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Facultad Regional Multidisciplinaria.

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Research submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for bachelor of Arts Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Dealing with the limitations faced by seventh-grade students in developing English speaking skills at Instituto Nacional Francisco Luis Espinoza of Estelí, during the second semester of 2016.

Authors

- Kellyn Mercedes Blandón Casco
- Gema Benazir Chavarría Alvarado
- Karen Vanesa Espinoza Duarte

Tutor: Msc. Israel Zelaya

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Content

1. Introduction

1.1 The problem background:

There are no prior studies about the problem delved in this paper -Limitations faced by seventh-grade students in developing English speaking skills at Instituto Nacional Francisco Luis Espinoza during the second semester of 2016. However, we have stumbled upon a few that are related to our topic and serve as support for the research of it. The closest are the following:

In 2014, Bustamante, Blass and Calero developed a study in UNAN´s (National Autonomous University of Nicaragua) English Language Department in the faculty of education and languages, whose purpose was to provide much needed knowledge of the methodological factors that affect the development of both listening and speaking skills in students of 10th and 11th grades. According to the investigation above, students do not present English skills according to a number of hours they receive in the curricula designed for their level, due to the poor methodological approach and inappropriate use of didactic resources by the teacher. The investigation also provided some possible solutions for the problem that may result in educational benefits for both the student and teacher in the English classroom.

Different from our research, which studies the lacking points of seventh graders learning experience regarding Speaking Skills of English as a foreign language, their investigation concerns the methodological part of the problematic, which is a different intake. Despite this, it still is of great relevance to our investigation.

1.2 Problem statement

Seventh-grade students face many limiting factors when learning basic English speaking skills for the first time. One of the biggest challenges in the learning process of the students above is the lack of knowledge caused by the tardy introduction of the English language and the lack of linguistic immersion in the classroom. Because of this, students do not possess the same knowledge, are inhibited in the classroom and also unmotivated (these being too, limiting points of the learning process). On the other hand, teachers suffer the lack of needed resources to impulse the promotion of oral skills in the classroom. The opposite of the mentioned problem factors would

thoroughly enable a concrete learning experience that will guarantee the speaking competitiveness needed in the student body to get through the remaining years of their high school experience with the cognizance to resolve problems in real life regarding the subject. Hence we state our problem as follows:

> How can we deal with the limitations faced by seventh-grade students in developing English speaking skills?

1.3   Research questions

We operationalize our problem by means of these two research questions:

− What limiting agents influence negatively the acquirement of English as a foreign language speaking skills to seventh-grade students in Instituto Nacional Francisco Luis Espinoza School during the second semester of 2016?

− What perceptions do students have regarding the importance of learning English as a foreign language?

− What strategies can be implemented to overcome the limitations?

1.4   Relevance of the Research

The primary purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the present limitations in the development of English speaking skills in seventh-grade students. The selection of this particular topic surges from asking: How is it possible that students graduate from high school without being able to speak English at least at a very basic level? Students have their first contact with the English language when they start seventh grade and continue that particular class during their high school career. The problem behind this presents itself in analyzing the motives that justify this fact.

This research is of great importance and relevance at an academic level. It is necessary to ask ourselves from a practical and formal point of view-What are the multiple reasons behind the

reality that such a low level of English speaking skills exists among students and how they can have such a low competence when trying to maintain a conversation. In other words, analyzing the causes, reasons and motives that have produced one of the lowest English levels in Central America is necessary. It is important to point out that English Proficiency Index which measures the amount of people that speak English per country does not even mention Nicaragua among their categories. (Navarro, 2015)

Besides making the reader reflect upon the condition of English education regarding speaking skills and presenting a reality that many do not perceive or recognize in its true nature and importance; we will give a closer answer to the problem, which is necessary and unavoidable for the improvement of the situation.

1.5   Definitions of key terms

- Limitations: noun| lim.i.ta.tion | \, li-mə-´tā-shən/Circumstance or condition that limits or provides as a difficulty when developing something. (2016, Merriam Webster)/
- Development: noun| de.vel.op.ment | \di- ´ve-ləp-mənt, dē-/ the act or process of growing or causing something to grow or become larger or more advanced. (2016, Merriam Webster)
- Speaking skills: noun| \´spēk\ the ability to say words in order to express your thoughts, feelings, opinions etc., to someone: to talk to someone. (2016, Merriam Webster)

1.6   Overview

In the following research we explore the causes of the low level of English speaking skills among seventh graders once they finalize their first year of high school. Consequently, we have outlined this report in the following way:

In the first chapter we introduce the problem and analize its´relevance, here we explain the reasons that justify our choosing the previously mentioned research topic, also explore the research that most closely resembled our topic.

Chapter two is the literature review in which the main theoretical ideas are presented, providing the reader with definitions and theories.We mention and study the limitations that keep students from learning significant English speaking skills in the classroom, among the limitations that students face in English class that will be analyzed are the tardy introduction to the English language in the educational system, the lack of real linguistic immersion, the behavior and lack of interest among the student body regarding the class…

On the other hand we will propose activities that will increment speaking tasks and motivate lower level students to speak in pairs or small groups during English class) which will solve the problem affecting what should be an ideal learning process of English speaking skills but in reality is not.

2. Literature Review

Speaking is an important skill when learning English as a foreign language. It involves great efforts from the educative community. The interest and motivation in students to join the different activities guided by the teacher are one of the principal factors that affect the development of students´ interactions with the language and its use in real context. Therefore when speaking English correct intonation and pronunciation is a key for speaking fluently.

The principal goal of this investigation is to study the limitations faced by seventh-grade students in developing English speaking skills at Instituto Nacional Francisco Luis Espinoza of Estelí during the first semester of 2016, after, previously having researched the limitations that affect negatively the acquisition of English as a second language in the classroom.

This research focuses on teaching speaking skills because it is one of the most outstanding abilities to demonstrate all the knowledge obtained along the English learning process. In the coming sections, we will mention some concept about speaking.

In this document, we will take into account the limitations that students have when learning English as a foreign language during seventh grade. This can clearly explain the continuous failure in this subject. Nowadays our country´s students start learning English relatively late since in the majority of the cases the first contact with the language is between eleven and thirteen years of age during high school. According to Oxford (1990) the ideal age to learn a language lies among zero and five years of age, being puberty an age in which it is still possible to learn it, since, after the age of twenty-three, the acquisition of a language is much more challenging.

Because of that, it is convenient to start learning a language at a young age, fundamentally during kindergarten when children are like "sponges". As cause of that learning English would be much easy than during ages such as adolescence or advanced adulthood. Therefore, we will address the following limiting agents in the teaching-learning process in students. E.g. the methodological techniques that teacher applies in the classroom. On the other hand, we will explore student´s reactions regarding the application of mentioned methodological techniques.

2.1 Limitations

2.1.1 Absence of linguistic immersion in the classroom.

This is another of the limiting factors that make the English learning process erroneous. Towell and Atkins (1997) comments that there exists many motives to justify this aspect, but if we really want our students to develop competencies in this subject, we should clearly promote a linguistic immersion, we should make our classes only use English as a vehicular language, leaving Spanish for occasions that are really necessary, for example, the meaning of an unknown word.

If there is no linguistic immersion present, there is no meaningful learning experience, since the student only listens to the teacher speak English on rare occasions. Hence, it is indispensable to create an adequate environment to get a real linguistic immersion. But there are other motives why in most cases managing this is very difficult.

2.1.2 Inadequate level of English knowledge

Garcia (1997) discusses that this is very common in high school teachers that have been teaching the same thing during many years. It does not mean that teachers do not have the necessary knowledge to teach English. What this means is that after an extended period of teaching the same thing without any kind of variation, the teacher loses the oral fluidness to promote linguistic immersion.

2.1.3 Misbehavior and lack of interest in the student body

Classroom environment is an important component of a student's educational experience. A pleasant, cooperative classroom environment, however, is not always the norm. Students who walk in late or leave or class early, who talk with friend during class or who leave their cell phones on during lessons are not an unseen factor during class hours (Braxton, 2004).

2.1.4 Large number of students in a single class

Brown (2001) highlights the extensive quantity of students as one of the main problems in the classroom. It is not possible to teach a language to thirty or thirty-five students. Intimately related to this aspect is the lack of interest and bad behavior of certain students, which causes the teacher

to pass great part of the hour of class silencing or trying to put their students in order so they can be able to continue their teaching job, and also is impossible to apply the activities that the teacher planned because of the quantity.

Educational researchers suspect that class size reduction (being twenty the ideal number of learners) in the early grades help students achieve better English speaking skills because there is greater opportunity for individual interaction between students and teacher in a smaller class. Teachers also tend to have better morale and feel less overwhelmed by students, thus giving a better performance in the classroom and facilitating a better learning experience.

Academic gains are not the only benefit of lowering a class size. A recent study in the *American Journal of Public Health* (2014) revealed that reducing class sizes in the early years of secondary school may be more cost effective than most medical and health interventions. This is because students in smaller classes are more likely to graduate from high school, and high school graduates earn more and also enjoy significantly better health than high school dropouts.

Class sizes is undoubtedly a factor to be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of learning English as a foreign language in the country´s secondary school. On the other hand it is discussed that class size is irrelevant in this day and age in education, but how one on one education is delivered by the teacher since public schools cannot regulate the number of students per class without contradicting educational policies of a free learning experience. Still there are a number of disadvantages present in classes of large class size: first, it can reduce the amount of time students can actively engage with each other; second, it can increase the disruptive behavior in the classroom; third, it can reduce the amount of time the teacher can spend working with each individual student; fourth, it can reduce the material the teacher can cover; fifth, it can eliminate many methods of assessing students i.e. open-ended assessments and writing assignments; and sixth, it can reduce the learning by reducing the kind of teaching methods that the teacher can employ in her classroom (Jenkins, 2014).

2.1.5 Lack of motivation in the student body

Regardless of the objective value of any topic or activity in their English class, if students do not recognize its value, they may not be motivated to expend effort. However, if students clearly see how coursework connects to their concerns, interest and above all, their goal of learning English Speaking skills that will be of use in later life, they will be more likely to value it, and thus be more motivated to invest time and effort.

Many times students are not motivated to work hard on their English speaking skills because the content in their classes are not relevant to their lives and therefore cannot see the value of what they are learning. Consequently it is important to somehow include content that relates to the social economic status of the country they are living in too, for example including words they are most likely to use in case of talking to a foreigner. Real world applications of English speaking skills in the real world must be highlighted

Students are most like to exert effort in something if they anticipate an eventual payoff in terms of their future careers (Dreikurs, 1993). Teachers can enhance motivation by linking their course content to the professions their students intend to study after they graduate from high school.

A big problem that affects students regarding the lack of motivation is that many times the professor does not emotion and speaks in a monotone, which can result extremely boring. A teachers own enthusiasm about the English course can be powerful and contagious. Even if they are not interested when they begin to learn English during seventh grade, the teacher´s own enthusiasm can raise curiosity, pushing them to discover the value they overlooked.

2.1.6 Pronunciation complex (complex related to the correct pronunciation of words in English)

This aspect is intimately related with the three previously mentioned points, since a lack of oral expression and of a linguistic immersion, makes students lack a good pronunciation of the English language.

Verbracken (2007) comments that in some cases some do not know how to pronounce a vowel in English language, but, some students even knowing how to pronounce it in the right way, prefer to say it like in Spanish and impoverish their pronunciation. This is a common response in students. They somehow think that they will look better among their peers if they pronounce the words incorrectly (for example, adding an e to words that start with S, Skater becomes Eskeiter.) since they do not wish to "stick out like a sore thumb". This attitude of rejection when pronouncing words correctly affects negatively our students since that avoids the betterment of the English language.

2.1.7   Scenic panic (otherwise known as Stage Fright)

Stage fright is in its various forms the most common form of phobia in the classroom, especially when a group activity brings a student to the attention of their classmates, no matter how big or small their number. When students have to do an exercise on the whiteboard or practice a dialogue it is at least seventy percent sure that they are suffering certain degree of performance anxiety.

Performance anxiety in the classroom is commonly experienced as the fear of public speaking that impairs them when learning English speaking skills. Many students suffer it with all of the limitations and emotions it imposes. They either don't realize help is available, fear they cannot be helped or think it will be too hard, which is why they become experts on avoiding presentations. However, they often have regrets about the way their fears control their academic choices and grades. (Ortiz, 1988)

2.1.8   Absence of the required resources.

It is necessary to highlight the needs our educational system possesses regarding language teaching. Besides the shortage, in many cases, of the necessary educational sources for teaching a language, we must also mention the little educational content related to this subject that repeats over and over again.

It is not logical that mentioned content is not updated every school year. Teaching languages is something that is alive and should grow constantly if we want to offer a learning experience of

quality to our students.If students are badly prepared and have a low English foundation in seventh grade, then a superior effort will be needed achieve they learn what they did not the last year.

If our teachers are not prepared enough to teach their class, students will have a low learning level. If we analyze the amount of hours dedicated in high school to learning English, we could conclude that at least they should be able to speak the language well enough to be understood, but, unfortunately we notice how the student´s linguistic competence is decreased.

At times the lack of resources might seem like a trivial frustration, but the fact that some students must use their own pocket money to cover expenses should be of notice. Money alone will not solve all of the challenges that plague public schools. Some students show up at school lacking far more than school supplies. Schools cannot continue to be the only institutions expected to reverse

the effects of poverty. However, increased funding for high-quality resources, mental health services for at-risk students, and continued teacher development would absolutely improve urban education. (Amato, 2016)

3. 3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This investigation is of a qualitative focus, thus using variables of quality not quantity. By identifying the limitations that seventh graders face when developing English speaking   and evaluating factors that cannot be measured quantitatively, such as social and academic factors. This assessment will allow to deliver a criteria of quality regarding the aforementioned research.

3.1.1   Subject Selection

Universe: 230 students conforming the total amount of seventh-grade students in INFLE High school of Estelí, Nicaragua; corresponding to the morning study session during the second semester of the 2016 school year.

Population: 50 students conforming the total amount of seventh grade A. This study group involves students ranging from eleven to twelve years of age.

Sampling: 15 students from seventh-grade A, 7 boys and 8 girls.

3.2   Data collection

 The method applied for this research was the method known as simple random probability sampling. 15 students were chosen following the criteria mentioned bellow:

− Disposition and will regarding the study.

− Fourteen active students of seventh grade A of Instituto Nacional Francisco Luis Espinoza.

− Students that have experimented certain difficulty in the English subject.

3.3 Data Analysis

The process of the data analysis is essential to the investigation since it was a mean of the recollection of unstructured information in order to analyze the present situation in the classroom regarding the acquisition of English speaking skills, students´ perspectives, behavior and overall limitations that affect the learning process. For this, Observation and interviews (teacher and student) where applied.

4. 4. Result and Discussion

4.1. What limiting agents influence negatively the acquirement of English as a foreign languagespeaking skills to seventh-grade students in Instituto Nacional Francisco Luis Espinoza School during the second semester of 2016?

Taking into account the limitations that students have when learning English as a foreign language during seventh grade can clearly explain the continuous failure in this subject. Nowadays our country´s students start learning English relatively late, since in the majority of the cases the first contact with the language is between eleven and thirteen years of age during high school. According to Oxford (1990) the ideal age to learn a language lies among zero and five years of age, being puberty an age in which it is still possible to learn it, since after the age of twenty three, the acquisition of a language is much more difficult. Because of that, it is convenient to start learning a language at a young age, fundamentally during primary school when children are like "sponges". As the cause of that learning, English would be much easy than during ages such as adolescence or advanced adulthood. According to *Asociación Nicaraguense de Profesores de Inglés* (ANPI) English should be part of the syllabus since at least fifth grade.

During the observation period, we noticed a student with advanced English skills compared to the rest of his classmates. The teacher using him as an aid in the classroom was not an uncommon practice. During interviews, it was known to us that the student had studied an English course during primary school in a private academy as was the case of a small amount of other students who had studied English during primary school or December vacations. We considered that these students with previous studies in the subject should not be favored among their peers or even rejected by them just because they find the subject as something that comes easy to them; which is why we decided to create working groups to increase team work and a sense of purpose as opposite to the feeling of bordomn common in tthose who feel out of place regarding intellectual levels.

4.2. What perceptions do students have regarding the importance of learning English as a foreign language?

The instruments that were applied to conduct this research where the observation guide in the classroom and the interview to the teacher and students as mentioned above. Students have acknowledged the importance of knowing English speaking skills at a communicative level as a vehicle to job opportunities in the country and also abroad, as well as a way of gaining personal fulfillment and knowledge acquirement. Since students consider English to be one of their most important classes, they spend a total of at least two hours per week reviewing their lessons and doing their homework; although, some admit to doing things related to other classes during English. For example completing math homework or studying for tests is a widespread practice among the student body. During one of the group activities we implemented in the class, a small group of students were too concentrated on finishing a mathematics task from the previous hour as to join the rest of their classmates. Their undivided attention was kindly asked by one of us and we decided on a livelier game , which was Rumours, as to gain their will and focus. But, none of them are keen to missing class because of the importance the subject has to them. A group of students even attends private English lessons to improve their level of communication skills. Students are willing to participate in class activities. Unfortunately, these activities applied by the teacher are solely focused on grammar structure and writing, thus failing to cater to the class´ needs and motivations. Students have expressed the desire of more activities that are related to speaking such as games, singing, dialogue. Guided by the interviews, we applied games and activities that required communication and teamwork, even increasing competitions and the sense of gain. For example to shake up the typical reading of a dialogue, we used a game known as "hot potato" to chose which students should read in front of the class. Students were kept on their toes as to not be the one that had to read, but were willing to do so in the case of losing. There were even cases of many couples that decided to voluntarily stand and read the dialogue. Students presented a happy, willful and interested attitude during the course of the class.

Students also expressed a wish for a change a scenery, to receive English class in a different area like the basketball court or the school's computer lab, which would increase their attention span and provide a fun distraction from the "same old, same old". Because of this, as an experiment, a grammar lesson which students normally find excruciatingly boring took place in the schools basketball courts, as a result of this students were happy, excited to get out of their classroom and motivated to participate.

4.3. What strategies can be implemented to overcome the limitations?

Using games and activities that require team work and basic speaking skills is one of the most important ways to teach efficiently in a language class. Games make the class attractive to students wether indoor or outdoor Games, strengthen language skills, besides, learners develop social skills and good relationships while they interact with each others, especially when they feel bored or tired. It arises students' motivation. Group activities prepare young learners for life and they acquire positive social attitudes. (Rosemary, 2010)

4.3.1. Roleplay

A way of getting students to speak is role playing. In this activity students pretend they are in different situations and have a great variety of roles. Teachers give information to students as to who they are and what they think or feel. Thus the teacher can tell the student that he or she is "a doctor and your patient has a stomach ache…what should you prescribe to make him feel better?" (Russo, 1983)

4.3.2. Charades

Simulations are very similar to role plays, except, it is a guessing game. In charades, if one of the students is acting as a soccer player, he or she silently begins to simulate playing the sport in silence, kicking an imaginary ball and so on until one of their classmates guesses correctly what they are representing. The student who gave the correct answer gets to be the next one to simulate an activity or character for the rest of the class. Since they are entertaining the class, this motivates students as Hammer (1984) suggests, they increase the self-confidence of hesitant students,

because in roleplay or simulation activities, they will have a different role and do not have to speak for themselves, which means they do not have to take the same responsibility.

4.3.3. Picture Describing

Harmer (1998) states that a great way to make use of pictures in a speaking activity is to give the students one picture and have them describe what is in the picture. For this activity students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups, then a spoke person for each group describes the picture for the whole class. This activity impulses the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills.

4.3.4. Rumors

This is a very fun and enjoyable game that has the whole class participating. It is very simple: the class rearranges themselves in a large circle, the teacher begins whispering something in their student´s ear, careful to not being heard by the rest. The student tells the person sitting next to them what the teacher told them and so on until the circle is complete. Finally, the teacher shares what he or she told the rest of the class and the last person of the circle says what she or he was told. The variations of the sentence are to be discussed by everyone. This activity proves to be of much more success when done with groups of smaller amount. A problem we faced when playing this game with the children, was the excesive amount of students in the class, which caused disorder and too much noise, resulting a teacher from a neighboring classroom to leave her students and ask us to make less of a racket.

4.3.5. Brainstorming

On a given topic, students can produce ideas in a limited time. Depending on the context, either individual or group brainstorming is effective and learners generate ideas quickly and freely. The good characteristics of brainstorming is that the students are not criticized for their ideas so students will be open to sharing new ideas.

4.3.6. Storytelling

Students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Story telling fosters creative thinking. It also helps

students express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending, including the characters and setting a story has to have. Students also can tell riddles or jokes. For instance, at the very beginning of each class session, the teacher may call a few students to tell short riddles or jokes as an opening. In this way, not only will the teacher address students' speaking ability, but also get the attention of the class.

4.3.7. Interviews

Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. It is a good idea that the teacher provides a rubric to students so that they know what type of questions they can ask or what path to follow, but students should prepare their own interview questions. Conducting interviews with people gives students a chance to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside and helps them becoming socialized. After interviews, each student can present his or her study to the class. Moreover, students can interview each other and "introduce" his or her partner.

4.3.8. Reporting

Before coming to class, students are asked to read a newspaper or magazine and, in class, they report to their friends what they find as the most interesting news. Students can also talk about whether they have experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives before class.

4.3.9. Who am I?

In this activity students must sit in a circle and write the names of well-known celebrities, either fictitious or real on blank cards. The blank cards must be folded and put inside a jar from which students will pick out one of them. The teacher will unfold the paper and tape it to the student´s forehead. The student will be able to see their classmates cards but not his or her own. A person must be chosen to start the game, asking yes or no questions to figure out who they are. The benefits are that besides being fun and catering to students interests in modern culture, it also provokes the use of language and sound patterns that they will later on be able to recognize in words spoken daily in the classroom.

The activities applied during English are mostly focused on the development of written communication, even though, grammar structure is a vital part when learning English, speech must

not be set aside. The activities applied in the classroom to promote speaking skills, by the teacher, are minimal and bare. Vocabulary drills do facilitate the achievement and enrichment of student´s language and guarantees correct pronunciation in the best of cases, for example when the teacher corrects students diction when it is wrong. The teacher fails to correct the students. Therefore fossilization becomes common among the student body, mistakes such as underuse or incorrect translation (Porque si-Because yes. The correct would be just because.) This was observed during our period observation. Students are tired of listening and repeating. The same task can be tiring and downright dull. Since speaking tasks do not take place, students are not motivated to engage in basic conversations among themselves. Competitions are not developed, due to this scenic panic and the refusal to participate in activities that need teamwork are strengthened. For example stage fright induced crying was present during an oral pop quiz ending in the student completely closing off and refusing to speak in front of classmates. Other children spoke at a very low volume that was very difficult to listen due to shyness. Students will not able to solve problems in their academic lives in the future unless this changes.

4.2. Empirical Examples

Stage fright, as it was previously mentioned in this research, is currently one of the major limitations that students present in the classroom. Principally due to the absence of activities that may promote the ever so crucial Speaking area which enables a proficiency regarding basic communication skills, students are unable to confront the possibility of having to perform in public or participate in any kind of activity that requires teamwork. Even though many people present stage fright without any kind of major problems when facing a coming class presentation, in others it is possible to observe major affectations. Among the many cases during the observation period, the most pronounced was without any trace of doubt the case of a certain student that was incapable of speaking in front of others during numerous classroom activities, suffering a crying fit during an oral quiz and later on during a game. The child was frightened and unable of speech, especially after being told by the teacher in front of the rest of the class. In order to placate this situation group activities were adopted by us, as not to call attention to students that could be intimidated by the spotlight.

The deficiency of a promotion of oral skills is another negative aspect of our educational system that has not been improved and remains stuck at the same point since many years. In Nicaragua, traditionally the teaching of the afore mentioned language has been based on learning grammar, vocabulary and certain writing abilities, completely leaving out spoken expression.

It was also to our notice that the teacher´s lessons are focused on using the Grammar Translation Method, which uses translation, grammar study, recitation, and dictation to practice English. These methods helps students translate texts. Teachers didn't need to teach pupils to speak English well. But today, not only students or pupils but all people recognize the value of English.

Communicating with people is essential. According to (Russo, 1983) to know a language very well it is necessary besides writing and reading it, to speak it. If our students do not speak English, even basically, they will never be able to put the grammatical knowledge acquired in class, in practice. Correcting students pronounciation is a must and can only be possible if they actually engage in small conversations with one another. Students in our class practiced conversing among theirselves using as an example a dialogue provided by us, thus acquiring that is the practice so necessary for them.

Another common situation that was present in the class was overall misbehavior in certain cliques such as constantly talking and fidgeting around in the classroom due to the lack of activities that could maintain students concentration focused on something productive, the lack of consistency in class topics. One example of misbehavior was a group of students that always sat at the back of the class and inconspicuously corrected the professor´s pronunciation while in other areas of the classroom others were either texting on their phones or passing notes. Things such as gay slurs, students from other classrooms dropping by to interrupt in the middle of class or children with their headphones were apparently common during our observation periods. According to our studies and interviews with students this happens many times because students are not motivated to work hard on their English speaking skills since the content in their classes is either totally in Spanish or not relevant to their lives or tastes and therefore cannot see the value of what they are learning.

In the beginning of our investigation period a surprising amount of students had shown themselves unwilling to participate in activities that required speaking skills by cause of shyness and the feeling of being intimidated by the classmates that can easily speak at the front of the class, due to the fear of being singled out. To attract them to class discussions and games one of our focuses was keeping students attentions focused on class by incorporating "Easter eggs" for example inserting a small text about a pop artist or an actor's picture in a slide show or activity. For example one of the activities we implemented in class used a very popular song, and also slang words that were immediately recognized by students, a tool that resulted to be extremely useful in engaging students and also a much more understandable classroom material since students spend most of their life interacting with pop culture. As result of the activities implemented in the classroom by us, we obtained students enthusiasm regarding speaking related activities, some even wanted to speak even after having had their turn to participate, where unafraid of making possible mistakes and an environment of understanding and teamwork was created.

5. Conclusion

There are many limitations that keep seventh grade students from learning the essential English speaking skills during their year of initial contact with the language, which in an ideal case should grow to become a sort of starting point for the acquirement of the speaking skills to come during the rest of their high school careers before they graduate. However the conditions students must face regarding their education in English speaking are many and not idyllic. Students are unmotivated due to different factors such as not actually *learning* how to speak in English since the class is given entirely in Spanish except for a few vocabulary drills which in their point of view are excruciatingly mind-numbing. Oral skills are not promoted (except during oral pop quizzes in which the teacher asks vocabulary) and there is a lack of any kind of activity focused on getting students to talk among themselves in a Basic English. The insertion of activities that lean towards student´s interests either culture or career wise would thoroughly enable a learning experience that on the other hand would guarantee the development of competiveness among students. To make a change in the present situation regarding the poor learning process of English speaking skills in students, we must all work with a superior effort.

5.1   Recommendations

With the intention of providing a better learning experience of English speaking skills to students, the following recommendations are necessary

- The Teacher should speak English as much as possible during the class.
- Plan activities to promote English speaking skills.
- Motivate students constantly to practice English.
- Give students positive feedback and correct their mistake.
- Incorporate visual aids to improve their pronunciation.

5.2   Concluding words

During the investigation period we had the gracious opportunity of finally being in a real educational environment and interacting with students, thus being able to base this research paper

on the true secondary academic experience; which resulted as fullfiling and enrichening to us as future English teachers.

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Anexes

Chronogram

Activities	Place and Date	Present Members
Identifying the problem	FAREM-Estelí 08/27/16	Karen, Kelly, Gema
Research questions and goals	FAREM-Estelí. 09/04/16	Karen, Kelly, Gema
Asking for Access to a classroom and students	INFLE 09/06/16 from 7:15	Karen, Kelly, Gema
Designing observation guides	Karen´s residence 0 9/07/16	Karen, Kelly, Gema
Applying observation guides	INFLE 09/08/16 to 10/13/16	Karen and Kelly
Methodological design, designing interviews and le sson plan	Karen´s residence 10/16/16	Karen, Kelly and Gema
Applying student and teacher interviews	INFLE 10/19/16 to 10/20/16	Karen, Kelly and Gema
Applying the lesson plan	11/09/16 INFLE	Karen, Kelly, Gema
Writing the first draft of the research paper	08/08/16 to 11/26/16	Karen, Kelly, Gema
Revision and discussion with thesis counselor	12/03/16 FAREM	Karen, Kelly, Gema

5.3 Observation guide

General data

Name of the school: _____

Type of education center: State_____ Private____

District: _____ Department: _____

Subject: _____ Grade: _____ Class:_____

Teachers´ note: The focus of this observation is to obtain information regarding the performance of speaking skills during the class. We aim to study the development of activities and overall process of the students´ progress.

N	Aspect	Yes	Partially	No
1	At the beginning of the class he/she takes the control of the students.			
2	He/she looks over the last content after he introduces a new topic.			
3	The teacher gives the student to participate in class			
4	The teacher has self-confidence at the moment of explain an answering about the class.			

5	The teacher introduces activity to promote oral expression.			
6	The teacher corrects pronunciation when students speak.			
7	The students pay attention when the teacher is speaking.			

Interview

The following instruments are for sole academic ends, the identities of the interviewees will be protected respecting the right of anonymousness of informants.

Student:

Topic of investigation: Limitations in teaching English speaking skills to seventh grade students of INFLE during the second semester of the 2016 school year.

General Data:

Place and Date_____

Age: _____

Sex: Male_____ Female: _____

School: _____

Grade: _____

Preguntas:

➢ 1- ¿Realmente disfrutas recibir la clase de inglés?

➢ 2- ¿Cuántas horas por semana repasas en casa los tema aprendidos en la clase mencionada?

➢ 3- ¿De qué manera le beneficia asistir a la clase de inglés?

➤ 4- ¿Qué actividades implementa el maestro en la clase para promover el habla del idioma Inglés?

➤ 5- ¿Tiendes a salirte de clase? ¿por qué?

➤ 6- ¿Dedicas tiempo a otras asignaturas durante la clase de inglés?

➤ 7- ¿Cómo te gustaría que el maestro de enseñe la clase de inglés?

Interview guide (Teacher).

Place and Date: _____

Age: _____

Sex: Male_____ Female_____

School: _____

Grade: _____

Questions:

➢ 1- How do you grade the learning experience of students of English speaking skills in the classroom?

➢ 2- What teaching methods do you apply in class?

➢ 3- What do you do with the students absents in the class? Do you investigate why are they absents?

➢ 4- Do students express interest in your teaching subject?

➢ 5- Do you plan future class topics according to time before starting the class?

➢ 6- How frequently is Spanish spoken in the classroom?

➢ 7- What didactic materials are used in your class?

➢ 8- To your point of view what is the problem that affects students the most regarding your subject?

5.4 Lesson plan

Discipline: English   Grade: seventh

Date: October 27th 2016   Time: 90 min

School: INFLE

Topic: There is there are with words of the house.

Initial activities

-Greetings

-Organize the classroom

-Check attendance

-Make a review about the last topic

Warm-up activity

Secret word Rumors

There is living room and a kitchen in my house.

Development activities

Through the game *cabbage*, students are going to read the dialogue in front of their classmates.

Dialogue

Bryan: Hello. I´m Bryan

Brittany: Hello Bryan. How are you?

Bryan: Fine Thanks… I saw your house on facebook

Brittany: Oh yeah! It is new. Do you like it?

Bryan: Yes. It is beautiful. Is there a swimming pool?

Brittany: yes, and a Jacuzzi. There are four living room, two bathrooms and a patio.

Bryan: Oh my God. It is big.

Ending Activity

Listen to the song and choose the correct word from the box to fill in the blank.

Heads   shelter   folder   table   bed   bread able   table

Is This Love"

I wanna love you and treat you right;

I wanna love you every day and every night:

We'll be together with a roof right over our heads;

We'll share the shelter of my single _____;

We'll share the same room, yeah! - for Jah provide the_____

Is this love - is this love - is this love -

Is this love that I'm feelin'?

Is this love - is this love - is this love -

Is this love that I'm feelin'?

I wanna know - wanna know - wanna know now!

I got to know - got to know - got to know now!

I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I - I'm willing and _____,

So I throw my cards on your table!

I wanna love you - I wanna love and treat - love and treat you right;

I wanna love you every day and every night:

We'll be together, yeah! - with a roof right over our _____;

We'll share the shelter, yeah, oh now! - of my single bed;

We'll share the same room, yeah! - for Jah provide the bread.

Is this love - is this love - is this love -

Is this love that I'm feelin'?

Is this love - is this love - is this love -

Is this love that I'm feelin'?

Wo-o-o-oah! Oh yes, I know; yes, I know - yes, I know now!

Yes, I know; yes, I know - yes, I know now!

I-I-I-I-I-I-I-I - I'm willing and able,

So I throw my cards on your table!

See: I wanna love ya, I wanna love and treat ya -

love and treat ya right.

I wanna love you every day and every night:

We'll be together, with a roof right over our heads!

We'll share the _____ of my single bed;

We'll share the same room, yeah! Jah provide the bread.

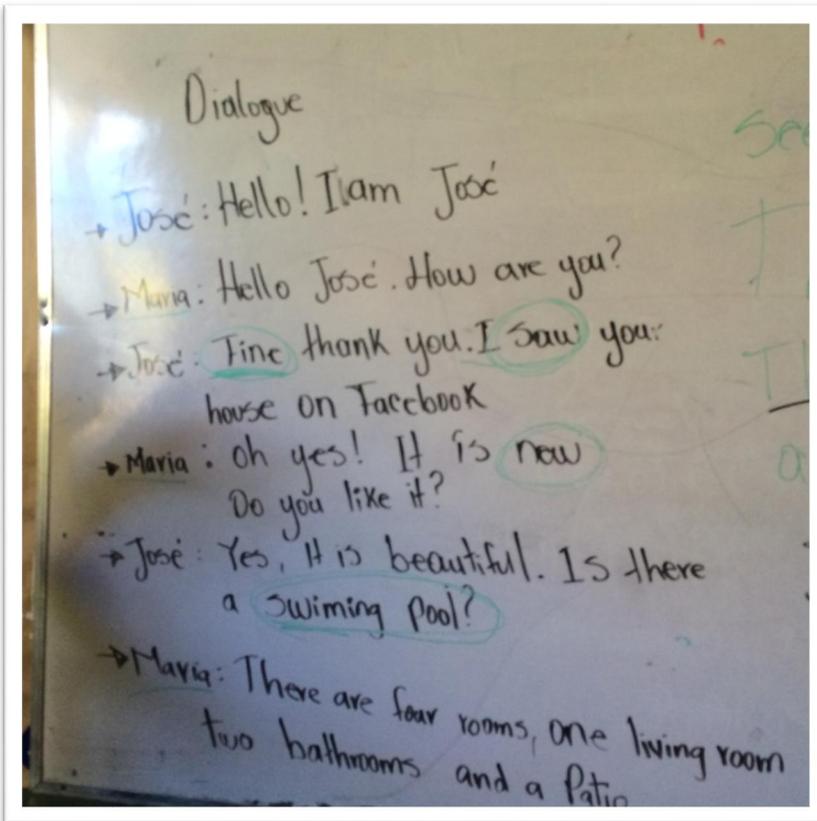**We'll _____ the shelter of my single bed**

Homework

Make sentences describing things in your house using there is - there are.

5.5   7.6. Photos.

Engaging students in a basic English conversation, practicing a dialogue and correcting pronunciation outside of the classroom.

Singing in class.