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RECINTO "LEONEL RUGAMA"

DEPARTAMENTO DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN Y HUMANIDADES.

Título

Maximizing oral production in EFL classes through cooperative learning strategies aided with technology in 07th-grade students at Francisco Luis Espinoza National Institute in the morning shift in the second semester of 2019.

Authors

Ena Anielka Suárez Rugama   enasuarez9@gmail.com

Johana Katherine Rosales Moreno   katherinersls13@gmail.com

Keyla Nasareli Galeano Irías   k.galeanoi@yahoo.com

This article presents a qualitative study carried out at the Francisco Luis Espinoza National Institute in the city of Estelí, Nicaragua. The objective of this study was to apply technology-assisted cooperative learning strategies to maximize production in seventh-grade students in the subject of English as a foreign language. The results obtained demonstrated that both the cooperative strategies implemented and the technology succeed in increasing and motivating the oral participation of students in English classes.

I.   Introduction

The fundamental purpose of this research is to present technology-assisted cooperative learning strategies to maximize the oral production of students of English as a foreign language.

In this sense, three cooperative learning strategies were selected: Numbered head together, Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share which allow for group and individual student participation. Also, technological resources available in the study center such as a computer, speakers, projector were used, which proved to be adequate to improve the students' interest in the class and their discipline.

Speaking is one of the main needs of English language learners, as it allows us to communicate with others. Unfortunately, traditional teaching methods, poor motivation in secondary school and students' fears are some of the obstacles that prevent this from being achieved.

With this study, we intend to contribute to the development of this particular skill, since as students of English we know the need to be able to interact with other speakers of English, for this reason, we raise the following research question: How can cooperative learning strategies aided with technology be applied in English classes to enhance oral production using the available resources?

II. Literature review

Many factors contribute to the market for Teaching English as a Foreign Language The historical factor offers the legacy of the old British Empire that took the language around the world. The political factor gives the current dominance of the USA. Science and technology have developed with English at the forefront. Also, there's a need for a global language to make international communications smoother, and tools such as the worldwide web truly accessible around the planet (Maxom, 2009).

Bygates (1991) claims that oral production is the ability to produce sentences in different types of situations.

Cooperative learning method is defined as a system of concrete teaching and learning techniques, rather than an approach, in which students are active agents in the process of learning through small group structures so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (Johnson D., Johnson, Stanne, & Garibaldi, 1990).

Numbered Head Together strategies are the kind of cooperative learning that is designed to affect student's interaction patterns and as an alternative to the traditional classroom structure (Sutipnyo & Mosik, 2018).

The Jigsaw Strategy Jigsaw is one of cooperative learning which is interesting to be applied to boost students' motivation in learning English especially to reading skill (Nurbianta, 2018).

A teaching strategy that provides an opportunity for students to share their thinking with at least one other student is Think Pair Share (Lyman, 1981).

Educational technology is one of the most effective teaching tools for second language teachers. It comprises mobiles, tablets, networking hardware, computers, and media. These electronic devices have made our day to day tasks easier and faster (Santhosh & Meenakshi, 2015).

III.   Materials and methods

Population and sample

The population selected was 357 students of 7th grade from the Francisco Luis Espinoza National Institute. For this research, 38 students of seventh grade B from the morning shift were selected to apply the corresponding strategies. The sample selected to apply the interviews was a group of 5 students and an English teacher.

Instruments:

In order to obtain the necessary information to validate this research, we applied three data collection instruments, which are explained below: Interviews, observation guides, and tests.

In this study, an observation guide was first applied to identify the characteristics of the group and the strategies used during the development of English as second language classes. The test was performed to measure the knowledge that students had acquired during the classes taught using cooperative learning strategies.

The interviews were applied to students and the English teacher to know the students' experiences and the teacher's point of view after applying cooperative learning strategies.

IV.   Analysis and discussion

During the application of the instruments, it was possible to identify the traditional teaching method used to teach English as a foreign language, which does not allow it to maximize the students' oral production.

For this research we implemented three cooperative learning strategies aided with technology as an alternative to maximize oral production, the results obtained were the following:

According to the students and the teacher, the cooperative learning strategies applied, allowed them to learn in a dynamic, active and easy way since the group work allows them to support themselves with their classmates and be more motivated.

Regarding the results obtained, we can say that the cooperative learning strategies that we applied are effective to maximize the oral production in the students because we were able to achieve interaction between students and making students lose their fear of speaking and also motivated them to learn to speak English. Although some of them have some limitations.

We observe that the cooperative strategies applied, the ones that are best adapted to groups of 38 or more students are: Numbered Heads Together and Jigsaw II¨ since groups of 5 or 6 students can be created, which allow students to have a higher number of classmates with whom they can interact. Another relevant factor is time, which with these two strategies is optimized to the maximum.

On the other hand, when we applied the think pair share strategy, we identified that it is an excellent strategy to develop logical thinking and speech, but it has some limitations since in this case, we work in pairs, therefore it does not benefit groups of more than 20 students and we do not take advantage of the time, which interferes with the development of other planned activities.

Concerning the use of technology supporting the implementation of cooperative strategies, we can say that they are very effective because the students were very interested. This aspect is very important because it helps to improve their discipline.

Also, we can say that the use of technology-assisted cooperative strategies is very effective for teaching English as a foreign language, because it strengthens group relationships, confidence, motivation, and companionship, maximizes the oral production in EFL students, improves the discipline of students in the classroom and rationalizes time more effectively.

V.   Final words

With this paper, we have concluded that using cooperative learning in EFL classes helps to maximize oral production. Cooperative learning has proven its effectiveness as a teaching strategy with all the benefits it provides to both the teachers and learners.   For teachers, this method creates a positive learning environment where students can practice their speaking skills also has positive effects on student achievements. For learners, CL helps to improve their motivation to learn, increases self-esteem and the relationships among classmates.

Also using technology in English classes improve students' attention as they find the class more fun and less routine, besides teacher can vary the audiovisuals aids depending on the subject to make it more attractive and keep students' participation throughout the class.

We found out that the strategies that we implemented: Numbered heads together, Jigsaw II, Think-pair-share aided with technology are creative tools to engage students so that they can learn the new content successfully and be more active during the class, also those strategies improve oral production and have positive effects on the students interaction since they created solidarity among team members through their working together to achieve group goals.

More importantly, is that we observed that Cooperative Learning strategies can change the teacher-centered traditional method since this method is about the interaction between students and not only between teacher-student.

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