

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) ON TEACHING
MATERIALS TO FOSTER SPEAKING IN NINTH GRADERS AT A PUBLIC SCHOOL

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, especially to my dear mother Adiela Cifuentes Agudelo and my brother Carlos Bermudez Cifuentes because they have always supported me in every step of my life and throughout the demanding process of this Master's Degree. I would like to thank my mom, who has always been my guardian angel, by guiding me with her words of wisdom, great patience and profound love, by wiping my tears in despair away, and, by encouraging me to always pursue my dreams and never quit this Master's dream. Both my mom and brother are my inspiration in life. To my dear brother Carlos, who has always been a role model to me in terms of discipline and has continually encouraged me to pursue my academic and professional goals.

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Abstract

This qualitative action research study describes the contribution of the design and implementation of teacher-designed workshops based on the CLT approach fused with conversational strategies to foster ninth graders' speaking competence in aspects, such as pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary at a public school in Manzanares, Caldas. The study was conducted with 12 learners aged between 14 and 15 years. In an attempt to achieve the research objective, six communicative workshops were implemented and data was gathered from learners' artifacts, teacher's field notes, a survey, an external observer's checklist and a pre-test, and a post-test. These instruments were used to collect the necessary information systematically, and consequently, have a process of data analysis to answer the research question. The findings evidenced the positive influence the CLT approach had on learners' proficiency level, speaking confidence, and learning motivation. This pedagogical intervention encouraged learners to speak, by reducing their anxiety to participate in speaking tasks in class. Consequently, some factors, such as conversational strategies, real-life situation-based teaching, group work, and communicative tasks helped learners to enhance their pronunciation, fluency, motivation and self-confidence to use the foreign language.

Keyword: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Conversational Strategies, Fluency, Self-Confidence, Pronunciation, Speaking Competence, Real-Life Situation-Based Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

The present qualitative action research study analyzes the contribution of a teacher-designed module made up of six communicative workshops with seven lessons each to enhance the development of ninth graders' speaking competence in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at a public school in Manzanaras, Caldas. Throughout this qualitative study, I propose materials based on the CLT approach to help learners enhance their speaking performance, as it plays a key role in the learning of any language, by contributing to their bilingual process. The workshops integrate the four language skills with the main focus on speaking as a productive skill, and it allows learners to identify and to understand basic vocabulary to follow instructions, to perform tasks, and to express themselves in short conversations.

The learners at my school are unable to reply to greetings and to follow short conversations, where basic vocabulary is required. Most of them are ashamed of speaking because they do not know how to pronounce certain phonemes correctly. Thus, their pronunciation and fluency are poor. They are not able to introduce themselves, to talk about their families, likes and dislikes, or to ask for directions, to order a meal in the L2. Most of the time, they do not follow instructions on proposed activities or they get easily distracted when the teacher starts speaking in the L2. There is little understanding of the lessons and poor speaking performance, which is reflected on learners' attitudes, low participation, lack of attention, and boredom in the class.

Therefore, by designing and implementing a contextualized module based on the CLT approach, accompanied by conversational strategies, which suit their needs, interests, and life

experiences, I intend to fulfill this gap. In the same line of thought, I expect to enhance their speaking competence, by providing them with chances to speak and to use functional language.

During the last decade, the National Ministry of Education (MEN) has been implementing a series of different policies to reinforce the learning of English in Colombia. Some of these policies are the Basic Standards of Communicative Competence in a Foreign Language: English, the National Bilingual Program (PNB, 2004), the Bilingual Law 1651 (2013), and The English National Programs: COLOMBIA *Very Well* (2015-2025). All of these were expected to foster and to enhance the learning of English in the country. With this in mind, it is necessary to implement and to propose new strategies, which help learners to learn the foreign language and to achieve the expected goals.

This research paper is structured in five chapters; the first chapter sets out the statement of the problem, the settings and rationale, the research question, and the research objectives. The second chapter refers to the literature review and the related studies in which the theoretical constructs, which inform this study, are described. The third one addresses the methodological design and instructional designs, which underpin the study. The fourth chapter deals with data analysis and findings. Finally, chapter fifth covers the conclusions, pedagogical implications, limitations, and questions for further research.

CHAPTER I. RESEARCH PROBLEM

1. Purpose of the Research

As English teachers, we always want to include, in our English lessons, innovative and meaningful materials to facilitate learners with the L2 learning. We normally expect these materials to affect learners' learning process. Moreover, we implement them to create an engaging, motivating, and effective language learning setting. As Gairns and Redman, (1986) stated, "Designing your own activities has the great advantage that you can exercise complete control over the input" (p. 125). In other words, teacher-designed materials allow us to select the content according to learners' needs, interests, and life experiences. It also fosters new ways to encourage and to engage them in foreign language learning.

This study is important since it allowed me to create better learning environments, which respond to learners' linguistic competence and linguistic performance (Chomsky), as well as interests, needs, and social background. Besides, it enriches both my pedagogical knowledge and teaching practice in the public EFL context. Through the implementation of a contextualized module to foster speaking in ninth graders, I was able to realize that there were several benefits when teachers design their own EFL materials. According to Ur (1996), "Good teacher-made materials are arguably the best there are: relevant and personalized, answering the needs of the learners in a way no other materials can" (p.192). Learners felt their voices had been heard as for the development of the teacher-created resources, which were implemented in their lessons and classes.

Through this study, I expect to contribute to the improvement of learners' speaking competence. In this way, I encourage them to speak and to interact more with each other, and to increase their repertoire of vocabulary words to be used in context. Besides, by providing them

with conversational strategies, I expect that these facilitate their interaction and fluency in the L2.

Regarding the EFL community of teachers, this study provides them with an innovative pedagogical intervention, which entails the design of contextualized workshops involved with the CLT approach to enhance their speaking competence. Besides, I expect my colleagues become interested in the scope of this study and the benefits gained from the implementation of the materials. Therefore, being aware of the importance of the speaking competence in language learning, it is necessary to foster the development of communicative tasks designed by educators themselves, according to learners' particular needs, interests, and real-life experiences. This study might contribute to the academic community as a reference for further research in the field of EFL materials development, based on the CLT approach and cooperative tasks, for strengthening learners' fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary learning as for their speaking competence.

Finally, this study addresses the research line of EFL teaching curriculum design and development ascribed to the Master's program of English Didactics at the University of Caldas as it provides new communicative materials, which are produced by teachers themselves and not materials taken from existing textbooks. Additionally, these are designed, by taking into account learners' voices, interests, needs, social background, and real-life experiences.

1.1 Description of the Context and Setting

The study was conducted with a group of twelve 9th graders at Instituto Manzanares, a public institution located in Manzanares, Caldas. It is a small town with 22,781 residents. This town is known as the town of cordiality. Inside the urban area, there are two public schools. The school is made up of three facilities; two for the kindergarten and primary sections and

one for high school. The whole school has one principal, one coordinator, one secretary, and 34 teachers, three of them EFL teachers that work for the three schools. The school population is the largest in town with about 700 students in 2020, whose ages range from 5 to 19 years. These students are enrolled from kindergarten to eleventh grade and belong to middle and low socioeconomic strata. The participants of this study were twelve ninth graders whose ages ranged between fourteen and fifteen years. The school's mission is to promote learners' values, such as respect, responsibility, order, tolerance, and a sense of belonging. According to the pedagogical project of the school (Proyecto Educativo Institucional, PEI acronym in Spanish) (1998), the aim of this institution is the development of the social and cognitive potentialities of individuals, based on their learning dimensions.

As a public school, the syllabus of the Institution considers the suggested curriculum and the Basic Rights of Learning (BRL) proposed by MEN (2014). Bearing this aspect in mind, the contents are divided into three terms; in each term, learners are expected to work on different modules, such as democracy and peace, cultural and social practices, and everyday globalization. In the same way, they must reach the B1 English level (CEFR, 2002) at the completion of 11th grade. The English classes are held twice a week (three hours per week). There is, consequently, little time left for the development of the four skills and the overall abilities required to learn a foreign language.

1.2 Description of the Problem

Based on my teaching experience, I noticed that learners at Instituto Manzanares have little or no command in their speaking skills in English in class, which is probably due to a lack of vocabulary and materials, which involve their interest in learning the English language. To detect this problem, I conducted a survey applied to the target population (nine graders), six

classroom observation notes in a teacher's reflective journal about learners' performance in the English classes and an interview to the English teacher in Eighth grade that was recorded and transcribed. Moreover, a pre-test was applied. All the instruments were analyzed, as well as the results of their pre-tests to ratify the problem. When learners were exposed to the speaking section of the pre-tests, which involved communicative tasks, few of them were able to perform well. Most learners did not do well on them because they refused to speak. They did not know how to use words in context or how to pronounce them. Others were afraid to express themselves and said they feel they were not going to sound well in the L2. As a result, I identified that the problems learners encountered while completing the proposed communicative tasks were due to a low level in terms of their speaking proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, lack of confidence in pronunciation and fluency.

In this school, most learners are unable to hold short conversations with the teacher or among themselves or to express their ideas in English without the help of the teacher or the use of a dictionary. They continuously use their cellphones for translating unknown words and sentences. Some of them do not understand or follow instructions when these are given in the L2, instead, they use their dictionaries and others rely on the teacher's guidance to develop the tasks provided. The derived difficulties they came across solving activities may be due to their low oral production level and their lack of vocabulary, little interest in learning English, and lack of exposure to and practice in the target language, which is evidenced in students' speaking performance in class.

On the other hand, the low number of contact hours, per week, does not allow them to have enough amount of time to practice the language and perform communicative tasks with learners. Moreover, due to the educational policies suggested for public institutions, it is not

allowed to ask students to buy commercial textbooks to support their learning process. Besides, there are no contextualized materials, which correspond to learners' needs and interests in the school. Based on the previous assumptions, I was also able to perceive that the materials, which I brought to class were not responsive to my students' needs to enhance their speaking performance. Therefore, this study attempts to supply learners with those needs through the development and implementation of teacher-designed materials based on the CLT approach, by displaying conversational strategies and cooperative tasks.

Moreover, this proposal responds to the claims of several researchers that acknowledge teachers' capacity to create their materials. Since English teachers and students are the subjects involved in learning and teaching the language. Thus, considering that teachers are “agents of permanent change” (Núñez & Téllez, 2009, p. 184) and that they ‘are subjects of knowledge’ (Quiceno, 2010), they are the ones called to transform their practice and their teaching contexts by making informed decisions about the syllabus, lesson planning, and the teaching materials they design. Teachers are also social and historical transformers (Freire, 1998), public intellectuals (Giroux, 2012), and ‘subaltern intellectuals’ (Kumaravadivelu, 2014, p. 76) with the potential to propose innovative pedagogical interventions aimed at engaging learners in their learning process. With this in mind, I stated the following research inquiry.

2. Research Question and Objectives.

2.1 Research Question.

- To what extent does the implementation of materials based on the CLT approach foster the speaking competence of ninth graders at a public school?

2.2. Objectives.

2.2.1. General Objective(s) (Research):

- To discuss the contribution of the design and implementation of teacher-designed workshops based on the CLT approach accompanied by conversational strategies and cooperative tasks to foster ninth graders' speaking competence at a public school.

2.2.2. Specific Objectives (Research):

- a) To analyze learners' fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary in terms of understanding in spoken form, retrieval, pronunciation, use, and correctness.
- b) To assess the appropriateness and usefulness of teacher-designed workshops based on the CLT approach as a didactic resource to enhance learners' communicative competence, oral participation and oral interaction in the L2.
- c) To appraise the contribution of conversational strategies through functional language to overcome speaking difficulties among ninth graders at a public school.

Chapter II. LITERATURE REVIEW

3. Theoretical framework

English teachers face several limitations when it comes to implementing materials like textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets in the classroom. The current resources, such as podcasts, videos, journals, exercise handbooks, and textbooks from MEN do not take into account learners' contexts, needs, interests, and motivations. Moreover, current textbooks like English Please and Way to Go, proposed by MEN, do not provide communicative tasks to foster learners' speaking competence and this is why, nowadays teachers must face the reality of designing their resources. Thus, the present study addresses how the implementation of a contextualized module based on the CLT approach contributes to foster the speaking competence in aspects, such as fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary of ninth-graders at a public school. Therefore, these are the theoretical constructs that support my research study: CLT and speaking competence.

3.1 Communicative Language Teaching

The CLT approach emerges as a movement away from traditional grammar lessons where the main focus was on form and grammar items rather than function and real communication. The CLT approach starts from a new view of language where communication is given the main role in foreign and second language teaching. Richards & Rodgers (2001) purported that, CLT “aims to (a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication” (p. 155). Both researchers agreed on the fact that CLT refers to a diverse set of principles, which reflect a communicative view of language and language learning and that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures. They further contended

that in the light to the concept of this approach, language carries not only functional meaning, but also carries social meaning. At a general level, CLT has greatly influenced many teaching practices around the world as it promotes an alternative to develop productive skills like speaking by drawing special attention to aspects, such as language in context, interaction, fluency and pronunciation, which were not strongly reinforced in previous grammar teaching methods.

According to Richards (2006), CLT sets as its goal the teaching of communicative competence. The goal of this approach is to develop what Hymes (1972) described as “communicative competence.” Hymes (1972) contrasts Chomsky’s concept of the linguistic competence and linguistic performance, and highlights that this needs to be seen from a wider perspective integrating communication and culture. That is to say, for a learner to be proficient in the L2, it is not enough to be competent in grammar rules if there is no mastery of the language in a given cultural social context.

Hence, the communicative competence concept emerges as a way to involve other aspects that were not relevant in previous approaches. Subsequently, Halliday (1970) complements Hymes’ concept with his theory of the functions of language. From his point of view, “only through the study of language in use are all the functions of language, and therefore all components of meaning, brought into focus” (Halliday as cited in Richards and Rogers 2001:159). In this sense, language has many functions beyond merely conveying and transmitting messages. Therefore, Halliday describes (1975: 11–17) seven basic functions that language performs for speakers of a language:

Table 1. Halliday’s Language Functions.

Language Functions		Definition
1	<i>Instrumental</i>	Language is used to get things, to express needs concerned with food, drink, comfort, and personal issues.
2	<i>Regulatory</i>	Language is used to control the behavior of others by the act of persuading, commanding and requesting others to do things.
3	<i>Interactional</i>	Language is used to create interaction with others, form relationships with others.
4	<i>Personal</i>	Language is used to express personal feelings and meanings.
5	<i>Heuristic</i>	Language is used to learn, to discover, and to gain knowledge about the world.
6	<i>Imaginative</i>	Language is used to create a world of the imagination.
7	<i>Representational</i>	Language is used to communicate facts and information.

Halliday’s functions of language as cited in Richards and Rogers (2001).

Through their concepts, both researchers corroborated that language does not occur without a social context and that learners need to foster their communicative competence to cope with all of the functions involved in speaking and learning a foreign language. In line with this point of view, Richards and Rodgers (2001) further underlined that in the light to the concept of this approach, language carries not only functional meaning, but also carries social meaning. In this respect, it is essential to learn the grammar forms, as well as understanding their potential communicative functions, and the social meaning these carry in a conversation. According to Richards (2006) “the new communicative approach to teaching prompted a rethinking of

classroom teaching methodology.’’ In this regard, this theoretical model becomes an appealing trend in the world of English language teaching as it concludes the era of grammar-based approaches, and sets a new focus on developing learners’ meaningful communication through integrating functional language and linguistic forms.

In the same line of thought, Littlewood (1981) acknowledged that “One of the most characteristic features of CLT is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language” (p. 1). To accomplish it, students work in pairs or groups to perform problem-solving tasks by interacting with each other. These are usually concerned with task-completion, information-gathering, opinion-sharing, information-transfer activities, reasoning-gap and role plays (Richards, 2006, p.19). Additionally, role-plays and reasoning-gap activities are also tasks in which, learners employ diverse language resources to develop both functional and structural aspects of the foreign language.

In their contrastive analysis of CLT with other approaches, Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) remarked that based on the assumptions of this methodology, contextualization is a basic premise, and learners learn a language through the process of communicating in it through trial and error. By doing so, the oral production skill is developed gradually. Under these circumstances, the scope of communicative tasks should be aimed at responding students’ interests, social context and personal needs to foster their speaking in a more motivating, and productive manner. Discovering that learning another language is a bridge to express one’s needs, persuade, request, provide information and advice to others is an encouraging fact for my students who have been learning English from grammar-based methods that have not led them to develop their oral production skills so far.

3.1.2. Teachers' Roles in CLT.

The principles and classroom tasks suggested in CLT entail new roles, functions and responsibilities for all participants of the lesson. Based on Richards' insights (2006), "learners now had to participate in classroom activities that were based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning." (p.5). This embraces a need to teach and structure current educational practices from a different perspective where learners assume more active roles in the lesson.

Researchers, such as Eisenring and Morgana (2019) concurred that "In applying CLT in the classroom, English teachers are required to be creative and active when they lead the classroom. In other words, the teachers should always try to find the way to make the class becomes interactive". On the same breath, Larsen-Freeman (2000), contented that the role of the teacher is to facilitate the communication in the classroom. The author suggests that when assuming the CLT role, teachers' major responsibilities are concerned with establishing classroom situations where communication is likely to be promoted. (Larsen-Freeman, 2000 as cited in Eisenring and Morgana, 2019, p.48). This implies to create a space for continuous interaction in the classroom.

In this sense, English teachers assume an important role in the CLT lesson. In Eisenring and Morgana's words (2019), "the way they lead the classroom and interact with students becomes the successful key for teaching and learning, especially in helping the students to reach all of the abilities contained in communicative competencies" (p.49). Additionally, Rahimpour and Magsoudpour (2011) remarked that "teacher-students' and students-students' interactions play a significant role in foreign language development. Interactions between teachers and students and also interactions among students will facilitate language development and will lead to better language learning"(p.171). With this in mind, interaction takes a fundamental part in English

language teaching and learning because it can determine whether the learning goals in speaking tasks performed in the classroom are achieved or not. Also, interaction becomes the main means for both teacher and learners to transfer their ideas, opinions, feelings, views, and perceptions over a topic. The CLT role for teachers invites them to promote and facilitate interaction among the participants in the classroom under all circumstances.

In this approach of language learning, teachers have to assume more flexible roles by being facilitators and monitors instead of being models for correct linguistic forms and flawless speech. That is, teachers may face a greater challenge once they need to develop different strategies for dealing with learners' errors and discover how these help in the process of learning a foreign language.

According to Richards and Rogers (2001) "Other roles assumed for teachers are needs analyst, counselor, and group process manager" (p.167). Both researchers confirmed that "The CLT teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to learner language needs. This may be done informally and personally through one-to-one sessions with students, in which the teacher talks through such issues as the student's perception of his or her learning style, learning assets, and learning goals" (p.167). That is to say, before implementing a communicative method of teaching and learning, teachers must be a needs analyst in their classrooms to identify the current existing needs of their students, their concerns, difficulties, personal needs, likes and dislikes in the L2 learning process. By doing so, students will be involved in lesson planning and lessons will be most likely to be achievable. The current study follows this requirement as students were interviewed, their needs were analyzed and the workshops implemented were based on a CLT framework that responds their specific interests and reasons to learn English in order to enhance their oral production level. The teacher played

both a needs analyst role and a group process manager by performing instruments to discover learners' needs in the language and creating appropriate resources to respond to those needs privileging students learning interests first.

Subsequently, Breen and Candlin (1980) describe teacher roles in the following terms: The teacher has two main roles: “the first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group... A third role for the teacher is that of researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organizational capacities.” (p. 99). In other words, when assuming these roles, teachers have to become both, facilitators to allow communication to flow smoothly in the classroom, and guides for task instruction and classroom procedures concerned with these. By acting as independent participants of the teaching process, classroom dynamics are more likely to be student-centered and learners can communicate more than they do in teacher-centered lessons. Instead of being the main source in the class, teachers need to organize more learning resources besides providing tasks to make lessons more communicative, collaborative and interactive.

In the same breath, Richards and Rogers (2001) highlight that “CLT procedures often require teachers to acquire less teacher-centered classroom management skills. It is the teacher's responsibility to organize the classroom as a setting for communication and communicative activities” (p.168). By this they mean, the CLT lesson should be structured in a way that encourages and sets opportunities for learners to speak and interact. Moreover, classroom materials need to be framed in communication and functional language. These resources need to aim at placing students in task scenarios where they communicate and negotiate using the L2 to

achieve a goal. In addition to this, the authors also suggest that “during an activity the teacher monitors, encourages, and suppresses the inclination to supply gaps in lexis, grammar, and strategy but notes such gaps for later commentary and communicative practice. At the conclusion of group activities, the teacher leads in the debriefing of the activity, pointing out alternatives and extensions and assisting groups in self-correction discussion.” (p.168).

Furthermore, both authors suggest that while a communicative task is being performed, the teacher should encourage and supervise learners without correcting their errors in lexis and grammar directly. Instead, the teacher must notice existing gaps and errors, and save them for later clarification and communicative practice to be discussed and shared at the conclusion of group activities. In this sense, feedback is given in a way that involves all members of the class inviting them to use self-correction for ongoing errors in tasks, by suppressing the need of pointing at one specific student’ error.

3.1.3. Learners’ Roles in CLT.

Learning a language from a communicative methodology demands learners to play a more active role than before. Previous approaches placed students as passive participants in the lesson. On the contrary, The CLT approach assumes learners to be the main focus on the class, which fosters communicative practice in a greater extent than other approaches.

According to Richards and Rogers (2001), ‘the emphasis in CLT on the processes of communication, rather than mastery of language forms, leads to different roles for learners from those found in more traditional second language classrooms.’ By this they mean, learners are now the main characters of the lesson, that is, their roles, active participation, and interaction are key tools toward developing a communicative competence in the foreign language. Learners now have a more active role in the CLT classroom, once they interact and communicate more with

other members of the class apart from the teacher, besides they perform tasks to practice oral skills continuously. This makes the lesson student-centered and allows teachers to play a coaching and supporting role that entails more than being the rigid instructors for teaching and learning of old traditional classrooms.

Breen and Candlin (1980), place learner's role within the CLT as negotiators when they stated that this role happens "between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning...and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes. The implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way"(p.10). That is to say, learners will be continuously working in teams, pairs or big groups and this leads them to negotiate with other learners to accomplish tasks. Most of these tasks are collaborative and structured to make the class more interactive.

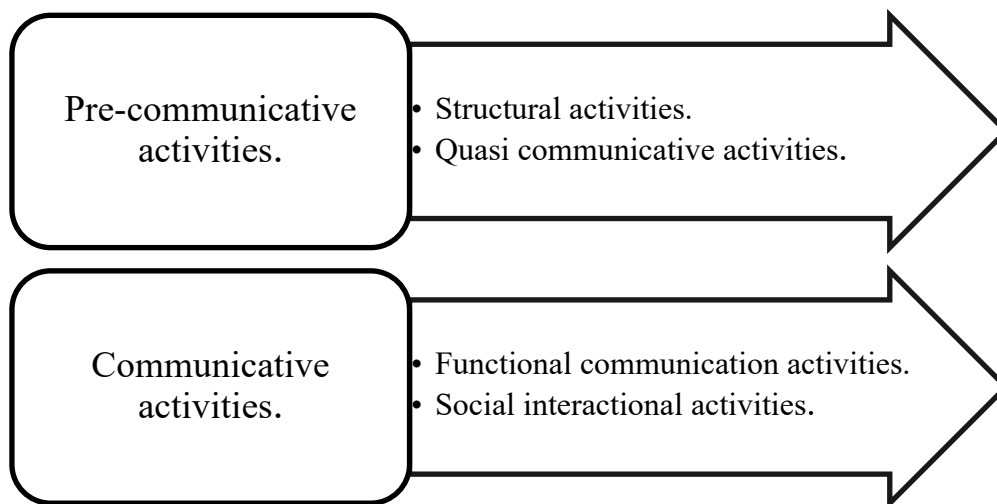
Besides this, guidelines for communicative lessons should encourage learners to be more reflective on their language performance once they are called to identify errors, by using self-correction to work on their progress. At the conclusion of group activities, learners reflect and review errors entailed in their communicative practice tasks with a guidance from their teachers. This way, learners play a more active, meaningful and participative role in their own learning.

3.1.4. Speaking in CLT.

Developing students' speaking competence is one of CLT goals. To accomplish so, different proponents of this theoretical model propose a distinction of activities to achieve the development of the oral production skill in the English Classrooms. Littlewood (1981) proposes

four stages of activities to foster speaking in the lesson and groups these in two kinds: pre-communicative activities and communicative activities.

Figure 1. Phases of the CLT class.



Littlewood's distinction of CLT activities as cited in Richards and Rogers (2001)

As seen in Figure 2, Littlewood (1981) acknowledges that the pre-communicative activities are composed of structural activities and quasi communicative activities. Likewise, the author explains that the second kind of tasks are named Communicative Activities and groups these in functional communication activities and social interactional activities. Along similar lines, Richards (2006) conceives an analogous distinction of the CLT class. However, the author groups tasks in only three stages defined mechanical practice, meaningful practice and communicative practice. For Richards (2006), the structural stage or mechanical practice refers to “a controlled practice activity which students can successfully carry out without necessarily understanding the language they are using”. Similarly, Littlewood (1981) suggests that “this form of structural practice is included here to provide a point of departure for other, more communicatively oriented activities” (p.9). In other words, this stage of the lesson is oriented for learners, and it has the purpose of providing practice on individual skills like pronunciation,

vocabulary and grammar. In terms of its purpose, Littlewood (1981) explains that the main goal of pre-communicative activities is to “equip the learner with some of the skills required for communication without actually requiring him to perform communicative acts” (p.8). Hence, this stage can be seen as a departure point to encourage learners to start developing their communicative competence little by little.

Regarding meaningful practice, Richards (2006) states that it “refers to an activity where language control is still provided but where students are required to make meaningful choices when carrying out practice” (p.16). In Littlewood’s distinction (1981), this practice corresponds to quasi communicative activities. The author summarizes the contributions of communicative activities over language learning when he affirms that these “provide whole-task practice, improve motivation, allow natural learning, create a context which supports learning” (pp.17-18).

In terms of communicative activities, Littlewood (1981) devise these between “functional communication activities” and “social interaction activities” as two major activity types in CLT. In Sreehari’s words (2012), “Functional communication activities are aimed at developing certain language skills and functions, which involve communication. Social interaction activities include conversation and discussion sessions, use of dialogues and role plays” (p.89). In the same line of thought, Richards (2006) explains the role of these activities when saying that “functional communication activities require students to use their language resources to overcome an information gap or solve a problem. Social interactional activities require the learner to pay attention to the context and the roles of the people involved, and to attend to such things as formal versus informal language” (p.18). In this sense, the communicative stage in the

CLT lesson requires learners to interact and to work cooperatively toward the achievement of a common goal.

Regarding oral production skills, according to Richards (2006), one of the goals of CLT in speaking is to develop fluency in language use. For the author, fluency is “maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite learners’ limitations on their communicative competence, and is developed, by creating classroom tasks in which learners feel the need of negotiating meaning, using communication strategies, correct misunderstandings, and work to avoid communication breakdowns” (Richards, 2006, p. 14). In that sense, by promoting speaking tasks, learners’ fluency makes their speech more understandable and successful for communicating and interacting with others. In addition to this, Richards (2006) also recommends involving accuracy tasks into the lesson as a key factor to foster fluency. He states “teachers were recommended using a balance of fluency activities and accuracy and to use accuracy activities to support fluency activities. Accuracy work could either come before or after fluency work”. In this line of thought, accuracy is a vital tool in learning a language, and it cannot be left behind in the process of developing communicative competence, fluency, pronunciation and all of the aspects entailed in foreign language learning.

Having addressed the second theoretical construct that supports this study, the next section refers to the speaking competence in the EFL classroom and four aspects that are of special relevance to my study which are fluency, pronunciation, conversational strategies, and vocabulary.

3.2 Speaking Competence

Language represents a very significant part of people's lives. Through language, we communicate and interact with others. All language competencies play an important role in human communication. However, speaking can be considered as one of the most necessary competencies when learning a language. Most users of a language communicate across this productive skill. Speaking reflects how much a person is competent in a language or not as this competence gathers most of the skills, both receptive and productive. There are many reasons to get students to speak in the classroom. According to Harmer (2000), 'there are 3 main reasons why doing so, firstly, speaking activities provide rehearsal opportunities-chances to practice real-life speaking in the safety of the classroom. Secondly, speaking tasks in which learners try to use any or all of the language they know to provide feedback for both teachers and learners. Everyone can see how well they are doing: both how successful they are, and also what language problems they are experiencing.' (p.123). Besides this, the author highlights the role of automaticity, which is promoted in fostering speaking. He further stated that 'the more students have opportunities to activate the various elements of the language they have stored in their brains, the more automatic their use of these elements become. As a result, students gradually become autonomous language users. This means that they will be able to use words and phrases fluently without very much conscious thought' (p. 123). In this sense, learners might become more independent users of the language if they are encouraged to speak in a foreign language whenever certain conditions are met.

According to Brown (1994), "speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, the participants, and the purposes of speaking". (Brown, 1994, as cited in Burns & Joyce, 1997)". Likewise, Chaney (1998) states that speaking

is “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts” (p. 13). Consequently, Cameron (2001) acknowledges that “speaking is the active use of language to express meanings so that other people can make sense of them” (p. 40). The author emphasizes the fact that “precise details of spoken language are of relevance and these need to be given attention since they represent key elements of a foreign language to share understandings with other people” (p. 40). On the same line, Lewis and Hill (1993) agree on the fact that speaking is a process that covers many things in addition to the pronunciation of individual sounds (p.54). Harmer (2007) shares the same view on the subject when he contended that ‘speaking is the ability to speak fluently and presupposes not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language on the spot.’ (p.284). That is to say, speaking conveys many language aspects beyond pronunciation and fluency.

On this matter, Burkart (1998) says that ‘speaking is an activity, which involves the areas of knowledge, which are the mechanics like pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary; it is the use of the right words in the right order with the right pronunciation and the functions concerned with transaction and interaction’ (p.11). Regarding the functions, Harmer (2000) drew a distinction between transactional and interpersonal functions. The author claims that ‘transactional function has as its main purpose conveying information and facilitating the exchange of goods and services, whereas the interpersonal function is all about maintaining and sustaining good relations between people’ (p. 343).

Besides communicative functions and mechanics, spoken language transmits people’s feelings and emotions. Clark & Clark (1997) claimed that in the oral production competence, a speaker expresses his thoughts and feelings in words, phrases, and sentences following a certain

structure, which regulates the meaningful units, and meaning of sentences (p. 223). The authors also highlight that the frequency of using the language will determine the success in the speaking skill. These instances are a sign that continuous practice and exposure to language enhance the communicative competence of students. On this matter, Cheng (2007) corroborated that 'effective communication takes more than the ability to talk. It likewise includes the use of one's mental capacities in the choice of words and the ability to make other people understand what one is saying and vice versa.' (p. 99). Furthermore, as it has been pointed by scholars, speaking is an evolving process. Based on Tarigan's views (1990), 'speaking is a language skill that is developed in child life, which is produced by the listening skill, and at that period, speaking skill is learned.' (p.3). In that order, this productive skill is developed at an early age and it is built throughout the years of exposure to the target language and the practice provided, by interacting with others. Research on the field suggests that rather than teaching learners to make well-formed sentences and then put these to use in the discourse, we should encourage learners to take part in spoken discourse from the beginning, and then they will acquire the smaller units. (Nunan, 1989, 32).

Having addressed what the concept of speaking entails, I proceed to mention the aspects that are of special significance to my research study, which are fluency, conversational strategies, and vocabulary.

3.2.1. Fluency

Fluency is a language aspect, which reflects learners' performance and confidence as a speaker. Hedge (2000) and Johnson (1979) define it as the ability to respond coherently within the

turn of the conversation, to link the words and phrases of the questions, to pronounce the sounds clearly with appropriate stress, and intonation and to all these quickly in ‘real-time.’

To Skehan’s (1996), fluency “concerns the learner’s capacity to produce language in real-time without undue pausing or hesitation”. (p.22). Conversely, Nation (1991) foregrounded a somewhat different explanation. He says fluency can be described as ‘having ready access to the knowledge you already possess (p.1). In his words, he means that ‘...from the very first day of learning a language, you can be fluent in the small amount of language you already know’. (Nation, 2008). These excerpts illustrate how Nation’s concept of fluency embraces all four of the language skills, including the receptive skills of reading and listening, and not just the productive skills of speaking and writing, whereas Skehan’s definition only entails aspects referring to language production.

Acknowledging Nation’s reflection on the fact that fluency derives from being capable of accessing all the language knowledge one already stores in its mind, a fluency activity should not introduce too much new material (Nation, 2007, 6). On the contrary, it should promote a space to practice, enhance, and master the language they have already acquired. Tasks that serve for this purpose should also provide multiple opportunities to get students into the path of becoming more fluent, by pushing them to speak at a faster rate, and reducing their pausing amount when speaking.

3.2.2. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is a crucial aspect of the development of speaking skills in a foreign language. Based on Dalton and Seidlhofer’s views (1994), pronunciation is the action of producing sounds of speech to communicate a message. This concept explains why having a

good pronunciation of the target language is fundamental in effective oral communication. Without an intelligible pronunciation, speakers of a language would not be able to exchange messages fluently when interacting with other speakers of the foreign language. Thus, bad pronunciation hinders the communication process. Also, Tlazalo and Basurto (2014) state that students may acquire pronunciation habits from different places and different people. Nevertheless, the authors remark on the fact that it is in the classroom where most learners encounter the first input in the L2 to “adopt, adapt, or imitate taking their foreign language teachers and classmates as sources of examples of what to do or not to do” (Tlazalo and Basurto, 2014, p.153). In line with this point of view, Pennington (1996) agrees on the idea that consciously or unconsciously, teachers are always teaching pronunciation somehow. The author further acknowledged that there are five different levels that teachers can display in their classrooms for teaching pronunciation. These levels are: ‘*mechanical* (e.g., repetition of minimal pairs); *contextualized* (e.g., repetition of keywords in a listening passage); *meaningful* (e.g., choice of the correct word in a sentence or reading passage); *realistic* (e.g., a role-play of a situation similar to one that one may face in real life); and *real* (e.g., discussion of the students' real-life situation or concerns)’ (Pennington, 1996, p. 225). Despite having a variety of levels, most teachers rely on drills and choral repetition as a way to teach and practice pronunciation. However, other teachers tend to avoid dealing with pronunciation perhaps because they lack confidence, skills, or knowledge in the field. (MacDonald, 2002, p. 3). Although it can be said that teaching pronunciation tends to be a reluctant task to teachers, this language aspect needs to be included in EFL lessons as it is a key element of speaking, which also needs to be enhanced to foster oral communication.

3.2.3. Conversational Strategies

We use conversation as a tool to exchange information with peers, to hold, and to maintain social relationships between the speakers of a language, to transmit thoughts and feelings for many other purposes. Nonetheless, few English learners can make sense of conversational rules or patterns. Therefore, they face trouble in keeping their conversations going (Walter, 2008). Using conversational strategies has been suggested as one effective way to overcome problems in maintaining conversations. As ascertained by Riggenbach (1998), conversational strategies are certain conscious ways to help maintain communication (as cited in Walter, 2008). That is, they enhance interaction and help learners to overcome conversation problems. In the same breath, Kehe and Kehe (2004) proposed that conversational strategies are helpful methods for speakers and listeners, who wish to continue a natural flow of conversation. By the same token, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1994) stated that conversational strategies are particularly helpful for language learners who frequently face difficulties in conversations because these strategies provide them with a sense of security in the language. The author further asserted that communicative strategies are ‘an invaluable means of dealing with communication ‘trouble spots’, such as not knowing a particular word, or misunderstanding the other speaker’ (p. 44). The aforementioned insights lead to say that, by promoting the use of conversational strategies, learners have more tools at their disposal to succeed in exchanging messages and transmitting ideas to other speakers.

Along similar lines, Walter (2008) proposed that conversational strategies help raise learners’ awareness of both form and function of the language. That is, conversational strategies are worth attention because they can facilitate interaction and fluency. In terms of the types of conversational strategies, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1994) acknowledge that these could be divided into nine types in order of significance: message adjustment or avoidance, paraphrase,

approximation, appeal for help, asking for repetition, asking for clarification, interpretive summary, checking (for comprehension and confirmation), and use of fillers/hesitation devices. To this research study, the conversational strategies of main significance are appealing for help, asking for clarification, asking for repetition, and checking for comprehension and confirmation.

3.2.4. Vocabulary

Vocabulary learning plays an essential role in the learning of a language, it allows interaction and communication with others and as a language component, it is involved in all the language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Prior to defining vocabulary, it is necessary to understand its relevance in language learning. As stated by Cameron (2001), “Vocabulary, as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays a great role for learners in acquiring a language” (p. 10). Several scholars have coincided in acknowledging vocabulary as an essential language component. Harmon, Wood, & Keser, (2009) stated that learners’ vocabulary development is a significant aspect of their language development. Furthermore, Laufer and Nation (1999), Maximo (2000), Read (2000), Gu (2003), and Nation (2001) have contended that vocabulary learning is fundamental for successful second language use and plays an important role in the formation of complete spoken and written texts.

In terms of the importance of vocabulary learning, Schmitt (2000) argued that “lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and the acquisition of a second language” (p. 55). Likewise, Nunan (1991) agreed on the fact that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because, without an extensive vocabulary, we will be unable to use the structures and functions we may have learned for comprehensible communication.

The aforementioned insights allow us to assume that it is necessary to improve the way we approach and teach vocabulary once it is one of the most vital aspects which contributes to the development of communicative skills. As Wilkins (1972) remarked, “There is not much value in being able to produce grammatical sentences if one has not got the vocabulary that is needed to convey what one wishes to say ... While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” (p. 111). As stated above, to master a language one needs enough vocabulary. Increasing it, will enhance communicative skills to master all the language skills entailed in language.

The need to provide learners with elements to increase their vocabulary storage can be better explained in Krashen’s words as cited in Lewis (1993), when he claimed that “when students travel, they don’t carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries” (p. 25). (Lewis, 1993, p. 25). That is to say, vocabulary knowledge plays a crucial role in foreign language learning since it promotes communication and makes understanding easier for learners.

3.2.5. Definition of Vocabulary.

Based on Alqahtani’s views (2015), the term vocabulary cannot limit only to words, this also refers to lexical entities that transmit information, the knowledge of words, meanings, and use (p. 25). Burns (1972) affirmed that vocabulary is “the stock of words which is used by a person, class or profession” (p. 295). That is to say, people have a wider knowledge of lexical items based on their field of studies, job or social strata. According to scholars, there are different types of vocabulary. Stuart (2005) refers to these types as receptive and productive vocabulary. Receptive concerning the lexical terms that students listen and understand but cannot produce by themselves and productive, the vocabulary that can be produced in speaking and

writing. (As cited in Alqahtani, 2015, p. 25).

Most learners perceive vocabulary learning as a memory task, a large repertoire of words they must learn by heart and store in their minds to succeed and become proficient enough in all the skills. Nevertheless, knowing a word implies more than merely memorizing it. Researchers, such as Ellis and Sinclair; Schmitt and Meara; Richard and Nation agree that knowing a word implies different types of knowledge, such as “phonological knowledge” which informs how to pronounce it; “orthographic knowledge” which indicates how to spell it and write it correctly; “receptive knowledge” associated with having the ability to understand the word when somebody uses it in a conversation or find the word in a written paper, “conceptual knowledge” needed to recall the word with its correct meaning, “grammatical knowledge” to know the grammatical form that occurs in the word, and “memory” to have the ability to remember it when it is needed. (As cited in Cameron, 2001, p. 77). In that order, knowing a word implies learning its characteristics and uses in context.

3.2.6. Vocabulary Teaching.

Bearing in mind the importance of vocabulary as a facilitating tool in the process of language learning, it becomes vital to provide learners with new ways to increase their vocabulary level. We also share Walters’ view (2004) when he referred that it is almost impossible to learn a language without words; even communication between human beings is based on words. Both teachers and students agree that acquisition of the vocabulary is a central factor in teaching a language. As vocabulary is a component entailed in every language ability, increasing it will allow learners to make a profit of it in many aspects. As contended by Finocchiaro (1975), “vocabulary will make students practice the structure more easily, it is

useful for students to communicate in daily life and will strengthen the belief that English can be used to express the same ideas or feelings they express in their native language” (p. 38).

Teachers should be concerned about encouraging their students to realize that they can also communicate their dreams, feelings, beliefs, interests, and everything that inspires them in the foreign language if they learn enough vocabulary and use it appropriately. In this respect, Nation (cited in Linse, 2006) acknowledges, “teachers should facilitate vocabulary learning by teaching learners useful words and by helping them to figure out meanings on their own” (p. 122). He further emphasizes that a good vocabulary teaching technique should comprise the following things “(1) It interests the learners. (2) It makes the learners give attention to the form-meaning or use of the words. (3) It gives a chance for repetition.” (Nation, 2001, p. 27). By the same token, it is also important to carefully select appropriate vocabulary that is responsive to learners’ age and proficiency level.

3.2 Related Studies

In this section, I refer to four studies related to the aim of the current research study and the reasons why they are important to this inquiry. These studies are related to my research because they aim at enhancing students’ speaking competence in English. These were relevant to me since they provided meaningful information concerning the theoretical foundations to conduct this research.

Regarding the CLT Approach, Vongxay (2013) conducted a qualitative research case study that explores the understandings and attitudes of ten English teachers in adopting CLT into their classrooms. This study investigates factors, which promote or hinder EFL teachers’

implementation of this teaching approach into Lao higher educational institutions English classrooms located in New Zealand. The researcher collected data through semi-structured interviews. The study compares the literature of CLT with the findings of data collected from these ten one-to-one, in-depth interviews. Among the findings of the study, the researcher showed some factors, which affected the implementation of a communicative approach of teaching in the Lao context were related to teachers' factors like traditional grammar-based teaching approach, teachers' English proficiency and lack of CLT training. Thus, the study suggests a range of practical recommendations to further improve the implementation of CLT and to help ensure the success in implementing this approach in educational institutions. This study is relevant to the school where I am currently working because it enlightens me with key suggestions to succeed in implementing this communicative approach into our classrooms.

Moreover, García (2019) describes the influence of Communicative activities as a method to improve the Speaking Skill in the third level English students of the Language Center of the Technical University of Babahoyo in Ecuador. The main instruments to collect data were students' artifacts, teacher's field notes, and students' surveys. In this research study, activities based on the CLT were built and implemented in the EFL classroom to enhance oral skills. The findings of this inquiry revealed that participants showed high interest in and felt motivated during the application of the communicative activities, expressing that the activities based on this methodology helped them to increase their vocabulary, improved their pronunciation, and increased confidence in themselves. This study is pertinent to mine as it recommends principles to follow when designing speaking tasks so that these are successful in promoting accuracy, vocabulary, and aspects of intonation like speaking rate, stress, and fluency, which I also intend to enhance in my students through my pedagogical intervention.

Concerning other speaking aspects, Silva (2015) explored oral interaction in a qualitative action research study, by implementing curricular units focused on task-based learning materials in sixth graders from a public school in Barrancabermeja Colombia between the ages of 11 to 14 years. Data was gathered through instruments, such as informal discussion, video tapes and field notes. Among the outcomes of the study, the researcher showed that the curricular units based on a Communicative Approach as well as Task-Based Learning, by shifting the teacher-student interaction to student-student interaction, which improved learners' self-confidence. Additionally, teamwork encouraged oral interactions, which contributed to identify their difficulties in the structure of the language. Silva's inquiry is significant to my study because it gives prominence to student-student interaction and its contribution to boost students' participation. Correspondingly, her study underlines group work as a way to establish a better classroom atmosphere that leads to oral interaction, which is a key aspect to foster in the application of my study.

In terms of the speaking competence, Munevar Vega (2017) carried out a qualitative action research study about the impact of worksheets based on role-plays on sixth graders' fluency at a private school located in Bogotá. Data was gathered from field notes, audio recordings, a survey, an interview, and students' artifacts. In this research study, worksheets framed under role-plays are implemented in the classroom to encourage sixth-graders' fluency. The findings suggest that participants developed different levels of fluency, and managed known structures and went beyond incorporating new ones during the creation of their role-plays while performing them. Additionally, they used the strategies provided by the material to have better fluency and most importantly, some of them created new strategies to be more efficient in their speaking competence. Although the research study was performed with younger students, this

study is relevant to my research since it promotes the use of role-plays, which is one of the communicative tasks suggested in the CLT Approach. Furthermore, it provides me with theoretical support for fluency, which is one of the aspects I intend to enhance in my students through my research project.

CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Type of Study

The present study was conducted within an action research model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (as cited in Burns, 1999). Action research is concerned with the systematic study of attempts to improve educational practice by groups of participants by means of their own practical actions and by means of their own reflection upon the effects of those actions (Hopkins, 2005, p. 57). Therefore, the researcher participated actively in a change situation at the same time as conducting the research. This action research intends to ameliorate learners' speaking skills throughout a pedagogical intervention that comprises the implementation of data collection techniques, the analysis and interpretation of the data collected to have an impact on a specific aspect of the teaching and learning process as it is learners' oral production as well as identifying the influence of the CLT approach on learners' language performance.

This study was performed, by following the cyclical process of the action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). Both scholars highlight that action research is based on four fundamental stages which consist of planning, action, observation and reflection. These steps are essential in a spiraling process, and they are undertaken in the following order: in the first phase, the researcher develops a plan of action to enhance an underlying problem found, in the second phase, this plan of action is implemented. Then, in the third phase, the researcher observes all the reactions, situations and relevant aspects of the implementation, and lastly, in the fourth phase, there is a reflection upon the actions implemented to analyze the effects and the changes that should be introduced for the next cycle. (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p.10).

An example of the cyclical process of action research is presented below.

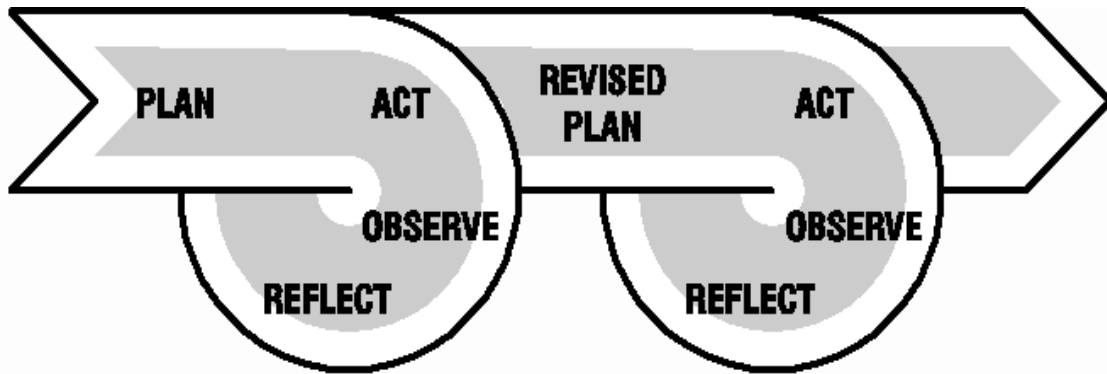


Figure 2. Cyclical process proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988).

4.2 Participants

The participants that were selected to conduct this research study were a group of twenty-four ninth grade students of Instituto Manzanares, a public school located in the town of Manzanares. Their ages ranged from 14 to 16 years. Initially, they were 14 girls and 10 boys. After the pandemic global emergency started, all students of the school were sent home and were instructed to continue their academic year virtually. Due to the lack of resources of most students in terms of technological devices, and a poor online connectivity access, the group reduced to only eleven students who were able to continue participating in the research from the beginning to the end of the virtual implementation. These eleven students, composed by 6 girls and 5 boys, were the main participants of the research study attending all virtual lessons and accomplishing with all communicative tasks implicated in the workshops.

Most students registered in this institution belong to low social status and their parents do not provide them with home-learning experiences to reinforce the contents that are learned in the classroom. The students in this group are in level A1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, 2000). At this level, most of the students are unable to

understand questions about their interests, everyday activities or to start a conversation. They also struggle with maintaining a short conversation and comprehending instructions given to them. In general terms, students only manage a minor number of words and elementary phrases.

4.3 Instruments

For this research study, four instruments were used for the diagnostic stage, these were a student’s survey, a teacher’s journal based on classroom observation, an external observer interview and a students’ pre-test to ratify their language proficiency level. The analysis of these data collection instruments allowed the identification of a problem considering perspectives from different sources involved in the teaching process. Each instrument was elaborated with a specific purpose. The following table displays the description and specific purposes of each data gathering instrument used.

Table 2. Data collection instruments and techniques used for the diagnostic stage.

N°	Data Collection Technique	Data collection Instrument	Rationale
1	Testing	Diagnostic test/ Learners’ Pre-test.	To assess learners’ language level taking into account listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in order to ratify the results obtained from the three instruments used in the diagnostic stage.
2	Survey	Learners’ survey.	To gather information about learners’ perceptions, needs, interests, and expectations regarding the learning and teaching process of English in the classroom.
3	Observation	External Observer Interview.	To obtain an external perspective of the teaching and learning practices held in the English lessons.
4	Observation	Teacher’s Journal.	To collect information about daily teaching and learning experiences, the school’s context and reflect on these situations in the English class. The entries of the journal are written by the researcher (non-participant observer).

4.3.1. Pre-Test

The pre-test was administered to 12 students from ninth grade of 'Institución Educativa Manzanares'. For this study, the test was used as an instrument to help identify students' proficiency level in each of the skills as well as their strengths and weaknesses in the English language. This instrument was also aimed at verifying the data collected in the diagnostic stage in terms of the skill the researcher intends to focus on during the pedagogical intervention. The pre-test was composed of four sections that correspond to the language skills: reading and writing, listening and speaking. Each skill section was divided in two parts of questions except for the speaking section, which contained three parts.

4.3.2. Learners' Survey

A survey was another instrument used in the diagnostic stage to collect information from students. The instrument was administered to 12 ninth grade students. Its main objective was to elicit information about students' needs, interests, perceptions and preferences regarding their language learning process and the teaching methodology used in class. Moreover, it also intended to know participants' recommendations to enhance ninth grade teaching practices held at school. The survey was composed of four parts, the first section comprised questions related to students' personal information, the second section referred to the English class and its current methodology, the third section elicit data on students' oral production skill and the last section contained questions on learning materials used in class.

4.3.3. External Observer's Interview

For this study, classroom observation was performed to gather information from an external observer through an interview. The purpose of this data collection instrument consisted on having an external view on classroom dynamics, events, attitudes, and students' needs,

strengths and fallacies toward the foreign language learning process. One English teacher from high school was invited to carry out a class observation of the target group, then he was invited to participate in the interview. This instrument was composed of five questions, the first question was about students' participation and interaction in class, the second question was concerned with the methodology used in the class, the third question enquired about learners' language level, the fourth question referred to the skills that are more complex to students, and the last question was concerned with the use of L1 and L2 in class. The information gathered from the external observer interview was of special relevance to the research study. As ascertained by Johnson and Turner (2003) "the information provided by an external observer supports the quality, reliability, and validity of the information as it is considered as "relatively objective firsthand information" (p. 314).

4.3.4. Teacher's Journal

Another instrument held throughout the diagnostic stage was a teacher's journal. This instrument was kept to have a self-analysis of the teaching practices held by the teacher and researcher with the ninth-grade students. The teacher's diary was written in first person, and it recorded language events, students' interactions, teaching dynamics, and situations occurred in the class. The data collected in the journal allowed the identification of issues that learners face in English lessons, besides describing learners' attitudes, strengths and hindrances in the foreign language learning process.

CHAPTER IV. PHASES OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted following three stages. The first phase was involved with the diagnostic stage, to identify the research problem, by applying four data collection instruments. This phase allowed to ratify and verify the needs and language problems learners faced in the speaking skill and, as well as the methodology implemented to improve the oral production fallacy. The second stage was the Action Stage, which comprised the implementation of six workshops based on the CLT approach portrayed in the theoretical framework. These workshops followed the CLT guidelines and were aimed at enhancing learners' speaking skill and communicative competence. The last stage was the Evaluation Stage, which entailed the analysis of the six workshops once their implementation was concluded, by applying three research instruments to describe how appropriate the pedagogical intervention resulted, as well as devising the pedagogical implications, findings, and conclusions.

5. Diagnostic Stage

To identify and ratify students limited oral production skills, the researcher applied three different data collection instruments and techniques, which are categorized in a learners' survey, a teacher's journal, and an external observer's interview that was recorded and transcribed. The first two instruments were applied to the target population (ninth graders), and the external observer's interview was given by one EFL high school teacher from the institution. In addition to this, a diagnostic pre-test integrating the four skills was designed and administered to confirm learners' proficiency level in English before displaying the pedagogical intervention. The section

portrayed below is divided into a description of the instruments implemented, their results and the analysis of the data collected from them.

5.1 Results and Analysis of the Instruments

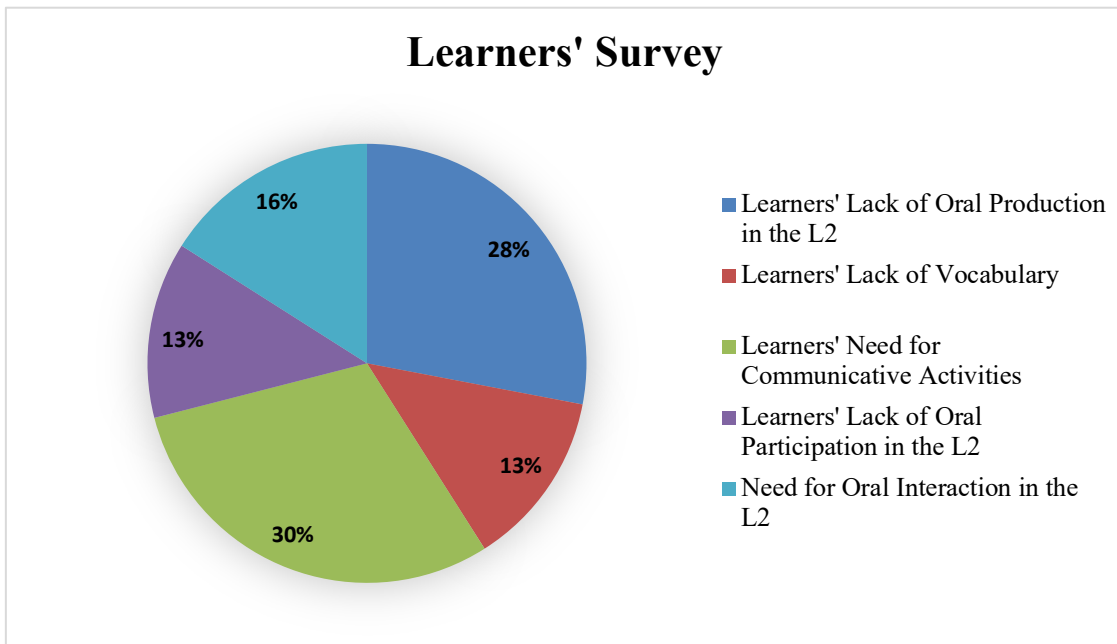
Once the implementation of the aforementioned instruments was concluded, the researcher proceeded with the analysis of their results, by following the grounded data analysis (Freeman, 1998) and the Pawing analysis (Ryan & Rusell, 2010), which consists of identifying emerging categories or codes through colors to make a distinction among them. Additionally, a table and a pie chart are displayed after analyzing each instrument to provide a summary with the categories that emerged from each, with their corresponding evidence and occurrences. Lastly, a triangulation data analysis is presented to find the most salient categories in each of the instruments employed.

5.1.1. Learners' Survey

Learners' Survey			
Categories	Occurrences	Percentage	Evidence
Learners' lack of Oral Production in the L2	22	16%	<i>Me da pena hablar en ingles.</i>
Learners' lack of Vocabulary	18	13%	<i>Me da duro entender o aprender palabras nuevas en inglés y eso es lo que me lleva a tener un bajo rendimiento.</i>
Mispronunciation of words	16	12%	<i>Siento mucha pena al hablar en inglés, no sé pronunciar palabras en este idioma.</i>
Learners' need for Communicative activities	23	17%	<i>Porque hacen que las clases sean más didácticas e interesantes lo que facilita el aprendizaje.</i>
Learners' lack of Oral Participation in the L2	18	13%	<i>Porque soy un poco tímido a la hora de responder preguntas y más si son de inglés.</i>

Need for Oral Interaction in the L2	22	16%	<i>Prefiero trabajar en parejas porque así siento más confianza y apoyo al hacer actividades.</i>
Need for Contextualized materials	17	13%	<i>Considero que los materiales de inglés generan un impacto positivo y motivan el aprendizaje cuando los temas y contenidos son relevantes para los estudiantes.</i>
Total	136	100%	

Table 3. Summary of the learners' answers in the survey



A survey was conducted to get to know learners' insights toward the difficulties that hinder their learning process in the English class. Seven categories emerged after grouping and analyzing data collected from the learners' survey. The results gathered in this instrument show that participants perceived speaking as the most challenging skill because they are not capable of employing words or structuring utterances for a fluent speech in English. In the same way, some of the categories of the analysis also revealed learners' problems for communicating orally in the foreign language and an excessive use of Spanish as a vehicle for communication in class. Learners' lack of oral production with 28% of the frequencies, learners' lack of oral participation

in the L2 with 13% of the occurrences, and need for oral interaction in the L2 with 16% of the frequencies revealed that students enquired in this diagnostic phase are not skillful at speaking. Additionally, one category displayed learners' interest toward communicative activities with 30% of the results demonstrated that participants seek to have a more communicative methodology for the English class through more communicative and interactive tasks within the lesson. Another category that reveals hindrances in students' communicative competence is their lack of vocabulary with 13% of the frequencies. In fact, eighteen students in the class highlighted in the survey they only know between ten and fifty words in English, which hinders their speech in this language.

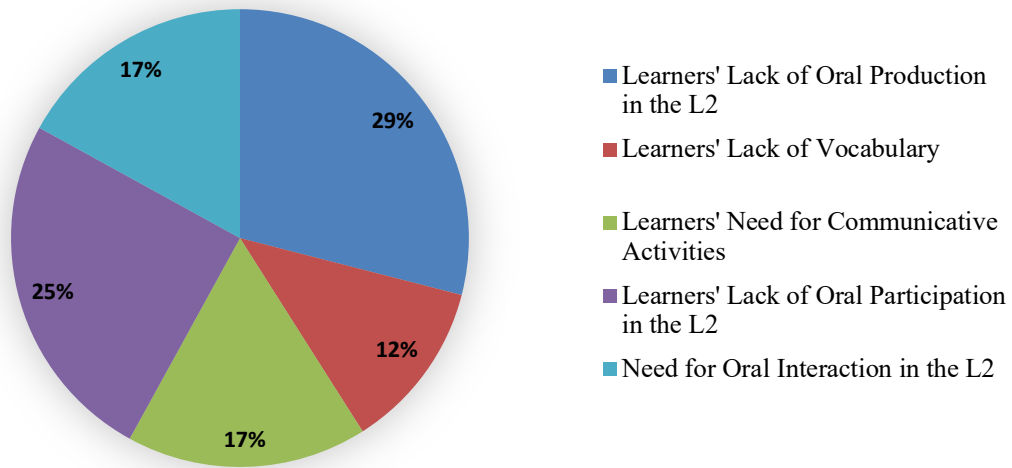
5.1.2. External Observer's Interview

External Observer's Interview			
Categories	Occurrences	Percentage	Evidence
Learners' lack of Oral Production in the L2	9	22%	<i>I notice here most students don't speak much or interact each other in English during the class, they are very low in speaking and perhaps in listening too because most instructions have to be translated into Spanish, they don't seem to understand what they listen in English...their use of English is very limited for the class perhaps a 30/70 being thirty the amount of English used and seventy for Spanish use.</i>
Learners' lack of vocabulary	5	12%	<i>Most students are afraid of speaking because they have no clue of how to say things in English nor how to pronounce correctly the few words they know.</i>
Mispronunciation of words	3	7%	<i>Some of them don't like the foreign language or say that the pronunciation is too difficult for them, that words in English are difficult too.</i>
Learners' need for Communicative activities	5	12%	<i>I consider there was a lot of grammar explanation in this class and this didn't lead students to have real communication in</i>

			<i>English among them during the class...There was no warm-up or previous tasks to invite students to participate or guess the topic, and there were no communicative activities for the class, everything focused on grammar.</i>
Learners' lack of Oral Participation in the L2	6	15%	<i>Well, students are very silent in most part of the lesson. They don't say much in English and the few times they talked during the class it was in Spanish</i>
Need for Oral Interaction in the L2	7	17%	<i>There is not much spoken interaction in English among them, they don't seem to use the foreign language for anything... Besides, the activities they did were mostly individual work, students worked on their own without interacting with one another.</i>
Negative feelings toward English	4	10%	<i>Students don't seem to care learning a new language and most importantly, they don't see the usefulness that English represents to their lives in the town, most of them come from rural areas or farms so they don't really see the need or the benefits of learning another language.</i>
Need for Contextualized materials	2	5%	<i>Students worked with seldom worksheets provided but there is not like a proof of a sequence for the tasks in the worksheets.</i>
Total	41	100%	

Table 4. Summary of the external observer answers in the interview.

External Observer's Interview



An external observer interview was conducted in the pursuit of having another perspective of learners' hindrances in English and their overall performance. After grouping and analyzing data gathered from this instrument, eight categories emerged in the analysis. The results collected from the interview revealed students' difficulties for communicating, interacting and participating orally in the EFL class. Some of the categories, which confirm this statement are learners' lack of oral production with 29% of the frequencies, learners' lack of oral participation in the L2 with a number of 25% occurrences, need for oral interaction in the L2 with 17% of the results and learners' need for communicative activities with 17% of the frequencies. Other categories found like learners' lack of vocabulary with a number of 12% occurrences, and mispronunciation of words with 7% of the results were linked to learners' lack of oral production due to linguistic factors. Additionally, an emerging category displayed in this instrument like negative feelings toward English with 10% of the results was associated to students' lack of oral participation in L2 during the lessons due to affective factors.

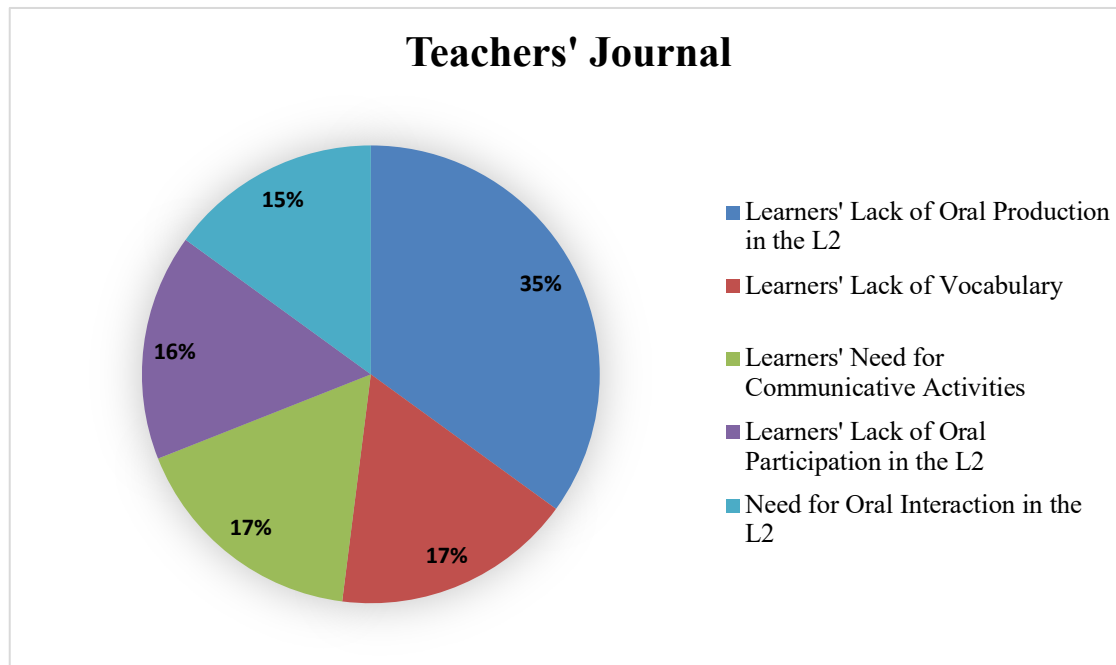
5.1.3. Teacher's Journal

Teachers' Journal

Categories	Occurrences	Percentage	Evidence
Learners' lack of Oral Production in the L2	11	23%	<i>Most of the times they didn't know what to say so they constantly called me to help them structure their speech in English, or to tell them which words to use. Some of them knew what to advice in Spanish but failed to say it in English.</i>
Learners' lack of vocabulary	8	17%	<i>Some questions were hard to understand for some students who looked at me and continually say: qué es eso teacher? they didn't recognize some of the words in there like: blackboard, pupils, drawing, next to and glasses. Very few students guessed the questions, in some questions they repeated: y en Spanish teacher?</i>
Mispronunciation of words	6	12%	<i>Another aspect that was difficult during the lesson was the pronunciation. Words related with the suffix 'Ache' generated great difficulty for my students' pronunciation. Many of them struggle pronouncing the terms: toothache, headache, stomach ache.</i>
Learners' need for Communicative activities	8	17%	<i>I noticed that students enjoy working in pairs, they seemed to be more confidently if they are working in groups than on their own. They do activities faster and they are much likely to speak with their classmate in English for doing a speaking task than in the class in the form of individual participation.</i>
Learners' lack of Oral Participation in the L2	6	12%	<i>I continually ask students 'how do we call this in English?' but unfortunately many students responded in Spanish most of the times, they didn't know the names of the foods in English even though I gave them clues to guess these.</i>
Negative feelings toward English.	2	4%	<i>Although they understood the idea of what they had to do in the role play, many of them didn't want to do it at all and refused to present it in front of everybody. Some students complained that they didn't know how to pronounce correctly some of the words given there and that they felt they were not capable of doing so.</i>

Need for Oral Interaction in the L2	7	15%	<i>However, while performing the activity in teams, students interacted and spoke a lot in Spanish with each other when the goal of the task was to make them interact in English, which didn't happen.</i>
Total	48	100%	

Table 5. Summary of the teacher's journal answers.



To trace down learners' performance during the lessons, a teacher's journal was kept. The journal entries were referenced on six classroom observations held during a two-week period with ninth grade students. After grouping and analyzing data collected from this instrument, it was revealed that students struggled to produce English orally during the classroom tasks and presented fallacies in vocabulary that hinder effective communication. This finding is directly associated with learners who continuously used Spanish as the main vehicle of communication for participating and interacting with their classmates throughout the different tasks performed in class. These statements are supported with four of the seven categories that emerged in the data analysis of the instrument. These categories are learners' lack of oral

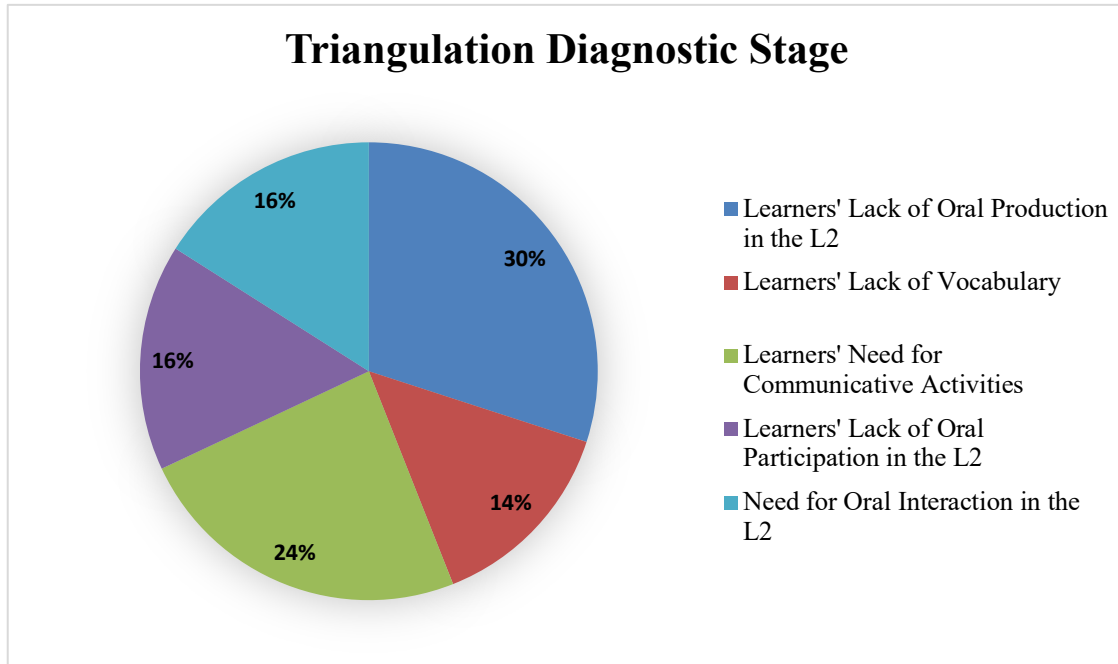
production with 35% of the data collected, learners' lack of oral participation in the L2 with 16% of the frequencies, need for oral interaction in the L2 with a score of 15% of the occurrences, and learners' lack of vocabulary with 17% of the results collected.

Moreover, the analysis of the teachers' journal entries unveiled learners' interest toward communicative tasks, in which they needed to work with their peers. The category learners' need for communicative activities with 17% of the frequencies supports this statement. Additionally, through the analysis it has been perceived that some learners had negative feelings toward speaking in English due to affective factors like fear and lack of confidence for talking in public.

5.1.4. Data Triangulation

Code/ Category	Operationalization	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS			Total	Percentage
		Learners' Survey	External Observer interview	Teachers' Journal		
Learners' lack of Oral Production in the L2	Students' difficulties to speak in English.	38	12	17	67	30%
Need for Oral Interaction in the L2	Students' lack of interaction in English.	22	7	7	36	16%
Learners' lack of Vocabulary	Students' little knowledge on words in English.	18	5	8	31	14%
Learners' lack of Oral Participation in the L2	Students' lack of speaking participation in the English class.	18	10	8	36	16%
Learners' need for Communicative activities	Students' interests toward implementing communicative tasks in class.	40	7	8	55	24%
TOTAL		136	41	48	225	100%

Table 6. Summary of the triangulation results.



Through the application and analysis of the instruments, the data collected was coded in the triangulation of the results, and five categories emerged in the diagnostic stage. The highest percentage is related to students' deficiency in the speaking skill with a score of 30% of the frequencies. This category entailed learners' linguistic factors like mispronunciation of words and lack of fluency in classroom tasks and overall performance. Furthermore, 16% of the data revealed that students rarely participate or interact in the L2 with their classmates. Similarly, 14% of the results unveiled students' lack of vocabulary, which may explain their lack of oral participation in the foreign language and their persistent use of Spanish in the lessons. Finally, 24% of the data collected showed that students were interested toward communicative activities and considered these tasks motivating and engaging for their learning. Based on these findings, it can be stated that students unveiled deficiency in the oral production skill and the linguistic factors comprising it. Nevertheless, participants' need and interest toward communicative tasks

emerged as a strategy to implement a more communicative methodology aimed at overcoming their speaking fallacy in the English lessons.

6. Instructional Design and Pedagogical Intervention

6.1 Instructional Design

This research study aims to analyze the impact of contextualized materials based on the CLT approach on nine graders' speaking competence in English. Based on the results obtained in the diagnostic stage, that indicated that the participants of this study had difficulties to communicate orally in the English class, it was decided to design and implement six workshops based on the CLT approach. These workshops contained communicative tasks to foster oral production and interaction in the English class through interviews, role plays, information-transfer activities, task-completion exercises, information-gathering, and opinion-sharing tasks. Moreover, these workshops were based on Dörnyei and Thurrell's conversational strategies (1994) and Halliday's functional language (1975).

Each workshop's structure was divided into four stages: structural stage, pre-communicative stage, functional communication stage, and social-interactional stage. The structural stage was focused on pronunciation and vocabulary practice. In this stage, students perform exercises to practice spelling, intonation, pronunciation and meaning of words. Richards (2006) suggests that every CLT lesson should start with a phase for mechanical practice before facing learners to communicative tasks. This stage is based on a "controlled practice activity which students can successfully carry out without necessarily understanding the language they are using" (Richards, 2006, p.16). Some instances of these activities are repetition drills or substitution drills. This beginning stage is in charge of introducing the vocabulary and the use of

particular grammar that is going to be in the workshop. Also, this structural and mechanical stage helps students be engaged in the topic entailed in the workshop itself.

The pre-communicative stage was focused on introducing the first conversational strategy to be put into practice in the workshop. In this stage, students performed communicative tasks, in which they had to express their opinions, provide information, ask for help, or request for a specific service. Littlewood (1981) defines the tasks entailed in this stage of the lesson as “quasi-communicative activities”. Here, learners have their first communicative task in the L2 to start practicing oral production. Another goal of this phase of the lesson is to provide meaningful practice. According to Richards (2006) “meaningful practice refers to an activity where language control is still provided but where students are required to make meaningful choices when carrying out practice” (p.16).

The functional communication stage emphasizes on tasks used to help students to practice the language functions required for communicating in a specific activity, as well as in real-life situations. In this stage, learners encounter with the second conversational strategy involved in the workshop and perform diverse exercises to put them into practice. Littlewood (1981) highlights that “the principle underlying functional communication activities is that the teacher structures the situation so that learners have to overcome an information gap or solve a problem” (p.22). This way, learners share and process information to perform the tasks contained in the functional stage.

Lastly, the social-interactional stage was concerned with students’ interaction within a given social context. In this final part of the lesson, learners exchange information with other classmates, by interacting in tasks like dialogues, interviews, role plays, improvisations, debates, conversation, and discussion sessions. One of the main objectives of the social-interactional

stage is to foster communicative practice in the English class. In this respect, Richards (2006) suggests that “communicative practice refers to activities where practice in using language within a real communicative context is the focus, where real information is exchanged, and where the language used is not totally predictable” (p.16). That is to say, this stage provides a more clearly defined social context for the tasks, by allowing students to cooperate and communicate with each other, by taking into consideration their own contexts, and other times, by simulating a different social context. Based on Littlewood's views (1981), the tasks of this stage of the lesson “approximate more closely to the kind of communication situation encountered outside the classroom, where language is not only a functional instrument, but also a form of social behavior” (p.43).

Finally, the topics used for each workshop were taken from both the school's curriculum and students’ suggestions of contents they would like to learn; however, these topics were adapted to a communicative methodology based on the framework of the CLT approach to foster student’s oral production and interaction in the classroom.

6.2 Pedagogical Intervention

The sequence described in the instructional design was developed through a pedagogical intervention integrating a communicative methodology, the various topics taken from the school’s curriculum and students’ proposals, and two conversational strategies used in each workshop.

Lesson Plan	Topic	Stages	Objective	Conversational Strategy
Lesson plan 1	<i>Knowing my region</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). 	<p>General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to describe and talk about the most common places of their town.</p> <p>Specific Objectives</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ask for or give advice on subjects related to my town context. ▪ To identify and use vocabulary related to places, and social services of my community. ▪ To express personal opinions about my home town, its places and people. 	<p>Asking for or giving advice.</p> <p>Giving information.</p>
Lesson plan 2	<i>Family in my community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<p>General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to talk about the activities they do and share with their families, and the living conditions at their home town and community.</p> <p>Specific Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ask for personal information on living conditions in my town. ▪ To identify and use vocabulary related to family, activities and living conditions of my community. ▪ To describe my family and its members. 	<p>Asking for information.</p>
Lesson plan 3	<i>Food in my region</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<p>General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to talk about the most produced kinds of food of their region the same as talk about their food routines and eating habits.</p> <p>Specific Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To talk about likes and dislikes in terms of food. ▪ To identify and use vocabulary related to general food and food specifically produced in my region. ▪ To give account of what I normally eat during a day ▪ To give advice on how to eat healthy and to stay in shape. 	<p>Giving information.</p> <p>Giving advice.</p>
Lesson plan 4	<i>What do I celebrate?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). 	<p>General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to ask for a favor in different life situations and conditions.</p> <p>Specific Objectives</p>	<p>Showing contrast.</p> <p>Asking for help.</p>

		→ Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To talk about holidays, celebrations, their dates and activities we do during these holidays. ▪ To ask for someone's vacation and basic information concerned with it. ▪ To ask for help and rent a service in a given situation. ▪ To order for food in a restaurant keeping in mind one's likes, dislikes and food restrictions. 	
Lesson plan 5	<i>Going abroad</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<p style="text-align: center;">General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to ask and give directions on how to get to a place and they will be able to talk about essential belongings for a trip on vacation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Specific Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To give and ask for directions on how to get to a place in a city or town. ▪ To request information to rent a car. ▪ To provide personal information on a VISA interview to travel abroad. ▪ To talk about places, I would like to visit. 	<p>Giving information: talking about my essential belongings for a trip.</p> <p>Giving and getting Directions.</p>
Lesson plan 6	<i>Beyond cultures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<p style="text-align: center;">General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to talk and express opinions on cultures they like and cultural aspects entailed in them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Specific Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To make and respond to suggestions for the best type of vacation according to one's lifestyle. ▪ To express opinion on cultural aspects of other countries I like. ▪ To talk about cultures and countries I would like to visit. ▪ To make requests to get information on a given issue. 	<p>Expressing opinion</p> <p>Making and responding to suggestions.</p> <p>Making requests.</p>

Table 7. Summary of lesson plans.

To begin with, the first workshop is called *Knowing my Region*. This workshop's main goal is to have students describe and talk about the most common places of their town. The topic

for this plan was places around town and services in a community, these topics were adapted to a communicative methodology. In the structural stage, there are two repetition and drilling exercises for pronunciation practice. Then, there are two vocabulary tasks, first, there is a matching picture exercise of places around town. Here, students match some pictures taken from their town with their proper names. The second task is an information-gap exercise in which, learners have descriptions of the services provided in the places of the town and their names. Students have to join each description with the name of the place that corresponds to that service.

The pre-communicative stage has a guided speaking task with some questions to have learners speak about their home town. In the functional communication stage, students work with the conversational strategy asking and giving advice, by performing a pair-work oral production exercise in which, they role play a situation of their choice out of six situations given in the task. Here, learners ask and provide advice to each other. The social-interactional stage is composed of two tasks, in the first, students play a board game in groups to answer questions of the places in their town. In the second task, students write a tourist guide brochure inviting people to their home town, for then to present it with the whole class.

The second workshop is titled *Family in my Community*. This workshop has as a main objective to have students talk about the activities they do with their families, and the living conditions at their home town and community. The structural stage is composed of three parts, in the first part learners are required to say three activities they do with their families and spell them. The second part is a pair work task in which, students interview each other about their family lives and conditions. In the third part, learners report the information gathered from their classmates to the class. The pre-communicative stage introduces the conversational strategy asking for information through a guided speaking session with questions to have students talk

about the types of families in their town and their living conditions. The functional communication stage is composed of an interview that learners role play with a partner. Here, they simulate to be part of the DANE organization and their mission is to enquire their peer about the town's population and each family's formation, by answering a questionnaire included in the workshop. The last stage is concerned with the social interactional stage. In this phase, learners are required to complete a family tree with their own information to be then presented to the class.

The third workshop is known as *Food in my Region*. This workshop's main objective is to have students talk about the most produced kinds of food of their region as well as talk about their food routines and eating habits. As in the previous workshops, in the structural stage, there are some tasks to promote pronunciation and vocabulary practice. This time, students repeat and spell some traditional eating products found in their region. Afterwards, students complete the vocabulary in a conversation titled *What would you like for breakfast* and role play it with a classmate. For the pre-communicative stage, there is a guided speaking session with questions to have students talk about what they normally have for breakfast and to describe how is a typical breakfast in the coffee region they live in.

The functional communication stage reviews the conversational strategy giving information, by having students in a conversation session where they talk about the most produced food in their region. The social interaction stage is composed of two parts. In the first part, learners watch a picture of a fridge and write the food they see in it, then they share their responses with the class. The second part invites students to record a two-minute video introducing themselves and providing personal information, such as what their favorite foods are,

what the most produced kinds of food in their region are, and lastly, learners should provide some advice on how to eat healthily and to stay in shape, in the video.

The fourth workshop is called *What do I Celebrate*. This workshop has as a main goal to have students ask for a favor in different life situations and conditions. The structural stage is formed of two phases. In the first phase, there is a vocabulary practice task in which students match holidays vocabulary with their corresponding pictures. In the second phase, there is pronunciation practice. Learners write in a given chart three words that are difficult for them to pronounce, three words that are easy for them and three words they consider they need to improve. The pre-communicative stage introduces the conversational strategy showing contrast through a guided speaking task with questions to have students talk about the differences of two pictures of their town shown in the workshop. In the second phase of the stage, learners are invited to have an interview with their classmate. Each learner is given a role (student A-student B chart). By following the prompts given, each student makes and answer questions to each other to know what they did and where they went on vacation.

The functional communication stage entails the conversational strategy asking for help. There are three cases offered to the class. Students work in pairs and select one case they like to role play. In all of the cases they need to ask for help to get a precise service. For this, the teacher provides some useful vocabulary and expressions to ask for a favor and guide their talk. Lastly, in the social-interactional stage, there is a flyer learners complete with information to create a new holiday or celebration in their town, then, they present their flyers to the class and say when their celebrations will be, the reason, and the events and activities held in them.

The fifth workshop was known *Going Abroad*. This workshop's main objective is to have students ask and give directions on how to get to a place and also, have them talk about essential

belongings for a trip on vacation. As in the previous stages, the structural stage has a vocabulary and a pronunciation practice phase. In the beginning phase, students take a vacation quiz. Here, they complete some general trivia phrases with appropriate words to make them logical. Then, students classify these words into nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Afterwards, students say which of these words are difficult for them to pronounce and which they need to improve. Here, there is a pronunciation and repetition practice time with each of the words students need to progress on.

The last phase of this stage is an interview task. Learners work in pairs and test their partner, by asking them names of countries, cities, continents and lakes. The pre-communicative stage introduces the conversational strategy, by giving information, by using the topic, by talking about essential belongings for a trip through an opinion-sharing task. The teacher tells students that they're going abroad for a two-week vacation. Students have to say which country they are visiting, and explain which things they will pack in their suitcases and why. Next, in the functional communication stage the conversational strategy giving and getting directions is introduced. Teacher explains students the vocabulary and expressions to give a direction and also to ask for one. Then, a map of the city of Boston is given to students. For this task, they work in pairs and they need to ask and give directions for three different places on the map of Boston, by taking turns for their talk. Students present their simulations with the whole class. Afterwards, learners are given some services they can get in a city, by looking at the map of the previous activity they should say in which specific places of the city of Boston they can find them.

Subsequently, the last phase of the stage is a listening task. Students listen to a conversation between a tourist and a guide and complete the conversation with the words they hear. Then, learners practice this conversation with a partner. The last stage of the workshop known as the social-interactional stage involves the conversational strategy requesting for a

service. This stage is composed of two parts. In the first part, teacher provides a context situation to students. Teacher tells them they are in Rio de Janeiro for their summer vacations and they need to rent a car for their stay. Learners simulate the situation with a classmate and request the car rental manager for the car they need, they do this in pairs, by following a given criteria card in the workshop. For the second part, students have an interview task in which they simulate they're having an interview to obtain the VISA to go abroad. Students express some reasons to justify their VISA request, besides, they are given some questions to prepare their interview in advance, and each student is scheduled to have the interview with the teacher in a video conference.

Finally, the last workshop is titled *Beyond cultures*. This workshop has as a main goal to have students talk and to express opinions on cultures that they like and cultural aspects entailed in them. As in the previous workshops, the structural stage promotes vocabulary and pronunciation practice. In this stage students take two cultural quizzes of Australia and Canada. Next, learners perform a spelling task for pronunciation checking. The pre-communicative stage introduces the conversational strategy expressing opinion, by using the topic suggesting a vacation plan. Students receive three tourist profiles, they select one, and in pairs, they discuss the best type of vacation for each of these people, by providing advice for their most appropriate vacation. Then students take the quiz *'What kind of tourist are you?'* and there is a discussion session to share their answers and opinions. Subsequently, there are two guided speaking tasks with questions in which students express their opinions on the cultures they want to visit and how their country is different from other cultures.

The functional communication stage retakes the same conversational strategy used in the former stage and sets four speaking tasks for students to communicate and interact with each

other. Here, there is a debate discussion in which, students talk about what they understand by the word culture and what aspects come into their minds when they hear this word. In this debate, learners are also encouraged to talk about the typical features of their own national culture. The last task of the phase is concerned with a speaking task, in which students work in groups and agree on 12 items to be placed in a time capsule that will be opened in two hundred years' time. Learners choose the items they consider best represent their culture as it is today and then, present the content of their time capsules to the class along with the reasons for their choices.

Finally, the social-interactional stage presents two conversational strategies, which make suggestions and requests, and respond accordingly. For the first phase, there is a listening task. Learners complete three conversations they hear with expressions for making and responding suggestions. Then, they role play these conversations in pairs. Next, the teacher encourages the class to make suggestions to a classmate and agree on an activity for this weekend, students simulate their conversations and present these to the class. The last exercise of this phase consists of a task-completion activity, in which students organize phrases to make requests. Afterwards, there is an Information-gathering activity. Here, the teacher gives learners a conversation between a museum guide and a tourist. Learners have to complete and organize this conversation with expressions of making requests. Then, students role play to the class this conversation in pairs. Lastly, the concluding exercise of this stage involves vocabulary practice. Learners are encouraged to match visual notices they can encounter in a museum with their corresponding meanings.

7. Action Stage

Based on the results drawn from the diagnostic stage analysis, it was identified that ninth graders struggled communicating in English orally. These difficulties are associated with lack of fluency and pronunciation, lack of vocabulary, speaking shyness, and not employing communicative tasks and conversational strategies in the classroom. Because of this, there is a need to propose a more communicative methodology that promotes and enhances students' communicative competence, oral interaction, participation, and use of L2 in the EFL classroom.

To foster ninth graders' use of L2 in the English class, six lesson plans were created and implemented. The workshops were designed under the CLT Framework and their main objective aims at promoting learners' communicative competence, as well as enhancing speaking aspects, such as pronunciation, fluency and vocabulary. The language functions taught through the six workshops were selected from the school's curriculum and learners' needs and personal interests. Moreover, these workshops were designed using facts and information from the students' town. It is important to note that due to the global pandemic emergency and all schools' politics of virtual education, the six communicative workshops had to be implemented virtually.

This action stage has been distributed into three phases that follow Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) spiral model. During each phase of the action stage, the researcher gathered data, by using three instruments, such as a teacher's journal, a learners' survey and an external observer checklist. Subsequently, each phase comprises two lesson plans, and their analysis made from the occurrences that were grouped using colors as suggested by Ryan and Russell (2003) Pawing technique to distinguish the categories resulted in each of the data collection instruments.

7.1 Lesson Plans and Workshops

During the action stage, six workshops were implemented in ninth grade. The target group received three hours of English instruction per week, thus, each workshop was designed to be completed in 9 hours or three weeks. The school's curriculum was embedded into each of the workshops, allowing some gaps for adaptations and variations in terms of speaking topics. The framework used to design each workshop was created under the CLT approach. Each lesson plan aims at promoting learners' communicative competence and introduces a conversational strategy or a language function to be performed through the communicative tasks provided in there.

Lesson Plan	Topic	Stages	Objective	Conversational Strategy
Lesson plan 1	<i>Knowing my region</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<p>General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to describe and talk about the most common places of their town.</p> <p>Specific Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ask for or give advice on subjects related to my town context. ▪ To identify and use vocabulary related to places, and social services of my community. ▪ To express personal opinions about my home town, its places and people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asking for or giving advice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Giving information.
Lesson plan 2	<i>Family in my community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<p>General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to talk about the activities they do and share with their families, and the living conditions at their home town and community.</p> <p>Specific Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ask for personal information on living conditions in my town. ▪ To identify and use vocabulary related to family, activities and living conditions of my community. ▪ To describe my family and its members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asking for information.
Lesson plan 3	<i>Food in my region</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). 	<p>General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to talk about the most produced kinds of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Giving information. ▪ Giving advice.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<p>food of their region the same as talk about their food routines and eating habits.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Specific Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To talk about likes and dislikes in terms of food. ▪ To identify and use vocabulary related to general food and food specifically produced in my region. ▪ To give account of what I normally eat during a day ▪ To give advice on how to eat healthy and to stay in shape. 	
Lesson plan 4	<i>What do I celebrate?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<p style="text-align: center;">General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to ask for a favor in different life situations and conditions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Specific Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To talk about holidays, celebrations, their dates and activities we do during these holidays. ▪ To ask for someone's vacation and basic information concerned with it. ▪ To ask for help and rent a service in a given situation. ▪ To order for food in a restaurant keeping in mind one's likes, dislikes and food restrictions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Showing contrast. ▪ Asking for help.
Lesson plan 5	<i>Going abroad</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<p style="text-align: center;">General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to ask and give directions on how to get to a place and they will be able to talk about essential belongings for a trip on vacation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Specific Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To give and ask for directions on how to get to a place in a city or town. ▪ To request information to rent a car. ▪ To provide personal information on a VISA interview to travel abroad. ▪ To talk about places, I would like to visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Giving information: talking about my essential belongings for a trip. ▪ Giving and getting Directions.
Lesson plan 6	<i>Beyond cultures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Structural stage (warm-up). → Pre-communicative stage (meaningful practice). → Functional communication stage (functional language practice). → Social-interactive stage (communicative practice and wrap up). 	<p style="text-align: center;">General Objective</p> <p>By the end of the lesson, students will be able to talk and express opinions on cultures they like and cultural aspects entailed in them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Specific Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To make and respond to suggestions for the best type of vacation according to one's lifestyle. ▪ To express opinion on cultural aspects of other countries I like. ▪ To talk about cultures and countries I would like to visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expressing opinion ▪ Making and responding to suggestions. ▪ Making requests.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To make requests to get information on a given issue. 	
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Table 8. Lesson Plans and workshops of the implementation.

7.1.1. Phase One

Distribution in phase one.

Phases	Lesson plans	Topic	Objectives	Conversational Strategy-Language Function	Data Collection Instruments
Phase 1	Lesson plan 1	Knowing my region	<p>General Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to describe and talk about the most common places of their town.</p> <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ask for or give advice on subjects related to my town context. ▪ To identify and use vocabulary related to places, and social services of my community. ▪ To express personal opinions about my home town, its places and people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asking for or giving advice. ▪ Giving information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher-researcher's diary
	Lesson plan 2	Family in my Community	<p>General Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to talk about the activities they do and share with their families, and the living conditions at their home town and community.</p> <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ask for personal information on living conditions in my town. ▪ To identify and use vocabulary related to family, activities and living conditions of my community. ▪ To describe my family and its members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asking for information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External observer checklist ▪ Students' survey

Table 9. Lesson plans Phase one.

Table 9 shows that phase one comprised lesson plan one and two, which aimed at promoting oral description of places and living conditions in the learners' home town using conversational strategies, such as asking for and giving advice, and asking and providing information. The researcher designed and applied three data collection instruments to gather information regarding the students' performance.

Lesson plan 1: Knowing my region.

The first phase of the action stage encompasses lesson plan #1 named *Knowing my Region*. This first phase pursues to observe and describe the influence that the CLT approach has on learners' speaking skill after their application in ninth graders' English class. This first workshop's main goal is to have students describe and talk about the most common places of their town and activities to do when visiting this place. The topic for this lesson plan was places around town and services in a community.

Based on the CLT guidelines by Richards and Rodgers (1986), a CLT lesson plan is divided into four stages. The first one corresponds to the structural stage. In here, learners performed two repetition and drilling exercises for pronunciation practice. Then, there are two vocabulary tasks that consist of a matching picture exercise of places around town and an information-gap exercise of services in the community. The second stage named pre-communicative stage has a guided speaking task with some questions to have learners speak about their home town.

In the functional communication stage, students work with the conversational strategy asking and giving advice, by performing a pair-work oral production exercise in which, they role play a situation of their choice out of six situations given in the task. Learners ask and provide advice to each other in this task. The fourth stage corresponds to the social-interactional stage, which is constituted by two tasks, in the first, students play a board game in groups to answer questions of the places in their town. In the second task, students write a tourist guide brochure inviting people to visit their home town, for then to present it with the whole class. Seven lessons were used to apply the first workshop.

Lesson plan 2: Family in my Community.

Lesson plan #2 is titled *Family in my Community*. Eight lessons were used to apply this lesson plan whose main objective was to have students talk about the activities they do with their families, and the living conditions at their home town and community. The structural stage is divided in three parts. In the first, learners are invited to share three activities they do with their families and spell the names of those activities letter by letter to revise if they know how to spell them accurately. The second part is a pair-work task in which, students interview each other about their family lives and conditions. In the third part, learners report the information gathered from their classmates to the class.

The pre-communicative stage introduces the conversational strategy asking for information through a guided speaking session with questions to have students talk about the types of families found in their town and their living conditions.

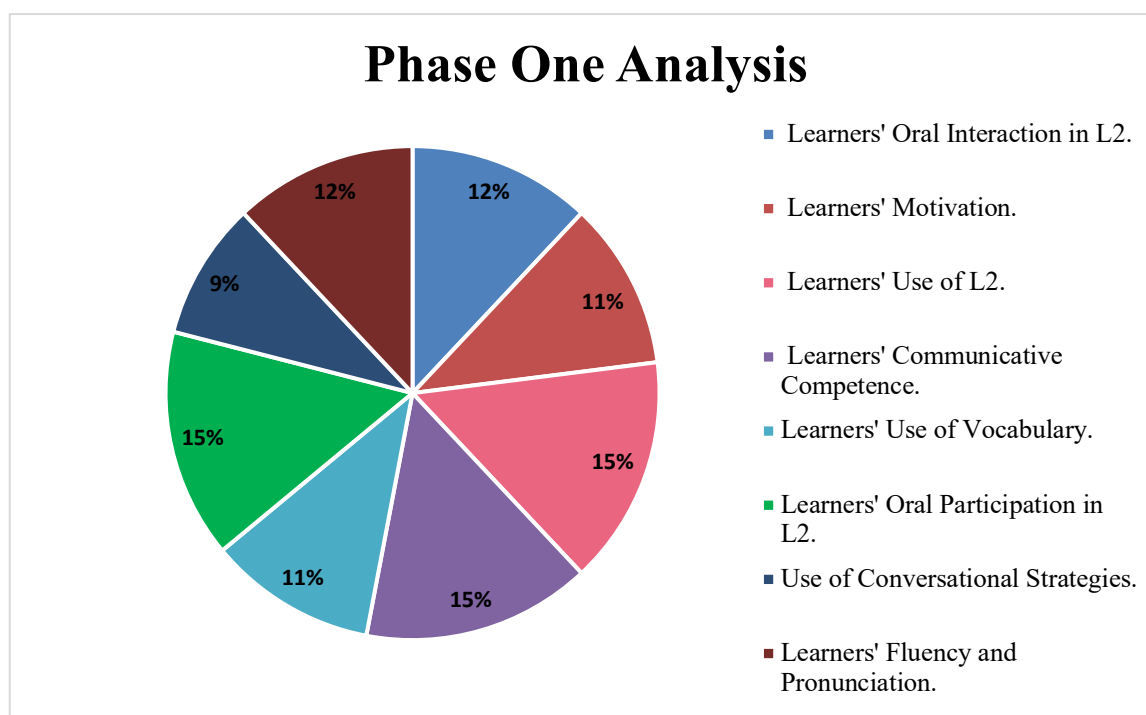
The functional communication stage includes an interview that learners simulate with a partner. They pretend they are part of the DANE organization and their mission is to enquire their peer about the town's population and each family's formation, by answering a questionnaire included in the workshop. The last stage is concerned with the social interactional stage. In this phase, learners create a family tree with their own information to be then presented to the class.

Phase One Analysis

The following table and graph show the occurrences obtained from the administration of the three instruments for phase one.

Code	External observation checklist	Learners' Survey	Teacher's Journal	Occurrences	Percentage
Learners' Oral Interaction in the L2.	4	11	8	23	12%

Learners' Motivation.	3	9	9	21	11%
Learners' use of the L2.	4	11	13	28	15%
Learners' Communicative Competence.	6	12	10	28	15%
Learners' use of Vocabulary.	3	8	9	20	11%
Learners' Oral Participation in L2.	3	9	16	28	15%
Use of Conversational Strategies.	4	8	5	17	9%
Learners' Fluency and Pronunciation.	2	12	9	23	12%
Total				188	100%



After analyzing the first two lesson plans corresponding to the first phase of implementation, there was evidence of the positive influence that the CLT approach had on ninth graders oral production skill. The results obtained from the analysis of the three instruments in phase one revealed that participants are using more English in the lessons.

This is represented with the category Learners' Use of L2, which is identified among the three instruments with 28 occurrences representing 15% of the codes. This code reveals that during the first phase, learners used English as the language for communicating in the classroom

while doing the tasks comprised in workshops one and two. This category is supported by some of the comments registered by the external observer in the checklist.

Descriptor #7 *Contextualization is a basic premise in the creation of the workshop, that is to say the workshop introduces contextualized tasks into the learning situation* establishes that students are using more English in the lessons to comply with the speaking tasks that are related to their daily contexts. This is inferred by the external observer remarks to this descriptor, such as,

The activities are designed to be developed in their real and everyday context. They promote meaningful communication, interaction among students and invite them to use English and their vocabulary and expressions to communicate what they need as much as they can in each of the tasks of the workshop.

Additionally, this information is again ratified by the responses given to Descriptor #13 from the checklist *Translation in tasks of the workshop may be used where students need or benefit from it*. The comments made by the external observer revealed that learners opted for using English as much as they could for each of the speaking tasks. This information is visualized here,

In most speaking tasks of this class, I noticed that translation was not as necessary as it was expected because the processes are sufficiently explained and exemplified so that the student fully understands the objective of the lesson and use English as much as possible for the development of most of the tasks provided in the workshop. Even though, students could translate, most of them opted for using expressions and vocabulary in English given in the class, and not depending on translation entirely.

On the other hand, some of the remarks made by students in the survey confirmed this information. Question twelve from the survey *¿Consideras que la metodología aplicada en los talleres (CLT: Communicative language teaching) promueve mucho más el desarrollo de su producción oral en comparación con otras metodologías usadas en clase?* determined that twelve students who represent 100% of the participants agreed on the fact that speaking has been fostered through the application of the CLT tasks. This percentage is supported by some of the learners' comments on this matter, such as,

'Pienso que esto nos ayuda a promover más el aprendizaje y habla del inglés'. (I think this help us to promote more the learning and speaking of English).

'Siento que cada vez hablo más en inglés ya sea dentro o fuera de las clases'. (I feel I'm speaking more in English every time, whether it is in or out of class).

'El actuarlo, vivirlo, interpretarlo como si fuese real, como si estuviese pasando en el momento, creo que es una manera que ayuda a hablar más en inglés y usarlo más, el conocer nuevas cosas como vocabulario también nos ayuda, esta metodología es una muy buena opción, en mi caso, siento que hablo más en inglés y entiendo mejor todo'. (Acting it, living it, interpreting it as if it were real, as if it were happening in the moment, I think it is a way that helps to speak more in English and use it more. Knowing new things like vocabulary also helps us. This methodology is a very good option, in my case, I feel that I speak more in English and understand everything better).

From the researcher's perspective the use of English was also highly evidenced in the students' performance. This is exemplified in some of the field notes recorded in the teachers' journal like:

In this lesson I realized that half of the students of the class sometimes need to receive an extra push to speak and participate in class, despite this, I noticed that there were more speaking interventions and more interaction in English in this class in comparison with the other lessons, I was able to notice that students spoke more freely and spontaneously about these family topics, they were more willing to communicate.

The results obtained from the analysis of the three instruments also display that one of the codes with the highest percentage is Students Communicative Competence with 15% of the occurrences on this first phase of the evaluation stage. As one of the main goals of CLT, Hymes (2001) defines communicative competence as the ability to use language for communication. (Hymes, 2001, p. 60). The data collected during the implementation of the workshops, as well as the application of the instruments, revealed that in some tasks of the lesson, students are using English in real life situations for fulfilling communicative needs, which can be inferred from their use of the communicative competence.

The external observer's comments confirm this statement in his response to descriptor #1 *The lesson provides opportunities for learners to focus not only on the language but also on the learning process itself.* In this regard, the external observer confirms that learners are using L2 for communication, by stating that:

The tasks in the lesson definitely promote using the language for communicating meaningfully within a context, throughout the tasks, I evidenced that students are constantly placed in situations in context where they need to employ English to transmit or ask for information or give advice to their classmates, I also noticed that students are more likely to communicate in English in tasks that were closed to their town context and daily realities, in my opinion, they seemed more encouraged using English in this tasks.

Subsequently, learners' communicative use of English in the workshops is also perceived in descriptor # 8 from the checklist *Dialogues proposed in the lesson center around communicative functions and are not normally memorized*. In this respect, the external observer highlighted that:

The exercises are not designed to be memorized, but to be performed meaningfully and communicatively speaking, these are aimed to encourage students to communicate with their classmates using English for real language scenarios like suggesting, requesting, asking for help or a service and things they normally do in their daily lives.

Conversely, some of the students' insights registered in the survey also suggest that they see the tasks as an opportunity to use English in a more communicative way. Question two from the survey *¿Cuál es su opinión frente a las temáticas de las actividades y tareas comunicativas que se han llevado a cabo en los talleres?* established that eleven students who represent 92% of the participants considered that their communicative competence has started to develop after the implementation of the CLT methodology, besides perceiving it as an amusing approach to learn. In this sense, students made some remarks, such as,

'Porque las metodologías anteriormente usadas nos daban menos libertad para expresarnos y normalmente era simplemente escuchar, ahora nos comunicamos más en inglés y trabajamos más con nuestros compañeros para hacer actividades hablando'. (Because the previously used methodologies gave us less freedom to express ourselves and it was usually merely listening, now we communicate more in English and we work more with our colleagues to perform speaking tasks).

‘Porque estamos en un continuo dialogo y eso me facilita mejorar los demás aspectos del idioma’. (Because we are in a continuous dialogue and that makes it easier for me to improve other aspects of the language).

‘Con los diálogos y las demás actividades comunicativas se nos hace más fácil aprender el inglés’ (With dialogues and other communicative activities it is easier for us to learn English).

The graph also displays that another category with a relevant percentage is Students Fluency and Pronunciation with 23 frequencies obtained in the three instruments that represent 12% on this first phase of the evaluation stage. As a matter of fact, fluency and pronunciation are a meaningful part of the constructs and the objectives of this study. The results revealed that students reflect a comprehensible pronunciation in their oral interventions and speaking tasks during the first and second workshop. Some of the comments registered in the teachers’ journal support this information:

In this part of the lesson that consisted of presenting each family tree, I noticed that students are participating eagerly, half of the class presented his family by giving all the information required in the task. The pronunciation of most students was acceptable and comprehensible and their intonation is improving except for one student out of twelve who were in the class.

Besides this, learners’ acceptable pronunciation is perceived by the external observer in his remarks toward descriptor #11 from the checklist *Comprehensible pronunciation and effective communication is sought*. In response to this descriptor, the external observer indicated that:

Despite few students’ pronunciation mistakes and still lack of fluency of some of them, effective communication is evidenced in most of the tasks I could observed in this lesson, students

have a very positive attitude and their interest and effort are seen in the class at the moment of pronouncing words and speaking in general.

On the other hand, students distinguish fluency and pronunciation as two factors they have enhanced since the articulation of the CLT methodology into the lessons. Question seven in students' survey *¿En qué aspectos de su producción oral ha notado mejoría después de participar en los talleres?* Indicated that ten students who represent 83% of the participants considered fluency, pronunciation and intonation as main aspects they feel they have improved more over other aspects like vocabulary. Students' comments confirm this information:

'Estas actividades de hablar me impactaron de mejor manera porque así aprendo a pronunciar mejor y a soltar más mi lengua para pronunciar mejor las cosas'. (These speaking activities impacted me in a better way because that way I learn to pronounce better and free my tongue to pronounce things better).

'Pues así uno aprende mucho mejor, se vuelve más suelto para hablar y aprende a pronunciar mucho mejor, y también aprende vocabulario'. (Well, that way one learns much better, becomes more fluent to speak and learns to pronounce much better, besides learning vocabulary).

'Creo que de esas maneras uno aprende mejor, se habla más en inglés, se pronuncia mejor'. (I think that in those ways we learn better, we speak more English, and we pronounce better).

'He disfrutado mucho las actividades de hablar ya que con ellas mejoro más mi pronunciación, es un reto para mí y cada clase intento ir mejorando'. (I have really enjoyed the speaking activities because with them, I improve more my pronunciation, it is a challenge for me and each class I try to improve).

To summarize, most of the data gathered from the first phase confirmed the positive influence that CLT has over learners' communicative competence, use of L2, participation, interaction and other speaking aspects, such as fluency and pronunciation. Nonetheless, there are other factors that learners still need to continue improving, such as vocabulary and fluency itself, taking into consideration that this first part of the analysis is just showing some results of how students' performance was at the beginning of the implementation.

7.1.2. Phase two

Distribution in phase two.

Phases	Lesson plans	Topic	Objectives	Conversational Strategy-Language Function	Data Collection Instruments
Phase 2	Lesson plan 3	Food in my region	<p>General Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to talk about the most produced kinds of food of their region the same as talk about their food routines and eating habits.</p> <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To talk about likes and dislikes in terms of food. ▪ To identify and use vocabulary related to general food and food specifically produced in my region. ▪ To give account of what I normally eat during a day ▪ To give advice on how to eat healthy and to stay in shape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Giving information. ▪ Giving advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher-researcher's diary ▪ External observer checklist
	Lesson plan 4	What do I celebrate?	<p>General Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to ask for a favor in different life situations and conditions.</p> <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To talk about holidays, celebrations, their dates and activities we do during these holidays. ▪ To ask for someone's vacation and basic information concerned with it. ▪ To ask for help and rent a service in a given situation. ▪ To order for food in a restaurant keeping in mind one's likes, dislikes and food restrictions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Showing contrast. ▪ Asking for help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students' survey

Table 10. Lesson plans Phase two.

Table 10 shows that phase two comprised lesson plan three and four, which aimed at promoting oral description of places and living conditions in the learners' home town using conversational strategies, such as asking for and giving advice, and asking and providing information. The researcher designed and applied three data collection instruments to gather information regarding the students' performance.

Lesson plan 3: Food in my region.

The second phase of the action stage encompasses lesson plan #3 known as *Food in my Region* and lesson plan #4 named *What do I celebrate*. This second phase pursues to observe and describe how learners' speaking skill has evolved after their application of the CLT approach in ninth graders' English class. This third workshop's main goal is to have students talk about the most produced kinds of food of their region as well as talk about their food routines and eating habits. As in the preceding workshops, the structural stage, seeks to promote pronunciation and vocabulary practice. This stage is composed of two parts, in the first, students repeat and spell some traditional eating products found in their region. In the second part, students complete the vocabulary in a conversation titled *What would you like for breakfast* and role play it with a classmate.

The pre-communicative stage provides a guided speaking session with questions to have students talk about what they normally have for breakfast and to describe how is a typical breakfast in their region. The functional communication stage emphasizes on the conversational strategy giving information, by having students in a discussion session where they talk about the most produced food in their region. The social interaction stage comprises two parts. In the first part, learners watch a picture of a fridge and write the food they see in it. Then, they share their

responses with the class. The second part invites students to record a two-minute video in which, they introduce themselves and say what their favorite foods are, what the most produced kinds of food in their region are, and they should give advice to eat healthy and to stay in shape too.

Lesson plan 4: What do I celebrate?

Lesson plan #4 is titled *What do I celebrate*. Eight lessons were used to apply this lesson plan whose main objective was to have students ask for a favor in different life situations and conditions. The structural stage is divided in two phases. In the first phase, there is a vocabulary practice task, students match holidays vocabulary with pictures that represent them. In the second phase, there is a pronunciation practice task. Learners write in a given chart three words that are difficult for them to pronounce, three words that are easy for them and three words they consider they need to improve. These words are shared and covered with the class.

The pre-communicative stage introduces the conversational strategy showing contrast through a guided speaking task with questions to have students talk about the differences of two pictures of their town shown in the workshop. In the second phase of the stage, learners are invited to have an interview with their classmate. Each learner is given a role (student A-student B chart). By following the prompts given, each student makes and answers questions to each other to know what they did and where they went on vacation.

The functional communication stage comprises the conversational strategy asking for help. The class chooses from three given situations. Students work in pairs and select one situation they would like to role play. In all of the cases, they need to ask for help to get a precise service. To do this, the teacher provides some useful vocabulary and expressions to ask for a

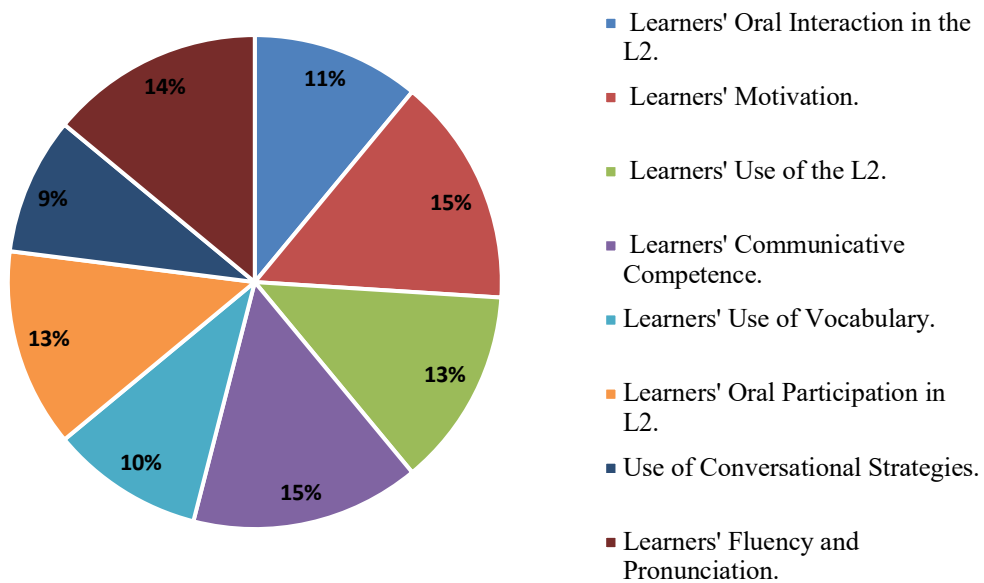
favor and guide their talk. Finally, in the social-interactional stage, there is a flyer learners complete with information to create a new holiday or celebration in their town, then, they present their flyers to the class and say when their celebrations will take place, the reason, and the events and activities held in them.

Phase Two Analysis

The following table and graph show the occurrences obtained from the administration of the three instruments for phase two.

Code	External Observation Checklist	Learners' Survey	Teacher's Journal	Occurrences	Percentage
Learners' Oral Interaction in the L2.	5	14	8	27	11%
Learners' motivation.	5	22	9	36	15%
Learners' Use of the L2.	7	10	14	31	13%
Learners' Communicative Competence.	11	13	12	36	15%
Learners' Use of Vocabulary.	5	9	9	23	10%
Learners' Oral Participation in L2.	5	15	12	32	13%
Use of Conversational Strategies.	7	9	6	22	9%
Learners' Fluency and Pronunciation.	7	15	12	34	14%
Total				241	100%

Phase Two Analysis



After analyzing the lesson plans three and four corresponding to the second phase of the implementation, there was evidence of a slight improvement in students' speaking performance in aspects, such as fluency and pronunciation. This is represented through the category Students' Fluency and Pronunciation, which is identified among the three instruments with 34 occurrences representing 14% of the codes. As a matter of fact, this category increased 2% compared to the results obtained in phase one. It can be concluded from the evidence obtained from this code that students have started to ameliorate their pronunciation and fluency in the speaking tasks proposed in third workshop *Food in my region* and fourth workshop *What do I celebrate*.

Descriptor #13 from the external observation checklist *Translation in tasks of the workshop may be used where students need or benefit from it* determines that students' messages are getting more assertive and comprehensible every time, their pronunciation has enhanced and this has reduced their need to use Spanish in the lessons. This is evidenced in the external observer annotations on this matter:

From what I could perceived in this class, students have started to ameliorate their intonation and pronunciation of words, their messages are more fluid and assertive, they speak in a more comprehensible way and it is also evidenced that they are getting every time more used to listen classroom language in L2 so they follow instructions easily without the need of translating as much as in the beginning of the lessons.

In addition to this, students later confirm this information, by expressing their perceptions to question #8 from the survey *¿De qué manera las estrategias de conversación impactaron su producción y comprensión oral en la lengua extranjera?* In this enquiry, learners expressed the positive influence that conversational strategies have had over their fluency and intonation at the moment of speaking. This is exemplified by some of the participants' comments, such as,

Siento que he mejorado mucho mi fluidez y entonación, ya no me siento tan insegura para pronunciar algunas palabras. (I feel that my fluency and intonation have improved a lot, I no longer feel so insecure to pronounce some words).

En mi opinión, estas estrategias me impactaron a nivel de mayor productividad en mi fluidez porque ahora ya son pocas palabras en las que me equivoco y creo que eso es un gran avance. (In my opinion, these strategies impacted me at the level of greater productivity in my fluency because now there are only few words, in which I am wrong and I think that is a great advance).

Question #12 from the survey *¿Consideras que la metodología aplicada en los talleres (CLT: Communicative language teaching) promueve mucho más el desarrollo de su producción oral en comparación con otras metodologías usadas en clase?* Reveals that besides contributing

to their fluency and intonation, learners consider that this approach has made them feel more involved to learn and speak in English. The following excerpt shows how a student commented about this question:

Porque a parte de ayudarnos a mejorar fluidez, pronunciación y demás nos ha servido para enamorarnos más del inglés, nos ha atraído hacia el idioma. (Because in addition to helping us improve fluency, pronunciation and other aspects, it has helped us to fall more in love with English, it has attracted us to the language).

In the same way, the teacher's journal supports the information gathered from the instruments, by claiming that learners could speak more fluently when performing conversations or when participating in class, which corroborates they are developing a smoother speech and a more confident use of English thanks to the implementation of the workshops. Some of the comments registered in the teachers' journal from the third workshop illustrate this statement:

The videos students made evidenced a confident, smooth and fluent use of English, in there I could see they were communicating their food preferences in a comprehensible language that reflected good pronunciation, they even used food vocabulary and some expressions to give information that were introduced and suggested in this third workshop.

From watching my students presenting their brochure projects, I could notice that every time there is a speaking task to present, some of them seemed to be freer and more confident to speak in public to the class. They sound more fluent and I do not have to scold their speech as much as I did before.

Similarly, some observations registered in the teacher's journal from the fourth workshop also reinforce this statement, by claiming that students are more receptive and willing to enhance their pronunciation of the words, and this is reflected in their speaking performance. The following comments recorded in the teacher's journal revealed this information:

Once the whole pronunciation is reviewed and practiced, students are required to practice the conversation in pairs. All students participated in this phase of the lesson, I noticed that their pronunciation improved in the words they had difficulties with at the beginning of the lesson, most students sound more fluent and their attitudes seemed more confident in this speaking task, their intonation enhanced in most of the words of the dialogue.

In general terms, students are more fluent and smoother in their speech, they speak with more confidence and they seemed to be much more committed in finding the right way to say words. In few students, there are still some errors to work on but specially in aspects related to intonation.

Another code that increased its number of occurrences to 36 frequencies in phase two and represents 15% of the results is Students' Communicative Competence. This category has emerged in both phase one and phase two with significant outcomes. In this category it was observed that in spite of still having some difficulties regarding grammar, intonation and syntax, learners are using the L2 to communicate with their classmates through a comprehensible speech evidenced in speaking tasks, in which they are continuously exploring the functional aspects of language. Some observations made by the external observer underline the communicative function of English in the lessons.

Descriptor #12 from the external observation checklist *The lesson evidences that the target linguistic system is learned best through the process of struggling to communicate. Language is created by the individual, often through trial and error* establishes that despite some linguistic fallacies, learners have evidenced a comprehensible speech in their speaking interventions. On this matter, the external observer's view is that:

In this lesson, it is clear that most tasks have a communicative and functional goal in students and as they get involved in the dynamics of each of the tasks, they have started to use expressions and ways to communicate better and express themselves in a much more comprehensible and fluent speech. Some topics of the workshop spark more enthusiasm in students than others and this is evidenced in their oral contributions. For instance, from what I could observe in the class, the food topic was appealing to them because they contributed a lot in the speaking sessions where they had to talk about it. Even though they still make some mistakes, their effort for communicating in the L2 what they think, is clear and observable in their participation.

Apart from fostering speaking in the lessons, the CLT approach has reduced the need to memorize oral interventions in the lesson. Descriptor #8 from the external observation checklist *Dialogues proposed in the lesson center around communicative functions and are not normally memorized* revealed that learners were using English in a more spontaneous form avoiding the tendency to memorize their speech. The following excerpt shows how the external observer broadens this thought:

From this observation, it is clear that the methodology of the session makes the development of activities more dynamic and productive, focusing the learning on fluid and assertive communication, but not on memorization, what often limits the effective productivity of the foreign language. The session definitely does offer the opportunity to connect not only with

the language that is being learned, but also with the communicative learning process of the subject by itself, through the active and proactive participation and interaction of each of the students. In the same way, the various teaching strategies applied during the session allow the students to see for themselves the strengths and weaknesses of their learning process in that language.

On the other hand, most students agreed in the survey that the CLT methodology has promoted considerably their development in the oral skill, which corroborates the advantages of the use of a more functional and communicative English in the classes through the implementation of the workshops.

Question #10 from the survey '*Teniendo en cuenta las actividades comunicativas desarrolladas en los talleres. ¿Cuál fue la actividad que más disfrutaste y por qué?*' Shows that students have enjoyed the communicative activities because these tasks emphasize less in grammar and center on functional aspects that can be useful in daily life situations. Regarding this idea, some students expressed that:

Me gustan estas actividades porque otras solo se enfocan en la gramática y casi no aprendemos, pero está metodología nos ayuda en todos los sentidos y en mi caso desde que estoy aquí, siento que he aprendido mucho más a lo que de toda mi vida he aprendido. (I like these activities because others only focus on grammar and we hardly learn, but this methodology helps us in every way and in my case since I am here, I feel that I have learned much more to what I have learned all my life).

Son actividades muy interesantes y didácticas que nos ayudan a mejorar en inglés porque interactuamos más con nuestros compañeros de clase simulando cosas que pasan en la vida real, creo que son actividades que nos facilitan y ayudan en el aprendizaje. (They are very interesting and didactic activities that help us to improve in English because we interact more with our classmates simulating things that happen in real life, I think they are activities that facilitate and help in language learning).

Disfruto mucho los diálogos, el de la maleta fue mi favorito porque me intereso hablar del país al que uno quiere viajar y lo que va a llevar. Pienso que eso le puede ayudar mucho a uno para aprender mas del idioma y a hablarlo mas bien. (I really enjoy the dialogues, the one with the traveling suitcase was my favorite because I was interested in talking about the country I want to visit and the objects I would take. I think that can help us a lot to learn more of the language and to speak it better).

In addition to this, comments recorded in the journal reflect on how students' communicative competence has evolved throughout the speaking tasks in workshops three and four. The journal portrays a reflection from the researcher on how students are getting more aware of communicating comprehensibly in the tasks:

A fact very interesting of this lesson is that in some parts of the class, some students seemed were very concerned of their speaking performance, they wanted to be understood when talking, and they continuously asked me if there was possible to practice the intonation of some words, they found difficult, this was new because before the implementation of the workshops, students kept their doubts to themselves and did not ask me to help them with their pronunciation or intonation. Now they seemed to be more concerned and interested in wanting to sound more

comprehensible and assertive at the moment of communicating with others, which is very positive to the class.

On the same spirit, the excerpt below shows a reflection recorded in the teacher's journal that evidences how learners are becoming more communicative, by providing more meaningful information in their oral interventions:

In some brochures, students express the reasons why people should live the experience of celebrating the holiday they were talking about, and some expressed their interest and wish to visit the country of that holiday, and explained some reasons to do it in English, this was new because this was not included in the information they had to expose, which proves they are more willing to use English in the lessons more than before. This was a very good contribution to the class because it shows students are making an effort to communicate more in the L2 than what they normally communicated before the implementation of the workshops.

Finally, one of the categories after the second phase of the evaluation stage was Students' motivation. This category represented 15% of the frequencies and it increased 4% compared to the results obtained in phase one revealing that students who made part of this research study were more interested and encouraged to use and speak in English during the implementation of the communicative lessons. Some annotations drawn from the teacher's journal unveil students' enthusiasm for performing functional speaking tasks in the L2, the excerpt below displays a comment from the journal kept in the third workshop:

I explained students and told them they would role play going to the restaurant in pairs and record their talk in a video. I showed my class four different restaurant menus to familiarize them with the task, then I told them I would assign menus to each pair to create their talk. After this happened, I noticed students were motivated for the task because they expressed excitement

when choosing menus and surprised since they were going to communicate in real daily life English to order food and drinks in a restaurant, expressing something they could do in real life too. Some students even created a personalized menu to do the task with its own recipes from the region, this shows they were very enthusiastic and it was amusing to perceive their interest.

By the same token, the external observer underlines students' positive attitudes and increasing interest in the communicative lessons and somehow links their motivation to the meaningful role they are given in each of the phases of the CLT class:

The personal experience of the students is a key element in the development of the observed activity, since they count on their own experiences to give a more subjective and at the same time objective opinion about what they think about what is being talked about, what makes students feel more comfortable and interested with the topics that are being taught in the session and they reflect this in their attitudes and great excitement when talking about the topics.

Also, students' perceptions supported this idea, by expressing they feel more confident, and encouraged toward learning English. The following excerpts illustrate students' positive reactions to the implementation of the communicative approach into their classes:

Son actividades demasiado interesantes, agradables y beneficiosas para nosotros, nuestro nivel en el inglés poco a poco va mejorando y todo es gracias a las temáticas de enseñanza y también a la paciencia, delicadeza, empatía y cariño con que nos enseña la profesora. (They are activities that are too interesting, pleasant and beneficial for us, our level in English is gradually improving and everything is thanks to the topics of teaching and also to the patience, delicacy, empathy and affection with which the teacher teaches us).

Esta metodología nueva que estamos usando en clase, me ha ayudado bastante no solo a mejorar mi producción oral, también en mi opinión, he incrementado el interés por aprender,

hablar y conocer un nuevo idioma, en este caso el inglés. (This new methodology that we are using in class, has helped me a lot not only to improve my oral production, also in my opinion, I have increased the interest to learn, speak and know a new language, in this case English).

In brief, this second phase of the evaluation stage confirms that learners communicate more comprehensibly, by having gained more confidence, fluency and good pronunciation when speaking in English, besides ratifying how their motivation has grown thanks to the functional and communicative focus of the English classes.

7.1.3. Phase three

Distribution in phase three.

Phases	Lesson plans	Topic	Objectives	Conversational Strategy-Language Function	Data Collection Instruments
Phase 3	Lesson plan 5	Going abroad	<p>General Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to ask and give directions on how to get to a place and they will be able to talk about essential belongings for a trip on vacation.</p> <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To give and ask for directions on how to get to a place in a city or town. ▪ To request information to rent a car. ▪ To provide personal information on a VISA interview to travel abroad. ▪ To talk about places, I would like to visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Giving and getting Directions. ▪ Giving information: talking about my essential belongings for a trip. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher-researcher's diary
	Lesson plan 6	Beyond cultures	<p>General Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to talk and express opinions on cultures they like and cultural aspects entailed in them.</p> <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To make and respond to suggestions for the best type of vacation according to one's lifestyle. ▪ To express an opinion on cultural aspects of other countries I like. ▪ To talk about cultures and countries I would like to visit. ▪ To make requests to get information on a given issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making requests. ▪ Expressing opinion. ▪ Making and responding to suggestions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External observer checklist ▪ Students' survey

Table 11. Lesson plans Phase three.

Table 11 shows how phase three is comprised of lesson plan five and six, which aimed at promoting speaking interaction in L2 through interviews and role-plays where learners simulate real-life scenarios employing conversational strategies, such as making requests and suggestions, giving and getting directions, expressing opinions, and giving information. To gather information to describe learners' performance, three data collection instruments were designed and applied by the researcher.

Lesson plan 5: Going abroad.

The third phase of the action stage comprehends lesson plan #5 known as *Going abroad* and lesson plan #6 titled *Beyond cultures*. The fifth workshop's main objective is to have students ask and give directions on how to get to a place and also have them talk about essential belongings for a trip on vacation. The structural stage fosters a vocabulary and a pronunciation practice phase. In the beginning phase, students take a vacation quiz, in which they complete general trivia phrases to be later classified into nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Afterward, students say which of these words are difficult for them to pronounce and which need to be improved. Here, there is a pronunciation and repetition practice with the words students need to progress on. The last phase of this stage embodies an interview task. Learners test their partners, by asking the names of countries, cities, continents, and lakes.

The pre-communicative stage introduces the conversational strategy giving information, by using the topic talking about essential belongings for a trip through an opinion-sharing task. Students work under the case they're going abroad for a two-week vacation, and they have to say which country they are visiting, and explain which belongings their suitcases will contain and why. Next, the functional communication stage introduces the conversational strategy of giving

and getting directions. In this phase, the vocabulary and expressions to give and ask for a direction are explained. Then, learners work in pairs with a map of the city of Boston. In this speaking task, they ask and give directions for three different places on the map of Boston, by taking turns for their talk. Students present their simulations to the whole class.

Subsequently, learners reflect on services they can get in a city, and they say where these can be found by looking at the map of the preceding activity. The last phase of the stage is a listening task, learners listen to a conversation between a tourist and a guide and complete the conversation with the words they hear. Then, they role-play this conversation with a partner.

Lastly, the social-interactional stage introduces the conversational strategy, by requesting a service. This stage is composed of two parts. In the first part, a context situation is provided, learners are supposed to be in Rio de Janeiro for their summer vacation and they need to rent a car for their stay. They role-play the situation in pairs and request the car rental manager, by following a given criteria card in the workshop. In the second part, students have an interview task, in which they simulate they're having an interview to obtain the VISA to go abroad. Students express some reasons to justify their VISA request based on some questions given to prepare their interview in advance. Each student is scheduled to have an interview with the teacher in a video conference.

Lesson plan 6: Beyond cultures.

Finally, the last lesson plan of the implementation is named *Beyond cultures*. Nine lessons were used to apply this lesson plan whose main objective was to have students talk and express opinions on cultures they like and cultural aspects entailed in them. As in the previous

workshops, the structural stage fosters pronunciation and vocabulary practice. In this stage students take two cultural quizzes of Australia and Canada, then they perform a spelling task for checking pronunciation. The pre-communicative stage presents the conversational strategy expressing opinion, by using the topic suggesting a vacation plan. Students get three tourist profiles, they select one, and in pairs, they discuss the best vacation plan for each of the people in the profiles, by advising on their most appropriate vacation. In the next task, students take the quiz ‘What kind of tourist are you?’ followed by a discussion session to share opinions.

Next, there are two guided speaking tasks with questions for students to express their opinions on the cultures they want to visit and how their country is different from other cultures. The functional communication stage goes back to the conversational strategy used in the former stage and sets four speaking tasks to foster learners’ interaction in L2. Here, there is a debate discussion in which, students talk about what they understand by the word culture and what aspects come into their minds when they hear this word. Learners are encouraged to talk about the typical features of their own national culture.

The last task of the phase is concerned with the time capsule speaking task. To do this, participants agree on 12 items to be placed in a time capsule that will be opened in two hundred years. They choose the items that best represent their culture as it is today and then, present the content of their time capsules to the class along with the reasons for their choices. Finally, the social-interactional stage presents two conversational strategies that are making and responding to suggestions and making requests. This phase begins with a listening task to complete three conversations learners hear with expressions for making and responding to suggestions, then, these are role played by them.

Next, the class makes suggestions to a classmate and agrees on an activity for this weekend, students simulate their conversations and present these to everybody. The last exercise of this phase consists of a task-completion activity, in which students organize phrases to make requests.

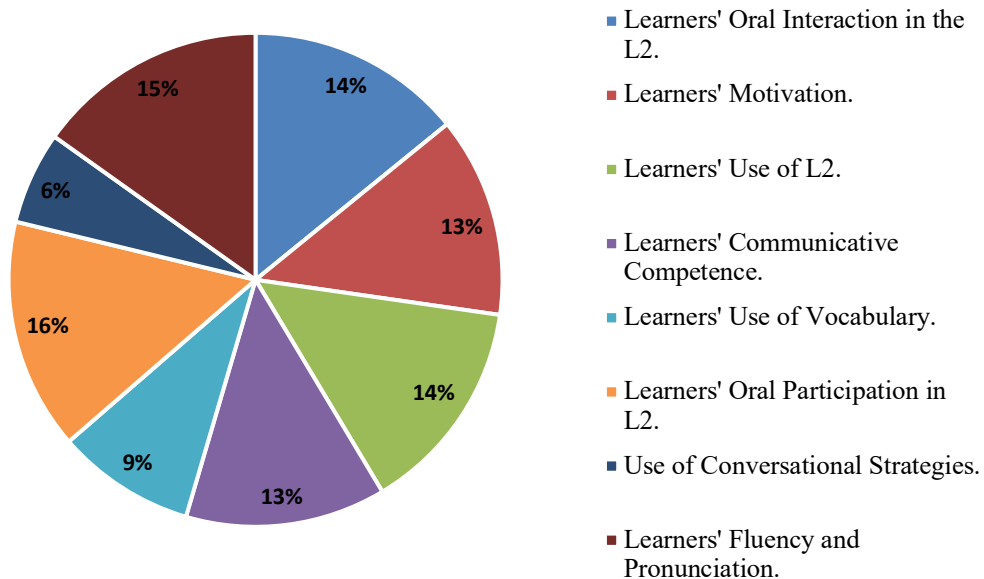
The concluding task of the social-interactional stage involves an information-gathering activity. Here, learners work with a conversation between a museum guide and a tourist, they have to complete and organize this dialogue with expressions of making requests for then to simulate it in pairs. Lastly, there is a vocabulary exercise to match visual notices one can encounter in a museum with their meanings.

Phase Three Analysis

The following table and graph show the occurrences obtained from the administration of the three instruments for phase three.

Code	External observation checklist	Learners' Survey	Teacher's Journal	Occurrences	Percentage
Learners' Oral Interaction in the L2.	14	32	15	61	14%
Learners' Motivation.	7	29	21	57	13%
Learners' Use of the L2.	9	28	24	61	14%
Learners' Communicative Competence.	12	23	21	56	13%
Learners' Use of Vocabulary.	8	12	7	39	6%
Learners' Oral Participation in L2.	14	31	22	67	16%
Use of Conversational Strategies.	8	15	16	27	9%
Learners' Fluency and Pronunciation.	9	33	21	63	15%
Total				431	100%

Phase Three Analysis



Based on the results obtained from analyzing lesson plans five and six corresponding to the third phase of the implementation, there was evidence that students are interacting more frequently in English during lessons to perform speaking tasks with their classmates and participate in class discussions. This is represented through the category Students' Oral Interaction in L2, which is identified among the three instruments with 61 occurrences representing 14% of the codes. This category increased by 3% compared to the results obtained in phase two.

Question #4 from the survey ¿Cuál ha sido la actividad comunicativa que más le ha gustado y por qué? Reveals the positive influence of communicative group work tasks once they have reinforced students' confidence and willingness to speak in English. On this matter, students commented that,

Las actividades que más me han gustado son las Student A-Student B tasks. Se me ha dado de una buena manera, siento que las desempeño mejor porque son reales e interactuamos

con otros y también al ser un trabajo con un compañero se refuerza el trabajo en equipo, y personalmente siento más confianza para hablar en inglés así. (The activities that I liked the most are the tasks of Student A-Student B. These have been given to me in a good way, I feel that I perform them better because they are real and we interact with others and also, working with a partner reinforces teamwork, and I personally feel more confident to speak English like that.)

La actividad que más me gusto fueron las dramatizaciones y las actividades de dar indicaciones para llegar a un lugar porque son muy interactivas y dinámicas, pude hablar arto en inglés con mis compañeros en la actividad, y así sentí menos pena de hablar y siento que aprendo más fácil y más motivada. (The activity that I liked the most were the role plays and the information-transfer activities like giving directions to get to a place because they are very interactive and dynamic, I could speak a lot in English with my colleagues in the activity, and this way, I felt less embarrassed to talk, and I feel like I'm learning easier and more motivated.)

In the same way, some annotations recorded in the external observation checklist confirm this information, by describing learners' positive performance when doing interviews and information-transfer activities.

Descriptor #2 from the external observation checklist *Activities in the workshop enhance the learner's own experiences as important, contributing elements to the classroom learning* determines that students find these interactive speaking tasks as advantageous and enriching practices to their learning. This is illustrated by some of the external observer comments:

In the visa interview, students faced a meaningful and communicative learning experience with the English language that can happen to them in real life too. In this task, they communicated and interacted in l2 with their peers in an interview where they could express personal reasons to travel and their own experiences, this motivated students because many of

them expressed they wanted to travel abroad and perceived the task as something useful and meaningful to them.

Similarly, descriptor #15 from the external observation checklist *Pair work tasks and interaction are evidenced during the lesson, that is, students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh or virtually, through pair and group work* confirms that ongoing interaction in L2 is frequently perceived in the lesson. In this regard, the external observer states that:

From observing the lesson and from watching the tasks learners performed in this class, it is evident that a lot of interaction is perceived among students. They have been working in pairs and some of them in small groups for accomplishing the speaking tasks of the workshop, interaction is noticeable not only when a dialogue is placed in which two people participate, but also in their interventions to participate in the lesson. In these last workshops, I have observed, it can be perceived students are using more English to communicate among themselves and to participate than what they usually did at the beginning of workshop one. Now they seem more confident and smoother to speak in English, they do it more frequently and also, they appear to enjoy cooperating in another language.

By the same token, the teacher's journal supports the information gathered from the instruments, by emphasizing how communicative tasks got to involve all participants in the class to a greater extent. The journal describes as well students' commitment and big efforts to achieve a good performance in interactional activities. This is sustained by some of the researcher's comments, such as,

I noticed that for this debate task, students are giving longer opinions, wide and much meaningful than in previous tasks, and in this case, they are interacting more with each other to

complement or refute opinions they had related to culture, this shows a bit of improvement because they did not do this before.

The interviews were very successful, this task was able to involve all members of the class, and it was evidenced in the students' previous preparation and hard work for accomplishing a good performance in the task.

Another code that increased its number of occurrences to 67 frequencies in phase three and represents 16% of the results is Students' Oral Participation in L2. This category has emerged among the three instruments with substantial outcomes, and in this last phase of the implementation, it increased by 3% compared to the results obtained in phase two. In this category, it was observed that students have increased their oral contributions in the class and have reduced their fear to speak in public.

Descriptor #1 from the external observation checklist *The lesson provides opportunities for learners to focus not only on the language but also on the learning process itself* remarks that the class methodology has allowed participants to be more involved and active in the lessons, which has influenced their participation favorably. From the external observer's point of view:

The class offers the opportunity to face not only the foreign language but also the study of English through the active and participative intervention and ongoing interaction and cooperation of the students, thanks to clear and precise guidelines facilitated by the teacher. In the same way, different learning and conversation strategies implemented during the class, and the constant feedback provided in the lesson makes the student manage to see the strengths and weaknesses of their learning and makes them feel more involved and encouraged in the lesson to constantly participate and contribute orally.

Eventually, learners' perceptions corroborate this view, by expressing their opinions in Question #2 from the survey *¿Cuál es su opinión frente a las temáticas de las actividades y tareas comunicativas que se han llevado a cabo en los talleres?* On this matter, learners commented that:

Me ha parecido agradable la dinámica de clase y siento que participo más ahora ya que me gustan los temas y hablar de otras culturas, viajes y países. (I found the class dynamic pleasant and I feel that I participate much more now because I like the topics and talking about other cultures, trips and countries).

Aunque mi inglés no es el mejor me veo más participativo ahora que hay debates y discusiones chéveres para hablar y contribuir en la clase. (Although my English is not the best, I look more participatory now that there are debates and cool discussions to talk and contribute in class).

La clase se volvió más interesante porque casi todas las actividades que nos propone la profe en los talleres hacen que uno quiera decir algo y participar siempre. (The class became more interesting because almost all the activities promoted by the teacher in the workshops make us want to say something and always participate).

In the same line of thought, some observations recorded in the teacher's journal describe how students have evolved into getting more fluent, confident, and receptive in their oral participation in English. The following comments registered in the sixth workshop illustrate this statement:

Students were fast in completing the task, at the moment of sharing the answers, most of them were eager to participate and express the words that were best for each of the cultural aspects of Australian culture. At the end of the task, I asked students if they would like to visit

Australia and most of them answered, indeed, they want to visit the country, at the moment of asking why students gave me the most reasons in English. They Expressed reasons like 'To study in a university, others say 'To visit new places' others expressed 'To travel abroad' And so on. I noticed the class was very interested in speaking when I asked them if they'd like to visit new countries and cultures.

Similarly, some annotations registered in the journal from the fifth workshop describe participants' oral interventions as an opportunity to employ and test their vocabulary and expressions learned in English, the comments made by the researcher state that:

In this lesson, my students seem to be very receptive because of their positive and fluent participation in the class. I was surprised because they were so connected to the exercise. students understood the idea of the task and completed it in time. at the moment of completing the vocabulary quiz, 99 % of students provided accurate answers. most ss knew the items described. only two students told me they didn't know the airports' Frankfurt, Charles de Gaulle, and J.F Kennedy but when sharing the answers, they participated eagerly. they mentioned the answers aloud and there was no need to call for participation, students volunteer freely.

Additionally, one of the categories after the third phase of the evaluation stage with significant results was Students' Communicative Competence. This category represented 13% of the frequencies obtained. Regarding this category, it was observed that students who made part of this research study ameliorated their ability to transmit information like ideas, thoughts, and opinions through the use of English as a foreign language. That is, students were encouraged and confident to use English to communicate with their peers. Question # 12 from the survey ¿Consideras que la metodología aplicada en los talleres (CLT: Communicative language

teaching) promueve mucho más el desarrollo de su producción oral en comparación con otras metodologías usadas en clase? revealed some evidence that supports this finding.

Pienso que si porque estas metodologías le pueden ayudar mucho a uno para aprender más expresiones y a comunicarnos mejor en otro idioma siendo más seguros. (I think so because these methodologies can help us a lot to learn more expressions and communicate better in another language being more confident).

Pienso que me desempeño mejor en transmitir mis ideas a otros desde que empezamos con los talleres ya que la atmosfera de la clase es bacana para participar y dar mis opiniones en los debates y discusiones. (I think that I perform better when transmitting my ideas to others since we started with the workshops because the atmosphere of the class is cool to participate and give my opinions in debates and discussions).

La metodología si me ha ayudado más que las otras porque ya no se centra tanto en gramática, sino que aprendemos el inglés de una forma más hablada y con temas que me pueden servir más adelante en la vida cotidiana. (The methodology has helped me more than the others because it no longer focuses so much on grammar, instead, we learn English in a more spoken way and with topics that can be useful to me later in daily life).

Sí, porque uno ve el tema y hay mismo hacemos una actividad en donde nos comunicamos en inglés usando ese tema entonces así aprendemos mucho más. (Yes, because we learn the topic and then we do an activity where we communicate in English using that topic so that way, we learn much more).

In the same vein, this code is also supported by descriptor #8 from the external observer checklist *Dialogues proposed in the lesson center around communicative functions and are not normally memorized* since it described that most students use English in a smoother and more

spontaneous way that does not employ memorization as a habit. Regarding this descriptor, the external observer stated that:

The methodology of the class is dynamic, interactive, participative and fruitful, because the main concepts for fluid and assertive communication are highlighted, and not focused on the memorization and repetition of parameters that limit correct oral production. Students have the chance to prepare their dialogues but are invited to speak without memorizing, most of them sound spontaneous and fluent because they have started to appropriate the language more confidently and speak more freely in class.

Moreover, students' progress on their communicative competence is portrayed in descriptor #6 *The lesson emphasizes learning to communicate through virtual interaction in the target language.* This statement was supported by the following extract made by the external observer:

Thanks to the assertive communication between the students and the teacher, the learning and improvement of the communicative competencies are evident because the clear and concrete communication of concepts and objectives is constant during the activity and the class provides many opportunities to make students interact and communicate with each other using the English language.

Finally, one category that increased by 1% in this third phase of the evaluation stage was Students' Fluency and Pronunciation. This category represented 15% of the frequencies obtained. The data gathered from this code sets that students were more fluent during the implementation of the communicative workshops. In fact, question #7 from the survey *¿En qué aspectos de su producción oral ha notado mejoría después de participar en los talleres?* Showed that 12 students who represent 80% of the participants of the study said that fluency and

pronunciation was one of the aspects they felt they have enhanced the most in addition to vocabulary.

Besides, the teacher's journal kept during the application of the instruments supported this idea, by stating that as students' motivation increased, they could speak more fluently and employ a better pronunciation in the communicative tasks. The excerpt below supports and broadens this assertion.

We reunited for rehearsing the speaking task. About 8 students attended and they were very participative and motivated. Students shared their dialogues, they asked me for guidance and I helped them. They sound much better, I can tell their fluency has improved a lot, they sound more confident when they speak, their intonation is not that bad for most of the words and it is much easier to understand what they say since they sound better now. My students have improved a lot in these aspects. The class is more enrolled with the activities, they ask for more information to complete them, they are concerned about timelines and self-correct when they see that there is not something right.

Likewise, the external observer supports this finding through his observations filled in the checklist, by stating that,

Although there are still a few mistakes to improve, students sound much more comprehensible and fluent than before, they participate and interact more freely in the class and are not as afraid of making pronunciation mistakes as before. Their use of vocabulary has increased in the tasks because some included expressions of requesting for a service which was the conversational strategy introduced in the workshop to perform the role-play of the car rental and sounded very clear when performing this to everybody.

To conclude, this third phase of the evaluation stage ratified the impact and importance of the CLT approach on students' speaking competence, fluency, oral interaction, participation, and motivation toward communicating in another language once it fostered that speaking in English became a habit in the classroom.

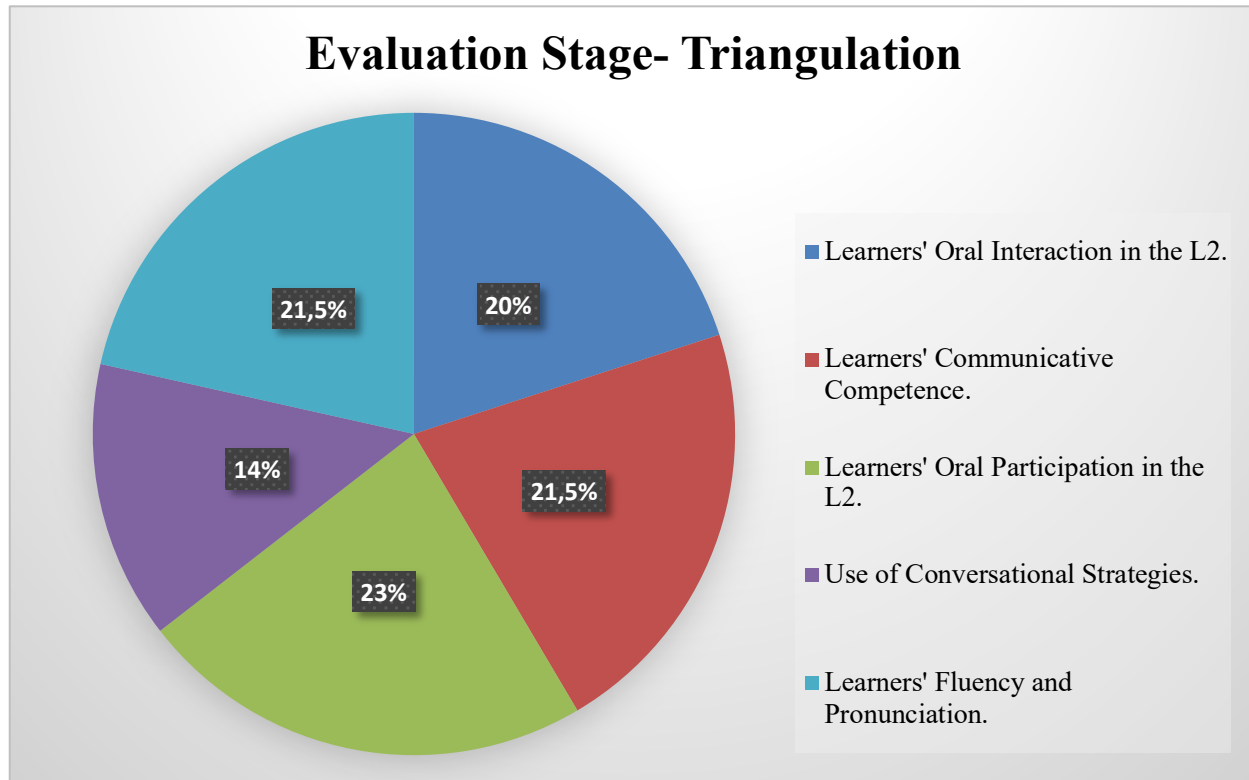
3.1.4. Data Triangulation

The following table presents the frequencies in which the different categories occurred throughout the administration of the data collection instruments after conducting the three phases of the action stage in the present study. The triangulation provided sufficient information to identify the most relevant categories and displayed responses regarding the questions considered in this research. Five significant categories could be identified with different frequencies among the instruments:

Code/ Category	Operationalization	Data Collection Instruments									Total	%
		Phase 1			Phase 2			Phase 3				
		Journal	Survey	External Observer	Journal	Survey	External Observer	Journal	Survey	External Observer		
Learners' Communicative Competence.	Learners' ability to communicate orally with others in the L2.	10	12	6	12	13	11	21	23	12	120	21,5%
Learners' Oral Interaction in L2.	Learners' ability to communicate with others	8	11	4	8	14	5	15	32	14	111	20%
Learners' Fluency and Pronunciation.	Learners' ability to communicate orally and continuously.	9	12	2	12	15	7	21	33	9	120	21,5%
Learners' Oral Participation in L2.	Learners' active participation through speaking	16	9	3	12	15	5	22	31	14	127	23%
Learners' Use of Conversational Strategies.	Learners' use of conversational strategies and functional language to request, suggest, ask or give information.	5	8	4	6	9	7	16	15	8	78	14%
Totals											556	100

Table 12. Data triangulation of the three phases.

8. EVALUATION STAGE



After conducting the pedagogical intervention, five categories emerged from the analysis. According to the results in Table 15, two codes, *Students' Communicative Competence* and *Students' Fluency and Pronunciation* displayed similar scores 21,5% the former and 21, 5% the later. These two categories were concurrent among the workshops and the instruments. The first category displayed was *Students' Communicative Competence* with 120 occurrences. In this item, it was observed that there was a steady growth of the frequencies of this code among the three phases especially in phase two with 36 occurrences that increased to 56 occurrences in phase three, which means that students got to communicate better and more comprehensibly in every stage of the application of the workshops, remarkably during the last phase.

The second code gathered from the action and evaluation stage was *Students' Oral Interaction in L2* with 111 occurrences representing 20% of the codes obtained. Overall results

showed that there was a consistent growth of this code with some variations as seen in phase one with the lowest rate of 23 occurrences, but a meaningful increase between phase two and phase three, by achieving 61 occurrences during the last phase of the implementation. These results revealed that during the pedagogical intervention, students were capable of interacting with their classmates in English more frequently as the implementation went through.

The third category displayed in this study was *Students' Fluency and Pronunciation*. This code had the second-highest number of frequencies with 120 occurrences, representing the 21,5% of the codes. This percentage established that fluency was highly developed throughout the phases occurred, more substantially in phases two and three. The results obtained in each of the phases describe a steady improvement in learners' fluency and pronunciation. For instance, in phase one, this item was perceived 23 times; in phase two, fluency and pronunciation had 23 frequencies, while in phase three, it appeared 63 times which means that students improved their fluency and ameliorated their pronunciation in every stage of the application of the workshops.

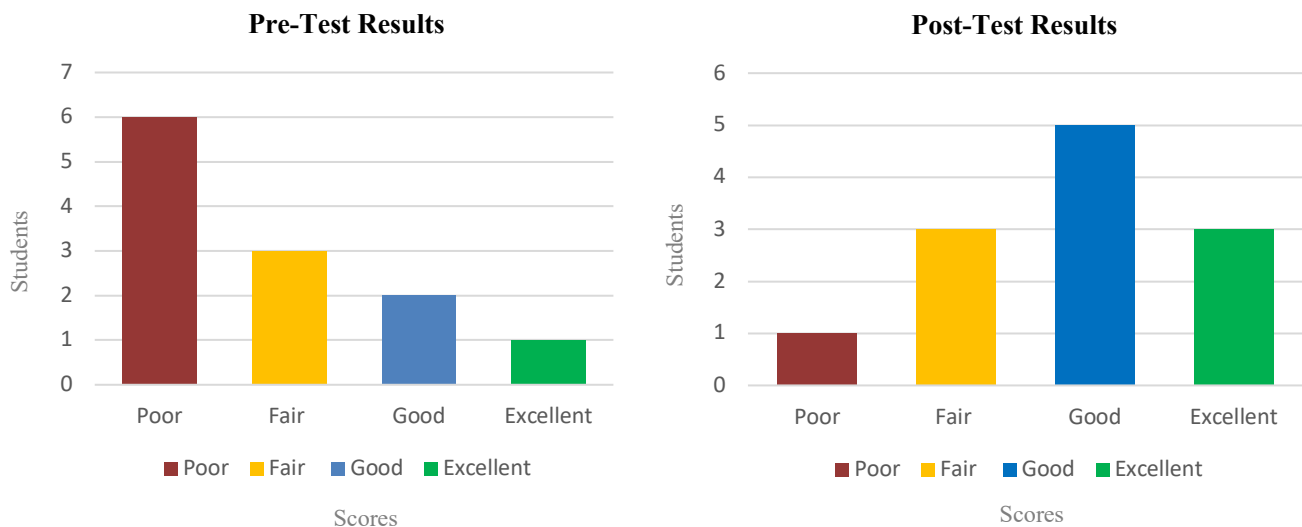
Students' Oral Participation in L2 was the fourth category displayed in the evaluation stage. This code represented 23% of the results, by having 127 frequencies, which denote the highest number of the occurrences obtained in this study. These frequencies revealed that students participated actively in the communicative tasks proposed throughout the six workshops, by using English as the main vehicle for communication with their classmates. In other words, the meaningful growth of this category unveiled how students felt more encouraged to participate, which increased their oral interventions after each of the phases took place.

The last category analyzed in the evaluation stage of the pedagogical intervention was *Students' Use of Conversational Strategies* representing 14% of the categories. Although this category displayed the lowest number of frequencies with 78, it revealed that some participants

used conversational strategies to give shape to their speech and make their language more functional while performing speaking tasks and communicate in the classroom. This code was highly portrayed during phase two and especially in phase three once students were more exposed to interactive tasks and progressed in other sub-skills, such as fluency, pronunciation, oral participation and oral interaction, which is illustrated in the overall results.

8.1 Pre-Test and Post-Test

A pre-test was administered to have a baseline on students’ language proficiency level before the implementation of the communicative classes as well as a post-test to measure students’ improvement toward their oral proficiency in English at the end of the implementation of the six workshops. According to Malik and Alam (2019), “Pre-test/post-test and post-test-only designs provide measurement of change for assessing the impact of teaching during academic year” (p. 6). In this study, a test containing four parts that evaluated the four communicative skills was used. Each of the parts aim at identifying students’ performance in listening, reading, speaking and writing. Each skill contained two tasks, except for speaking which contained three parts. The teacher-researcher used a speaking rubric to evaluate students’ performance in the oral skill. The results are displayed below:



Graph 9. Level of proficiency in speaking before and after the implementation.

Graph 9 shows substantial improvement in all aspects of speaking competence in the post-test. The amount of poor proficient and fair proficient students went down from 75% to 33,3% after the application of the six communicative workshops. Additionally, there was a meaningful increase in the number of students who were placed in the good proficiency level in the post-test going from 16,7% to 41,7% correspondingly. Similarly, another significant improvement was observed in the students who were placed in the excellent proficiency score going from 8,3% in the pre-test to 25% in the post-test. These results ratify the positive impact CLT has on students' speaking performance. Each communicative phase implemented through the workshops in the pedagogical intervention along with the conversational strategies empowered learners with the necessary tools to perform better in English orally.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that apart from having a meaningful influence on students' oral interaction skills, the application of this CLT approach also contributed to students' affective filter to learn a foreign language. This methodology lowered learners' anxiety levels, by reducing their fear of talking and interacting with others in the classroom. Hence, it led participants to gain self-confidence and boosted their motivation to learn the English language.

CHAPTER V. FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to give an account of the categories obtained in the data triangulation developed after the implementation of the six communicative workshops from the pedagogical intervention, whose application and analysis were divided into three phases. The results obtained from the data allowed to identify a significant improvement in nine graders' speaking skills when being exposed to the communicative tasks through the six lesson plans. The analysis revealed learners' improvement in aspects like oral participation, oral interaction in L2, vocabulary, fluency and pronunciation. Besides, students who participated in this study ameliorated their communicative competence and their use of conversational strategies was evidenced, which helped most of them to enhance their speaking proficiency in the English class.

Once the data was analyzed in the evaluation stage, some positive aspects were found as the main contribution to this process:

Learners' Oral Participation in the L2.

There was a significant improvement in the learner's ability to participate orally, by using the foreign language in class. Oral participation emerged as a category from the data triangulation of the evaluation stage. This category displayed the highest percentage among all of the codes obtained in the triangulation. In phase one, this code was displayed 28 times; in phase two, it had 32 frequencies while in phase three; this category obtained 67 frequencies. The results achieved from this category suggest that learners participated orally more often in the lessons because the pedagogical treatment and the communicative methodology used in the workshops helped learners to effectively prepare themselves to participate and interact with the members of the class, by reducing the level of anxiety and, by increasing their confidence.

Moreover, oral participation was also promoted during the implementation of the communicative workshops because learners were motivated and engaged with their foreign language learning process and most importantly, their speaking interventions evidenced they were more willing to communicate and to express themselves better than even before. In other words, the communicative approach fused with the use of conversational strategies allowed them to be more encouraged, empowered, and adapted to the lesson dynamics, by increasing and by promoting their oral interventions in the English class.

Learners' Fluency and Pronunciation.

For this study, pronunciation and fluency were considered key components to enhance learners' oral interaction skills and their performance in L2. Results displayed in the data triangulation table revealed that fluency and pronunciation had 23 frequencies in phase one, 34 in phase two and 63 in phase three, which shows that students improved this aspect of their language learning progressively. This improvement was evidenced in learners' use of a more structured speech and better intonation patterns when learner-teacher interaction or learner-learner interaction took place in the EFL class, and overall communication with their peers and teacher. It was found that learners gained control of basic grammar tenses, verb forms, and lexical expressions needed to start and to keep a conversation going in speaking tasks held in the classroom.

On the other hand, it is important to highlight that the tasks, which aimed at teaching learners how to use the language communicatively were far more stimulating, effective and meaningful than exposing learners to grammar-based teaching or grammar translation methods. In other words, the exposure to a CLT approach in the class allowed learners to be more fluent when speaking, which improved their oral production in English.

Learners' Communicative Competence.

It emerged as a category from the data triangulation of the evaluation stage. This category displayed the second highest percentage among all of the codes obtained in the triangulation. In phase one, this code obtained 28 frequencies; in phase two, it had 36 frequencies while in phase three, this category appeared 56 times. Results gathered from this category revealed that learners developed their communicative competence progressively. That is, learners had improved their oral language skills to elaborate discourse to initiate a conversation, express opinions, suggest, request for a service and ask follow-up questions on familiar topics.

Nonetheless, learners still require prompting and support from the teacher to solve language problems they encounter when they want to be spontaneous, natural and, especially, when they want to improvise, as they might lack knowledge of more complex grammar structures and unplanned vocabulary.

Outcomes from this category showed that communicative and contextualized tasks allowed students to be interested in performing better when speaking in English and encouraged them to use functional language to transmit information meaningfully. Speaking tasks promoted in the workshops provided learners a fun and significant context where they could use language for real-life situations.

Learners' Oral Interaction in the L2.

Another significant improvement displayed from the data triangulation of the evaluation stage is related with learners' ability to interact in the foreign language with their peers during class. This category kept an average behavior in the three stages of the evaluation stage. In the first phase, oral interaction was displayed 23 times; 27 times in phase two and 61

times in phase three. These results revealed that students interacted in English frequently as they used appropriate terminology with relative ease and little levels of anxiety in their oral performance, especially in the main speaking tasks of the last two workshops, which correspond to the third phase of the evaluation stage.

The use of structured communicative lessons, which went from a basic mechanical stage to a pre-communicative phase, developed a communicative function. Then, they could achieve a social-interactional stage, which fused with the implementation of conversational strategies and vocabulary. These enabled learners to identify the purpose of speaking tasks, to set personal objectives, and to plan content, by recognizing functional language, expressions and conversational strategies, which will complement their speech to make them sound smoother and more fluent while using the L2.

Learners' Use of Conversational Strategies.

The last code obtained from the data triangulation was use of conversational strategies. This category had the lowest number of frequencies in the three phases of the evaluation stage, in phase one, this code achieved 17 frequencies; in phase two, it had 22 frequencies while in phase three, this category emerged 39 times. That is, this category scored 78 occurrences in total. Nonetheless, outcomes obtained from this code determined that participants who were part of this research study improved their speaking skills due to the use of conversational strategies bonded with the employment of functional language and planned vocabulary when lacking lexicon.

The implementation and planning of conversational strategies helped learners find alternative actions to solve language and content problems that arose from the requirements of main speaking tasks. As a result, learners were successful in communicating comprehensibly,

they showed improvement in the organization of the content and clarity of the message. In other words, learners who implemented conversational strategies and functional expressions performed better orally in English.

CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

After the implementation of the pedagogical treatment, and the analysis of the information provided in the data collection instruments, some conclusions and recommendations appeared to provide EFL teachers with some proposals which can serve to embrace language teaching challenges especially when the main objective is to develop learners' communicative competence and to foster speaking skills in the English language.

Current teaching practices at Colombian schools aim to make learners bilingual and proficient in a foreign language. However, most of the educational practices held in the classrooms are based on traditional language approaches that merely focus on grammar and structure, and do not foster the four language skills. Moreover, when it comes to rural and town contexts, students do not find learning English as something useful or meaningful to their daily life realities, that is, they do not perceive it as a means to succeed in life, which explains why they do not feel motivated and engaged to foreign language classes, by making them unable to progress in language learning.

With this in mind, the application of a model based on the CLT approach supposes an innovative way to engage learners in speaking as it provides a classroom methodology that intends to make language learning more communicative and at the same time, it aims to foster speaking skills, by strengthening linguistic, vocabulary, and affective aspects of the foreign language learning process. In fact, the conclusions and new pedagogical knowledge resulting from the findings is explained below.

The implementation of CLT approach in the English classroom boosts learners' motivation, interest and positive attitudes toward foreign language learning, by making them perceive it as a meaningful, fun and enriching task to their lives once they practice speaking

skills in real-life situations. Additionally, it encourages autonomous learning and promotes self-motivation, since the students can execute mental processes to examine learning outcomes, by identifying strengths and weaknesses in their oral performance regarding the speaking goals set in each workshop.

Moreover, lessons that are structured under the framework of the CLT approach fused with conversational strategies promote oral participation and oral interaction in EFL classrooms, which results in effective communication among students. Incorporating conversational strategies in regular language classroom instruction supposes an innovative strategy to supply learners with higher possibilities to succeed when interacting with others in a foreign language, as the development of each stage of the lesson facilitates new learning regarding phonological features, language use and vocabulary knowledge. This way, learners are more capable of making effective decisions to cope with language problems that prevent communication.

Another conclusion drawn from this study is that lessons oriented under the light of a communicative methodology foster English fluency and enhance students' pronunciation in L2. That is, before introducing oral interaction tasks, communicative lessons comprise a preparatory mechanical stage that provides learners with pronunciation practice and extensive exposure to listening and speaking that aim at both enhancing the phonological aspect and their speaking confidence as language users. Thus, this preliminary stage allows students to gain self-confidence when speaking a foreign language and help them retain new useful vocabulary.

In relation to learners' communicative ability, CLT has a direct and positive influence on this aspect as its main goal is to develop what Hymes referred to as 'Communicative

Competence' (Hymes, 1972). This methodology calls for learning a foreign language through real communication and life situations, which helps learners to employ functional language and to increase vocabulary knowledge in meaningful contexts, which routes them to be more comprehensible and orally productive in conversations.

On the other hand, the application of the CLT approach in English classrooms does not have a direct impact on accuracy. Even though accuracy and fluency are both important goals to pursue in any classroom task, the findings revealed that fluency is more likely to be achieved over accuracy. Darwish (2014) remarked 'it is clear that the approach concentrates on fluency more than accuracy as oral communication is the target for most communicative lessons' (p,185). Although this is true, it is worth noticing that the focus on fluency in the target language leads learners to gain self-confidence when communicating with other people in L2, as well as gaining motivation from talking more outside of the classroom.

The limitations of the study were grounded on a global emergency caused by the world pandemics Covid-19, which required this research to be implemented through virtual classes only, due to the National Ministry of Education guideline that made all educational institutions of the country work at home for about a year. This means that the CLT dynamics had to be adapted to be oriented virtually, by taking into consideration the context learners were facing. Furthermore, other limitations of the study were the access to technological devices and internet connections. Only around half of the participants in ninth grade had access to online connectivity and were able to participate in the virtual implementation of the workshops and the lessons oriented through the ZOOM platform.

Finally, this study recommends implementing CLT lessons and Communicative workshops in English sessions that can be oriented, if possible, in face-to-face form to perceive

the approach's effectiveness in non-virtual settings. It is also recommended basing communicative tasks on real-life situation-based teaching and employ cooperative work to develop learners' oral interaction skills. This way, participants are involved in tasks, which take their contexts into consideration. In addition to this, it is suggested analyzing the impact, which CLT may have on vocabulary learning, use and application in context, as well as accuracy.

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Appendices



Appendix 1. External Observer's form (Action Stage).

	<p>University of Caldas Master's in English Didactics External Observer form</p>	
Teacher observer:		
Teacher observed:		
Workshop observed:		

Please submit your answers in the checklist below. Make a tick ✓ in the (YES) column if you consider the statement is reflected and accomplished in the workshop. Make a tick ✓ in the (NO) column if you consider the statement was not reflected in the workshop.

CLT characteristics and principles Does the lesson plan...	Yes	No	Comments
1. The lesson provides opportunities for learners to focus not only on the language but also on the learning process itself.			
2. Activities in the workshop enhance the learner's own personal experiences as important, contributing elements to the classroom learning.			
3. The teacher helps learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language during the lesson. Attempts to communicate are encouraged from the very beginning of the lesson.			
4. The lesson incorporates learner activities that include an information gap exercise, a choice and feedback.			
5. Lesson plan provides for more student talk and less teacher talk, where teacher serves more as a facilitator.			
6. Emphasizes learning to communicate through virtual interaction in the target language.			
7. Contextualization is a basic premise in the creation of the workshop, that is to say the workshop introduces contextualized materials into the learning situation.			
8. Dialogues proposed in the lesson center around communicative functions and are not normally memorized.			
9. Sequencing of the lesson is determined by any consideration of content, function, or meaning that maintains interest.			
10. Communicative competence is the desired goal (i.e., the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately).			
11. Comprehensible pronunciation and effective communication are sought.			
12. The lesson evidences that the target linguistic system is learned best through the process of struggling to communicate. Language is created by the individual, often through trial and error.			
13. Translation in tasks of the workshop may be used where students need or benefit from it.			
14. Fluency and acceptable language are the primary goal: Accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.			
15. Pair work tasks and interaction are evidenced during the lesson, that is, students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh or virtually, through pair and group work.			

Appendix 2. Learners' Survey (Action Stage).

	<p>University of Caldas Master's in English Didactics Learners' Survey Institución Educativa Manzanares</p>	
Name:		
Grade:		
Date:		

Apreciado estudiante, la siguiente encuesta tiene como objetivo evaluar su rendimiento y conocer su opinión frente a las actividades y tareas comunicativas que se han desarrollado en los talleres implementados en clase para mejorar la producción oral en términos de pronunciación, fluidez y vocabulario. Agradezco su objetividad y honestidad para responder cada una de las preguntas.

1. **¿Cómo califica su participación con relación a las tareas que se han realizado sobre los temas vistos en los talleres comunicativos implementados en clase?**

Excelente _____ Buena _____ Regular _____ Mala _____

2. **¿Cuál es su opinión frente a las temáticas de las actividades y tareas comunicativas que se han llevado a cabo en los talleres?**

Muy agradables _____ Poco agradables _____

¿Por qué?

3. **Seleccione con una (X) las actividades comunicativas que más le han llamado la atención:**

_____ Student A-Student B tasks (**Ejemplo:** Diálogos y entrevistas).

_____ Role plays (**Ejemplo:** Dramatizaciones).

_____ Information-gathering activities (**Ejemplo:** Encuestas y entrevistas).

_____ Information-transfer activities (**Ejemplo:** Dar indicaciones para llegar a un lugar).

_____ Task-completion activities (**Ejemplo:** Juegos, sopas de letras).

_____ Repetition and pronunciation activities.

_____ Opinion-sharing activities (**Ejemplo:** Actividades de opinión sobre cultura general).

Explique porqué le han gustado:

4. ¿Cuál ha sido la actividad comunicativa que menos le ha gustado? ¿Por qué?

5. ¿Cómo fue su comportamiento durante el desarrollo de las actividades?

Excelente _____ Bueno _____ Regular _____ Mala _____

6. ¿Usted realizó con dedicación las actividades comunicativas que se mencionaron en el numeral 3?

Sí _____ No _____

¿Por qué? _____

7. En qué aspectos de su producción oral ha notado mejoría después de participar en los talleres?

_____ Fluidez

_____ Pronunciación y entonación

_____ Vocabulario

_____ Todas las anteriores

8. ¿De qué manera las estrategias de conversación impactaron su producción y comprensión oral en la lengua extranjera?

9. ¿Cuál de las siguientes estrategias de conversación le aportó más en el proceso de mejorar su producción oral en inglés? (Puede seleccionar más de una).

_____ Presentarse y dar información personal

_____ Hacer sugerencias

_____ Pedir y dar consejos

_____ Expresar habilidades

_____ Ordenar comida en un restaurante

_____ Describir personas, lugares y cosas

- _____ comparar y contrastar personas, lugares y cosas
- _____ pedir y dar indicaciones para llegar a un lugar
- _____ expresar opiniones sobre temas de interés general
- _____ expresar preferencias, gustos y cosas que no me gustan
- _____ hacer preguntas de respuesta corta como 'sí' ó 'no'.
- _____ pedir un favor para obtener algún servicio (**Ejemplo:** pedir un taxi, rentar un carro).

10. ¿De qué manera los talleres contextualizados implementados le han ayudado en el proceso de mejoramiento de su producción oral dentro y fuera de clase?

- _____ incrementaron mi interés hacia el inglés
- _____ me motivaron a aprender el idioma
- _____ incrementaron mi participación oral en clase
- _____ mejoraron mi pronunciación y ganas de hablar en inglés
- _____ todos los anteriores
- _____ Otro? ¿Cuál?: _____

11. Teniendo en cuenta las actividades comunicativas desarrolladas en los talleres. ¿Cuál fue la actividad que más disfrutaste y por qué?

12. ¿Consideras que la metodología aplicada en los talleres (CLT: Communicative language teaching) promueve mucho más el desarrollo de su producción oral en comparación con otras metodologías usadas en clase?

_____ Sí _____ No

¿Por qué?:

Appendix 3. Speaking Rubric.

Speaking Rubric

University of Caldas
Masters in English Didactics
Speaking rubric



Descriptors:

1. Can describe people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms.
2. Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities.
3. Can describe simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases.
4. Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences.

Level: A1-A2		Grade: 9th grade		
Criteria	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Pronunciation	Gives a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms with no mispronunciation of words and intonation, with excellent fluent speech and great articulation in target language with expression.	The student makes minor errors in pronunciation, mispronounces few words but delivers a clear message. There is good articulation in target language when giving a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms.	The student has errors in pronunciation, some effort in articulation in target language when giving a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms.	Pronunciation and intonation are lacking and hard to understand. Student makes little or no effort to enunciate and articulate in target language when giving a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms.
	Gives short, basic descriptions of events and activities with no mispronunciation of words and intonation, with excellent fluent speech and great articulation in target language with expression.	The student makes minor errors in pronunciation, mispronounces few words but delivers a clear message. There is good articulation in target language when giving short, basic descriptions of events and activities.	The student has errors in pronunciation, some effort in articulation in target language when giving short, basic descriptions of events and activities.	Pronunciation and intonation are lacking and hard to understand. Student makes little or no effort to enunciate and articulate in target language when giving short, basic descriptions of events and activities.
	Describes simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases with no mispronunciation of words and	The student makes minor errors in pronunciation, mispronounces few words but delivers a clear message. There is good articulation in target language when describing simple aspects of his/her	The student has errors in pronunciation, some effort in articulation in target language when describing simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of	Pronunciation and intonation are lacking and hard to understand. Student makes little or no effort to enunciate and articulate in target language when describing simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple
	intonation, with excellent fluent speech and great articulation in target language with expression.	everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases.	simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases.	sentences, using simple words and basic phrases.
	Gives a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences with no mispronunciation of words and intonation, with excellent fluent speech and great articulation in target language with expression.	The student makes minor errors in pronunciation, mispronounces few words but delivers a clear message. There is good articulation in target language when giving a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences.	The student has errors in pronunciation, some effort in articulation in target language when giving a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences.	Pronunciation and intonation are lacking and hard to understand. Student makes little or no effort to enunciate and articulate in target language when giving a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences.
Fluency	Gives a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms with smooth and fluid speech; few to no hesitations and no attempts to search for words; volume is excellent.	Gives a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms with smooth and fluid speech; few hesitations; a slight search for words; inaudible word or two.	Has a repeatedly hesitant and jerky speech and some sentences are left uncompleted, the volume is very soft when giving a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms.	Speech is slow and exceedingly hesitant and strained except for memorized phrases; difficult to perceive continuity in utterances, has long pauses which interfere with communication and is sometimes inaudible when giving a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms.
	Gives short, basic descriptions of events and activities with smooth and fluid speech; few to no hesitations and no attempts to search for words; volume is excellent.	Gives short, basic descriptions of events and activities with smooth and fluid speech; few hesitations; a slight search for words; inaudible word or two.	Has a repeatedly hesitant and jerky speech and some sentences are left uncompleted, the volume is very soft when giving short, basic descriptions of events and activities.	Speech is slow and exceedingly hesitant and strained except for memorized phrases; difficult to perceive continuity in utterances, has long pauses which interfere with communication and is sometimes inaudible when giving short, basic descriptions of events and activities.
	Describes simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases with smooth and fluid speech; few to no hesitations and no attempts to search for words; volume is excellent.	Describes simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases with smooth and fluid speech; few hesitations; a slight search for words; inaudible word or two.	Has a repeatedly hesitant and jerky speech and some sentences are left uncompleted, the volume is very soft when describing simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases.	Speech is slow and exceedingly hesitant and strained except for memorized phrases; difficult to perceive continuity in utterances, has long pauses which interfere with communication and is sometimes inaudible when describing simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases.
	Gives a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines,	Gives a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short	Has a repeatedly hesitant and jerky speech and some sentences are left uncompleted, the volume is very soft	Speech is slow and exceedingly hesitant and strained except for memorized phrases; difficult to perceive continuity in utterances,

	likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences with smooth and fluid speech; few to no hesitations and no attempts to search for words; volume is excellent.	series of simple phrases and sentences with smooth and fluid speech; few hesitations; a slight search for words; inaudible word or two.	when giving a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences.	has long pauses which interfere with communication and is sometimes inaudible when giving a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences.
Vocabulary	Gives a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms with excellent control of language features; a wide range of well-chosen vocabulary and expressions.	Gives a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms with good language control; good range of relatively well-chosen vocabulary and expressions.	Has basic vocabulary choice and expressions with some words and vocabulary range clearly lacking when giving a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms.	Weak language control, vocabulary that is used does not match the task when giving a description or presentation of people, places, living conditions and possessions in simple terms
	Gives short, basic descriptions of events and activities with excellent control of language features; a wide range of well-chosen vocabulary and expressions.	Gives short, basic descriptions of events and activities with good language control; good range of relatively well-chosen vocabulary and expressions.	Has basic vocabulary choice and expressions with some words and vocabulary range clearly lacking when giving short, basic descriptions of events and activities.	Weak language control, vocabulary that is used does not match the task when giving short, basic descriptions of events and activities.
	Describes simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases with excellent control of language features; a wide range of well-chosen vocabulary and expressions.	Describes simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases with good language control; good range of relatively well-chosen vocabulary and expressions.	Has basic vocabulary choice and expressions with some words and vocabulary range clearly lacking when describing simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases.	Weak language control, vocabulary that is used does not match the task when describing simple aspects of his/her everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words and basic phrases.
	Gives a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences with excellent control of language features; a wide range of well-chosen vocabulary and expressions.	Gives a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences with good language control; good range of relatively well-chosen vocabulary and expressions.	Has basic vocabulary choice and expressions with some words and vocabulary range clearly lacking when giving a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences.	Weak language control, vocabulary that is used does not match the task when giving a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, as a short series of simple phrases and sentences.

Appendix 4. Sample of a Communicative workshop (Workshop no.5).



Workshop No. 5
Going abroad

Structural stage:

1. A Vacation Quiz

Write the words in the bank in the correct sentence.

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| airports | China |
| London | Cuba |
| USA | black |

- Boston, Seattle, Kansas and Dallas are cities in the _____.
- In Iceland, the _____ are hot.
- John F. Kennedy, Frankfurt, and Charles de Gaulle are _____.
- Hawaii has some _____ sand beaches.
- In _____, cars are old.
- In _____ buses are red and have two stories.
- Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing are cities in _____.



4. Vocabulary practice.
Word focus: **IN**

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| In Australia | In Portuguese | In Amsterdam |
| In Japanese | In a hotel | In Colombia |
| In French | In a tent | In a house |

Write the expressions in the correct place.

- In English _____
- In Europe _____
- In a classroom _____

Pre-Communicative stage

1. TASK: Imagine you're going abroad for a two-week Vacation. Say which country you go to, and explain which things you will pack in your suitcase and why.

Conversational strategy: Talking about my essential belongings for a trip.



For my trip, I will pack ...

2. Speaking ups: Look at the map of Boston. Where do you do these things?

- Get medical assistance? _____
- Learn about history? _____
- Relax outside? _____
- Watch a baseball match? _____
- Take your dog for a walk? _____



2.

Pronunciation practice

A. Say the following words and practice their pronunciation:

- | | | | | |
|---------|------|--------|-------|-----------|
| Airport | Cold | Abroad | Place | Homesick |
| Beach | Hot | Bus | Lake | Suitcase |
| | | | | Jetlagged |

B. Which of these words are nouns? _____

C. Which of these words are adjectives? _____

D. Which of these words are adverbs? _____

The most difficult word for me to pronounce is: _____
The easiest word for me to pronounce is: _____
I need to improve the pronunciation of the words: _____ and _____.

3. Speaking practice

Work in pairs and test your partner! Take turns to ask questions. Ask him/her to say four names of:

EXAMPLE

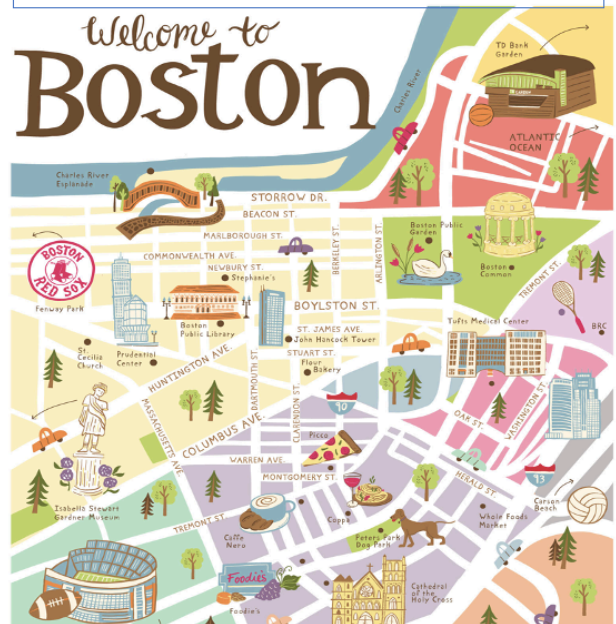
Can you name three big cities?
Ok, Tokyo, Dubai and Madrid.
Sure! New York, Bogotà and London.
Now, is your turn.

- Read a book? _____
- Meet clients and colleagues? _____
- Go praying? _____

Conversational strategy: Giving and getting Directions.

Functional communication stage

TASK: Work in pairs. Ask for and give directions for three different places on the map of Boston. Take turns for your talk.



USEFUL EXPRESSIONS TO GIVE AND ASK FOR DIRECTIONS...

Use these expressions to guide your talk in the task.

Asking for directions:

Where is...?
How do I get to...?
Is it near here...?

Giving directions:

It's near here /It's about ten minutes away.

Go past the go past ...

Go straight on... go straight

Across from... across from

Cross cross

Turn left on... turn left

On/At the corner... on/at the corner

Turn right on.../Go right at... turn right

Next to... next to

Take the first right... take the first right

2 Look at the expressions for giving and getting directions. Listen to a conversation between a tourist and a guide. Complete the conversation with the words you hear. Then practice with a partner.

On a Stroll in Boston

T: Tourist G: Guide

T: Hi, we would like to go to the Boston public garden. Is it _____? Can you give me instructions on how to get there?

PART 2



Imagine you're having an interview to obtain your VISA so that you can visit a country you like. Think of the reasons to justify your VISA request

You will be scheduled to have the interview with your teacher via ZOOM. Prepare your interview in advance.



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What is your name?
2. Where were you born?
3. What is your nationality?
4. How old are you? When were you born?
5. Have you ever been to _____? If yes, on what VISA?
6. Do you have any relatives or friends in _____?
7. What do you do for a living?
8. What are your reasons to come back to your country?
9. Are you single or married?
10. Do you have any children? If yes, how old are they?

Conversational strategy:
Providing personal information.

Prepare your interview
by answering these questions orally.



G: Sure! That's is a beautiful and peaceful place to visit, It's _____ twenty minutes _____ from here but you go past some interesting places on the way. Here's a map.



Go _____ Columbus Avenue, go _____ Flour bakery and turn _____ on Arlington Street. Go on for two blocks. The Boston public garden is on your right.

T: Oh, that sounds interesting.



G: Yes, it is. You can go _____ the garden and the Boston Common is _____ from it. That is also a very nice place if you like nature.



T: Great to know about it. Thanks a lot.

Social-interactive stage:

PART 1

Conversational strategy:
Requesting for a service.

Imagine you are in Rio de Janeiro for your summer vacations and you need to rent a car for your stay...Request the car rental manager for the car you need. Say:



1. The type of car you need
2. Length of your stay
3. Your budget
4. Ask for available cars and their costs.



Workshop no.5 'going abroad':

		Yes	Need to improve
Las actividades de repetición ayudan a mejorar mi pronunciación y fluidez.	✓		✗
Asociar palabras con imágenes me ayuda a recordar más fácil el vocabulario.			
Colocar palabras en oraciones ayuda a recordar vocabulario a través del contexto.			
Hablar de situaciones familiares a mi contexto promueve el desarrollo de mis habilidades comunicativas en el inglés.			
Hacer juego de roles me ayuda a desarrollar habilidades conversacionales como pedir y dar consejos, dar o pedir información.			
Participar en actividades de interacción social me motiva a hablar en inglés.			
Hablar de mis sueños como los países que quiero visitar a futuro, sus lugares turísticos y lo que es esencial en mi equipaje para mis viajes me motiva más a hablar el inglés y me facilita su pronunciación.			
Respondo preguntas que me hacen y participo en clase.			

Self-assessment section