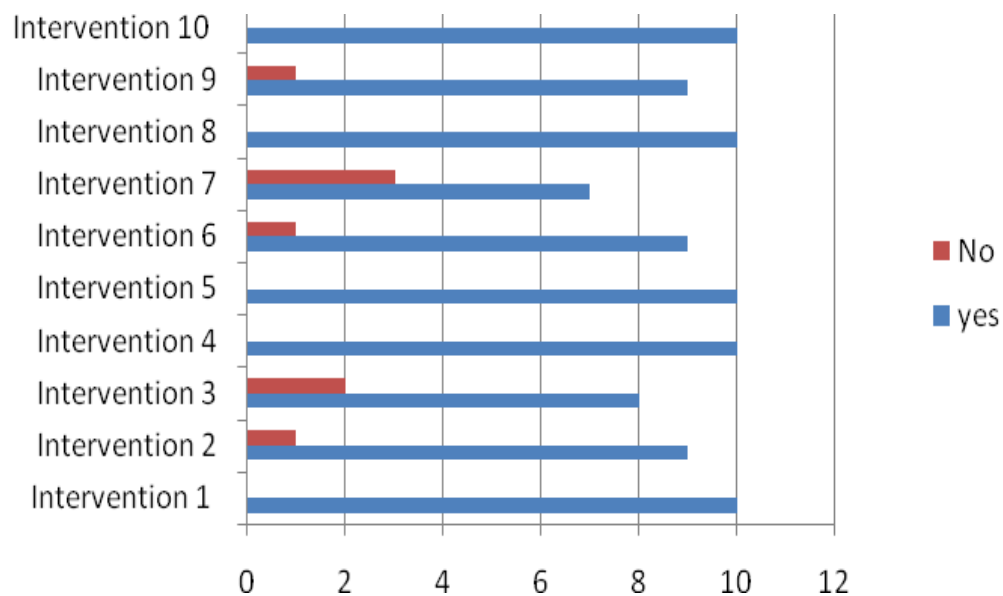


Figure 5.

Number of students who enjoyed the speaking activities proposed by the teacher.



Excerpt 17 :

What was your personal perception regarding student`s performance while speaking in English? :

“ I noticed they were gladly engaged with the activity and that permitted them to participate more , “ student six “ (no given name) was so happy participating that she focused on expressing her thoughts rather than on taking time for correction ”

Teacher`s reflection intervention 6

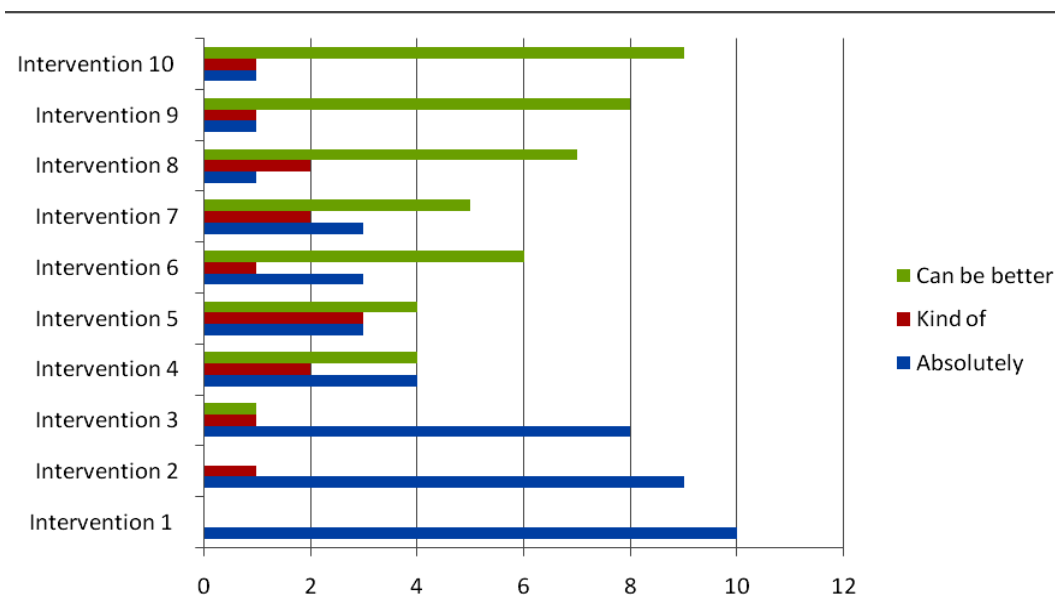
In order to complement the previous data, the excerpt above is an example of how learner`s interest can help them to overcome linguistic barriers or obstacles in the search for attain established goals, as Qin (2002) posits, motivation is an influential factor on students will power and persistence in learning.

The analysis of the data that led to the identification of this category also evidenced that motivation in this study was highly connected to another concept that was constantly present in

the data and that was identified as its emergence from the very coding stage started. Richards & Schmidt (2002) concluded that when learners are motivated to do something they feel it is worth doing and their expectations to succeed in doing it are high; in this study these high expectations are driven by beliefs on their own capabilities mediated for the lowering of anxiety and the development of self-appraisal feelings, as it is revealed on the following excerpts and the analysis of question seven from the self-assessment instrument.

Figure 6.

Number of students who felt embarrassed while speaking during the interventions.



Excerpt 18 :

Strengths:

“Sentí que podía ser capaz de hacerlo , mejoré en el speaking de la task” (S#1, SA #4)

Excerpt 19 :

Strengths :

“No me dio miedo hablar ,me sentí muy cómodo y capaz de participar” (S#2, SA #5)

Excerpt 20 :

Strengths:

“... y aunque sabía que podía equivocarme seguí y seguí hablando” (S# 5, SA # 3)

Excerpt 21 :

Strengths:

“..y me siento feliz, noté que los compañeros respetan lo que digo ,aun con errores”.(S# 8, SA #8)

Excerpt 22 :**Strengths:**

“me motivó que ya no me enfatizo en los errores, sino en lo que de verdad puedo expresar en inglés”. (S# 9, SA # 6)

Excerpt 23 :**Strengths:**

“se que el resto del curso me entiende perfectamente cuando hablo, eso como que me dio fuerzas para continuar mejorando en la actividad”. (S# 8, SA # 8)

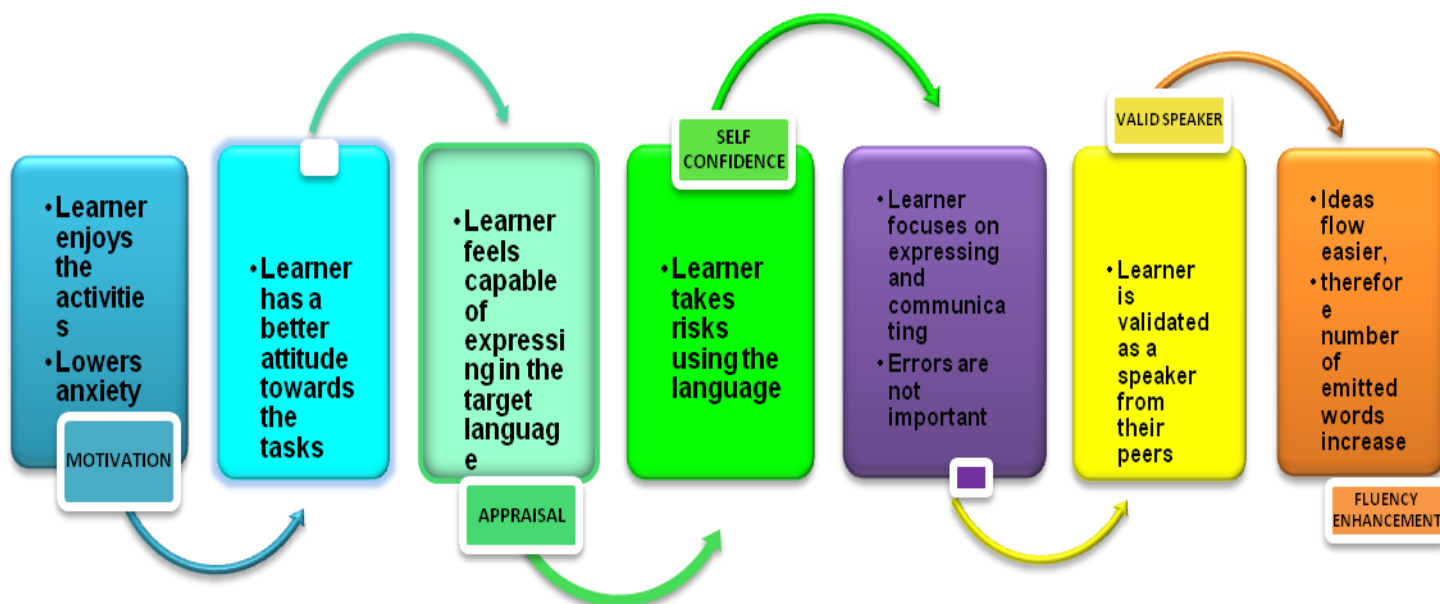
As it can be seen on the previous excerpts, students report a sense of capacity that can be directly linked to what Clement (1986, cited in MacIntyre et. al.1998, p.549) defines as linguistic self-confidence, that is, the confidence students have in their own ability to use the L2 language and that is achieved when students have positive self- perception of second language competence and low levels of anxiety(*See figures 5 and 6 above*), in this study the combination of motivation and self-confidence revealed a powerful behavior that the researcher named for the effect of this study “the valid speaker”, this is, the model of behavior that most of learners reported and that shed light on how affective factors such as motivation and self-confidence enhanced a linguistic component ;oral fluency .For the researcher the “valid speaker” represents the learner that is empowered to communicate after feeling capable, respected and allowed to interact in the group.

As figure seven suggests “the valid speaker” was the result of the influence of factors such as motivation and self-confidence; once the learner perceived he was motivated and capable of using the language ,he pursued a trial where communication of messages was the key point , this willingness to communicate led to perceptions of acceptance ,respect and attention from

the members of the groups which strengthened his affective filter Krashen (1982) and as a result, fluency performance was achieved through the quantity of ideas expressed.

Figure 7.

The model of how motivation and self confidence enhanced oral fluency in this study



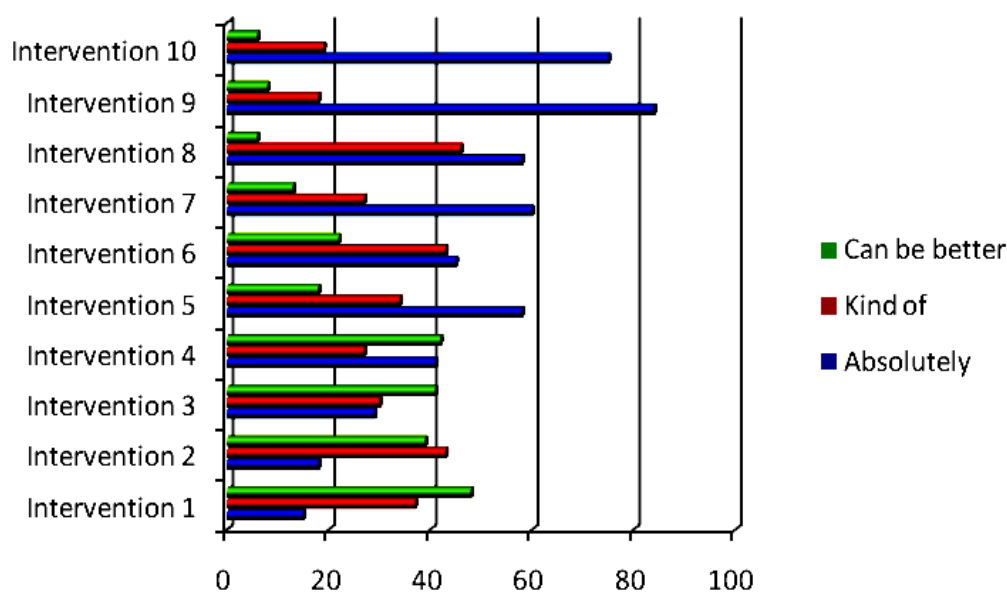
Contreras.K. 2013

Awareness of Improvement. This category is related to the concept of capability and improvement in oral fluency that students have gained during the participation in this study, Bordonaro(2006,p.30) has affirmed that awareness refers to the “conscious attention to the ongoing, current process of learning and the improvement of language skills” ,in this regard participants in this study had the opportunity to constantly check and self-report their fluency level through the individual self-assessment they had to hand in after each implementation.(see appendix D). The researcher particularly analyzed the number of “*absolutely, kind of and can be better*” statements given to questions four, five and six since they were the ones aimed at determining fluency predictors and fluency self-report improvement.

Students` judgment awareness of improvement shows an increase of positive report through the “*absolutely*” statement and a substantially decrease on the average report “*kind of*” and negative report statement “*can be better*” as it is shown on figure 8.

Figure 8.

Self evaluation report



This chart evidences how by being exposed to constant speaking tasks, students experience and are able to self-report improvement in the development of this language feature, these results can be contrasted with the quantitative analysis of the measuring fluency chart (*see figure two*) which also report an increase in participants oral fluency up to 152% at the end of intervention ten.

The following excerpts taken from student`s self-assessment instrument part B assert the concept of self-efficacy students had after the study.

Excerpt24 :

Strengths:

“me ayudó a expresarme con mas soltura”(S#7, SA # 10)

Excerpt25 :

Strengths:

“La fluidez incremento notoriamente”(S#2, SA # 8)

Excerpt26 :

Strengths:

“la facilidad para expresarme ... decidí buscar videos en youtube sobre reuniones de la ONU me ayudo en la facilidad”(S# 9 , SA # 9)

Excerpt27 :

Strengths:

“Siento que hablo y pienso con mas rapidez en inglés”(S# 4 , SA # 9)

Excerpt28 :

Strengths:

“Alcance mejorar mi fluidez sin mirar tiempo y temores.”(S# 6 , SA # 10)

Excerpt29 :

Strengths:

“me doy cuenta que hablar con mas fluidez también me ayuda entender cuando me hablan mas rápido en inglés ,como si el cerebro se acostumbrara” (S# 9 , SA # 10)

In summary, this chapter presented the data analysis procedures and interesting findings drawn from the current study; participants involved in collaboratively and self-directed speaking tasks reported sense of commitment and motivation towards the speaking activities, reinforced by the senses of improvement, reducing anxiety and feeling able to communicate with fluency. The next chapter will address the main conclusions that have been derived after the implementation of the strategy as well as the pedagogical implications this study has drawn and suggestion for further research.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

In the current study the posed research question was: How can fluency in Speaking be fostered in a group of university students through the use of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks? Therefore, the study concluded from the quantitative data analysis that there was an objective and quantitatively observable increase in the oral fluency performance of the target population evidenced through the increase of number of hour per minute and a registered decline in the number of hesitations, all of these considered by García-Amaya (2009) as clear predictors to assess fluency .

Also, the data gathered permitted to identify factors that have proved to work in conjunction to enhance the improvement of this oral feature and they were treated as categories to answer the research question.

The first conclusion deals with the use of collaborative tasks as a successful strategy that can be successfully implemented to enhance oral production, through the use of pedagogical techniques such as assigning roles, participants provided and found support in their peers which led them to understand language production as a social construction in which learning from others takes place. Having a specific role within the group allowed participants to boost their own abilities and help other members to overcome obstacles, this was considered a critical issue that helped learners to stay in the task and successfully complete it.

It was evidenced that students' feelings of fear and anxiety when doing oral contributions disappeared; this, allowed them to feel empowered and to focus their contributions on message

conveyance, making them aware of the fact that communicating ideas is the key point in the process of learning a language, thus attitude towards English oral activities even those NOT related to the interventions, substantially changed, as a result more participation and academic improvement were achieved.

Clearly seen from the analysis, the researcher could draw how learners showed a progressive improvement in their self-direction process, as self-direction was a new conception to their academic life, it was interesting to see how easily they linked the impact of taking control of their learning with the improvement not only in speaking with fluency but as an extra finding enhancing vocabulary and pronunciation learning.

The analysis of the data revealed also that participants actually complied with all the characteristics described by Garrison (1997) as the self-directed learner model: self-monitoring, self-managers displayed in implemented strategies by the learners such as reporting their own strengths and weaknesses and planning for overcoming failures and attain goals.

Another important conclusion is related to the effect that motivation and self-confidence had on the improvement of oral fluency, although for some researchers these concepts (fluency, motivation and self-confidence) can hardly be related given the difference of their nature, findings from this study brought out the great impact that both factors had on benefitting participants in the trust in their own capabilities and empowering their positive image of target language users, which resulted in more support to enhance oral production and as a result fluency improvement.

After some insights the researcher considers that it is important to highlight the role of the instruments to achieve this goal (KWL chart and self-assessment), although they were actually included in the design of the lesson plans as a data collection instruments they actually modeled

the SDL strategy for most of participants, let`s have in mind that in this study no direct instruction on self-direction was provided, thus the instruments served students to develop self-directed learning attitudes that they reported to serve as modeling to monitor and manage learning in an attempt to fill the gap between the actual status and the desired one regarding fluency ,permitting the learners to have a clear awareness of the improvement they have made and thus have a positive attitude towards the proposed tasks .

To sum up this study concludes that having learners working together in their linguistic goals and on the other hand empowering them to recognize strengths, failures and desired goals in their attempts to communicate served a basis to boost linguistic learning and motivational support that enhanced their oral production with fluency.

Pedagogical Implications

The use of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks brought as a conclusion that the particular features of these kinds of activities could enhance oral fluency in a group of university students by the interconnected action of factors such as working collaboratively, managing learning, being aware of improvement and affective factors.

Based on the positive results of the study on fluency enhancement it can be stated that collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks can be successfully implemented by language teachers at high school and university contexts to improve overall oral English performance given that the features of the strategy have important elements to enhance vocabulary ,pronunciation motivation and as some of the participants reported listening comprehension ,in this regard this pedagogical proposal could serve as a response to teachers` claims for the need

of a contextualized model for improving the speaking skill in the "unique" Colombian language classroom.

Interestingly the strategy used in this study have impacted the methodology used by teachers from other subjects, although these teachers already implemented group work in their lessons, they have expressed students require them to assign roles when working in groups, this can be taken as a claim for proving that the students recognize the effectiveness of collaboratively work being aware of their potential beyond the English class and can transfer it to other subjects , an issue that can impact not only their learning context but also their future teaching contexts given that fact that they are undertaking a Basic Education Licenciatura program.

The application of the strategy led researcher to rethink the kind of activities usually *she* designed to foster oral production within the classes, one of the major implications is that speaking cannot be thought as an isolated activity where the construction of meaning is relegated to the merely individual oral performance evaluated through monologues or long prepared oral presentations, on the contrary it can be highly supported by the design of tasks that require students share their common linguistic problems, learning goals and thus learn together and produce language with easiness within a team. In this sense, possible suggestions for teachers would rely on the selection or design of engaging communicative tasks that promote students use of the target language as a co-creation process.

Given the effectiveness of team work, it is also important to highlight that the study shed light on important issues to consider when planning working in groups in the English class; in which working within a team includes the assigning of specific roles to promote equally efforts

put in a task. It is advisable for the teachers to monitor the fulfillment of the assigned role as well as to constantly check for student`s comprehension of the task to develop.

A third major implication regards to the inclusion of self -direction as a factor that can enhance oral linguistic performance, for this it is important to consider a possible training for teachers and the insertion of the SDL as a required step in the institutional lesson planner ,besides the design of instruments that guide learners on the use of self-direction strategies, as it was shown in the findings, they can be used at the beginning and at the end of each task as a way to promote self-reflection and self-managing, identifying weaknesses, strengths and proposing alternative ways to overcome a difficulty to achieve a desired goal.

The results of the study concur with Thornbury`s (1999) claim on fluency improvement when the learner is not focused on their conscious production, participants reduction of anxiety and the creative communicative objectives proposed by each tasks support learners to take risks on a comfortable environment to deliver more messages in a certain period of time . Conversely this study does not share Kellem`s (2009) assumption that repetition is one of the basic principles to ensure fluency development in all teaching contexts since the mere nature of the activity actually runs against one of the most powerful aspects emerged from the data; motivation, a salient issue that permitted learners to tackle linguistic problems.

Limitations

The researcher found some limitations related to the scheduled timeline .The first one was the cessation of activities regarding interventions for a period of three weeks due to medical problems. This issue led to consider alternatives ways to ensure the sequence and thus acquired results in fluency would not be affected, this entailed asking the supply teacher to continue

working on oral activities in order keep up with the pace set by participating in continued speaking tasks. It is important to mention that the lessons, by the substitute teacher, were not interventions since they did not follow the requirements of the lesson plans or the strategies and were not recorded. When the researcher returned, the interventions continued.

Other drawbacks experienced during this study were related to time constraints, the planned time to develop the first interventions was not enough due to the fact that students were not used to develop activities in which they had to analyze themselves as learners and fulfill a role; the researcher noticed students took more time fulfilling the reflection surveys during the first interventions, for further implementation it is important to allocate more time for initials interventions.

Further Research

This study focused on enhancing fluency through collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks, with positive results that revealed an increase of 152% of oral fluency improvement, as some of the students reported to feel a better understanding of what they listened to as interventions progressed. Therefore, it would be worth to investigate the effects this kind of tasks would also have on the parallel improvement of other skill such as listening.

For practitioners or researchers willing to replicate this study it is advisable to balance the difficulty of the planned tasks in such a way that more challenging activities or on the contrary less demanding ones do not affect the validity of the data collected in terms of showing a higher level of fluency, given the easiness of a task, or having a lower performance in fluency due to its greater effort. Besides the type of recorded data must comply with the requirement of impromptu

speech cited by Lennon (1990) in which no learnt by heart, recitation or read sample is taken as valid.

An interesting research opportunity is open to validate this study in contexts where the sample population had more participants; it would be also interesting to investigate the results of implementing the strategy including more interventions.

References

- Binder, C. Haughton, G. and Bateman, B. (2002). "Fluency: Achieving True Mastery in the Learning Process". Retrieved: http://www.fluency.org/Binder_Haughton_Bateman.pdf
- Bordonaro, K. (2006). Self directed language learning of ESL students in an American College library. *Journal of Language and Learning*, 5(1), 29-49 retrieved http://www.jllonline.co.uk/journal/jllearn/4_1/3_bordonaro.pdf
- Brown, J. D. (2004). Promoting fluency in EFL classroom. In T. Newfield (Ed.), *Conversational fluency: Ideology or reality: Proceedings of the JALT Pan-SIG Conference, Kyoto, Japan, 2003*. Tokyo: Japan Association for Language Teaching. Also retrieved from: <http://www.jalt.org/pansig/2003/HTML/Brown.htm>
- Brumfit, C.J. (1984). *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching: The Roles of Fluency and Accuracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching*. New York: Routledge.
- Strauss, A. Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research. Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. (2nd Ed. 1998)
- Sheerin, S. (1997). An exploration of the relationship between self-access and independent learning. In *Autonomy and independence in language learning*, eds. P. Benson and Voller. London: Longman, pp. 54–65
- Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs. (1986). Referring as a collaborative process. *Cognition*. (1-39) Stanford University
- Cohen, A. (1994). *Assessing Language Ability in the Classroom*. Boston. Heinle & Heinle.

- Collazos, C., Guerrero, L, Pino, J, And Ochoa, S. (2003) Collaborative Scenarios to promote positive interdependence among group members. CRIWG 2003.LNCS 2806, pp.356-370,2003.
- Crystal, D. 1987. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Denzin, N.K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Chicago: Aldine
- Dillenbourg P. (1999) What do you mean by collaborative learning?. In P. Dillenbourg (Ed) *Collaborative-learning: Cognitive and Computational Approaches*. (pp.1-19).Oxford: Elsevier
- Du, F. (2012). Using study plans to develop self-directed learning skills: implications from a pilot project. *College Student Journal*, 46, 223-232.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R., (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman, D (1998) *Doing teacher research: From inquiry to understanding*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.
- García- Amaya. (2009). *New Findings on Fluency Measures across Three Different Learning Contexts*.
- Garrison, D.R. (1997).“Self-directed learning: Toward a comprehensive model”. In *Adult Education Quarterly*, Fall 97 v 48 n 1, p18, 16 p.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-606. Retrieved March 5, 2013 from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-4/golafshani.pdf>

- Hartmann, R. R. K., & Stork, F. C. (1976). *Dictionary of language and linguistics*. New York: Wiley.
- Hieke, A.E. (1985). A componential approach to oral fluency evaluation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 69, 135-142.
- Jones, L.(2007). *The Student-Centered Classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*
- Kato, H. (1997). Some Thoughts on Oral Examination for Advance Students in Japanese System.5, (3). 181-186. In: Cohen, A. (1994). *Assessing Language Ability in the Classroom*. Boston. Heinle&Heinle.
- Kellem, H. (2009) Principles for developing oral fluency in the classroom .*JALT Journal* 33. 1
- Krashen, S.D. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon
- Kormos, Judit and MariannDénes (2004). Exploring measures and perceptions of fluency in the speech of second language learners. *System*, 32 (2), 145 - 164
- Lennon, P. 1990. Investigating fluency in EFL: A quantitative approach. *Language Learning*,40, 3, 387-417.
- MacIntyre, P., Clement, R., Dörnei, Z. & Noels, K. (1998).Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation.*The Modern Language Journal*.
- Merriam, S. (2001). *Andragogy and Self-Directed Learning: Pillars of Adult Learning Theory*. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 88, 3-13
- Nunan, D. (2004) *Task-based Language Teaching*.Cambridge University Press.

- Nunan, D., & Bailey, K.M. (2009) *Exploring second language classroom research: A comprehensive guide*. Boston: Heinle, Cengage Learning.
- Nunan, D. (1992) *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pattanpichet, F. (2011). The effects of using collaborative learning to enhance students' English speaking achievement. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning* 8(11), 1-11. Retrieved from <http://journals.cluteonline.com/index.php/TLC/article/view/6502>
- Prabhu, N. S., (1987 b). *Second Language Pedagogy*. Oxford: OUP.
- Richards, J. C., Platt, J., & Weber, H. (1985). *Longman dictionary of applied linguistics*. London: Longman.
- Richards, J. and T. Rodgers. (1986). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C. & Schmidt, R. (2002). *Longman dictionary of language teaching & applied Linguistics (3rd Ed.)* Harlow: Longman
- Richards, J & Renandya, W. (2002) *Teaching: An Anthology of current practice* Ed Methodology in Language Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rivers, W.M. (1981). *Teaching foreign language skills (2nd ed.)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Roschelle, J. & Teasley S.D. (1995) The construction of shared knowledge in collaborative problem solving. In C.E. O'Malley (Ed), *computer-supported collaborative learning*. (pp 69-197) Berlin: Springer-Verlag
- Schmidt, R. (1992). *Psychological Mechanisms Underlying Second Language Fluency*. Cambridge University Press.
- Thornbury, S. (1999). *How to teach grammar*. Harlow, Pearson Education.

Van Boxtel, C., Van der Linden, J. L., & Kanselaar, G. (2000). Collaborative learning tasks and the elaboration of conceptual knowledge. *Learning and Instruction* 10, 311–330. (pp. 1-20) Oxford: Elsevier science Ltd.

Willis, J. (1996) A framework for Task-Based Learning. Longman.

Willis, D. & Willis, J. (2007). Doing task-based teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Xiao-Qing, Q. (2002) ‘An Investigation into the Motivation Theories and the Implications for Foreign Language Learning’, *Foreign Language Research* Vol 4.

Yaruss, S. (1998). Real-Time Analysis of Speech Fluency. *Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*. Retrieved from <http://www.fluencyfriday.org/realttimeanalysis.pdf>

Appendix A.

Initial Survey Results



Master in English Language Teaching
for Self-Directed Learning


SURVEY RESULTS AND DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION

Researcher: Katia Contreras Gutiérrez.

QUESTION 1	6 students out of 15 do speaking activities: in every class. 9 students out of 15 do speaking activities: occasionally. 0 students out of 15 do speaking activities: once before the test. 0 students out of 15 do speaking activities: never.
QUESTION 2	15 students out of 15 like to speak English 0 students out of 15 do not like to speak English 1 students out of 15 sometimes like to speak English 1 students out of 15 like to speak English only if they have to
QUESTION 3	0 students out of 15 consider their English level as advanced 0 students out of 15 consider their English level as intermediate 15 students out of 15 consider their English level as beginner 0 students out of 15 consider their English level as low
QUESTION 4	2 students out of 15 feel relaxed when speaking in front of their peers 0 student out of 15 feels secure when speaking in front of their peers 2 students out of 15 feel stressed when speaking in front of their peers 11 students out of 15 feel insecure when speaking in front of their peers
QUESTION 5	7 students out of 15 need more practice to improve their speaking skill 8 students out of 15 need more collaborative work to improve their speaking skill 0 students out of 15 need more teacher's support to improve their speaking skill 0 students out of 15 need a more appropriate classroom environment to improve their speaking skill
QUESTION 6	15 students out of 15 consider English as useful for their lives 0 students out of 15 do not consider English as useful for their lives
QUESTION 7	3 students out of 15 think that a teacher is always needed to learn English 12 students out of 15 do not think that a teacher is always needed to learn English
QUESTION 8	0 students out of 15 think that they can learn and improve their oral skill just by practicing with their peers. 15 students out of 15 do not think that they can learn and improve their oral skill just by practicing with their peers.
QUESTION 9	15 students out of 15 like the suggested speaking activities in class 0 students out of 15 do not like the suggested speaking activities in class
QUESTION 10	13 students out of 15 think that team work could help them improving their performance in the speaking activities 2 students out of 15 do not think that team work could help them improving their performance in the speaking activities
QUESTION 11	6 students out of 15 think that practicing English individually could help them to improve their oral fluency 9 students out of 15 do not think that practicing English individually could help them to improve their oral fluency

Appendix B.2

Consent letters for participants


MASTER IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Annex 3

**DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING TEACHING STRATEGIES TO FOSTER SELF-DIRECTED LANGUAGE
 LEARNING IN COLOMBIA RESEARCH PROJECT PART 2**

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Sincelejo, agosto 21 de 2012

Señores:
 Estudiantes Inglés
 Corporación Universitaria del Caribe
 CECAR

Apreciados estudiantes:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada: **"How can fluency in Speaking be fostered in a group of students through the use of collaborative and self-directed speaking tasks?"** Este estudio busca aumentar el nivel de fluidez individual de los estudiantes de dicho nivel a través de técnicas y estrategias aprendidas en el curso de la maestría antes mencionada. Por lo anterior, comedidamente solicito su consentimiento y colaboración como participantes de mi propuesta de investigación, que se llevará a cabo durante los meses de agosto, septiembre, octubre, noviembre y diciembre.

Esto implica la planeación e implementación de actividades y recolección de datos durante varias semanas en las cuales ustedes responderán dos cuestionarios, completaran unos ejercicios de reflexión en relación con las estrategias utilizadas en las actividades de speaking, y presentarán dos exámenes uno al comienzo y otro al final de la investigación.

Igualmente, se les garantizará el uso de seudónimos para mantener su identidad en el anonimato en todas las publicaciones que la investigación origine, por tal razón si usted firma la carta de consentimiento acepta voluntariamente participar del proyecto de investigación. Así mismo, usted puede decidir rehusarse a responder, participar, o abandonar el proyecto. Sin embargo, su participación voluntaria será de gran ayuda para llevar a cabo este proyecto de manera exitosa.

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




Appendix D

Student`s Self-reflection surveys

 Universidad de La Sabana	MASTER IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES	
SELF -EVALUATION	

Student`s Name: _____

Date: _____ Lesson N^o: _____

	ABSOLUTELY 	KIND OF 	CAN BE BETTER 

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

Comments

My strengths were

Areas I can improve

Appendix E.

Teacher's reflection notes



MASTER IN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

What were the greatest achievements while carrying out this intervention? Why?

Were the objectives reached? Explain. How did you realize of this? Support.

Would you modify something taking into account the purpose of enhancing fluency?

What was your personal perception regarding students' performance while speaking in English?

Have you observed improvement in oral fluency while implementing collaborative and self-directed tasks?

What other actions can be taken as part of your research validity?

Appendix F.



MASTER IN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

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

LESSON PLAN INTERVENTION 1

Adapted from Dr. Joan Rubin's Lesson Planner, ICELT lesson plan template and Weekly Planner 2012-02 Department of Languages
and Cultures, Universidad de La Sabana

Name of co-researcher: Katia Contreras Gutierrez University Code Number: 201111351									
Institution: Corporación Universitaria del Caribe CECAR									
Date of Class: 25TH DAY MONTH YEAR 2012 Week No. _1_	Time of Class: 7.00 Length of class: 45 minutes								
	Time Frame: Two Lessons period								
Class/grade: 10th	Room: Computer Lab and regular classroom								
Number of students: 40	Average age of Students: 20								
Number of years of English study: 5	Level of students A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2								
Lesson Number	Research Circle Leader: Professor Carolina Cruz.								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1	2	3	4						
5	6	7	8						

Set Lesson Goals Engage actively in a range of collaborative discussions to get around a problematic situation. Demonstrate understanding of the main ideas and most details in given instructions by completing a map and retelling ideas to other classmates.		
Language Goal Student will be able to discuss on the best decisions to get out of a place based on peers suggestions	Assessment Criteria They will show understanding for given explanations and They will give explanations to others using the new vocabulary and expressions without greater fluency.	
Learning to Learn Goal Organize information to achieve particular purposes.	Assessment Criteria Students will be able to evaluate his own achievement of learning regarding the vocabulary he already knows and the vocabulary needed to complete the task.	
Identify a topic for the lesson Planning a escape		
Materials and Resources		
Material 1 Name: online activities	Rationale: activate previous knowledge, build new vocabulary	Annex 1
Material 2 Name: pictures	Rationale: model situation / Eliciting answers	Annex 2
Material x Name: map	Rationale: input to provide instructions	Annex 3
Assumed knowledge Basic expressions and prepositions to give directions.		
Anticipated problems and planned solutions Students might have problems understanding the interactional scheme of the task to avoid misunderstandings teacher will show Appendix 4		

Description of language item / skill(s)	
Form	
Meaning	
Use	
Skill(s) and sub skill(s)	
(For CLIL) Content <u>Communication</u> <u>Cognition</u> <u>Culture</u>	

Teacher's role	Stage	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activity	Interaction	me
facilitator	Lead in/Preparation (+S) DL Learning Strategy highlighted)	Provide students with vocabulary related to Prepositions of place, places in a city, prepositions of movement. Vocabulary building Recycling	Place : Computer Lab 1. Students will do online multiple choice exercises and games to check previous vocabulary knowledge related to: Prepositions of place, Places in a city Prepositions of movement. http://elt.oup.com/student/stardust/level5/games/game6.3.jsessionid=2FB123BDED6713E5E4CA879B4393F43B?cc=global&sellLanguage=en http://www.funenglishgames.com/readinggames/directions.html http://www.funenglishgames.com/readinggames/directions.html 2. By groups students will be required to do a search for interesting and new vocabulary related to the prepositions and places in a city. <div style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Self direction strategies: While completing this activity, students will be encouraged to reflect on the type of vocabulary they already have (self evaluation) and the additional vocabulary they need or would like to have and share their reflections. Students will also have to search for the pronunciation of new words (self-instruction)</p> </div> 3 Based on the new words found each group will have to design a Glogster and post it. Tutorial will be provided	-S	T

			<p>4. Each group will show their Glogster and pronounce the new words and expressions. Teacher will check pronunciation and meaning, drill exercises.</p> <p>5. Students will vote on the most complete Glogster.</p>		
Model Elicitor	<p>Presenta tion Modeling (+S DL Learning Strategy highlighted)</p>	<p>Provide student s with a model of G rammar structu res to describ e the locatio n of a place in a city and give sugges tion to given proble ms. C ontrolle d</p>	<p>MODELING *Teacher will give a model conversation in which functional language below will be presented.e.g.</p> <p>A: There is an accident on X street. B: I think you should turn left because XXXXX A: XXXXXX B :XXXXXXXX</p> <p>*Pronunciation drills.(Chain drill)</p> <p>*Students will be induced to notice the language used to give suggestions, directions or warnings.</p> <p>*Students will participate in basic role plays as teacher will prompt some pictures showing difficult situations in a map .students are required to : a) Describe what is happening. b)Locate the situation (near the..,in front of , at...street) c) Give suggestions and warning using functional language such as: I think he should you`d better, Why don`t you... Be careful not to Make sure you... Go that way because... Directions *Student`s reasons for those suggestions will elicited as an exercise to</p>	-S	T
				-S	S

		practic e.	make them extend their answers. *Teacher will provide feedback		
ncoura ger	E	P ractice (+S DL Learning Strategy highlighted)	<p>Students will be introduced to the production task; teacher will ask Sshow they would feel if they were lost in a very dangerous and haunted city. T will explain that they are lost and they need to work as a team in order to fulfill the mission. Students by groups will have to decide on which is the better way to get out of an imaginary city, they are actually lost there, and there are many dangers and threatening situations to deal with.</p> <p>1. A student will be chosen and given a map with the figures of threatening situations like robbers, phantoms, zombies, etc and the places where they are in the city.</p> <p>2. Students 2, 3 4 will have to listen to the descriptions of student 1; this leader will give a description of the city and talk about the dangers of it. Ss2 3 and 4 mark the information in a given blank map of the city.</p> <p>Roles can be assigned here. One student will pay attention on the particular dangerous places, another on the dangers, while other on the free ways</p> <p>3. Now each one of the previous listeners will pair up with three classmates (NOT at the same time) to give descriptions and instructions about the city based on activity 1. The speaker will spend 4 minutes with classmate 1 , 3 minutes with classmate 2 and 2 minutes with classmate 3.</p> <p>4. Each listener will now pair up with other 3 different classmates and</p>	s s s	S S S

			<p>repeat stage four until all students are involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice that : Students will perform as listeners to complete the individual map and then as speakers to other 3 more classmates individually. <p>5. Groups will meet. Each group will have to make agreements on the best way to get out of the city based on the individual map each one completed.</p> <p><i>This task evidences collaborative work because:</i> They will have to make efforts in completing individual tasks (completing the map)and then explaining it to others (4/3/2 technique) to achieve collective goals.</p> <p>Students will have the opportunity to negotiate meaning.</p> <p>By deciding upon what to do to solve a problem they will be enhancing social construction of knowledge.</p>		
	<p>Learner self-evaluation (+S DL Learning Strategy highlighted)</p>		<p>Learner will do a self check evaluation</p>		
	<p>Wrap up (+S DL Learning Strategy highlighted)</p>		<p>Students will discuss on the best decisions made by the different groups or changes they would have implemented it.</p>		
	<p>Expansion/ Independ</p>				

	ent Study DL Learning Strategy highlighted (+S)				
--	---	--	--	--	--

Appendix G

KWL Chart

K.W.L. Chart		
Topic: _____		
K What I Already Know	W What I Want to Know	L What I Have Learned

Appendix H

Initial Timeline

TIMELINE
RESEARCHER: KATIA CONTRERAS

ACTIVITY	AUGUST				SEPTEMBER				OCTOBER				NOVEMBER			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Describing your population		X														
Run Pre test -Survey			X													
Implementation 1							X									
Implementation 2								X								
Implementation 3									X							
Implementation 4										X						
Implementation 5											X					
Implementation 6												X				
Implementation 7													X			
Implementation 8														X		
Implementation 9															X	
Apply post test																X
Data Analysis (all methods)									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Preparing and analyzing your Journal					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Preparing final article														X	X	X

