Implementing Social Strategies to Improve Speaking in Interaction Activities

Juliana Díaz

Research Report submitted

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in English Language Teaching –Autonomous Learning Environments

Directed by Pedro Maldonado

Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures

Universidad de La Sabana

Chía, Colombia

2014

Declaration

I hereby declare that my research report entitled:

Implementing Social Strategies to Improve Speaking in Interaction Activities

- is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared and specified in the text;

- is neither substantially the same as nor contains substantial portions of any similar work submitted or that is being concurrently submitted for any degree or diploma or other qualification at the Universidad de La Sabana or any other university or similar institution except as declared and specified in the text;

- complies with the word limits and other requirements stipulated by the Research Subcommittee of the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures;

- has been submitted by or on the required submission date.

Date: _____

Full Name: _____

Signature: _____

Abstract

This action research project explored the possible effects of three social strategies in participants' oral interaction while they are communicating between peers in class tasks. The project was carried out with a group of thirteen students at a private university located in Chía, Colombia. They were enrolled in different undergraduate programs and took English as a graduation requirement of their programs. At the end of this qualitative research, the gathered data demonstrated that the students were able to interact, use the language to transmit and convey messages and, improve two linguistic components (vocabulary and fluency) along with their self-confidence when speaking.

Key words: social strategies, oral interaction, interaction activities, fluency and vocabulary.

Resumen

La investigación exploró los posibles efectos de tres estrategias sociales en la interacción oral de los participantes cuando se comunican entre pares en las actividades de interacción. Este proyecto fue llevado a cabo con un grupo de estudiantes de una universidad privada localizada en Chía, Colombia. Ellos se encontraban en diferentes programas de pregrado y tomaron el curso de inglés como un requerimiento para graduarse. Al final del proyecto cualitativo, los datos obtenidos demostraron que los estudiantes fueron capaces de interactuar, usar el lenguaje para trasmitir y expresar mensajes y mejorar dos factores lingüísticos (vocabulario y fluidez) al igual que su autoconfianza al hablar.

Palabras claves: Estrategias sociales, interacción oral, actividades de interacción, vocabulario y fluidez.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Table of Tables

Chapter One: Introduction

Nowadays people live in a globalized world that has different cultures and beliefs which are mostly expanded through the use of mass media. Due to this close worldwide communication, new learning demands have arisen. Learning a new language such as English is a goal not only in South America, but also in developing countries all over the world.

For the reason above, in 2004 the Colombian Ministry of Education sets a goal called "Programa de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras (PFDCLE)" to develop and raise second language proficiency in young Colombian citizens from private and public institutions. To this end, the communicative competences appear as the main components to work on in order to undergraduate gain some proficiency in a second language; in an EFL context, learners can develop this competence when they learn to use language in realistic situations. Recalling Oxford (1990), students need communicative competences, especially the sociolinguistic competence, to use the second language in various contexts. The sociolinguistic competence helps learners to understand and use appropriate utterances in various social contexts by means of spoken discourse such as apologizing, persuading and describing.

The present study suggests the use of three social strategies-asking questions, cooperating with peers, and substitution (Oxford, 1990; Chamot et al., 1999) along with communicative activities to improve a group of adult learners' oral interaction. Thirteen students from a university in Chia, Colombian, participated in this study; although they were enrolled in various undergraduate programs, they were studying English to meet a graduation requirement. The main core of this project was to have students communicate more effectively by creating useful and dynamic activities that provide opportunities for spoken/oral interaction focusing on issues such as

students' attitudes, expectations, interests, and needs, as well as their ability to express their points of view and cultural values (Chastain, 1988; Given, 2009).

Considering the importance of improving learners' oral interaction, Oxford (1990) and Mora (2013) reaffirmed that communication should occur through the use of interaction tasks. Learners can participate in those tasks using the language and focusing on different functional situations and contexts. Those tasks also foster students' speaking skills because they can connect their knowledge of the world with their cultural references.

Statement of the problem

The Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures at this private university focuses on training and preparing graduates to participate in a globalized world in which English is often the language with greater demand. The document called "Restauración de reestructuración curricular para el programa de proficiencia en lenguaextranjera en la Universidad de La Sabana" (2002) describes two main directives: to foster communicative competences and to provide an integral education; in addition, the department´s curriculum seeks to develop the four English skills in two face to face sessions and one online session per week in a blended program.

The students participating in this study were young adults who are considered independent users at the B1-B2 level (CEFR). The students can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters and topics about their university contexts; they can also deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken (North, 2000). Furthermore, students understand the importance of learning the English language not only they need to pass a required international proficiency exam for graduation, English competence offers study and job opportunities as they grow professionally.

This research study sought to understand a phenomenon in a real context taking into account the participants' and university setting (Golafshani, 2003). In this study, one current issue in regards to students' speaking development is that the teacher does not promote a communicative atmosphere in which learners can use the language. Hence, the teacher used two needs analysis instruments, field notes of teacher's observations and a student questionnaire. She identified issues such as students' low performance while interacting with peers.

The first instrument of these was field notes which can help the researcher to organize the "raw notes into cooked notes" (Shagoury & Power, 1993, p. 46) to identify students' behavior during speaking activities.

After observing the students' speaking behavior for two weeks, the researcher found six salient student behaviors. The preliminary data analysis revealed that during interactive group speaking activities about a given topic, the pupils expressed their points of view using their first language (L1).

Occasionally, some of them were silent or used monosyllables words; it was difficult for them to express themselves because they seemed to lack useful strategies to share their thoughts. Others did not use language that promoted discussion of given topics in class; instead, they used some isolated sentences in English to state their points of view, such as affirmative and negative words,short sentences to achieve the task demands, answer a question or make a list. In addition, most students indicated that they wanted to write down what they were going to say before speaking, so they could feel comfortable and prepared when communicating their ideas. These salient behaviors from the field notes are described below:

Table 1.Salient students' behaviors.

"Group #1: The students use English for 5 minutes, then they switched to Spanish"
Excerpt from the Needs Analysis Observation August 16th.
"Task: encourage students to discuss and make a list of habits in life that are good and bad for people's health.
"Group #2 and 3: Students speak little English for example isolated word".
Excerpt from the Needs Analysis Observation August 16th.
"Most of the time students use monosyllable words use the L1 and they did not discuss. Instead, they use their writing skills if they want to say something"
Excerpt from the Needs Analysis Observation August 2nd.

The teacher-researcher used a second needs analysis instrument to complement the preliminary data. She used questionnaires (Rothwell, 1996) and followed the author's most important components for questionnaires such as length, students' anonymity, introductory and closing sentences, nominal and ordinal questions, and a close remark sentence to create an appropriate and objective survey.

One section of the survey asked questions about the four English skills. The responses indicated that the majority of students perceived speaking and reading as difficult skills, yet most of them indicated that speaking was the most important of the four language skills. Moreover, when asked about the frequency of English use in the classroom, the majority of the participants stated that they used English in class; however, in another question they also admitted that the frequency of using the language was not high.

Another topic of the questionnaire involved the types of speaking activities students preferred. Those activities were simulations, debates and discussions, which demonstrate that learners understand the importance of learning and using English.

Based on the data obtained during the needs analysis, the researcher concluded that the students may find difficulties expressing themselves because they might not feel confident while speaking and interacting with peers, so they can prefer to use their L1 or monosyllables words and no discussion was observed in the tasks. Swain and Canale (1980) pointed out that in order to learn other languages in the classroom; interaction must take place between the teacher and students and among learners. So, if the teacher provides opportunities for students to hear [input] from the L2 and produce [output], students are more apt to acquire the new language in the classroom setting. In this research context, some students made an effort to use the language when they tried to communicate ideas and feelings; however, these students could not use appropriate words or expressions to discuss a given topic and express their ideas with any degree of fluency.

Participants needed of interaction activities to communicate thoughts and experiences without being worried the anxiety of speaking accurately. However, they did not know how to converse in English because they were not acquainted with speaking strategies. In order to address these issues, the teacher researcher promoted the use of social strategies by training students how to use them, and provided activities during which students could communicate authentically with their peers. Swain and Canale's study (1980) showed the importance of teachers reducing social and cognitive pressures in the classroom so that students could produce language that reflects more appropriately or precisely their intended meaning.   Consequently, the teacher considered it necessary to create communicative situations and train students to use of social strategies, so they could easily share their points of view using the language they knew (Tsou, 2005).

This research project investigated the possible outcomes of the integration of social strategies to improve oral interaction skills in interaction activities. It was driven by the following research question and objectives:

How might social strategies influence oral interaction in a group of B1-B2 young adults' university English class?

General objective

To determine the effects of three social strategies on oral interaction in a group of B1-B2 university English learners.

Specific objectives

1. To analyze the influence of social strategies in young adults' oral interaction.

2. To examine how the three selected strategies might impact learners' self-confidence.

Rationale

An area identified as the most problematic in the target group is the one regarding oral interaction.The focused observation of different classes and the data gathered from the questionnaire revealed that students used few sentences in English and some students did notparticipate in speaking activities in the classroom.

As, English is now considered an important language for personal and professional success, the city government of Bogota has implemented a core project to promote English called *Bogotá Bilingüe*. The mission of this campaign is to help learners to be aware of the importance of learning this language in different contexts including the workplace, relationships, school and university.

Taking into account the aforementioned context and problem, the researcher plans to implement social strategies as tools to communicate; thus, she has to set different social contexts appropriate to students' English level to develop the sociolinguistic competence. The activities should encourage learners to describe, give opinions and explain personal and cultural topics. Thus, students should be able to build meaning in conversations, informal/formal discussion and

meetings, goal-oriented co-operation, transactions to obtain goods and services, information exchange, interviews and be interviewed using sociocultural strategies (North, 2000). This contextualization suggests taking advantage of students' needs to foster their oral interaction skill.In recent studies, Gómez (2011) and Mora (2013) found that peer interaction provides students with opportunities to listen to what others have to say, so they can compare and contrast opinions and ideas. This finding reinforces the importance of providing students with tools such as social strategies to enhance communication.

The following chapter presents the theoretical framework of the project, which includes relevant theories about the speaking skills, interaction based on sociocultural context and interaction activities where social strategies are embedded.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

This literature review examines for current theories and literature regarding second language communication and particularly oral interaction. Speaking skills, oral interaction, interaction activities, and three social strategies –asking for clarification and verification, substitution, and cooperation with peers- rooted in the work of Oxford (1990) and Chamot et al. (1999) are the constructs to promote oral interaction. Research concerning those strategies relies on the cognitive psychology (Wiliams & Burden 1997, p.149) as its aim is to promote an educational environment, where pupils are actively learning by using tools, with an emphasis on creative expression. Additionally, this review will include a discussion of how these social strategies and interaction tasks intertwine to improve speaking skills, especially oral interaction.

Speaking skills

Speaking is the productive skill that is delivered orally. In order to develop speaking skills, learners can do it in two ways: individually or in face-to-face situations. For this project, speaking skills are focused on pupils' performance while using the second language to interact and share thoughts in group tasks.

Nevertheless, the lessons from the target context most likely develop speaking skills. This is because the topics used during those sessions occasionally foster the language use and are not relate to the students' interests or experiences. In that sense, the teacher generally provides speaking activities relegated to the chat at the beginning and end of the lesson; those activities are simply ways of rehearsing pre-selected grammar items or functional expressions (Thornbury, 2009).

Some researchers have identified the shortage of opportunities to practice speaking as an important contributing factor for speaking failure (Díaz, 2011; Gómez, 2011). Spending time in

class reciting grammar sentences and vocabulary items does not constitute practice (Díaz, 2011); instead, verbal skills are developed through interaction projects. Hence, while speaking practice takes place in order to achieve any degree of fluency, automaticity is necessary (Thornbury, 2009).

Automaticity allows speakers to focus their attention on the aspects of the speaking activity that requires immediate either planning or articulating a speech by means of some strategies. Thus, learners use the language they know, for example prefabricated chunks to express thoughts of a given topic and in a communicative activity; however, when students have in-class opportunities to practice the language, they can transform those small units into bigger ones.

Another problem that teachers face when trying to develop the speaking skills is preparing students to use the language in real situations. Although some researchers such as Brown (2007) in the EFL field consider speaking to concern pronunciation, word choice, and grammar as fundamental to speaking skills, others such as Chastain (1988) claimed that the focus of speaking instruction should be conveying and creating meaning. Consequently, in this research project, speaking skills are developed when undergraduates interact with their peers in communicative tasks.

Oral interaction

As stated earlier, speaking skills serve as a vehicle for students' participation in-class activities; hence, when students are engaged in a group task that requires communication, oral interaction occurs and oral proficiency is developed. When the teacher provides and uses interaction activities during the lesson, students will communicate with their peers who may share similar language and social backgrounds, and interests. Situations like these can lead to a natural conversation because learners may feel involved so their participation is relevant in the activity.

Communication skills can be developed in various ways. For instance, Díaz (2011) found in his research that his students could develop speaking skills by being trained to perceive, recall and articulate sounds and structures. Moreover, he stated that speaking can also be developed using tasks where learners can use the language communicatively. In Mora's (2013) and Mohammed's (2008) research projects, they found that when participants worked together a task, they encouraged an active conversation which could lead to reflection and learners became more serious and responsive. Those kinds of in-class speaking opportunities gave students a chance for practicing speaking skills as preparation for using the language outside the classroom (Harmer, 2001). Hence, in this research project the researcher is going to focus on the "talking with" speaking process (Chastain, 1988, p. 275) in which speakers create meaning in the process of interacting with others to ensure comprehension.

According to Brown (2007) learners should become proficient in maintaining conversation by activating the language they know. Besides, in studies such as in Kayi (2006), the students learned to speak in the second language by interacting with their peers. Alternatively, Taylor (1983) found that learners can put their grammatical knowledge into practice by speaking, but they cannot speak for the sole purpose of acquiring new grammatical structures of the language. In this research project, learners speak in English as a way of communicating ideas and expressing thoughts, so the researcher aims to provide students with opportunities to freely use the language.

Gutiérrez (2005) found in his research project that using the language for a specific purpose helps learners to communicate. She reports that her students saw speaking as a developmental process in which pronunciation and grammatical mistakes played a part; however, speaking was used to express points of view in real-language situations. Also, Hulstijn and Hulstijn (1984) found that students who planned and monitored their speech had fewer grammatical errors; however, they

took thirty percent longer to say what they wanted to say and transmitted fourteen percent less information. This previous study demonstrates that the teacher can promote the use of language with interaction activities that invite students to participate by choosing topics related to their lives. Hence, students will speak the language they have in their minds exchanging personal, general and professional information.

When learners are using the language to communicate, they take into account their linguistic, extra-linguistic and sociocultural knowledge. Chastain (1988) pointed out that speaking requires students to activate their linguistic knowledge, which is the language knowledge such as discourse patterns, genre, and functions. Moreover, Thornbury (2009) stated that extra-linguistic knowledge, which is the knowledge of the world, affects speaking positively because learners have to consider the topic, cultural and context knowledge, and the familiarity with the other learners. In a recent study Given (2009) found that the relation between students' cultural background and the classroom context influenced their classroom oral participation. In this research study, the teacher will focus her lessons on promoting communication among participants considering that the learners share common contexts.

The sociocultural knowledge is also present in the oral interaction process; it joins the previous knowledge, extra-linguistic and linguistic, when students follow the values and norms of behavior in a given society, including the way these values and norms are realized through language (Thornbury, 2009). It is shown when Wang (2004) found in his study that global sociocultural values certainly trigger students' discussion participation. Hence, the researcher designed activities about real life topics, where learners easily shared their experiences or ideas because they have common characteristics such as their language level, age, an established knowledge of the topic and context.

For interaction activities to be meaningful, students must communicate using the language. Ellis (1999) defined interaction as participants of equal status such as age and similar majors sharing related needs and interests while they make an effort to understand each other. He said that other factors that influence interaction are the nature of the task and characteristics of participants. Taking those characteristics into account, in this study classroom interaction should be based on principles and practices; in other words, the teacher-researcher will carry out activities of real life topics and inform the participants about an objective to fulfill in the task. This type of oral interaction implies that students interact with others by speaking in class, answering and asking questions, making comments, and taking part in discussions (Tuan & Nhu, 2010)

In addition, Long (1996) and Ellis (1999) discussed the term negotiation of meaning in their Interaction Hypothesis (IH). This Hypothesis describes another important characteristic of interaction which is message conveyance. In the IH Long (1996) emphasized the role of negotiation of meaning in language development; he stated that negotiation triggers interactional adjustment, complemented by various types of feedback, which facilitates language acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, and output in productive ways. That is to say, negotiation of meaning among learners in an interaction activity is necessary to help them notice the mismatches between input and output through negative feedback to finally modify the output. So, for language acquisition to occur, teachers must provide opportunities to negotiate meaning to prevent a communicative breakdown (Long, 1996).

The IH acknowledges that during conversations, situations arise wherein a participant does not understand what the other says, but learning becomes more effective. Through negotiation, learners obtain feedback from interlocutors on their language output in the forms of the conversational adjustments; thus, learners notice new language features and compare this with the

existing output to modify their production. Long (1996) said that feedback occurs through recast,

repetitions of the learners' errors using emphasis in order to improve vocabulary, morphology, and

syntax. However, this research project draws on the principles of negotiation of meaning, viewed

as a vehicle for speakers to interact and share ideas without paying attention to the usage of correct

grammatical sentences; therefore, the negative feedback to enhance language forms is not relevant

in this project. In addition, comprehension between learners while interacting does not depend on

negotiation itself; instead, learners may benefit from dialogic interactions which enhance fluency

by allowing the participants to produce the target language (Ellis, 1999).

Research in this area reaffirms the importance of communication of ideas rather than

mastery of appropriate grammatical structures while interacting. Buck (2001) and Osada (2004)

stated that instead of creating accurate grammatical structures, students should use interaction

skills, which involve making decisions about how to communicate an idea and the ability to use

the language in order to satisfy particular demands. For this reason, speakers use their background

and linguistic knowledge to create a message that will be meaningful to the audience. In the same

way, Gómez (2011) found that peer interaction gives students an opportunity to listen to what

others have to say in order to compare and contrast ideas. Similarly, Jurkowitz (2008) believed

that negotiation of meaning requires both learners to work together using the L2. Peer

collaboration and meaningful communication as described in these two research projects guided

the researcher to emphasize interaction during class sessions because it would help learners to cope

with communication problems using strategies without focusing their attention separately on

grammatical forms. In essence, these studies also helped the teacher researcher to recognize the

importance of giving students opportunities to negotiate meaning using the language.

For a number of years, researchers have studied interaction among non-native speakers (NNS) in EFL contexts. Jurkowitz (2008) focused on NNS-NNS interaction because in an EFL environment the curriculum emphasizes communication and small group work, but opportunities of extensive practice are too infrequent. This is the reason for which communication through interaction must take place in classrooms in order to promote second language use. She also suggests that NNS-NNS interaction is beneficial to learners' L2 development and students conversational management techniques. Based on this, the teacher researcher acknowledges the importance of creating an environment where students feel confident enough to use the language.

During communication exchange, Oxford (1990) stated that meaning includes not just the semantic and syntactic meaning of words, but also the pragmatic meaning (contextual appropriateness) of communication acts. In Given's research (2009), the participants noted that even though their language proficiency was limited, they believed that the more they knew about the subject matter, the more they were likely to contribute to discussions. Therefore, the activities should include topics that are related to the syllabus without leaving aside the students' context; thus, teachers should promote the use of a variety of communication skills in tasks that help students use the language. Students need to interact among themselves doing pair and group work, so they do not rely on the teacher as the only source of language input. Peers can provide great variety of language models (Long & Porter, 1984); therefore, students need to interact among themselves. In order to achieve that purpose, Chastain (1988) stated that in the activities proposed by the teacher, their objective should be clear for students, so they can participate in the exchange of information without forcing production; this will enhance motivation. Providing students with varied opportunities for speaking will increase the amount of talking time, work and interaction.

Interaction Activities

The type of interaction which involves students' exchange of information is called interpersonal (Vygotsky, 1978). This occurs as a social behavior when people communicate in face-to-face activities through oral or written media. Vygotsky's theory is related to how learners can develop mental processes through another human or a sociocultural activity. In this research project, interpersonal communication will be demonstrated in interaction activities which help speakers to use the language among themselves, discussing real life topics. This was observed in recent studies that have investigated the role of interaction activities in fostering students' oral interaction (Garrido, 2012; Kayi, 2006; Herazo, 2010; Lopera, 2013; Mackey 1999; Mohammed 2008; Mora 2013; Tsou 2005). In those projects, tasks provided and exposed students to opportunities to contextualize and use the second language, and learners had more chance to participate and learn from their partners.

Moreover, Chastain (1988) referred to this type of interaction as "talking with" in which two processes take place: the process of creating meaning and the process of interaction. Therefore, learners need to cooperate with others and the teacher-researcher needs to involve learners in common real-language use. In a local study, Cárdenas and Robayo (2011) involved their students in role plays related to their lives. They observed positive attitudes from students, who showed interest in the interaction with classmates. Because of this, the researcher is interested in promoting interaction and cooperative communication among participants in ample opportunities to speak and participate. Also, these opportunities highly motivate, after receiving participation instruction, and increase students' interest in the activity using comprehensible language (Tsou, 2005).

The teachers in the mid to late 1970s were interested in natural language because they believed that the L2 acquisition process should resemble that of L1(Brown,1994). On the contrary,

"classrooms must not become linguistics courses but rather the locus of meaningful language involvement" (p. 254). Teachers must prepare their students to participate successfully in conversations by orienting them to handle the topic under discussion, establishing a context, and giving them potentially useful vocabulary. This was shown in Gómez's (2007) and Prieto's (2007) local studies, and Mohammed's (2008) international study when teachers used activities such as debates, oral presentation and discussion to trigger language use and help them construct sentences and ideas. In addition, in international studies done by Mora (2013) and Kayi (2006), they learned from her findings the significance of offering their students opportunities, ideally from real life scenarios, to create meaningful output and use the second language in action; therefore, using interaction activities, students are exposed to a context where they can use the language.

After considering the importance of interaction activities for language use, Swain and Canale (1980) proposed different kinds of activities primarily to promote students' interaction and improve speaking fluency. The first one is *performance activities,* which provide students with opportunities to communicate in the language. The authors stressed that the focus is on engagement and communication, and that emphasis should not be placed on grammatical accuracy during the interaction. This, they claimed, would disappear over time. Consequently, because the main objective is to engage students in real communication, teachers should create a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1989).

The second kind of activity is *guided activities*, which includes a model that students can change to talk about themselves and to communicate their own needs and ideas, and tasks which the students carry out using language taught beforehand. Finally, c*reative or freer activities,* usually designed to provide practice on predicted language items and fluency, but where language

focus is less relevant. Some activities for freer practice are interaction or information gap, role-plays, simulations, discussions and games. These activities can be combined with cooperative techniques to motivate students to use and improve their English. In this project, *the performance and creative and freer* activities are used to prompt students to interact and increase participation through pair work (role-plays) and group work (simulations, debates and discussions). Gutiérrez (2005) and Lopera (2013) found that when teachers provide students with those three speaking activities, students could express ideas freely, so real communication is reached because the learners are given the chance to be more spontaneous. Therefore, they found that these performance and group discussion-type activities promoted communication and students are able to achieve a common goal.

Finally, because one of the underpinning principles of this research project is to use social strategies (based on the sociolinguistic competence) to practice the language in various contexts, the researcher focused on those types of activities as they offer several benefits to the students. As they participate, students have opportunities to try out the language they already know, learn from how others express similar meaning, and use new strategies they have studied. In addition they gain experience in spontaneous interaction, and they use language purposefully and cooperatively. All of this simulates real life interaction, so they achieve communicative goals. Ellis (1999) said that ethnographers believe that interaction is constructed by participants as they dynamically exchange not just meaning, but also their role relationships, and their cultural and social identities. Therefore, it is necessary that the teacher -researcher provide students with opportunities in the classroom to interact where they can use certain social strategies in order to have positive effects on their participation and speaking fluency.

Social Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990), who has worked on learning strategies and their relation with foreign language learning, stated that "learning a second language in a foreign context does not have immediate social and communicative functions within a community where it is learned; this means that the language can be learned everywhere to communicate" (p. 6). This study took place in an EFL context where learners usually did not speak in English during in-class activities; hence, the researcher's aim is to provide proper strategies and communicative activities which will increase student confidence and lead them to practice the language more. Macaro (2006), Weyers (2010) and Gallaher (20012) used a group of strategies, especially speaking strategies, with their students that proved effective in improving their oral performance. Those strategies focused students' attention on developing a task and maintain spoken communication.

According to North (2000) and Oxford (1990), language entails communicative competences to express meaning and it can be expressed through the medium of speaking, writing, reading and listening. The authors describe four types of communicative competences:

- Grammatical competence or accuracy is the mastery of the linguistic code such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling and word formation.

- Sociolinguistic competence is the appropriate use of utterances including knowledge of speech in different social contexts.

- Discourse competence is the ability to combine ideas to create cohesion and coherence.

- Strategic competence is the ability to use strategies without using the language to communicate, as in gestures, for example.

Recalling that another objective of this research is to relate communication with the sociolinguistic competence and interpersonal interaction, the oral interaction development was established in a social context by means of interaction activities. Swain and Canale (1980) pointed

out that if learners were to engage in socio-cultural-interpersonal interaction and the goal was for them to use authentic language, then they should be involved in activities based on their context as young adult teenagers who may share common interests in regards to their second language learning. For this reason, both activity and oral interaction are required; hence, in the lesson students collaborate and participate in the proposed activities, and new knowledge is constructed until the learners are in a position to appropriate it.

Because language is the vehicle for communication, the use of strategies can contribute to the effectiveness of the process. McDonough (1999) stated that strategies have been isolated in the learning process for many years. Nowadays students use tools to learn the language, communicate in the language, and compensate for the lack of knowledge or breakdown of communication in different macro skill areas such as reading, writing, speaking and listening.   Strategies are the tools for this research project because they will contribute to the communicative process and will permit students to participate in interaction activities. Oxford (1990) described strategies as an easy way to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, self-directed, effective, and transferrable to new situations; in addition, they are oriented to communicative competence. Among the strategies that Rebecca Oxford mentioned, the indirect social strategies are the foundation of this project, to be used by learners in the interaction activities in the implementation stage.

In the implementation stage, the process involved in language production, the teacher determined what social topics she needed to take into account to improve students' oral interaction while participating in class tasks. Swain and Canale (1980) established some guidelines, while learners are using the language, in regards to behavior (what the speakers can do), semantics (what they can mean) and grammar (what they can say) decide whether the communication is appropriate or not. Ellis (1999) complemented this idea by saying that a social view of language learning

favors the metaphor of "participation" which entails active involvement rather than the traditional metaphor of "acquisition" which demands possession. Taking into account the main objective of this project, in the implementation stage learners will have opportunities to use the language in activities where a social context is set.

Providing interaction activities are one way teachers can help learners develop sociolinguistic competence because the task's context and task can be designed for those purposes. Olshtain and Cohen´s study (1989) reported that learners of Hebrew could communicate and participate successfully in interaction activities because they were involved in sociolinguistic acts (interaction activities) by considering linguistic and cultural standards for acceptable performance when they used the second language and took into account the objective of each task. Those positive results would not have been achieved if they had not used social strategies. According to Oxford (1990) and Chamot et al. (1999), asking questions for clarification and verification, substituting, and cooperating with peers social strategies are aids to increase interaction and cultural understanding because those tools can help learners to maintain the conversation and achieve a task.

In this research project, social strategies were used to promote participation and communication among participants. Asking questions for clarification and verification were necessary for students to communicate and solve comprehension problems, which could have occurred when something important needed assistance from group members to express an idea. Drawing on Oxford's (1990) work, paraphrasing, repeating and explaining are the structures that students can use to confirm understanding and avoid misunderstanding during an interaction. This strategy and these structures may not be part of learners' L2 repertoire, so the teacher may need to teach and monitor their use.

The substituting strategy involves substituting known words or phrases when learners do not know or cannot remember a specific word or phrase so that communication continues. Learners may have not known sufficient vocabulary on all topics in the target language to participate effectively, and if they have constantly used a dictionary and asked the teacher for expressions or vocabulary, communication in the group can slow or stop.

Finally, the cooperation with peers strategy can encourage positive interdependence and mutual support by giving learners a chance to share their strengths to accomplish a task. Students can collaborate among themselves to produce an outcome based on the objective of each activity; hence, they are going to use the language to communicate meaning and share thoughts. The cooperation with peer's strategy is apparent when students communicate during interaction activities; therefore, those activities are helpful to provide important opportunities for learners to practice speaking.

In the implementation of this project, the researcher is satisfied of building stronger language motivation, have more language practice opportunities and greater use of different language functions. Hence, the researcher will take into account the learners' request in the needs analysis questionnaire to have communicative tasks such as role plays, simulations, and discussion during the lessons to practice and use the language learners know. As a result, the participants can communicate and negotiate a message being motivated to interact. Providing students with interaction activities has positive benefits in increasing students' motivation; in Herazo's study (2010), he found that in-class tasks which involved exchanging information and had relevant content will engage participants doing the task and encourage them to use the language in their attempt to find out more information.

Consequently, those strategies will help students to be aware of their own process and become active learners. Gruyter (2009) reinforced this idea by saying that language learning awareness can increase whose competence and proficiency which in turn influences learner's strategies and motivation. Therefore, the target population in this project is expected to enhance their self-confidence by working with their peers to communicate thoughts and ideas considering the social context given in the activity. This was showed in Yang's study (1996) who found that when learners used some learning strategies, group discussion increased.

Another potential area that has already been explored about this project is that teachers and students might not be fully aware of the positive factors of teaching and using strategies in EFL context. Chamot et al. (1999) stated that students must first believe they are capable of becoming more independent learners; additionally, teachers must have confidence that the individual strategies are effective and communicate this to students. Díaz (2011) concluded that the teacher's role in promoting participation and work cooperation was important to create meaning.

In the while-implementation stage of this project, the researcher played an important role in training students in the sociolinguistic skills and strategies use because s/he was able to help, facilitate, advice, coordinate and co-communicate those tools before students started interacting in the activities. Recent studies such as in Diniz de Figuereido and Mota (2009),Brett (2011), Mohammed (2008), Tsou (2005), and Osboe, Fujumura,and Hirschel (2007), it was shown and found that learners were motivated to participate more after receiving participation instruction. The teacher helped stimulated and encouraged students to be more comfortable as did opportunities to perform in smaller groups and talking about familiar topics. On the other hand, the researcher trained and taught students on the strategies, so that they were expected to learn their importance and when they were appropriate to use (Oxford, 1990). Without those skills,

learners would have been reluctant and not fully involved in the speaking practice because they would have lacked the confident to use the language and interact freely with their peers. As McDonough (1999) explained, teaching students how to use strategies will increase their proficiency in their use in different situations such as in role plays with different contexts, where they will adopt strategic approaches using them efficiently in less powerful areas.

As a final point, Chamot et al. (1999) stated strategies teachability by saying that developing learning strategies, in this case social strategies, can help students become effective learners with a variety of tools to aid them in all types of learning and understanding. Therefore, teachers must name and define the strategy to explain why the strategy works and when to use it. Hence, in the training stage, the teacher- researcher has to explain the strategy with examples for students to know how to use them and guide the interaction process among learners.

Chapter Three: Research Design

This chapter provides a detailed account of the procedures followed during the study. The

sections in this chapter include the type of study, the educational context, the participants' profile,

the roles of the teacher-researcher, the data collection instruments, and the procedures of the

implementation.

Type of Research

The present study is classified as an Action Research that allows teachers to inquire about

learning problems and reflect on their pedagogical practice. This study corresponds to a small-

scale intervention with the purpose of analyzing its impact, benefits, and positive or negative

outcomes in the population (Burns, 2010). Taking into consideration that this study attempts to

improve students' participation in interaction activities by means of learning strategies, action

research represents the most appropriate type of research for this study.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) action research is a systematic study that

combines action and reflection with the intention of improving teaching practice. It combines

diagnosis, action and reflection of practical and problematic issues in order to find possible

solutions. Additionally, Stenhouse (1975) suggests that action research should contribute not only

to practice but also to a theory of education and teaching accessible to other teachers, making

educational practice a more reflective one.

In research, the teachers first self-assess their own teaching practice, which leads them to

understand and learn how to improve and make some changes in it. Cohen, Manion and Morrison

(2007) stated that Action Research is a qualitative study because it describes and interprets an area

that needs to be improved to generate patterns which are understood to explore possible

resolutions. For this particular action research project, the teacher reflected on her learners'

behavior and participation in interaction activities where they had to share their ideas using the

English language. Based on the gathered data from the needs analysis, the teacher noticed that

students did not use English to share their thoughts; instead, they remained silent or used

monosyllabic words; furthermore, they needed to write their ideas first before starting speaking

and mostly they used their first language.

Context

This research study was carried out at a private university located in Chia, Colombia. Its

mission and vision are to educate professionals who would be desire to contribute to society and

put their knowledge into practice to help people in need. This university tries to prepare students in

a globalized world and feel confident enough to achieve and reach professional and personal

standards established in the world.

To accomplish those general standards, the undergraduate English program has a blended

language learning methodology and the lessons are divided into two60-minute face-to-face (F2F)

sessions and a one-hour online session per week. The participants in this research, who were in

English level Six, had to develop various activities using Virtual Sabana, the university's online

platform each week. Some of these activities involved group tasks and others were completed

independently.

The weekly online session, as part of the sixty four-hour English program, has activities

assigned individually and/or collaboratively and contributes to the development of the target tasks

stated in each academic term. Active participation in discussion forums is mandatory as the

website is a space conceived for continuous reflection, contributions, and learning within a

respectful and supportive learning environment. Independent work is set in VS, for students to

prepare classes and consolidate topics studied in class. The platform also serves as a scaffold because it provides resources for skill development and practice.

The institution follows a communicative and task based approach because students are encouraged in the lessons to use and practice all of the English skill areas. The face-to-face and online activities are created based on the idea that learning a language successfully comes through communicating real meaning. When learners are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition are used, and this allows them to learn to use the language (Richards & Rodgers, 2006). The English curriculum and course syllabi approved by the university direct the development of all of the skills with the objective that students are able to read authentic academic and scientific articles and listen to and understand social/transactional dialogues, talks, lectures and interviews. In addition, students can write compare/contrast, cause/effect and opinions essays and participate in discussions related to their academic, social and professional context. Teachers enhance students' autonomy and promote the ICT use inside and outside the classroom.

These demonstrate that during the English lesson students are exposed to real language. The teacher-researcher uses and adapts the activities from the New Cutting Edge Upper-Intermediate text book (Cunningham & Moor, 2005), but she also uses other activities from the web and textbooks to complement the lessons. The use and adaptation of those activities are set in order to help students to improve their English skills.

Learners' Profile.

The participants of this research were sixteen male and female university students between eighteen and twenty two years old. The university uses a language proficiency exam to classify new and old learners; hence, the English level six course that the students are in corresponds to B1-

B2 according to the CEF (Common European Framework). Learners were from different undergraduate programs at the university, who were studying English as a graduation requirement and have to take an international exam when they finish the seven English levels.

Most of the participants were able to read authentic academic and scientific articles and listen to and understand social/transactional dialogues, talks, lectures and interviews. In addition, they could write essays using present, past simple, perfect and future tenses, but they found difficulties writing coherent and cohesive essays with a continuous flow of ideas because they used isolated sentences develop their ideas in a logical order for readers. They also had difficulties using appropriate grammar structures in context when writing essays and in cloze grammar exercises.

Based on the needs analysis findings, the area identified as the most problematic in the target group regarding speaking was oral interaction. The students had to use English when participating in discussions related to their academic, social, personal and professional context. The observation of different classes evinced that students were limited in their ability to express themselves. They produced some limited English sentences, monosyllabic words or expressed their point of view using their L1and remained silent in interaction activities. Likewise, when they were not able to discuss about a topic, they only shared isolated ideas and sometimes finding necessary to write them first.

> "This was the program presentation but I have them a reading and then in groups the students have to discuss about the topic of it and identify the main ideas and topic sentences.
>
> In groups of three learners have to discuss. I can observe from their performance that most of the time they use monosyllable words and short sentences such as yes or no I think so"
>
> *Excerpt from Observation August 2nd.*

Moreover, students indicated in the preliminary survey for this research, as they had consistently done in end-of-course self- assessments conducted by the teacher, that speaking was the most important of the four language skills. They proposed activities such as debates /discussions and simulations to develop this skill; this proposal suggests that students may did not speak in English because the activities at the beginning of the project, in which they were involved, were not motivating enough (in contrast to the ones proposed by them).In addition, the teacher-researcher surmised that the students generally did not take risks because they feared embarrassment or appearing foolish with mistakes in front of their classmates.

After considering the target group's profile and needs, the teacher-researcher decided that social strategies might serve as a possible tool to implement in her classes in order to solve this particular problem. These strategies could probably facilitate peer-interaction, by asking questions or using statements to continue talking and substituting words when vocabulary is missing. Yet, she believed that interactive activities had to be based not only on class objectives, but also on social contexts in order to make students feel comfortable and natural while speaking.

Researcher's Role

The researcher participation in this action research study had different roles during the several stages of the project. Reflective action research (Burns, 2010) is evidenced when the teacher analyzes and reflects systematically on the daily classroom teaching practice; this is done in order to think about the possible solutions and how to address a specific problem presented in the classroom. In this part of the study, the teacher is also a researcher, acquainted with language learning theory, which guided her decisions about possible solutions previously thought by the teacher; also, theory helped the researcher to support and explain her points of view and the gathered data.

Later in the research, the teacher played another important role as a facilitator and guide (Burns, 2010). For this particular study, called by the author participatory action research, the researcher trained students in using three social strategies –asking questions for clarification and verification, substitution, and cooperation with peers-for improving their speaking skills by presenting, naming and giving useful examples of them.

Data collection instruments

The instruments chosen to collect data in this research study were an initial and final survey, a teacher's journal and a think-aloud report.

Survey

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), highly structured surveys using cloze questions are useful to measure and generate frequencies of response amenable to analysis. This survey had multiple choice questions in which the range of choices was designed to capture the likely range of responses to given statements (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). For the present study, this type of questionnaire determined if students were acquainted with the social strategies and how frequently the participants used them in the interaction activities (Appendix A)

Previous to the implementation, the survey was administered to the whole group to know the frequency of students using social strategies and to see if they used them or at least if they were acquainted with them. Additionally, it was necessary that the surveys were complemented and compared to the teacher's observation journal to ratify the data collected.

Think-aloud report

This procedure is applied in language learning settings to keep a record of how a person processes language that is to determine which strategies a learner uses to complete a specific task (Chamot, et al., 1999). Also, because students compose these reports in real life settings, they are

not likely to forget their thought or invent false ones, giving this instrument a high degree of validity in connection with the task (p. 68). Generally, students verbalize their thoughts in the think-aloud technique, but for this research project, the teacher-researcher had the students use paper-based think-aloud reports to write their strategies use (Appendix B).

For this research project, the teacher conducted the report individually as a follow-up activity in the middle and at the end of the implementation. Chamot, et al. (1999) said that students will probably need training and practice before using it, but once they are used to the technique; most of them will enjoy sharing their thoughts about their experience using the three social strategies in the communicative tasks. Periodically, students completed a chart to report which social strategies they used to complete various tasks and why they chose those strategies; then, they answered open ended questions to complement and validate their thoughts about the use of strategies and their learning process.

Observation

According to Oxford (1990) this instrument is useful as social strategies are directly observable and can yield information about how students currently go about learning languages. This technique is more reliable when was complemented with the survey at the beginning of the implementation. Also, observations were complemented with the think-aloud instrument to validate the data found. The author suggests that the researcher consider the level of detail she plans to observe. For this reason, the teacher- researcher focused the observation on the social strategies typically used by the whole group and the influence of each strategy in students' oral interaction, and then, she tracked the strategies used from small groupsin the target group.

Data collection procedures

Before the teacher-researcher start the implementation stage, she asked peer workers at this

university to revise and validate the data collection instruments; also, she received insights from

her peers who are conducting research. As a complement to this, a pilot phase was conducted with

the participants of the study to help the researcher validate the instruments by presenting their

thoughts and reactions. Having followed both procedures, the teacher could make amendments in

regards to the questions in order to not bias students' responses.

Previous to the implementation, the survey was applied to the whole group to determine the

participants' level of knowledge about social strategies and to what extent they used them. The

teacher conducted this survey once to check students' schemata and use in regards to three social

strategies; therefore, the survey was not conducted again at the end of the implementation.

The "think-aloud" technique has evolved over the years and is now commonly used to

gather more information form participants. Thus, Ericsson and Herbert (1984) recommend that the

information should be collected in the form of retrospective reports after the task to avoid any

interruptions of task flow. For this research project, the teacher conducted this technique

individually as a follow-up activity as soon as students had done some activities. It is also a key

instrument in the implementation stage because it helped the teacher understand and know from

the participants their beliefs and experiences using questions to clarify and verify the information

they were discussing among them, substitute words when they lacked of vocabulary and cooperate

with their classmates. The participants felt comfortable answering the instrument because it was in

Spanish and they wrote about the experiences that recently happened in the classroom.

Finally, the researcher focused the observation on the social strategies typically used by the

whole group, and then, she tracked the strategies from a small group in the target group. The

observation took place throughout the implementation when students used the social strategies in interaction activities.

Ethical Considerations

The research design instruments were validated by three peer workers, two peers who were doing research, and an experienced researcher/teacher. Also, each instrument includes information that explains the main goal of it to the student-participant**.** The teacher-researcher informed students that their identities would not be revealed and that the information gathered from them would not affect their grades.

Chapter Four: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

This chapter aims to explain the pedagogical intervention and implementation of the three social strategies in students' performance in communicative tasks. Moreover, it describes in detail the process and steps followed in the pre, while and post implementation stages including the instruments used in each stage, the objectives of each task in the implementation stage and the materials used.

Vision of Language

In this research project, students are learning a language in an EFL context; hence, teachers need to establish appropriate activities for students to share their thoughts easily. The teacher-researcher considered language as a vehicle for understanding and transmitting a message among the participants, who share common interests, ideas, and needs. The interaction activities for this study are designed to encourage these students in this context to share their knowledge using the language they know and to communicate a message effectively.

The two foundations of communicative competence are sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. The first is related to students' culture and context; the second refers to the interaction between two learners using the language they know along with certain techniques to overcome language gaps (Brown, 2007). Therefore, the teacher-researcher designed activities that not only followed the syllabus of the course, but also included real life topics for students use the language.

Brown (2007) and Thornbury (2009) claimed that learners who share the same context have a similar culture with a previously established cognitive and affective behavior. Consequently, learners have the knowledge about the norms and rules about how to use the language in society and in a specific situation. This common socio-cultural knowledge drew the teacher-researcher's

attention to language as interactive communication among individuals, each student with a socio-cultural identity.   So, by means of the communicative competence, learners are not interacting to learn language in a predictable process; instead, they are creating meaning through interpersonal negotiation among learners (Brown, 2007).

Vision of Learning

For this particular context and research project, the teacher acknowledges the importance of learning through three social strategies which are the tools for learners to improve their oral interaction. Fostering oral communication is a key objective in this university because students must demonstrate communicative competence to fulfill international standards and requirements (CEF). With these standards and requirements in mind, the teacher provides learning opportunities by training participants on how to use the strategies in the interaction activities. Formal studies indicate that the more explicit the strategy instruction is, the more successful it will also be; so teachers have to facilitate the strategies, and learners have to activate self-direction during the learning process. Oxford (1990) and Chamot et al., (1999) said that general goals of such training are to make language leaning more meaningful, to encourage collaboration between learners, and to practice the strategies. In other words, training students in the social strategies facilitates oral interaction improvement.

According to Oxford (2001), classroom strategy instruction can help learners identify their responsibilities. The strategies instruction is an aid for students to understand their role and responsibility in their own learning; thus, they can have control and became more confident to use the appropriate strategies in a specific activity. Additionally, Oxford (1990) claimed that the researcher is to develop consciousness or familiarization of the strategies; this statement means that awareness training and concept introduction are very important because this will motivate and

encourage learners to expand knowledge of strategies. Finally, practice one or more strategies with actual language activities, train students will be necessary to understand the value of a strategy, when it can be used, how to use it, and how to evaluate the success of the strategy.

Vision of Curriculum

Curriculum is defined as the planned sequence of formal instructional experiences presented by the teachers, who also decide how to implement the instruction strategies in the class (Harrison, Blakemore & Buck, 2001). A curriculum should be based and designed not only on the social context, but also on the students' context. For this reason, the curriculum must have objectives, content and methodologies related to those contexts.

According to Harrison, Blakemore and Buck (2001), curriculum designers should plan a variety of learning modes to accommodate students' individual personalities and learning styles. For this study, the objectives are set according to the students' social context in order to fit their needs and interests. The content is also related with those contexts which lead teachers to know what to teach; therefore, the teacher's role is to apply appropriate methodologies in the class that fit content and context in order to reach the objectives already established in the lessons.

The curriculum at this university seeks to connect context and students' needs; it follows a communicative approach to develop the four English skills. In addition, the university requires from its students to take an international exam and reach an English proficiency level B2, so in regards to the communicative approach, students must be able to write and speak in English with a degree of fluency (CEF).This approach draws the attention to language as interactive communication among individuals, each with a socio-cultural identity; so, language classrooms are treated as a locus of meaningful, authentic exchanges among users of a language (Brown, 2007). Accordingly, foreign language teachers have to improve the creation of meaning through

interpersonal negotiation among learners. Brown (2007) also points out that meaningful

communication depends on the cooperation of all the participants involved with a specific given

context. In that case, for this research project, the researcher acknowledges the implementation of

interaction activities to establish the need of a context which promotes on students the second

language use, provides needed language, suggests other ideas, and encourages students to continue

speaking (Chastain, 1988).

Instructional Design

The implementation of this study included twenty-two hours divided into three hours a

week. Before starting the implementation, the researcher asked permission from the director of the

Languages Department from the university to start with the implementation steps. She also

informed and received permission of the students to conduct the study (Appendix C and D). In

both letters, the teacher described the objectives and possible benefits of the project. She also

informed both students and director of the department that she would share the results of the study

but that the participants' identities would remain protected.

The lessons were set to demonstrate in detail the influence of the three social strategies on

the oral interaction of a group of university young learners. The implementation took place in the

pre-, while-, and post-stages as shown in Table 2.

Table 2.Stages in the Process and Instrument Design.

Stage	Instruments
Pre-implementation	Survey: February 20th.
While-implementation	1. Week 1 and 2: Train students in the three social strategies by: - Modelling - Making students aware of the importance of each strategy - Practicing each strategy using interaction activities and - Analysing if the strategies were helpful during the activity 2. Week 3-9: Observation of students' performance while interacting among them in the activities (simulations, role plays, and debates). Think aloud record in the middle and at the end of the implementation
Post-implementation	Gathering and Analysis of data

Pre-implementation Stage.

The purpose of the pre-implementation stage was to identify if students were acquainted with social strategies in their language learning; this stage required some minutes in one two-hour session on February 20th. A survey, which included four statements about the use of strategies during the activities provided in the lesson; it was administered to students who had to choose how often they used the strategies, so the teacher knew if they were acquainted with them.

While-implementation Stage

In the while-implementation stage, the teacher spent two weeks in the face-to-face sessions instructing students on the three social strategies. This training was about providing a model activity for each the strategies to help students understand their use and importance in their learning process. Hence, at the beginning of the training lesson the teacher used open questions to elicit responses from the students about the importance of each strategy, and at the end of it students evaluated their process to understand the reason why the strategies were necessary. Social strategies training and implementation of interaction activities took two months. In the two lessons from week 1 and week 2, the teacher's purpose was to focus each lesson on the strategies. The

teacher planned activities in which students could practice and be trained in the three social

strategies as described below:

Week 1:
-February 20th: In groups students share their individual descriptive essays written in the first cut in order to create a final outline taking into account the learned structure. A leader is in charge of presenting a speaking presentation based on the outline created in the groups.
-February 22st: Based on a reading about health topics, students will interact in groups using statements about the reading. Then, they have to discuss the information they consider interesting or shocking and finally support their opinions in front of the class.
Note: Students received training in using cooperation with peers, asking for clarification and verification, and substitution strategies and the activities served as a practice for each strategy.

Week 2:
-March 6th: Discussion activity about how to help a best friend who drinks a lot in order to share personal experiences. In groups, students have to discuss possible solutions to help their friends and discuss the mental and physical effects of alcohol abuse.
-March 8th: The final activity in the training stage consists of a review in which students remember the three strategies usage in order to discuss different topics related to life's ups and downs.
Note: For the second week students used the three social strategies again. Each training class, students have to recall the three strategies before the task begins.

The interaction activities were designed based on the preferences and interests that the

students expressed in the needs analysis survey; in addition, the topics were taken from the course

syllabus of the university relates the activities with the objectives of the curriculum. Both lesson

plans followed a skilled-based syllabus and the ICELT format (In-service Certificate in English

Language Teaching) and were designed to improve students' oral interaction. Each lesson included

a pre-task, practice and post-task stage in which the teacher followed the topics that she needed to

cover during the first and second periods, and at the same time she related them with the

interaction activities (Appendix E and F). The interactive activities were adapted from a variety of

electronic sources, the course textbook *New Cutting Edge Upper-Intermediate students' and

teachers' books* activities (Cunningham & Moor, 2005), and other print materials such as *Keep

Talking: communicative fluency activities for language teaching* (Klippel, 1984).

The activities were debates, simulations and discussion based on the syllabus topics for first and second periods. The main topics were:

1. Life's ups and downs: The activities are related to topics about students' personal and academic life.

2. Mishaps, accidents and odd experiences: The activities are about the experiences they have lived.

At this stage, the teacher observed students' social strategies performance, and in the middle and at the end of the implementation, the students filled a think aloud record after some activities to record their performance during their interaction with their peers. From Week 3 to week 9 (Appendix G), the aim of each lesson was to have students use the three social strategies while they were interacting in activities such as discussion, debates and simulations. For example, in week 8 the teacher created two large groups (A and B) and each student received a role. Within the groups, students discussed the possible expressions for a telephone conversation based on their roles. Randomly, students got together and performed a telephone conversation. The participants had to use English expressions to insist, interrupt, direct the conversation, hesitate or express uncertainty; therefore, the cooperation with peers, substitution and asking for clarification and verification strategies were intended to be used in class. However, in some classes, depending on the situation given and their immediate need to communicate a message and interact, students were able to use at least two or the three social strategies in each activity.

Post-implementation Stage.

The post-implementation had two purposes: the first one was to explain how to fill out the think aloud report in a Google document, and the second one was to organize the data collected to finally analyze it.

Chapter Five: Results and Data Analysis

This chapter is describes the analysis of the influence of three social strategies in university young adult learners' oral interaction. Moreover, it describes the procedures and stages of Grounded Theory (GT) reviewed by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) to analyze the data collected from the three instruments mentioned. In this chapter, the researcher will present the basic findings that emerged from this process.

Sources of Data

The three instruments were piloted in this action research project: survey, observations and think aloud record. The group of participants included 16 adult university learners at the outset of the study; however, this number dropped to 13 due to the withdrawal of three students from the English program. An initial survey was helpful to create the students' profile in regards to their knowledge and use of the three social strategies, so the researcher understood students' frequency use and familiarity of the social strategies.

Additionally, the teacher researcher conducted observations and took notes on the influence of the three social strategies in the implementation stage while students were participating in interaction activities during the classes. Through the think-aloud reports, the researcher gathered data about the students' use of the social strategies in the interaction activities and the reason why students used them while interacting. The think aloud reports also included an open ended question survey regarding the strategy influence in students' learning process and their lives.

Data Analysis Approach

Grounded Theory (GT) is a systematic series of analyses, including coding, categorization and identification of a core variable, until theory emerges and explains the phenomena being studied or which can be used for predictive purposes, was the method used to analyze the data in

this research project (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This qualitative study helps the researcher to start gathering the data from every day actions in a specific context. Following the GT approach, the researcher starts with the analysis of data to discover what is relevant and generate theory from the analysis.

The steps of GT used in the present study are open, axial and selective coding. Those GT aspects were carried out in order to deconstruct the data into manageable chunks to facilitate an understanding of the phenomenon in question. The data analysis stage started with Open coding procedure. This enlightening procedure helped the researcher to identify single units of analysis to code students' perceptions and performance regarding the effects of three social strategies use in interaction activities. Then, the teacher-researcher codified the data, creating new codes and categories and subcategories where necessary, using Atlas T.I software and integrating codes where relevant until the coding was completed (Cohen et al., 2007). The next procedure to analyze data is called axial coding which helped the researcher to identify links between the codes in order to classify them into categories. To do this, codes were explored, their interrelationships were examined, and codes and categories were compared to existing theory; the essence of axial coding is the interconnectedness of categories (Cohen, et al, 2007, p.493). The final procedure in GT is called selective coding, in which a core code was identified in order to relate it with the initial codes at the beginning of the data analysis. In selective coding, the researcher identified a ''story line'' and wrote a story that integrates the categories in the axial coding procedure (Cohen, et al, 2007). This story tells the influence of the three social strategies in students' oral interaction and how the analyzed data is related to existing theory.

Data Management

The teacher-researcher started the implementation conducting a paper survey and a think aloud report. Then, she observed her classes when students were interacting among them in the activities and used a notebook to take notes about what was happening while students were interacting, especially the influence of the social strategies. The initial survey, think aloud report and observations were transcribed in several Word documents and saved in a folder to analyze the data found in those instruments.

At the end of the data collection process and implementation, the think aloud report was implemented again using a Google Doc and sent via e-mail; responses were collected digitally and saved in the folder. The collected data from each instrument was marked using specific codes that helped the researcher categorize and analyze it, in order to respond to each research question and objectives regarding to the three social strategies. The researcher used Atlas T.I^{TM} software to codify the data gathered from each instrument in the implementation stage. This word-benching software allows the researcher to present visual displays of the qualitative analysis that gives the researcher an overview of the findings through an interactive network that visually interconnects all the documents and codes in each instrument.

Data analysis and Findings

The think aloud reports and observations were codified taking into account the research questions and objectives. To deal with the previous stages, a chart that connects the action research objectives, the constructs, the instruments, stages and findings was designed:

Table 3.Categories and subcategories.

RESEARCH QUESTION		
How might social strategies influence oral interaction in a group of B1-B2 university young adult learners?		
MAIN OBJECTIVE		
Determine the possible effects of three social strategies on oral interaction in a group of B1-B2 university English learners.		
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: 1. To analyze the influence of social strategies on young adults oral interaction 2. To examine how the three selected strategies might impact learners' self-confident.		
CORE CATEGORY: **Influencing factors on students' oral performance when interacting with others**		
CATEGORY: **Fostering of students' interaction and communication performance with peers** SUBCATEGORIES -Interaction improvement -Language use and message transmission in interaction performance	**CATEGORY:** **Linguistic improvement** SUBCATEGORIES -Fluency -Vocabulary learning	**CATEGORY:** **Enhanced self-confidence when speaking** SUBCATEGORIES -Willingness -Low anxiety

In the pre-implementation stage an initial survey determined students' frequency use and acquaintance of the three social strategies when interacting with their classmates. The objective of this survey was to identify the participants' beliefs in regards to the strategies using contextualized statements. At the beginning of the implementation process, 16 students answered the survey:

Figure 1. Survey results
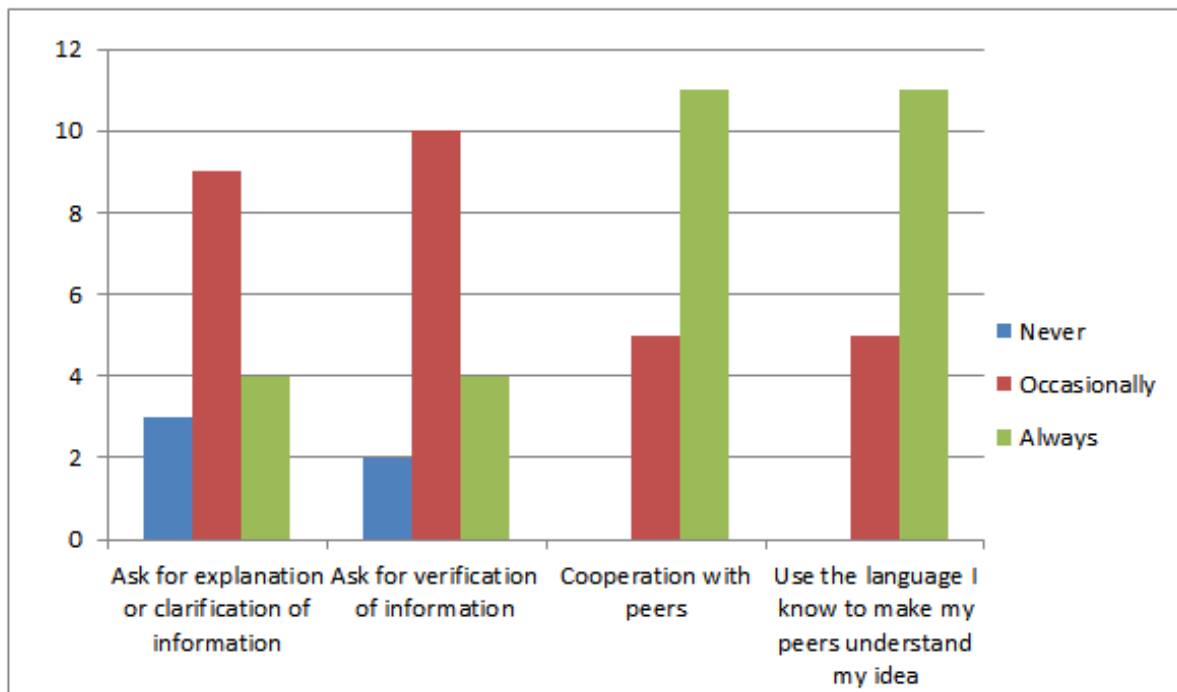
The majority of answers regarding the three social strategies showed that they occasionally

used questions or statements to ask for verification and clarification of ideas, but the researcher did

not know if they used the second language; and students always cooperated with their peers and

used the language they knew to make their peers understand their ideas. The survey did not show

the explicit names of each strategy; rather, the strategies were contextualized and described. In the

training stage (while-implementation stage), the teacher observed that students were not acquainted

with the names and did not know how to use the strategies.

During the data analysis stage after the implementation finished, a core category

Influencing factors on students' oral performance when interacting with others emerged**.** The

researcher stated this core category to answer the research question and the data found and

analyzed. This main category displayed three influencing factors on students' oral performance

when they were interacting with their peers; those factors are fostering of students' interaction and

communication performance with peers, linguistic improvement and enhanced self-confidence

when speaking. These are related to the specific objectives and are supported by the coded data

evidenced in the excerpts.

Fostering of students' interaction and communication performance with peers.

This is the most relevant category because it describes how students *improved their oral*

interaction performance with their peers and how they could use the language to transmit

messages (See Figures 2 and 3). At the beginning of this research project, when students were

asked to interact in speaking activities, they were using isolated words in English or using their

mother tongue, so they were not really interacting using the English language.

On the other hand, in the implementation stage, it was evidenced that there was an *Interaction*

improvement in the students. Figure 2. Interaction improvement
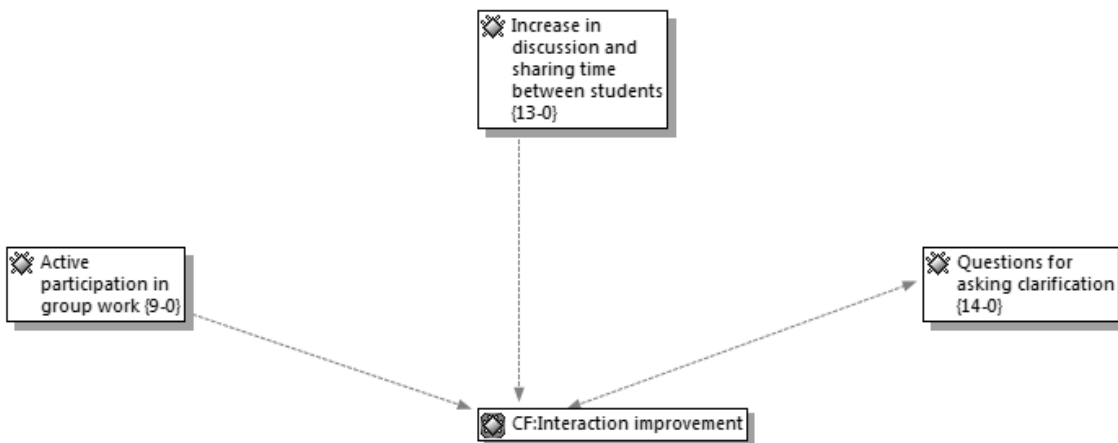
Students' oral interaction improved when they used questions and statements to clarify the

peers' non-understandable message.

> "Group 2: Each student interacts and participates in the activity. Students share but also discuss their experiences."
>
> "They are willing to share their thoughts and they ask questions to understand the reasons why they wrote those future events."
>
> *Excerpt from Observation 1, March 13th and April 4th.*

Hence, the use of asking for clarification and verification social strategy was especially helpful for low proficient speakers to ask "more proficient speakers to slow down, paraphrase, repeat, explain or clarify what he or she has said" (Oxford, 1990, p. 169). This strategy enabled students to expand their interaction; they used questions or statements to solve comprehension problems and confirm whether an utterance had been correctly understood (Oxford, 1999). This is illustrated in the following excerpts:

> "One student uses the strategy asking for clarification and verification strategy by using the question "could you say that again, please?"
>
> *Observation 1.*
>
> "Ya que en ocasiones uno quiere aclarar dudas o algo por el estilo, para uno utiliza preguntas y otras expresiones" [*sic*]
>
> *Think aloud report second implementation. Student #260.*

Another aspect to be considered is the opportunities students have to interact. In the initial needs analysis survey, the undergraduates asked the teacher to include interaction activities such as debates/discussion and simulations in the course. After the implementation of different interaction

activities to promote the use of English, students reported that they participated actively and

interacted among them in their groups to complete the given task.

"Siempre participo activamente con mis compañeros ya que logro hacerlo muy bien" [*sic*]

"Porque soy activa y me gusta participar en las actividades"

Think aloud report first and second implementation. Student #935

The students might have reported active participation because they were involved in those

activities. Herazo (2010) and Mohammed (2008) found similar results in their studies when the

participants were clearly engaged in interaction tasks exchanging relevant content that helped

students to keep the conversation going and use the language; the participants also learned more

from their partners. In this research project, those opportunities were practice for participants to

use the language they knew, and they could transform small units of speech into larger ones in

order to gain fluency (Thornbury, 2009).

On the contrary, considering students' performance during the activities, in the needs

analysis field notes the teacher had observed that learners did not discuss about a given topic with

their peers in activities in which they had to use the second language; instead they remained silent.

"In group 6 they worked isolated and they did not discuss at the end of the activity

they shared some ideas that they had written before"

Needs analysis field notes. Category: students' behavior while speaking No discussion (C).

August 2nd

In Mackey (1999), it was observed that the students, who used their class time to practice

interaction, developed their second language successfully. In addition, Lee (2009) found that

group discussion led to a varied participation. In this case, recent studies and the needs analysis

field notes helped the researcher to focus her classes on promoting communication and exchanging ideas.

In the implementation stage the teacher trained the students to use the three social strategies as an aid to interact using the language; then, students discussed and shared their ideas with their peers. Training participants in social strategies use motivated them to participate more in the communicative activities (Diniz de Figueredo &Mota, 2009; Brett, 2001; Tsou, 2005). It was observed that the students discussed and shared their thoughts about the topics set by the teacher; consequently, students felt the need to interact in English with their classmates about their personal experiences and at the same time, they felt the need to use the language, as shown below:

"Students share but also discuss their personal experiences "

Observation 1. March 13th

"De alguna u otra manera me obliga a hablar y he enriquecido mi manera de hablar" [*sic*]

Think aloud report, second implementation. Student #934

Students not only improved they interaction performance, but also *they used the language they knew to communicate with their peers and learn from them* (See Figure 3).

Figure 3.Language use and message transmission in interaction performance.
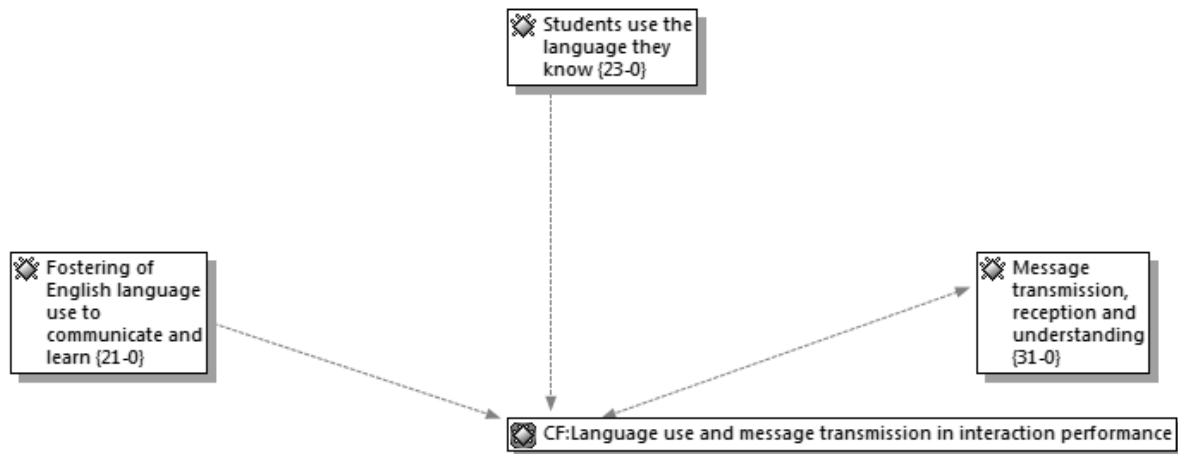
After the training, students were able to use the social strategies to interact and fulfill a task. The teacher followed the "Talking with" process (Chastain, 1988) and used interaction activities proposed by Swain and Canale (1980) for the students not only to use the language, but also to create meaning.   The interaction activities used in the lessons had a clear objective considering the topics of the periods and extra material, so the students could participate in the activities without forcing any type of production (See Appendix G).

> "In the role play about buying and selling things students use English language when they are interacting with their classmates"
>
> "Also students use a lot of questions to ask for prices and for the objects they would like to buy. I can observe that students use polite expressions while interacting"
>
> Observation 2 April 24th.

Students were able to not only use English to communicate and interact with their peers, but also they could learn from them. This was evidence in Mohammed's study (2008), who found that group activities gave students opportunities to participate using the second language and learn

from their peers. In addition, Taylor (1983) and Kayi (2006) found in their studies that learners

can put into practice the grammatical knowledge they know in realistic situations. Therefore, it was

evidenced that the students felt the need to use the language with their classmates in situations in

which there are realistic topics. Those English lessons provided students with realistic

opportunities to demonstrate the practical use of the second language by means of social strategies

in different situations (Chastain, 1988), as shown below:

> "Es divertido y de alguna u otra manera me obliga a hablar y he enriquecido mi manera de
>
> hablar" [*sic*]
>
> *Think aloud report, second implementation. Student #934.*

The students reported that in the activities they found the need to use English by

cooperating with peers, substituting the words they did not know and asking questions to clarify

unclear information. In recent studies (Cardenas and Robayo, 2011; Herazo, 2010; Weyers, 2010)

it was observed not only the positive impact on students' attitudes towards the different activities

but also, learners focused their attention on the task which promoted communication among them

to fulfill the task aim.

Simultaneously, in the present study students could use the language to transmit, receive and

understand their messages. Students transmitted their point of view, ideas and opinions regarding

several topics while interacting in the tasks. Those interaction activities represent the "talking

with" speaking process proposed by Chastain (1988) in which students interact to create meaning;

therefore, from the teacher's observations and students' responses, it was evident that the social

strategies used in the activities helped learners to interact among them, and at the same time,

students could express what they were trying to say. In the following excerpts it was demonstrated

that teaching the strategies to students increased their language proficiency in different situations.

> "Student 934 said her idea and the other group did not understand what she said. So one
>
> student from the other group asked her to say the idea again in order to understand it".
>
> *Observation #2, May 8th*
>
> "Darme cuenta que no es solo que yo misma entienda lo que estoy diciendo
>
> si no que es necesario que los demás me entiendan"[sic]
>
> *Think aloud report second implementation. Student # 273.*

In the implementation process undergraduates could communicate and share their ideas

with their peers. By means of the social strategies, especially the substitution strategy, students

frequently used the language they knew describing a word and using synonyms when they did not

know specific vocabulary about the activity as described below:

> "La mayoria de veces, si, para explicar y dar a conocer lo que realmente quiero saber
>
> o quiero decir entonces tratando de explicar el significado con otras palabras" [sic]
>
> *Think aloud report, second implementation. Student # 260*

The student expressed that he could make decisions about how to communicate an idea

using the language; hence, he was using a social strategy to achieve a communicative goal (Buck

2001).

The following observation excerpts demonstrate moments when students used the language

they knew in two different interaction activities:

"One student did not know a word in English, so she describes the place (the word is cave)"

Observation 1. April 10th

"He said "people who consume drugs" he did not know how to say "drug addict"."

Observation 2. May 8th.

These excerpts reflect students' continuous use of English to communicate, transmit and understand messages using familiar language to express their thoughts; in addition, the observation excerpts showed that students used the substitution strategy to describe with other English words the vocabulary they did not know or remember. In Gutiérrez (2005) and Hulstijn and Hulstijn's (1984) studies, it was found that students were aware that pronunciation and grammar mistakes are part of their learning process; however, students were not worried about making grammar mistakes or knowing all the necessary vocabulary in the speaking opportunities given in class. In this research project, students fostered the language use to communicate and express their ideas freely using the social strategies without being worried about appropriate structured sentences; additionally, they could learn from their partners when they felt the need to used and exchange expressions to continue the conversation and complete the task.

Linguistic improvement.

In the pre-implementation stage of this project, the participants were reluctant to interact because they were supposed to speak in English and had difficulties expressing ideas in English. Later, in the implementation stage, students had opportunities to interact with their classmates and use the three social strategies. Therefore, they demonstrated improvement in *fluency and vocabulary* (See Figure 4)

Figure 4.Linguistic improvement.
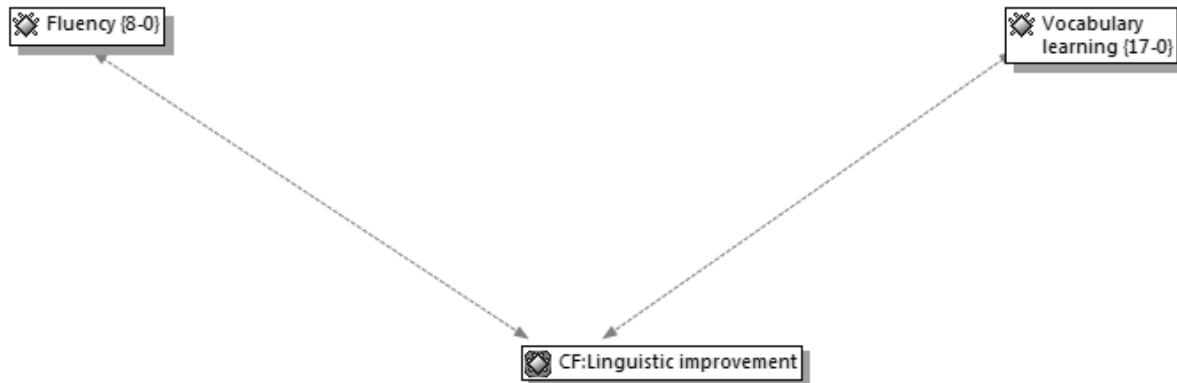
Students improved in these linguistic components (fluency and vocabulary learning)because they often had opportunities to speak in English in the classroom using statements and questions to clarify information, substitute words when they did not know vocabulary, and cooperate with peers to accomplish a task. Swain and Canale (1980) stated that the interaction activities were opportunities to interact and improve the speaking fluency; this linguistic improvement was found as shown below:

> "One student has some vocabulary and grammatical mistakes, but at the end she could transmit what she was trying to say. She never stops her speech and she could share the message she was trying to convey"
>
> Observation 1. March 15th
>
> "Ha mejorado mi fluidez al hablar" [sic]
>
> Think aloud report, second implementation. Student #052.

Those dialogic interactions among participants allowed them to produce and used the language, as well as to enhanced fluency (Ellis, 1999). They improved this linguistic component

when they were interacting in the activities because the students' main objectives were to transmit and understand messages they were trying to convey and complete the given task. Also, pupils' social strategies-asking for clarification and verification, substitution, and cooperation with peers-use was the key element to foster fluency because those tools created a more enjoyable and easier learning environment (Oxford, 1990).

Another linguistic component that the students improved was vocabulary. This linguistic component is related to students' fluency improvement because during the activities, students were able to continue speaking English without pausing even when they did not know a word. In order to deal with lack of vocabulary, the participants used the three social strategies to maintain the interaction going, yet at the same time they learned new vocabulary from their peers.

"One student uses the question "How do you say?"

Observation 1, March 8th.

"Si porque he desarrollado nuevo vocabulario y el hablar…a desarrollado una hablidad para hablar ingles" [*sic*]

Excerpt from Think aloud report, second implementation. Student #074.

"Es beneficioso aprender otro vocabulario que es más fácil de aprender mediante compañeros" [*sic*]

Excerpt from Think aloud report, first implementation. Student #274.

"Puede influir pero a mí me parece que esas estrategias influyen en la adquisición de vocabulario…"

Excerpt from Think aloud report, first implementation. Student #156.

Oral interaction activities were beneficial for the students' linguistic improvement especially when they had the tools to interact with peers. Jurkowitz (2008) stated in her study that Non-Native Speakers (NNS-NNS) interaction is beneficial for students' L2 improvement. In addition, Mohammed (2008) found that the students participated more and learned from their peers in group activities. Considering the benefits of those studies, in this project it was found that this type of oral interaction and the use of the social strategies not only foster students' fluency, but also those aspects contribute in language learning among peers, especially vocabulary.

Self-confidence when speaking.

Oral interaction activities give students opportunities to practice the L2. In those oral activities, students were *willing to participate in the activities and use the language because they were confident to produce output*.

Figure 5.Self-confidence when speaking.
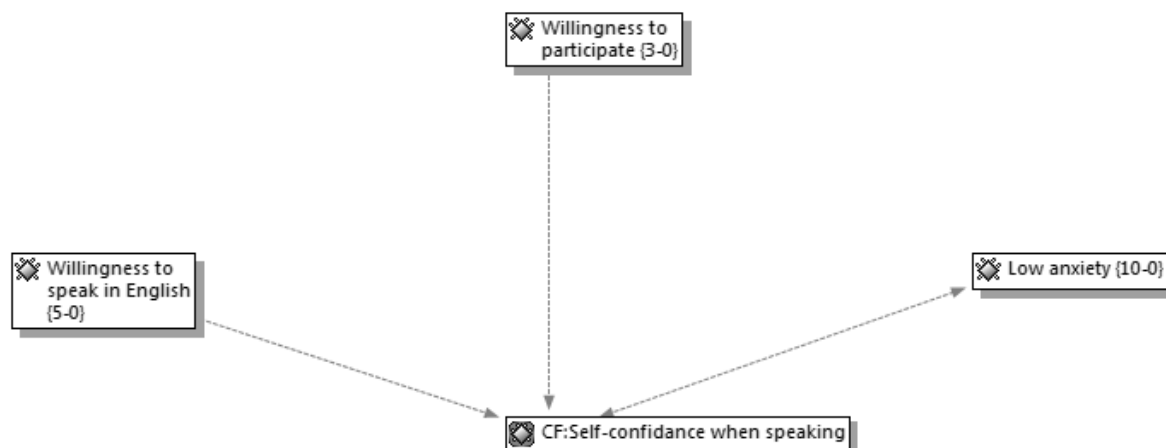
This category represent show using the three social strategies during the interaction activities impacted students' self-confidence. The teacher-researcher observed that students were using the asking for clarification and verification strategy and seemed to participate more

willingly. For that reason, they seemed motivated to participate, use the language and share their

interests.

> "They seem motivated because they are asking questions among them and I observe a
>
> good discussion among them"
>
> *Observation 1, March 27th*

In addition, a student reported in the think aloud instrument that he felt shy when he did not

how to express himself, but now he believes that he has improved his performance:

> "Porque antes era un poca mas temerosa a la hora de hablar al no saber que decir o no
>
> tener el termino adecuado para poder expresarme." [*sic*]
>
> *Think aloud report second implementation. Student # 934.*

Thornbury (2009) highlighted that the affective factor plays a crucial role to improve

students' self-confidence. He stated that if the students are well disposed towards a topic and if

they feel comfortable while speaking (not having the feeling of being evaluated) students'

performance will be positively affected. This was evidenced at the end of the implementation when

the participants reported their improvement while interacting with their classmates:

> "Si, porque como primera mejora e dejado un poco el miedo de hablar en ingles y eso a
>
> logrado aumentar mi capacidad de interacción oral en ingles." [*sic*]
>
> *Think aloud report, second implementation. Student # 273*

She reported a low level of anxiety when speaking in English which permitted interaction

improvement. In current research studies such as in Molberg's (2010) and Brett's (2001), findings

showed that if students were given opportunities and strategies to interact in class, then they would

be willing to maintain spoken communication going as observed below:

> "274 and 934 students sometimes speak in class because they are shy. However, in today's lesson they participated in the whole activity"
>
> *Observation 2, May 8th.*

In addition, in the think aloud report, the participants were asked to indicate which affective

factors they felt they had developed as a result of the social strategies training

> ¿Cuáles de los siguientes aspectos pudo desarrollar después de recibir entrenamiento en el uso de estrategias sociales en actividades de habla? Puede marcar más de una opción.
>
> Auto confianza: 8
> Facilidad para llevar a cabo la actividad: 11
> Motivación: 9
> Autonomía: 4
>
> *Excerpt from Think aloud 1.*

Thus, the students reported that as a result of the social strategies training, they were able to

carry out an activity and were more motivated to do so. Hence, the interaction activities in this

study were the opportunities in the classroom to interact and the social strategies were the tools

that helped learners to feel confident to communicate in English. MacIntyre et al. (1998) stated that

providing those interaction opportunities and social strategies created a state of self-confidence in

L2 because the levels of anxiety decreased and students perceived an improvement in their

linguistic competence; as a result, there was a willingness to communicate to fulfill an activity.

To sum up, the three social strategies had a positive influence in students' oral interaction.

First, students used the language they knew by using synonyms, questions and statements in order

to transmit and clarify the message while interacting with their peers. Second, in this interaction,

students noticed that they improved the target language in regards to fluency and vocabulary.

Finally, the social strategies and interaction activities for pair and group work motivated students

to participate more and share their thoughts; thus, they felt comfortable speaking in English.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

Conducting qualitative action research implies identifying a problematic situation regarding students' learning process in regards to a second language. In this research study, the teacher-researcher observed in the needs analysis that her learners did not communicate their ideas during in-class activities. She also observed that the participants did not use English for their discussions.

This action research project sought to find out how the implementation of three social strategies- asking for clarification and verification, substitution, and cooperation with peers-affected the participants' oral interaction. Hence, the teacher-researcher trained the learners in the use of the strategies to develop participants' oral interaction in-class activities. Moreover, the students participated with their peers in order to complete a task which became a crucial step in improving their oral interaction.

The implemented *performance* and *creative and freer* activities (Swain & Canale, 1980) were the opportunities for students to engage in oral interaction. The teacher asked the students to use the three social strategies in those interaction activities. The positive influence of these social strategies on the students' second language was reflected in their ability to understand and convey messages with their classmates. First, asking questions for clarification and verification strategy was helpful for the participants to clear up unintelligible information and maintain the conversation. Second, the substitution strategy enabled students to continue speaking and avoid long interruptions due to vocabulary issues because they learned how to use the language they knew to describe unknown words. Finally, the cooperation with peers strategy was helpful while participants worked in small groups to complete a task.

Additionally, it was evidenced that learners improved two linguistic components: vocabulary and fluency. The participants learned new vocabulary which improved their

performance in class activities. Fluency was another improved aspect in regards to students' performance. The data gathered demonstrated that they became more fluent when they dealt with interaction activities in the classroom using the social strategies and the language they knew in order to transmit a message.

Using these strategies also impacted the students' self-confidence; they were more willing to participate and share. Students implemented the strategies as tools to improve their performance while interacting; hence, students' level of anxiety decreased and used the language. This study impacted the population from this university because the students improved their oral interaction skills by means of three strategies to reach the international and national speaking skills standards.

Limitations

During the development of this project there were some unexpected results caused by specific limitations that occurred during the process.

Time management

To conduct a study like this, it was necessary to provide enough training regarding the use and importance of the three social strategies. At the beginning of the implementation four lessons were planned to train students in each strategy, but each lesson was focused on one social strategy. However, in one of the classes at the end of the implementation, the researcher planned an interaction activity for the students use all the strategies at the same time. Also, some new activities that were not established in the syllabus at the beginning of the course, affected the continuity of the implementation stage. These interrupted two sessions and resulted in a week's delay. Hence, this short time dedicated to training should be expanded to help students have a clear idea of how to use each social strategy, especially in different contexts.

Modification in the target group

The implementation started at the beginning of the semester of 2013and included 16 student participants. Three students did not participate in all stages of the implementation due to their withdrawal from the course. The researcher did not take into account those students' responses in the data analysis.

Design

The think aloud reports showed relevant data in regards to participants' perceptions of the three strategies as tools to improve their oral interaction. However, the teacher-researcher could have provided a test to more specifically validate components of speaking skills, such as vocabulary learning. Taking into account those constraints, the researcher is aware of future research opportunities.

Pedagogical Implications

This private university follows national and international standards to provide undergraduates English lessons that stress the development of communicative competences. English lessons should integrate the four skills; however, the teacher-researcher found that sometimes speaking skills, especially oral interaction is left aside in the classroom.

Therefore, this researcher recommends that social strategies should be integrated to the English course syllabi in order to seek and develop for new alternatives to encourage oral interaction among the learners. The lesson plans should include a continuous training in social strategies; therefore, teachers should take the responsibility of promoting the acknowledgment of social strategies in oral interaction. Moreover, students' improvement is closely related to their needs and interests; for that reason, teachers have to know what the students like, in order to plan classes that are meaningful for them. Lastly, explicit teaching of social strategies, as well as the

exposure of students to activities that aim at practicing and developing oral interaction, is a crucial issue.

Further research

This action research project focused on oral interaction improvement among young adult participants using three social strategies. One of the primary research areas for further research is the use of compensation strategies, especially when students are interacting trying to express their ideas. In the interaction activities, students used the language they knew; however, they sometimes used compensation strategies such as mimics, their first language and asking questions to the teacher. Compensation strategies are communication strategies used by learners to compensate for limitations in their language. These strategies make up for students' deficiency in grammar and vocabulary. When learners do not know new words and expressions, they guess the meaning bringing their own life experience to interpret information by guessing (Oxford, 2011). Based on these findings, this research project could be extended in regards to the compensation strategies impact on students' oral interaction.

Another further research area is feedback. It could be used by students to improve the second language in interaction activities and to enhance autonomy. Feedback refers to the information about what is and is not understandable and/or correct in a speaker's output (Long, 1996). In other studies, teachers could implement negotiation exchanges such as more repetitions, reformulations, expansions, extra stress, and a range of other features. Students could obtain some benefit receiving feedback from interlocutors on their language output using those conversational adjustments (Long, 1996). Hence, the feedback serves as an indication for learners to modify their production.

Additionally, in the think aloud report students had to answer if they used the social strategies during the activities; also, another section contained open-ended items to determine the extent to which the strategies influenced students' English learning process in other aspects of their lives. Students' responses demonstrated that the three social strategies can be used outside the classroom for difference purposes. For example, when a student traveled abroad, she stated that could use the three social strategies while she was interacting with foreign speakers. Also, there was a positive influence in regards to students' professional and academic lives such as when they had to take the oral exam in an international exam, attended an interview, dealt with other subjects of their major or work, and when students wanted to learn other languages.

Finally, a further area of study is to understand students' motivational desires to learn a second language. This group of learners is now aware of the importance of implementing the three social strategies in contexts different from the classroom in order to attain an achievement in their lives. This happens because the students have a motivational aspect called one's *ideal* or *ought to self* (Dörnyei, 2009). This aspect is a powerful motivator to learn the language because of our psychological desire to reduce discrepancy between our current and possible future selves.

References

Ayaduray J., & Jacobs, G. (1997). Can learner strategy instruction succeed? The case of higher order questions and elaborated responses. *System,25*, 561–70.

Buck, G. (1992). Listening comprehension: Construct validity and trait characteristics. *Language Learning, 42,* 313-357.

Brett, A. G. (2001). Teaching communication strategies to beginners. *The Language Learning Journal.*

Brown, D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy.* New Jersey, NY: Prentice Hall.

Brown, D. (2007). *Teaching by principles.* New York, US: Pearson Education.

Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Cárdenas, D., & Robayo, M.(2001). Improving speaking through role plays and dramatization. *Profile Journal, 2,* 12-15.

Chamot, A. U., Barnhardt, S., El-Dinary, P. B., & Robbins, J. (1999). *The learning strategies handbook*. New York, NY: Pearson Education.

Chastain, K. (1988). *Developing second language skills* (3rd ed.). Chicago, IL: Harcourt Brace.

Cohen, L., Marion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007).*Research methods in education* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Cunningham, S., & Moor, P. (2005).*Cutting edge upper intermediate*. England: Pearson.

Díaz, C. (2011). Exploring knowledge of English speaking strategies in 8th and 12th graders. *Profile Journal, 13,* 85-98.

Diniz de Figuereido, E. H., &Mota, M.B. (2009). L2 speech production in the classroom:the

effects of treating speaking in its own right. *Revista Intercámbio, XIX, 101-124*.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Motivation language identity and the L2 self.* Bristol:

Multilingual Matters.

Ellis, R. (1999). *Learning a second language through interaction.*Amsterdam: John

Benjamin.

Ericsson, K., & Herbert, A. (1984*).Protocol analysis: Verbal reports as data.*Massachusetts:

MIT press.

Garrido, B. (2012). Making communication happen: Interactive groups in the bilingual

classroom. *Encuentro, 21, 80-93*.

Given, L. (2009). Speaking up: six Korean students' oral participation in class discussions in US

graduate seminars*. English for Specific Purposes*, *28*(3), *142-156.*

Gruyter, M. (2009). *Handbook of foreign language communication and learning.* Berlin:

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data.

Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The*

Qualitative Report, 8, 597-607. Retrieved from*http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR8-*

4/golafshani.pdf

Gomez, J. (2011). Peer Interaction: A social perspective towards the development of foreign

language learning. *Profile Journal, 13,* 189-204.

Gutiérrez, D. (2005). Developing oral skills through communicative and interactive tasks. *Profile*

Journal, 6, 83-96.

Jurkowitz, L. (2008). *Interaction, meaning-making, and accuracy in synchronous CMC*

discussion: Experiences of a university-level intermediate French class (Doctoral thesis).

Retrieved from

http://arizona.openrepository.com/arizona/bitstream/10150/193602/1/azu_etd_2854_sip1_

m.pdf

Klippel, F. (1984).*Keep talking: Communicative fluency activities for language

teaching*.Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harmer, J. (2001). *How to teach English*.England: Person Education.

Harrison, J., Blakemore, C., & Buck, M. (2001).*Basic principles of curriculum design*.Boston,

MA: McGraw-Hill.

Kayi, H. (2006). Teaching Speaking: Activities to Promote Speaking in a Second Language. The

Internet TESL Journal, XII (11), *1*. Retrieved from http://wwwiteslj.org

Herazo, J. (2010). Authentic Oral Interaction in the EFL Class: What it means, what it does not.

Profile 12 (1), *47-61.*

Hulstijn, J., & Hulstijn, W. (1984). Grammatical errors as a function of processing constraints and

explicit knowledge. *Language Learning, 34*(1), *23–43.* doi:10.1111/j.1467-

1770.1984.tb00994.x

Long, M. (1996). *The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition: Handbook

of second language acquisition*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Long, M,. & Porter, P. (1984).Group work, interlanguage talk, and second language

acquisition.*TESOL Quarterly*, *19*(2), 207-226.

Lopera, E. (2013). Enhancing speaking skills through the application of collaborative learning

strategies in a Colombian public school (Master's thesis). Retrieved from

http://hdl.handle.net/10818/9274.

Macaro, E. (2006). Strategies for language learning for language use. Revising the theoretical

framework. *Modern Language journal, 90*(3), 320-337.

MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K.A. (1998).Conceptualizing willingness to

communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *Modern*

Language Journal, 82, 545-562.

Mackey, A. (1999). Input, interaction and second language development. *SSLA*, 21, 557-587.

McDonough, S. H. (1999). Learner strategies.*Language Teaching. 32, 1-18.*

Molberg, H. (2010). *The consequences of motivation and linguistic self-confidence in relation to*

pupil's oral interaction (Master's thesis). Retrieved from

http://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/2951/thesis.pdf?sequence=1

Mohammed, K. (2008). The effect of using a program based on cooperative learning strategy on

developing some oral communication skills (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from

http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502845.pdf.

Mora, K. (2013).*Communicative language teaching* (Master's thesis).Retrieved

fromhttp://digitalcommons.usu.edu/gradreports/306

North, B. (2000).*The development of a common framework scale of languageproficiency*.New

York, NY: Peter Lang.

Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press.

Osada, N. (2004). Listening comprehension research: A brief review of the past thirty

years.*Dialogue, 3,* 53-66. Retrieved from www.talk-

waseda.net/dialogue/no03_2004/2004dialogue03_k4.pdf

Osboe, S., Fujmura, T., & Hirschel, R. (2007). Students' confidence and anxiety in L2

speaking activities. *Languaging, 10, 32–35*.

Olshtain, E., & Cohen, A. (1989). *Speech act behavior across languages*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Oxford, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know.* Boston: Newbury House.

Oxford, R. (2011). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education.

Prieto, C. (2007). Improving eleventh graders' oral production in English class through cooperative learning strategies. *Profile, 8*, 1-16.

Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2006). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rothwell, A. (1996). Research skills for students: Questionnaire design. *Kogan page LTDA, Montford University.*

Thornbury, S. (2009).*How to teach speaking.*England: Pearson Education.

Tsou, W. (2005). Improving speaking skills through instruction in oral classroom participation. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 46-55.

Tuan, L. T., & Nhu, N. T. (2010). Theoretical review on oral interaction in EFL classrooms. *Studies in Literature and Language, 1*(4), *29-48.*

Shagoury, R., & Power, B. M. (1993).*The art of classroom inquiry: A handbook for teacher-researchers*. Portsmouth, N.H: Heinemann.

Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. England:Heinemann.

Swain, M., & Canale, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics, 1,* 1-47.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Interaction between learning and development: Mind and society.*

Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Wang, Y. (2004). Pursuing cross-cultural graduate education: A multifaceted investigation.

International Education, 33, 52–72.

Weyers, J. R. (2010). Speaking strategies: Meeting NCATE oral proficiency standards. Foreign

Language Annals, 43(3), *384-394*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2010.01089.x

Williams, M. & Burden, R. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers: A social constructivist*

approach. Cambridge: CUP.

Appendix A

CUESTIONARIO DE ESTRATEGIAS DE HABLA EN INGLÉS

La Sabana

Estimado estudiante: el objetivo del presente cuestionario es recolectar información acerca de las estrategias que utiliza cuando habla en actividades comunicativas. El tiempo estimado para este cuestionario es de 5 minutos aproximadamente.

Instrucciones: Después de leer cada ítem, responda, marcando con una equis "X", la opción que considere más apropiada, según la siguiente escala:

1= Nunca	2= Ocasionalmente	4= Siempre

Por favor conteste todos los ítems. Seleccione una sola opción en la escala. **No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas.** Sus respuestas serán de carácter confidencial.
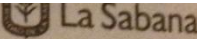
¡Muchas gracias por su colaboración!
Juliana A. Díaz Gamboa, Profesora investigadora, Área de Inglés, Universidad de la Sabana.

INFORMACIÓN PERSONAL

Grupo: _____32_____   Fecha: _20/02/2013_

Ítems	Nunca	Ocasionalmente	Siempre
A. Cuando participo en actividades comunicativas en clase, puedo pedir a mis compañeros que me expliquen o clarifiquen la información que estoy dando, sin utilizar el español	1	X	3
B. Cuando participo en actividades comunicativas en clase, puedo pedir a mis compañeros que verifiquen la información que están dando o den ejemplos de la misma, sin utilizar el español.	X	2	3
C. Cuando participo en una actividad comunicativa en grupos, contribuyo efectivamente el logro de la actividad	1	X	3
D. Cuando participo en actividades comunicativas en clase, me hago entender con el lenguaje que sé o manejo a pesar de no saber o recordar un término exacto.	1	X	3

Appendix B

Learning Strategies: Think-Aloud Record

La Sabana

Código: 20220156 .
Fecha: 10. 04 2013 .

Estimado estudiante: El objetivo del presente cuestionario es recolectar información sobre las estrategias que utilizó cuando participó en actividades comunicativas y sobre la importancia de las mismas en su proceso de aprendizaje. Le recuerdo que no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas y que éstas son completamente anónimas. El tiempo estimado para responder este cuestionario es de 15 minutos. Muchas gracias por su colaboración.

Parte 1

INSTRUCCIONES: Lea cada una de las afirmaciones, marque (√) si ó no y escriba el porqué de su respuesta.

INDICADOR	SI	NO	POR QUÉ
Cuando participé en actividades comunicativas en clase: • Usé preguntas y otras expresiones para clarificar, verificar, reformular o pedir ejemplos de la información que estoy dando.	√		Muchas veces no se tiene todo el conocimiento del tema y el vocabulario por lo cual hay que pedir aclaración
• Participé activamente con mis compañeros para completar la actividad.	√		La mayoria eran en grupo y así se hace mas interesante el trabajo
• Usé el lenguaje que sé o manejo para sustituir palabras o frases que no recuerdo o no sé.	√		Sí, asi mismo aprendo y mejoro mi entendimiento y vocabulario

1

INSTRUCCIONES: Responda la siguientes preguntas sobre estrategias sociales y su importancia en su proceso de aprendizaje. Recuerde que no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas y éstas son completamente anónimas.

1. ¿Cree que el uso de las estrategias sociales trabajadas le ha ayudado en algo en su aprendizaje?
    Sí _X_ No____ Explique

    Hace que sea mas llamativo e interesante el trabajo y el tema, da mismo la practica

2. ¿El trabajo con las estrategias sociales le ha gustado? Si _X_ No ____ Explique

    Es mejor trabajar en conjunto. (a veces)

3. ¿Considera que el uso de las estrategias sociales le ha ayudado a mejorar las habilidades en el idioma inglés? Si _X_ No ____ . ¿Cuáles?

    aclaro, corrijo y mejoro mi vocabulario. y conocimiento del idioma.

4. ¿Considera que el uso de las estrategias sociales le ha ayudado a mejorar su capacidad de interacción oral en inglés? Si____ No _X_ Explique:

    puede influir pero a mi parecer esas estrategias influyen en la adquisicion de vocabulario y entender, la interaccion se apoya en mas factores.

5. ¿Cuáles de los siguientes aspectos pudo desarrollar después de recibir entrenamiento en el uso de estrategias sociales en actividades de habla? Puede marcar más de una opción.

    a. Auto confianza ____
    b. Facilidad para llevar a cabo la actividad _X_
    c. Motivación ____
    d. Autonomía ____

6. ¿Ha utilizado las estrategias sociales en otras áreas o materias?
    Sí ____ No _X_ ¿Si es afirmativa, cómo?

7. ¿Cree que en el futuro podría utilizar las estrategias sociales que aprendió y practicó?
    Si _X_ No ____ Explique

    Si estoy aprendiendo otro idioma o mejorando el ingles.

¡Muchas gracias por su colaboración!

Appendix C

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA APROBACIÓN POR PARTE DE DIRECTIVAS

07 de Marzo de 2013
Chía, Colombia

Señora:
Nohora Bryan
Directora Departamento de Lenguas y Culturas Extrajeras
Universidad de la Sabana
Chía

Apreciada Señora:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada "Implementing Social StrategiestoImproveSpeaking in InteractionActivities", dirigida a estudiantes del Programa de inglés de la Universidad de la Sabana, la cual intenta contribuir y enriquecer los procesos de aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera y al mismo tiempo reorientar las prácticas docentes en estrategias de aprendizaje en la parte del habla en el área de Inglés.

Este estudio busca determinar los posibles efectos al implementar estrategias sociales, particularmente las que permitan mantener una interacción y negociación en actividades de habla en el idioma Inglés. Cabe anotar que dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés con Énfasis en Ambientes de Aprendizaje Autónomo de la Universidad de la Sabana.

Por lo anterior, comedidamente solicito su consentimiento y colaboración para realizar mi proyecto de investigación. Igualmente, a los participantes se les garantizará mantener su identidad en el anonimato.

Cabe anotar que el proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en las evaluaciones y notas parciales y/o finales del curso, por tal razón el estudiante deberá firmar una carta de consentimiento donde acepte voluntariamente participar del proyecto de investigación.

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

Cordialmente,

xxxx

Docente de inglés y estudiante de Maestría en Didáctica del inglés, Universidad de la Sabana
_____

Yo autorizo a xxxx para llevar a cabo su investigación en la Universidad de la Sabana
_____   _____

Nohora Bryan   Fecha

AppendixD

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Chía, 06 de Marzo de 2013

Señores:

Estudiantes nivel 6

Programa de proficiencia en inglés

Universidad de la Sabana

Chía

Apreciados estudiantes:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada "Implementacion de estrategias sociales para mejorar el habla en actividades de interación". Este estudio busca determinar los posibles efectos al implementar estrategias sociales,particularmente las que permitan mantener una interacción y negociación en actividades de habla en el idioma Inglés, a través de una serie de actividades dirigidas hacia este propósito. Cabe anotar que dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés con Énfasis en Ambientes de Aprendizaje Autónomo de la Universidad de la Sabana.

Por lo anterior, comedidamente solicito su consentimiento y colaboración como participantes de mi propuesta de investigación, que se llevará a cabo durante el primer semestre académico del año 2013.

- Los resultados de esta investigación serán utilizados únicamente con propósitos académicos. Estos no afectaran los resultados académicos de la materia.
- La identidad de los participantes será protegida en todo momento a menos que me den permiso específico de nombrarlos en el documento final.
- Están en la libertad de retirarse de la investigación en cualquier momento, en tal caso, la información adquirida no será usada en este estudio.
- Revisaré todos los datos que recoja sobre cada participante antes de publicarlos.
- Solo se dará a conocer los resultados de la misma en la sustentación de la tesis, así como en el reporte final del proyecto

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

Atentamente,   Acepto participar

xxxx

Nombre _____

Docente investigador

Firma   _____

Appendix E

ICELT LESSON PLAN FORM

Name of teacher: xxxxxx	**Candidate Number:**
Institution: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx UNIVERSITY	
Date of Observation: 21 02 13	**Time of observation: 10.00 to 11.00** **Length of class: 1 hour**
Class/grade: Level 6	**Room: B-201**
Number of students: 16	**Average age of Students: 18 to 22 years**
Number of years of English study: from 3 to 5 years	**Level of students: B1-B2 (CEF)**
LessonNumber *(pleasedelete)* ① **2 3 4**	**Observer:**

Main Aim(s):

By the end of the lesson students will be able to state possible solutions of a difficult situation.

SubsidiaryAims:

- Students will work in groups
- Students will use grammatical tenses.
- Students will discuss solutions of a problem with their peers
-

Personal aims:

- To improve my instruction delivery.
- To try to keep more closely to estimated timing.

Assumed knowledge:

Level 6 students who are studying at a private university have been studying this level for one month. In the first term they have reviewed present and past in simple and continuous tenses. Also, they have worked individually and in groups for the online class about life's ups and downs.

Description of language item / skill(s)

The aim of this lesson to train students on the use of cooperative with peers skills; where students will understand the use and purpose of working with peers in order to develop a speaking activity.

Skill(s)

Speaking is a skill that needs constant practice. English classes must have opportunities to students are able to chuck small units of speech into larger ones in order to gain fluency and grammar appropriateness (Thornbury, 2009). The activities that the teacher uses are based on students' preferences and context.

Sub skill(s)

Connect with their schemata.
Discuss to find solutions.

Materials :

1. A picture describing a healthy life (Annex 1). The picture helps students to activate schemata on how a human being should do in order to be healthy. It is also a tool for students recall vocabulary.
   Retrieved from: Cunningham, S & Moore, P. (2008). New Cutting Edge Upper intermediate Students' book. England: Longman. 18.

2. Power point presentation (Annex 2). It is used to train students on the importance of using *cooperative with peers* strategy. Also, students will find the topic the need to discuss

Rationale

Profile of learners:
This is a group of 20 students between 18 to 22 years. They are studying English as a graduation requirement. They are in a Blended learning course with three hours in Face to Face sessions and one hour in an online session. According to the CEF, the learners' language level corresponds to B1-B2. Most of them are able to read authentic academic and scientific articles and listen to and understand social/transactional dialogues, talks, lectures and interviews. Regarding vocabulary, they have worked on life's ups and downs. However, it is evident that they need to be exposed to interaction activities since some students are reluctant to speak in English, use their L1, cannot express their ideas so they use monosyllabic words or they first write to feel confident at the moment of speaking.

Outline the learners' linguistic needs (around 100 word)

In the first cut, students have worked on life's ups and downs so, based on this topic students have to share their beliefs and personal experiences. The students' linguistic needs are focused on interaction activities to promote oral interaction between them. To do so, they need to be exposed to activities that are related with their sociocultural background to feel confident at the moment of sharing ideas and feelings. Moreover, students will receive training on the importance of how to use social strategies.

Outline the learners' affective needs (around 100 words)

Based on the needs analysis and observations, I could notice that they do not take risks widely probably because they feel embarrassed when they are making a mistake or they are afraid of looking foolish in front of their classmates and they do not know how to express themselves; this may be the reason why some students do not participate and do not ask questions when they do not understand instructions. Cooperating with peers, asking questions for verification and clarification, and substitution social strategies are the tools for students interact with their peers and easily express what they want to share.

Outline the learners' cognitive needs (around 100 words)

Explain how learners' aims of the lesson relate to the needs

The main objectives of the lesson have students discuss and share their personal experiences and find possible solutions of a specific problem. Their difficulties were taken into account while they are speaking; for that reason, students will receive training on how to work collaboratively to accomplish a task.

Explain how learners' needs will be addressed in the specific learning environment

Since students are in a university environment where it is mandatory to take an international exam to achieve their diploma; teachers must promote speaking as a necessary skill for them use their linguistic and background knowledge about English language. To do so, teachers have been working on connecting their personal lives and university context to worldwide problematic to finally express students' ideas.

Anticipated problems	Planned solutions
- Students may find difficult to work in groups - Students may not complete the task	- Modeling and stating the importance of the strategy - Brainstorming their ideas about the strategy. - Monitoring while they are doing the task

Stage	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activity	Time and interaction	Tutor's comments

Pre-task	To elicit from students the process and the importance of cooperating with peers.	- Power Point Presentation(See Annex 2)
		• Contextualize students by asking the following questions about cooperation with peers:
		   • What do you have to do when you work in groups?
		   • How can you manage a task while working in groups?
		   • What is the difference between individual and cooperative tasks?
		
		Students brainstorm ideas and share their personal experiences and beliefs.
			10 min
			T-Ss	

Practice	To set the goal of the activity, a context and create the groups to use the cooperating with peers strategy	- State what the students have to do while cooperating with their peers • - Show the picture of a healthy man (See Annex 1). Between the students, they have to infer the kind of life this man lives and which positive actions he has done to have a healthy life. • - In groups students have to discuss five possible solutions to help a friend who is alcoholic. Also, they need to discuss on the effects that alcohol	2 min T-Ss 5 min Ss-Ss 20 min Ss-Ss	

		could have mentally and physically in people. •		
Post-task	To share and evaluate their performance.	- A leader of each group shares their solutions on the context given and the effects of alcohol on peoples' body. - The teacher makes a list with the relevant contributions. - The teachers asks questions to students evaluate their performance: • Was it easier for you to work in groups cooperatively? • Does each member work while working with peers? • How was the experience of working in groups? • How did you feel when you worked in groups?	15 min 3 min Ss	

ANNEXES

1.

When you are in groups….

• What do you have to do when you work in groups?

• How can you manage a task while working in groups?

• What is the difference between individual and cooperative tasks?

Cooperation with peers strategy

You're going to cooperate in your groups to share, state ideas helping each other to complete a task.

In groups of 3

• Your best friend is drinking a lot of alcohol, you might believe is an alcoholic.

1. 4 solutions to help your friend
2. Effects of alcohol (mentally and physically)

2.

Appendix F

ICELT LESSON PLAN FORM

Name of teacher: xxxxx	**Candidate Number:**

Institution: LA SABANA UNIVERSITY	
Date of Observation: 12 03 13	**Time of observation: 10.00 to 11.00** **Length of class: 60 minutes**
Class/grade: Level 6	**Room: B-201**
Number of students: 16	**Average age of Students: 18 to 22 years**
Number of years of English study: from 3 to 5 years	**Level of students: B1-B2 (CEF)**
LessonNumber*5*	

Main Aim(s):

By the end of the lesson students will performance in pairs real life situations using expressions about being sympathetic or not.

Subsidiary Aims:
- Students will classify expressions from a chart about being sympathetic or not.
- From a listening exercise students will identify the speakers' problems and the expression used according to each situation.

Personal aims:
- To put into practice different ways of giving instruction.
- To promote the use of the three social strategies.

Assumed knowledge:

Level 6 students who are studying at a private university have been receiving training on social strategies for interactive activities. Moreover, they have been studying present, past and perfect tenses and they have worked on life ups and down topics in reading, writing and listening exercises. However, students need more practice on speaking because they need activities that relate their context and interest with the curriculum.

Description of language item / skill(s)

Speaking skill activities starts setting context, giving input in order to students interact with their peers. In the classes, students need to be exposed to activities that help them use the language they know and at the same time feel confident to speak. For that reason, teachers have to give students the opportunities to express and share what they think without being worried about grammar accuracy.

Skill(s)

Speaking is a skill and as such needs to be developed and practiced independently from the grammar curriculum. However, teachers take this skill for granted because is part of daily life (Thornbury, 2009). Hence, interactive activities based on students' interest help them to share and interact with their peers.

Thurnbury, S. (2009). How to teach speaking. *England: Pearson Education Limited.*

Sub skill(s)

Students use the three social strategies in order to interact between them.
From a listening activity, students identify the speakers' problems and their reaction

Materials :
1. Listening track 2.3. The recording has three situations for students identify the possible problems each speaker has and if the responses were sympathetic or not. Retrieved from: **Cunningham, S & Moore, P. (2008). New Cutting Edge Upper-intermediate Students' book. England: Longman.**

2. Chart with expressions (Annex 2). It helps students identify which expressions are fairly, very and unsympathetic. Retrieved from: **Cunningham, S & Moore, P. (2008). New Cutting Edge Upper-intermediate Students' book. England: Longman. 23**

3. Interaction activity (Annex 1). Each student will receive a roll and performance the given situation in order to use the three social strategies with their partners.

Rationale

Profile of learners:

This is an Upper-intermediate group of 17 students between 18 to 22 years. They are studying English as a graduation requirement. They are in a Blended learning course with three hours in Face to Face sessions and one hour in an online session. According to the CEF, the learners' language level corresponds to B1-B2. Most of them are able to read authentic academic and scientific articles and listen to and understand social/transactional dialogues, talks, lectures and interviews. In addition, they are receiving training on writing descriptive essays using appropriate cohesion and coherence between paragraphs and appropriate use of grammar tenses. They can participate in discussions related to their academic, social and professional context. Regarding vocabulary, they have worked on ups and downs, prefixes and suffixes to form adjectives and nouns.

Outline the learners' linguistic needs

During the semester, students have worked on developing communicative competences using the four language skills. Moreover, during the Evaluation week it was evidence that they have problems using appropriate grammatical structures in the right context. Thus, they need to be exposed to activities to practice language that connect their needs and schemata; and, they also need to use the knowledge they know about the language in meaningful contexts.

Outline the learners' affective needs (around 100 words)

Learners at this stage and age they find difficulties to take risks widely probably they feel embarrassed when they are making a mistake or they are afraid of looking foolish in front of their classmates. Thus, when they are completing an assignment, work in collaboration with peers is a key aspect for students learning process. Additionally, a task provides a meaningful opportunity for them feel confident enough to share ideas and use the language.

Outline the learners' cognitive needs

In this stage, learners need to express their point of view, state arguments and interact with the peers while using the language they know. In the interactive activities such as discussion, debates and simulation; students can state their arguments and debate their ideas in order to accomplish a task.

Explain how learners' aims of the lesson relate to the needs

The main objectives of the lesson cover students' needs presented at the beginning of the semester. This group of students needs functional language exposure to meaningfully relate and improve their language with real life contexts. Thus, providing students with an appropriate training on the use of social strategies will help them interact with their peers. Finally, cognitive and affective needs are going to be addressed in interaction

activities such as simulations, debates and discussions.

Explain how learners' needs will be addressed in the specific learning environment

Since students are in a university environment where it is mandatory to take an international exam to achieve their diploma; teachers must promote language use in real and meaningful contexts. To do so, teachers have to work on activities that involve their personal lives and university context to worldwide problematic.

Anticipated problems	Planned solutions
- The students may find difficult to figure out the speakers' problems	- Asking questions to help students recognize them and put the recording twice.
- The students may find difficult to identify which expression are very, fairly and unsympathetic.	- Giving contextualized examples.

How do the anticipated problems and planned solutions relate to the above needs analysis?
Based on students' cognitive and linguistic needs at the moment of using language tenses, the teacher planned to solve possible problems in the lesson using modeling with examples and asking questions, in order to students recognize the speakers' problems and the mark the expressions correctly.

Stage	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activity	Time and interaction	Tutor'sco mments
Pre-task	To help students identify the meaning and possible expressions of being sympathetic.	• The teachers set context providing a situation that can happen to students and elicit possible reactions. Moreover, students need to analyze if they were sympathetic or not. • Have students to listen a recording about with three different situations. • Students listen to it twice and identify the problem and if the speakers were sympathetic or not. • From a chart (See Annex 2), students classify which expressions have a very, fairly and unsympathetic meaning	6 min T-Ss 10 min Ss 5 min Ss	
Practice	To use the three social strategies and the expression already classified.	• Have students to make groups of two and each one of them receive a role. (SeeAnnex 1). • In groups and in one minute each student reads the role and prepares it with the partner. Then, they need to perform the situation. • Choose two groups to perform in front of the class and as soon as each group finishes the interaction, students need to identify if the reaction of his/her was sympathetic or not.	30 min Ss	

Post-task	To have students reflect on the use of the strategies.	Students need to reflect if they used the strategies while interacting and if they help them in their performance.	10 min Ss	

Annex 1

A. You are going to call your best friend to tell him/her that you have just had a fight with your boyfriend/girlfriend.

B. You are going to receive a phone call of your best friend and you are going to listen to his/her

B. You are going to receive a phone call of your best friend and you are going to listen to his/her

A. You are going to call your best friend to tell him/her that you have just had a fight with your boyfriend/girlfriend.

B. You are going at the cinema with your best friend and he/she is in tears at the end of the movie. You are going to be fairly sympathetic.

A. You are at the cinema with your best friend and at the end of the movie you start crying because the end of it is very sad.

B. You are going at the cinema with your best friend and he/she is in tears at the end of the movie. You are going to be unsympathetic.

A. You are at the cinema with your best friend and at the end of the movie you start crying because the end of it is very sad.

A. You are going to tell your friend that you are really worried because your mother is very sick and she is on her way to the hospital.

B. Your best friend's mother is in her way to the hospital and you friend seems worried. You are going to be unsympathetic.

A. You have a dentist appointment and you are very scared. You have to go to the dentist, so you need to talk to a friend and share with him/her your feelings.

B. Your best friend is too scared to go to the dentist. You are going to be sympathetic.

B. Your best friend's mother is in her way to the hospital and you friend seems worried. You are going to be sympathetic.

A. You have a dentist appointment and you are very scared. You have to go to the dentist, so you need to talk to a friend and share with him/her your feelings.

B. Your best friend is too scared to go to the dentist. You are going to be unsympathetic.

A. You are going to tell your friend that you are really worried because your mother is very sick and she is on her way to the hospital.

3 **a** Mark the sentences in the box: *** for very sympathetic, ** for fairly sympathetic and * for unsympathetic.

Calm down!	Never mind.
Come on! Pull yourself together!	That sounds awful!
Don't take any notice of him/her.	There's no point in getting upset about it.
Don't worry. It doesn't matter.	Try not to worry about it.
How annoying!	What a shame!
Just ignore him/her/it/them.	You must be really worried.

Appendix G

Weekly activities (Week 3 to 9)	Instrument and Activity

3hours (Face to face classes)
Week 3:
March 13th: Students individually answer a six questions quiz called "How adventurous are you?" Then, in groups of four, students have to share their answers which involve extreme sports experiences. At the end of the activity they need to report the most interesting facts of their peers.
 	
    Note: The class aim is to have students use the three social strategies while they are sharing their answers.
 	
    March 15th: To set the context students will identify from a box the expression which are very, fairly and unsympathetic. Then, they have to listen to three situations in order to identify the problem and if they reaction of the speaker was sympathetic or not. Finally, in pairs from a bag each student chooses a role and they have to perform the situation given.
    Note: While students are performing their role, they have to use the language to complete the task by means of the three social strategies
	Train students in the three social strategies by:
	
	- Modeling
	- Making students aware of the importance of each strategy
	- Practicing each strategy using interaction activities and
	- Analyzing if the strategies were helpful during the activity

Week 4:
March 20th: By means of some pictures, students have to work in groups to orally create different sides of the story depending on the given pictures. Then, they have to share the story to another group and provide feedback on pronunciation and grammar.
    Note: the aim of this activity is have students cooperate in groups, use their own language if they have problems with vocabulary and give feedback on their partners' performance.
 	
    March 22nd : implementation was not possible (time constraints)
 	
Week 5:
March 27th: This lesson starts with a warm up activity in which students listen to different songs and they have to identify the type of music. They have to think on their favorite kind of music or the one that they enjoy the most. The task is about creating a list of reasons and qualities they consider important
	- Observation took place while students interact
	- Students interact in the activities: simulations, role plays, debates
	- Think aloud record in the middle and at the end of the implementation

about the type of music they chose. Then, students walk around the classroom and discuss with other students stating their arguments in order to convince others to listen the kind of music they like. March 29thImplementation activity was not possible, they had a writing assignment **Week 6** April 3rd: This lesson prompts students to discuss and debate on some slogans from recognized brands. Each group receives one slogan and they have to think about the possible product and justify their thoughts. Later, they have to exchange their slogans and debate about it. Finally, they share their justifications with the other group and the members of it decide if they agree or disagree about their thoughts. 　　Note: In this activity students use the three strategies to discuss, share and debate about the topic. 　　(think aloud was not implemented) April 4th: Individually students fill in a chart about their future in their life, world, locality, place of study and family. In groups they share their life experiences by asking for more information on the things they find interesting. At the end of the lesson, students create a poster and explain it focusing on a period of time. 　　Note: Cooperation with peers and substitution social strategies. **Week 7:** April 10th: By means of a video and pictures, students have to create a story using their language. One member of each group has to start the story and the other finishes it. 　　Note: Strategies used: cooperation with peers and substitution 　　(think aloud was implemented) April 24th: Based on a recording students have to write expressions they listen from the recording about buying and selling things. Assign students a role (shopkeepers or shoppers) and they have to perform it. Hence, each student has to sell or buy different objects and also fulfill a task such as asking extra information (where the nearest bank is, etc).	

Note: the three social strategies are used.

Week 8:

May 1st: The aim of this activity is to have students use the language to insist, interrupt, direct the conversation, hesitate or express uncertainty. The teacher creates two big groups (A and B) and each student receives a role. Inside the groups, they have to discuss the possible expressions for a telephone conversation based on the received role. Randomly, students get together and perform a telephone conversation.

Note: cooperation with peers, substitution and asking for clarification and verification strategies are intended to be used in class.

May 3rd: This activity aims to promote a discussion about drugs legalization. The teachers creates two big groups; each group has to defend a side (favor or against) in regards to the topic. Each group receives an article about legalization of drugs; then, students get together to decide on the ideas they will discuss and defend for to finally start with the debate.

Note: all the strategies are intended to be used in the activity.

Week 9

May 8th:The teacher will introduce a topic in order to know students perceptions about it. Then, each student read an article about the topic to answer some questions. Later, in small groups, students will discuss about the topic answering some question.

Note: all the strategies are intended to be used in the activity.

May 10th

This hour session aim was to provide instructions about the think aloud report. I showed the students the GoogleDoc in order to students know the steps they had to follow to fill it out.