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Methodological Strategies Implemented by the Eleventh- Grade English Teacher for
Fostering Student's Oral Proficiency in the English Class at the Reino de Suecia
Institute during the Second Semester 2020.

**Research submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Bachelor of
Arts degree in English Education.**

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the effectiveness of the strategies implemented by the eleventh-grade English teacher to foster oral proficiency. The research site selected was the Reino de Suecia Institute during the second semester of 2020. This qualitative research has a descriptive-narrative approach. Further, we collected the intended data through a semi-structured interview, participant observation, along with an oral proficiency rubric (for assessment). This study has nine participants: eight eleventh-grade students - aged sixteen to seventeen, as well as one English teacher. The results showed the strategies—set of sentences and songs--implemented by the English teacher foster oral proficiency, having as predominant linguistic competence. Nonetheless, some strategies may not be flexible enough to cover all the competencies of oral proficiency. It recommends implementing flexible strategies that foster language for a real-world context with the use of an assessment instrument to identify the strategy's effectiveness.

Keywords: Methodological Strategies, Communicative competence, Oral Proficiency, fostering, English teaching.

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I. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

One of the difficulties English teachers may find in EFL¹ classrooms is that some beginner or intermediate students present limited oral proficiency. Low oral performance could be related to students' lack of English foundation background, students' lack of confidence to use oral language, content not designed for the students' actual language level, etc. For this reason, teachers need to increase students' speaking time by finding flexible-effective methodological strategies that appeal to students' oral language needs.

This research paper analyzes the effectiveness of the strategies implemented for fostering English oral proficiency. To achieve this objective, we identified strategies that work on the communicative components for improving oral performance — linguistic, socio-linguistic, and strategic—, with the use of comprehensible input to facilitate students' output. We described the assessment method used throughout these strategies, we found two more flexible activities to foster language in a real-world context.

This paper discusses the significance of using strategies, such as mingles as well as interviews, to motivate students' oral production showing their accuracy and fluency in the English language. It analyzes how theories such as communicative language teaching or Krashen's comprehensible input move from theory to practice when

¹ English as a Foreign Language describes situations in which English is learned in countries where it is not a language of majority-when students might be tourists or business people (Harmer, 2007, p. 19)

observing student-teacher interaction in class. This research highlights the importance of designing an assessment method based on students' learning needs.

1.1. Research Problem

Developing oral proficiency incorporating linguistic, strategic, and sociolinguistic components (Chanstain, 1998) is a challenge for the language teacher and students. Besides, in the English lesson: limited vocabulary, student's demotivation, speaking anxiety, the lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and even the lack of parent's support may mitigate the improvement of this fundamental language skill. Furthermore, some activities may not have as goal oral production, but developing reading or writing. This suggests that the English teacher needs to foster oral proficiency by implementing effective strategies that facilitate fluency and accuracy. Consequently, we select the following research question: Do the methodological strategies implemented by the English teacher foster student's oral proficiency?

1.2. Background of the Study

The research titled "*Strategies and Techniques for Fostering Oral Communication Confidence in EFL Students*" explored the implementation of strategies for developing students' oral communication. Results showed that these strategies impacted students' confidence and reduced oral apprehension (Mahdi, 2015, pp. 162-173). This research reflected on strategies to facilitate oral performance and reduce speaking anxiety in the English foreign language classroom.

It is worth noting that oral proficiency is related to students' comprehension of the topic. The action research "*Fostering Students' Oral Production in the EFL Class*" -- implemented three communicative activities based on the communicative approach and

Krashen's theory-- concluded that the English teacher must design speaking tasks based on students' real-world context to motivate them to talk in class. These strategies need to expose students to messages easy for them to understand and produce as well (comprehensible input) (Bula, 2015).

Similarly, the local study "*Effectiveness of the Strategies Used by English Language Teachers to Teach Listening Skills to Elementary School Students*" found the use of songs and games as beneficial for students' motivation and participation in the course of the English class. These strategies enabled acquiring new vocabulary, improving pronunciation, and developing listening skills. (Pauth, Urrutia, & Valle, 2016). This study covered listening skills and teaching strategies, which are part of the comprehensible input-- a significant aspect in oral proficiency.

The previous studies showed that effective strategies enable developing oral language and create conditions where students do not hesitate when speaking English. Nonetheless, all these investigations encourage teachers to continue implementing innovative strategies and didactic material that support pupils' learning process.

1.3.Objectives

The following research analyzes the effectiveness of the methodological strategies implemented for fostering oral proficiency in the EFL class. To shed light on the main objective, we need to identify these speaking strategies and describe the assessment method when performing these activities. It follows that for a better comprehension of the problem statement, we have set the following research objectives:

Specific Objectives

- a. To identify the methodological strategies for fostering student's oral proficiency during the English class.
- b. To describe the method implemented by the teacher to assess oral proficiency.
- c. To suggest two strategies for fostering student's oral proficiency during the English class.

1.4.Keywords

Methodological Strategy: Known as instructional strategies consist of methods to engage students in the learning process. They are used to improve students' skills-- language skills.

Oral Proficiency: Omaggio (1986) cited in Miriam Stein (1999) defines oral proficiency as the capacity to use appropriate ideas using the target language. The article explains that a high degree of oral proficiency implies linguistic, and socio-linguistic knowledge about different topics and situations.

Fostering: The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines foster or fostering as “to promote the development of something (Merriam-Webster, 2020). In education, fostering learning is interpreted as the teacher creating settings where his/her students acquire meaningful learning by expressing their ideas in class without apprehension in a fun environment.

II. CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL REVIEW

The present chapter aims to review literature related to fostering oral proficiency through the use of methodological strategies in the English class. It explains the connection between oral proficiency along with the communicative language teaching approach. It describes the comprehensible input-output theory, which are concepts that support communication in class with real meaning. Later on, it identifies strategies to enhance oral proficiency in class including the possible method teacher uses to assess students' oral proficiency.

2.1. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Teaching EFL requires teachers committed to their work, willing to develop their knowledge along with their teaching skills. Part of that commitment to quality in education involves changes in teaching methodology. Throughout history, teachers have gone from using approaches centered on grammar-translation to oral communication (Celcie-Murcia, 2001; Harmer, 2007). It is relevant pointing out that although these approaches and theories are well-structured, their implementation in the classroom may have some variations. These variations depend on factors affecting the teaching-learning process (Folse, 2009, pp. 9-28), such as age, language level², learning goals, syllabus, topic, students' amount, didactic material available, students' real-world context, and so on.

² EFL students are generally described in three levels, beginner, intermediate, and advanced (Harmer, 2007, p. 95)

2.2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

For the development of effective oral production in the students, the teachers apply a mix of approaches. This variety of approaches allow teachers to have more options for strategies and didactic material. For example, they have the option of using the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT), which is about real-world communication, and the Collaborative Approach based on teamwork. Regarding the use of the CLT, Harmer (2007) claims that:

Activities in CLT typically involve students in real or realistic communication, where the successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing is at least as important as the accuracy of their language use. Thus role-play and simulation have become very popular in CLT. For example, students might simulate a television program or a scene at an airport ... In other communicative activities, students have to solve puzzle and can only do so by sharing information (Harmer, 2007, p. 69).

Additionally, Professor Jack C. Richards suggests that the CLT is a “set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how students learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and students in the classroom” (Richards, 2006, p. 2). Respecting this, it is understood that the CLT involves all the main elements that are directly related to the English Teaching such as the lesson’s objective, students’ previous knowledge and interests, strategies to motivate the learning process, and the teacher and students’ roles in class. CLT’s activities (see 2.5. Methodological strategies) allow students to use oral language, and

give opportunities to speak in class. The students work on their strengths and weaknesses that will only be identified if they speak in class.

2.3. Communicative Competence and Oral Proficiency

Different researchers have come up with to try to explain the definition of oral proficiency. Some linguists use the definition of communicative competence (CC) and oral proficiency (OP) interchangeably; others claim that OP is a part of CC. In spite of this, they all agree on the relation between CC and OP. Hence, this chapter defines communicative competence and gives an understanding of oral proficiency.

For foreign language acquisition, CC is the relationship between communicative ability and the context (Richards, 2006, p. 3). Yule (2010) suggests that “communicative competence can be defined as the general ability to use language accurately, appropriately, and flexibly” (p. 194). Developing communicative competence involves using oral language to express ideas and thoughts about real-world problems (students' context). In other words, to show their communicative competence, students use their receptive (listening) and productive skills (speaking) to communicate oral messages. Students should use their communicative competence in EFL to express thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and doubts about previous experiences or familiar situations. For this reason, English teachers should avoid communicative activities in which the vocabulary and phrases have nothing to do with the students' context.

Additionally, communicative competence is structured by three competences, linguistic, sociolinguistic, and strategic. Linguistic competence is the accurate use of grammar rules, spelling, pronunciation, etc. Notwithstanding, knowing grammar structures will not facilitate interpreting and producing ideas, students need the

sociolinguistic competence to use appropriate language based on the social context. The strategic competence allows students organize their message (output) effectively using strategies to compensate their difficulties when talking or writing (Yule, 2010, p. 194).

EFL students can show their communicative competence by describing his/her native city to a group of tourists. Using tenses and pronouncing words accurately (grammatical competence), including colloquialism and slang expressions to the conversation (sociolinguistic competence), and if not knowing how to say a word in the target language, finding a different way to express the same idea (strategic competence) (Chomsky, 1965; Hymes, 1972; Swain, 1980; Bachman, 1990). On this wise, CC does not only use oral language; it involves the use of the four basic language skills. Students should be competent to understand written text in the same level as oral conversations.

In the English class, the English teacher assess students' communicative competence by identifying the use of grammar rules, vocabulary taught before, correct spelling of that vocabulary they use, correct sentence structures, idioms or phrases used in informal speech, express their ideas in a simple and fluent way, etc. Taking into consideration how broad this topic is, this research paper will be focused on some of the elements that belong to these competences due to they are relevant through the assessment of oral proficiency such as fluency, clearness, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar structures, and some others.

Similarly, in Nicaragua, the Basic National Syllabus states that communicative competence (in Spanish and English) involves comprehension of the topic, majoring the four basic language skills, and analyzing what happens in the classroom and in the students' real-world context (MINED, 2009). MINED's description for CC describes

students as critics and active listeners of their contexts, which in the English language allows them to develop and improve certain proficiency level in the language.

Before defining oral proficiency, it is necessary to define what proficiency is. Proficiency is an advancement in knowledge or skill (progress) (Merriam-Webster, 2020). The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines proficiency as the ability to do something well because of training and progress. In essence, reaching proficiency means that the person is competent to perform an action and improvement and progress are observed after hours dedicated to acquire more knowledge and abilities.

Oral proficiency involves the same aspects as communicative competence, including: using grammar structures, expressing clear ideas, proper pronunciation of the speech sounds, and the use of the language for the interaction inside the classroom. The only difference is that CC involves being competent in the four basic language skills, and oral proficiency is centered on speaking and listening (Frisch, 2015, pp. 25-30). In this regard, English teachers may notice that some EFL students “can achieve great expertise in written language, but not the spoken language” (Yule, 2010). In oral proficiency the student is able to communicate and understand oral ideas in real-context.

Oral proficiency is a continuous process, students can go from level 1 (e.g. beginner) to level 2 (e.g. intermediate), this scale depends on the assessment method implemented. Then, English teachers should encourage students to develop their oral proficiency in class, defining English learning as a process in which students learn something new every day (perhaps a new word, grammar rule, definition, etc.) that allows them express and comprehend their ideas orally.

2.4. Comprehensible Input and Output

It should be noted that for EFL students reaching oral proficiency depends on how exposed they are to the target language. In this concern, Harmer (2007) claims that students need considerable exposure to the target language to acquire it; the best kind of language for this purpose is comprehensible input. In language teaching, input is the language that the learner is exposed to. Yule (2010) suggests that to be meaningful for the learner such an input has to be comprehensible, because the learner cannot process or produce what he/she cannot understand (p. 192). The English teacher is the main provider of input, but recordings, music, gestures, flashcards, and realia are more examples of input. Comprehensible input includes using simple grammar structures and vocabulary as well. For instance, English native speakers or teachers may ask an EFL student “*how are you getting on in your studies?*”, but if the student does not understand the question, the question can change to “*English class, you like it?*” (Yule, 2010, p. 192).

As aforementioned, in oral proficiency, students use their listening and speaking skills. This is, they receive input (listen) and produce output (speak) in EFL. The goal of comprehensible input and output is to send and listen a clear message; input and output are relevant for language acquisition. However, motivation, self-esteem and anxiety will determine how easy and fast language will be acquired. If the teacher uses vocabulary, songs, games, visual material, and different tools to provide a message easy to understand, but the student is demotivated, he/she has low self-esteem, and a lot of anxiety to speak in public; this comprehensible input will not be received. To cover this issue, teachers can encourage students to use the target language, telling them how worth it their participation is and that the classroom is a safe place to express their ideas.

Nevertheless, overcoming all these fears is up to each student, it depends on their willingness to change.

The information provided through the input must be according the students' current proficiency level ($i+1$)³; something that may be simple for the English teacher, may not be for the student. Providing comprehensible input that goes according to the ($i+1$) requires the teacher to implement strategies with visual help, gestures, and clear explanations of the topic. Basically, students should understand the messages and instructions provided in class, but the question is how does the teacher identify if students comprehended the lesson?

Giving answer to this question, and as a mean to support Krashen's theory, Merrill Swain claims that the comprehensible output creates opportunities where the students respond and interact in the target language (Harmer, 2007). Similarly, to create these chances, the teacher should know about the students' level. So both comprehensible input and pushed output complement each other, and both become a main help in the development of students' oral proficiency level.

2.5.Methodological Strategies to Foster Oral Proficiency

As previously mentioned, the teacher can implement different strategies with the purpose of motivate students to participate and learn; these are called methodological strategies because they are implemented by the teacher. Strategies in terms of language Education can be divided in two groups, teaching (methodological) and learning

³ ($i+1$): "i" represents learner's level and "+1" represents the language that is just beyond the learner's grasp (Folse, 2009, p. 35)

strategies. Rebecca Oxford (1990) defines strategy as “a plan that is consciously aimed at meeting a goal”. Learning strategies are also known as self-study strategies, and are identified as the student’s actions to improve their own language learning. In contrast, teaching strategies could be defined as the actions taken by the teacher to help students learn during the development of the class. Both strategies complement each other, but are performed by a different subject.

Previously mentioned that strategies can be centered on a specific language skill. For this, it can identify reading, writing, listening and speaking strategies. All these strategies are essential to obtain a continuous improvement of learning. Hence, it recommends its continuous implementation to get positive results. Although the teaching strategies are implemented by the teacher, their goal is to achieve students’ learning, and they allow students to become more critical in relation to their own learning (Maridueña, Astudillo, & Ledesma, 2017).

As mentioned earlier, language teaching has strategies for each language skill. And as oral proficiency involves listening and speaking, strategies to foster OP should involve the use of both skills. The goal is to make students talk in class, but at the same time, comprehend what their classmates are saying. Another characteristic may be the use of meaningful vocabulary according to the students’ background and previous knowledge. They must be simple, so students will not feel apprehension while talking. They need to be attractive, to encourage them to participate and interact.

In relation to the communicative competence (focused on oral proficiency), these strategies should include the use of vocabulary related to the topic, going from simple to complex grammar structures, clear intonation and pronunciation of the vocabulary, and

should be flexible in a way that the student uses his/her simple words to express complicated ideas. Taking account of this, next it suggest two strategies that fulfill the requirements a strategy should have to foster students' oral proficiency.

2.5.1. Games

In language teaching, “communicative game is a set of well fun-design activities to stimulate students' interaction in the classroom” (Dewi , Kultsum , & Armadi, 2017). Through these activities the students interact while having fun in an educational setting, which gives them confidence to produce the language and improve their oral proficiency in class. Communicative games have an effect on students' participation, which motivates them to express their ideas without hesitation, and students' enjoy the learning process because using games reduces boredom in class.

Gate (2003) cited in Dewi, Kultsum , & Armadi (2017) points out that “to express their own point of view or give information, the learners must speak or write as in getting the meaning from others, they have to understand what people are saying or have written”. Gate's idea is related to Krashen's Comprehensible Input Theory, which explains that humans acquire language when the input provided is understandable. For this reason, using communicative games can be a good alternative to foster students' oral production only when the words and phrases used in the game are familiar to students current language level.

The Communicative Language Teaching Approach explains that several strategies can be implemented to involve students on real communication. One strategy suggested by the CLT is communicative game in which students use grammar structures but this is not the main focus; the goal is to produce language without paying strictly

attention to grammar mistakes made by the students (Harmer, English Language Teaching, 2001, pp. 84-86). Games allow students to talk in class using language that they will need in real-life situations; for instance, phrases and words used when ordering food in a restaurant, talking with friends, descriptions of their relatives, and so on.

2.5.2. Role Plays

Harmer (1998) defines role plays as activities in which students are required to imagine that they are in a situation and act it out. Clear examples are being a doctor in a hospital, being a tourist guide describing a touristic place, ordering food in a restaurant, making reservations for a hotel, being a teacher with a group of students, etc. For these activities, every student has to play a role in which he or she uses the language taught previously. Role playing allows students to show their interests on a particular topic since they have freedom to modify their role based on their previous knowledge and personal experiences. An important element to develop students' oral proficiency is practice. Role playing allows students to have some time to organize their ideas and to identify the best way to improve their fluency when playing their characters. Role playing requires students to understand and feel what others feel; they imitate and comprehend what they observe and listen to produce language.

2.5.3. Songs

Jeremy Harmer in his book "*The Practice of English Language Teaching*" explains that using songs is a useful strategy that allows teaching speaking skills. An aspect teachers should consider is analyzing the song lyrics before presenting them to the class. This because song lyrics may have unknown vocabulary, complex sentences or inappropriate language. Harmer (2007) claims that:

There are two ways of dealing with this problem: the first is to have students bring their own favorite songs to class. If they do this, however, the teacher may want to have time (a day or two) to listen to the song and try to understand the lyrics. Some of the songs may deal with issues and language which the teacher is not keen to work with. Another solution is to use older songs, and to ask students whether they think they still have merit - whether they like them, despite their antiquity. Teachers can then choose songs which they like or which are appropriate in terms of topic and subject matter, and which they themselves think pass the test of time (Harmer, 2007, p. 320).

2.5.4. Oral proficiency Interview

Keitges (1982) defines language proficiency interviews “as evaluative sessions in which one or more persons perform communicative tasks elicited or assigned by’ one or more examiners who subsequently observe and rate the resultant speaking performance to determine speaking proficiency” (p. 19). In other words, an interview for assessing students’ oral proficiency ought to be a task in which the student uses his/her listening and speaking skills to understand and communicate ideas. The task could be performed from student to student or teacher to student. While the task is performed, the teacher must observe and rely on some instrument to measure students’ proficiency.

As exposed above, implementing an interview should be accompanied by an instrument to assess students. This instrument could be a rubric, a checklist, an observation guide, a Likert scale, etc. The criteria may depend on what the teacher needs to assess. To illustrate, Penny Ur designed an assessing rubric for oral production (speaking) in which speakers are scored from one to five (being one the lowest), and the

two main criteria are accuracy and fluency. For accuracy, she identifies aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar; in fluency, she determines the communication (Ur, 1996, p. 135).

Ur (1996) claims that tasks that are structured and have clear objectives are more convenient to make students talk in class, especially those who have a beginner or intermediate level (p. 128). In that way, students will be motivated to talk and to not use their mother tongue, and hence the strategy could be considered successful (p. 120). Oral interview is an effective strategy to make students talk in class, but the teacher's management of the strategy determines if students feel comfortable and without apprehension to talk.

Stage 1: Preparation

1. Before implementing any strategy, make sure you have identified students' previous knowledge and interests, as well as, the topic content and the syllabus. There are some other elements that you must take into consideration, but this will depend on the teaching context.
2. The amount of students may define how the activity will continue. If you are working with a small group (10 -15 students) you may have time to interview each of the students, this will be a teacher-student interaction. If you're working with a large class, it suggests to change the dynamic and opt for a student-student interaction. This will depend on the time management and the amount of students in class.
3. Whether this is a teacher-student or student-student interaction, you will have to have the set of questions that will be asked. Remember, the student should be

familiarized with the vocabulary and topic, that is, the when selecting the questions take into consideration that.

4. If the interaction will be student-student, you should give them two different set of questions, one for student A and one for student B.

Stage 2: Oral Interview

1. Explain students they will be making an interview. Describe what the interview is about; such as a personal interview or a job interview.
5. Organize the class, if it will be a student-student interview divide the class in couples. If the interaction is teacher-student, make sure to bring an extra activity to keep the rest of the group busy and quiet while interviewing their classmate.
2. During the interview, students should take turns asking personal questions to their classmates.
3. A maximum of 10 questions, using vocabulary and grammar structures students will master.

Sample

- a. What is your first name?
- b. What is your last name?
- c. How do you spell your last name?
- d. How old are you?
- e. Where are you from?
- f. Do you have any brothers and sisters?
- g. What is your mother's name?

- h. What is your father's name?
- i. Do you have any pet?
- j. Do you have any hobby?

Material

The teacher could bring two big paper with the questions for student A and student B, put it on the whiteboard and during the interview students could see the questions they have to ask. Another option is provide a copy of the questions for each students, this is up to the teacher and the resources available in the class.

2.5.5. Mingle: Find someone who

Pollard and Hess (1997) cited in Darmayenti and Nofiandri (2015) explains that mingle activities are techniques in which the students stand up, circulate and talk with one another. In the EFL classroom, mingle is a short activity where learners get to know each other asking and answering several questions (British Council, 2020). Some examples of mingle activity in the EFL class are: questionnaires, matching activities in which students find their partner, group dictations, and some others.

The objective of mingles is to allow EFL students to talk with as many classmates as they can. They can work in pairs or groups and switch from one classmate to another while using their listening and speaking skills (it suggests taking notes). Consequently, mingles increase student talking time and reduce teacher interventions. However, English teachers must set clear rules, so students shall know what to do and how to do it. For instance, for large classes, students need limited time to have opportunities to talk with the majority of their classmates.

Students may need some supporting material to continue with the conversations and completing the task. Typically, beginner students may use a checklist as they walk around the class trying to find a classmate who has the characteristic the student is looking for. When students find “someone who likes apple juice” or “someone who has two dogs,” they write that person’s name on their checklist and move on to the next person to continue filling the list. In contrast, some advanced students may need a different instrument, such as interviews with open-ended questions, in that way, they are challenged to use their speaking and listening skills relying on their language level.

As the goal is students to work on their oral proficiency, English teachers may want students to use grammar structures and vocabulary that they domain. Hence, it recommends to get to know the students’ interest and previous knowledge. If English teachers use vocabulary and grammar structures that are too complicated for them, they may not be able to have a conversation with their classmates in the target language.

This activity does not require the use of expensive material, a checklist listing 15 to 20 characteristic and a copy of the checklist for each student could be enough. There is a variation for this part: previously to the strategy, the teacher can write the checklist on the board and the students can copy it. However, this could take some time and reduce the speaking time.

2.6.Oral Proficiency Assessment

Oral proficiency differs from communicative competence because it happens progressively, and it has different levels or scales, what it means that students can be novices or beginners in the oral proficiency assessment and still have some proficiency in the language. It is relevant to mention that language proficiency involves proficiency

in speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and when we mean by oral proficiency we refer to proficiency in the speaking and listening skills. These oral skills involve more than just having a conversation, students should domain the linguistics, socio-linguistic, and strategic competence.

With reference to the assessment of oral proficiency, a wide variety of factors must be evaluated by the English teacher before and after the assessment. First, it needs to structure a task or strategy in which students show their speaking skills, what it means as teacher, I assess them in a communicative situation. Second, once that the task is structured for the students to perform, it would have to design an instrument with the criteria that will identify in the students and that at the same time will help to determine their oral proficiency level in the English language. Between the factors, the teacher needs to consider, the students' previous knowledge is one of them, the topic, their interest, their context, etc. This for the design of the strategy and the instrument (Shohamy, 1983, pp. 527-540).

The purpose of assessing students' oral proficiency is to identify their weaknesses and strengths. The English teacher should provide feedback of the students' output, which will allow the student have an idea of his/her progress. Stephen Krashen suggests to provide feedback that does not exaggerate on accuracy. Otherwise, students will feel apprehended, and spontaneous conversations can be limited (Harmer, 2007).

2.7. Summary of the Literature Review

To sum up, teaching EFL involves the implementation of different approaches to work on students' language skills. One useful approach for developing communicative competence in EFL is the CLT, which is based on real-world communication. For

purpose of this research, CC involves the use of the four language skills, and OP uses speaking and listening skills. Exposure to comprehensible input allows students develop their comprehensible output. CLT includes the use of speaking activities that foster oral proficiency and promotes comprehensible input and output, including: games, role plays, songs, interviews, and mingles. Finally, to assess student's oral proficiency, teachers can assess the use of grammar structures, pronunciation, fluency, etc. In spite of this, the English teacher should avoid exaggerated emphasis on accuracy to not limit students talking time in class.

III. CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

3.1.Overview

This chapter presents an overview of the methods to be followed in this thesis. These methods are centered on analyzing the effectiveness of the methodological strategies implemented during the English lessons to foster oral proficiency of high school students. This qualitative research approach uses three methods of data collection such as a semi-structured interview, a rubric to assess oral proficiency, and an observation guide. According to Mackey & Gass (2005), the qualitative approach provides an ample description of the participants, research site and findings. This approach enables us to apply our experience, understanding, and interpretation to the phenomenon studied. The aim of qualitative research is to gain an in-depth, holistic perspective of a group of people, environment, programs, events, or any phenomenon one wishes to study by interacting closely with the people one is studying (Farber, 2006)

This research does not use statistical procedures to process and analyze the data. Nevertheless, it allows interpreting and analyzing a reality that cannot be controlled but observed in its natural setting. We identified the participants who took part in the study as well as the characteristics used to select them. Finally, it describes the ethical principles that this research took into consideration during the process of writing it.

3.2.Analysis of the strategies and oral proficiency

For analyzing qualitative data, it was necessary to identify keywords from the teacher's responses to the interview implemented and the main elements from the observation of the teacher and students' actions during the teaching-learning process. As

researchers, we went to the *Reino de Suecia* Institute to observe the activities and determine how the participants' behavior developed in class. In the same way, the observation guide and rubric to assess oral proficiency are instruments enabling us to gather reliable data and select specific information to analyze in this process.

Creswell (2014) claims that “text and image data are so dense and rich, not all the information can be used in a qualitative study” (p. 245). Mackey & Gass (2005, p. 179) claim that qualitative research brings attention to the researcher's topic of interest. Therefore, the two main elements identified are the methodological strategies and the students' oral proficiency. When observing the strategies, we analyzed types, implementation and effect on students' motivation and on fostering oral proficiency. Regarding oral proficiency, the key elements are pronunciation, use of grammar rules, content domain, clarity to express ideas and speaking without hesitation.

Concerning the analysis of the methodological strategies, in her book *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*, Penny Ur explains that several techniques can be implemented to assess students' responses, such as role-playing, group discussion, individual presentation and picture-description. The selection of the activity ought to be followed by planning its implementation during the class (1996, p. 133). In this case, Folse claims that planning a speaking strategy is about identifying the participants' characteristics (language level, the domain of the contents, interests, behavior, level of participation), defining the objective and, description, preparing didactic material, and determining the place of implementation (2009, pp. 110-111). We found these data in the lesson plan prepared by the English teacher and through observing the teacher's performance of the strategies.

To foster students' oral proficiency is meaningful to motivate them to talk in class. The Cambridge University Press (1996 as cited in Ur, 1996) defines a successful speaking activity as one in which students frequently talk (student-centered), they all have a chance to speak, they are interested in the topic, and the language is acceptable according to the students' current level (p. 120). Once the English teacher implemented the strategies and the students were part of the process, the effectiveness of these strategies on students' oral proficiency could be analyzed.

This analysis was possible throughout the observation of students' actions; it noted: when they were more motivated to talk in class using the target language, when most of them had opportunities to express their ideas, or when they were not struggling to use the English language.

3.3.Data Collection

Data collection was analyzed by taking notes and consulting previous studies, scientific articles, theses, reliable websites, and some English teaching books. All these sources structured our literature review. Based on these sources, their analysis, and the specific study objectives, we designed the data collection methods (Yin, 2011, pp. 64-66).

3.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

We used a semi-structured interview with the teacher in this research project to gain insight into this classroom context and increase our understanding of it. At the same time, it allowed us to have flexibility with the questions to those who participated in the process. In our case, it provided us, as the interviewer, with a set of instructions that we followed in the interviewing process. The semi-structured interview has open-

ended questions designed to understand the teacher's opinions, experience and knowledge about implementation of the methodological strategies for fostering students' oral proficiency as well as the method to assess students. We consider it important to clarify that this kind of interviewing is not a questionnaire; it is an interview guide. Harrell and Bradley (2009) claim that this kind of interview collects detailed information in a style that is somewhat conversational. A semi-structured interview is often used when the researcher wants to delve deeply into a topic and understand thoroughly the answers that are provided (Harrell & Bradley, 2009, pág. 27).

Additionally, Lagos (2017) states that this type of semi-structured interview helps the researcher "to provide a structure that promotes an environment with room for the participants to make spontaneous narratives and descriptions based on my interest as a researcher". The semi-structured interview helped us to gain a deeper understanding of the information obtained from the teacher. Since the interview was flexible, it enabled us to reformulate each question according to the previous knowledge of the English teacher about the topic. So in the interview, every doubt was clarified.

The questions in the interview answered two of the three specific objectives which identified the methodological strategies for fostering oral proficiency and described the method used to assess students. Further, our semi-structured interview was designed with nine open-ended questions. This interview is recorded in the annexes of this research paper.

3.3.2. Participant Observation

This study includes a participant observation in which took notes on the participants' behavior and actions, and implemented some methodological strategies

that helped us to interact with the students (Creswell, 2014, p. 239). Some strategies were implemented by the English teacher. Similar to our semi-structured interview, we relied on a structured observation guide to gather complete information. This guide is structured with eleven statements related to the classroom environment - and the teacher's and student's actions. It observed, inter alia, the types of strategies, the procedure to implement them, the use of the English language in class, the students' motivation before and after the implementation of strategies, the type of content and vocabulary used, strategies based on students' interests and student-centered strategies. To identify the frequency of these elements, each statement was marked with an A (always), S (sometimes), or N (never).

We also wanted to gain insight into how effective the strategies were for fostering oral proficiency, and hence, to identify and suggest types of strategies implemented by the English teacher that were not observed during the English class. It observed the class on ten occasions in which the first four observations identified the student's oral proficiency level. This was relevant to modify the level of complexity of the methodological strategies implemented. The continuous observation of the class helped us to select strategies to develop oral proficiency that were according to the student's English language knowledge.

It is worth noting that this qualitative research has a narrative-descriptive approach in which we described the lives of the participants throughout the descriptions of their personal experiences and their reality (Riessman 2008 cited in Creswell 2003). In the next chapter for Analysis and Discussion of Data, we provided a narrative chronology of the events observed as well as the participants' actions and their

consequences. This description of events was complemented by our perspectives as researchers and English teachers.

3.3.3. Rubric for assessing students' oral proficiency

We recognise that observing students talking in class is not enough for the teachers, and determining the English level requires the use of an assessment method. This led us to describe the method implemented by the teacher to assess students' oral proficiency. We designed a rubric that was structured with five aspects to assess a student's oral performance. This rubric assigned a score, from 0 to 2 for a total of 10 points; being 0 the lowest score and 2 the highest. The observation of the class and an interview with the teacher were essential to forming a model for designing our own rubric. Concerning this, Penny Ur presents the next scale based on some other models to assess students' speaking skills (1996, p. 135):

Table 1: Rubric for assessing students' speaking skill.

Accuracy		Fluency	
Little or no language produced	1	Little or no communication	1
Poor vocabulary, mistakes in basic grammar, may have a very strong accent	2	Very hesitant and brief utterances, sometimes difficult to understand	2
Adequate but not rich vocabulary, makes obvious	3	Gets ideas across, but hesitantly and briefly	3
Good range of vocabulary, occasional grammar slips, slight foreign accent	4	Effective communication in short turns	4
With vocabulary appropriately used, virtually no grammar mistakes, native-like or slight foreign accent	5	Easy and effective communication, uses long turns	5
Total Score Out of 10: _____			

3.4. Participants

Mackey & Gass (2005) define participant as “an individual whose behavior is being measured or investigated” (p. 362). Yin (2011) claims that an important element of a qualitative research is to describe and explain a social reality from the experience and perspective of a study’s participants. It is essential to describe the environment in the classroom where the students and teacher (participants) interact, learn, and develop their skills. Further, to understand the students’ behaviour and reaction while the methodological strategies are implemented for achieving the group’s learning objectives.

In this qualitative research, the selection of the participants is considered intentional. This will allow selecting participants to yield relevant data to answer the aim of this research (Mackey & Gass, 2005; Yin, 2011). The participants for this study are eight eleventh-grade students from section “C”, aged sixteen to seventeen, and one English teacher. Most of the students acquired their knowledge of the language during their previous four school years, only two of them have attended private English classes, and hence they have a beginner English level (see 3.4.Data Collection).

During the English lessons, most of the students were active, cooperative, and eager to participate in the activities oriented by the teacher, but misbehavior was an issue that limited their integration and fulfillment of some tasks. As a result, the characteristic used to select the participants was good discipline and active participation in the strategies.

With regard to the teacher, he has a master in English Education and has fourteen years of experience as an English teacher. He has worked with high school and university students in Estelí City. His methodology is dynamic due to the

implementation of several methodological strategies during the teaching process. His teaching style enabled students to feel confident to speak in class and to ask for help when in doubt. During the interview and the observation of the class, the teacher was willing to provide information for our research. To preserve their anonymity (see next section, Ethics and Human Subject Issues) all their names do not appear in this research. Regarding participant's anonymity, Kvale & Brinkmann (2015, pág. 102) state four ethical considerations must be taken into account when the source of data is human: the informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and the role of the researcher. Informed consent implies that the informants must be familiar with the purpose of the interview and the study's overarching goals.

3.5.Ethics and Human Subjects Issues

According to Yin (2011), respecting ethical principles represents a step towards trustworthiness and credibility. For this, our research is transparent with the procedures implemented to gather information and with the results obtained; we rely on visual, oral and written evidence to support our main findings (p. 39).

The Universal Copyright Convention under the aegis of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) extends international protection to copyrights and neighboring rights. This convention takes place every fourth year and discusses issues related to intellectual property. Further, it provides legal and technical assistance to the countries' participants, but it is up to each country to decide which measures it will adopt internally to cover copyright issues (UNESCO, 2001, p. 51).

In Nicaragua, the Law 312 “Copyrights and Neighboring Rights” protects every original, literary, artistic and scientific work with the purpose of avoiding the appropriation of these creations without giving the credit to the author (SICE, 2020). However, Nicaragua as a developing country does not count with an organization and resources to enforce the law 312 and to protect the copyrights.

A study involving seven Nicaraguan universities concluded that a doctoral thesis advisor’s early feedback and clear explanation may eliminate the so- called “copy-paste practice” or plagiarism in university research papers (Rodrigues, Lucio, Mejía , Pérez, & Peña, 2017, p. 17). As researchers, we feel confident in avoiding plagiarism due to the fact that before and during the development of this study we relied on the support of our thesis advisor who provided detail explanation and supportive material about the proper use of APA Sixth edition - an important element for respecting the copyrights in our paper.

This research protects the human subjects by obtaining approval from two institutions FAREM-Estelí and Reino de Suecia Institute. Before implementing the data collection process, it was required to submit our research’ objective and procedures to the institutions for their approval. In accordance with the National Research Council (2003) cited in Yin (2011) considering protecting human subjects in a research work requires obtaining voluntary informed consent from the participants, and assuring confidentiality about the participants’ identities. Accordingly, to implement the observation and interview with the participants (teacher and students), it demanded oral consent, and to protect students’ integrity their names were not required but a code was assigned to each student (e.g. 01, 02, 03, etc.)

3.6. Summary of the Method

In conclusion, chapter three presents the methods that were applied in this research. The elements that we took into account in the analysis of the methodological strategies and oral proficiency, the effectiveness of these strategies, the assessment method for oral proficiency, and for suggesting more strategies. We described the interview process, the participant observation, and the selection of the participants. We have considered ethics as an important component for interviewing and observing the participants of the study, and we explained our ethical considerations.

IV. CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains qualitative reports from the participants and the research site. It reflects the interaction among students and the English teacher during the implementation of the methodological strategies, the types of strategies, assessment method, and suggested strategies. After analyzing data from the literature review, observation, and interview, we found the following results for every specific objective.

Specific Objective 1: To identify the methodological strategies for fostering student's oral proficiency during the English class.

Participant observation was a valuable instrument in this study. This observation allowed us to collect visual data of what occurred in the English classroom. It enabled us to describe the research site. The research site selected was Reino de Suecia Institute, which had one mobile classroom equipped with tablets, and an internet connection. The institute has a library with a variety of English books to develop the lessons. In the classroom, the English teacher had basic didactic material such as textbooks and speakers.

We observed that the English teacher implemented a great variety of strategies to develop the lesson including songs, and oral presentations to foster students' oral proficiency. Nevertheless, not all the activities presented by the teacher had as objective students' oral proficiency. For instance, the game **Word Search** consisted of students searching for ten words located in a grid, every student had a copy of the grid, so they were working individually without talking and concentrated on finding the words. This activity lasted ninety minutes and allowed students to acquire new vocabulary.

Based on our previous experience as English teachers and students, time management avoids boredom in the EFL class. In this concern, ninety minutes (two periods) to work on an activity such as Word Search may be too much time. This because students had the handout before the English class-- they only had to find ten words. Furthermore, it observed that those students who finished the task before the deadline started chatting with their classmates and misbehaving in class. Those who were not misbehaving were bored and uninterested. As consequence, students' English speaking time was affected, and during that observation, it could not observe more communicative activities or the teacher's assessment method.

We observed that the teacher used warm-ups such as **hot potato, brainstorm, and passing the marker** to review previous knowledge or introduce new content. During these warm-ups, students used short words and phrases to answer. These activities had a low level of difficulty and motivated students to participate in class to demonstrate their oral production. The teacher did not have to interpret in Spanish; students were familiar with the vocabulary and questions. The input provided by the English teacher was comprehensible, and so students' output. In this concern, Yule (2010) suggests that to be meaningful for the learner such an input has to be comprehensible, because the learner cannot process or produce (output) what he cannot understand (p. 192). The use of comprehensible input showed us that the English teacher had already identified his students' language level and previous knowledge.

During the warm-ups, it noticed that students' motivation and participation changed. Before these warm-ups, students had a passive role in class, and their oral participation was limited. During them, students were more motivated to talk using the English language.

The interview data showed the English teacher has experience working with a great variety of communicative strategies. He expressed that **short dialogues, mingles, role plays, songs, set of sentences, games and conversation circle** are—based on his experience—the most effective and convenient strategies for making students talk in class, and hence they bring the opportunity to assess students' oral proficiency. Moreover, the English teacher added that positive feedback motivates his students to continue talking in the EFL class. During the observation time, it found the teacher implemented songs and set of sentences. Nevertheless, short dialogues, mingles, games, and conversation circle were not present during the observation time.

During the implementation of the strategies, the English teachers expressed in the interview, he uses flashcards, worksheets, mind-maps, and realia. Nevertheless, during the eight observations, in one occasion, he used as didactic material a textbook.

Set of Sentences: The English teacher presented this strategy after teaching the topic *Cause-Effect Sentence*. He divided the class into couples, and every couple wrote cause-effect sentences; one student wrote a cause and the other the effect. One student wrote: I did not have breakfast, and the other student wrote: now I am hungry. For this activity, students had some time to write their sentences. Then they have to present them in front of the class.

Since they had to express written ideas with cohesion and coherence, they had to review previous vocabulary and grammar structures (e.g. modal verbs) taught by the teacher, and pronunciation of the words, the strategy was a challenge for the students. Nevertheless, students were competent to achieve the task's objective and show their linguistic competence --an element of communicative competence (see

2.3.Communicative Competence). In this regard, Yule (2010) explains that communicative competence has three components: linguistic, sociolinguistic, and strategic. Yule explains that communicative competence involves the use of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. This is why oral proficiency, which involves speaking and listening is considered part of communicative competence. Some other authors mention that for its broadness communicative competence cannot be observed when implementing one strategy, but different strategies can show students' competence.

Considering the aforementioned, we share the teacher's opinion of classifying the activity *Set of Sentences* as an activity to foster oral proficiency. In this context, some authors such as Penny Ur (1996) claim that assessing oral proficiency does not only involve fluency, but accuracy. Through the use of proper grammar structures and vocabulary to form the sentences, students showed language accuracy. During the oral presentations, the teacher did not put exaggerated emphasis on students' grammar and pronunciation mistakes, rather when students culminated with the presentations, he gave general feedback for the whole class.

Use of songs: The strategy consisted on students performing songs in front of the class. It was flexible because the students had the option to work individually or in small groups, they chose their own songs according to their interests and preferences, and previously to their performances, the students had one week to be prepared. While students were performing, it noticed domain of the lyrics, most of them did not have a piece of paper to read the lyrics; they memorized it before, they have good pronunciation of the words and phrases, and all of them were motivated to participate in the strategy.

This activity was learner-centered because the teacher observed their performance, to later give some feedback based on the information gathered from the assessment instrument (rubric). It must be pointed out that at the end of each performance the teacher provided information including students' weaknesses and strengths. Some of the students were nervous before their presentation, the teacher encouraged them to do it with confidence and to respect their classmates' performance. Simultaneously, while the students were performing the activities, the teacher counted with a rubric to assess students' oral proficiency. This rubric included aspects such as fluency, discourse, pronunciation, and so on.

To foster students' oral proficiency, strategies should create room for students to feel confident enough to talk. It is important to point out that before performing the songs, students' first reaction was shyness and nervousness, but during the performance of the songs, students showed confident enough to introduce themselves and to sing the song.

Specific Objective 2: To describe the method implemented by the teacher to assess student's oral proficiency.

In the interview administered to the English teacher, he identified rubrics as effective instruments to assess students' language skills. Concerning the assessment method, he explained that communicative strategies such as games and songs create an opportunity to implement these rubrics. Another element he assesses during the class is participation. For fostering participation, he uses some strategies such as hot potato and passing the marker. Participation activities in the EFL classroom allow teachers to assess students' oral language.

During one of the participant observations, the teacher used songs as a strategy, and he implemented a rubric to assess students' performance. This rubric had four elements, pronunciation, fluency, lyrics knowledge, and introduce your song. The teacher explained that such criteria changes depending on the outcomes he has set out for the learning process.

Regarding the use of activities to foster participation, Penny Ur (1996) explains that several techniques can be implemented to assess students' responses; role-playing, group discussion, individual presentation, and picture-description are some examples. These techniques or activities elicit students' answers, so they use their oral language. However, to assess students' oral proficiency, Ur (1996) and Shohamy (1983) claim that the English teacher needs to design an assessment instrument based on his experience working with the students and the criteria he/she needs to assess. For instance, Penny Ur proposes a rubric criterion for fluency and accuracy and scores students' performance from one to five (being one the lowest score).

From the interview with the English teacher, the participant observation, and the literature review, we designed a rubric, which had the next criteria:

1. The student speaks confidently and naturally without hesitation.
2. The students' pronunciation is accurate, with correct number of syllables and inflections.
3. The student answers with well-structured sentences; following the grammar rules.
4. The student answers with vocabulary taught by the teacher or counting with his/ her previous knowledge.

5. The student uses content related to the subject and the topic taught by the teacher according to his/her English level.

Observing the assessment method used by the English teacher, we implemented a communicative strategy (oral interview) and assessed student's oral proficiency through the rubric we designed. As claimed above, the rubric had five criteria, and scored every criterion from zero to two for a total of ten points. Being zero the lowest score and two the highest.

The rubric is for any language level, but we implemented the Oral Interview (Keep the Glass in the Air) to work with a beginner level. This level was determined by the previous participant observations when students showed their knowledge and skills. It is fundamental to mention that our goal was not to determine students' language level. To do so, we need a specialized test, such as TOEFL⁴ or OPI⁵. Instead, our goal with this rubric was to assess students' oral proficiency during the implementation of a communicative strategy (Oral Interview).

During the implementation of this rubric, students obtained a similar score from seven to eight out of ten. Most of the eight participants presented a few difficulties in their linguistic competence—the accurate use of grammar structures. To illustrate, when asking what is your name? One student said “my name Luis” rather than “my name is Luis”. Students had some weaknesses in adjective-noun order; when asking what is your favorite color? They said “my color favorite is blue”. However, they had accurate

⁴ Test of English as a Foreign Language (ETS TOEFL, 2021)

⁵ ACTFL Speaking Assessment: The Oral Proficiency Interview (ACTFL, 2021)

pronunciation of the speech sounds and fluency when pronouncing sentences and phrases without hesitation. They use content related to the subject and the topic taught by the teacher according to their English level.

Specific Objective 3: To suggest two strategies for fostering student's oral proficiency during the English class.

Once, we identified the strategies implemented by the teacher. We suggest the use of Mingles and Oral Interview to foster students' oral proficiency. It is relevant to mention that the English teacher identified Eternal Mingles and Short Interviews as communicative activities. In spite of this, during the class observation, he did not use these activities. Accordingly, we suggest *Mingles* (Find Someone Who) and *Oral interview* (Keep the Glass in the Air) as communicative activities.

It is noteworthy that Mingles in the EFL class can be different types of activities. Namely, questionnaires, interviews, find someone who, etc. These activities become Mingles when students stand up, circulate, and talk with one another. Consequently, we suggest the activity "*Find Someone Who*" as an example of a mingle activity.

Find Someone Who (Mingle): We planned to use "Find Someone Who" as a fill-gap activity and mingle. Unfortunately, we did not have time to implement the strategy and the assessment method (a rubric), this because students were working on some other activities as preparation for their graduation, and the English teacher had already scheduled the activities he needed based on the curriculum. Hence, we based on the interview with the teacher and the literature reviewed to suggest Mingle as a strategy to foster oral proficiency in class. The teacher described mingles as one of his top strategies when he want students to produce oral language, too. Pollard and Hess (1997)

cited in Darmayenti and Nofiandri (2015) describes mingle activities as techniques in which the students stand up, circulate and talk with one another.

One clear example is in the activity “Find Someone Who” in which students are supposed to find classmates who fulfill the characteristic they are looking for, and hence, complete a list of characteristics. For this strategy, students shall use survey sheets with ten to fifteen characteristics; they must find in their classmates. This activity can be used with different topics, and different survey sheets so the repertory of topics for conversation is large.

This activity is useful when working with beginner students because they had the list of characteristics as a guide to start a conversation with their classmates. They may put in practice the three components of oral proficiency. For instance, linguistic competence is present when students are talking using grammar structures and the pronunciation of the words, socio-linguistic competence when students select the right vocabulary for every topic (politics, social media, religion, etc.) or when they use informal speech when they talk with their classmates, strategic competence can be present when students find substitute words to fill the gaps in their target language. Those are some of the benefits of mingle activities, students may have a guide on how to start talking, but responding and continue with the conversation is up to their knowledge and skills in the language.

Keep the Glass in the Air (Oral Interview): We can use plastic glass, a ball, or a balloon; it depends on the available resources. Students may play it outdoors or indoors. Therefore, we used a plastic glass to play inside the classroom. With large groups, the teacher can divide students into small teams (five to eight students). The

goal is to make everyone talk, so we chose eight participants. Then we explained to the participants the steps to develop the game.

Steps

1. Gather students in a circle. The teacher can be part of the circle to play with the students.
2. When students are all situated, the teacher throws the glass up in the air.
3. Students have to keep the glass up in the air, they can use their hands, head, feet, chest, etc.
4. The student who drops the glass must answer a question. Then the game continues until all the questions are answered and every student has participated.

Prior to the class, we prepared a list of questions, students answered during the game. This questions were based on the vocabulary they used in class, and the previous content developed by the teacher. This aspect was relevant to ensure the success of this activity. Otherwise, content and vocabulary not related to the student's language level may affect their performance.

List of Questions

What is your name?

What is the name of your mother? Or What's your mother's name?

What is your favorite color?

What is your favorite hobby?

Do you like to watch T.V?

Do you like to listen to music?

Additionally, we put in practice the Comprehensible Input Theory. One of the questions was *what's your mother's name?* The student was not familiar with this structure, so we asked the same question with a simpler structure *what is the name of your mother?* During that second try, the student was able to answer the question accurately and fluently. In this regard, comprehensible input includes using simple grammar structures and vocabulary. For instance, English native speakers or teachers may ask an EFL student "*how are you getting on in your studies?*", but if the student does not understand the question, the question can change to "*English class, you like it?*" (Yule, 2010, p. 192).

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest the significance of implementing flexible strategies to enable real-world communication. Oral proficiency as part of communicative competence implies three components: linguistic, socio-linguistic, and strategic. In this concern, some strategies were limited to one or two of these components. For example, the English teacher implemented sentences centered on grammar structures and pronunciation (linguistic). Students performed songs focused on grammar, pronunciation, and slang/idioms (linguistic and socio-linguistic). It concluded that these strategies have a partial effect on oral proficiency, having linguistic as a predominant component in most of them.

Effective communicative strategies do not only have linguistic competence as their goal but the rest of the components. Thus, implementing different methodological activities may enable the teacher to cover every single aspect of communicative competence. In this regard, some authors and the English teacher identify short dialogues, mingles, role plays, oral interview, games, and conversation circle as strategies that enable real communication in class, and in the case of an oral interview, allows fostering oral proficiency (Dewi, 2017; Ur, 1996; Harmer, 1998; Harmer, 2007; Keitges, 1982; Pollard and Hess, 1997). Another aspect found is that comprehensible input must be present throughout these strategies to facilitate students' understanding of the vocabulary, phrases, and sentences used and produce oral language.

For assessing oral proficiency, the English teacher used a rubric when students performed the strategies. This rubric assessed pronunciation, fluency, lyrics knowledge, and introduce yourself. We implemented an assessment method for confidence when

using the language, accurate pronunciation, grammar structures, and content domain, too. Penny Ur (1996) suggests a rubric that assesses fluency and accuracy. We concluded that fluency and accuracy--include linguistic, socio-linguistic, and strategic components-- are significant for assessing oral proficiency.

In addition to the above, some strategies may not be flexible enough to include all the components of oral proficiency. Thus, we suggest two activities that foster real-world communication, use comprehensible input, and encourage students' participation. The activities Mingles and Oral interviews enable students to show their fluency and accuracy in the target English language. For example, when we implemented an oral interview--through the game Keep the Glass in the Air, students were having fun when playing with their classmates, and the questions were related to students' previous knowledge and interests. As a result, every participant used the comprehensible output to answer the questions, and they showed the domain of fluency and accuracy they had. Taking into consideration that in the observations, students showed a beginner level using basic grammar structures, simple sentences, and a few slang words.

In conclusion, English teachers need to consider several elements before implementing a strategy to foster students' oral proficiency. These strategies should create learning conditions in which students learn how to use language for a communicative purpose. Besides, language should not be limited to the use of words and rules, but appropriate language, cohesion/coherence among sentences, and communication strategies essential when developing communicative competence. The best way to achieve this goal is by implementing more dynamic and innovative communicative strategies with real-world communication.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusions of the study, some recommendations will be directed towards the English teachers and further researches.

To the English teacher

The findings imply that assessing oral proficiency in EFL students requires the use of a wide variety of strategies finding that one single strategy is not enough for such as purpose. Therefore, it recommends to continue implementing strategies that foster real-world communication, and simultaneously use an assessment instrument to identify the strategy's effectiveness.

To further researches

We planned to implement Mingles and Oral Interview with the students to observe their effect on oral proficiency. Notwithstanding, the lack of time-limited affected the implementation of more than one strategy, and hence, we only had one opportunity to apply an oral interview and the assessment method. Although we observed, oral interviews are useful for developing oral proficiency in class, we needed to implement more strategies plus the assessment instrument to get an ample description of students' oral performance. Thus, it recommends further researches to apply more activities to observe all the components of oral proficiency.

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VIII. ANNEXES

8.1. Participant Observation

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua

UNAN-Managua

Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria

FAREM-Estelí

Institution's name: _____ Observation's date: _____ Time: _____

Observant name: _____ Number of participants: _____

Objectives:

- To identify the methodological strategies for fostering student's oral proficiency during the English class.
- To suggest strategies for fostering student's oral proficiency during the English class.

Write a check in the correct cell according to the right answer: Always (A),

Sometimes (S), and Never (N)

N°	Statements	A	S	N	Observation
1	Before starting the lesson, the teacher presents a warm-up activity.				
2	The teacher implements a strategy (brainstorm, hot potato, etc.) to recap the previous lesson.				

3	During the implementation of the methodological strategies, students interact using language to communicate.				
4	The strategies implemented by the tutor are contextualized to the students' interests, needs, and beliefs.				
5	During the implementation of the strategies, students show motivated to participate orally.				
6	The strategies are learner-centered, so the tutor is a facilitator in the learning process.				
7	The strategies implemented are related to the functional-notional syllabus (introducing yourself, ordering food, making reservation, apologizing, making a complaint, etc.)				
8	Strategies like role-play, information-gap activities, jigsaw activities, note-taking, discussions and debates are observed during the class.				
9	Linguistics: During the lesson, students use vocabulary and sentence structures appropriately.				
10	Socio-linguistic: During the lesson and activities, students use idioms and their background knowledge to communicate with their classmates.				

11	Discourse: While students speak, they express their ideas in a logical and understandable manner (cohesion and coherence).				
12	Strategic: It observes, students use communication strategies ⁶ to express their ideas according to the level that they have.				

⁶ A way of overcoming a gap between communicative intent and limited ability to express that intent, as part of strategic competence (Yule, 2010, p. 284).

8.2.Semi-structured Interview

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua

UNAN-Managua

Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria

FAREM-Estelí

Institution's name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Interviewer's name: _____ Grade: _____

Dear teacher, we are asking you to be in this research study. We are researching about methodological strategies implemented by the 11th grade English teacher for fostering student's oral proficiency in the English class at the Reino de Suecia Institute during the second semester 2020. With the information you are providing, we hope to learn to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process in the English subject. We will identify methodological strategies for fostering students' oral proficiency and describe the method that you implement to assess your student's oral proficiency. Please feel free to answer the next questions and thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

1. How long have you been working as an English teacher? And how has this experience been for you?
2. According to your experience as an English teacher, what's the most challenging language skills for your students to develop?

3. For you, what is oral proficiency? Do you consider the development of oral proficiency is challenging for your students? If so, why?
4. How do you assess your student's oral proficiency in class? Do you have specific criteria to assess them?
5. How do you keep your students engaged and motivated, and how do you promote students' oral participation in class?
6. What kind of strategies do you implement in class to have students talking and interacting with each other in English?
7. During the implementation of the strategies, do you support the process using some didactic material? If so, can you give some examples?
8. According to your experience, what has been the most effective strategy you have implemented to work on students oral proficiency?
9. Is there anything else you would like to say about the experience and what you think about it?

8.3. Rubric to assess student's oral proficiency

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua

UNAN-Managua

Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria

FAREM-Estelí

Objective: To analyze the effectiveness of the methodological strategies implemented for fostering student's oral proficiency during the English class.

Directions: Use this rubric to assess student's oral proficiency. Assign a score, from 0 to 2 for a total of 10 points. Being 0 the lowest score and 2 the highest.

Strategy's name: _____ Student's number: _____ Date: _____ Grade: ____

Criteria	Student Score
Students will be able to:	
Speak confidently and naturally without hesitation.	
Pronunciation is accurate, with correct number of syllables and inflections.	
Answer with well-structured sentences; following the grammar rules.	
Answer with vocabulary taught by the teacher or counting with his/her previous knowledge.	

Use content related to the subject and the topic taught by the teacher according to his/her English level.	
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Note: This rubric will be implemented during the development of strategies to analyze their effectiveness on student's oral proficiency.

8.4.Evidence

English Feast: Performances, English Songs, Poetry, etc.



| Photograph taken by Yerlis Zamora



Photograph taken by Yerlis Zamora



Photograph taken by Yerlis Zamora

Cause-Effect Set of Sentences



Photograph taken by Yerlis Zamora

Find Someone Who: Explanation



Photograph taken by Mr. Porras



8.5. Timetable of Activities

N°	Activities	Dates	Time	places	Observation
1	Choose the topic	July 10 th 2020	1 week	Yerlis'house	
2	Write the objectives	July 16 th 2020	1 week	Yerlis'house	
3	Topic approval and tutor assignment by the university	July 16 th 2020 to Aug 26 th 2020		FAREM-Esteli	
4	First the meeting with the advisor to explaining components of the investigation.	August 29 th 2020	1 hour	FAREM-Esteli	
5	To work in Introduction and Literature review (important aspects)	Sept 1 st to 20 th 2020	3 weeks	Yerlis'house	
6	Seek instructor's feedback	Sept 5 th and 11 th 2020		School Padre Fabretto and Farem-Esteli	
7	Review and organize data	Sept 22 nd 2020		Yerlis' house	

8	To prepare instruments to carry out the research.	Sept 23 rd 2020		Yerlis' house	
9	Seek instructor's feedback	Sept 25 th 2020		FAREM-Esteloi	
10	First participant observation	Oct 5 th 2020	2 hours	Reino de Suecia institute	The goal was relate to teacher and students.
11	Second participant observation	Oct 12 th 2020	2 hour	Reino de Suecia institute	The teacher no desarrollo la clase becuase estaban realizando el festival de la raza
12	Third participant observation	Oct 14 th 2020	1 hour	Reino de Suecia institute	The goal is identify the strategies that use the teacher.
13	Fourth participant observation	Oct 19 th 2020	2 hours	Reino de Suecia institute	The goal is identify the effectiveness of strategies to develop oral proficiency and apply interview to the teacher
14	Fifth participant observation	Oct 25 th /2020	2 hours	Reino de Suecia institute	Apply one strategy and observe their effectiveness of strategy to develop

					oral proficiency of students.
15	Sixth participant observation	Oct 28 th /2020	1 hour	Reino de Suecia institute	Identify the strategies that allow the student speak english.
16	Seventh participant observation	Nov 9 th 2020	2 hours	Reino de Suecia institute	Observe the behavior of students when the teacher strategies strategy.
17	Eighth participant observation	Nov 16 th 2020	2 hours	Reino de Suecia institute	Observe if the strategies are effective in any momento of the class. (start, developing or to end).