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Research Paper

Effectiveness of Educational Games in Increasing Students' Oral Participation in Eleventh Grade Students at the Public School Güasuyuca, Pueblo Nuevo, during the Second Semester 2015

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Abstract

This study attempts to determine which educational games are being used by EFL teachers in their classes and how effective are those games in increasing students' oral participation. The research was carried out in The Public School Güasuyuca, Pueblo Nuevo; the participants were nineteen students of eleventh grade and the English teacher in that school.

In order to achieve the research purpose, a qualitative research was carried out using methods for collecting data such as questionnaire and observation guide. Results showed that English teachers are rarely using educational games in classroom, but when they use games can be seen the participation of students. Games also, develop an opportunity in which students can hold conversations using the English language in class. It is recommended to use games, since they are effective in increasing students' oral participation and to create an environment of confidence where students can practice the target language.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Problem Statement

Research reveals that English language students generally struggle with oral communication more than writing, listening and speaking. They can read and understand texts but, some of them have difficulties in its oral production. English students feel nervous and timid in activities which include oral participation. They have fear of being criticized by the teacher about what they say or the rest of the students laugh at their opinions; this make them isolate of activities requiring the exercise of their oral ability. Even though students are good at the most of the English basic skills, participate orally is difficult for them (Urrutia & Vega, 2010).

Curriculum developers, teacher-educators and language educationists have striven to achieve student oral participation in the language classroom. The purpose in English as a second language education is to promote classrooms where students are seen as active participators; trying to change the vision of traditional language classrooms where teachers are the owners of knowledge and students only receive that knowledge (Ho, 2007).

The desire is to create teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction in language classrooms. Ho (2007) says:

With this idea of classroom interaction in mind, attempts have been made by second-and foreign-language educators in all quarters of the teaching profession to make changes in classroom practices. New tasks and activities have been introduced to engage students in sustained oral behavior, even to the extent of imposing on teachers and students new communicative classroom teaching and learning methods” (p. 8)

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of educational games in increasing English students’ oral participation. The idea of investigating this issue arises primarily from the observation during four years in English as Foreign Language classrooms. Most of the students during those years tend to struggle when trying to participate orally. The first idea was to investigate about strategies in general to increase English students

oral participation; after reading some information about this, the need for a more focused approach was clear, so the final decision was to investigate about the effectiveness of educational games in increasing students' oral participation in English classes.

There is a variety of reasons why students of English as a second language have fear of speaking English in front of other people. They may have the idea in their mind but they do not find the exact words to express them. Sometimes people who are demanding their participation are impatient and do not give them enough time to organize the ideas and formulate the answer. Fear of speaking in English can limit students from asking and answering questions during the class, or make teachers angry by the fact of keeping quiet when they ask for something about the subject (Kasper, Babbitt, Mlynarczyk, Brinton, & Rosenthal, 1999).

For English as foreign language learners who have limited contact with the language in their daily life, practice becomes a key element. They need to speak both inside and outside of the classroom with different people in different situations. For this reason, the responsibility of the teacher is to apply activities where students practice the target language orally as much as possible (Liu, 2009). This research aims to determine if games are effective in helping English language students of high school participate orally in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes, as already mentioned.

The research questions for this purpose are:

- a. What educational games are being used by EFL teachers in their classes?
- b. How effective are educational games in increasing student's oral participation in EFL classes?

In the frame of answering those questions it is carried out a qualitative research. This type of research begins selecting an individual or group problem, then researchers use questions and processes to collect data. After investigate researchers make an interpretation of the data collected.

Into this type of research design are found three components: Philosophical worldviews, strategies of inquiry and research methods. For this research paper has been selected

as philosophical worldview the social constructivist which is about opinions or understanding individuals have about the world in which they live or relate. The research look for participant's views about the situation in study, also is seen the historical and traditional aspect (Creswell, 2008). This worldview concerns with the topic because this research is a study with a specific group of English students. The methods for collecting data pretend to know the participant's view about the topic in study.

Regarding to strategies of inquiry was selected the ethnography which involves the study of a group in a specific setting during some period of time, the researchers collect data using observation and interviews (Creswell, 2008).

The research method selected is observation of behavior. This method orientates to become part of participant's life. One of the important elements of data collection is the observation in the study field; researchers share activities with participants in order to observe their behavior (Creswell, 2008).

1.2. Relevance of the Research

Increasing oral participation in English as foreign language learners is considered as a relevant topic for several reasons. Firstly, learning a new language is a challenging process both for teachers and students and maintaining an active participation is a bigger challenge for teachers. Secondly, in most of the English classrooms teachers explain while students are in silence, they are the only person who talk and students only repeat what they say; even though they do their best to help students feel free and encourage them to participate the results are not always positive, and finally, some teachers say that they have implemented group works, pair work and other activities but students always do and say nothing (Pearse, 2000).

A common known conception is that students of a foreign language stay incompetent respect to oral participation no matter how much they know about the target language. This has been a problem requesting to be solved in places where English is a key for progress, development and an important language of communication. The conclusion

has been that is essential not only speakers know all aspects about the language, but they can also develop the ability to use the language orally, to interact successfully with people who speak it around the world (Ho, 2007).

Using games in order to increase English students' oral participation has demonstrated important results. Some oral games have been implemented with students in high school level. A research done in Colombia by Urrutia and Vega (2010) reflected important results; they used games with tenth grade students giving as a result that this strategy allowed students to trust in themselves, created a good atmosphere inside the classroom. They encouraged students to communicate orally and to have confidence in their speaking skill. In addition, when students were playing they overcame their fear of making mistakes.

Games can help students to maintain the interest in the class. The use of games motivates students and also helps teachers to create a context where the use of the target language is effective. They provide to the students the opportunity for an intense communication and they can also be seen as a way to practice the language and not only a way of killing time (Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2006).

1.3. Background of the Problem

Research has revealed that students learn better when their teachers use a variety of strategies, resources and activities (Harmer, 2007). The same study mentioned before which was carried out in Colombia showed that games are an effective pedagogical tool in English language learning because they decrease students' tension and stress (Urrutia & Vega, 2010). Games provide interest to the students (Richard-Amato, 1996). Similarly, Ariza (2001) conducted a study called interacting in English through games at a public school in Bogotá, Colombia in order to encourage oral participation in English. Results showed that the use of game motivated students to use the language in communicative situations.

Lanfolt (2007) studied some factors that affect oral participation. The study was carried out in a public school from Sahagún, Colombia with students of sixth grade. Findings demonstrated that students always had anxiety in activities such as reading a loud in public or in conversation; she concluded that some personal factors such as self-esteem, risk taking, competitiveness and anxiety affect students' performance. Some external factors are evidenced too, such as beliefs, academic level differences, empathy and relationship among students as well as the lack of strategies to assume a different attitude to participate in class.

1.4. Organization of the Research Paper

This paper is outlined in the following way: Chapter one is the introduction which has been divided as follow: first, problem statement, this part talks about a general view of the problem, secondly relevance of the problem, and finally, the background of the problem. The second chapter is the literature review, this is a review of many studies related to the problem in study, what some scholars say or has researched about the topic.

The third chapter is the methodology, an explanation of the methodology used in the study, it also include research questions, research design, subject selection, instruments and data analysis. The fourth chapter is Results and discussion and limitations. The fifth chapter talks about conclusions, recommendations and further research. At this way the paper is organized and presented.

1.5. Key terms

Effectiveness: Effectiveness is defined as the capability to get better students outcomes. Teachers who reach the effectiveness are referred as quality teachers (Pahl, 2008).

Oral Participation: Participation is defined as students being involved in classroom work, participating in activities, setting their goals and maintaining attendance (Townsend, 2007) oral participation is individual or group oral responses.

Games: Games are activities governed by rules, they have a goal and generally cause fun (Hadfield, 1990).

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review is a classification and evaluation of what accredited scholars and researchers have written on a topic (Taylor, 2007). The purpose of this research is to determine the effectiveness of games in increasing students' oral participation in EFL classes. For this purpose, several studies have been reviewed. About games definition: Teaching Oral English (Byrne, 1995), Intermediate communication games (Hadfield, 1990) and games in primary education (Moyle, 1990). About benefits of games in the educational setting were reviewed: Games and Speaking Activities (Steffke, 2003).

This chapter also reviews the role of teachers during the implementation of games, speaking (Bygate, 1987), and classroom talk (Ho, 2007). Moreover, some literature about oral skill development was reviewed, namely: success in English teaching at secondary school level (Davies & Pearse, 2000), and materials and methods in ELT (McDonough & Shaw, 2012).

2.2 What are Games?

It is somehow difficult to give a precise definition of what games are. According to Byrne, games are a form of play which is governed by rules (Byrne, 1995). For Hadfield (1990), games are activities with rules, a goal and an element of fun. Both Byrne and Hadfield associate games with enjoyment and learning. Moreover, games not only are a simply change from routine activities, but in the teaching of a language they can be used as a form of getting students to use the target language liberally during they practice the game (Byrne, 1995).

Games could be defined as the medium by which the humans explore different experiences in different cases and with different objectives. Considering the situation when a person obtains a new electronic device, most of the people avoid to read the manual from the beginning to the end, they would start to play with the remote control of the machine, through this activity the person would start to learn and to know the

functions of the machine by the practice, then consolidating with the manual. It is the same in the educational setting; students need to know how topics work on practice. Playing, they can associate practice and theory. Games are activities to achieve different objectives through their implementation (Moyle, 1990).

2.3 Types of Games

There are many types of games. Games of skills, personal challenge, competition, collaboration, simulation, association, riddles, board games, those involving movement and those which do not. From the point of view of language, there are those which work grammar structures or vocabulary. There are also games that focus on the oral or written interaction, requiring skills such as inferring meaning, paraphrasing, finding synonym, building word families, as well as exploring placements and other aspects. In summary, some types of games give the opportunity to deal with issues related to language, its structure, vocabulary, phonetics or cultural world (Guastalegnanne, 2009).

Educational games can be divided into different types. Pozzo (2009) has categorized educational games in five types. The first type is language games. This type of games demand the use of linguistic knowledge, they allow to get opinions about different semantic fields, conceptualize different grammatical rules, and systematize grammatical, lexical and phonetic objectives. The second type is games of expression. Those games develop the oral and written expression, narratives games are one of them.

The third is picture games, those (memory, lottery) games are recommended to work with children but they can be implemented with young and adult people too. They can be created by the students modifying the rules and supports. Other type is challenge games which can be used to evaluate knowledge and creativity, an example of these are quiz games. The last type is strategy games; these can be simulation games playing over a board. This type of game allows having an interdisciplinary work, working together with other teachers.

The methodological challenge is how to use games in classrooms and how to achieve as much educational goals as possible through their implementation. Consequently, it is useful to establish a classification of games to identify differences between them (Rubio & Conesa, 2013).

Games in teaching a language can be also classified into two types. Games centered in the precision (control of language) and games focused on fluency (focused on communication). In games of language control new language elements and precision are practiced using pieces of language which are memorized through the constant repetition in order to provide useful pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical practice. The goal is usually to get more points than other participants and often there is a winner. That type of game focuses on the comprehension and production.

The second type, games focused on fluency, also called games of communication control change from language control to communication control. They tend to focus on developing fluency and collaboration with others. These games are usually implemented, in pairs or in four or five students' small groups (Lewis & Bedson, 1999).

The following are some games which belong to the family of games care and share. The name of the first is 'learning names', this game allow to introducing one and others, learning names, sharing likes or other personal information. The teacher who applies this game can set a friendly classroom atmosphere by putting on some music, if he or she wishes.

The Procedure of the game is as follow: first, the teacher asks learners to mill about, nodding and smiling, in a space in the classroom. It is an advantage if some cheerful music is being played, it can be stopped when the teacher wants students to stop move. Then the teacher asks them to stop in front of another learner and introduce themselves, the next step is to let the learners mill again until the teacher stop them and ask them to introduce themselves again, a four step can be add to the challenge by asking learners to point at and name the other people they have already met. They can help each other to do this, if necessary. This is a very effective way of practicing some specific topics

such as the present simple, at the same time students practice their oral skill (Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2006).

The other game of the family care and share is 'Getting to know each other'. The procedure is: firstly, the learners must sit in circles about eight, and then the teacher give to the students a moment to choose something which is important for them and that can be referred to in one or two words. The teacher can begin as the model. Introducing her or himself by saying, for example, I am Carmen and I like playing football. Then, the next learner in the circle repeats what the first learner said and add his or her own information, so the third learner repeats what the first two learners said and then adds his or her own information and so it continues round the circle (Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2006).

2.4 Benefits of Games in Educational Settings

Learning a foreign language requires much effort. Students need to develop the four main abilities (speaking, listening, reading and writing). They need to listen, repeat, and speak until being able to take part in an everyday conversation or discuss their ideas and thoughts. It takes a lot of work because it is a long and hard process. Sometimes students get bored practicing the same activities in class; that is why games have an important role in the educational setting. Games claim to be fun. Playing games learners are not bored any more, they allow students to be interested in the lesson, they are still doing a hard work but in a different way, they can develop English skills playing (Steffke, 2003).

Games have been a tool used for educational purposes in various occasions. One of the most common forms has been to use games as an element of motivation to do more enjoyable or to facilitate learning. This allows associating school situations with some features such as competition, imaginative problem solving, joke, dance, music etc. There are some historical examples that show the presence of games in education. The Roman poet Horace taught the alphabet with letters of bread, the English philosopher

John Locke attempted to teach reading using dice. This is a way to use games for educational purposes (Garcia & Peñalba, 2009).

They have been transformed into an important part of the educational setting in the beginning of the twenty-first century (Miller, 2008) . An important benefit of games is the communicative skill employment. Games easily become close to a natural communication. The main reason is that most of games require the use of oral communication which promotes oral participation in the students almost unconsciously. There is always a need to speak, students are not forced to talk by the teacher but they need to speak in order to win the game (Steffke, 2003).

The use of games is a way to make attractive any other activity. It has been used in the educational context because it can add interest, excitement and a dimension that can be enjoyable for students, turning the work of teaching in a fun activity but also achieve didactic objectives. They make the activity of teaching dynamic and allow students to engage in the learning process (Garcia & Peñalba, 2009).

Games have two types of objectives: the game's objective and the teaching's objective. Those are different from each other. The first is the objective of the game itself following the instructions and get the goal the game has, the second is the purpose by which the game is employed in a class, the educational objective, and how it is helpful in the students' learning (Steffke, 2003).

2.5 The Role of the Teacher during the Implementation of Games

A good teaching is keeping the attention and interest of the students. If they are interested in the class, paying attention, obeying the instructions of the teacher, listening carefully and they are able to ask and answer questions, something productive can be taking place inside the classroom. The teacher must be able to get the attention of students, awake their interest and maintain a good participation because this is essential in all teaching. If those objectives are not achieved in the lessons, it is not going to be possible to get the main goal, of getting students to master the elements of English and

practice them in communication. Attention and interest of students are the keys to develop a good learning process (Ho, 2007).

The didactic use of games is not just an activity of recreation for the students. It is also an important resource in English classes to increase the participation and to improve the pronunciation. In fact, games are a part of students' life and it is an essential instrument to create links between school and family. But the implementation of games in class does not implicate this will be productive and get the purpose thought. It needs to be suitable for language purposes. The choice, organization, purpose direction and explanation of a game will have a major role in English classes (Álvarez, 2010).

Teaching through games need to be deeper thought. Often the major problem is not produced by the game itself but by the class and the time management. Then the game need to be carefully chosen always keep in mind how it will be presented, how it will be carried out, how the game is related with the topic and how the game contribute in the learning process of the students (Steffke, 2003).

The goal and the attitude of the educator during the application of a game in class are important. Teachers must be well prepared but also should enjoy playing and being convinced that through playing they are helping the group of students develop various skills. They should not forget that the main purpose is to conduct learning process, although games are present they are pursuing educational goals and they should be directed towards those objectives. Teachers should maintain that goal in their mind. Teachers' attitude should be entertaining students but the goal must be to achieve a higher level of knowledge (Garcia & Peñalba, 2009).

In the application of games there are three main phases: before the game, during the game, and after the game. Before the game is the process in which the rules are explained, the duration, and objective of the game and it can not start if each of the students has not understood the explanation or the materials are not ready. The next phase is during the game, in this part teachers must pay attention to the duration and to the group dynamic, taking notes about what they will discuss after play. The last phase is after the game, although the game has finished the pedagogical activity has not, after

the game is made an evaluation about what students learned and if the implementation of the game helped to reach objectives totally or partially.

There is a variety of games teachers can use in a foreign language class. However there are some important considerations. The most convenient didactic or educational games teachers should use are those in which is necessary to use the language, those which can be implemented with a little amount of materials, and those which do not require enough time (Pozzo, 2009).

2.6 Oral Skill Development

Communication can be seen as the main goal of an English course. If communication is going to be perceived by the students as the most important goal of the course, they need to practice English in the classroom with this viewpoint in mind and as often as possible. This means introducing a selection of elements of English as real communication in the course, for example, to strengthen the most important aspects to communicate every day such as: greetings, give instructions, and requests. To see communication as a main goal is a new way to see course syllabus (Davis & pearse, 2000).

In oral skills development, language learners need to be engaged in activities which motivate them to talk. In teaching materials used nowadays has been taken into account the need to include activities that focus on the development of the language or that encourage to the participants to interact and share information. The goal of this idea is to give to the students the chance to use the language they are learning in an innovative activity in which they feel confidence and motivation to talk. The most common activity to make students to talk is the dialogue but, there are other activities that can provide motivation to talk. The use of games is one of them (McDonough & Shaw, 2012).

Games include oral strategies. These are: describing, predicting, simplifying and asking for feedback, in activities such as guessing missing information. Although those activities are known as games which include fun, they need communication of its

participants; students can work cooperatively and maintain an oral interaction at all time to successfully complete an assigned task (McDonough & Shaw, 2012).

2.7 Summary of the Chapter

The main theories addressed in this literature review include various aspects. One of them is the definition of games. It is difficult to give a precise definition about games. Firstly, Games are a form of play governed by rules (Byrne, 1995). Secondly, For Hadfield (1990), games are activities with a goal and an element of fun. Games could be also defined as the medium by which the humans explore different experiences and they have different objectives (Moyles, 1990). Finally , games not only are a simply change from routine activities, but in the teaching of a language they can be used as a form of getting students to use the target language without tension or fear (Byrne, 1995).

Regarding the types of games, theories demonstrate that there are many types. Games of skills, personal challenge, competition, collaboration, simulation, riddles, inventions, board games, those involving movement and those which do not. From the point of view of language, there are those focused on the form or the meaning of words, those which work grammar structures or vocabulary. There are also games that focus on the oral or written interaction, requiring skills such as inferring meaning, paraphrasing, finding synonyms, and building word families. In summary, some types of games give the opportunity to deal with issues related to language, its structure, vocabulary, phonetics or cultural world (Guastalegnanne, 2009).

Educational games can be categorized in five types. These are: Language games, games of expression, picture games, challenge games and strategy games (Pozzo, 2009). Games in teaching a language can be classified into two main types. Games centered in the precision (control of language) and games focused on fluency (focused on communication) (Lewis & Bedson, 1999).

Games are a benefic strategy in the educational setting. Sometimes students get bored practicing the same activities in class. Everyone knows that games claim to be fun. Playing games create a situation in which learners are not bored any more, they allow students to be interested in the lesson (Steffke, 2003). The Roman poet Horace taught the alphabet with letters of bread, the English philosopher John Locke attempted to teach reading using dice. They make the activity of teaching attractive and allow students to engage in the learning (Garcia & Peñalba, 2009).

Most of games require the use of oral communication which promotes oral participation in the students almost unconsciously. There is always a need to speak, students are not forced to talk by the teacher but they need to speak in order to win the game (Steffke, 2003). Here is concluded the benefits of games in educational settings. Games have two types of objectives: first the goal of the game and the teaching objective (Steffke, 2003).

There is also information found and reflected in the literature review about the role of teachers during the implementation of games. The goal and the attitude of the educator during the application of a game in class are important. Teachers must be well prepared. They should not forget that the main purpose is to conduct learning process. Teachers' attitude should be entertaining students but the goal must be to achieve a higher level of knowledge (Garcia & Peñalba, 2009).

In the application of games there are three main phases: before the game, during the game, and after the game. Before the game is the process in which teachers need to explain the rules, the duration, and objective of the game. The next phase is during the game, in this part teachers must pay attention to the duration and to the group dynamic, taking notes about important aspects. The last phase is after the game, here is made an evaluation about what students learned, and if the game helped to reach educational objectives (Pozzo, 2009).

About oral skills development, the main theories reflect that language learners need to be engaged in activities which motivate them to talk. Games They need communication of its participants (McDonough & Shaw, 2012).

Chapter Three: Methodology

The fourth chapter of this study will present the methodology that was implemented in this study. The chapter will start by presenting the main research questions and the research design that was chosen as appropriate. Moreover, subject selection and the population will be presented here too. Furthermore, data collection and data analysis are introduced in this chapter.

3.1 Research Questions

The present project pretends to answer the following research questions:

- a. What educational games are being used by EFL teachers in their classes?
- b. How effective are educational games in increasing student's oral participation in EFL classes?

3.2 Research Design

This study followed a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is a common type used to inquiry about a specific situation in a specific place. Regarding to this design Creswell (2008) says:

Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (p. 4).

This research design was chosen for several reasons. First, because is about exploring a problem in a group of students. This is the difficulty to participate orally. Secondly, some methods of data collection are used such as questionnaire and observation guides and finally, because after collection the data is interpreted by the three researchers.

Qualitative research also contains three components: Philosophical worldviews, strategies of inquiry and research methods. For this research has been selected as

philosophical worldview the social constructivist, this is about opinions or understanding individuals have about the world in which they live or relate. The research looks for participant's views about the situation in study, also is seen the historical and traditional aspect (Creswell, 2008). This worldview is related to this research because it is a study which pretends to collect information based on participant's opinions about the research's topic.

Regarding strategies of inquiry was selected the ethnography which involves the study of a group in a specific setting during some period of time, the researchers collect data using observation and interviews (Creswell, 2008). This strategy was selected because this research takes place in a specific school with a specific group of students in a period of time of six months and observation guides are used in order to collect data.

The research method selected is observation of behavior. This method orientates to become part of participant's life. The collection of data is based on the observation in the study field sharing with the participants activities they do (Creswell, 2008). This method was selected because during the data collection researchers share some activities students and teacher do in the classroom in order to observe some pattern of behavior.

3.3 Subject selection

The subject of the present research was selected through the interview to the head-teacher of the public school Güasuyuca asking about how many students there are in the school and how many teachers teach there. He answered that two hundred-seventy students are in total and seventeen teachers are responsible for the education.

3.3.1 Description of the Study Site

The Public School Güasuyuca is located in the community Güasuyuca. This community is located thirteen kilometers west from the municipality Pueblo Nuevo, Estelí department. The school where the research is carried out is located in front of the health center. This school was founded in 1999, at that time teachers only taught elementary

school, was to 2002 that teachers began to educate high school students but only from seventh to ninth grade. In 2009 a complete education was made possible, primary and high school from first to eleventh grade.

Currently, at high school are studying a total of one hundred-eleven students, fifty-seven females and fifty-four males. Those students are distributed in five grades, from seventh grade to eleventh. The amount of students in each grade is as follows: in seventh grade are twenty-one students in total, eight of them female and thirteen male. In eighth grade there are twenty-eight students in total, thirteen female and fifteen male, in ninth grade there are a total of twenty-three students, fourteen of them are female and nine male, the tenth grade is made up of twenty students, nine female and eleven male, the eleventh grade is composed by nineteen students, who thirteen are female and six male. Those are all students studying high school in the Public School Gūasuyuca.

In the school work a staff composed by ten people. Those people are: a head-teacher, seven teachers of which four are women and three are men, a librarian and a janitor. All of them have different responsibilities. The director has to ensure all is well in the school including teacher's job. Teachers are responsible of teach several subjects such as: Spanish, Mathematic, English, Geography, History, Biology, Sociology, Physics, Chemistry, Physical education, Civic, Cultural and Artistic Expression, and Vocational Technique Orientation. The janitor is responsible of cleaning the school. This is the labor the staff does at this scholar center.

The infra-structure of the school is fourteen rooms. They are distributed as follow: ten classrooms, the auditorium, the library, the storeroom, and the head-teacher office.

3.3.2 Universe, Population and Sample

The universe of the research is two hundred-seventy students and seventeen teachers from the public school Gūasuyuca. The population is only the eleventh grade with nineteen students and five teachers. The sample consists of the same number of students as in the population, namely nineteen students.

3.4 Data Collection

For the purpose of this research, two data collection methods were chosen: the questionnaire and the observation.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The word 'questionnaire' is commonly used in a general sense to refer to any printed set of questions that participants in a research can answer; they can be about selecting one choice from several possible answers or by writing out a complete answer.

Questionnaires have been used in order to collect two specific types of information. They are facts and opinions. Facts are items of information about which participants in a survey have knowledge, and opinions are messages expressing a belief about something (Murray, 2003). The questionnaire in this research pretended to collect opinions of the English teacher related to what types of games she uses in class in order to achieve educational purposes.

3.4.2 Observation

The observation, as a data collection method, has several advantages. Researchers can get many advantages by using this method. They can record information in the specific way it occurs, with many details. They can also notice unusual aspects during the observation. This method is useful for exploring topics that may be difficult for participants to discuss using interviews face to face (Creswell, 2008). Those are some advantages of using observation to collect data in qualitative research.

Flick (2009) asserts that observation in its different forms tries to understand practices, interactions and events which occur in a specific context from the inside as a participant or from the outside as a mere observer. In observation different starting points are taken to reconstruct the single case: the events in a specific setting, the activities of a specific person, the concrete interaction of several persons together (pág. 282).

Observation guides in this study allowed taking notes during the implementation of specific games in English class. The observations were documented by the three researchers through field notes, in which participants' attitudes and behaviors as well as activities were as detailed as possible. We made a total of six observations of 90 minutes each one. After each observation, researchers shared their notes and completed them when necessary with details that hadn't been written previously.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of interpretation about information found. Researchers have to read all the information, interpret it and then organize and prepare the data for being analyzed; it is the process to analyze the essential part of results and reflect if the research process answered research questions (Creswell, 2008).

For this research after apply instruments all the data collected is organized, this include results of the questionnaire about teacher opinions, also is read all the information in observation guides, then information is interpreted; in this part, we realize if the research process answered our research questions, in other words, if the implementation of games is effective to increase students oral participation. The information found in the literature review is compared with results of instrumentation; a discussion is also done about both sources of information.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the main findings of this research. The results and discussion will be presented from the two main research questions, introduced in chapter three. The answers to the two questions were obtained through the data collection methods we used; namely, the questionnaire and the observation.

a. What educational games are being used by EFL teachers to teach English to eleventh grade students at the Public School Güasuyuca, Pueblo Nuevo?

The analysis of the data collected for this study showed that the English teacher at Güasuyuca secondary school occasionally used educational games in her English classes. The evidence that supports our statement is the following excerpts taken from the observations:

In the first class session that we observed, the teacher used some didactic materials, such as videos and then had students comment on the video they watched. She recommended to the students to go to the library to watch some videos about places in the community and other videos about pedestrian traffic. Then students returned to the classroom and they talked about the videos during ten minutes. Then the teacher explained about what people can do in every place, as they observed in the videos. For example: What do you do in the hospital? So students could answer: 'I get medical attention'. Then students wrote five sentences individually using that structure and places observed in the videos.

In the second class session that we observed, the teacher did not use any activity, she only introduced the topic to the students and then she asked for some opinions about the topic. Then she explained the topic and she did not give the students any assignments.

In the third class session we observed, the teacher explained the topic during fifteen minutes, and then some students did some tasks on the white board. As a conclusion of the class, she assigned a pair-work task as the homework.

The data presented above clearly shows the lack of usage of games in the English class. However, the teacher answered on the questionnaire that she implements games in her classes, on a regular basis. Some of the common games she says she uses in her English classes are: bingo, memory games, board games, language games, for example 'Simon says', etc. She explained also decides to use those games according to the topic she needs to teach. Moreover, she claimed that she also keeps in mind how much time she has available for each class session.

During our observations the teacher featured games only one time. It was a game called 'Sharing likes' to introduce the topic 'Technology'. The teacher clearly introduced the game, explaining the procedure and the objective; students quickly understood what the game was about. It was related to the topic because the conversation students hold was related to 'Technology' which was the topic the teacher wanted to introduce. Then the students had to share information with a classmate about their likes concerning to technology. The teacher effectively managed time, as the game lasted ten minutes, including the explanation of the game.

Steffke (2003) argues that games should be well-planned and implemented in ESL classes. He explains that often the major problem is not produced by the game itself, but by the class and the time management. Games need to be carefully chosen keeping in mind how it will be presented, how it will be carried out, how the game is related to the topic and how it contributes in the learning process of the students. Similarly, Álvarez (2010) says that the implementation of games in class does not implicate this will be productive and get the purpose thought. It needs to be suitable for language purposes. The choice, organization, purpose direction and explanation of a game will have a major role in English classes.

Taking the Steffke (2003) and Álvarez (2010)'s explanations into account, it is evident that in that time the English teacher at the public school Güasuyuca implemented

efficiently the game but she lacks in understanding of the nature of some educational games she uses. As she answered in the questionnaire: “I implement several games, but I do not know what they are called”. As Steffke also says, this understanding of games objectives and how they will be implemented is vital in helping English students’ reach educational purposes, or as in this case, increase their oral participation, as this research aims to investigate.

b. How effective are the educational games used by the English teacher at Güasuyuca in increasing student’s oral participation?

The teacher, as a participant of this research, answered that the games she applies in her classes allow her students to be more interested in the class contents and activities. Moreover, she said that games helped her students to understand the contents she taught them. She also mentioned that the games she used helped her students to lose fear to speak; they can hold conversations in the English language and they have a good interaction inside the classroom. According to her, the games she used contributed to have a real communication in English classes.

As noted in chapter two, Games can help students to maintain the interest in the class. The use of games motivates students and also helps teachers to create a context where the use of the target language is effective. They provide to the students the opportunity for an intense communication (Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2006). They also facilitate interaction in the class.

However, in the praxis the influence of the educational games on the students’ oral participation was not clearly observed. As mentioned before, the teacher only used games once during our observations. Consequently, it is somehow difficult for us to draw conclusions regarding her viewpoint on the effectiveness of games in this aspect of English language learning, namely in promoting students’ oral participation.

In our observation, the day the teacher used the game called ‘sharing likes’ which she had planned for the English class, many students were anxious before playing. In order

to tackle this challenge, the teacher played some music which helped to create a good atmosphere inside the classroom. As we could observe, most of the students were engaged in the game. They participated orally. They talked about technology, which was the topic the teacher oriented; they shared information about Facebook, cellphones, computers, etc. The game facilitated a good interaction, as students did their best to participate orally in the English language.

As also noted in the review of literature, Games have been used as instruments for engaging students into lessons; they provide interest to the students (Richard-Amato, 1996) Similarly, McDonough and Show (2012) say that speaking activities can be defined as activities that offer students an excellent opportunity to use English in real communication. Games include oral strategies. They also need communication of its participants; students can work cooperatively and maintain an oral interaction at all time.

Limitations

During the research process, we found some limitations. Those were mainly related to the collection of data. It was difficult to make sufficient observations because the school where the study was carried out is located in a community far away of our place of residence.

Another limitation was that students did not have class on some holidays, for example: in November 2nd they were supposed to have English class, this was not possible for 'the day of dead'. The same happened on the last Friday of the month in which they do not have English class, due to an evaluation session teachers have every month.

Finally, other important limitation was the lack of games implemented in the English classes. The teacher used other activities such as videos, explanation of the topics, exercises in the whiteboard and games were rarely used. This had a negative effect on the research aims because the objective of the research focused on the effectiveness of educational games in increasing students' oral participation in EFL classes.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

This study was aimed at studying the effectiveness of educational games in increasing oral participation in eleventh grade students in the Public School Güasuyuca, Pueblo Nuevo. After collecting and analyzing data through observations and the questionnaire, we found that games are an effective pedagogical tool in increasing students' oral participation. However, the English teacher rarely used educational games in English classes in that institution. It was found that when the teacher applied games in class, students participated orally in a natural way, they had a real communication in the class because all the students shared information orally and they could understand clearly each other.

The results of this study highlighted the need of implementing speaking activities that aim to reach communicative purposes. The implementation of games could have a positive influence on students' oral participation. Unfortunately, they are not being exploited in the English classes.

Recommendations

Some recommendations to the teacher are to make more dynamic English classes, to use educational games frequently, in order to motivate students and give them the opportunity to practice their speaking skills. There is a variety of games a teacher can use in the classroom but as Pozzo (2009) says, the most convenient didactic or educational games teachers should use in a foreign language class are those in which is necessary to use the language, those which can be implemented with a little amount of materials, and those which do not require enough time.

Further Research

We leave an open invitation for teachers and students to continue researching the teachers' activities and methodologies to increase students' oral participation in English classes, since this problem is present in most of the schools, and this topic needs to be

addressed in order to help English students to have a real communication and not only knowledge about the language.

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Annexes

1. Questionnaire to English Teacher

School: _____

Grade: _____

Date: _____

Dear teacher,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the effectiveness of using educational games in increasing oral participation in English language classes. Your opinion is important. Therefore, we would like to ask you to kindly answer this questionnaire. The answers will be relevant in our research project, as students of the 5th year of the English major at UNAN-FAREM-Estelí, 2015. All your responses will remain anonymous. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Do you use **games** in your **English classes**? If so, what **types of games** do you normally use?

2. How do you decide what game you will use in the classroom?

3. Do you consider that **games** you use in classroom allow to students **participate** both individually and collectively?

4. Do you consider that the use of games help students to lose inhibition to speak? Why?

5. Do you consider those **games** contribute to have **real communication** in the classroom?

6. Do you think that **educational games** have any disadvantages? If so, which can you mention?

2. Observation guide

Research Project: Effectiveness of Educational Games in Increasing Oral Participation in eleventh grade English students in a public School in the community Gūasuyuca, Pueblo Nuevo during the second semester 2015

Date: _____

Schedule: _____

Grade: _____

Number of Observation: _____

| Types of educational games the teacher uses | When are games used (introducing, reviewing a topic, killing time or icebreaking) | Role of the teacher during the implementation of games | Benefits of games (good atmosphere, motivate students to participate orally, etc.) | Disadvantages of games (produce stress, competitiveness, does not have educational objectives, etc.) |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| | | | | |