

**NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF NICARAGUA.
REGIONAL UNIVERSITARY CENTER MATAGALPA.**

GRADUATION SEMINAR TO GET A DEGREE IN ENGLISH.



THEME:

The development of basic skills in the English Teaching Learning process at Secondary School.

SUB-THEME:

Main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in the teaching learning process of tenth grade EFL students at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute of Río Blanco, during the second semester 2005.

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November, 2005

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DEDICATION

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” Theodore Roosevelt.

We would like to dedicate this research to someone who guided us along these five years. She taught us that We can give the best of ourselves, it does not care what we have or where we are.

Lic. Marisela Coronado González.

For all those moments, we shared together on this process of becoming English Teachers.

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From the bottom of our hearts We would like to thank to God.

We would also like to thank to EFL students and teachers of tenth grade at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute.

We would also like to thank to all of those people who encouraged us to achieve our goal.

Our dear teachers at UNAN-CURM, for their support and dedication to us along these five years. Especially to our English Teachers:

Lic: Ligia Pineda.

Lic: Sergio Ortega.

Lic: Julieta Küll.

Lic: Julio Roa.

Lic: Vicente Gutierrez.

Lic: Marisela Coronado.

TEACHERS' VALUATION.

This scientific report was elaborated with the objective of determining or to settle down, the main difficulties that English students face in secondary education to develop the speaking skills or oral expression in this language.

The result was an excellent report that offers to the reader, scientific knowledge regarding pedagogy, didactics and methodology that are the basic components and fundamental tools for English's professors.

In this work they are approached, concepts, definitions, terminologies, technical and teaching strategies that can achieve that the opposing difficulties as a result of the investigation can be overcome, in such way that the reader, as professor of English has in this work. It has an excellent recipe to achieve that in English's students "Speak English"

I congratulate the students authors, for their work, their dedication and interest when carrying out this investigation, and for the excellent quality of the same one.

Lic. Marisela Coronado González.
English Teacher

SUMMARY

The development of basic speaking skills in the English Teaching –Learning process of tenth grade EFL students at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute of Río Blanco is the main point of this research. The practical purpose is to analyze the main difficulties on this process, proposing communicative activities and strategies for improving them.

This research lets EFL Teachers and students at Nicaraguan Secondary school to reflect about the way has been addressing the Teaching-Learning process and It helps to understand what are the main difficulties that affect the development of speaking skills and how to deal with them.

Speaking is the productive oral skills. It consist of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. This skill like the other ones is more complicated that it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words. The Audio-Lingual method was the first approach used to teach speaking. Recently the Communicative Language Teaching or Communicative approach is the new proposal , however EFL Teachers believe that It is necessary to design some basic principles of teaching and apply them in their contexts.

Nation wide there is a discussion about the official nicaraguan syllabus to teach English as a Foreign Language because of its grammatical focus does not allow the development of speaking skills, and the lack of Training English Teachers at Nicaraguan Secondary School.

Added to these relevant points, the development of basic speaking skills in the teaching learning process is being affected by:

- ✓ The traditional EFL class and short time to teach speaking.
- ✓ There is lack of motivation.
- ✓ There is lack on the domain of basic language functions.
- ✓ There is lack on basic grammar and vocabulary knowledge.
- ✓ The use of native language most of the time in EFL class.

Another idifficulty is the testing speaking process. Speaking is probably the most difficult skills to test and one of the difficulty is separating them from listening skills. The lack on assessment because of large EFL classes is another of the great difficulties.

INTRODUCTION

English Language has been teaching around the world as a Second Language or Foreign Language. Now days the number of non-speakers of English is increasing world wide. In Nicaragua the first people to speak English were the corsair pirates from England. They arrived to the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast and began to introduce English Language on that part of the Country. The Moravos (a religious group on this part) spoke English with a German accent and they spread the Language around the communities. English Language became part of this culture and people began to use English in a mixture with native dialects.

On the Pacific of Nicaragua was probably first introduced in the 1840's at UNAN – León. It was the first educative institution to teach English. There is another important fact that History points out: In 1856 the American William Walker declared himself president of Nicaragua and he established English language as the official language.

The official Nicaraguan Syllabus of English as a Foreign Language at Secondary School has been teaching for more than fifteen years. One of its goals is to develop the speaking skills that allow EFL students to master the Foreign Language and use it in every day life. Now days to speak English is a basic need and some Educative Institutions are training their graduated in English, however the results and the proficiency on speaking skills of EFL students are low.

Mastering the art of speaking is the most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language, and success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language (Nunan, 1991). Speaking skills are the most important aspect to focus on, however many EFL teachers still spend the majority of class time on reading and writing practice, following the order of a textbook or a structured grammatical syllabus, almost ignoring speaking skills. That has to do with the traditional activities of EFL class and, of course the lack of training English Teachers.

Due to these factors most of EFL students are not able to keep a conversation going and this situation as Krashen(1960) pointed out : it produces a high affective filter that affect students' attitude toward the teaching learning process of speaking skills.

This research showed the main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in the English teaching learning process of tenth grade EFL students at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute. The purpose was to analyse the main difficulties detected, proposing communicative activities and strategies that should be applied to improve them and therefore the development of speaking skills.

The methods used were the empirical through the interviews, surveys and observations applied. And the theoretical through the analysis of the information related to the theme. The universe was the one hundred and twenty three tenth grade EFL students and four Teachers at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute. The Sample were eighty EFL students that represents the 65% and the four EFL teachers that represent the 100%.The variables were:

- Main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in the teaching process.
- Main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in the learning process.
- Communicative activities and strategies.

JUSTIFICATION

The level of the development of basic speaking skills in the English Teaching Learning Process of tenth grade EFL students have to do with the goals of the official Nicaraguan syllabus of English in Secondary School and the different contexts where it is applied.

This research attempts to analyze the development of basic speaking skills in the English Teaching Learning Process, establishing the main difficulties and proposing techniques and strategies to make more effective and meaningful the process.

It is necessary because of the low proficiency and level of speaking skills in English of tenth grade EFL students. It benefits all of the EFL students and Teachers at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute of Río Blanco.

It is very important because it allows to reflect about the way basic speaking skills in the English Teaching Learning Process is being addressed at Nicaraguan Secondary School. The practical purpose is to propose some techniques and strategies and how should EFL Students and Teachers get involve and developing basic speaking skills in a higher level.

It helps to understand the real Teaching and Learning situation of basic speaking skills and the different aspects on the field that English Teachers and EFL students have to work in.

General Objective.

To analyse the main difficulties on development of basic speaking skills in the English Teaching Learning Process of tenth grade EFL students at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute of Río Blanco, during the second semester 2005.

Specific Objectives.

To determine the main difficulties on development of basic speaking skills in the English Teaching Process of tenth grade EFL students at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute of Río Blanco, during the second semester 2005.

To establish the main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in the Learning process of tenth grade EFL students at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute of Río Blanco, during the second semester 2005.

To propose communicative activities and strategies for improving the main difficulties detected on the development of basic speaking skills in the Learning process of tenth grade EFL students at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute of Río Blanco.

1. Basic Speaking Skills

Speaking is the productive oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning (Bailey, 2000:42). This skill like the other ones is more complicated than it seems at first and involved more than just pronouncing words.

To produce systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning, means to be able to communicate in the different contexts and different situations of communication. To master this skill involves to develop a group of microskills and they are so far than just work with pronunciation or grammar.

EFL Teachers and students should be aware of that point. They may learn a great deal about vocabulary, grammar, and sentence and discourse structure, but the language (English) will not become a true medium of communication for them and will not engage them very deeply. They need to understand that master speaking means becoming able to use it to comprehend, communicate and think-as they do in their first language.

In order to this it is important to recognize that language learning takes places in stages. Interpretive skills (listening, writing) develop much more quickly than expressive skills (speaking, reading) and the ability that students covet most-the ability to speak the foreign language fluently-requires the longest period of growth. Understanding all these points of view about speaking skills EFL teachers and students have to work as a team on the development of the following micro-skills:

- Pronounce the distinctive sounds of the language clearly enough so that people can distinguish them.
- Use stress and rhythmic patterns and intonation patterns of the language so that people can understand what is said.

- Use the correct forms of words. This may mean, for example, changes in the tenses, cases, gender.
- Put words together in correct word order.
- Use vocabulary appropriately. That means to use the register or language variety that is appropriate to the situation and the relationship to conversation partner.
- Make clear to the listener the main sentences, constituents such as subject, verb, object by whatever means that the language uses.
- Make the main ideas stand out from supporting ideas or information.
- Make the discourse hang together so that people can follow what you are saying.

These micro-skills are very important if the goal is communication through speaking. It is necessary to focus on each one and work separately. That means to develop these micro-skills in a systematic process that allows to EFL students improve their speaking skills. However, the communicative activities to develop speaking according to the teachers in an EFL class, seldom focus on these aspects, because of the time or the teacher is interested in other ones such as : behavior Problems and participation.

It is true that if we want to achieve certain proficiency on basic speaking skills we have to change the teaching style and beliefs about English as a foreign language.

It is necessary to be open mind to the new modern methodologies and approaches. we need to provide new situations of communications in the classroom and get involve all of the students.

There are three kinds of speaking situations in which we find ourselves everyday and we need to be prepared to deal with: (Stovall,2004)

- Interactive
- Partially interactive
- Non-interactive

Interactive speaking situations include face- to- face conversations and telephone calls, in which we are alternately listening and speaking and in which we have a chance to ask for clarification, repetition or slower speech from the conversation partner.

Some speaking situations are **partially interactive**, such as when giving a speech to a live audience, where the convention is that the audience does not interrupt the speech. Some speaking situations maybe totally **non-interactive**, such as when recording a speech for a radio broadcast.

The goal of any EFL teacher and syllabus has to be: to train students to interact in these speaking situations and be able to understand and be understood by others. that is what an EFL student in any part of this world needs.

EFL teachers should expose the students to these speaking situations and asses their proficiency,help them to improve it in a systematic way through meaningful communicative activities. Unfortunately, Nicaraguan contex at secondary school shows EFL students with low proficiency in speaking skills not just for learning problems,even lack of economical resources, lack of support from parents, and educative institutions(MECD).

1.2 Background to teaching speaking

As any teacher knows that the Audio-Lingual Method was the first approach to teach speaking skills.This method assumes that language learning is habit formation. That means students needed to form good habits and lessons involved a great deal of repetition.

Prator (1965) was one of the first American methodologist to point out that the Audio-Lingual Method had been a failure at getting language learners to communicate in the target language. He suggested that teachers would have to begin to move their students from manipulation to communication by devising drills and exercises that were more demanding than the usual procedures: listen and repeat “ (totally manipulative). or “substitution” and “transformation” (predominantly manipulative).

He pointed out that students were not communicating unless they themselves were finding the words and structures they needed in order to express their opinions or reactions-or if they themselves tried to exchange with others, facts and information about topics that were meaningful to them.

That is what is happening in most EFL classes. Most of the students refuse to use English due to be afraid of making a lot of mistakes or they are simply so shy to share their opinions. That is the result of the way we have been teaching them. But on the other hand, they should be able to communicate and this is the most complicated task for an EFL teacher.

Time went by and some people began to believe that we learn language by interacting, then students should interact during the lessons. As a result, a method called communication language teaching arose.

Two versions of communicative language teaching emerged:

The weak version points out that teachers should teach the components of language but include communicative activities.(Nicasol 2005).

That means that EFL teachers should focus on all of those aspects that help students to speak such as. (grammar, pronunciation, intonation, functions of the language, vocabulary etc.);but they should include meaningful communicative activities during all this process.

The strong version points out that students learn through interacting. Lessons should consist of opportunities to communicate in the target language. (Nicatesol 2005)

On the other hand, the strong version points out that it is through interaction that EFL students learn, so they should be exposed to the language during every single minute of each lesson. The classroom should be the place where everyone use the target language.

This new method is what according to EFL-Class context should be applied, because what we need is to have a clear idea about what we are doing or the goal of teaching speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language.

1.3 Goals and techniques for teaching speaking.

The goal of teaching speaking skills is communicative efficiency. Learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary, and to observe the social and cultural rules that apply in each communication situation.

To help students develop communicative efficiency in speaking, EFL teachers can use a balanced activities approach that combines language input, structures output and communicative output.(Stovall,2004)

Language input comes in the form of teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages and the language heard and read outside of class. It gives learners the material they need to begin producing language themselves.

Language input may be content-oriented or form-oriented.

Content-Oriented input focusses on information, whether it is a simple weather report or an extended lecture on an academic topic. Content-Oriented input may also include descriptions of learning strategies and examples of their use.

Form-Oriented input focusses on ways of using the language: guidance from the teacher or another source on vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar (linguistic competence); appropriate things to say in specific contexts (discourse competence); expectations for rate of speech, pause length, turn-taking and other social aspects of language use (sociolinguistic competence); and explicit instruction in phrases to use to ask for clarification and repair miscommunication. (Strategic competence);

In the presentation part of a lesson, a teacher combines content-oriented and form-oriented input. The amount of input that is actually provided in the target language depends on students' listening proficiency and also on the situation. For students at lower levels, or in situations where a quick explanation on grammar topic is needed, an explanation in Spanish may be more appropriate than one in the target language.

Structured output focuses on correct form. In structured output, students may have options for responses, but all of the options require them to use the specific form or structure that the teacher has just introduced.

Structure output is designed to make learners comfortable producing specific language items recently introduced, sometimes in combination with previously learned items.

Teachers often use structure output exercises as a transition between the presentation stage and the practice stage of a lesson plan, textbook exercises also make good structured output practice activities.

In communicative output, the learners main purpose is to complete a task, such as obtaining information or developing a travel plan. To complete the task , they may use the language that the teacher has just presented, but they also may draw on any other vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategy. In communicative output activities the criterion of succes is whether the learner gets the message across. Accuracy is not a consideration unless the lack of it interferes with the message.

In everyday communication, spoken exchanges take place because there is some sort of information gap between the participants. Communicative output activities involve a similar real information gap. In order to complete the task, students must reduce or eliminate the information gap. In these activities, the Language is a tool to achieve the goal.

In a balanced activities approach, the teachers use a variety of activities from these different categories of input and output. Learners at all proficiency levels, including beginners, benefit from this variety; it is more motivating, and it is also more likely to result in effective language learning.

1.4 Strategies for developing speaking skills.

Students often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process.(Stovall,2004)

Effective teachers teach students speaking strategies such as: using minimal responses, recognizing scripts and using language to talk about language that they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. These kinds of teachers help students learn to speak so that the students can use speaking to learn.

That is an important point about speaking skills that EFL teachers and students should take in account, however the focus on speaking at Nicaraguan EFL classes is very poorly. It is necessary to re-orientate the process of teaching and speaking skills through the development of speaking strategies such as:

1.4.1 Using minimal responses

EFL students who lack confidence in their ability to participate successfully in oral interaction often listen in silence while others do the talking. One way to encourage such students to begin to participate is to help them to build up a stock of minimal responses that they can use in different types of exchanges. Such responses can be especially useful for beginners.

Minimal responses are predictable, often idiomatic phrases that conversations participants use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt and other responses to what another speaker is saying.

Having a stock of such responses enables a student to focus on what the other participant is saying, without having to simultaneously plan a response.

Examples

Express uncertainty	(I don't know.)
Solicit an opinion	(How do you like.....?/ What do you think of...?)
Accept an offer	(Well, all right. Thanks very much.)
Express satisfaction	(It sounds good.)
Express approval	(Yes, of course!)

1.4.2 Recognizing scripts

Some communication situations are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges – a script. Greetings, apologizes, compliments, invitations and other functions that are influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts. So do the transactional exchanges involved in activities such as obtaining information and making a purchase .In these scripts, the relationship between a speaker turn and the one that follow it can often be anticipated.

EFL teachers can help students develop speaking skills by making them aware of the script for different situations so that they can predict what they will hear and what they will need to say in responses. Through interactive activities, teachers can give students practice in managing and varying the language that different script contains.

Examples

Apologize	(I'm very sorry.)
Invitation	(Will you go with us to the party?)
Greetings	(Hello.Hi. Good Morning/ Afternoon /Night. How are you? /How is it going? / how are you doing?)

1.4.3 Using language to talk about language.

EFL students are often to embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand another speaker or when they realize that a conversation partner has not understood them. Teachers can help students overcome this reticence by assuring them that misunderstanding and the need for clarification can occur in any type of interaction, whatever the participants' language skills levels. Teachers can also give students strategies and phrases to use for clarification and comprehension check.

Examples

What does _____ mean? To ask for the meaning of unknown words.

Could you repeat that, please? When there is misunderstanding.

How do you pronounce that word? To ask about pronunciation of words.

By encouraging students to use clarification phrases in class when misunderstanding occurs and by responding positively when they do, teachers should create an authentic practice with the classroom itself. As they develop control of various clarification strategies, students will gain confidence in their ability to manage the various communication situations that they may encounter outside the classroom.

1.5 Developing speaking activities.

Traditional classroom speaking practice often takes the form of drills in which one person asks a question and another gives an answer. The question and the answer are structure and predictable, and often there is only one correct, predetermined answer.

The purpose of asking and answering the question is to demonstrate the ability to ask and answer the question.(Stovall,2004) In contrast, the purpose of real communication is to accomplish a task , such as conveying a telephone call message, giving a direction , obtaining information, or expressing an opinion.

In real communication, participants must manage uncertainty about what the other person will say. Authentic communication involves information that the other does not have. In addition to achieve their purpose participants may have to clarify their meaning or ask for confirmation of their own understanding.

To create classroom speaking activities that will develop communicative competence, EFL teachers need to incorporate a purpose and an information gap and allow for multiple forms of expressions .However quantity alone will not necessarily produce competent speakers. EFL teachers should combine structured output activities

2. Interaction and communication

Human interaction is a process whereby two or more people engage in reciprocal action. This action may be verbal or nonverbal. Human communication, on the other hand, is a system of giving and receiving information. There can be no communication without achieving communication. This happens, for example when the person being addressed refuses to cooperate and will not interact with the initiating speaker.

Interaction has been useful in describing classroom according to the dominant type of interaction that occurs. For example, if the teacher talks or lectures most of the time and student participation is minimal, then the classroom is teacher-dominated (ie $T \rightarrow S$). If the teacher gives the student opportunity to participate but usually initiates and controls classroom activities, then the classroom is teacher-centered ($T \leftrightarrow S$).

If the teacher organizes activities such that the students can initiate and control much of the interaction then the classroom is student-centered and the activities and teacher domination would be totally inappropriate teacher behavior.

Most of EFL teachers nowadays consider their speaking activities as meaningful and students enjoy them, that is a good indicator, because it tells us that EFL teachers are working on achieving a student-centered classroom and the goal is communication using the foreign language (English).

2.1 Four aspects of classroom interaction that enhance communication.

Bailey and Celce-Murcia (1979) isolate four areas affecting classroom interaction that EFL Teachers should attend to:

- Social climate.
- Variety in Learning activities.

- Opportunity for students' participation.
- Feedback and correction.

Social climate is mentioned first because it is the most basic and fundamental of the areas, without a good social climate, everything else that we discuss becomes meaningless. If students are not at ease and do not feel good about their language class, there will be no communication. It is the EFL teachers' responsibility to establish the proper atmosphere so that students can relate to the teacher and to teach other ones in a positive and constructive way.

To do this the teachers have to enjoy teaching and to like their students. Not all teachers have the proper temperament to do this, however, even those teachers who are well-intentioned and personable often overlook techniques that would help promote a good social climate.

Variety in Learning activities. The preceding discussion on social climate describes how improving the social dynamics in the language class will help to encourage communication.

This is a form of "internal motivation" since EFL teachers motivate the students indirectly by promoting good feelings in the class. Introducing variety into learning activities is a more external form of motivation. If the EFL teacher can use some variety in each lesson to make the class more enjoyable and less routine, this will motivate the students to learn.

Variety can be introduced on many different levels. One way is to make effective use of all four skills. Another way is to move as quickly as possible from manipulative drills to communicative activities such as: problem solving, role plays, information gap, skills competition.

Opportunity for students' participation , social climate and variety indirectly encourage communication in that they set the stage and provide motivation. The most direct way to facilitate communication is to provide ample opportunity for students' participation which has it correlates: (a) little or no teacher domination. (b) minimal teacher talking time. At the most general levels, student participation means allowing students to have as much input as possible into the class itself.(Syllabus,activities,assignments).More specifically the EFL teacher should have students work in pairs or teams whenever useful.This permits the teacher to be a resource person rather than the dominant figure.Communicative activities lend themselves well to work in pairs or team.

Feedback and correction. When a teacher allows for active student participation, his responsibility to provide useful feedback and correction to the students become even greater. Dealing with correction is an inherent delicate matter.Some researchers recommend that EFL teachers ask each student how and when they want to be corrected, because this varies considerably from one individual to another.(Cathcart and Olsen,1976).Peer and self-correction , are more effective than teacher correction , thus a good teacher will enlist assistance from the class or (idially) guide students in correcting their own mistakes rather than merely providing the correct form.

There are a number of things EFL teachers can do to encourage self –correction. Some of these devices are verbal and nonverbal. The verbal feedback may be indirect , such as asking “would you repeat that ?”(For some students this is ambiguos , for other ones it is a valuable face-saving technique). A more direct way is first for the teacher to repeat only the segment with the error or to repeat the word before the error.

Schachter(1981) is among those teachers who feel nonverbal correction via visual hand signal is more productive and less confusing than verbal signals. For example, forming a "T" with the hands signal tense error, forming an "A" with one's finger signal an article usage error.

Regardless of how a teacher decides to correct, certain guidelines apply. These include correcting selectively (e.g. Correcting only what has been taught and only what is incomprehensible, since it is impossible to correct everything) It is also important to give positive as well as negative feedback, and to handle public corrections in such way that no one in the class feel ridiculed because the teacher or classmate has made a correction.

3. Main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in the teaching process.

3.1. The lack of training English Teachers.

The quality of teaching has to do with better results in each learning activity, but speaking of quality of teaching, it is necessary to talk about Teachers' training as the organizer, conductor or facilitator of this process.

Brown optimistically remarks: "One of the most interesting things about teaching is that you never stop learning"(1994:32) every time it is more necessary to pay attention to the training of English teachers. Most of EFL teachers do not have a professional growth. Most of them, even are not graduated English teachers yet.

For example at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute there are four people teaching English. They have different characteristics such as:

- They are not graduated English Teacher.
- Two of them were in the United states for some months. (They do not have academic training in English)
 - Two of them are studying to become English Teacher and they have been teaching English for last three years.

At the present time they do not have more training than their everyday lessons or classes in the University. Their lesson plans reflect the order of the syllabus and the grammar focus some activities provoke the meaningful communication however the lack of students' motivation and the lack of authentic material of teaching learning made them fail.

3.2 The grammatical focus of the official Nicaraguan syllabus of English.

The official Nicaraguan syllabus of English has a deeply impact on the development of basic speaking skills, because EFL teachers follow the order of the syllabus and the focus on speaking is poorly.

Most of the time EFL teachers are focus on writing and reading and there is lack of communicative activities . The official Nicaraguan syllabus has been teaching for more than fifteen years and now day EFL students have different interest than students ten years ago so the official syllabus does not have impact on the teaching learning process.

It is necessary to change the official syllabus and applied one syllabus that lets EFL teachers achieve their goal and grow professionally.

3.3 The lack of material to teach speaking.

The lack of material to teach speaking do not let to the EFL teacher to get better results in the process .Any educative institution provide any kind of material. The teacher has to deal with that in the classroom.

For example at INSOL the enviroment of the classroom is appropriated, but all the classes are large. They have an average of forty-five students. The lack of textbooks does not help to work in extra-learning activities. The main textbooks used by teachers most of the lessons is “Pathways to English 2” as a source of activities according to the syllabus.

3.4 The short time of EFL class

The time is an important aspect on the teaching process. According to the official academic pensum of an EFL student in Nicaragua, English is being taught three times a week in periods of forty five minutes.(In some highschool two times, one of ninety minutes and the other of forty five.) On this period of time the EFL teacher has to play and important role to divide the minutes and offer each student a chance to speak.

Most of the lessons time is too short and rarely EFL teachers are focus on speaking.

3.5 The lack of support from parents.

The participation of parents in the teaching learning process is the most important aspect; because parents provide some kind of extra material to support the process and also they motivated students to achieve suuccessfully the goal.

However ,there is lack of support from parents, most of them do not like to get involve in this process because of their jobs, business etc.

!.6 The testing process

Speaking is probably the most difficult skill to test. It involves a combination of skills that may have no correlation with each other, and which do not lend themselves well to objective testing. (Kitao, 2001) There are not yet good answers to question about the criteria for testing these skills and the weighting of these factors. A speaker can produce all the right sounds but not make any sense, or have great difficulty with phonology and grammar and yet be able to get the message across.

Also success in speaking depends to a great extent on the listener. Comprehension of spoken material depends, among other factors, on the degree to which the listener is familiar with the speaker's accent and the degree to which they share background knowledge, and so what is a problem for a listener may not be a problem for another listener.

Another difficulty is separating the listening skills from the speaking skills. In most normal situations, there is an interchange between listening and speaking, and speaking appropriately depends, in part, on comprehending spoken input. This necessarily becomes a factor in the testing of speaking, and it is difficult to know whether you are testing purely speaking or speaking and listening together.

Testing speaking is also a particular problem when it is necessary to test large numbers of students as in an EFL class of tenth grade students (Forty five students in the class). In this situation it is necessary more time and this becomes a huge job. In spite of the difficulties inherent in testing speaking, a speaking test can be a source of beneficial backwash. If speaking is tested, unless it is tested at a very low level, such as reading aloud, this encourages the teaching of speaking classes.

In EFL test just a few items try to test speaking. the traditional paper pencil test is being used to test speaking. However teachers should consider whether this kind of test is accurate reflections of authentic language use.

When the goal of language instruction is the development of communicative competence, teachers can supplement traditional test with alternative assessment methods that provide more accurate measures of progress toward communication proficiency goals. This can be done by combining formative and summative types of assessment.

4. Main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in the learning process.

As any EFL teachers in any part of the world knows that makes EFL students speak is a great challenge. We found that there are many factors that affect the development of this skill and due to this reason EFL students do not develop in a meaningful and successful way this expressive skill. The Teaching Learning process is being addressed in a traditional way, following the order of the syllabus, lack of material to teach speaking and large EFL classes with shy students and a hard work for the teacher.

These factors are reflected in every day lessons and we know that affect the results of each activity. After a long period of observation, surveys and interviews with students and teachers we found that the main difficulties of tenth grade EFL students were determined by many factors such as: motivation, use of native language most of the time, mispronunciation, lack on vocabulary and grammar knowledge, lack on the domain of language functions and the traditional EFL class.

The results let us to look into this process that has to do with the teacher' training and student' interest as main characters but It also has to do with the school, the educative Institution (MECD) ,and the Parents.

4.1 Motivation

According to Deci and Ryan(1985) , intrinsic motivation is related to basic human needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness. Intrinsically motivated activities are those that the learner engages in for their own sake because of their value, interest and challenge. Such activities present the best possible opportunities for learning.

We refer to the intrinsic motivation as a fundamental base for each learning activity. Intrinsic motivation is the key to success. We found the first and basically main difficulty in EFL classroom is motivation and we believe all human beings need to feel motivated to do whatever thing, if there is no motivation there is no interest in what we have to do.

Most of EFL students at tenth grade are interested just on the grade. They are not concern about their proficiency in English because they assume that they will never use English after they finished the Secondary School studios. Also they do not want to learn English because it is not necessary in our context. These points of view do not let the development of the four basic skills, mainly speaking, although Teachers make a good job and try to capture students' interest and attention the lack of motivation decrease the proficiency of EFL students.

These negative feelings have to do with no external motivation, the context where they live, the opportunities they will have once they finished the Secondary school. We consider there are strong external factors that affect the teaching and learning process such as:

The beliefs students and parents have about English.

We know that the teachers' task is to promote motivation, especially intrinsic motivation because if we hope to achieve the goal, teachers and students as a team should be engaged in motivated activities in the classroom. What we need is to think about our context where we are teaching and every speaking activity that we plan should be authentic, meaningful and interesting. According to Rudder (2005) teachers should take in account these tips to promote intrinsic motivation.

4.1.1 Authenticity

This is an important part to take in account with whatever material the teacher use in the teaching process. While more authentic the material more meaningful will be the learning process. EFL teachers should choose news, letters from magazines, internet, etc... and then they should make an authentic practice on group and pair work to get involve in a real communication through information gap activities and role plays.

It is very important to choose the authentic material according to the level. Due to the lack of material we consider EFL teachers should translate and adapt some material to create an authentic class. Discussions, debates and expressions of opinions are just some of the techniques that EFL teachers should apply and promote in the classroom.

4.1.2 Learning

Learning should be meaningful and every learning activity should be connected with the previous knowledge the student already has. This process should be a mixture of strategies (speaking) and tasks to improve the communicative competence. Teachers should give a continuous feedback. This feedback should be individualized and formative.

EFL students need to improve their ability, so teachers should focus on the connection of every stage of the process.

4.1.3 Interest

The interest is an important part in every learning activity. EFL teachers should promote interest through the discussion of hot topics about celebrity personalities (actors, singers, athletes) strange news (true stories from newspapers, internet, magazine)

We also suggest EFL teachers research for information about their community. And before to discuss any information explain the importance and the goal.

4.1.4 Variety

EFL teachers should design a variety of learning activities. These activities should be short and meaningful. We as EFL teachers should design them and think about students' practice (controlled, guided, communicative), evaluation (alternative assessment, self assessment).

EFL teachers also should think about learner style (visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile) and in one of the points of modern methodologies: the Multiple Intelligences. Through speaking activities we should promote: linguistic, creative, interpersonal intelligences that allow EFL students to get involved in the process.

As we have seen the lack of motivation and material to teach speaking should be solved with an active participation of the English teachers getting material according to their own context, however they have busy schedule to do that.

4.2 Use of native language most of the time.

According to some modern approaches the use of the “mother tongue” most of the time, in this case (Spanish) in the classroom is allowed. that does not interfere in the learning of the foreign language. We agree that we as EFL teachers should use it when it is extremely necessary. However we find that most of the EFL students do not use English to ask and answer to the teacher, just a low percent of the class understand and use the new language.

The use of Spanish most of the time in an EFL classroom affects the teaching and learning process, because in this case the classroom is the unique place where learners have the opportunity of using the language. If the Nicaraguan official syllabus of English has the goal of developing the four basic skills of the language, it is necessary to train teachers and provide them with the useful tools to make a better job.

EFL students should be more responsible with the process and with the teachers. As a team they should promote the use of the new language, that will help them to improve their speaking skills and therefore their communicative competence. Also if the classroom is the unique place where they use the new language, all interactions among its members should be in English.

We agree that this task is not just of the teacher on this level, because this process must begin with the first years of studios, teaching them some basic language functions, commands, useful vocabulary and the most important to interact with the teacher and classmates.

We strongly agree that the use of Spanish should be avoided in the EFL classrooms because they must use the new language basically to talk about language. Teachers should get involved in the learning activities using English the whole class time. As we know this is a complicated task due to the students' behavior and parents' reactions so we suggest that we should get involved in the teaching learning process of English.

The work is to convince EFL learners that if they want to get better results and if we want to achieve the goals we should create a real English environment in the classroom. "We teach who we are" (Hooks, 1994:42). It is important to think about the way we teach because that has a deep impact on students' learning. Sometimes we want the learners to have a certain level of proficiency in English Language however we have to remain that in much part this is the challenge and the task should be focused on the goal.

4.3 Pronunciation.

"Pronunciation has often been viewed as a skill in second language learning that is most resistant to improvement and therefore the least useful to teach" (Rajadurai, 2001:10). Teaching pronunciation is not the specific task of EFL teacher therefore a lot of pronunciation problems is the result of this cause. According to the English syllabus to teach pronunciation is an integrated task that begins with the first year of secondary school and goes on. That means along the five years EFL teachers focus on pronunciation: vowels sound, consonants sound and some intonation patterns and stress of compound nouns and three syllable words, however this is not a systematic process according to the syllabus and teachers lack of material (tapes, videos).

We found that mispronunciation is a great problem because EFL students are afraid to speak. Teachers assumed that it is a hard work to teach pronunciation mainly stress, vowels sounds and intonation with a large class of forty five students. EFL teachers can not assess them in a systematic way. The lack of support material do not let to get a standar English.

Shyness of some EFL students do not let them to improve this difficulty. They are afraid to speak because they do not want to be laughed by the rest of the class. Some students complain because will not be understood.

However Teachers consider that in any EFL class around the world the mispronunciation will not be an obstacle when learners have the enough motivation to speak, because there are some simple answer that are not so far of using in everyday lessons.

They also agree on the need of changing the way pronunciation is taught in an EFL class, because It is an important part of the language that has to be taught with a different focus. We suggest to use the phonetic symbol alphabet and familiarize the students, so in this way they can improve their pronunciation.

Also EFL teachers should get involve them in the context because context has a deep impact on the meaningful learning of each skill. They can listen songs or watch TV in a systematic way, (assigning them different task to talk about) and therefore improve their pronunciation.

Another important thing that teachers should remain is the practice. Every lesson should have some minutes to teach pronunciation focus on all of those aspects that students have problems such as : stress, intonation, vowel sounds.

The teacher also has to explain to the students that they will have their own pronunciation and they will be aware of making mistakes because all we are human beings .We consider that EFL students have to be expose most of the time interacting with the purpose of improving pronunciation and help each other on their performance.

We believe that the most difficult point on this task is learn the different sounds that we do not have in the native language ,so EFL teachers have to focus on this point.It does not matter what the syllabus or textbook say, the important nowadays is teaching according our own principles.Pronunciation is after all an active part of the new language and EFL teachers should teach it in any time of the lesson.

4.3.1 Varieties of Pronunciation.

No language is uniform,every language varies in different ways as a results of different factors. This is true of all levels of language and not just pronunciation. The most obviuos factor in language variation geography; languages varies from area to area and this accounts for what we call” regional dialectcs”. The pronunciation aspect of dialect is refferred to as accent and we have to decide which accent or accents are important and wich one will form the basis of our teaching.

A language also varies gradually in time-generation varieties. Our grandparents do not speak in quite the way we do; there are differences in pronunciation.A language also varies socially; there are social varieties. People in the so-called professions do not talk in the same way as member of the working class.Pronunciation is the most obvious clue to social background.A doctor and a docker from the same area will be expected to speak differently , and it would certainly sound very strange to hear a trade union official speaking an Anglican bishop.Language varies between men and women – varieties based on sex . these varieties of pronunciation should be analyze in the classroom and exploit them to have a topic to talk and learn that this is the reason why pronunciation is a distinctive trail among people from different background.

We suggest that EFL teachers and students should focus on common problems that are likely to occur:

- Difficulty in pronouncing sounds which do not exist in the students' own language.

e.g /ə/ /ð/ /θ/

- Confusion of similar sounds.

e.g /i/ /i:/ or /b/ /p/

- Use of simple vowels instead of diphthongs

e.g /i:/ instead of /iə/

- Difficulty in pronouncing consonant clusters.

e.g /desk/ /fifth/

- Tendency to give all syllables equal stress and a "flat" intonation.

According to Doff (1988) there is no single 'correct' answer for these difficulties but it is important to follow these steps:

- Say the sound clearly in isolation (so that students can focus on it) and in one or two words, and for students to repeat the sound, in chorus and individually.
- If students confuse two similar sounds, it is obviously useful to contrast them so the students can hear the difference clearly.
- If students have difficulty in producing a particular sound (usually because it does not exist in their own language), it is often very useful to describe how it is pronounced, as long as this can be done in a way that students understand.

- Writing words on the board is not necessary, and could confuse the students- the focus should be on pronunciation , not on spelling.

4.3.2 Intonation.

Intonation is the music of a language (Doff, 1987:114)The way the voice goes up and down as we speak. It is very important in expressing meaning , and especially in showing our feelings(surprise,anger,disbeliefs, gratitude).However intonation patterns are quite complex and it is better for some students to acquire them naturally rather than try to learn them consciously.

For teaching oral English at a fairly low leve, teachers need to be aware of two basic intonation patterns:

Rising Tone: used in asking Yes/No questions, and to express surprise, disbeliefs, etc.The voice rises sharply on the stressed syllable.

Really? Is he your friend? Do you want some tea?

Falling tone: used for normal statements, commands and for WH- questions . The voice rises slightly earlier in the sentence and then falls on the key word stressed.

A ticket to London, please. What's your name?

Practising stress and intonation.

The easiest way for students to practice stress and intonation is repetition .If the focus is on pronunciation , traditional “repetition drills” , which are often boring for students to do , can be made interesting and challenging ;students are not asked simply to repeat sentence, but to repeat it using a particular stress and intonation pattern.

For this to be effective , it is important for EFL teachers to:

- ✓ Give a good model of the sentence themselves , saying it at a normal speed , making a clear difference between stressed and unstressed syllables and using natural intonation.
- ✓ Indicate the stress and intonation clearly , using gestures.
- ✓ Make sure that students pay attention to stress and intonation when they repeat the sentence.

One way to help students use natural intonation is to practice saying the sentence in sections, starting with the end of the sentence and gradually working backwards to the beginning , this technique is known as back-chaining.

The reason for starting at the end rather than the beginning is that it is the last stressed syllable that determine the intonation pattern of the whole sentence . So by repeating the end of the sentence, the correct intonation is preserved.

Give a demonstration to show how back-chaining can be used as part of a repetition drill.

- i) Say the whole sentence. Show the stress and intonation using gesture.
- ii) Students repeat , starting from the end .
- iii) Group of students repeat the whole sentence , then individual students.

This technique should be applied in an EFL class and students will improve their stress and intonation problems. Also they develop more fluency that allow them to speak clearly.

4.4 The lack on vocabulary knowledge

A good knowledge of English vocabulary is important for anyone who wants to use the language, it refers to the vocabulary knowledge of active speaking vocabulary, that is, words that the speaker is able to use in speaking. (Kitao, 2001:1). Vocabulary is an important part of language and everybody knows that it is not necessary to know all the words of English language however it is necessary to know most of those useful words that are common and allow to communicate.

The knowledge of vocabulary an EFL student has is an important factor that affect the development of speaking skills. To speak the most basic are words.

The acquisition of new vocabulary let to express in a more fluently way, in order to do that it is necessary to be motivated to learn vocabulary and use it to speak.

For example .

Most of EFL students of tenth grade try to speak but they fail because of poorly vocabulary. The way of teaching vocabulary is failing because students can not remember the words they have learnt some years ago. That happen because there was no interest or a systematic feedback.

EFL teachers and students have to work on this aspect. Students have the responsibility of improving themselves their own knowledge of vocabulary by using dictionary, reading different material available, and using it on the assignments.

Teachers should focus on the knowledge of those useful words that are very related to students' interest. Also it is important to use different techniques to teach vocabulary such as: realia, visual aids, mimics, games and the most important a systematic feedback.

These activities allow students get more involve and be aware of the needs of learning vocabulary to achieve the goal of speaking. Another important point is teacher has to focus just on a small numbers of words(5-8) and use them in the different learning activities. This will let to the students have a more enjoyable learning of vocabulary.

4.5 The lack on the domain of basic language functions.

Any EFL teacher knows that the Nicaraguan official EFL syllabus lack on a focus on basic functions of language that allow students to develop their communicative competence. If the goal is to speak the syllabus should take into account the cognitive and sociocultural needs of the students ; the community in which the school is located , training, language ability of the teacher and the present and foreseeable future needs of the society in which students live.

In summary it is necessary to take into account the context , because context has a deep impact in the teaching learning process. This difficulty is interfering directly on the development of the basic English skills , specifically speaking skills because communicative behavior (spoken English) is always situationally conditioned and therefore subject to infinitive variations.

Finnochiaro(2001)points out the following variations:

- The functions that language serves in real –world everyday use.
- The varieties of language possible within each of the functions.
- The shared sociocultural allusions (which some writers have called presuppositions) necessary to a complete understanding of the acceptability or appropriatness of oral or written communication.

EFL teachers and students need to be aware of what does English as Foreign Language mean, because most of the time they just follow the syllabus and pay less attention to the context where it is developed. That means they are not working on the development of two functions of language that enhance learners to develop their communicative competence.

According to Finnociario(2001) if the goal is to speak learners should be prepared to use basically , two of the principal functions of language: personal and interpersonal. The personal function refers to the ability to express our inner most thoughts as well as the gamut of emotions . The interpersonal functions enables us to establish and mediate desirable social and working relationships.

These language functions enables to interact and communicate in the different speaking situations. These two functions are basic because they are related to the daily life.

The official Nicaraguan Syllabus promote language functions with a focus on grammar however EFL students need to know how to respond to a situation of communication in real life. The lack on the domain of functions influence the behavior when they speak. They are not ready to express their thoughts and interact in a natural way as they do in their mother tongue, also they do not use the appropriated phrases and expressions according to each situation.

In order to help learners teachers should:

- ✓ Be focus on those functions that enable learner to keep a conversation going.(greeting, clarification. asking and answering etc.)
- ✓ Use the functions most of the time during the classtime.

- ✓ Teach them like part of our every day life and not as if they were an obligation to be learnt.

- ✓ Give feedback on those functions that you consider learners should use most.

- ✓ Promote the personal and interpersonal functions as basic elements to get involve in speaking activities.

The domain of language functions also is a task of every student interested in a high proficiency of thir own speaking skills, therefore a good and interesting way to improve them is through reading or listening of conversations between native speakers, using books , TV, or cassettes.

A single sentence might incorporate many different functions simultaneously . It is the understanding of how to use linguistic forms to achieve these functions that comprises the matter of foreign language learning.

These are examples of functions to be taught:

- 1.Greetings, inviting, accepting.
- 2.Congratulating, flattering , seducing, charming.
- 3.Interrupting, requesting etc.

4.6 Lack on basic grammar knowledge.

Grammatical knowledge allows to generate sentences. At the same time, though we must something to say, we must have meanings that we can select from when we wish to express these meaning. There is no doubt that grammar and vocabulary go together, it is necessary words to express the thoughts and it is necessary grammar to do that in the appropriate order.

The sounds and sounds patterns, the basic units of meaning, such as words and the rules to combine them to form new sentences constitute the grammar of a language.

The grammar, then, is what we know. It represents our linguistic competence. To understand the nature of this internalized, unconscious set of rules, which is part of every grammar of every language.

Every human being who speaks a language knows its grammar. When linguist wish to describe a language, they attempt to describe the grammar of the language that exist in the mind of its speaker. There may be some differences among speakers knowledge, but there must be shared knowledge, because, it is this grammar that makes it possible to communicate through language.

There are two model about grammar:

Descriptive and Prescriptive. The descriptive grammar describes the linguistic knowledge. it explains how it is possible for us to speak and understand, and it tells what we know about sounds, words, phrases and sentences. Prescriptive grammar prescribes rather than describe the rules, it tells what rules are necessary to know.

Teaching grammar state explicitly the rules of the language, list the words and their pronunciation . It assumes that the students already knows one language and compares the grammar of the target language with the grammar of the native language.

It is very important to point out that the grammar knowledge EFL students have about their native language because this knowledge is the base to build the new grammar.Those EFL students with good knowledge of about English grammar were those with high proficiency on the domain of the grammar of their own native language.

Most of EFL students have a good knowledge about grammar(rules) however they do that in a mechanical way, just some of them can explain what they do clearly.Some of them are not worried about grammar because of the focus on structures and accuracy form and they consider the most important is to speak.

One of the problem is they use short sentences and short answers in cases where they should offer and explanation . Another problem is the use most of the time of structures in simple present when they have to use other tenses.As it has been said in this part is very important the vocabulary students have learnt because sometimes they are not able to express their thoughts appropriatly.

There are a lot of grammar exercises most of the time in written form.EFL teachers and students ae not concerned on grammatical mistakes when they speak because they consider the most important is to get involve in the communicative activity and interact using English.In the process it is necessary the feedback and assessment more systematically.

To improve the grammar knowledge of EFL students , teachers should pay attention to these tips:

- Grammar should be presented gradually in a step by step progression.

for example:

If students do not master the simple present tense, do not explain them the present progressive.

- Reference to students' native language should be used to establish the right connection.

Teachers should make a connection between the grammar knowledge students already have and the grammar of the new language.

- Teachers should not adopt the perspective of a linguist or grammarian who is describing a language scientifically, but rather that of a foreign language instructor who is addressing an audience that lacks formal knowledge and control of how the target language works and control in using it.
- Grammatical explanations should be short , clear, and concise. A deductive mode of presentation, should be used when the grammar is complex or difficult , and inductive mode of expression should be used when grammar is fairly simple.

Understanding explanation is essential in a cognitive oriented method, however understanding alone is not enough . Therefore, using mechanical and meaningful exercises is essential.

The formal , explicit teaching of rules may be appropriate when the essential conditions for language are not met. That means EFL teachers should review the way they have been teaching grammar . Students should be more interested on the domain of this part of language to achieve a better proficiency in their skills, Teachers should focus on communicative functions because they help students how to use the target language to perform an specific task , such as to give advice, make suggestions, describe, request, compare, and so on.

4.7 The anxiety of Traditional EFL class.

Recently, it has been introducing new approaches, techniques to teach English, however there is no a systematic assessment that let to monitor every EFL teacher and class. There is a lot of information about the role of a teacher in the teaching learning process but it is important to point out that most of the time the EFL classroom does not have a good social climate in which the teacher is a facilitator due to the lack of material and training of the EFL teacher.

Some activities oriented by the teacher are boring and students get anxious. David and Rinvoluceri(1990) look at the problem of anxiety by examining the classroom environment and explaining circumstances in which students feel insecure. Some classroom situations make them feel that they are being judged, they are isolated and they lack of control.

Similar feelings may occur if the classmates are not willing to listen to one another, openly show lack of interest, or interrupt the speaker. The teacher's explanations, if unclear or unsatisfactory, may lead to comparable frustration and the students feel they do not have control over the learning of the new language.

EFL teachers' task is to create a good atmosphere in the classroom where students feel confident and participate in the learning activities freely.

In order to help EFL students, teachers should:

- Build cohesive group and have a positive atmosphere. Group members should be interested in each other and feel they have something in common.
- Established rules that compromise each member of the classroom. They have a sense of direction as a group and they should be able to define their goals in group as well as individual.
- Have a positive attitude to themselves as learners, to the language and culture being studied and to the learning experience.

5. Communicative activities and strategies.

People learn to speak by speaking, so EFL teachers and students should speak using English most of the classtime. In order to do this, it is necessary to introduce communicative activities and strategies that allow teachers and students interact using the new language.

English can be used in teaching the lesson itself : giving examples, introducing a text, asking questions etc. It can also be used for activities which surround the lesson: checking attendance, telling students commands, controlling the class, chatting etc., however the most important is English can be used in every communicative activity in the classroom.

The most useful communicative activities to teach speaking with good results in an EFL class among other are:

1. Discussion.
2. Role plays
3. Speech
4. Descriptions
5. Information gap.

These activities are designed by teachers to provoke oral interaction among the members of the classroom. Students enjoy them and they learn in a real English environment.

Discussion

Strategy:

- Students choose an interesting topic freely and talk about it.
- The classmate listen the point of view about the aspect of the topic and get involve in the discussion , expressing their own points of view.
- Teachers can suggest topics and beginning to discuss.
- The class choose a moderator.

Roleplay

Strategy:

-The teacher give students a situation of communication and students takes different roles to act according to their functions.

-Another variation is let students to create by their own the role play.

Speech

Strategy:

- students choose a topic of their interest and expose it in front on the class.
- The students have to manage the time. (2 minutes)
- The classmates ask the speaker about the aspect of the topic he is talking.
-

1.4 Description.

Strategy:

- Students and teachers choose pictures from magazines, newspaper or other material.
- In group of three students describe one picture in the following order:
 - Talking in different tenses
 - student A: describe the picture using simple past
 - student B: describe the picture using the simple present.
 - student C: describe the picture using the future.
 - Teacher can explain the tenses before the activity .

1.5 Information gap

Strategy:

Students work in pairs to create a communicative need the , the two students in each pair are giving different information.

Students' task is interact using English , sometimes using an specific structure and fill out the information.

When EFL teachers and students get involve in communicative activities there ae some factors very important that determind the success of the activity.

Some important guidelines to take into account provided by English Teaching Magazine Forum(2002):

- ✓ Cultivated a relaxed atmosphere.

A relaxed atmosphere is conducive to free expressions. The skillfull teacher can create an atmosphere in which the students feel enough at ease to struggle through a situation to find the words to express himself/herself.

In order to do that EFL teachers should:

Learn students' names.

Smile.

Speak naturally.

Students should talk, not take notes.

Everyone should use English.

- ✓ Be alert and foster alertness.

since the activities provides practice in both speaking and understanding what is said, the teacher should stay alert and see to it that te attention of the students does not wander.

- ✓ Be enthusiastic and engender enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm is one of the most important factors in a speaking activity. students should be excited at the chance to use the new language for purpose of communication.

- ✓ Be patient.

Patience , necessary in any encounter with students, is especially important in a speaking activity. The teacher should put himself in the place of the student. The teacher should , therefore, give the students the time they need. At the same time, he should monitor class participation to see that no individual monopolizes the time.

- ✓ Listen.

The teacher should dominate the activity. He should try to get students to speak as much as possible. With some activities, the teachers' role is merely to be a listener, with other he should play a more active role in order to keep the conversation going.

- ✓ Making correction.

This is an especially delicate area in speaking activity. Students tend to insist that they want to be corrected . It seems important, however, EFL teachers should avoid correct students while they are talking.

Communicative activities and strategies makes an EFL class the appropriated place to learn English, where fluency is more important than accuracy. That means that the goal is to create an atmosphere in which students can talk freely.

In order to improve the process of teaching learning process of speaking skills teachers should use an evaluation process that takes into account that communication is based on interaction and is creative and also unpredictable.

EFL teachers should focus on the summative and formative assessment.

Summative assessment.

- ✓ Takes place at the end of a predetermined period of instruction.
- ✓ Rates the students in relation to an external standard for correctness. (How many right answers are given).
- ✓ It is the approach taken by most traditional and standardized tests.

Formative assessment.

- ✓ Takes place on an ongoing basis as instruction is proceeding.
- ✓ Rates the student in terms of functional ability to communicate, using criteria that the student has help to identify.
- ✓ Helps students recognize ways of improving their learning.
- ✓ It is the approach taken by alternative assessment methods.

It is important to assess this process (Testing) because it allows the teacher to reorganize the teaching learning process and evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and strategies applied.

The most common tasks to test speaking are: Reading aloud, Conversational exchanges, Using visual material, Oral interview. Of course the students should be familiar with these tasks before to be tested.

EFL teachers should also test speaking by:

- ✓ Continuous assessment: The teacher gives a mark for participation over a series of lessons.
- ✓ Short oral test: The teacher calls each student out in turn and tests him or her on a prepared topic. Each test lasts 30-60 seconds.

Conclusions

The main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in the teaching learning process of tenth grade EFL students at Sor Oliva Lombardi Nacional Institute:

In the Teaching Process are:

1. The lack of Training English Teachers.
2. The Grammmatical Focus of the official Nicaraguan Syllabus of English.
3. The lack of material to teach speaking.
4. The short time of EFL class.
5. The lack of support from parents.

In the Learning Process are:

1. The attitude of some EFL students that refuse to use the Foreign Language meaningfully.
2. The lack of motivation.
3. The use of native Language most of the time.
4. Mispronunciation.
5. The lack on vocabulary and grammar knowledge.
6. The lack on the domain of basic Language Functions.
7. The anxiety of Traditional EFL class.

APPENDIXES

Annexe 1.Survey

**NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF NICARAGUA.
CURM**

Survey to EFL students of tenth grade.

Institute:_____ **Level**_____

Dear English Student the purpose of this survey is to establish the main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skill, please read each statement and according to your experience choose an answer.

1.Lack of Motivation. Yes._____ No._____

2. Mispronunciation. Yes_____ No._____

3. Lack on the domain of basic language function. Yes._____ No._____

4.Lack of Basic grammar knowledge. Yes_____ NO_____

5.Lack of vocabulary Knowledge. Yes._____ No._____

6.Traditional EFL (English) Classes. Yes._____ No._____

7.The use of Native Language most of the time. Yes_____ No_____

8.Others_____

Thank you very much.

Annexe2

**NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF NICARAGUA.
CURM.**

**Interview to EFL English Teachers at National Sor Oliva Lombardi
Institute.**

General Information.

Years of Experience_____ **Level of Teaching**_____
Training: Lic._____ **MEP**_____ **English Student**_____

Dear English Teacher the purpose of this interview is to establish the main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skill, according to your experience answer these questions.

1. What are the most useful activities to develop speaking skill in an EFL-Class?
2. How do you consider are your speaking activities in every lesson? (Meaningful, Boring, enjoyable) Why?
3. What do you think are the main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skill in EFL-Class?
4. .How often do you expose to your students to speaking activities during the class? (sometimes, seldom, never, always) Why?
5. Can your students communicate their basic ideas using English Language?
6. . What recommendations could you give us to develop basic speaking skill an EFL-Class?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Annexe 3

**NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF NICARAGUA.
CURM.
OBSERVATION GUIDE IN THE CLASSROOM.**

General information.

Name of the watcher. _____ Year _____

Institution _____ Number of students _____

Subject _____ Time _____

Topic _____

Aim _____

Write Yes or No for each statement.

1. Initial

Use english to orientate the initial activities. _____

Explain the aim of the lesson and the importance. _____

Students use English. _____

2. Development

Students and teacher interact using English _____

Teacher promotes the participation _____

Student are interested in the learning activities orientated by the teacher _____

Team-work _____

Feedback and Assement _____

2. Evaluation

Students and teacher get the aim of the lesson _____

Students express their doubts freely. _____

Comments _____

MANAGING YOUR CLASS: WHO SAYS IT'S DIFFICULT?

By Carmen Ma. Castro Z.

Self evaluation questionnaire

This is for your personal reflection to help you evaluate your teaching style and classroom management. If you are honest with yourself, you may discover where you can improve as a teacher

My own attitude:

- ✓ Do I enjoy teaching? do my students seem to enjoy the class?
- ✓ do I seem relaxed?
- ✓ Do I show an interest in both the learning and the personal problems of my students?
- ✓ Do I generate responsive enthusiasm in the class?
- ✓ Do I smile showing a friendly attitude?
- ✓ Do I frequently make eye contact with the students?
- ✓ do I know my students' names? Do I talk to them before or after class?
- ✓ Is my reaction to students' errors encouraging or discouraging?
- ✓ Am I sarcastic? Do I shout for no reason?
- ✓ Is any humor in my class?

Classroom management

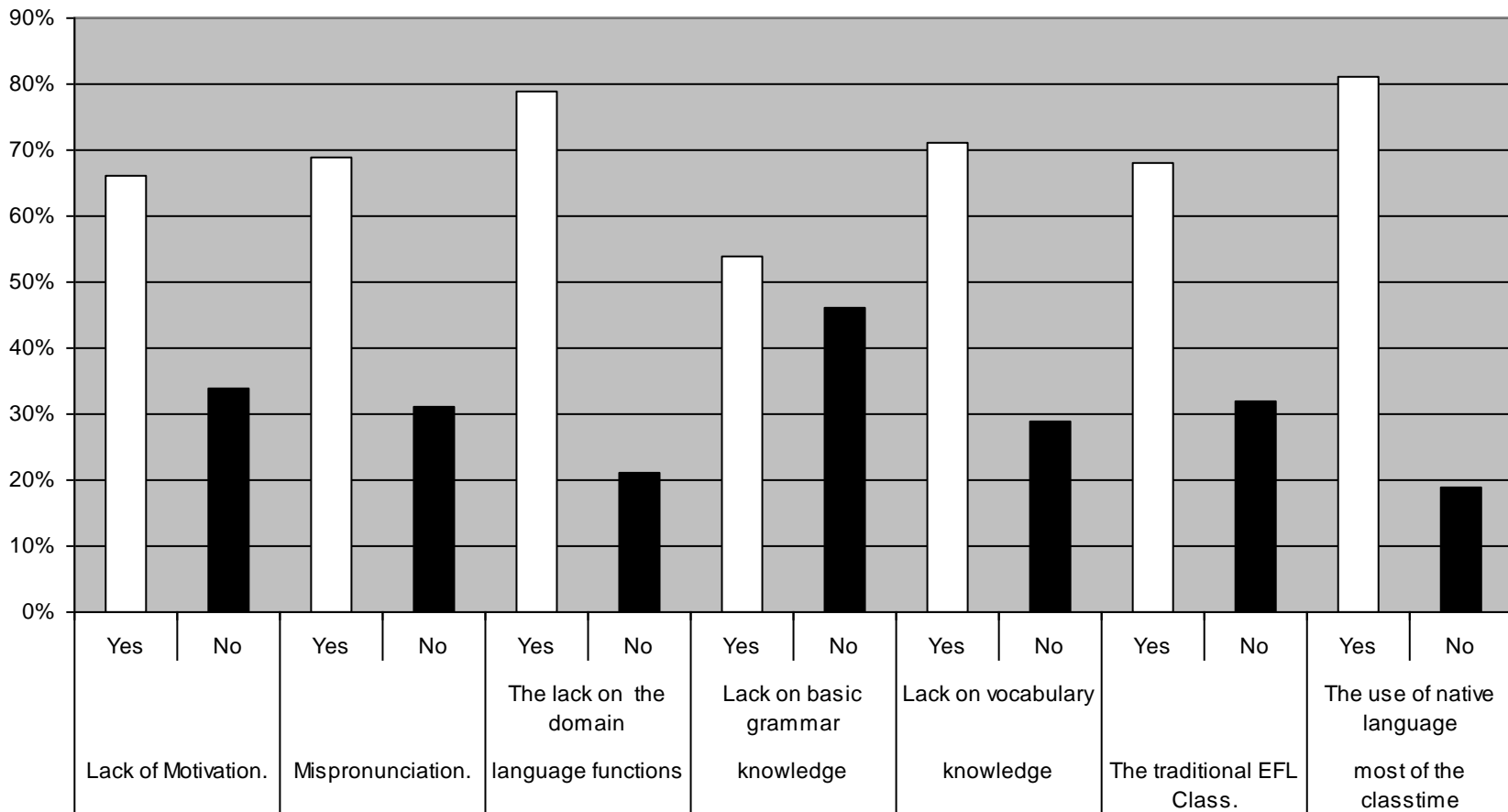
- ✓ Does my voice vary sufficiently to make meaning clear and to command a student's attention?
- ✓ Do I move around or do I just stand still (or sit behind the desk)?
- ✓ Do I look at each other from their seats?
- ✓ Does everybody know what they have to do before the activity begins?
- ✓ Do my activities last too long (or too short)? How do I know the timing is right?
- ✓ Do I let students sit around with nothing to do?
- ✓ Do I use the board to record useful information? do I allow Students enough time to copy from the board ?
- ✓ Do I take advantage of group or pair work to maximize student's talking time?
- ✓ Do I monitor students when they are working in groups or pairs?
- ✓ Do I give students individual attention?
- ✓ Do I tend to ask questions only to the fast learners?

Teaching strategies:

- ✓ What percentage of class time do I talk compared to the students talking time?
- ✓ What percentage of time do I speak in the target language?
- ✓ Do I relate the context of the material being studied to the student's personal life or Nicaraguan reality?
- ✓ Do I vary the types of activities or do I always follow the same routine?
- ✓ Do I give students positive feedback (praise) when correcting them?
- ✓ Do the students get the opportunity to use English to talk about topics that interest them?

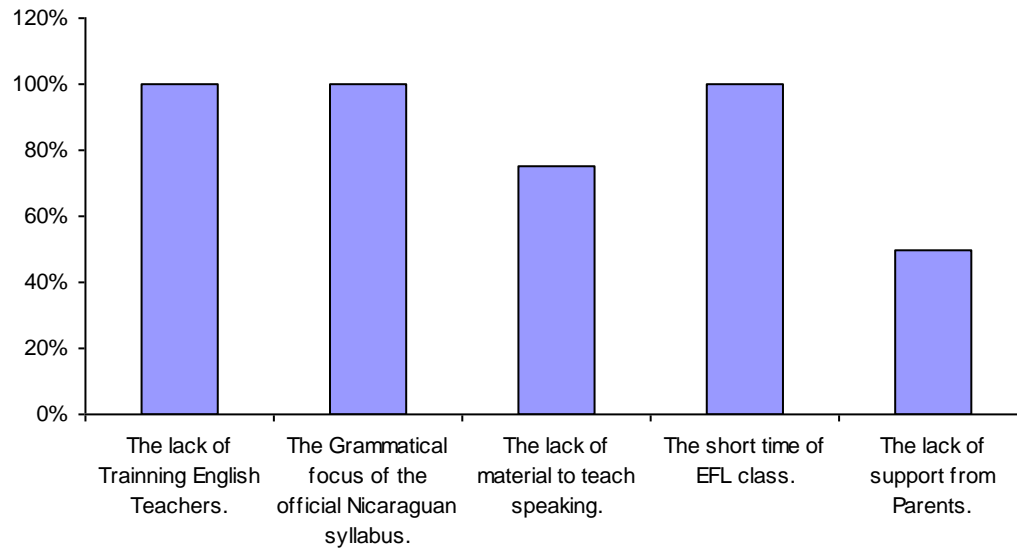
Annexe5

Main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in the learning process of tenth grade EFL students.



Annexe 6

Main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in the Teaching process of tenth grade EFL students.



Annexe 6

Table of results to the survey applied to eighty Tenth Grade EFL students at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute.

Indicators:

A: Lack of Motivation.

B: Mispronunciation.

C: The lack on the domain of basic language functions.

D:Lack of Basic Grammar Knowledge.

E: Lack on vocabulary knowledge.

F: The Traditional EFL class.

G: The use of Native Language most of the classtime.

H: Other.

Codigo.	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1	X		X	x	X		x			x	x		x		
2	X		X			x		x		x		x	x		
3		X		x		x		x	x		x		x		
4	X		X		X			x	x		x		x		
5		X	X		X		x		x		x		x		
6	X		X			x		x		x	x		x		x
7	X			x	X		x		x		x		x		
8	X		X			x		x		x	x		x		
9	X		X		X		x		x		x		x		
10	X			x		x	x		x			x	x		
11		X	X		X		x		x		x		x		
12		X		x		x	x		x			x	x		
13	X		X		X			x	x			x	x		
14	X		X		X		x			x	x			x	
15	X		X		X		x		x		x			x	
16	X		X		X		x			x	x			x	
17		X	X		X			x		x		x		x	x
18	X		X		X			x	x			x	x		
19	X			x	X			x		x		x	x		
20		X	X		X			x	x			x	x		
21	X		X			x	x		x			x	x		
22	x		X			x		x		x	x		x		
23	X		X		X		x			x	x		x		x
24		X		x	X		x		x		x		x		
25	X		X		X		x			x	x		x		
26	X			x	X			x	x		x		x		
27		X	X		X		x			x	x		x		x
28	X			x	X		x			x	x		x		
29	X			x	X			x		x		x	x		
30		X		x	X			x		x		x	x		
31	X		X			x		x	x			x		x	x
32		X		x		x	x			x	x		x		
33	X		X			x		x	x			x		x	
34		X	X		X		x		x		x		x		
35	X			x				x	x		x		x		
36	X		X		X			x		x	x		x		
37	X		X			x	x		x		x			x	
38		X	X		X		x			x		x	x		
39	X			x		x		x	x		x		x		
40		X	X		X			x	x		x		x		
41	X		X			x	x			x	x			x	
42		X	X		X			x		x		x		x	
43	X			x	X			x	x			x		x	
44	X		X		X		x		x			x	x		
45		X	X		X		x			x		x	x		
46	X		X		X		x		x		x		x		
47	X		X		X			x	x		x		x		
48		X		x		x	x		x		x		x		
49	X		X			x	x			x	x		x		
50		X	X			x	x		x		x		x		
51	X		X		X			x	x			x	x		

52		X	X		X			x	x		x		x		
53	X			x	X			x		x				x	
54		X	X		X		x		x		x			x	
55	X		X		X			x	x		x			x	
56		X		x	X		x		x			x		x	
57	X			x	X		x		x			x	x		
58	X		X		X			x		x		x	x		
59		X		x	X		x		x			x	x		
60	X		X		X		x		x		x		x		
61	X			x	X			x	x		x		x		
62		X		x	X			x	x		x		x		
63	x		X		X		x		x		x		x		
64	x		X		X			x	x		x		x		
65		X	X		X		x		x		x		x		
66	x		X		X			x	x		x		x		
67	x		X		X			x	x		x		x		
68		X	X		X		x		x		x		x		
69	X			x	X			x	x		x		x		x
70	x			x	X			x	x		x			x	
71		x	X		X			x	x		x		x		
72		X	X		X		x		x		x		x		x
72	x		X		X		x		x			x	x		
74	x		X		X		x		x			x	x		
75	x			x	X		x		x			x	x		
76	x			x	X			x	x			x	x		
77		X	X		X			x		x	x		x		
78	x		X		X			x		x	x		x		
79	x		X		X		x		x			x	x		
80	x		X		X			x	x		x		x		x
RESULTADOS	53	27	55	25	63	27	43	37	57	23	54	26	65	15	8
	66%	34%	69%	31%	79%	21%	54%	46%	71%	29%	68%	32%	81%	19%	10%

Annexe 7

Table of the results of the interview to EFL teachers of tenth grade at Sor Oliva Lombardi National Institute.

Questions.	Answers given.
1. What are the most useful activities do you apply to develop speaking skills?	-Oral activities. -Discussion, guessing games, conversations, talking about topics.
2. How do you consider are your speaking activities and every lesson? (meaningful, Boring, enjoyable) Why?	Meaningful, because students interact using English. They practice what they have learnt.
3. What do you think are the main difficulties on the development of basic speaking skills in an EFL class?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students refuse to use the new language meaningfully. They are just worried about their grade. ■ The lack of training English Teachers. ■ The grammatical focus of the official Nicaraguan syllabus of English. ■ The short time of EFL Class. ■ The lack of support from parents.
How often do you expose to your students to speaking activities during the class? Why?	Sometimes because we focus and other skills.
Can your students communicate their basic ideas using English?	Some of them. Not all because they are shy and refuse to use it.
What recommendation could you give us to develop basic speaking skills in an EFL Class?	Teachers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work focus on vocabulary, pronunciation . • Introduce language Functions. • Practice a lot of conversation. • Share experiences with other teachers.