THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON LEARNERS' ACCURACY,

FLUENCY AND VOCABULARY

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Research project to obtain the degree of Master in English Didactics

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I thank God, first of all because he gave me the strength to achieve this goal, to my parents and brother who are the most important people for me, to my godmother, who was not aware I was pursuing this master's degree because of her Alzheimer, but I do understand her importance in my life and a special acknowledgement to my professor Frank Giraldo for his patience and wonderful guidance. To all of them, my gratitude forever.

Abstract

This project aimed at enhancing the speaking performance specifically accuracy, fluency and vocabulary of learners at a private university in Cartagena by the implementation of Communication Strategies. The researcher elaborated six workshops after the collection of data through the following instruments: students' survey, researcher's journals, teachers' interviews and a diagnostic test. These workshops took into account the strategy training model and international descriptors for a basic user of English. After the analysis of the findings, it was determined that respecting the accuracy aspect, the students improved their awareness of components to create accurate sentences and knowledge of grammatical tenses. Concerning fluency, rising and falling intonation, expansion on the length of utterances and moderate progress on the placement of pauses of the sentences occurred. Finally, regarding vocabulary the learners' improved the expansion of ideas, diversified their previous vocabulary and reduced in a significant way literal translation coming from L1.

Key words: Speaking skill, communication strategies, accuracy, fluency, vocabulary

Introduction

Getting prepared for future language demands at a workplace is one of the key aspects to be developed by English teachers in today's world. Students not only should acquire knowledge about specific terminology related to tourism, technology, medicine and some other fields, but also ways to communicate successfully in every situation especially when they struggle with the recalling of a particular word or when they realize that their linguistic resources are not enough.

Therefore, Communication Strategies are appropriate tools that guide the students to look for alternatives to foster conversation, avoiding silence and on the contrary facilitating the interaction. These allow the learners to get their meaning across in challenging situations and keep trying instead of abandoning the conversation, and finally attain the communication goal (Dörnyei, 1995). If teachers train the students to identify and use these strategies the students might conceive the L2 as flexible as their mother tongue because they will be prepared to manipulate it according to the context needs.

When exchanging ideas, the students could experience a series of feelings, these could be related to their level of English, internal factors or the setting itself. Oxford (1990) considers that a high number of learners feel scared when expressing their ideas in English. The insufficient vocabulary and their thoughts about being incorrect with respect to grammar make them feel incompetent. The fact of knowing how to employ communication strategies efficiently contributes to the communicative competence and makes a difference between high speakers and low ones (Savignon, 2002).

Bearing in mind the previous position this project intends to implement communication strategies paying special attention to the following aspects accuracy, fluency and vocabulary for a Basic Language User of English specified by the Common European Framework (2001). The

reason for carrying out this study is to make the learning process of the students of course III at this private institution more dynamic and create an impact on the way they will be using the language in their personal life and future workplaces. This type of work will be beneficial for both the learners currently involved in the program and the future ones because I will provide a foundation to train them in the master of these strategies (metacognitive, social, time gaining, help seeking and maintenance) that should not be overlooked because they are inherent to the development of social interactions.

This document reports a whole description of the instruments used to detect the situation that needed to be improved, objectives, evidence of different type of related investigation held around the world, and in the same vein, the most effective strategies to cope with communication disruptions and the latest techniques to carry out this process. At the end of this report, it could be observed that communication strategies contributed to the strengthening of the subskills aforementioned and to the students' personal life bringing them confidence, awareness and autonomy.

1   Research problem

1.1   Purpose of the research

Learning a second language is something that requires effort, time and also strategies to deal with those awkward moments that even the experts in the topic might feel because of the failure of not recalling a specific word or because they have never thought about the equivalent of a phrase in the target language. Hamad (2013) states that foreign language users have inconveniences to express thoughts in a natural way because the majority not only struggle to know what they want, but also the proper way to do it. Moreover, to follow the same idea as Rost & Ross (1991) claim learners could act as if they have understood what they have heard of read because they do not want to be embarrassed.

Consequently, this study about Communication Strategies allows to explore and report the impact of eighteen strategies elaborated for authors like Bejarano et al. (1997), Dörnyei & Scott (1997), Faerch & Kasper (1983), Tarone (1983), Porter (1986), O'Malley & Chamot (1990), Brown (2007), Tarone & Yule (1987) in order to empower the learners and offer them foundations to have a better performance on their social encounters which will in turn have repercussions in their personal and professional life due to the sense of confidence and awareness they may entail. The strategies can prepare them for social interactions in which speaking is involved.

Similarly, this project is relevant because the strategies bring both interpersonal and intrapersonal advantages because they help to the development of oral proficiency because when exchanging ideas learners work on their oral skills which makes their knowledge understandable and they also learn to decode their interlocutor's message (Long, 1983; Rabab'ah, 2016). This is an aspect the participants in this study should not overlook because when they exchange ideas,

they show their viewpoint, experiences and beliefs that sometimes could fluctuate or accord with the interlocutor due to the lack of clarity when sharing the message or lack of understanding of the person who is listening. What is more, communication strategies, in other words, not only could contribute to the students' communicative competence improvement specifically accuracy, fluency and vocabulary, but also to their social interactions.

On the other hand, this project is applicable for the university or any other institution because it provides training so the students can adapt their discourse to state their ideas in varied ways as well as enough practice to overcome linguistic deficiencies, dealing with one of the most students' recurring feeling of "knowing what to say, but not the way to convey it", that is to say, eliminating the existing gap between what the learners would like to say and their available linguistic resources since they will have a guide to strengthen their autonomy. Likewise, it is useful for the teachers because they can assist their students to maximize the content from the book and as a result gain language independence in life. Cohen (1990) affirms that "a major trait of successful speakers is that they use strategies to keep the conversation going… Communication strategies compensate for deficits the speaker may have" (p. 56).

Finally, this project will serve as a reference for the future students in the master's program to know how to create structured lessons or workshops having into account the communication strategies, accepted standards for a basic user level and the latest didactic techniques that can be employed in virtual, remote or typical orientations.

1.2 Description of the context and setting

I carried out this study at a private university in Cartagena, Colombia. Its pedagogical model is understood as an integral one where academic, administrative and management processes are connected to give account of the relationships held inside and outside the institution (PEI, 2005).

This institution has 20 academic programs and two branches, the industrial and technological park, located in Ternera neighborhood and Casa Lemaitre campus in Manga, correspondingly. I did my study in the first one. They both have classrooms equipped with video beams, speakers, white board, air conditioning and fans. Because of the 2020 pandemic, I had to conduct this study in remote conditions through the Microsoft TEAMS platform mostly and dealing with all the advantages and drawbacks this phenomenon brought like the discovery of new educational websites as well as issues with connectivity.

I work there in the Language Center department that offers programs and services related to foreign languages to people, companies and government organizations. I belong to the English program that consists of six courses lasting one semester each to take the students to the B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching and assessment (Council of Europe, 2001). At the moment of carrying out this investigation I was teaching course III which helps the students to get to level A2+ in accordance with the Common European Framework (2001).

During this project, I worked with a population of 27 learners. They were all young adults and belonged to the majors of this university. Based on the diagnostic stage, they all liked English and saw the language as a means to improve and be ready for the future. The learners attended the course four hours a week in the morning. It was from Monday to Friday having one day off, and classes started at 9 o'clock until 9:50 am. They had remote classes because they participated in this project in the second semester of 2020 where the pandemic was still a menace.

We used the book Top Notch 2, (3rd edition) of Pearson which was the one selected by the university to be taught in this level, this had ten units divided into four lessons each and the access to a platform which had to be used at the same time as a way to put into practice their new

knowledge. The curriculum states that the textbook needs to be covered in sixteen days giving a pacing that guides the teachers. The assessment system has the following percentages, 20 % quizzes, 20% platform, 10% participation and homework and 50% oral exam. For the purpose of this study, I had to adapt the lessons so they could be articulated with the strategies mentioned, respecting what they were supposed to learn based on the class syllabus, but giving them the chance to complement it with new ideas. Thanks to this intervention the students devoted much more time to work on their speaking skill doing extra things like conversations in class, videos and simulations where they took theory to practice in a meaningful and real way.

1.3   Description of the problem

This project about Oral Communications Strategies was intended to permeate the participants' oral performance in terms of accuracy, fluency and vocabulary. After I analyzed the data obtained from 7 interviews, 27 questionnaires, 15 observations registered in the form of journal entries and 1 diagnostic test, I realized that the participants had a good level of reading comprehension, a basic knowledge related to writing and difficulties with the listening and speaking skills, being the last one the most notorious. Even though the students managed to express their ideas they had inconveniences with the organization of their words because these had an incorrect order, or because they omitted parts, the pronunciation of verbs, non-natural sounding pauses as well as intonation of questions, and lack of awareness of the tenses or verb conjugation which did not allow them to convey their ideas in a natural and accurate way when it came to speak about everyday topics of non-demanding context or language.

This is the reason why I focused my study in the development of the speaking skill. The participants are enrolled in programs that might lead them to speak in English; therefore, this could be the language the students will take most advantage of in their future workplaces due to

the international dynamic of companies nowadays; as a result, if the students feel more prepared to speak, then they may be more empowered to face job challenges.

1.4 Research question and objectives

1.4.1 Research question

What is the impact of conversation strategies on the English language accuracy, fluency and vocabulary of students at a private university?

1.4.2 Objectives

1.4.2.1 *General Research objective*

To characterize the impact conversation strategies have on accuracy, fluency and vocabulary

1.4.2.2 *Specific Research Objectives*

- To describe how conversation strategies affect accuracy, fluency and vocabulary in the speaking skill of adult learners
- To evaluate if conversation strategies increase accuracy, fluency and vocabulary of adult learners
- To determine the influence of conversation strategies in accuracy, fluency and vocabulary of participants

2   Literature review

2.1   Theoretical framework

2.1.1   Strategic competence

This project will follow the communicative competence model of Canale & Swain (1980) who define it as the employment of linguistic and nonlinguistic strategies to deal with language gaps a learner may have because s/he is still in the process of learning a language. This means that when the learners participate in language demanding situations, they could make use of their previous knowledge like it is expected to handle them but also of their gestures or mimics to continue the conversation.

Some years later Canale (1983) complemented the concept of conversation strategies to include not only strategies to deal with disruptions in communication because of the speakers' low knowledge of the foreign language but also to interact with interlocutors in an effective way. Dörnyei & Thurrell (1991) define it as the ability to express ideas in an effective way even when encountering difficulties.

Consequently, there are two interactional views in the study of communication strategies, an interactional and psycholinguistic one. The former is about the process itself of sharing ideas and what the users do to make themselves understood, in other words, how they negotiate meaning (e.g., Tarone, 1980; Rost & Ross, 1991; Williams, Inscoe, & Tasker, 1997; Nakatani, 2010). Tarone (1980) describes communication strategies as the "mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in a situation where the requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared" (p. 420).

The psycholinguistic view has to do with the cognitive processes done by a user to overcome a particular situation (e.g., Faerch & Kasper 1983, Kellerman & Bialystok, 1997; Litlemore 2001; Poulisse, 1990). The above two perspectives are related to the findings of different studies that have found that raising the learners' awareness of the communicative strategies improves communication strategy use and oral communication ability (Nakatani 2010; Rabab'ah, 2016).

2.1.2 Communication strategies

According to Hatch (1978) the strategies are intended to provide support to the students when communicating, making them more engaged, prepared to understand both the language and culture as well as their independence in regards to a language. Learning these types of tools facilitate the ability of the speakers at the moment of exchanging ideas with others because they give them the necessary confidence and knowledge to avoid communication disruptions. Different studies have proved that when the learner is really aware of the communicative strategies, he improves the way in which he uses them and his or her oral communication ability (Nakatani, 2010; Rabab'ah, 2016). This is because the students take active part in their learning process through the constant reflection or analysis of their interactions which in turn contribute to their autonomy and interpersonal relations.

The word "interaction" is strictly related to oral communication strategies, for some authors such as Tarone (1977) who defines oral strategies as the intentions of two speakers to create a common message when their languages differ. The employment of CS in a conscious way may serve to deal with breakdowns due to the personal lack of linguistic resources (Tarone, 1977).

In the same vein, Yule & Tarone (1991) think that the roles of participants within interactions that lead to negotiation of meaning can be effectively described within a communication strategy framework, which focuses on cooperative moves by both speakers.

These strategies can be used by any learner, regardless of their proficiency in English because for the advanced ones they are means to study in depth, or to raise consciousness of how to direction and clarify a conversation to achieve a goal, and for the beginners to feel more confident and with less fear to try as Jamshidnejad (2011) states, "CSs in L2 interaction enable participants not only to co-construct knowledge or solve problems, but also to go beyond it to test their hypotheses, or expand their knowledge to wider aspects of the language. Thus, not only novice learners, but also more proficient learner can benefit from the L2 interaction."

Faucette (2001) states communication strategies could be excellent means for less proficient learners to have the tools to maintain the conversation resulting in the opportunity to receive more language input and improve their language ability. Furthermore, Hua, Mohd Nor, & Jaradat (2012) believe that raising awareness of both low proficient and high proficient speakers to strategies that are used by speakers of different proficiency levels may well help ease communication.

All of the strategies I selected to conduct this investigation deal with conversation, and that involves listening and speaking. Precisely, these are the skills I noticed students needed to develop more in the diagnostic stage, thanks to the results from the journals and surveys. These strategies could help the students when they feel they lack knowledge of a certain word that is strictly necessary at that moment. By their implementation they would elicit content from their conversation partner and cooperate to continue with the conversation.

2.1.3 Types of strategies

This study has a mix of compensation, metacognitive, maintenance, help seeking, time gaining and social strategies based on several authors like, Brown (2007), O'Malley & Chamot (1990), Faerch & Kasper (1983), Dörnyei & Scott (1997), among others.

Compensation strategies let the students understand and produce by using L2, even with the inconveniences of not knowing the language, like speculating from the non-verbal communication and context or using similar words (Oxford, 1990).

Metacognitive strategies are the ones students employ to administer their way to learn or to take advantage of the information. These are understanding learning styles, designing and keeping track of their process (Oxford, 1990).

Maintenance strategies are intended to help the people involved to proceed with the conversation avoiding awkward silences or a lack of empathy.

Help seeking strategies are used to get the assistance of the interlocutor, because it is necessary to confirm or verify what was said.

Time gaining are those strategies that allow the speakers to take some seconds to think and organize what they would like to say.

Social strategies have to do with the idea of sharing ideas with L2 language users to know more about something or as a way to help each other (Oxford, 1990).

It is important to say that some learners might make use of some memorization, since they are getting acquainted with a different part of the language and due to the fact that they are in their first English levels.

Strategies employed in the present study and corresponding examples:

Table 1. *Addressed communication strategies and corresponding authors used in this study*

Publication	Name of strategy and definition	Examples
Brown (2007)	Prefabricated patterns: Used to have some "elaborated" ideas to begin.	It's a thing you…
Brown (2007)	Stalling or time-gaining strategies: Used to get time to organize ideas	Well
Brown (2007)	Use of all-purpose word: Used to replace an unknown word	Stuff
O'Malley & Chamot (1990)	Evaluation: Use to verify understanding	Formal: Did I make myself clear? Informal: Are we on the same page?
O'Malley & Chamot (1990)	Clarification request: Used to ask directly for an unknown word	What do you mean?
Faerch & Kasper's (1983)	Self-repair: Used to correct what has been said	I need a couple of razors. Wait, sorry! Actually, I need three.
Bejarano et al. (1997)	Follow-up questions: Used to show interest in someone else´s opinion in the form of questions	How was it? How did you celebrate it?
Bialystok (1983); Dörnyei & Scott (1997); Faerch & Kasper (1983); Tarone (1983)	Provide active response: Used to show interest or to show understanding	I know what you mean
Bialystok (1983); Dörnyei & Scott (1997); Faerch & Kasper (1983); Tarone, (1983)	Shadowing: Used to repeat the interlocutor´s ideas to show comprehension.	Travel agent: …and it arrives at Los Angeles at 10 o'clock Customer: *Los Angeles at 10: 00*. I´d like to join the tour Disneyland at 10:00.

Bialystok (1983); Dörnyei & Scott (1997); Faerch & Kasper (1983); Tarone, (1983)	Asking for repetition: Used to show a person was not able to listen what was mention before	Formal: Would you mind repeating? Informal: Come again?
Dörnyei & Scott (1997)	Confirmation request: Used to verify what someone understood	Do you mean he did not get my point?
Dörnyei & Scott (1997)	Interpretive summary: Used to make longer sentences of the delivered message to check understanding	So, the pipe is broken, basically, and you don't know what to do with it, right?
Tarone & Yule (1987)	Overexplicitness (waffling): Used to paraphrase someone´s idea	Simply put
Brown (2007)	Approximation: Used the name of a similar item to compensate for the lack of knowledge about a specific one.	"Plate" instead of "bowl" Another possibility: It becomes water = melt
Dörnyei & Scott (1997)	Response reject: Used to show disagreement	Formal: That´s a valid point, but Informal: You must be joking!
Porter (1986)	Show agreement: Used to show someone shares the same viewpoint.	Formal: I couldn't agree more Informal You can say that again!
Coulthard (1985)	Interrupting: Used to make a pause to take control of the dialog, answer questions or show disagreement.	Formal: Sorry to interrupt, but... Informal: Wait, did you say?

2.1.4   Strategy-Based Instruction

This project selected the 2005 update of the Strategy-Based Instruction model developed?? Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary & Robbins (1999) because it included a new step for the Assessment part, which I found appropriate to verify how well the learners could achieve the workshops' goals.

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)

The CALLA (Chamot, 2005; Chamot et al., 1999) model is composed of six steps, namely: Preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, expansion and assessment. The preparation stage accounts for how the beginning of the class takes place, the activation of the previous knowledge and the setting to start a new class. Presentation is about showing the students the strategies in an explicit way in order to have a solid knowledge taking into account what they already know about them. Practice has to do with the time dedicated to use the new information in applicable exercises, in this particular case, based on the content a Basic User of the English language should be learning. Evaluation is about asking the students their opinions or reactions towards the strategies of the session to check effectiveness. Expansion is devoted to the organization and presentation of a final product that could evidence the students' grasp of the strategies. Finally, in the assessment the teacher rates the students' knowledge of the strategies and how well they can employ them (O´Malley & Chamot, 2005).

2.1.5   Specific Speaking Skills for the Present Study

Speaking is the productive skill I planned to intervene by the use of communication strategies in this study. According to Thornbury (2005) "The average person produces tens of thousands of words a day, although some people like auctioneers and politicians may produce even more than

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that" (p. 1). Different from writing, speaking takes place in the form of utterances and it is something spontaneous, people do not have time to elaborate their answers as they might do when it comes to writing. Thumbury states that "speech is produced utterance-by- utterance, in response to the word-by-word and utterance-by-utterance production of the person we are talking to (our interlocutor).

Three subskills were intended to be improved through the implementation of communication strategies, namely: accuracy, fluency and vocabulary. It is important to mention that accuracy is related to the grammar and the right combination of words at the time of speaking, paying special attention to the combination of verbs, the use of auxiliaries, questions marks in an appropriate way.

The grammatical competence according to the Common European framework (2001) could be defined as the set of principles governing the assembly of elements into meaningful labelled and bracketed strings (sentences). Likewise, it is not about learning structures by heart, but to use them like if we were out of the classroom in a functional way. Common European framework (2001) argue that Grammatical competence is the ability to understand and express meaning by producing and recognizing well-formed phrases and sentences in accordance with these principles (as opposed to memorizing and reproducing them as fixed formulae).

Fluency, has to do with the idea of speaking in a natural way without uncomfortable or recurrent pauses because it will stop the normal flow of a conversation, in other words, people stop normally to breathe, but if pauses are so recurrent it will serve a sign that the speaker is struggling with the language (Thornbury, 2005). By the same token, the CEFR (2020) defines fluency as the fact of communicating ideas continuously without not losing the focus and avoiding long silences. Since the participants of this study will be getting an A2+ which implies

a low level of language ability, their degree of fluency might be affected somehow by pauses, hesitations, false starts and reformulations (CEFR, 2020). Many studies about communication strategies have given account that L2 language users can enhance their speech rate and oral ability through strategies that help them to deal with their deficient linguistic resources. (Bialystok, 1990; Dörnyei, 1995).

Vocabulary refers to the amount and type of words the learners should know or learn according to a requested level. Rivers (1983) & Nunan (1991) state that getting the proper vocabulary have repercussions in the correct use of the target language because it is not enough it will be difficult to make the most of the information one has acquired to express ideas clearly, which agree with Wilkins (1972) "(...) while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (pp. 110-111).

2.1.6 Defining speaking skills for the present study

The Common European Framework (CEFR) including the Companion Volume with New Descriptors, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) have proposed language levels descriptors so it can be easy to understand what students are expected to do when learning a language.

Figure 1 shows how this level is represented in the Global Scale of English (GSE), it ranks from 36 to 47 and it is named Level 2.
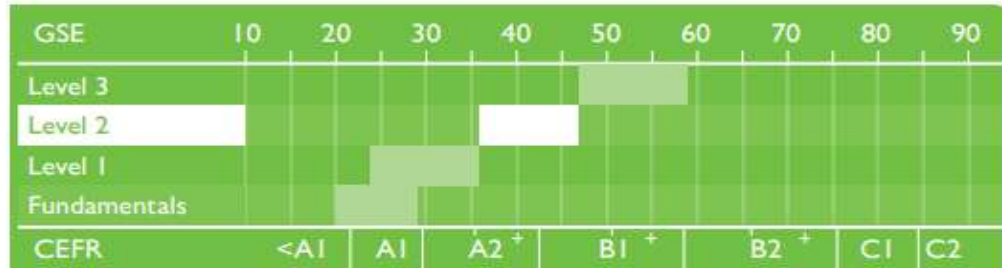
Figure 1. Alignment with the Global Scale of English and the Common European Framework of Reference

It is important to mention that the group of students belonging to the A2 + level is called Basic Users, Novice High and CLB 4 in The Common European Framework (CEFR) including the Companion Volume with New Descriptors, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CBL) respectively.

2.1.7 Commonalities among the CEF, Canadian benchmarks, and ACTFL in terms of what a basic level learner should do in speaking and conversation

In this section, commonalities among the frameworks are discussed and synthesized. The first aspect to analyzed is the Productive one. The following illustrations show what the *Overall spoken production descriptor* at this level should be:

"A2- Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 69).

> Novice-level speakers can communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. They do so primarily through the use of isolated words and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and recalled. Novice-level speakers may be difficult to understand even by the most sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to

non-native speech. (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 2012, par. 34)

"Create simple spoken communication in routine, non-demanding contexts of language use within the four competency areas" (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks [CCLB], 2012, p. 1).

It appears that the learners at this point are able to utter phrases that are not very elaborated about their immediate context; however, these can be affected due to their lack of vocabulary and grammar. Hence, hesitation, simple questions and self- correction are expected to happen along with feedback from recipients. The students at this stage also tend to use prefabricated sentences because this is the moment when they start to work on their social functions. Therefore, communicating with English native speakers is a very demanding task at this level.

Now, if I look at the Overall production in a more detailed way, I can see standards related to the learners' experiences all the frameworks share:

Description of experiences (Concerns narrative and description)

> A2-Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. Can describe everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g., people, places, a job or study experience. Can give short basic descriptions of events and activities. Can describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal experiences. Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions. Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70)

"Conversation is restricted to a few of the predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture, such as basic personal information, basic objects, and a limited number of activities, preferences, and immediate needs" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 35).

"Communicate information about common everyday activities, experiences, wants and needs" (CCLB, 2012, p. 154).

It seems that a basic user is capable of illustrating objects or events when they are very familiar to him /her, in other words, sentences related to employment, belongings, experiences, and habits. Besides, a student at this point can explain in simple terms the kind of activities he/she does on a daily basis as well as narrate past experiences. Likewise, the learner is able to make comparisons and express preferences in a brief way. It is assumed that the pupil may not be ready to provide details about the aforementioned topics.

Interaction is the second aspect I am going to focus on and a key point in the field of communication because it is an opportunity to put into practice what a student has learned and prove how ready he/she is to face real life situations. The frameworks mentioned beforehand provide criteria to identify what a student should be ready to do when sharing ideas with others.

Overall spoken interaction:

"Interacting with others

Use a range of courtesy formulas and some casual small talk in short, one-on-one or small group interactions

-Ask and respond to questions about common, everyday routines

- Use a range of small talk phrases and expressions" (CCLB, 2012, p. 155).

A2- Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges

without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 83)

"They are able to manage successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations." (ACTFL, 2012, par. 35).

The standards above describe what an A2+ student can do with the spoken language respecting interaction. It appears that the learner at this level can have very short dialogs as long as the topics are easy to foresee or about areas of immediate relevance. The pupil might need cooperation from his partner when facing difficulties to express an idea. Moreover, he/she can attempt to paraphrase his utterances because his vocabulary is not solid enough. The student could answer and ask questions in simple terms yet struggle to carry on speaking.

Conversation (Maintenance of personal relationships)

A2- Can establish social contact: greeting and farewells; introductions; giving thanks. Can generally understand clear, standard speech on familiar matters directed at him/her, provided he/she can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time. Can participate in short conversation in routine contexts on topics of interest. Can express how he/she feels in simple terms, and express thanks. Can ask for a favour (e.g., to lend something), can offer a favour and can respond if someone asks him/her to do a favour for them.

(Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85)

"Expresses feelings, needs, preferences, satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Communicate information about common everyday activities, experiences, wants and needs" (CCLB, 2012, p. 156).

"Novice High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information." (ACTFL, 2012, par. 35).

The previous descriptors account for what learners can do regarding the conversation item. It is observed that the standards are similar when suggesting that a student can make questions or reply to not complex statements concerning basic themes pertaining to their everyday life. Topics like feelings, tastes, desires and priorities can be expressed when sharing ideas with another person. They can also make and respond to simple requests. It is also found that the students could ask for repetition or explanation of words when needed.

2.1.8 Specific skills for the Present Study plus the associated strategies

The following table illustrates the conversation strategies and the language descriptors for a basic user according to the CEFR, CLB and ACTFL. I created this because I wanted the strategies to be aligned with international standards and the institutional syllabus so they could be more meaningful for students and useful for their learning.

Table 2. *Conversation strategies and descriptors for the present study*

Conversation strategies to be taught	A2 Language descriptors from frameworks
Prefabricated patterns	"A2-Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70). "Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70).
Confirmation request	"A2- Can understand enough to manage simple, routine tasks without undue effort, asking very simply for repetition when he/she does not understand" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 88).
Provide active response	"Novice High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they

	hear from their interlocutor" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 36).
Clarification request	"Asks questions and makes requests and suggestions politely and appropriately" (CCLB, 2012, p. 155).
Follow-up questions	"Elicits or provides details as needed" (CCLB, 2012, p. 155). "Can cope with a limited number of forward follow up questions" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 74).
Stalling or time-gaining strategy	"Can participate in short conversation in routine contexts on topics of interest" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85) "Use a range of small talk phrases and expressions" (CCLB, 2012, p. 155).
All purpose-word	"Novice-level speakers can communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. They do so primarily through the use of isolated words and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and recalled" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 34).
Shadowing	"Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 83).
Asking for repetition	"Novice High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 35).
Interpretive summary	"Create simple spoken communication in routine, non-demanding contexts of language use within the four competency areas" (CCLB, 2012, p. 1).
Self-repair	"Can describe everyday aspects of his/her environment" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70).

	"He/she can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85).
Evaluation	"Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70).
Approximation	"Communicate information about common everyday activities, experiences, wants and needs" (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 156). "Elicits or provides details as needed" (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 155).
Show agreement	"Can express how he/she feels in simple terms, and express thanks" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85).
Response reject	"Expresses feelings, needs, preferences, satisfaction and dissatisfaction" (CCLB, 2012, p. 156). "Novice High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 36).
Overexplicitness (waffling)	"A2- Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 83)
Topic-shift	"Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70). "Use a range of small talk phrases and expressions" (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 155). "Can participate in short conversation in routine contexts on topics of interest" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85).

Interrupting	"They are able to manage successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 35).

2.2   Previous related studies

Communication strategies has been a popular topic studied around the world, as an example the article by Dörnyei (1995) gives attention to the training of three strategies, such as t*opic avoidance and replacement, circumlocution and using fillers and hesitation devices* focusing on awareness and practice activities. The population involved in this study was 109 students in Hungary (72 girls and 37 boys) who were also divided to be part of a training group and a control one. The results let us know that the learners improved significantly both qualitative and quantitative regarding oral performance and strategy use. It was observed an improvement in the speech rate, in other words, fluency. Besides the students had a positive perception about the strategy training and the importance of communicative strategies.

Nakatani (2005) reports what has been recently said about oral communication strategies, how they can be taught explicitly and the improvement they can have in the ability to communicate. This work has 62 participants, they were divided into 2 groups, a strategy training group and a control one, the former had 28 students and latter 34. The intervention lasted 12 weeks and the data collection instruments used to assess it were, e.g., transcription of data, retrospective protocol data and participants' pre and post course. The results revealed that there were not great improvements in the control group; however, the students that were part of the strategic training group did improve their oral results regarding the test score. That is to say, the students increased their awareness and use of strategies like *negotiation of meaning and maintenance of fluency*. It

was also found that the strategy training had an impact on the students' discourse helping them to be able to create long utterances.

The article by Nakatani (2010) presents how communication strategies enhance the learners' oral proficiency. An Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) developed by Nakatani (2006) was used to see the strategies employed by students as well as Strategy Training. The process was 12-weeks long and there were 62 Japanese college students involved. There was not a control group. The students took a test before and after the intervention to see their results regarding errors, strategies and production rate. The investigation showed that there were significant correlations between learners' posttest scores and their report on the OCSI and that *negotiation of meaning* and *strategies for maintaining discourse* could improve students' oral skill.

The article carried out by Alibakhshi & Padiz (2011) reports the impact that could exist when teaching communication strategies as well as their stability. The strategies employed were *avoidance, approximation, language switch, appeal for assistance, circumlocution, self-repair and self-repetition*. A population of 60 students participated in this study and they were divided into two groups, experimental and control one. The first one received training on communication strategies during 10 weeks. The findings showed that the experimental group had better results in the oral performance compared to the control one and the test revealed there was a difference in the use of seven out of nine strategies between the two groups. And also, that there was a stable effect of teaching communication strategies after a long interval.

Rabab'ah (2016) in the article presents the impact of communication strategy on students' oral ability and the strategic competence. This study involved 80 students who were divided into groups. A training group of 44 students to be formed in communication strategies such as

circumlocution*, appeal for help, asking for repetition, clarification request, confirmation request, self-repair* and *guessing* and 36 belonging to the control group who got a normal communicative course. The techniques to evaluate this work were the pre and posttests procedures, in other words, pre and posttests IELTS speaking scores exam and the transcription data of the IELTS speaking test. The results revealed that the training group improved significantly in the test regarding the speaking skill and employed more communication strategies due to the training. The students got significant results concerning Fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy as well as pronunciation.

The studies mentioned in the preceding discussion are similar because they incorporated strategy-based instruction as the approach to guide their implementation which means that they defend the idea of raising the students' awareness so they can actively take responsibility as mediators of their learning process. On the other hand, they differ concerning the number of strategies used, some of them decided to incorporate three and others more than six. Generally speaking, the studies reported improvement in the oral skill in terms of fluency, and lexical resources.

3   Research Methodology

3.1   Type of study

This study was based on a qualitative approach because it takes place in the natural setting of the participants where a researcher is in charge of providing descriptions, explanations or interpretations of an addressed problem as Creswell (2009) states "the process involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis

inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (p. 4).

To analyze the data, I used the grounded theory which is defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as the generation of interpretations and theoretical constructs from the actual observation of behavioral phenomena that occur in the classroom. This factor allows the teacher-researcher to react to educational issues that affect his/her context.

According to Corbin & Strauss (2007) there is a sequential series of three stages I should follow: namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding where I brainstorm a variety of concepts which served as clues to start to organize the data coming from the instruments, classified the information into categories or perspectives and I adjusted them into a smaller number of meaningful codes.

Likewise, the method I used for my research study was Action research defined by Carr and Kemmis (1986) as "action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out" (p. 162).

Kemmis and McTaggart (1986) research cycle consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection, where you:

- Identify a focus area of your practice that presents a 'puzzle', problem, or question and plan strategies to change or improve the situation.
- Collect information systematically about this focus area.
- Analyze and reflect on what the data you have collected are telling you about the situation.

● Act as necessary again to change or improve the situation.

3.2 Participants

A group of twenty-seven students are involved in this process. They were all young adults whose ages ranged from seventeen to twenty-two years old. They were in their third or fourth semester of majors like engineering, psychology, law and business administration. At the moment of collecting the data, they were in their third English course of a six-course program, they came from Cartagena and close small towns like Turbaco and Arjona and belong to all the strata; however, the majority of them live in neighborhoods from strata 6. All the students agreed on the importance of English nowadays; they all wanted to learn this language and seemed eager to participate in this project as evinced in the diagnostic stage. Their English level ranged from A1 to A2 according to the diagnostic test administered. However, after analyzing all the data collection instruments in the diagnostic section I could see that the two skills where they had more difficulties were listening and speaking being the latter the most notorious.

3.3 Instruments

Table 3. *Data collection instruments in diagnostic stage*

Research Stage	Data collection Instrument	Rationale
Diagnostic stage	Journal	To collect data about students' experiences in the English class in the form of entries by the researcher.
	Survey	To collect data from learners about their feelings, opinions, needs and wants to be assessed.

	Interview	To collect information from the administrative board about their perceptions and pupils' difficulties, strengths and necessities.
	Diagnostic test	To explore the students' knowledge as well as their strengths and weaknesses in the English language regarding the A2 level.

As the above table shows, in order to explore the administrative staff perception as well as the students' knowledge and performance in the four skills concerning the English language, four different instruments were administered. The first one was a journal where the researcher could keep track of the pupils' learning experiences in the daily teaching context in the form of entries.

The second was a survey that was intended to know learners' general beliefs, strengths, needs and wants about different aspects related to the language. It included several types of questions, some of them were multiple choice, likert scale, ranking, semantic differential and some others open-ended questions. Some interviews were also conducted to nine teachers with the aim of knowing their viewpoint about the students' learning behavior in connection with the English language and their skills at this private university, basically what they considered were the strengths and weaknesses when the students speak, listen, write or read and how these skills could be improved.

On the other hand, a diagnostic test was also administered to analyze the learners' achievements on the four skills respecting the language learning process. The format of the questions was based on a Key English Test (KET) sample, which is a standardized test, developed by Cambridge University Press to measure the A2 level according to the Common European Framework. The test sample obtained from Cambridge Assessment English was found

appropriate for this population because this test is widely used, developed by a well-known university and it has been validated to check level A2.

It is important to mention that the group of students belonging to the A2 + level is called Basic Users, Novice High and CLB 4 in The Common European Framework (CEFRL) including the Companion Volume with New Descriptors, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) respectively. The descriptors used for the study were those explained in the theoretical framework. Finally, some journals were studied equally to reflect on the observed class, obtaining more evidence of the wants, drawbacks and needs the students have when communicating in the second language to think about the possible ways to improve their learning process.

Concerning the data analysis, I used the Grounded Theory as the qualitative strategy of inquiry and I made a triangulation to give validity to the strategy. The Grounded Theory proposed by Glaser & Strauss (1967) consisted of three stages, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding where I brainstormed a variety of concepts which served as clues to start to organize the data coming from the instruments, classified the information into categories or perspectives and I adjusted them into a smaller number of meaningful codes.

Analyzing all the data will let me know as a teacher what the current level of my learners is as well as the competences, they should be able to achieve in order to move to the next one. This exercise represents the construct operationalization since I am establishing the two variables of my study, on the one hand a dependent that involves the exploration of frameworks and the independent one that has to do with conversational strategies I will be proposing to achieve the descriptors. The population I will be working with is expected to reach an A2+ level at the end of the semester.

4   Phases of the study

4.1   Diagnostic stage

To analyze the data obtained from the instruments, a triangulation was made to check the coherence and justify the sources, in other words, to search for validity and reliability (Creswell, 2009). The raw data from different sources was first organized for the analysis, second it was coded by hand to look for descriptions in order to interpret their meaning. Therefore, a set of codes/categories were created according to the investigator's experience (predetermined codes) which were improved with the ones that resulted when analyzing the instruments. After the data collection and analysis, a systematization of frequencies of occurrences was executed manually using the pawing technique (Ryan & Russell, 2001). This process consisted of counting the frequencies in which the same codes appeared and using a specific color to identify them. Finally, they were organized from the most to the least frequent. The result of the data analysis is presented in the table below.

Table 4. *Data analysis triangulation*

N°	Codes	Surveys	Interviews	Journals	Frequency totals	%
1	Positive attitude towards the language	25	6	18	49	26,6%
2	Difficulties with speaking	19	12	14	45	24,5%
3	Non-effective listening skills	13	1	12	26	14,1%

4	Basic level of writing	7	7	9	23	12,5%
5	Good level of reading comprehension	6	6	9	21	11,4%
6	Overuse of Spanish	5	4	4	13	7,1%
7	High affective filter	2	2	3	7	3,8%
	Totals	77	38	69	184	100.0%

In relation to the data analysis results shown in the table above, seven codes were found after evaluating the raw data in the administered instruments, i.e., journals, surveys and interviews. As the chart displays, the first category observed was *Positive attitude towards the language* with the highest number of occurrences 26,6% which appeared six times in the teacher's interview, eighteen in the journals and twenty-five in the survey. These numbers summed up a total of 49 occurrences. On one hand, the teachers expressed what they have noticed when the students are taking their lessons. They agree that learners' attitudes, reactions and beliefs are positive. An excerpt below:

Teachers' interview

"Siento que los estudiantes están mucho más interesados en el idioma hoy en día que en años anteriores donde había que luchar mucho, mucho para llamarles la atención un poquitico"

I think the students are much more interested in the language nowadays compared to past years where we had to strive a way too much to call their attention a bit. *Translated for the purpose of this study.

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It can be seen from the above sample that the students have a better reception of the English language today. It seems that a representative number of learners used to reject or were not very interested in learning this language. The data suggest that teachers feel like they have many more possibilities to teach the language today since they have a better answer from pupils.

Identically, the following result from the students' survey evidence they have that positive feeling toward the language.

Students' survey

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
El aprendizaje del ingles me parece interesante	1	0	1	3	21

Figure 2. Student's survey

The students were asked to express their opinion concerning the learning of the target language. The above chart suggests that a very reduced portion of the learners found the idea counterproductive; however, the highest number of learners were in favor which suggests that today the students are more aware of the importance of mastering a foreign language. The majority of the learners seem to be interested in learning the L2.

The second category was *Difficulties with speaking* 24, 5%. This suggests that the learners have inconveniences at the moment of producing utterances, or conveying their ideas regarding certain topics according to the Basic user level. The following excerpts depict perceptions about their performance in a general way:

Journals

The students were participating in an activity where they had to read a question and answer immediately, the teacher was taking notes to give suggestions at the end. Some learners began to

answer but stopped because they didn't know how to answer and some others were giving very simple sentences like "because I like" "I am agree", "I think minibar because can drink I like, more easier me" another even say "teacher I have the ideas but I do not know transmit"

The data sample above comes from the researcher's journal. The data suggest that the learners lack the vocabulary, better yet the grammatical patterns to respond to simple statements about familiar topics or the immediate environment. The majority of them were not capable of articulating their utterances when speaking.

<u>Students' survey</u>

Mi desempeño en el habla es:
Insatisfactorio 1: _4__ 2: __11__ 3: _3__   4: _3__   5: _4__ 6: _1__ 7: ___
Satisfactorio

The above result obtained from the students' survey represents what the learners think their actual speaking performance is in a rating scale. It is a reflection on the way they convey their ideas orally. It seems that the highest number of students believe they have very basic linguistic resources compared to the lowest number of pupils. A low oral performance is assumed by the majority of learners.

In the same vein, there was another section of the survey where the students had to answer open-ended questions in order to get more indications of their beliefs and opinion and to know through the anonymity of the instrument their real perception of the target language.

<u>Students' survey</u>

¿Cuál es la habilidad en la que presentas más deficiencia? ¿En qué sentido?

"El habla porque me demoro mucho para organizar las ideas que voy a decir, también mi pronunciación no es muy buena que digamos"

*"Speaking because it takes me a lot of time to organize the ideas I am going to say, besides my pronunciation is not that good". *Translated for the purpose of this study.

On the other hand, and to finish discussing the first code, the data gathered from the Diagnostic test also pictures the same inconveniences associated with the speaking skill. The students had to answer ten questions about familiar topics as well as describe a few images to assess their speaking as a Basic user. These results represent that the majority of students are not ready to answer in a fluent or grammatical way. Also, most of them do not have the strengths regarding pronunciation and lexical resources when it comes to answering questions about topics such as family and other people, life conditions, directions and past experiences for example.
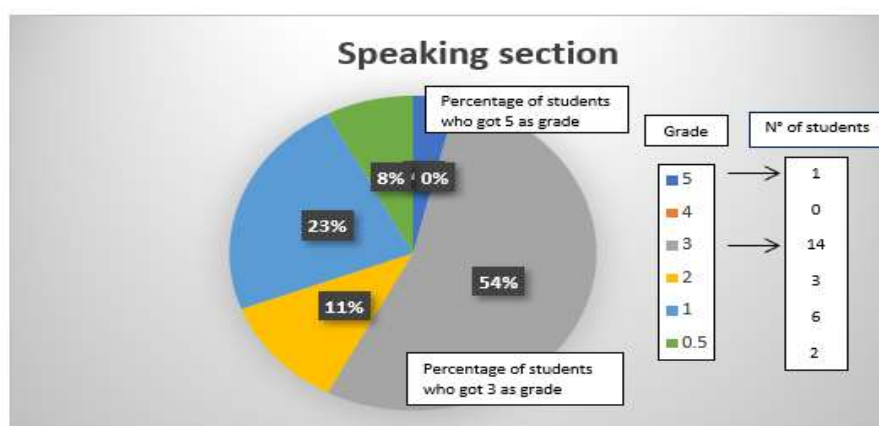

Figure 3. Speaking section

The above graph shows the relationship between the number of students and their oral performance on the speaking section of the diagnostic test. It appears that a very reduced number of learners have the barely linguistic resources to talk about their past experiences, directions and locations, marital status and food in a more than acceptable way; compared to the majority of them who seem to barely have the speaking competences specified for a Basic user of the English language. A low oral performance was the most pronounced pattern.

The third category that arose was *Non-effective listening skills* with a total of 26 reappearances, the equivalent of the 14, 1 % of the frequencies described in the chart demonstrating that the students have difficulties understanding something that has been said and obtaining the gist and the details of a conversation. Some excerpts will be added to illustrate the code:

Teachers' interviews

"Por otro lado, también presentan inconvenientes con la escucha, les cuesta mantener la atención en algo y cuando les pregunto, sólo saben las respuestas de unas cuantas preguntas"

On the other hand, they also have inconveniences with listening, it is difficult for them to keep focus on something and when I ask them, they only know the answer to some questions.
*Translated for the purpose of this study.

The excerpts gathered from the teachers' interview describe that the learners do not appear to be ready to recognize words as a basic user will do it. Even though they appear to be able to understand some vocabulary, they are not competent enough in this skill. It seems that the learners can listen to the general idea but not to the specifications.

Students' survey

¿Cuál es la habilidad en la que presentas más deficiencia? ¿En qué sentido?

"La escucha porque creo que aún me falta un poco más de vocabulario para identificar lo que me están diciendo."

The listening because I think I still lack vocabulary to identify what people are telling me.
*Translated for the purpose of this study.

Similarly, the learners were asked through an open-ended question about the ability where they had more weaknesses. It is observed that they have trouble understanding the material regarding the basic user level. Listening deficiencies seem to be part of the learners' problems.

Correspondingly, the data gathered from the Diagnostic test also depicts the same inconveniences associated with the listening skill. The listening section consisted of two parts. The first one was about getting the gist of five short conversations between friends, relatives or between a person and a clerk. The results will be presented below:
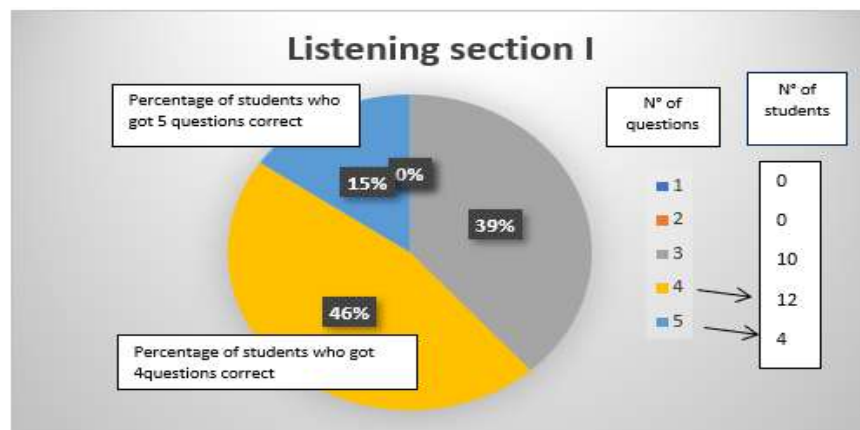
Figure 4. Listening section 1

The chart describes the relationship between the percentage of students and their performance on the first listening section of the diagnostic test. The data show that a small percentage of the learners was able to complete all of the exercise in a successful way while the second bigger amount, with a difference of two students, could complete the conversation based on what they listened; nevertheless, the information suggests that the average of pupils can identify vocabulary concerning food, time, weather and locations.

Figure 5. Listening section 2

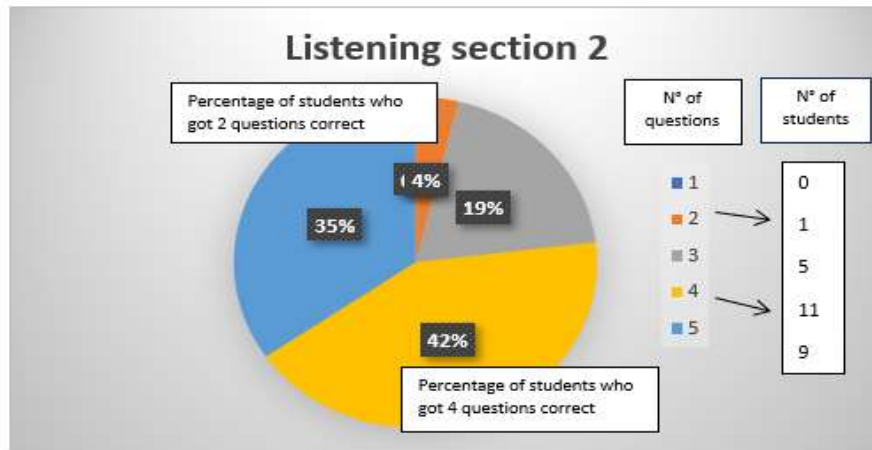The graph illustrates the second section of the listening test that had to do with getting the details from a conversation by making a match between options. It is observed that a big portion of the pupils could recognize the vocabulary related to a Basic User level and the smallest was not able to obtain all the vocabulary. Despite this; it seems that there are more learners who have basic listening skills and the ones who do not.

The next category is *Basic level of writing* with 12,5 % obtained in the triangulation process, this let us know that most of the students can convey their ideas in a good way when talking about immediate context topics. Some illustrations below:

Teachers' interview

¿Cómo les va a los estudiantes a la hora de escribir?

"Los estudiantes se equivocan en cuestiones como conectores y alguno que otro verbo en pasado, pero en términos generales los estudiantes si desarrollan sus ideas en inglés"

*The students make mistakes regarding connectors and some verbs in the past tense, but in general they can convey their ideas in English. *Translated for the purpose of this study.

The previous sample evidence that the learners are most of the time aware of the rules when delivering sentences in the target language. In other words, the order, the spelling, the style and all a piece of written information involves. The students seem to have basic writing skills.

On the other hand, an opposite behavior was ratified in other samples, i. e., the diagnostic stage where the students were encouraged to participate in two types of writing exercises. As the following charts reveal:
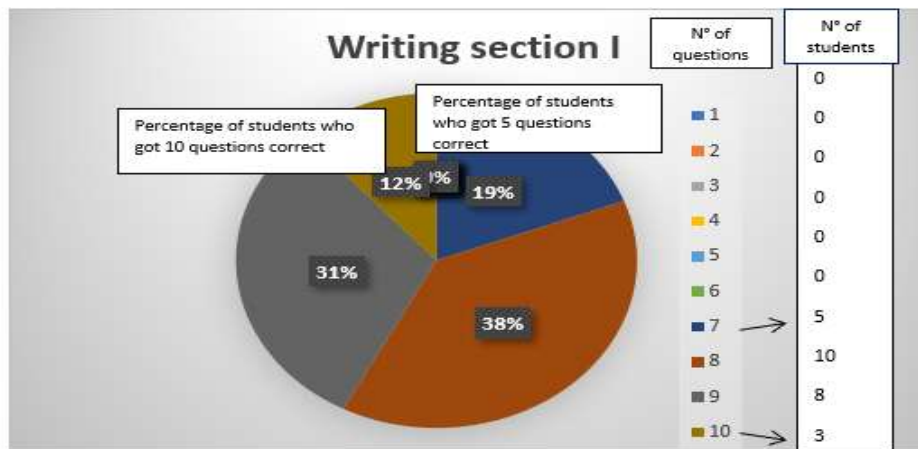

Figure 6. Writing section 1

This graph provides information about the results obtained by the learners concerning the first part of the writing section; this was about completing a passage with a word that could make sense. It is observed that a representative amount of the learners could complete almost all the exercise in the expected way compared to a reduced number of students who were not able to fill the complete form with just four words. It can also be shown that the majority of the learners seem to be capable of putting words related to this language level.

Good level of reading comprehension was displayed as the fifth category in the table with a total of 11, 4% letting us know that the students from course III are able to understand a good number of key aspects of a reading or any piece of written information written the majority of the time. They are also able to understand the general idea of simple readings.

The teachers also emphasize that most of the population have better levels of reading and this can be ratified in the following excerpt:

Teachers' interview

"La mayoría muestra fortalezas en la (comprensión de) lectura principalmente; pienso que, debido a la exposición continua a textos escritos y auditivos en inglés, bien sea en la academia o en su vida social y personal"

The majority of my students have strengths in reading comprehension mostly; I think it is because of the continued exposure to written texts and recordings because of the academy or the social or personal life. *Translated for the purpose of this study.
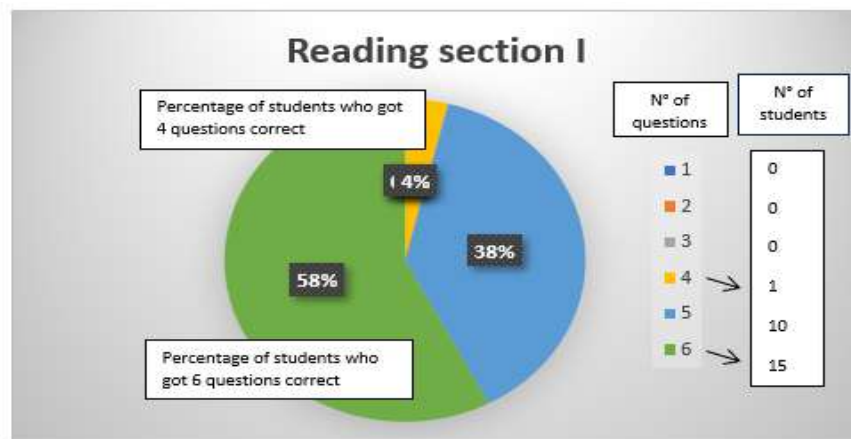
Figure 7. Reading section 1

Additionally, the results obtained in the diagnostic test revealed good scores in relation to the code described beforehand. The above graph provides information about the number of learners and their performance at understanding advertisement. It represents that a big number of students appear to be capable of getting familiar names, words and very simple sentences compared to the very small percentage who are not capable. Despite the fact that there are some of them who need to improve, it can be stated that the majority have good levels of reading comprehension.

Overuse of Spanish emerged as the sixth category in the triangulation process which accounted for 7, 1% of the overall figure. The students' dependence on the language 1 was considered a problem, the data reported that some students were observed talking in Spanish during the development of the classes. On the survey the students reflected on the usage of the language 1 when they were learning English. They were asked through a Rating scale question to state their perception. The excerpt shows the result:

Students's survey

Durante los ejercicios en pareja en clase, hablo español:

Mucho   1:_5__   2: _6__   3: _5__   4: _5_   5: __1_   6: _2__   7:_2__   Poco

The students rated their use of the L1 when doing exercises in class and they agreed that most of the time they tend to use it during the activities while a single learner showed that the use of this was nonexistent.

Finally, the last category is *High affective filter* with a 3, 8 % average of frequency showing that there is some evidence that the students sometimes feel insecure or hesitate when expressing themselves in English. Some of them are scared of making mistakes in class.

Students' survey

¿Cuál es la habilidad en la que presentas más deficiencia? ¿En qué sentido?

"La habilidad que presento deficiencia son el habla ya que me da pena equivocarme."

The ability where I had more troubles is speaking because I am afraid of making mistakes.
*Translated for the purpose of this study.

4.2   Instructional design

Taking into account the learners' difficulties obtained in the diagnostic section six workshops about conversation strategies were planned following the Strategy Based-Instruction model

O'Malley & Chamot (2005). This pedagogical intervention was carefully planned considering international frameworks such as The Common European, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and The Canadian Benchmark to clearly guide the students to attain the linguistic competences they should get and constantly adjusted due to the cycling process of Action research. Every workshop lasted three hours and a total of 18 strategies were presented, analyzed and taken to practice.

Table 5. *Workshops, strategies and skills for the present study*

Workshop 1 Talking about car accidents and everything it entails
Strategies: Prefabricated patterns, Confirmation request, Provide active response
Skills
"A2-Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70) "Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions" Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70). "A2- Can understand enough to manage simple, routine tasks without undue effort, asking very simply for repetition when he/she does not understand" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 88). "Novice High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 36).
Workshop 2 Describing food passions
Strategies: Clarification request, Follow-up questions, Stalling or time gaining strategy
Skills
"Asks questions and makes requests and suggestions politely and appropriately" (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 155). "Elicits or provides details as needed" (CCLB, 2012, p. 155). "Can cope with a limited number of forward follow up questions" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 74). "Can participate in short conversation in routine contexts on topics of interest" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85). "Use a range of small talk phrases and expressions" (CCLB, 2012, p. 155).
Workshop 3 Likes and dislikes
Strategies: All-purpose word, Shadowing, Asking for repetition
Skills
"Novice-level speakers can communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. They do so primarily through the use of isolated words and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and recalled" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 34).

"Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 83).

"Novice High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 35).

Workshop 4 The Arts
Strategies: Interpretive summary, Self-repair, Evaluation
Skills

"Create simple spoken communication in routine, non-demanding contexts of language use within the four competency areas" (CCLB, 2012, p. 1).

"Can describe everyday aspects of his/her environment" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70).

"He/she can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85).

"Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70).

Workshop 5 Technology and you
Strategies: Approximation, Show agreement, Response reject
Skills

"Communicate information about common everyday activities, experiences, wants and needs" (CCLB, 2012, p. 156).

"Elicits or provides details as needed" (CCLB, 2012, p. 155).

"Can express how he/she feels in simple terms, and express thanks" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85).

"Expresses feelings, needs, preferences, satisfaction and dissatisfaction" (CCLB, 2012, p. 156).

"Novice High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 36).

Workshop 6 Ethics and values
Strategies: Overexplicitness, Topic shift, Interrupting
Skills

"A2- Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 83).

"Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70).

"Use a range of small talk phrases and expressions" (CCLB, 2012, p. 155).

"Can participate in short conversation in routine contexts on topics of interest" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85).

"They are able to manage successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations" (ACTFL, 2012, par. 35).

4.3   Action stage

The pedagogical intervention was designed considering the results gathered from the diagnostic stage as I explained beforehand. The six workshops had a particular structure of five steps consisting of preparation, presentation and practice, evaluation, expansion activity and assessment. There was also a final general goal for each lesson, three strategies per workshop, a linguistic objective every workshop based on the students' book which was Top Notch 2, third edition of Pearson, and the language skills to address per session. It is also important to mention that the workshops had a small section called "quick reviews" to verify the understanding of the strategies involved.

In the first workshop the students studied the car parts and the behavior people have when driving so they could learn to talk about how a car accident happened using the past continuous tense and the simple past also the reasons to support or explain their ideas the three strategies they analyzed and put into practice that session were prefabricated patterns, confirmation and provide active response.

In the second workshop the learners learned to express their opinions about their eating habits based on their personal beliefs including the topic "used to" as the basis to do it. I organized the content to be mixed with the strategies: clarification, follow up and stalling or time gaining strategies addressing skills like speaking, listening and reading.

In the third workshop the students were able to talk about their interlocutor's personality (preferences) in order to express their likes and dislikes through the strategies all-purpose words, shadowing and asking for repetition. In addition, there was a grammar topic that will help them with the coherence of their sentences, this was "gerunds and infinitives" and "gerunds as objects of prepositions". The skills they practiced that day were speaking and listening.

In the fourth workshop the participants were exposed to vocabulary about arts so by the end of the workshop they could talk about their favorite art expression. The pattern to orient their sentences for that session was the passive voice that had to be strategically combined with the tools interpretive summary, self-repair and evaluation. Besides, the skills for that were speaking, listening and writing.

In the fifth workshop the learners studied vocabulary related to technology so they could get ready to accomplish the goal of the lesson which was to talk about a technological device they were trying to buy and its characteristics. During this workshop they employed the strategies: approximation, show agreement and response reject, as well as the grammar topics "infinitive of purpose" and "as... as". The focus that time was on the speaking and listening skills.

Finally, in the sixth workshop the students understood how to deal with ethical dilemmas when finding a product in a public place, strengthening their ethics and values. To use talk about this in a natural way they incorporated the grammar topic "The Past unreal", the strategies overexplicitness, topic shift and interrupting, and used their speaking and listening abilities.

4.4   Evaluation Stage

In this section I share the results I obtained from the three data collection instruments employed during this study, namely Researcher's journal, External observation and Survey. It is important to state that the first instrument was developed in a format filled with descriptive and reflective notes following all the stages of an SBI model, that is to say, preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, expansion and assessment (O' Malley & Chamot, 2005). My approach was: students and teachers assess the strategies. Paying attention to two sides: Assess of the use and assess the impact on performance. Performance was analyzed in relation to the strategies. For data collection and the validity of this study, I used both sources of assessment.

In the same vein, I used the latter instrument to get information during the third and sixth workshop only so that there was ample time to teach the students and see their opinions and reactions respecting the use of communication strategies. Additionally, I complement with the data I obtained as the final production of students that arose after the implementation of every workshop, in this case, a conversation so I could assess how well they understood and implemented communication strategies (3 per workshop), included the studied vocabulary, used a grammar topic and the right pronunciation.

The Strategy-Based Instruction model selected for this study through the analysis of one of its stages named "Assessment" allowed me to keep track of the students' progress during the intervention and this combined with the Action research approach gave way to re design or make pertinent updates in order to approach the learners' difficulties encountered before and during the six workshops.
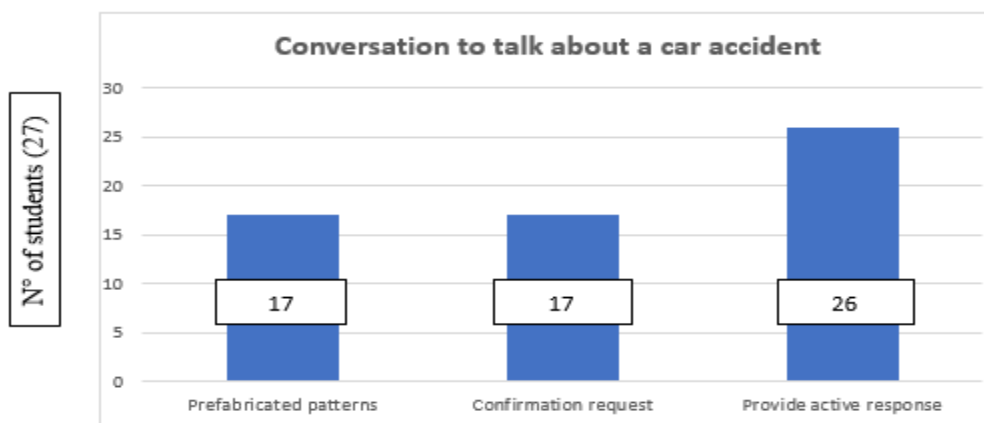

Figure 8. Workshop 1

The previous graph illustrates the number of the students who used the strategies suggested for workshop number 1 to describe a car accident. It seemed that they had a correct understanding of the strategy "Provide active response" because they all could include it in their conversations reacting positively or negatively to their classmates' stories which suggest that

after that workshop, they were able to communicate their perceptions taking elaborated ideas as a support like the following ACTFL (2012)descriptor states: *"Novice High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor"* (par. 36).

When it came to include phrases that were already pre designed as a support (Prefabricated patterns) and ask the interlocutor to check what s/he has already said (Confirmation request) some students had some difficulties; however, the "Prefabricated patterns" strategy was incorporated in workshop 2 again and there was another similar to "Confirmation request" so the learners could see how different they were and get ready to distinguish and make them part of their linguistic resources.

Summary of improvement per constructs after workshop 1

On accuracy

 After the implementation of the strategies, I could notice that some of the students should continue working on the use of the verbs in the past tense, omitted the subject pronouns or the auxiliaries when making questions; however, they showed a good usage of the "Past continuous" tense the majority of times and agreed that strategies helped them to get familiar with new patterns and organize their ideas.

Evidence of this follows:

The first data sample comes from External observation and suggests that some learners were not conjugating the verbs in the past

A: Oh, the man was driving like crazy?

*B: yes bro, he was driving like crazy and we **feel** the hit in the car*

The second sample was taken from the Researcher's Journal and it represent the students' evaluation of the strategies where they emphasize that these help them to organize their ideas

J: "En mi caso, de las tres, el de los patrones prefabricados fue el que más me resultó o me ha parecido útil, yo creo que cuando uno intenta hablar en inglés la primera oración siempre es como la más difícil, entonces si tú tienes una forma ya practicada de comenzar las oraciones, entonces ya tienes un tiempito más para organizar en tu mente lo que vas a decir"

The third sample is a transcription of what the students produced during the Assessment part of the class, one of the stages of the SBI model.

A: Are you saying you had an accident? Oh no, my friend

B: Yes, *a guy was speeding, weaving through traffic and texting while driving.* He was like drunk, I guess didn't notice the traffic light was red so he didn't wake on time.

As the data shows, the students began to gain awareness of how these oral tools can facilitate their social interactions allowing them to "buy time" to present their ideas in a more cohesive way, paying attention to the different words that are part of a sentence. However, they needed more practice to be more attentive so they could have a better combination of words and stop to omit them.

On fluency

Some students showed deficiencies regarding the length of their sentences, rising and falling intonation and in the natural pauses in a sentence, this could be because they were still in the process of understanding the characteristics of the target language and because of the constant interference of the L1 where they thought the rhythm was as similar as the mother tongue's. Nonetheless, the learners stated that the strategies were useful to have a more natural

conversation because they could say the phrases that native speakers tend to use and began to incorporate all the L2 sound differences.

Some evidence to ratify the results:

The first excerpt comes from the External observation and represents the students need to work on the intonation of questions.

A: Hello Maria, Carlos was going really slow, he was talking the phone with girlfriend

B: Do you mean he was slow?

The second excerpt was taken from the Researcher's journal and it shows the students' evaluation of the strategies where they stated that these contribute to have a more natural conversation.

J: "Nos ayudan como a flexibilizar la conversación, el habla, ya q si hablamos como nosotros siempre tratamos de traducir del español al inglés sería algo muy rígido, digo yo entonces esas estrategias nos ayudan a hacer la conversación más fluida"

The third excerpt is a transcription that evidences a not natural sounding pause and difficulties with the intonation of yes/no questions produced during the Assessment part of the class, one of the stages of the SBI model.

A: While I was driving, I got a flat tire and I hit a tree

B: **Thanks God you are okay**

C: So, **was there more damage?**

The data above gave account of the aspects the participants of this study needed to improve such as pauses, the difference when saying yes/no questions and information questions as well as how they incorporated the strategies to keep the communication channel open. These mistakes might have taken place because they were not knowledgeable enough of the aspects one has to

focus when speaking in English and therefore, they were not able to express their ideas smoothly.

On vocabulary

Regarding the vocabulary aspect of workshop number 1, I can state that thanks to the strategies the students became more attentive and ready to include new patterns in their conversations as a way to vary it and shape what they already knew; however, the results evidenced that some of them should work more on the length of their sentences.

Some excerpts below:

The first result is a student's transcription that comes from External observation and suggests that some learners struggle when finding the correct term that represents their thoughts in the L2.

*A: Hey Mateo was being a bit reckless because he **skipping** on the red light*

B: Do you think he didn't notice?

B: Do you think he is a bad driver?

The second result was taken from the Researchers journal and it represents the students' evaluation of the strategies where they emphasize that the strategies lead to the expansion of sentences.

J: "Por mi parte las estrategias son útiles a la hora de abrir una conversación, al momento de a veces quedarse uno corto, o no entender involucrarlas allí y no sólo poner la conversación más amena sino no quedar uno mal"

The third result is a transcription of what the students produced during the Assessment part of the class, taking into the Stage of the SBI model, this suggests that the students need to work on their vocabulary of the target language.

A: I was fixing the car when I checked your mistakes

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*B: Why don't we talk about that **in front of?***

C: Are you saying that Pedro an accident? When were you going to tell me? It's also my car!

The previous examples ratified the aforementioned descriptions found during the implementation of the first group of communication strategies. It seemed that the students were in favor of strategies because they could help them to come up with more ideas at the moment of speaking, despite the fact that they should practice more to get the correct term that represents their thoughts in the L2.
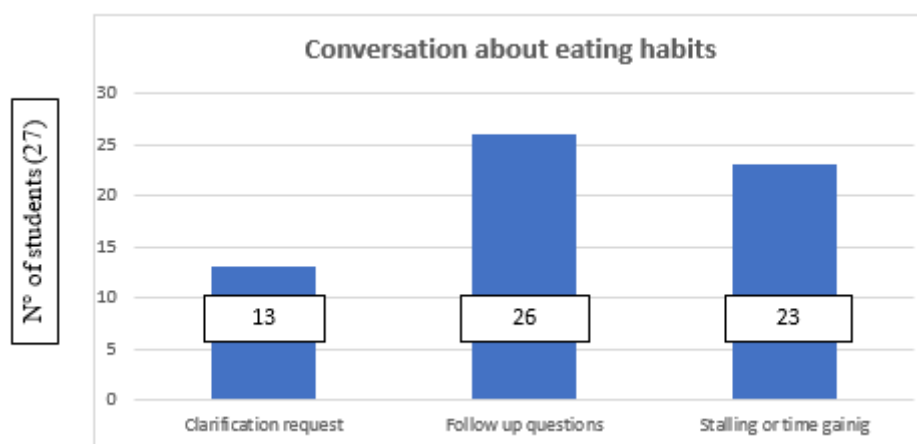

Figure 9. Workshop 2

The previous graph illustrates the number of the students who used the strategies suggested for workshop number 2 to talk about eating habits. The number of learners who were forgetting or not using them in an expected way was a little less compared to the results from workshop #1. On the other hand, there was an increase in the group of learners who began to use the strategies properly. Likewise, the learners seemed to manage some of the descriptors established by the Common European Framework that have to do with the creation of questions and phrases to show interest and continue the conversation; however, they appeared to struggle with the idea of making questions in a right way to verify content as the CCLB (2012) illustrates: "Asks questions and makes requests and suggestions politely and appropriately" (p. 155).

It is important to mention that during the Assessment part there was evidence of strategies from previous workshops which might mean that the students became interested and aware of how to be more prepared to deal with communication encounters by implementing them. Also, I could observe evidence of strategy use when they took their midterms, they were using strategies such as "confirmation, pre-fabricated patterns and stalling" to have a better control of time and to avoid communication breakdowns.

Summary of improvement per constructs after workshop 2

On accuracy

The group of learners who seemed to have started to get a better organization on the sentences began to increase due to the use of strategies as stated in their comments. Moreover, the learners employed grammar topics, in this case, "Used to" in the expected way. At this point, the students started to combine the strategies from the previous workshop with the ones they learned on the second one, as they received a pertinent feedback, however to reach the description of the Basic User level the students still needed to focus their attention on key aspects such us the auxiliaries in questions and conjugation of verbs in the past.

Evidence of this follows:

The first data sample is a transcription of what the students produced during the Assessment part of the class, one of the stages of the SBI model. This suggests that some learners combined strategies from the first and second workshop, in this case "Follow up question", "Prefabricated patterns" and "Stalling or time gaining strategies".

A: But I will pass on the octopus tonight.

*B: **Don't you eat seafood?***

*A: **What does seafood mean?***

*C: **It´s a kind of food that** contains food that come to sea. Seafood is any kind of fish, as food like human that mainly included fish and shellfish*

*A: Oh, I got it. **Well**, I used to eat a lot of fish but now I don't care for it.*

The second sample was taken from the External observation and it represent that the students have inconveniences with the auxiliaries especially in questions

*A: Spectacular, I like that idea. **Used** to do this kind of dynamic before?*

B: No, this is the first time we have incorporated.

C: It is the new technique. It makes the plate more attractive.

The third sample comes from the External observation format and it shows the observer's opinion about the use of the strategies where she talks about the recycling of the old strategies.

O: The students used the three strategies taught by teacher Camila immediately in the practice. She gives the theory and the practice. The students understood the strategies were good for their dialogs. Also, the students identify the strategies, the old and the new.

The results gathered from this instrument account for the awareness and recycling of the structures through the use of the implemented communication strategies. The fact of involving them in activities where they had to analyze, work in groups and make decisions through class exercises contributed to this.

On fluency

The number of students who were not able to communicate ideas with a basic domain like this level suggests was bigger compared to the ones who were working on their fluency by the use of communication strategies. The first group should devote more attention to natural sounding pauses when speaking. The second group who was dealing with the aforementioned aspects in a better way stated that the strategies contributed to their fluency because they started to expand

their sentences and were making less mistakes regarding the intonation of questions that differs depending on the speaker's intention, in other words, when s/he wants to have an affirmative or negative answer or when looking for complete data.

Some evidence to ratify the results:

The first excerpt is a transcription of what the students produced during the Assessment part of the class, one of the stages of the SBI model and they represent bad employment of natural pauses.

C: Well, those dishes sound very interesting, but I prefer the filete mignon because the second has beef and I don't like it

A: Really? don´t like beef? ***How long have you not eaten meat?***

C: Yes, I used to eat beef about five years ago, ***but as time goes, I stop eating the edible meat*** *also, the first don't seem healthier to me and it's more delicious.*

The second excerpt was taken from the Researcher´s journal and it shows the students' evaluation of the strategies where they state that the strategies helped to carry on with their conversation.

J: Si porque te ayudan a componer una respuesta en base a las palabras que sabes y que tienes seguridad de usar porque ya sabes cómo se pronuncian y al implementarlas gracias a la estrategia y llena aún más de satisfacción que puedas hacer argumentos más largos.

The third data excerpt comes from External observation and emphasizes that some learners are struggling when making pauses in a sentence.

O: Some students need to work more on how to make natural pauses when speaking. I think this is OK because this is level three.

As the data show, I could state that the activities selected and done in class to put into practice the communication strategies began to contribute to the development of key aspects like at the level of words in sentences. It appears that the students had a better grasp of how those little changes give more clarity to the message they are trying to deliver; despite that some of them should dedicate more time to learn to make pauses at the moment of speaking so the message can be clearer and more efficient.

On vocabulary

After the implementation of workshop two, some students continued expanding their sentences thanks to the strategies that provided them with new patterns which was a good indicator of awareness and vocabulary improvement. There was still a group who needed to focus on giving more details first to have a more interesting and clear conversation and second to familiarize themselves with new alternatives and therefore increase their vocabulary. Likewise, some students were having some difficulties to understand that sometimes what they want to express has a different way in an L2.

As observed in the samples below:

The first result comes from the External observation and represents the students need to work more on the target language repertoire.

A: But I have a question, what is that steak?

*B: Churrasco is a type of **cooking** for me that is super thin. It' a typical food in San Andres.*

The second result was taken from the Journal and it shows the students' practice section of the clarification request strategy and it evidences on the one hand that they expanded their sentences and on the second that they should improve their vocabulary.

B: Do you eat a lot of candies or that?

*A: **You should eat less. That is really bad for your health. Do you have any other symptoms?***

B: No, I don't

*A: Ok I am going to get you a **presentation**. You should take the mushroom diet for a few days*

B: Mushroom? That's a new word for me. Can you explain it?

The third result comes from the External observation when the observer evaluated the students' vocabulary of the session and this implies that they should be aware of the differences between languages.

O: I saw good descriptions in general. However, some of them are making literal translations.

According to the above results the students learned about those aspects they needed to improve, namely avoid making direct translations from Spanish to English and creating short sentences. Similarly, the students appeared to have a good understanding of the strategies, this may obey to theory to practice focus, as one of the characteristics of SBI, that allowed them to make good use of the new patterns to avoid communication problems.
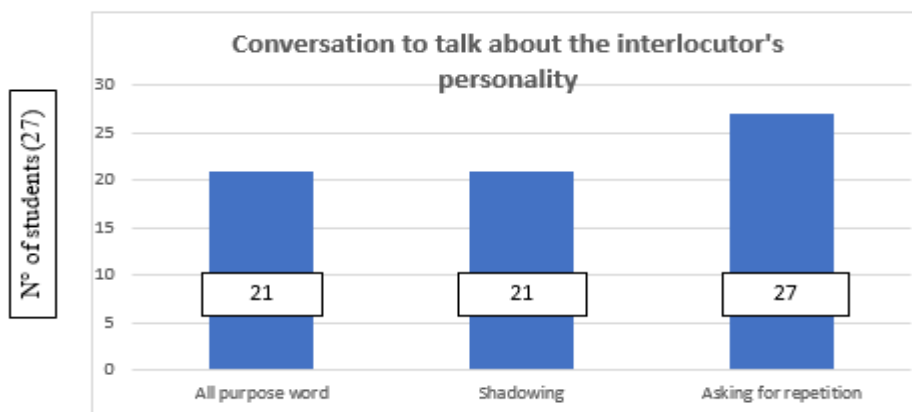

Figure 10. Workshop 3

The previous graph illustrates the number of the students who used the strategies suggested for workshop number 3 to talk about the interlocutor's personality. It appeared to be a continuous

improvement by learners as they advance on learning more strategies. This responds to the focus on awareness and constant recycling of the tools through practical exercises. A reduced number of students struggled remembering one of the addressed strategies from the lesson compared to the majority of them who seem to put them into practice. It is important to mention that there was evidence of the use of strategies from previous workshops which might mean that the students were more engaged and more prepared to keep a conversation going.

Summary of improvement per constructs after workshop 3

On accuracy

I could assert the learners had better results because they showed more understanding of the structures of the target language since they did a good conjugation of regular verbs to talk about their experiences and the things they have enjoyed "Simple past" by implementing strategies as well as the grammar "Gerunds as objects of prepositions". At this point the number of students who forgot to include the auxiliaries inside questions was reduced; however, some students were having some difficulties at the moment of combining two verbs like in the "Gerunds and infinitive" grammar topic, first they did not know the topic and second, I explained it during this workshop, therefore a few mistakes would continue happening because they were still consolidating the new information. The students would continue working on these two aspects in workshop number 4.

Evidence of this follows:

The first sample was taken from the External observation and it represents the practice session where the students were having difficulties with the gerunds and infinitives.

A: So, tell me something about yourself

*B: What would you **like know?***

A: What is your favorite sport?

*B: I love watching soccer and **play** it with my friends. For me soccer is the most exciting sport. What about you?*

A: You love watching soccer. Well, soccer is a bit fun, but I prefer volleyball, I think it's more interesting

B: I agree with you, volleyball is a great sport too

The second data sample is a student's transcription that comes from the Assessment section of the SBI model and suggests that the students have a better command of the verbs in the past tense.

*B: I'm excited about meeting the boy I **met** on a dating website, I expect to find the right person.*

X: Hello

*B: Hey!! Are you X? Ok so I **decided** to bring this cup of coffee and this candy for you, any problem?*

X: I don't mind eating this

B: Great, so, are you bored of being here?

X: No, but I don't like talking a lot.

The third sample comes from the Researcher's journal and it is one of the reflections I made during the Presentation and practice of the lesson about the learners' use of the strategies.

J: The majority of the learners preferred to use the All-purpose word strategy to compensate for the "etc." word, maybe because it seems to be the easiest way and the most used. Their attempts were correct in regards to the sentence structure, in other words, they knew what the position of the strategy was.

The students showed a continuous improvement in the understanding of the strategies and the aspects intended to improve, this gives account of the permanent reuse of the strategies during the exercises in the class which let them notice how frequent the strategies are on a daily basis and invited them to be ready to make a good use of them to enhance their communicative competence.

On fluency

I could observe that the number of students who maintained a conversation without hesitation concerning rising and falling intonation improved. This was consistent with one of the comments the learners made in the reflection part of the workshop where he or she expressed that the strategies helped to have a more fluent conversation. Similarly, the learners proceed giving more extent to their utterances. On the other hand, some students were still having inconveniences with pauses when communicating their ideas.

The first excerpt comes from the Researcher's journal specifically from the practice section and it suggests that the students have some difficulties to pronounce verbs as well as sentences in general when it comes to natural pausing.

A: What's happening? You look upset. You haven't said anything

*B: Oh, nothing serious. I´m just **afraid of flying to China, planes aren't** mine. I hate flying and all the things **that have to do with** height, **but thanks for asking.***

The second excerpt comes from the External Observation, which illustrates that they have a better control of the intonation of questions and the use of less pauses.

A: So, tell me something about yourself.

*B: **What would you like to know?***

*A: Ehh ... things like, **what do you like to eat?***

B: Well, really, I love and prefer to eat pizza.

*A: Love and prefer to eat pizza. Pizza is something delicious and rich. In fact, I love it, **I can't help eating pizza every day.***

B: I feel the same way. We should go to the mall together sometime, then.

The third excerpt comes from the Survey and shows the student's opinion in regards to strategies

S: Sí, las estrategias estudiadas me ayudaron. Colaboran en la fluidez, soltura, apoyo y seguridad. Son como un as bajo la manga.

Based on the above results, I could suggest that the students started to differentiate the L1 from the L2 in terms of fluency. I could see that some of them did notice how the strategies could impact their oral skill, that is to say, supporting them to give more details when speaking to make the most of conversations and helping them to sound in a spontaneous way in the foreign language

On vocabulary

The results indicate that the students became better at giving more details in their sentences, knowing which words to use according to the context where they were, and become more knowledgeable of more ways to express their ideas in order to avoid monotony, taking into account formal and informal contexts. Moreover, I did not see any literal translation during this implementation. I can assert the learner's previous knowledge was enriched by the implementation of strategies.

The first data sample comes from External observation, and it provides evidence of learner's vocabulary in general

O: The students showed a good knowledge of vocabulary, they knew the content they were working on this unit, so they used it on the practical exercises while including new patterns. I didn't see literal translations.

The second data comes from the Researcher's journal and informs the students are expanding their sentences.

Y: I would like to meet you

R: Oh really? What would you like to know?

Y: What do u like to play when you're free?

R: Let me see. I enjoy playing soccer, I think that I'm pretty good on that. What about you?

Y: I really love going to the dance academy and dance like nobody is looking at me

R: Oh, that's really interesting, we should switch places one day and try something new

Y: I love that idea. Definitely I'm in.

The third data sample comes from the Survey better sentences and it shows the students' opinions towards the strategies

S: Me sirvieron porque dan más versatilidad al momento de resolver una duda y manejar los escenarios

The previous results account for the acceptance of the strategies by the learners. It appears that the strategies have had a good impact on the way they communicate in the target language, making them feel more comfortable and with more tools in order to continue with the natural flow of a conversation. This data is consistent with the evaluations made on previous workshops where the biggest number of students seems to be in favor of the implementation of conversation strategies and the benefits, they bring for both the dialog and the person itself.
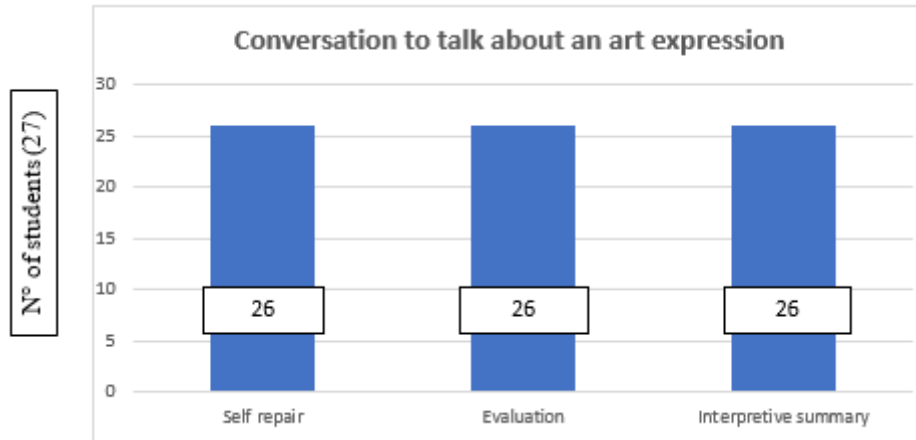
Figure 11. Workshop 4

The previous chart evidences the number of students as well as their incorporation of the strategies on the expansion section of workshop number 4 to talk about their favorite art expression. It seemed that the students had a continuous progress from workshop 1 until this one. This reveals their persistence for using the new knowledge from every session to create meaningful conversations where they shared their ideas about their likes, dislikes of familiar topics. Besides, I could state they stopped forgetting the strategies, because in the past there were some students who tended to forget one sometimes; however, at this point they were more aware of the benefits they can have when including them in their daily interactions.

On the other hand, I could say the students are ready to make reformulation from time to time as one of the descriptors says (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 85) because they were able to use the self-repair, evaluations and interpretive summary strategies in their different alternatives during the expansion activity in the expected way.

Summary of improvement per constructs after workshop 4

On accuracy

The number of learners who had more control of grammar structures, such as "Gerunds and infinitives" and auxiliaries inside questions increased. The grammar mistakes were fewer

compared to workshop 1. This shows how the students implemented new phrases that provided confidence and reminded them to have some order, as expressed in their comments. The strategies helped the students to see grammar as an aspect that should be oriented towards communication and not just to accumulation of patterns or structures.

Even though there were some students who needed to continue working on the organization of their ideas and the past participle verb when talking about "the passive voice" I could state they were closer to what a Basic user should be able to do in terms of grammar as the CEFR (2020) states that "Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say".

The first result is a transcription of the student's production and this emphasizes they improved their way to create questions and that they did not forget the auxiliaries in questions.

A: "The starry night" was painted in Saint-Rémy.

*B: Sorry, **where is** Saint-Remy?*

A: Wait sorry, it's Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. It is located in Arles, France.

*C: **What was** the painting technique used by Vincent van Gogh?*

A: He used oil on canvas, and it took him one night to do it.

B: So, with this difficult technique, he managed to do this painting in one night, right?

The second result comes from the Researcher's journal during the evaluation stage and it represents the students' perception of the strategies

J: La estrategia que más me gustó de esta semana fue la que me ayudó a ver qué tan claro soy cuando hablo, porque a veces creo que los demás no me entienden y se me olvida que yo puedo ser el del problema

The third result comes from the External observation and it evidences good use of the suggested grammar topic

O: In general, the students do a very good job, they are using the gerunds and infinitive in a better way. A few times they get confused, but that is normal. They are in the process of acquiring that information.

As the data shows, the students are able to employ strategies in a good way, in this case, the one used to summarize something. I think they did it well according to their current level of English. The learners were also able to use the vocabulary from the lesson; therefore, it appeared that they were capable of combining the new vocabulary with the strategies. Likewise, students showed a good acceptance of the strategies because they expressed the benefits they had.

On fluency

I could say that even when the learners agreed that the strategies were tools to keep the natural flow of a conversation, some of them needed to devote more practice to the pauses of words in sentences. Despite that, the students improved regarding expansion of their ideas by getting involved in activities where they had to analyze, work in groups and make decisions. The active participation by using strategies contributed to the flow of their utterances in English.

The first excerpt from the External observation shows improvement of word stress.

O: The students have had problems with the intonation of words, like the natural pauses of the sentences. The teacher Camila brought some exercises and the students were more conscious of that.

The second excerpt illustrates the student's production obtained during the Assessment part of the SBI lesson which suggests that the learners still struggled with pauses.

*B: Yes. Can the **conversation be made** giving examples of famous works of arts? I know about the Gioconda. This painting is best known as La mona Lisa and was painted by Leonardo Da Vinci.*

The third excerpt from the Researcher´s journal, taken from the practice stage represents good intonation at level of words, in other words, less pauses.

A: So, tell me something about yourself?

B: What would you like to know?

A: mmm What about music, do you like pop music?

B: Yes, my favorite pop music artist is Ariana Grande. I think she has a special voice. What about you?

A: A special voice. I agree, but she is not my kind of taste. I prefer "The weekend" I think it has a real style

As the data suggest, at this point of the students seemed to have a better comprehension of the correct rhythm of words that integrate a sentence thanks to the communication strategies and all the naturalness they bring. However, they should keep on working on that because that

will help them to build confidence.

On vocabulary

I could observe an improvement on the amount and type of words the students use, for example they made good use of the art repertoire providing details and longer sentences and included new patterns due to the strategies. The students were more conscious of the benefits of including strategies in their dialog because they stated they helped them diversify and increase their ideas. Few learners still got confused sometimes with false cognates in English, but there was more awareness on behalf of them at this point.

The first data sample from the Researcher's journal especially the practice section shows the vocabulary augment

A: The movies are my favorite art expression because they have energy, drama, action and make me be concentrate on the images and the audio. Fast and furious is my favorite movie and I want to be like Paul Walker and drive like him because I love the speed.

B: In a nutshell, you are fascinated by movies especially Fast and Furious and the principal actor, right?

The second data sample from the Researcher´s journal represented my view after the end of a session.

J: The students employed the strategy in order to summarize something. They did it well according to an A2 learner. I also noticed one of the previous strategies, "use of all-purpose words" which suggests that the students are making them part of their daily conversations. The learners are also using the vocabulary from the lesson; therefore, it appears that they are capable of combining the new vocabulary with the addressed strategy.

The third data sample from the External observation accounts for the appropriation of vocabulary

O: The students are learning more; they use the vocabulary they have on their students' books in a good way. They included new sentences to their dialogs where they put the strategies into practice.

The above results evidence that the students are capable of combining vocabulary about art, a grammar topic and a strategy to achieve a goal, this is a good sign of improvement in terms of awareness of some of the most important aspects when learning a foreign language.
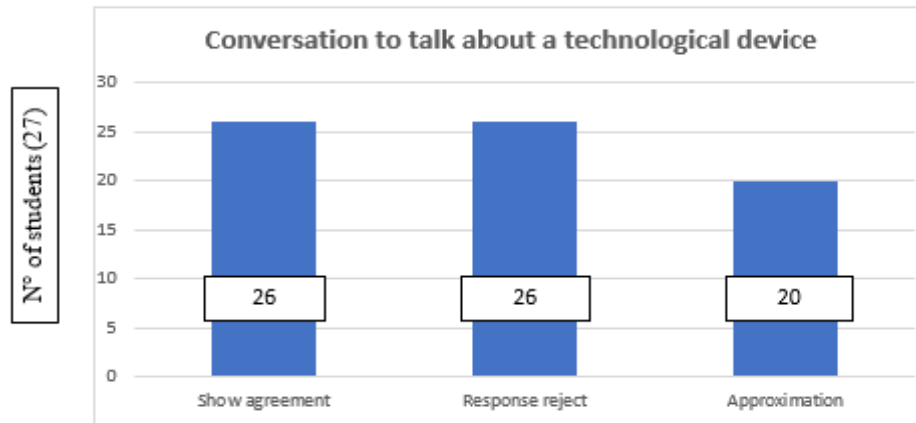
Figure 12. Workshop 5

The previous chart evidences the number of students as well as their incorporation of the strategies on the expansion section of workshop number 5 to talk about a technological device they are trying to buy and its characteristics. The students seemed to have improved throughout the workshops implementations as the results show, pair and group allows them to share with their classmates, evaluate and strengthen the knowledge they had related to the strategies and the essential patterns of the language required to make a better use of them.

They did a good use of this new group of strategies overall; however, they appeared to need more practice to understand and reveal a good command of the strategy called "approximation" due to the fact that two groups forgot to include them in the expansion activity.

Summary of improvement per constructs after workshop 5

On accuracy

The results showed that the students could convey their ideas with no mistakes concerning "Gerunds and infinitives", "As…As" and "Simple past" having the strategies as a guidance. However, this time a small number of students forgot to include the grammar topic "Infinitive of purpose" and made some mistakes regarding plural nouns; however, I could assert they have a better handle on the combination of verbs and cohesion in their sentences in general.

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The first excerpt is a transcription of the student's production and it evidences good use of "As... as" and "Simple past"

*A: And now what's going on with this? David!!??! come here. You **took** my laptop yesterday to download videos and fool around. Can you explain me why it's making this terrible noise and why the mouse doesn't work?*

*B: Ammmm.... It's maybe **infected** with a virus, but if you want, I can take your laptop and try to see if it does the trick.*

*A: No way! ... You must be kidding! You are not nearly **as professional as** a computer technician.*

The second excerpt comes from the External evaluation and it represents the observer impression of the student's overall accuracy

O: In my opinion the students are doing better in their classes, they make mistakes with respect to simple things like plurals for example, but they have a better knowledge of grammar topics. It is not the same as the first day I saw them.

The third excerpt from the Researcher's journal, that focused on the practice section suggests that the students can use in a better way the grammar topic "Gerunds and infinitives"

A: Deimer, could you take a look at this?

B: Sure, what is the problem?

*A: Well, I clicked on the pull-down menu to open file, and the cursor does not move. I **try** to **select** the icon again but I can't. The computer does not respond.*

B: I understand you, your computer is frozen

*B: Why do not you **try restarting** it? If this does not work, when I finish here, I will review it calmly.*

The learners used the requested grammar topic as well as the strategies in a good way. It seemed that they got the idea of describing the situation when they did not know the right term ("Approximation" strategy) and that they were also capable of combining vocabulary about technology, a grammar topic and a strategy to achieve a goal, this was a good sign of improvement in terms of awareness of some of the most important aspects when learning a foreign language.

On fluency

The students seemed to be trying to better the naturalness with which they should communicate in a foreign language because they had a continuous advancement in terms of falling and rising intonation due to the incorporation of strategies; however, some of them still needed to pay special attention to the sounding pauses when speaking and the length of their utterances. In addition, the students stated conversation strategies in general made them feel more confident in their conversations.

The first result comes from the External evaluation and reflect the students' use of good intonation when making questions

O: The students sound better, they know more when they are asking questions, making an exclamation or something like that.

The second result illustrates the student's production and it represents that some students need to work more on the pauses when speaking.

A: I should read more information and find before I buy it

*B: They are really fast **so when you are searching something** you **will find it very fast** plus they also have a good image quality and they are not very expensive **so will be able to pay** for a **very good one** with the budget that you have.*

The third result from the Researcher's journal shows the student's perception regarding the strategies during the Evaluation part and present the strategies as a support.

J: Hacen que las conversaciones sean más natural y amenas

On vocabulary

The results suggested that the communication strategies supported the majority of the students to be able to participate in basic communicative encounters with vocabulary and sentences according to their level. Moreover, learners stated conversation strategies can be used in different scenarios, meaning formal or informal contexts bringing them confidence and autonomy. There was still a very small number who needed to continue adding details to what they say and stop being too simple when speaking.

The first excerpt is a transcription of the students' production and evidences the students' expansion of sentences

C: I am looking for something that I can easily carry in my pocket, that has a good internal memory, a good processor and also that the battery charge lasts a long time.

A: Two designs recently arrived that are very similar but from a different brand. They're everything you are looking for.

A: A: These are here, this is the Samsung Galaxy Z flip and this is the Motorola RAZR. These are incredible in addition to what you are looking for, you can fold their screen and make them smaller so you can carry it in your pocket or in your small bags.

B: so, the design is innovative.

The second excerpt comes from the External observation and it represents how the students are capable to combine the strategies and the content from the lesson

O: The students include the vocabulary in the activities, this time they learned about devices

and technology. All the conversations had that. Besides, they are using the patterns related to

the strategies which expands their vocabulary.

The third excerpt from the Survey emphasizes the students' consideration of using strategies

in a formal or informal way based on a context

S: Me sirvieron porque dan más versatilidad al momento de resolver una duda y manejar los

escenarios

The previous examples suggest that the students can find the connection between strategies

and the impact they could have in their communicative competence, since they bring variety,

dynamism, and the combination of the addressed vocabulary, grammar topic and the strategy to

accomplish an objective definitely contributes to the awareness and consolidation of their
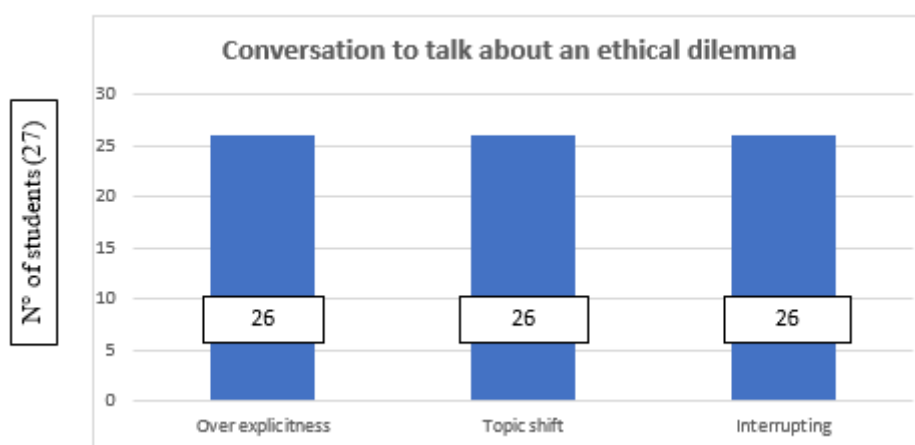
knowledge.

Figure 13. Workshop 6

The previous chart evidences the number of students as well as their incorporation of the

strategies on the expansion section of workshop number 6 to express how to deal with ethical

dilemmas when finding a product in a public place. There was a continuous improvement if we

take a look at the chart from workshop #1. At the beginning, the lowest result was 18 and the

highest 48. After the study and implementation of communication strategies I saw how these

numbers changed while the students took advantage of all the benefits they bring. At the beginning their grammar mistakes were more notorious and they tended to forget the new pattern. These results let me know that despite the fact that they might have some difficulties at the moment of conveying their ideas, they have the tools and have had enough practice to continue their process in an autonomous way.

The results from the external observation account for the pertinence of the activities proposed in class, the engagement of learners and the improvement they have had. It appears to be a connection between the exercises, the content from the level and the communication strategies analyzed because the students are able to express themselves with less difficulty. On the contrary, the careful design of the activities and the classes have helped them to become more recursive at the moment of speaking.

On accuracy

It seemed that the students at this point had a better organization of their sentences and the conjugation of verbs because they used the "Past unreal" tense in a good way and made no mistakes regarding "Simple past". Likewise, the students improved in the usage of auxiliaries in questions thanks to the strategies. There were still some learners who used the wrong preposition, in the same a very reduced number of students got confused with the subject pronouns.

The first result is a transcription of the student's production to illustrate their improvement concerning the simple past

A: Hey, hi. How are you doing?

B: I`m doing well...Look, Pool looks scared

A: Speaking of scared, remember when we found a 10.000 wallet?

*C: Excuse me **did I hear you say 10.000 million?***

*B: Sure, I **remembered** we could only say and now what??*

*A: That's right, Pol. It was a lot of money and we **didn't** know what to do. In other words, we **were** very excited!*

The second result obtained from the External observation evidences that the students got better results compared to workshop 1

O: The students have some minor mistakes when sharing their messages, but I think they have had a good progress during this journey

The third result comes from the Researcher´s journal and shows the students using the grammar to obtain a goal without focusing too much on structures.

J: There are some issues related to grammar, but they didn't interrupt the natural delivery of the message.

The samples above account for students´ better command of grammar structures and improvement from workshop number 1 until 6. They still made mistakes, but they were less because of the continuous practice they had throughout the workshops. The students were also able to combine old with new strategies which illustrates how these seemed to permeate their way to deal with communicative situations in English where some help would be worthy. The students appeared to take advantage of the strategies.

On fluency

The results suggested the students who had improved their ability to articulate a correct intonation of questions because of the use of communication strategies was bigger, besides the students stated strategies guided them to develop the speaking skill; however, there was a group

of learners who needed to continue practicing natural sounding pauses to have a better performance at the level A2+.

The first data sample comes from the External observation and reflect progress when speaking on behalf the learners

The students had less pronunciation problems related to verbs.

The second data sample from the Researcher´s journal evidences the difficulties the students still have with respect to the pauses when speaking.

B: It's a envelope full on money, someone must have dropped it, I am sure that whoever lost this amount of money must be very worried right now. Do you think that we should try to locate the owner of the envelope?

*A: We probably should, but didn't you say that you needed money to buy some things for your house, maybe this money **could be** helpful and **allow you to** buy **what you need**, besides…*

The third data sample obtained from the Survey accounts for the students' understanding of the benefits of implementing strategies

S: Todas me ayudaron a soltar un poco y hablar más y no quedarme en lo mismo que decía, a pesar de que aún siento que debo estudiarlo más, estas estrategias me facilitan el estudio independiente.

On vocabulary

The learners seemed to be on the right track of what a basic user should attain because of the implementation of communication strategies. The students were making a better use of the addressed vocabulary and new patterns which led to the variation of their speech and increase of their autonomy. Besides, they stated the strategies helped them to expand their ideas and speak naturally which in turn reduced the literal translations.

The first excerpt is a transcription of the student's production to evidence how they added more details to their sentences

B: I hate to interrupt, but I don't think that doing that would be ok. I know I am going through a rough situation since I have not been able to find a job, but that doesn't mean that I will steal someone else's money, and besides, I have my parents support financially.

A: I know, but this money could be so helpful for the both of us, I have been wanting to buy some things and I already spent all my savings.

B: that is your fault for not being responsible and spending your money as if you were rich. Oh, by the way, before I forget, I need to remind you that my mom invited you and your family to eat lunch with us tomorrow, so don't forget.

The second excerpt from the External observation illustrates how the students have increased their vocabulary

O: The students from course III were using vocabulary related to ethics and values from the beginning of the lesson. The topics were connected. They included the structures of the strategies. Their vocabulary has variety.

The third excerpt comes from the Survey and represents the students are trained to study and learn more vocabulary

S: Todas me ayudaron a soltar un poco y hablar más y no quedarme en lo mismo que decía, a pesar de que aún siento que debo estudiarlo más, estas estrategias me facilitan el estudio independiente

The samples above account for the learners' comprehension. They were able to communicate in simple terms the required aspects and are following the principles expected for a Basic learner,

in other words, working on what they should which is incorporating new phrases and expressions that will lead to variation and more confidence to communicate what they really mean.

5   Findings and discussion

In this section I will share the main salient outcomes after the implementation of six workshops supported by communication strategies through the Strategy-Based instruction model to develop the students' performance on accuracy, fluency and vocabulary. Besides, I would like to state that all the strategies played an important role in the development of the students' oral performance because the learners used them during every workshop; however, some of them were more appropriate to influence certain aspects much more than others due to their distinguishing marks. I will proceed with the outcomes per construct and the strategies that helped most to achieve that.

On accuracy

In regards to accuracy, there were two findings. The first was the *awareness on behalf of the students of all the essential components to create accurate sentences*. The students learned that their sentences should follow the indications of the target language, taking into account the auxiliaries, order and correct conjugation. Their sentences turned into more concise and understandable utterances. In addition, the fact of using the strategies allowed them to take action in their learning process, making them more critical of all the details that a complete sentence should have and as Willems (1987) argues when learners can incorporate communication strategies in a successful way their mistakes can be overlooked.

Respecting the first finding, the strategies that contributed most were: "Prefabricated patterns" because these let them start new sentences in a confident way, "clarification request",

"confirmation request" and "follow up questions" due to the order the students had to take into account to create questions and "self-repair" because they let them restart to be clearer.

The second finding was *enhancement on the knowledge of grammatical tenses*, it could be observed during the six workshops that the learners used the grammar knowledge regarding simple past, gerunds and infinitives, among others not as an accumulation of structures but as a way to get something, being the meaning the focus. The design of the workshops under the Strategy-Based instruction model gave them the opportunity to take theory into practice immediately which contributed to their complete apprehension of the tenses and the consolidation of their knowledge through sharing, which ratifies that interaction to communicate is not only useful as an exercise, but it can contribute to the advancement of syntax (Wagner-Gough & Hatch, 1975). In the same vein, the "output hypothesis" believes that students should use their knowledge in well-designed exercises to attain better levels of accuracy similar to the native speakers (Swain's, 1985). Along the same lines, this finding is connected to the one obtained by Lee & Heinz (2016) where the students agreed after reflecting that understanding the established organization of the L2 through strategies is a key aspect.

Concerning the second finding, the strategies that played the best role were: "self-repair" because this allowed the students to check the word they were saying and the tense to be clearer on the new attempt, likewise "confirmation" and "clarification request" that let them be focused on the grammar tense.

On fluency

Regarding fluency, there were three outcomes. First, there was an *improvement in terms of rising and falling intonation*, due to the employment of communication strategies the learners acquired the knowledge to distinguish the way to pronounce questions if looking for an

affirmative or negative answer as well as for complete information. At this point, they have a solid knowledge of what to expect when questioning his or her interlocutor. Respecting this outcome, the strategies that contributed the most to achieve the improvements on fluency were: "confirmation request", "clarification request", "follow up", "asking for repetition", "evaluation" and "interpretive summary" because of the rising and falling intonation necessary to make a good usage of them and shadowing because it helped them to pay attention to intonation once again not in the form of inquiry but as a sign of understanding.

The next outcome was *expansion on the length of utterances* because the students could make longer sentences which indicates that their length of the run on sentences has improved because of the insertion of prefabricated patterns and phrases inherent to the strategies. In addition, they learned to combine the addressed grammar topics and vocabulary which is a strength at their level because this will contribute to all their learning process. This first outcome goes in line with Dörnyei (1995) where the students who belonged to the experimental group showed enhancement in the speech rate after strategy training as well as another study carried out by Nakatani (2005) who stated that the students increased their length of utterances after being trained.

Concerning the second outcome, the strategies were: "prefabricated patterns" because these let them begin in a confident way and expand their ideas, "time gaining strategies" because they could have more time to think before starting, "self-repair" because they could find the way to be clearer, "interpretive summary" because they let them speak to elaborate to show understanding, "approximation" and "overexplicitness" because they had to come up with ideas to describe things, "topic shift" to start a topic they would like and "interrupting" to find a way to clarify something or share an idea related to the topic.

The final outcome that emerged respecting this construct was a *moderate progress on the*

placement of pauses of the sentences, that is to say, the students are now more able to do the

natural sounding pauses when expressing their ideas, basically they have a better grasp that there

are some invisible "commas" when speaking, the same way they could find them in the written

communication; however, it is necessary to mention that they need to proceed working on this

aspect because it still requires more training and I couldn't address it more because of time

constraints. Regarding the third outcome the strategies were: "provide active response",

"shadowing", "show agreement" and "response reject" due to the patterns they involved since

they are prefabricated somehow, they provided the learners with an idea of how sentences sound

in the target language.

On vocabulary

Regarding vocabulary, there were three results. The first one that emerged during this report

was the *learners' expansion of ideas due to the usage of communication strategies* because they

learned to delve on what they were saying, providing details and getting acquainted in a

significant and better way with all the established content appropriate to deal with social

encounters at a basic level. These results agreed with Nakatani's study (2005) which revealed

that the students in the training group came to make longer utterances, modified their speech in

order to achieve comprehension.

The participants in this study agreed that the assimilation of new patterns served as a

foundation to master some part of the key knowledge necessary to answer and therefore they

took advantage of that to speak more. These phrases, chunks of language or expressions are not

only useful to keep conversations going, but as a way to build confidence. The students might

have a better domain of these ideas in the future as they continue enriching their learning process

because these could be adapted and explored in a deeper way (Wong, 1976). Besides, this fact-built confidence to communicate their ideas to their classmates in a more notorious way which agrees with Vygotsky's notion of ZPD, in which the students cooperate towards the construction of knowledge and extend it because of the social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978).

Respecting the first result, the strategies that contributed most to the improvement on vocabulary were: "prefabricated patterns" because these provided the students with new ideas to carry on the conversation, "follow up questions" allowed them to come up with new topics to explore, "time gaining" because they could think better before beginning and there make longer sentences, "interpretive summary", since they talked to organize their ideas about what was said, "approximation" due to the fact that they looked for more ways to describe, "topic shift" since they could introduce new topics and "interrupting" because they could continue with an idea or include a new one.

The second result was the *diversification of the students' vocabulary,* it was because of the wide range of alternatives explored in the class and their own search that they could become interested in familiarizing and enriching their ideas with them. They have a better understanding of what register is and how the words they say can influence in social interaction. Besides, they are more likely to use synonyms and have the tools and the training to advance as autonomous learners. Moreover, this also allowed the students to learn that there are many ways to keep a conversation going and when they do not know the exact word, they need for the context they still can think of others to let them be understood. Studies about interaction agree that the input can be accessible when the students are able to clarify what they listened in order to understand. (Long, 1983).

Concerning the second result, the strategies were: "provide active response" since it gave the students new alternatives to vary what they knew, "follow up questions" because they thought about new questions to ask to keep the conversation going, "use of all-purpose words" since they showed what they knew about something and finished when they couldn't find more ideas, "shadowing" because they brought new questions, "show agreement", "response reject" and "asking for repetition", since they knew more formal and informal ways to do this, "self-repair" because they could start again in a new way, "evaluation" given the fact they could state new ways to check the grasp of something, "overexplicitness" because they were able to say the same idea using other words and "interrupting" because they could ask for more ideas regarding what was said or used that to start a new topic.

The third achievement involved the *reduction in a significant way of literal translation coming from the L1*. Throughout the study the students learned to understand the difference that exists between the two languages, in this case Spanish and English and that literal translations are not always the best way to help themselves when it comes to having a successful interaction. They learned to communicate being more conscious of the way the target language works and with less interference coming from their L1, this confirms that communication strategies are intended to help with what is missing between the L1 and L2 (Tarone, 1977). Respecting the third result, the strategies were: "provide active response" because the students could avoid the literal translations coming from the L, "asking for repetition" since they avoided translation and included new patterns instead of saying "repeat" and "evaluation" because they could speak in English not to say the same ideas in Spanish.

6   Conclusions

This project about the impact of conversation strategies on English language vocabulary, fluency and accuracy affected in a positive way the participants' communicative ability and their own learning process. I can state that they are now more aware of the phrases and sentences they can use in order to facilitate the conversational interaction such as the use of strategies to confirm, understand and foster the conversation, in other words, they know that these are not attached to a particular topic, but to the necessity of having some support at the moment of talking. This first conclusion goes in line with the ones obtained by Lee & Heinz (2016) where the learners after their reflection about strategy usage became more active and more responsible for their learning process. Murray (2010) also considered that there have been many studies of the effective use of LLSs in the second language (L2) classrooms that have produced positive results.

During the period this project lasted the students analyzed and put into practice eighteen communication strategies. At this point, they know how to recycle them depending on their necessities and their level of interest. The most useful strategies for this group of participants were "Provide active response", the second "Confirmation", the third "Stalling or time gaining". They are essential for Basic User level learners because they help to maintain the conversation, show interest and deal with time issues.

On the other hand, conversation strategies can increase accuracy, fluency and vocabulary of adult learners like this project suggests. The learners have few inconveniences to conjugate verbs when talking about the past, show a better usage of the auxiliaries and subject pronouns in questions, a better grasp of how to use infinitives and gerunds, and believe that strategies are helpful to organize their ideas when speaking. Likewise, they feel comfortable to combine the

strategies and the grammar, which is a good sign because these can not be employed in isolation. Despite these positive aspects, I have to say some of them still make mistakes related to prepositions, past participle adjectives and a few grammar topics; nevertheless, their domain of accuracy at this point enhanced. These results are consistent with those in Rabab'ah (2015). Thus, language learners benefit from conversation strategies because they can help them to have a good control to convey sentences in an organized way; however, they may have difficulties with minor aspect related to this competence.

Regarding fluency, the students state conversation strategies help them have a more fluent and dynamic conversation, better understanding of what rising and falling intonation is as well as expansion of their utterances; nonetheless, some students need to continue working on the natural pauses when speaking which was the most difficult aspect to intervene since it is an inherent characteristic of the target language different to the way students speak in their mother tongue which may need more time to be developed. I encourage future researchers to give special attention to the development of this aspect. At the same time, I recommend to devote time to work on the pronunciation aspect, so the students' language ability can be fully addressed.

Concerning the vocabulary aspect, the learners are more prepared to express their ideas about basic communicative needs and avoid literal translations coming from their L1. In addition, they agree that conversation strategies give them more autonomy to deal with different context, expand their utterances and diversify their vocabulary. It seems, therefore, that thanks to conversational strategies the learners augmented their words repertoire.

Finally, I determined the influence of conversation strategies on accuracy, fluency and vocabulary and I could say that the participants of this study have the tools and experience to get

their meaning across, clarify and gain time to give a better response when involved in communicative encounters. I can state that they are able to do this because they were trained to not only make the most of what they already knew, including what they did not realize they knew, but also to gain new alternatives to express depending on the contexts. All in all, language learners seem to increase their awareness of their learning process in general terms, especially because of the influence of conversation strategies.

Finally, I strongly recommend explicit training because this study gives account of its efficiency. When the students are guided, they learn to be proactive and take their learning process seriously because they experience that is not only knowing the content, but how to use it. This agrees with what O'Malley & Chamot (1990): "Students should be apprised of the goals of strategy instruction and should be made aware of the strategies they are being taught" (p. 184). Moreover, other authors like Oxford (1990) and Wenden (1991) insist on direct training. Oxford (1990) states that when "strategy training is being explicit, giving the reasons why certain strategy is helpful, its use, and how to evaluate it, the training has more impact" (p. 207).

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8   Appendixes

Appendix 1. Student's consent

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Nombre: _____   Edad: _____

Fecha: __ __ / __ __ / __ __   Teléfono: _____

1. ¿Cuál es el objetivo del proyecto?

Este proyecto tiene como objetivo diagnosticar las falencias que presentan los estudiantes del Curso de inglés nivel III con respecto al aprendizaje del idioma y proponer una serie de estrategias para mejorarlas.

2. ¿Qué pasará durante el proyecto?

Se recolectará información a través de observaciones de clases de manera escrita, grabaciones de videos o fotos, sólo para fines educativos del proyecto, de esta manera se podrá analizar mejor la información recolectada. Encuestas, entrevistas a docentes, directivos y estudiantes serán realizadas también con la premisa de lograr el objetivo. Los datos obtenidos a través de los diferentes instrumentos permitirán identificar necesidades educativas y diseñar estrategias para mejorar el desempeño académico en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera de los estudiantes del Curso de inglés III. Por último, se presentará un plan de acción que permita la innovación de la práctica pedagógica para el mejoramiento del desempeño académico.

3. ¿Qué daños podrían ocurrirle al sujeto de investigación si hace parte del estudio?

La actual investigación, no representa riesgo o daño alguno para los sujetos, atesorarán las normas comprendidas en la Resolución N° 008430 de 1993 del Ministerio de salud, teniendo en cuenta el ARTÍCULO 5: En toda investigación en la que el ser humano sea sujeto de estudio, deberá prevalecer el criterio del respeto a su dignidad y la protección de sus derechos y su

bienestar. Asimismo, se tendrá en cuenta el ARTÍCULO 8, en el cual se dice que: En las investigaciones en seres humanos se protegerá la privacidad del individuo, sujeto de investigación, identificándolo solo cuando los resultados lo requieran y éste lo autorice.

4. Beneficio que se esperan obtener con las pruebas

Los participantes del proyecto se beneficiarán con la participación en actividades y la aplicación de estrategias innovadoras que permitan el mejoramiento de sus prácticas pedagógicas para el desarrollo de las habilidades comunicativas correspondientes al inglés como lengua extranjera; así como el mejoramiento en el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes.

5. Confidencialidad y uso de la información obtenida

La información acopiada y procesada está cargo de la investigadora Camila Gómez Castro a cargo de este proyecto, haciendo uso de registro físicos y digitales, bajo las normas de empleo adecuado de la información establecidas en la constitución política nacional en su Artículo 15 y en la Ley 1712 de 2014, y utilizando los dispositivos o medios tecnológicos sugeridos para proteger la información personal. En todo caso se mantiene el anonimato y la intimidad de las personas. La información recolectada tendrá única y exclusivamente fines académicos y de orientación a los educandos en sus necesidades de aprendizaje. Su posterior ingreso a bases de datos de investigación se sujetará a la confidencialidad y rigor de las normas y prácticas de investigación vigentes en el país.

6. Costos de la participación

La investigación tiene fines académicos por lo tanto los participantes serán exonerados de cualquier importe por la entrega, captura, almacenamiento, procesamiento o utilización de la información; así como de cualquier derecho pecuniario, ingreso, bonificación o fondo monetario,

que se cause con su participación en esta investigación. Igualmente, los costos de realización corren por cuenta de la investigadora.

7. Derechos de los participantes

Como participante en esta investigación a usted le ampara el derecho de conocer el objetivo del proyecto, ser tratado con respeto, conocer los riesgos que se pueden presentar, retirarse en cualquier momento del estudio sin que esto ocasione detrimentos ni sanciones: así como también es su derecho conocer información relevante sobre las personas que van a investigar, conocer quienes tendrán acercamiento a su información, requerir apoyo y explicaciones durante la evolución del consentimiento informado o etapas de la investigación.

8. Comunicación de los resultados

Los resultados de la investigación serán entregados a los participantes a través de comunicaciones orales, con ayuda de diapositivas, folletos que respondan a los siguientes interrogantes: ¿Qué problema se estudió y por qué?, ¿Cómo se estudió?, ¿Cuáles fueron los hallazgos? Y ¿Qué significan esos resultados?, Asimismo las dudas o comentarios al respecto pueden remitirse vía e-mail *cgomez@utb.edu.co* o celular 300 5388394 a Camila Gómez Castro.

9. Declaración final

Con su firma usted acepta que ha leído o alguien le ha leído este documento, que se le ha respondido satisfactoriamente a sus preguntas y aclarado las posibles dudas, y que acepta participar voluntariamente en el presente estudio.

Nombre del participante:

Cédula o tarjeta de identidad

_____

Firma

Camila Gómez Castro

Nombre del investigador

CC. 1. 143.355.797 de Cartagena

_____

Firma

Appendix 2. Teacher's interview

Universidad de Caldas

Maestría en didáctica del inglés

Explorando la percepción de docentes con respecto al idioma inglés en la universidad

A continuación, se le harán unas preguntas con el fin de conocer su opinión acerca del idioma inglés. Por favor responda de manera honesta, sus respuestas serán confidenciales y su nombre no será revelado. No existen respuestas correctas e incorrectas para este instrumento. Su participación es de mucha importancia en aras de desarrollar un proyecto en la universidad que contribuya a la solución de una problemática específica.

Sección I: Percepción del inglés

1. ¿Qué piensa usted sobre el idioma inglés hoy en día?

Sección II: Habilidades

2. En base a su experiencia ¿En cuál o cuáles habilidades los estudiantes muestran fortaleza? ¿Por qué?

3. ¿Cómo les va a los estudiantes en el habla? ¿Cómo considera que se puede enriquecer esta habilidad?

4. ¿Cuál es el desempeño de los estudiantes en la escucha? ¿Cómo podría fortalecerse?

5. ¿Cómo les va a los estudiantes a la hora de escribir? ¿Cómo podría ser mejorada esta habilidad?

6. ¿Cómo los encuentra con respecto a la habilidad de lectura en la lengua extranjera? ¿Cómo puede ser perfeccionada?

7. ¿Cuál o cuáles son las habilidades de mayor importancia para usted como docente? Por favor explique.

8. ¿Qué otros aspectos cree que deban mejorar los estudiantes con respecto al idioma inglés?

Mil gracias por su colaboración.

Appendix 3. Student's questionnaire

Universidad de Caldas

Maestría en didáctica del inglés

Explorando el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés de los estudiantes en una universidad

El propósito del siguiente cuestionario es recolectar información acerca de su proceso, opinión y preferencia con respecto al aprendizaje del idioma inglés. Teniendo en cuenta esta información la investigadora analizará cómo puede contribuir a mejorar el proceso.

Nota:

Este cuestionario es completamente anónimo, sus respuestas son confidenciales y para uso exclusivo de este trabajo, éste no es un test por lo tanto no existen respuestas correctas ni incorrectas, por favor siéntase libre de expresar su opinión de manera sincera y de seleccionar la opción con la que más se identifique.

¡Comencemos!

I. Percepción general del inglés

Esta sección busca conocer sus ideas e impresiones sobre el idioma extranjero. Por favor indica tu opinión colocando una "X" en la casilla que mejor indique su grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo con cada oración.

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
1. El aprendizaje del inglés me parece interesante					
2. El inglés es fácil					
3. Hablar en inglés con mis compañeros me produce tranquilidad					
4. Mi desempeño con respecto al idioma inglés es satisfactorio					

II. Habilidades

En la siguiente sección se busca conocer su percepción sobre las cuatro habilidades en las que se trabaja el idioma inglés, a saber, habla, escucha, lectura y escritura. A continuación, encontrará dos adjetivos opuestos y siete espacios, por favor coloque una "X" en uno de los espacios para indicar su opinión sobre lo planteado.

5. Al participar oralmente en clase, me siento:

Inseguro 1:___2: ___3: ___4: ___5: ___6: ___ 7:___ Seguro

6. Mi desempeño en el habla es:

Insatisfactorio 1:___2: ___3: ___4: ___5: ___6: ___ 7:___ Satisfactorio

7. Durante los ejercicios en pareja en clase, hablo español:

Mucho 1:___2: ___3: ___4: ___5: ___6: ___ 7:___ Poco

8. Escribir en inglés es:

Complicado 1:___2: ___3: ___4: ___5: ___6: ___ 7:___ Fácil

9. Mi desempeño en la escritura es:

Ineficaz 1:___2: ___3: ___4: ___5: ___6: ___ 7:___Eficaz

11. Captar la idea general de un audio es:

Fácil 1:___2: ___3: ___4: ___5: ___6: ___ 7:___ Difícil

12. Escuchar con el fin de obtener los detalles, es para mí:

Fácil 1:___2: ___3: ___4: ___5: ___6: ___ 7:___ Complicado

13. Los ejercicios de la lectura me parecen

Inadecuados 1:___2: ___3: ___4: ___5: ___6: ___ 7:___ Adecuados

13. El conocimiento que poseo de la gramática es:

Malo 1:___2: ___3: ___4: ___5: ___6: ___ 7:___ Bueno

14. La cantidad de vocabulario aprendido, la percibo como:

Poca 1:___2: ___3: ___4: ___5: ___6: ___ 7:___ Mucha

III. Metodología

En la siguiente sección encontrarás un listado de actividades, debes asignarles un número de 1

a 5 de acuerdo con tus gustos, siendo 1= para nada atractivo, 2=poco, 3= más o menos,

4=atractivo, 5= muy atractivo. Marca una "X" en frente de un número.

- Actividades en línea, usando páginas como Kahoot, Socrative, Mentimeter o Quizlet

    1____ 2____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____

- Dramatizaciones

    1____ 2____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____

- Presentaciones orales

    1____ 2____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____

- Creación de tus propios videos

    1____ 2____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____

- Juegos de memoria

1____ 2____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____

- Estrategias orales para comunicarse mejor en inglés

1____ 2____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____

IV. Reflexiones

En la siguiente sección encontrará unas preguntas para que por favor conteste de acuerdo a su percepción.

En inglés se trabajan 4 habilidades que son, habla, escucha, lectura y escritura. ¿Cuál es la habilidad más importante para ti? ¿Por qué?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

¿Cuál es la habilidad en la que presentas más deficiencia? ¿En qué sentido?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

¿Qué otros aspectos se deberían tener en cuenta para tus clases de inglés de Nivel III?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Mil gracias por tu colaboración

Appendix 4. Diagnostic test

Maestría en didáctica del inglés

Universidad de Caldas

Prueba Diagnóstica de inglés

Esta prueba está diseñada con el fin de conocer el nivel de inglés actual de los estudiantes con respecto a lo estipulado en el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas para nivel A2. Ésta es una prueba anónima por lo tanto datos como su nombre, edad o carrera no serán revelados. Este instrumento servirá para recolectar datos con el fin de realizar un futuro proyecto en la universidad.

La prueba estará dividida en secciones. Lea cuidadosamente.

<u>Sección I</u>

Escucha

En esta sección escucharás cinco conversaciones cortas entre amigos, familiares o entre una persona y el dependiente de una tienda, etc. Tienes que identificar información como precios, números, horarios, fechas, lugares, indicaciones, formas, tamaño, el tiempo, descripciones de personas y acciones. Las grabaciones serán reproducidas dos veces. Para cada pregunta existen tres opciones de respuesta que serán dibujos o fotos. Por favor marca con una "X" la respuesta correcta.
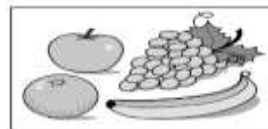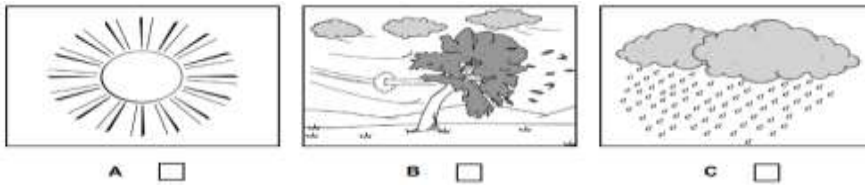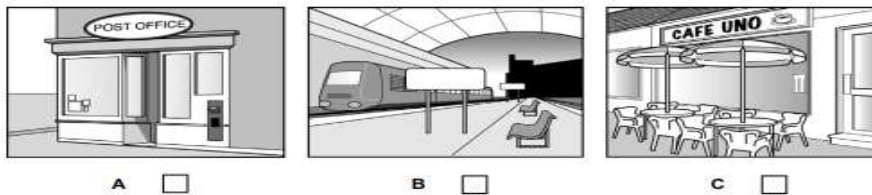
1. What´s Jill´s favorite food?
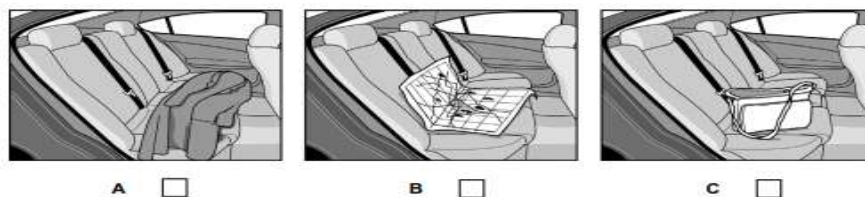
2. What time will Barry phone back?

3. What was the weather like last weekend?

4. Where are they going to meet?

5. What's still in the car?

Ahora escucharás a Sam hablándole a Jenny de los regalos que recibió el día de su cumpleaños. ¿Qué regalo le dio cada persona? Escribe **una** letra (a-g) en el espacio que corresponda.

People   **Birthday presents**

6. Parents _____   a. belt

7. Brother _____

8. Sister _____

9. Aunt _____

10. Cousin _____

b. book

c. chocolate

d. Computer game

e. football

f. money

g. Sweater

Sección II

Lectura

En esta sección encontrarás seis avisos y cinco oraciones debajo, por favor lee los avisos y escribe **una** letra (a-f) en el espacio de la oración que corresponda

A **MUSIC SHOP**
New and used CDs – great for the car!

B **PIANO FOR SALE**
LOOKS AND SOUNDS BEAUTIFUL – ONLY £300

C **Play the Guitar**
Classes for children and adults
Beginners welcome

D Live music here every Friday – get your free ticket today!

E **Pop group needs new singer**
Call Andy on
020 8746 9902

F **Piano lessons**
(only for people who can read music)
Phone 020 4998 3664

11. If you want to learn to play this, call this number _____

12. Buy these here and listen to them while you are traveling _____

13. You do not have to play to go to these concerts _____

14. You will learn about the history of music in this class_____

15. Your age is not important for these lessons ____

A continuación encontrará una lectura titulada Penguins la cual debes completar, por favor encierra **una** de las opciones para cada espacio de la lectura.

114

Penguins

There are different types of penguins. They can be _____ forty centimeters to more meter tall.

16

They all _____ in the south part of the world. In winter, they swim_____long way to find
17   18
warmer weather.

In spring, _____ penguins come together on the beaches of Antarctica. The female penguin has

19

one or two eggs. She puts____eggs on the ground and sits there to keep____warm. But she

20   21

doesn't sit all the time because penguins can move with one egg between their legs. ____the

22

female penguin is sitting on the egg, the male penguin brings her food. He also ____this after

23

the babies penguins are born.

16. a. From   b. By   c. Between

17. a. Lives   b. Live   c. Lived

18. a. One   b. The   c. A

19. a. Lots   b. Much   c.Many

20. A. Her   b. Hers   c. She

21. a. It   b. Them   c.Their

22. a. When   b. How   c.Who

23. a. Does   b. Do   c. Doing

Escritura

Completa el email. Por favor escribe la palabra que **tú** consideras es la indicada en cada

espacio. Solamente **una** palabra.

From :	Jessie
To:	Carmen

Thanks for your email.

This month (24) _____been quite boring for me. I haven't had the time to do any (25) _____the things I like. Our new teacher gives us too (26) _____homework and the weather´s been terrible
(27) _____ the weekends. I haven't played tennis (28) _____ three weeks now! But (29) _____ is some good news! I can come and stay (30) _____ you in the summer. Mum and dad have said yes! I (31) _____so pleased.

The best time for me is (32) _____ second half of July. (33) _____this okay? Please ask (34) _____ mum and dad and email me back. Then I can get my plane ticket.

Love,
Jessie.

Ahora, por favor escribe un email.

You have started going to a new sports club. Write an email to your English friend, Leo.

Tell Leo: **Where** the club is, **What sport** you do there, **How much** it costs

Write **25-35** words

From:
To:

Habla

En esta sección se te harán una serie de preguntas, algunas son generales y otras específicas ya que la respuesta dependerá de lo que observes en una imagen.

1. What is your name? Nickname? Surname?

2. What´s your marital status?

3. How often do you eat fruit for breakfast?

4. How many of the students are studying engineering in this class?

5. What are you doing next month?

6. What were you able to do when you were a kid?

7. What programs/video games/games/ did you use to watch/play?

8. What were you doing yesterday in the afternoon?

Now, answer according to what you see in the images:

9. If you start in the hotel/bank and go one block East / North, what will you find?
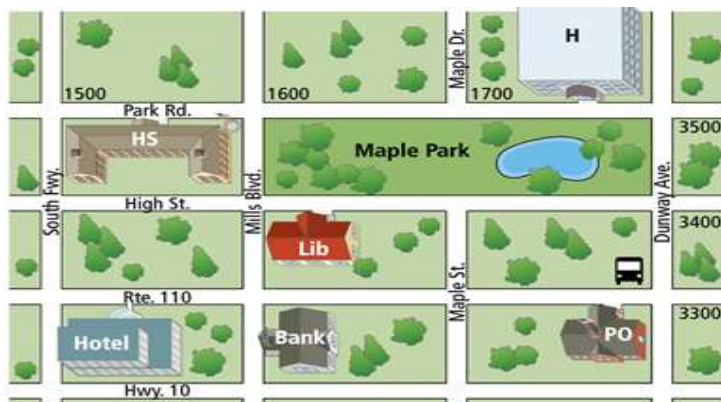
10. Describe the next picture, you have 45 seconds

Rúbrica:

Components and scales	5 Sophisticated	4 Competent	3 Partly competent	2 Not yet competent	1 Novice	SCORE
FLUENCY	Successfully manages to maintain the expected naturalness, speed, and flow	Generally manages to maintain the expected naturalness, speed, and flow.	Somewhat manages to maintain the expected naturalness, speed, and flow.	Barely manages to maintain the expected naturalness, speed, and flow.	Cannot manage to maintain the expected naturalness, speed, and flow.	0
LEXICAL RESOURCES	Successfully uses expected vocabulary repertoire.	Generally uses expected vocabulary repertoire.	Uses some expected vocabulary repertoire.	Uses a few basic expected expressions.	Lacks basic vocabulary repertoire	0
GRAMMATICAL RANGE & ACCURACY	Successfully controls expected grammatical structures and sentence patterns	Generally controls expected grammatical structures and sentence patterns	Shows some control of expected simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire.	Shows limited control of expected grammatical structures and sentence patterns.	Cannot control expected grammatical structures and sentence patterns.	0
PRONUNCIATION	Speech can be understood with minimal to no effort.	Speech is generally intelligible with some effort by the listener	Speech is generally intelligible but requires considerable effort by the listener	Pronunciation puts a great strain on the listener.	Speech is unintelligible.	0
Student's name:						0,0

Taken from UTB Language center.

Mil gracias por tu ayuda

Note. Test sample adapted from (Cambridge, 2020)

Appendix 5. Workshop 1

WORKSHOP I

Lesson title: *Talking about Car accidents and everything they entail*

Group: Course III

Level: A2

Materials needed: PowerPoint presentation (teacher), videos, audio recordings, computers, students' book, and internet connection.

Final general goal for the lesson: By the end of Workshop 1, the students will be able to describe and discuss how a car accident took place.

Conversation strategies to be taught	A2 Language descriptors from frameworks
Prefabricated patterns: Using memorized stick phrases, usually for "survival" purposes. Example: where is the…? it's a thing you, it's a person who, it's a kind of…	A2-Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70) -Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70)
Confirmation request: According to Rabab'ah (2004), it refers to requesting confirmation that one heard or understood something correctly. It might be by asking full questions (e.g., You mean he did not get my point? You said that the International School is the best? Do you mean that I should go to a travel agent?) (p. 151).	"A2- Can understand enough to manage simple, routine tasks without undue effort, asking very simply for repetition when he/she does not understand. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 88).
Provide active response: It is used to provide active responses. The former entails using positive comments or using other conversation gambits such as "I know what you mean", "sounds good" or "really?"	*"*Novice High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor." (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012).

Linguistic objective: Know when to use the Past continuous tense

Language skills to address: Speaking, listening, writing and reading

<u>Lesson description</u>

I.   Preparation

Time: 20 minutes

The students will use the webpage (https://www.menti.com/) to make a brainstorm of the means of transportation they know so far, and the teacher will ask general questions about the ones they have ridden or been into before.

II.   Presentation and Practice

Time: 30 minutes

After that, the teacher will direct students' attention to an image of a vehicle and its different parts in English in order to introduce the first strategy "Prefabricated patterns", but before doing that the teacher will elicit if the learners know what this strategy is about by saying:

Guys, imagine that we have to describe with our own words the different parts of a car. How can we do this?

Note. See reference image on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 40.

The teacher will analyze the ideas given by their students and will complement with the examples below in case they are needed:

Example: What is a windshield wiper? <u>It's a part that</u> cleans the front window

<u>It's something that</u> you use to clean your car's window

<u>It´s a kind of stick</u> (equipment) that you use to clean the front window

The teacher will provide an explanation of this strategy and more examples so the learners can be ready to create this type of sentences (Teacher's ppt).

Once the students have had some practice by making statements, they are going back to the Car image and get ready to select and describe at least five car parts and share their ideas with the class.

After the exercise is completed, the teacher will do a mini review by asking the students:

Did you use the strategy? Did you use it well? Did it help you? How? How can you use it effectively next time? Was it easy to use?

Time:30 minutes

The teacher is going to continue the lesson by teaching the students the use of the Past continuous (Teacher's ppt). Once the learners know how to create sentences using this grammar topic, the teacher will introduce the second strategy, which is "Confirmation" but before will elicit if the students have ideas about what this is. After checking the students' background knowledge, she will explain the strategy clearly. The teacher will use a short reading from the book to provide examples. After they have finished reading, the teacher will point out a specific excerpt from the "photo story" section (second column, Brad's comment) to show how the strategy can be used.

Note. See reference reading on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 39.

Time: 40 minutes

Immediately, the teacher will show some pictures regarding car accidents and will ask them what they know or if they can guess what they mean. This exercise will serve as a basis for the strategy practice.

Note. See reference images on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 38.

<u>Quick check:</u> The teacher will do a quick review to verify the understanding of strategies so far so the students can always remember that the strategies are the most important tools they have. Questions such as:

What are the strategies we have covered so far? How can we use them? Do you see the difference between them?

Then, the students will put into practice the second strategy in pairs by making a very short conversation taking into account the previous pictures about car accidents and making sure that their statements include the Confirmation strategy.

Example provided:

Note. (ESRnews, 2013)

> A: Man, Peter was going really fast, he was waving through traffic without thinking
>
> B: Was Peter driving like crazy?   (Confirmation strategy)
>
> B: Do you mean he was not focused? (Confirmation strategy)
>
> B: <u>So</u> Peter was waving through traffic? (Confirmation strategy)

After the students' exercises are checked. The teacher will do a mini review by asking them:

Did you use the strategy? Did you use it well? Did it help you? How? How can you use it effectively next time? Was it easy to use?

Time: 25 minutes

Later, the teacher will set the stage to present the last strategy, namely "Provide active response". First, she will explain what this is about and ask the students how they think this is put into practice, in other words, ways they believe can be used to provide an active response.

Then, the teacher will play an audio recording where the students will listen to a very short dialog that includes some examples of how people use this strategy. After the students listen carefully the teacher will ask about those phrases that were used to show empathy and will show more ideas to express concern or relief.

Ways to respond:

To practice the use of this strategy the teacher will play pieces of audio recordings where the students have to guess or imagine what is happening and show empathy by using the "Provide active response strategy".

Transcript 1: I had an accident. I hit a parked car

Transcript 2: The brakes failed and I hit a tree.

Transcript 3: Guess what?! I won a car last Saturday!

After the students' exercises are checked. The teacher will do a mini review by asking them:

Did you use the strategy? Did you use it well? Did it help you? How? How can it be used effectively next time?

III. Evaluation

Time: 20 minutes

The learners will have some minutes at the end of every workshop to assess the strategies, bearing in mind the following questions:

What did you learn about strategies for conversations? When can you use them? What are some ways in which we can express these strategies? Did these strategies help you? If so, how?

IV. Expansion activities

Time: 30 minutes

Video: In groups of three the students will make a creative conversation where they describe a car accident. The conversation needs to comply with the following criteria:

-Use the strategies

-Include the vocabulary seen in the lesson

-Use of past continuous

-Have a good pronunciation

V. Assessment

Time: 15 minutes

The teacher assesses the students' use of strategy with a rubric.

Appendix 6. Workshop 2

<u>Workshop II</u>

Lesson title: *Describing food passions*

Group: Course III

Level: A2

Materials needed: PowerPoint presentation (Teacher), computers, students' book and internet connection.

Action Research is an approach that encourage teachers to constantly evaluate and enhance the projects they are working on in order to polish them for future implementations. The necessity of more pair-work as well as the students' forgetfulness of using the strategies from time to time were the most pronounced patterns found across the instruments, there were some others like difficulties with listening and lack of empathy; however, they did not have the same frequency of appearances. The conscientious analysis of the weaknesses gathered from workshop #1 led to a more careful set of activities to approach learners during this second workshop.

More activities where the students have to interact, more mini reflections so they can be more aware that the strategies are the tools of major significance during the sessions and moments where the learners can work together are going to be observed in a most notorious form during this new attempt.

Final goal for the lesson: By the end of Workshop 2, the students will be able to talk about their eating habits based on their personal beliefs.

Conversation strategies to be taught	A2 Language descriptors from frameworks
Clarification request: Asking for an explanation of an unfamiliar meaning or structure. Example: -What do you mean? -I´m sorry, I am not sure I understand what you mean by (word or expression)? -That´s a new word/expression for me. Can/ Could you explain it? -What does (word or expression) mean?	Asks questions and makes requests and suggestions politely and appropriately (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 155)
Follow-up questions: People often raise follow-up questions in conversations. For example, if one interlocutor mentions Birthday, he/ she is likely to be asked what kind of gifts she/he received. Example: -Did you get any presents? -How was it? -Where did you celebrate it?	Elicits or provides details as needed (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 155) Can cope with a limited number of forward follow up questions" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 74).
Stalling or time-gaining strategy: Using fillers or hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain time to think. Example: -Well -Actually -Now let's see -Uh -As a matter of fact	Can participate in short conversation in routine contexts on topics of interest (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85) Use a range of small talk phrases and expressions." (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 155).

Linguistic objective: Know when to use "Used to"

Language skills to address: Speaking, listening and reading.

<u>Lesson description</u>

I. Preparation

Time: 20 minutes

The students will begin the class by doing a review of the strategies learned during workshop

#1 participating in a small activity (teacher vs. students). The activity goes like this: first the

students will remember as a whole class the names of the first three strategies they know so far and then the activity will begin: a keyword is going to pop up to represent one strategy, so the students will have to make an association. They will have 13 seconds to do that. If they get it, they obtain one point, if not the teacher gets it. At the end there will be a winner.

For instance:

How awful! (Provide active response-strategy expected to be mentioned)

II. Presentation and Practice

Time: 35 minutes

The teacher will explain the first strategy of this lesson "Clarification request" and will ask the students how they would ask for clarification in English. Afterwards, the teacher will guide students' attention to an image of a part of a dialog extracted from a conversation they will read. The teacher will orient the students so they can notice a specific word from the dialog (craving) and would ask about what they would do if they were in the middle of that conversation and did not understand that word.

Note. See reference image on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 63

Unknown word= craving

The teacher will analyze the ideas given by the students and will complement with the examples below:

Rita: What does *craving* mean?

Rita: That's a new word for me. Can / Could you explain it?

Rita: I'm sorry, I am not sure I understand what you mean by *craving*?

She will also take some minutes to talk about register, so the learners could be familiar with the structures that are considered to be formal and informal at the moment of asking for

clarification. She will also tell learners that this strategy is a way for them to interact with English speakers when they do not understand something.

Challenge: The students will try to make a definition of the unknown word. They are going to be reminded that they can use the strategies they learned from the previous workshop too. An example below:

It is a verb that I can use to express that I really want to eat chocolate instead of another food. It is something that calls my attention a lot. I really feel I need to eat that.

The learners will put the strategies into practice by working in pairs via WhatsApp. The teacher will divide the students and will give them an image with short information about food.

The dynamic is this: First, the students should identify an unknown word or if there is not any, choose one that could be a possible unknown term for students in general. Then, they will create a definition for that specific word trying to expand their answer. When finished, they will make a short conversation where they talk about their eating habits, (they could pretend to be characters if they want like doctors, or personal trainers) and make sure to include a sentence where they use the unknown word so they can introduce the "Clarification request strategy" to ask and get the meaning of the target word.

Example below:

Unknown word= Poultry

Note. See examples of food words on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 62.

Conversation:

A: Hey Lucia, you look gorgeous!!

B: Thank you. You're always kind :) you look very well too

A: Are you blind? Don't you see my belly? My health is a mess right now. I do not know how to have more control.

B: One way is to prepare all your meals at home instead of eating out. I travel once a month to look for the poultry in my father's house so I don't have to buy that at the supermarket which is altered sometimes.

B: *Poultry*? *That's a new word for me, can you explain it?*

B: *It's a word we can use to talk about the birds we raise. It is something we say to show we prefer to have our meat at home instead of buying it at the supermarket. For example: chickens and turkeys.*

A: Thank you so much. I will think about having my poultry too.

After the learners understand the example given by the teacher, they will do the same exercise with one of the following images.

Note. See reference images on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 63.

When the exercise is completed, the teacher will do a mini review by asking the students:

What strategy did you use? Did you use the strategy? Did you use it well? Did it help you? How? How can you use it effectively next time? Was it easy to use?

Time: 35 minutes

Then, the teacher will teach the grammar topic for the lesson, this is "used / used to". Using a PowerPoint presentation where the students could see examples like this:

The teacher used to skate, until she fell down.

She will ask about the students' experiences and invite them to share, she will show how to make negative sentences and questions and later the students will do some exercises from the book.

Once the learners show they have enough knowledge of this topic the teacher will proceed with the second strategy.

The teacher will announce what the "Follow-up questions strategy" is about and will motivate the learners to express possible ideas to do so. Later, she will play a recording where the students will listen to a short conversation between two people having dinner. They should listen carefully to get the "follow up question".

Note. See reference conversation on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 66.

- <u>Don't you eat chicken?</u> (Example of a Follow up question)

The teacher will give another example, so the learners can have a better understanding. This time she will include the grammar topic "used to" in one of the questions. So, the students can notice how to use it for upcoming exercises:

Note. (Assegur, 2019)

The students will take a look at some images where people are showing what they are not allowed to eat and they will make questions in general to find out about the reasons for their preferences. They are going to be invited to employ "used to" in one of the questions and also reminded of the use of "Wh" questions so they can have more ideas to make their questions. Stress as well as intonation will be addressed too.
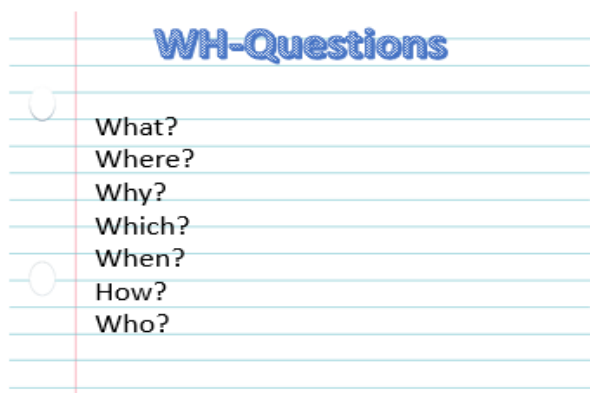
Note. See reference images on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 66.

Then, the students will make use of this strategy by working in groups of two people in their own Zoom break up room and using the webpage (https://letsdraw.it/). The activity goes like this: each of them will have one minute to make a drawing to represent a symptom / reason why some people do not like to eat certain kind of food (based on the excuse images studied before).

They will take turns to try to guess the problem his / her classmate is referring to. Once they have guessed each other's drawing, they will select one to create in pairs three follow up questions (one using "used to") to show interest concerning that represented situation. The teacher will go to the different rooms to see what they are doing and then she will call ten pairs randomly to present what they did.

Example:

First: One minute to make a drawing related to the pictures. Let's suppose that a student draws a weight machine to represent the studied image (be on a diet/ try to lose weight). The other students guess it and then the student who first draw will have to guess his classmate's drawing too.

After that they will create a short conversation with three follow up questions:

Conversation:

Maria: I am on a diet, I want to lose weight

Luis: Are you going to a wedding?

Luis: Do you want to go to the beach?

Luis: Didn't you use to have the same weight before?

Quick check: The teacher will do a quick review to verify the understanding of strategies so far so the students can always remember that the strategies are the most important tools they have. Questions such as:

What are the strategies we have covered so far? How can we use them? Do you see the difference between them?

Time: 35 minutes

The third strategy is: Stalling or time gaining. The teacher will tell the students what this is about and wait to see if the students can think of possible ways to represent it. subsequently, she will present an example:

Example:

A: What do you think is the main reason for learning English nowadays?

B: Well, ...

B: Let me think about that, ...

B: That's an interesting question!...

Reminder:

Another possibility that can be used in this exercise to gain time is to remember the "Confirmation strategy" employed in workshop #1 where the students could make a question similar to the one, they heard to confirm what was said.

For example:

B: "The purposes to study English today?"

The teacher will ask if the students remember the name for this particular option ("Confirmation strategy" used in the previous workshop) and will explain that this possibility can be used in the two scenarios both to confirm or to gain time. The idea is to make students aware that they might be using strategies they learned in this or future workshops.

In order to work on the usage of this last strategy, the students will read a text called "How can it be?" Later each of them needs to create a "Wh" question regarding the text content, the

teacher will call pairs randomly using a random picker name webpage, so one of them can be put on the spot to use the strategy to give his / her answer.

Note. See reference reading on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 68.

Example questions:

- Based on the reading, do you agree with that saying that says "you are what you eat"? why? Why not?

- What can we do to persuade an American that he/she should stop to eat when s/he is really full and not when the plate is empty or when the TV show is over?

- How would a French person react if we invite him /her to eat junk food for a complete day?

- Due to the fact that the obesity rate among French children has reached 17%, what can French parents do to guide their children into "good eating French habits"?

III. Evaluation

Time: 20 minutes

The learners will have some minutes at the end of the workshop to assess the strategies, this time this will be done in an anonymous way using (https://b.socrative.com/teacher/#launch), they will insert their short answers and we will all see what their thoughts are. Questions such us:

What did you learn about strategies for conversations? Did these strategies help you? If so, how? When can you use them? What are some ways in which we can express these strategies?

Since this is a metacognitive activity, the students can answer in Spanish.

VI. Expansion activity

Time: 30 minutes

Debate: In groups of three people the learners need to make a conversation where there are two chefs and two types of dishes and one person who does not know which one to eat. At the end the person decides which dish is the best for him /her and why.

The conversation needs to comply with the following criteria:

- Include the three strategies

- Use the vocabulary seen in the lesson

- Create sentences using the "Used to/use to" grammar topic

- Have a good pronunciation

V. Assessment

Time: 15 minutes

The teacher assesses the students' use of strategy with a rubric.

Workshop III

Lesson title: *Likes and dislikes*

Group: Course III

Level: A2

Materials needed: PowerPoint presentation (Teacher), computers, students' book and internet connection.

Research is a field that requires reflection and the making of decisions all the time in order to enhance the techniques or strategies one is intending to evaluate. After the analysis of the findings obtained from workshop #2 the investigator considered pertinent to focus the learners' attention more to aspects like pronunciation of words and structure and analysis of sentences through the inclusion of more elaborated activities where the students can be encouraged to employ the addressed strategies without discarding what has worked during the process: group work and practical exercises.

Final goal for the lesson: By the end of Workshop 3, the students will be able to talk about their interlocutor's personality (preferences).

Conversation strategies to be taught	A2 Language descriptors from frameworks
All purpose-word: This strategy is about including useful or neutral vocabulary to compensate for the exact word. Example: Synonyms of the word "something": Stuff Thing Compensation using verbs: • Do *Do* my hair = blow my hair *Do* my nails =Paint my nails Compensation of the word "etc.": and so on and so on and so forth and the like and everything and whatnot and on and on And blah blah blah And yada yada yada Example: Michelle is always talking about how much she envies Katy, because Katy has the perfect life with her rich and handsome husband, her big house *and everything.*	*Novice-level speakers can communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. They do so primarily through the use of isolated words and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and recalled.* (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012)

Shadowing: It is the exact repetition of the interlocutor's sentence to show the listener's understanding of important issues. Example: Travel agent: …and it arrives at Los Angeles at 10 o'clock Customer: *Los Angeles at 10:00*. I'd like to join the tour Disneyland at 10:30. It can be used to show: - you are listening and *give* your opinion (*agreement* or *disagreement*) -To bring new questions to the conversation -To make decisions	*Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.* (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 83)
Asking for repetition: It is used when the participant did not hear or understand what the partner has said. Example: Formal: I'm sorry? Excuse me? Pardon me? Informal: What was that? Come again? Say what?	*"Novice High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information."* (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012).

Linguistic objective: Know when to use "gerunds and infinitives" and "gerunds as objects of prepositions".

Language skills to address: Speaking and listening.

<u>Lesson description</u>

I. Preparation

Time: 20 minutes

The learners will start this new workshop through a review of the strategies learned during workshops #1 and #2 by participating in an activity. The dynamic goes like this: they will read the sentences they see on a word document and will try to associate them with the six strategies studied before by using a specific color.

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An example below:

II. Presentation and Practice

Time: 35 minutes

The teacher will explain the first strategy of this lesson "Use of all-purpose words" and will ask the students if they know a word that can be used to refer to "something" in English without saying the "exact" word for that. Afterwards, the teacher will guide the attention to an image of a part of a dialog about the colors two people prefer to paint their living room. The teacher will orient the students so they can notice the word (stuff) to ask about what *it* is referring to and the possible word or words it is replacing or covering.

Note. See reference conversation on Top Notch 2 (3ʳᵈ edition), page 75.

The teacher will analyze the ideas given by their students and will complement so they can have a better understanding. For the case of the synonyms of the word "etc." the teacher will explain the distinction between the formal and informal expression.

Example: Stuff

Words that *it* can be replacing or covering: *table, chair, sofa, desk, mirror, bed.*

She will also illustrate how this can be done with verbs:

• Do

Do my hair = *blow* my hair

Do my nails =*Paint* my nails

After that, she will encourage the learners to discover another expression that people use to replace words or ideas. This time the teacher will talk about what she will do on October 31st and they have to concentrate to get the all-purpose word strategy:

Example:

I am excited to wear my costume on October 31st, I know we are on quarantine, but I plan to go out following the indications given by the ministry of health. I always wear a different costume every year. I have been Shakira, an angel, a witch, Rose from Titanic, wonder woman, a kitty, a nurse, a teacher *and on and on*.

The teacher will ask them if they could give ideas to express the same. She will complement with the expressions below:

Synonyms of the word "etc.":

and so on

and so on and so forth

and the like

And everything

and on and on

and whatnot

And blah blah blah

And yada yada yada

More examples:

I wanted to keep talking with my old friend, but I had to go to the mall to buy the decoration, the soda, the cake, popcorn *and whatnot*.

Once the students have understood how to make statements, they are going to do a practical exercise in pairs where they will select a color for a specific room and explain the reason for their choice. This reason should include the "all-purpose word" strategy in one of its forms.

Note. See exercise on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 75

Example:

A bedroom for a teenaged girl   color: pink

I selected the color pink because for a long time this has been the most associated color to girls, and a way to show that something is feminine. When they are born almost all the *stuff* their moms buy has this color, so I will put pink on the walls, blankets, ceiling, chair *and the like.*

The teacher will listen to ten pairs read and will pay special attention to sentences' structures and pronunciation. If she finds a specific sound that needs to be addressed, she will do it so they can continue learning and improving.

After the exercise is completed, the teacher will do a mini review by asking the students to work in pairs so they can socialize their feelings and opinions respecting the addressed strategy. They will do it via WhatsApp. First, they will share their individual thoughts and then they will send me a final message where they condense their feelings. Items like the ones below might be taken as a guide.

1. Use of the strategy

2. Way it was used by you (right, wrong, why?)

3. Recommendations for the next time

Time:30 minutes

The teacher is going to continue the lesson by teaching the students the use of the "Gerunds and infinitives" (Teacher's ppt). Once the learners know how to create sentences using this grammar topic, the teacher will introduce the second strategy, which is "Shadowing" but before will elicit if the students have ideas about what this is. After checking the students' background knowledge, she will explain the strategy clearly.

She will have short conversation analysis session so the students can notice that apart of using the "Shadowing" strategy to show one is listening, this could be used:

• To show you are listening and *give* your opinion (*agreement* or *disagreement*)

• To bring new questions to the conversation

• To make decisions

Note. (Khazan, 2020)

<div align="center">Example:</div>

• A: What do you like to do in your free time?

• B: Well, I love singing. I think it's relaxing

• A: *You think singing is relaxing.* Well, I find singing a little difficult. In my case, I enjoy playing the guitar.

The students will be asked about the way in which the strategy was employed. In this case it was "to show someone is listening and give an opinion to disagree". The teacher will also elicit the other strategy that could be observed in the conversation too, this is "stalling" (from ws2).

Quick check: The teacher will do a quick review to verify the understanding of strategies so far so the students can always remember that the strategies are the most important tools they have. Questions such as:

What are the strategies we have covered so far? How can we use them?

Then, the students will put into practice the second strategy in pairs by making a very short conversation based on the one you could see on the book, they will be challenge to replace the ideas from the middle part using different gerunds or infinitives to ask about someone's preferences in general and to include one of the usages of the "shadowing" strategy.

Note. See conversation on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 77.

After the students' exercises are checked. The teacher will address the pronunciation of those words that can be enhanced and will explain where the accent of words should be or explain a particular sound if needed.

Then, the students will take a quiz to see how much they learned about the aforementioned strategy. The first student to finish successfully will have a virtual medal.

Time: 30 minutes

The teacher will explain the topic "Gerunds as objects of prepositions" using a PowerPoint presentation. Once the learners have had enough practice of this, she will set the stage to present the last strategy, this is "Asking for repetition". First, she will explain what this is about and ask the students how they think this is put into practice, in other words, ideas they believe can be said when they need somebody to repeat.

Then, the teacher will play an audio recording where the students will listen to a dialog that includes some examples of how people use this strategy. After the students listen carefully the teacher will ask for those phrases that were used to ask for repetition.

Transcript:

A: Hey, are you okay? What's wrong?

B: you know, I feel blue

A: *I'm sorry?*

B: I am tired of waking up early, working so much and getting home late.

A: I'm sorry to hear that.

B: How about talking with your boss?

The teacher will analyze the students' answers and will also ask if they could recognize any other of the studied strategies and the examples of gerunds as objects mentioned there. The strategy "Provide active response" can be seen here.

Later, the teacher will ask the students if they know how a person can use this strategy when talking with friends, grandparents, school principal or president.

Formal:

I'm sorry?

Excuse me?

Pardon me?

I didn't understand that

Could/Can you say that again please?

Would you mind repeating?

Informal:

What was that?

Come again?

Say what?

Huh?

What?

The students will concentrate on intonation of the phrases a lot as well as the register and will practice the last strategy of the lesson by working in pairs and making a short conversation where they include the gerunds as objects of prepositions based on certain images. Some of them will make formal conversations and others informal.

Example of an informal conversation:

Lucy: Karen, you look a little upset

Karen: Yes, I have to get up at 4:30 am to take the bus. I am tired of taking public transportation. This has been a busy week.

Lucy: *What did you say?*

Karen: My boss is giving me too much work, I am doing a lot of homework from university, helping my parents in the business and reading 5 law books. I need a break!

Example of formal conversation:

Employer: Good morning miss. Is your name Margarita?

Candidate: Yes, it is. Nice to meet you.

Employer: Pleasure it's mine. Have you been part of the selecting process before?

Candidate: *Would you mind repeating?*

Employer: you look familiar, I think I have seen you before, had you ever visited the company?

Candidate: No, sir. This is my first time.

Employer: Please tell me, what do you dream about in regards to your workplace?

Candidate: I dream about working in a respectful environment, where we all have the chance to speak and communicate our ideas without being afraid of doing it.

Employer: You have found the right place!

The teacher will listen carefully to the groups and devote special attention to pronunciation, sentence order and word choice to give suggestions.

III. Evaluation

Time: 20 minutes

First, the learners will have some minutes at the end of the workshop to assess the strategies in class, bearing in mind the following questions:

What did you learn about strategies for conversations? When can you use them? What are some ways in which we can express these strategies? Did these strategies help you? If so, how?

Second, they will be sent a questionnaire to their emails where they will assess all the strategies they have covered so far, in other words, nine to have another point of view.

IV. Expansion activities

Time: 30 minutes

Video: In groups of three the students will make a creative conversation where they talk about their interlocutor's personality (preferences)". The conversation needs to comply with the following criteria:

-Use the strategies.

-Use of "gerunds and infinitives" as well as "Gerunds as objects of prepositions".

-Have a good pronunciation.

V. Assessment

Time: 15 minutes

The teacher assesses the students' use of strategies with a rubric.

Appendix 8. Workshop 4

Workshop IV

Lesson title: *The Arts*

Group: Course III

Level: A2

Materials needed: PowerPoint presentation (Teacher), computers, students' book and internet connection.

A continuous reflection is essential to make improvements as the project progresses, this is the main characteristic of Action Research, the approach that guides this work. Based on the analysis of the results gather from workshop 3 the investigator will not only proceed with the same structure of the workshop which has been based on learning through examples, stimulate learners to discover how to use the strategies and share their ideas, promoting awareness and reuse of previous strategies, but also will guide students to focus on activities where they have to be more aware of the stress on words.

Final goal for the lesson: By the end of Workshop 4, the learners will be able to talk about their favorite art expression.

Conversation strategies to be taught	A2 Language descriptors from frameworks
Interpretive summary: It is the extended paraphrase of the interlocutor's message to check that the speaker has understood correctly. Example: So, the pipe is broken, basically, and you don't know what to do with it, right? More ideas: In a nutshell Basically	*"Create simple spoken communication in routine, non-demanding contexts of language use within the four competency areas"* (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 1)

In other words
To summarize
All in all
In conclusion
What you have discussed in

Self-repair: It is a way of remedying mistakes in conversation	*Can describe everyday aspects of his/her environment,* (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70)
Repair on communication:	
Wait, sorry	
I mean	*He/she can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time* (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85)
My bad	
What I mean to say is	
What I am saying is	
What I am trying to say is	
What I want to say	
Let me say it another way	
Let me put it in another way	
Let me rephrase that	
Maybe I am not making myself clear	
Metacognitive strategy:	
Evaluation: It is checking comprehension after completion of a receptive language activity, or evaluating language production after it has taken place	*Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something* (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70)
Example:	
Formal:	
Did I make myself clear?	
Am I being clear? Is this clear?	
Am I clear?	
Informal:	
Do you follow me? Are you following me?	
Does that make sense?	
Are we on the same page?	
Do you get it? Get it? Got it?	

Linguistic objective: Know when to use the Passive voice.

Language skills to address: Speaking, listening and writing.

<u>Lesson description</u>

I. Preparation

Time: 20 minutes

The students will use the webpage (https://kahoot.com/schools-u/) to participate in a review of the strategies they have studied so far (nine), through the online activity they will find examples that represent the different strategies and their job is to select the best according to a particular situation. There will be a podium at the end of the exercise where the student who has completed the biggest number of correct answers will appear.

The teacher will dedicate time to analyze the wrong answers and to provide clarification in case it is needed.

II. Presentation and Practice

Time: 30 minutes

The students will begin the lesson by sharing their thoughts concerning the images they see on the slide. They will talk about the form of arts they prefer-most, the reasons for that, the frequency in which they go to enjoy them, the ones they dislike, and some other types of arts expressions they have tried before.

After that, the teacher will provide an explanation so the students can know what the first strategy of this workshop (Interpretive summary) is about and will ask how they think this is done in conversations. After checking the students' background knowledge, she will explain the strategy in detail.

The teacher will use a dialog so the students can identify how the people use that strategy:

Note. (Los Abalorios, s.f.)

Cristina: Which form of art do you enjoy?

Lucia: I think jewelry is the one I enjoy buying and wearing most of the time, I have bought a variety of them so I always, literally always have something to wear for the first time.

Cristina: *So, I guess you always look elegant because you have jewelry that goes with all your clothing styles, right?*

The students will analyze the following chart and will reflect on when to use those other alternatives of summarizing expressions, in other words, the possible contexts or degrees of formality. They will share their ideas with the class and the teacher will be there to clarify.

In a nutshell	To summarize	All in all	What you have discussed in
Basically	ok, in other words	In conclusion	

Then, they will do the first practical exercise of the workshop. This consists of a pair activity where they will be interacting via WhatsApp through audio recordings and written text. Each of them will give an answer of no less than three sentences to the question "Which form of art

expression do you enjoy the most and why?" in a written way, the classmate who receives it is going to study that to think of a way to rephrase it in order to verify how much s/he understood. Then, each of them will send a voice note with their understanding (strategy included) and finally they will evaluate each other to see how well they did that. The teacher will call 12 pairs so one student will represent one of the answers to the question about favorite art expression and the other will show the comment using the strategy to recap what was said.

At the end each pair will send the written texts as well as the audio recordings (with the strategies) to the teacher for a third revision and feedback.

While the students are presenting their conversations, the teacher will be taking notes to provide feedback regarding what needs to be improved in terms of the strategies and also stress on words and connection between verbs. She will write down the words she listens the students struggle with and will guide them to learn about word stress by using a PowerPoint presentation.

To make this lesson more meaningful the students will be working with the words from the past three workshops, in other words, vocabulary regarding Car accidents, Food and Personality. The first thing the teacher will do is to write the word Photography and ask the students for the pronunciation of this, then they will go to the webpage (https://www.spanishdict.com/) and write the word photography. She will show them that when we have a word that has two, three or more syllables, there is always a strong syllable while the rest are weak and will show the students the video on the webpage so the students can see where the stress is. After that they will continue guessing the stress of words, they have been using during the first three workshops.

Then, the teacher will show them another webpage so they can see how the stress is there, it is done by the use of "ˈ" before the syllable that is strong and will practice by inserting other common words from the past workshops
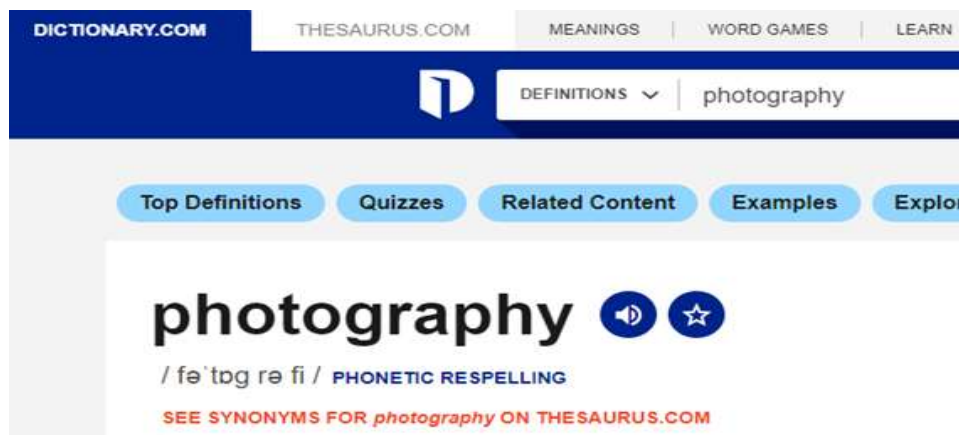
Note. (Dictionary, 2021)

To practice more, the students will go to the webpage (https://www.notebookcast.com/) where they will participate in pairs. The teacher will play the sound of a word, the two students have to represent where the strong syllable is through a drawing while the rest of the learners analyze if the drawings are correct or incorrect, then another pair tries representing another word.

Example give below of the words tasty and emergency (TASty) (eMERgency)
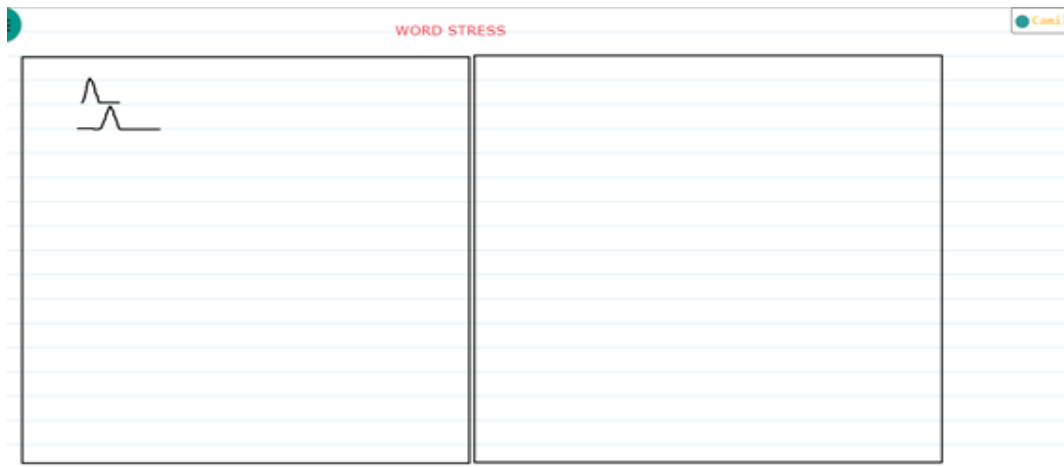
Finally, the students will make three groups to play "guessing word stress" through a Jeopardy game, where they will take turns to say a number, being 100 the easiest and 500 the most difficult and say the pronunciation of a word. The group who guesses more is the winner.

Note. (Play Factile, s.f.)

Mini review

The students will tell the class what they know now about word stress and then they will express their beliefs about the first strategy.

The students will use the Class WhatsApp group to send through emojis their opinions about the first studied strategy (Interpretive summary). They will answer these questions one by one.

Did you use the strategy? Everybody answers

Was it easy to use? Everybody answers

Did you use it well? Everybody answers

Did it help you? Everybody answers

After that, the teacher will introduce the second strategy (Self repair) and will question the students about what they do when they are in a conversation and they realize they are confused in regards to a term they said or a word they mispronounce.

Later, the teacher will guide students' attention to an image of a part of a dialog extracted from a conversation they will read. The teacher will stimulate the students so they can notice what one of the characters said to correct himself in each conversation and would ask about other alternatives they can think of to do so.

<div align="center">Example of a casual conversation</div>

A: So, are you ready to start visiting famous museums?

B: I can't wait to do it

A: Be sure not to miss the Louvre while you are in Mexico. *Sorry, I mean*, when you are in Paris!!

B: Actually, that's the first place I plan to see!

<div align="center">Example of a more formal conversation</div>

A: Don´t forget to bring a file with your qualities, *sorry, what I meant to say was* qualification, in order words, a resumé with all the evidence of your academic formation as a music teacher and your certificates of the places where you have worked.

B: Yes, sir. I am going to do it.

A: Have a good day.

B: You too. Goodbye.

Now, that the learners have seen examples of the strategy in use, they will categorize more expressions into formal and informal ways, making a distinction of how they are used depending on the contexts.

Wait, sorry!   What I mean to say is   My bad   Let me say it another way   I mean

What I am saying is   What I am trying to say is   Maybe I am not making myself clear

What I want to say   Let me put it in another way   Let me rephrase that
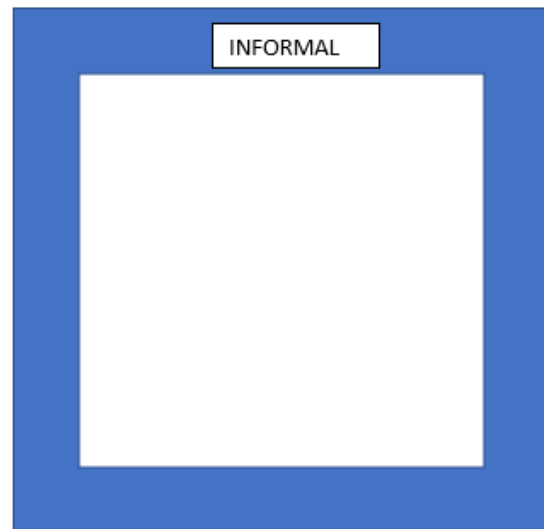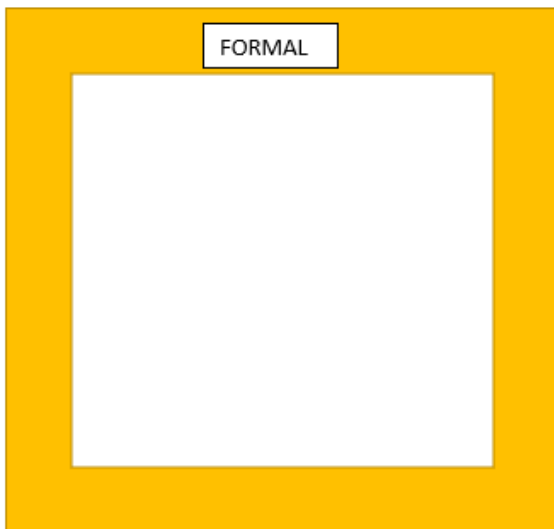
FORMAL

INFORMAL

The students will put into practice the second strategy by creating a short conversation where they include information they see on the images from the book as well as the "Self-repair" strategy. The above examples given by the teacher can be taken as a guidance. However, they are expected to add their own style.

Note. See reference images on Top Notch 2(3rd edition), page 89.

Quick review: The students will be asked about the two strategies they have learned so far and if they can see the difference between them.

The teacher is going to continue the lesson by teaching the students the use of the Passive voice (Teacher's ppt). She will give all the example sentences based on the art expressions topic. The students will also learn about the most common materials used nowadays so they can formulate more detailed statements when describing objects.
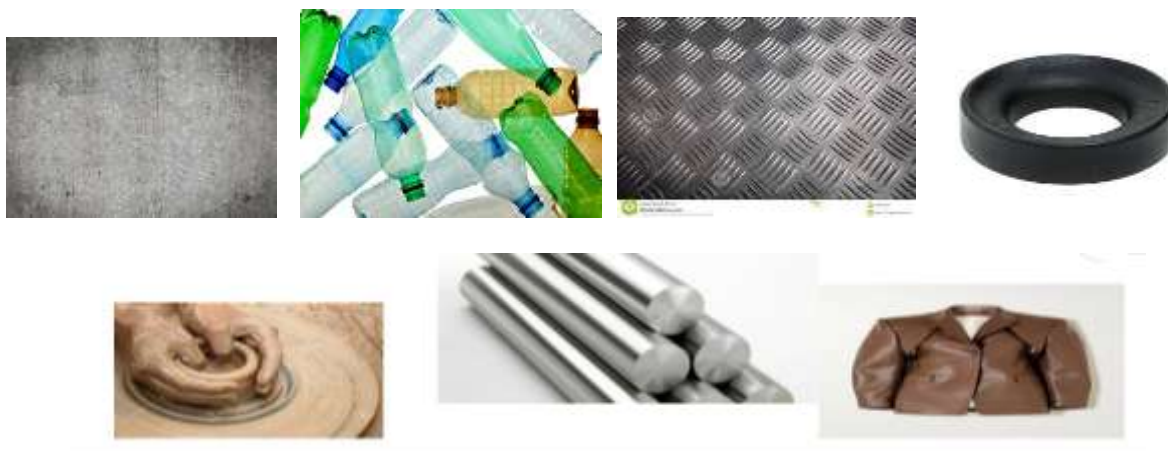
Once the learners know how to create sentences using this grammar topic, the teacher will introduce the last strategy, which is "Evaluation" but before will elicit if the students have ideas about what this is. After checking the students' background knowledge, she will explain the strategy clearly.

A: What is the most attractive figure for you?

B: You know, I really like this chair. It was invented in a Colombian small-town with cheap and recyclable material we all have at home. *Do I make myself clear?* This is made of cloths. We can use the ones we don´t like or use anymore.

I find it very cool because it is something we can do with our siblings and personalize it.

A: You are right, and it looks very comfortable!

Then, the learners will be challenged to listen to pieces of audio recording where people say other expressions to confirm the understanding of what has been said. There will be a mini competition among students vs. teacher to see how much they can recognize. Questions like: Am I being clear? Is this clear? Do you follow me? Are you following me? Does that make sense? Are we on the same page? Do you get it? Get it? Got it?

Later, the students will learn about the different grades of formality and the right intonation.

III. Evaluation

Time: 20 minutes

The students will do the evaluation of the strategies learned during that day through a short survey where they will find some multiple-choice questions and one open ended to give a written perception.

IV. Expansion activities

Time: 30 minutes

Video: In groups of three the students, they will make a creative conversation where they share their ideas regarding their favorite art expression (one they have seen at a museum, on TV, in a visit to a city or country, etc.),". The conversation needs to comply with the following criteria:

-Use the strategies

-Include the vocabulary from the lesson

-Use of "passive voice"- (present, past, questions)

-Have a good pronunciation

V. Assessment

Time: 15 minutes

The teacher assesses the students' use of strategies with a rubric.

Appendix 9. Workshop 5

Workshop V

Lesson title: *Technology and you*

Group: Course III

Level: A2

Materials needed: PowerPoint presentation (Teacher), computers, students' book and internet connection.

During workshop number 5 the idea is to proceed with what has been useful so far, in other words, minimizing the bridge between knowledge and know-how, stimulating students to discover, continuous reminder of the elements we are exploring (the strategies) and group work as well as individual work to strengthen the learning process. On the other hand, activities related to word stress will have a space in the next workshop to continue reinforcing that part.

Final goal for the lesson: By the end of Workshop 5, the learners will be able to talk about a technological device they are trying to buy and its characteristics.

Conversation strategies	A2 Language descriptors from frameworks
Approximation: Using a single alternative lexical item, such as a superordinate or a related term, which shares semantic features with the target word or structure. Example: plate instead of "bowl" Another possibility: it becomes water= melt	"Communicate information about common everyday activities, experiences, wants and needs" (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 156). Elicits or provides details as needed. (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 155)
Show agreement: It is when one speaker share the interlocutor's ideas Examples: Formal:	Can express how he/she feels in simple terms, and express thanks. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85)

I couldn't agree more
That's absolutely true
Absolutely
I take your point
I have come to the same conclusion
You're (completely / totally / absolutely)
right.

Informal:
You can say that again!
I'm with you there
You beat me to it
That's for sure
That's exactly how I feel

Response reject: Rejecting what the interlocutor has said or suggested
Formal ways:
I see your point, but…
That's a valid point, but...
I see what you´re saying, but...
I respect your point but from my perspective (or but in my opinion) …
I'm not sure I agree with you on…
I'm afraid I disagree.
I take your point but that isn't the way I see it; instead, I think that…

"Expresses feelings, needs, preferences, satisfaction and dissatisfaction" (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 156).

"Novice High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor." (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012)

Informal ways:
No way!
You must be joking!
You can't be serious!
I don't think so.
Impossible

Linguistic objective: Know when to use the "Infinitive of purpose" and "As…as".

Language skills to address: Speaking and listening.

<u>Lesson description</u>

Time: 20 minutes

The students will take a look at some images (memes) and will try to find out which strategy they are representing in English and also communicate the reasons why they believe that.

(Stalling or time gaining)

(Asking for repetition) Opt 1

(Confirmation request) Opt 2

(Clarification request) Opt 3

(All-purpose word)

(Provide active response)

I.   Presentation and practice:

Time: 30 minutes

The students will begin the class by sharing the names of the technological devices they have in their houses, the amount of time they have had them and how much the learners use them.

Examples expected:

- Monitor

- Headphones

- Printer

- Smart phone

- TV

- Camera

- Tablet

- Stereo

The teacher will continue the class by explaining the first grammar topic of the workshop, that is "Infinitive of purpose" first taking the students to a virtual board where they will brainstorm the different "Gerunds and Infinitives" they can recall from previous workshops and second through the use of a PowerPoint presentation. This grammar topic will work as a vehicle to implement the first strategy of this lesson, this is "Approximation".

So, the teacher will provide an explanation of the strategy and will show a video to the students. The video is about someone who's watching TV, but suddenly the image becomes blurry. The students will try to describe what is going on to measure how closer they get to the expected term *Blurry* (Silva, 2016).

After that, the teacher will show an example of how this would look in a conversation:

Unknown word: Blurry

Pedro: Can you give me a hand? I don't know what is going on with this TV. I was watching this program and *the image started to move. I have pressed all the buttons <u>to see</u> what happens but the image doesn't change. It has a bad quality*.

Marcela: It is blurry! Why don´t you move the antenna?

The teacher will elicit the expected term as well as the approximation sentences (3). Besides, the students should find the infinitive of purpose example.

The students will compare the sentences they said after they watched the video with the ones from the short conversation to see what they had in common to get to the goal "blurry". This is to make them more aware.

When the students have had a clear comprehension of what this strategy is about, they will proceed with a practical exercise where they will create mini conversations in pairs, where they describe a problem, show a solution and include the "infinitive of purpose" grammar topic taking into account the following situations:
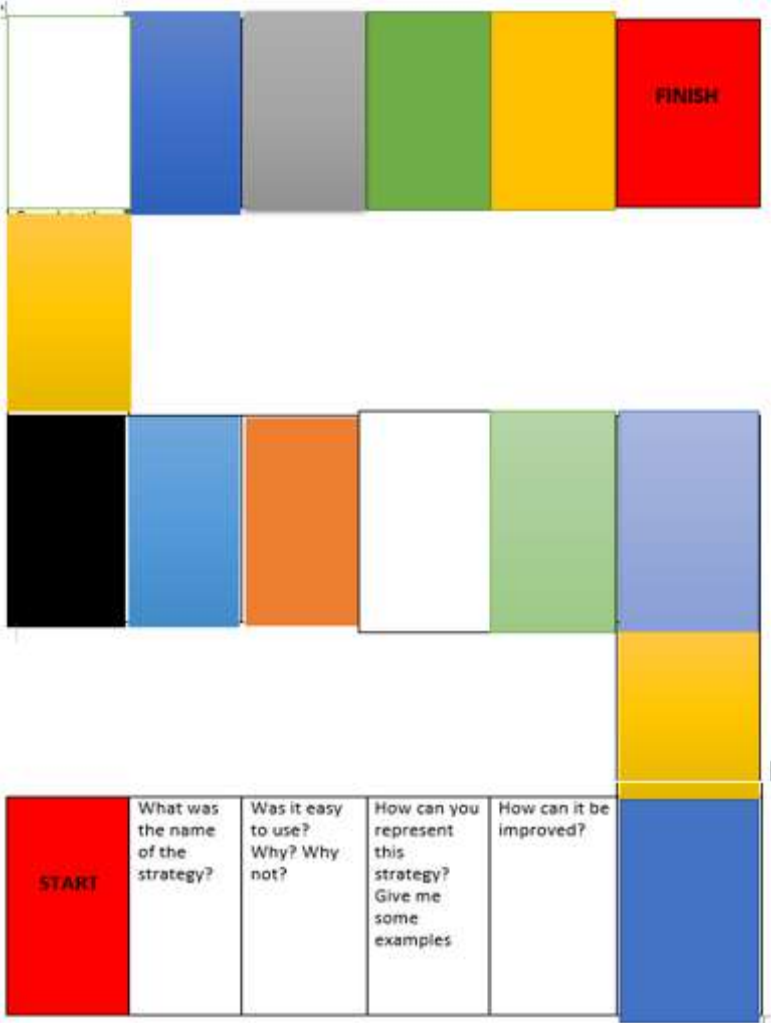
Broken

Frozen

Overheated

Pixelated

Intermittent

Mini review: The students will go to the webpage

(https://app.classroomscreen.com/wv1/4ae12942-9dbc-46c4-a3c7-82967e478f08) where they

will be doing a review of the first strategy by playing with a dice and a board in form of snake

with all the questions covered, there are three opened now so you can see how the exercise is. At the beginning they will participate voluntarily, I will throw the dice and they will move through the board according to the number they get, after a few volunteers I will call some people randomly.

| START | What was the name of the strategy? | Was it easy to use? Why? Why not? | How can you represent this strategy? Give me some examples | How can it be improved? | |

Time: 30 minutes

The students will now learn about how to use "As... As" to make comparisons, the teacher will use technological devices to give examples and also a PowerPoint presentation. During this grammar topic the students will learn adjectives to compare the devices' functions.

Later on, the students will also practice word stress of adjectives on the webpage (https://www.socrative.com/) where they will find a multiple-choice question to decide which syllable of the addressed adjective is the strongest bearing in mind that they are key points of the aforementioned grammar and they need to be ready use this well as a support of the second strategy.
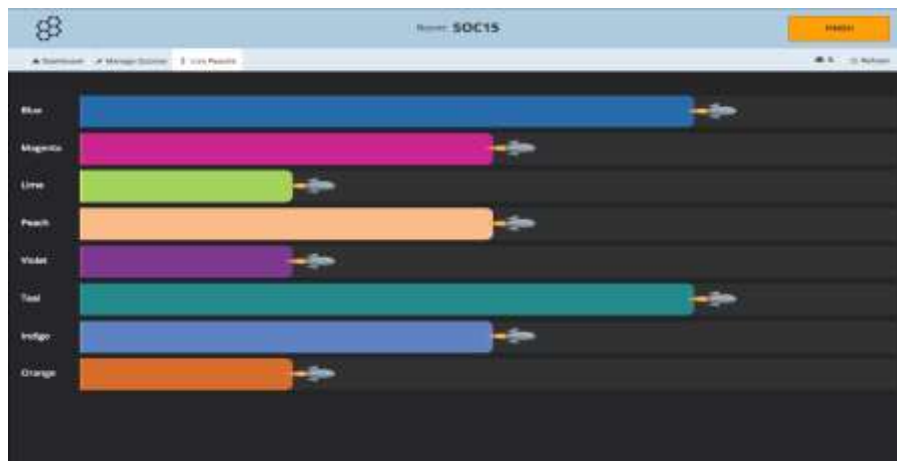
Afterwards, the students will take a look at the next conversation to understand it and to discover the second strategy "Show agreement". Likewise, the teacher will elicit another strategy the students could see there, this is "Follow up question". Then, the teacher will give a more detailed explanation and will explore along with the learners other possibilities to put this into practice

Note. (Epstein, 2021)

A: I'm thinking about going to the mall this weekend

B: Really? What are you buying?

A: A new keyboard, probably an Asus. It seems to be a good one and it is not expensive.

B: *I'm with you on that*. I have heard the Asus is as affordable as the Acer.

Once the students understand the objective of this strategy, the teacher will show them two formal examples as well as informal and will give them 5 minutes to surf the net to find more ideas. After the due time, the students and teacher are going to analyze and classify the information.

Examples:

Formal:

I couldn't agree more

That's absolutely true

Informal:

You can say that again!

You beat me to it

To take plan to action, the students will listen to a conversation between two people. They should listen to that carefully so they will tell the class about the products the two people are discussing as well as their characteristics. This will serve as a model for the practical exercise

they will do in pairs, that is based on the two images of magazines, the students will create a similar conversation.

Note. See reference images on Top Notch 2, page 103.

Time:30 minutes

The teacher will explain the third strategy of this lesson "Response reject" and will ask the students how they would disagree with someone in English. Afterwards, the teacher will guide students' attention to an image of a part of a dialog extracted from a conversation they will listen and read. The teacher will orient the students so they can notice the way the characters are doing it and would ask about what they would do if they were in the middle of that conversation and did not share their interlocutor´ ideas. After they do that, she will also ask if they saw another word that represents other strategy ("Actually"-stalling or time gaining strategy),

<p align="center">Conversation</p>

Luisa: I am thinking about getting a new printer on a Facebook page.

Pamela: Actually, you should not buy that there because it is not an official place with pse and all that.

Luisa: *I take your point but that isn't the way I see it; instead, I think that* people need to work no matter if they don´t have an official way they will find the way to deliver the product

Once the learners have practiced individually sharing ideas with the class, they will do it in pairs by working via WhatsApp. Every group will have a mini discussion where one person states the advantages, and the other disadvantages of buying online and buying in physical stores using the third strategy

The teacher will analyze the ideas given by the students and will provide feedback; in case they require more ideas, she will complement with the examples below:

Formal ways:

I see your point, but…

That's a valid point, but...

I see what you´re saying, but...

I respect your point but from my perspective (or but in my opinion) …

I'm not sure I agree with you on…

I'm afraid I disagree.

I don't think you and I have the same opinion on this issue.

I take your point but that isn't the way I see it; instead, I think that…

Informal ways:

No way!

You must be joking!

You can't be serious!

I don't think so.

Impossible

Quick review

The students will share their opinion in regards to the two strategies studied by participating

in a "quiz" on the webpage (https://www.mentimeter.com/) where they will select between

possibilities.

III. Evaluation

Time: 20 minutes

The students will evaluate the three strategies implemented on this lesson in class to know their beliefs concerning the usefulness of them.

IV. Expansion activities

Time: 30 minutes

Video: In groups of three the students will make a creative conversation where they describe a technological device and the characteristic it has. The conversation needs to comply with the following criteria:

-Use the strategies

-Include the vocabulary seen in the lesson

-Use of Infinitive of purpose and As...as

-Have a good pronunciation

V. Assessment

Time: 15 minutes

The teacher assesses the students' use of strategy with a rubric.

Appendix 10. Workshop 6

Workshop VI

Lesson title: *Ethics and values*

Group: Course III

Level: A2

Materials needed: PowerPoint presentation (Teacher), computers, students' book and internet connection.

During this workshop the students will find an activity where they can reflect and get a better understanding of the strategy "Approximation" from workshop number 5 which some of them left out during the expansion section. Likewise, the implementation of the Strategy-Based instruction workshop will remain in the way it has had an impact so far, that is to say, making an emphasis on interaction, awareness and practicality.

Final goal for the lesson: By the end of Workshop 6, the students are going to express how to deal with ethical dilemmas when finding a product on a public place

Conversation strategies	A2 Language descriptors from frameworks
Over-explicitness (waffling): using more words to achieve a particular communicative goal than what is considered normal in similar L1 situations. Examples: Simply put In other words That is to say Put it differently In simply terms That is	A2- Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 83)

Topic-shift: It is when people want to change the subject, either because they don´t want to talk about certain topics any longer or because they want to introduce a new topic.
For example:
Oh, by the way…
That reminds me of…
Speaking of (which)…
Oh, before I forget…
Oh, I wanted to tell you…
Not to change the subject, but… (and then go ahead and change the subject)

Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 70)
- Use a range of small talk phrases and expressions." (CCLB: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012, p. 155).
Can participate in short conversation in routine contexts on topics of interest. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 85)

Interrupting: It is used to ask a question or clarify something, join or end a conversation or to express your opinion on the topic
Examples:
I hate to interrupt but I wanted to let you know…
I don't mean to be rude, but…
Sorry to break into
Excuse me, did I hear you say…?
May I add something quickly?

"They are able to manage successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations." (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012).

Linguistic objective: Know when to use "The Past unreal"

Language skills to address: Speaking and listening

<u>Lesson description</u>

Time: 20 minutes

The students will take part in an activity where they will find mini example situations in order to elicit the fifteen strategies they have analyzed and learned so far. One situation will pop up randomly and they have to show a verbal reaction (strategy in use) to overcome that moment.

After that, the students will remember the topics from the past workshop and will work in three big groups on a shared board. Each group will have a representative. They are going to write descriptions according to the image they see. They need to write three sentences and the representative who does it first will accumulate points for the group to get a position in the podium at the end. Help from other participants of the same groups is okay.

Frozen

Overheated   intermittent

II. Presentation and Practice

Time: 30 minutes

The students will begin the class by guessing the unscramble words below, they are values. After that, they will share how important they are in society nowadays and why.

Example:

ipssomacno = compassion

For them: Respect, honesty, humility, logic, cooperation, trust, self-control and fairness.

Then, the teacher will explain the first strategy of the lesson which is "Overexplicitness" and will ask the students if they know about words or phrases that they use when they want to "re explain" or "being clearer" regarding what they are trying to communicate.

Later, the students will read a text to discover an example of this strategy (the sentence: "in other words")

Note. See reference reading on Top Notch 2 (1ˢᵗ edition), page 118 and insert the strategy "in other words" in the first paragraph, after the word "center".

After the students really understand this reading, they will come up with more ideas to represent the strategy and the teacher will complement with the followings in case they don't mention them:

Examples:

Simply put

In other words

That is to say

Put it differently

In simply terms

That is

Later, the students will remember one of their experiences, their relatives or friends' concerning lost objects and considering also if they found them or not to create a short conversation where they include the "overexplicitness strategy" to make themselves clearer as well as the "approximation" one to describe that object.
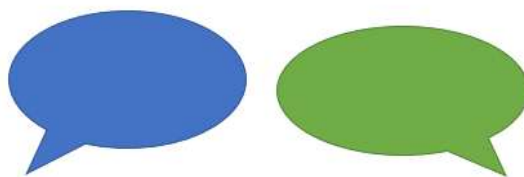
After the revision of this exercise, the students will take some minutes to discuss together via WhatsApp about the strategies they studied. They will talk about the easiness, applicability, and suggestions for the next time to employ it better.

Time: 30 minutes

The students will be learning about the grammar topic "Present unreal" through a PowerPoint presentation made by the teacher. After they know how to express their ideas using this topic, the teacher will announce what the "Topic shift strategy" is about and will motivate the learners to express possible ideas to do so. Then, the students will listen to a short conversation to see how people employ this strategy on daily conversations.

Note. See reference conversation on Top Notch 2 (3rd edition), page 111 (photo story) and insert the following paragraph, after the question "How would you feel if someone broke it and didn´t tell you?".

By the way, this reminds me of the time I lost my glasses at work, I was having such a bad day until the bodyguard asked who had lost a pair of glasses a kid found outside. What a relief!! I really appreciated that.

The students will also be asked if they found any of the studied strategies from previous workshops to see if they can remember. (well----Stalling or time gaining strategy)

Later, they will receive a link of a virtual word search to find some examples of how this strategy can be represented.

Examples: That reminds me of, As I was saying, Going back to, By the way and Anyway

Note. (Wordwall, s.f.)

After that, they will do the second practical exercise where they will create a short dialog just like the one analyzed before, taking into account one of the following images from the book to guide their conversation using the strategy and the Present unreal.

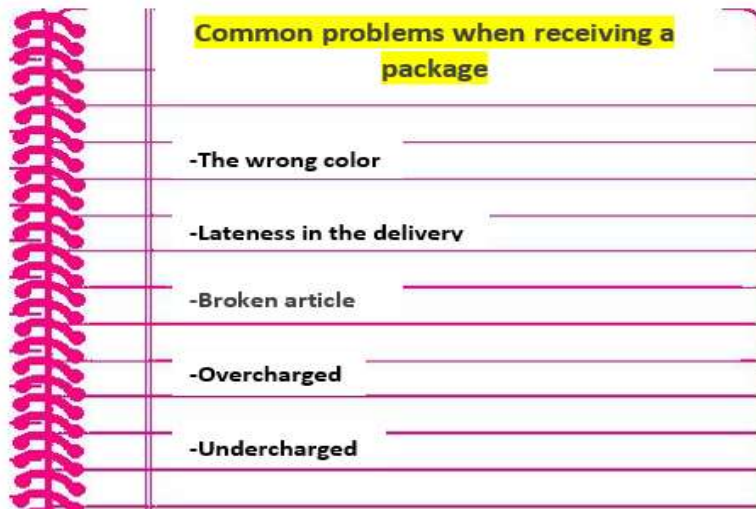*Note*: See reference conversation on Top Notch 2, page 110.

Once the students have shared their conversations with the class. They will do a mini review of the two addressed strategies by going to the webpage baamboozle, where they will work in two big teams answering questions to distinguish the strategies and also reflecting about their usefulness and easiness.
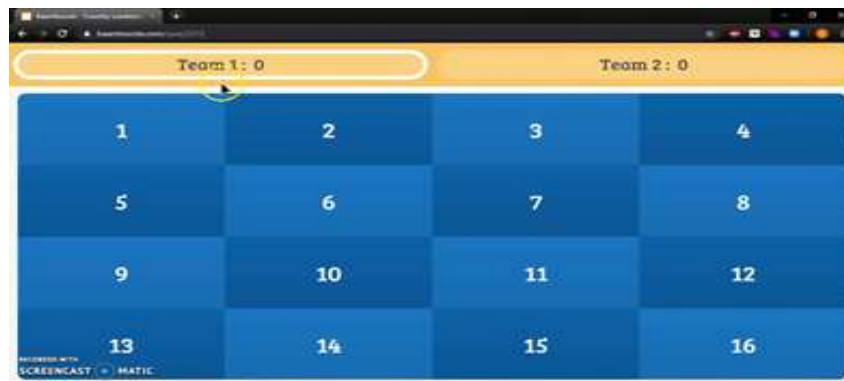
Note. (Baamboozle, s.f.)

Time: 30 minutes

The students will take a look at the most frequent problems when getting a package, and will share the ones they have experienced.

Common problems when receiving a package

-The wrong color

-Lateness in the delivery

-Broken article

-Overcharged

-Undercharged

Afterwards, the teacher will move on with the third strategy, which is "Interrupting" but before will elicit if the students have ideas about what this is. After checking their background knowledge, she will present the following conversation, so they could see how to employ it:

Note. (Envíos, s.f.)

A: Am I calling servientrega Bogotá?

B: Yes, sir. How may I help you? Can you give me your ID number to continue?

A: 112345667.

B: Your package was delivered yesterday at 5pm, Servientrega Manga, Cartagena, Avenida 5 calle 45, you asked for socks, jeans...

A: *Sorry, but* there was a mistake in my delivery. I only asked for one sweater and I received two. I am calling to return it.

B: Thank you so much for your honesty, sir. Servientrega apologizes for that inconvenience sir. I will correct that immediately.

After the students get the idea of using this strategy, they will work in groups to create conversations where people express dissatisfaction in a polite way using the aforementioned strategy.

Later, they will share with the class and the teacher will also focus on pronunciation

III. Evaluation

Time: 20 minutes

The students will evaluate the three strategies implemented on this lesson in class to know their beliefs concerning the usefulness of them.

Likewise, they will also take a survey so they can give their opinion about the strategies used from workshop #4 to #6

IV. Expansion activities

Time: 30 minutes

Video: In groups of three the students will make a creative conversation where they describe how to deal with ethical dilemmas if they find a little package with a considerable sum of money in a mall, university or discotheque.

The conversation needs to comply with the following criteria:

-Use the strategies covered during this workshop, but they can also use the previous

-Include the vocabulary seen in the lesson

-Use of "The unreal conditional"

-Have a good pronunciation

V. Assessment

Time: 15 minutes

The teacher assesses the students' use of strategy with a rubric.