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CARRERA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

Task-Based Activities Used to Foster the Speaking Skills of Eleventh Graders at "Carlos Cueva Tamariz" High School

Trabajo Investigativo del Curso de Graduación previo a la obtención del Título de Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación, en la especialización de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this project was to determine the importance of the use of task-based activities to foster speaking skills in nineteen students of the Eleventh grade at Carlos Cueva Tamariz High School. The outcome of task-based activities is communication, so when teachers use these kinds of activities, students have to work and communicate with each other in order to complete a task. The data collected through tests, a survey, and an interview with an expert have shown that these activities foster speaking skills and motivate students to participate in an active way. As a conclusion, this study showed that task-based activities were useful tools to foster speaking skills in teenagers because during the interaction students were able to acquire language and vocabulary which let them communicate effectively.

Key words:
Task based
Activities
Speaking Skill
Motivation
Goals
Learner role
Teacher role

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RESUMEN

El propósito de este trabajo fue determinar la importancia del uso de actividades basadas en tareas para incentivar las habilidades orales en estudiantes de primero de bachillerato del colegio Carlos Cueva Tamariz. La finalidad de las actividades basadas en tareas es la comunicación, así que cuando los profesores usan estas clases de actividades, los estudiantes tengan que trabajar y comunicarse en inglés con sus compañeros para completar la tarea asignada. La información recolectada a través de testes, una encuesta, and una entrevista con experto han demostrado que estas actividades incentivan las habilidades orales y motivan a los estudiantes a participar de manera activa. Como conclusión, este estudio demostró que las actividades basadas en tareas fueron útiles herramientas para incentivar las habilidades orales en adolescentes por que durante la interacción los estudiantes fueron capaces de adquirir el lenguaje y el vocabulario lo cual les permitió a los estudiantes comunicarse efectivamente usando el idioma inglés.

Palabras claves:
Actividades basadas en tareas
Motivación
Habilidad oral
Rol del profesor
Rol de alumno

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DEDICATION

To God who has always given me the strength to achieve my goals. To my parents, Ruben and Cristina, who with great love and effort made my university studies possible, and to my brothers and sisters who have always given me their love.

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, knowing English, a global and international language, is essential because people can have better opportunities or achieve success in different aspects of their lives. According to previous research, teaching English is faced with some serious problems because of a lack of motivation and interest of the students to learn English. As a result, this work proposes task-based activities to foster students' speaking skills and interaction in class.

The aim of this work is to determine the importance of the use of task-based activities to motivate students to speak using the target language in an active way. The aim of these kinds of activities is to engage students to use the target language in order to complete a task. Also, these activities require that students interact among themselves in order to acquire and practice the language. For this reason, the responsibility of the teacher is to create learning opportunities in which students acquire and use the language autonomously.

Chapter One describes the reasons for this work and its objectives. This part gives general information about why learning English is difficult for students.

Chapter Two provides the Literature Review on task based activities. This contains the concept of the task, types of tasks, sequence of the task. Also, this chapter contains information about speaking skills and motivation. Finally, the author proposes task-based activities that teachers can use to foster students' speaking skills. With these activities, this piece of work wants to provide opportunities where students can develop their speaking skills in an interactive way.

Chapter Three explains the methodology that was used to do this work, and Chapter Four presents the data analysis of the survey, tests, and interviews which were gathered to carry out this study.

The last part of the work provides some recommendations to teachers on how to use these kinds of activities in class.

In conclusion, the information collected in this work proves that task-based activities can be a useful tool to teach a foreign language and motivate students to learn it in an interactive way.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Task-based activities used to foster speaking skills with teenagers from Eleventh Grade at Carlos Cueva Tamariz High School.

1.1 PURPOSE

This work proposes task-based activities to foster speaking skills for Eleventh Graders at the Carlos Cueva Tamariz High School.

1.2 PROBLEM

According to previous research, students cannot speak English and express their ideas and thoughts for important reasons, such as lack of motivation, interest, vocabulary, material, communicative activities in a classroom and the learners' insecurity. Therefore, the learning process becomes monotonous and uninteresting. As a result, students feel indifference and boredom. This problem can be overcome with the application of task-based activities in order to encourage students' oral communication. Due to this, the present work will use task-based activities in order to enhance speaking skills and oral communication in a participative way. Through this project, task-based activities will provide resources to increase communication in English.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION

The project aims at determining the importance of task-based activities to foster speaking skills in English learners, and verify the importance of students' interaction and students' oral participation in a communicative learning environment.

Nowadays, the international barriers have almost disappeared, and people can keep in touch more easily with other cultures and languages. Previous research has demonstrated that mastering the English language, which has become a global language by now, is an essential tool to achieve success in different aspects of our lives. Therefore, it is important to use activities that help students to speak English by using information from their lives. In this manner, task-based activities will supply opportunities to use English in a real life context. These kinds of activities keep students to use English in a communicative way, so task-based activities give students opportunities to express ideas, opinions, thoughts, and feelings. With the use of these kinds of activities, students are considered an important part of the learning process, because they have the opportunity to interact with each other in real life situations. Also, the use of task-based activities in the classroom encourages and motivates learners to use the language in a natural manner.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the effect of applying task based activities in fostering students´ speaking skills?

1.5 OBJECTIVES

General objective

- To determine the importance of using task-based activities to foster speaking skills in English learners from the Eleventh Grader at a Cuenca high school

Specific objectives

- To define theoretical aspects about task-based activities.
- To select task-based activities to use them in an English classroom.
- To explore students' participation when using task-based activities in the EFL classroom through class validation.

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CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review presents scholarly data related to the topic Task-Based Activities used to foster speaking skills with teenagers from the Eleventh Grader at Carlos Cueva Tamariz High School. This chapter contains information about Task-Based Language Learning, the conditions for language learning and, in addition, some information about speaking skills and students' motivation.

2.1 TASK-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING

Skehan, in his article, "Task-based instruction," mentions that during 1980s, two main developments occurred in language teaching. First, the term 'communicative activity' became replaced by the term 'task', and second, a task-based approach to instruction emerged which was also known as task-based language learning or task-based language teaching (1). Willis in her book, "A framework for task-based learning," mention that task-based language teaching develops from communicative language teaching whose aim is communication, which is based on the learners' needs and on situations that are as authentic as possible (25-34). Therefore, these theories shared several principles. Both support the language learning process through task activity. Students learn the langue by fulfilling a task. Input in these methodologies need to be rich. The principal point is that in these approaches students learn to interact with others in daily situations in and outside the classroom.

Foster in her article, "Task-based Learning and Pedagogy," states that "the task-based approach to language teaching has evolved in response to a better understanding of why languages are learnt" (69). Also, she mentions that this task-based learning provides a perfect atmosphere which best

promotes the natural language learning process in order to help students with the acquisition of the language (69).

Estaire and Zanón in their book, "Planning Classwork: A Task-Based Approach" state that "In task-based learning the basic and initial point of organization is the task; the classroom is organized as a sequence of a task and it is tasks that generate the language to be used" (12).

Moreover, Richards and Rodgers in their book, "Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching," state that task-based language teaching refers to an approach based on the use of a task as the core unit of planning the language teaching in which students have opportunities to interact with others and in this manner learn the structure of the language (223).

2.2.1 TASK-BASED ACTIVITIES

According to the authors mentioned above, task-based activities are activities that require the use of the target language in order to complete a task. The main point is the completion of the task and less the correct use of the language. These kinds of activities are more focused on developing fluency than accuracy, because accuracy can be developed during further practice. Also, these writers manifest that the core of a task-based activity is the task and therefore, this work will review some definitions of a task.

2.1.2 DEFINITION OF TASK

Jane Willis states that tasks "are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome" (23). Nunan, in his book, "Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom", says that "a communicative task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form" (10). Rod Ellis in his book, "Task-based Language Learning and Teaching" emphasizes that "a task is a

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work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed"(16). In other words, the three author manifest that the core and principal element of an activity is the task, and all tasks have an outcome that students have to achieve to fulfill the task in order to acquire and use the target language.

Besides, these kinds of activities require the interaction of students to fulfill a task. Students have to work in pairs, groups, or whole class in order to produce and practice the language. Jane Willis mentions that doing a task in pairs or groups has several advantages that help students to have more confidence to use the target language in the learning process (35-36):

-The task gives confidence to try to use the language that they know.

-It gives students experience and chance to express what they want spontaneously.

-It gives the opportunity to negotiate turns to talk among members of the group, and engages learners in using language purposefully and co-operatively.

-It gives students more opportunity to try out communication strategies, checking, reformulation of other people´s ideas, etc.

-It helps to develop learners' confidence, cooperation among the group to achieve the task's goals using the target language.

Further, in their article, "Task-Based Learning," Abad, Chacon and Quispe mention a checklist given by Candlin (1). Candlin, as cited by the authors, says that a task should

1. Have objectives that match the communicative needs of learners.
2. Require input from all learners regarding their different learning styles.
3. Allow for different modes of participation and solutions.

4. Be challenging but not threatening.

5. Ensure cost-effectiveness and a high return on investment (qtd. in karina Adad, Chacon, and Quispe).

The above-mentioned advantages and aspects help students in the process of learning because students participate, interact and work together to reach a goal which is communication.

2.1.3 ELEMENTS OF A TASK

According to Nunan, elements of a task are goals, input, activities, teacher role, learner role, and settings (11).

-*Goals* are task's intentions. These are what teachers want to develop in their students when they engage learners in a task. For example, exchange personal information, talk about something specific, write a paragraph, etc. (48).

-*Input* refers to all data material or resources that teachers give students to read, listen to, and see; such as videos, articles, pictures, etc. Also, all these resources should take into account the students' interests and level so that students can carry out the task in a successful way (53-58).

-*Activities* are the things that students have to do with the input. These activities engage students in a specific topic in order to complete a task. Nunan proposes three characteristics that activities should have: authenticity, skills use, and fluency/accuracy (59). Authenticity implies that students are involved in real, everyday situations where they can use their speaking skills to improve fluency and accuracy (59-62).

-*The teacher's role* in these kinds of activities is seemingly passive. The teacher "only" has to guide and control the activities in class, but this does not imply that the role of the teacher is not important. He/she has a crucial

role in the presentation of the task. The teacher has to create or design tasks according to the students' interests, level, and learning needs (84-85).

-*The learner's role* is active. Students have to be independent; they have to be reflective and critical in their learning. Also, learners have to be able to create and invent their own learning situations to improve their level of language skills with the guidelines given by the teacher (81-83).

-*Settings* "refer to the classroom arrangements specified or implied in the task"; settings are also the spaces that the teacher provides while the tasks are carried out (91).

All these elements help the teacher to adapt, select, modify, or create their own tasks.

2.1.4 TYPES OF TASK

Willis in her book mentions that there are six types of task: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative task (26).

1. *Listing*. - In this type of task, students can work as a whole class, individually, or in groups. They can use brainstorming or fact-finding in order to complete a list, or draft a map etc., using their experience or ideas, or finding information in books.

2. *Ordering and sorting*. – In these tasks students have to organize, classify, or rank their ideas or information about a specific topic to fulfill the task.

3. *Comparing*. - In these kinds of tasks students have to identify similarities and differences about a specific topic from different sources.

4. *Problem solving*. - These tasks demand that students use their experience to think or formulate hypotheses in order to find possible solutions to solve problems.

5. *Sharing personal experiences*. - In these tasks, students have to share personal experiences from their daily lives in order to have a casual social conversation in the classroom.

6. *Creative tasks*. - In these tasks, students have to create projects in pairs or groups. These projects could be oral or written. Also, these projects require out of class research, and students have to use all the information that they have learned.

These kinds of tasks can be made in pairs or groups and help students overcome the fear of talking in front of a public. They also help students to develop their skills, especially speaking skills. In these kinds of tasks, students use information that they can later employ in real life situations.

Ellis considers that there are two types of task: unfocused tasks and focused tasks. Unfocused tasks "predispose learners to choose from a range of forms, but they are not designed with the use of a specific form in mind", while focused tasks "aim to include learners to process, receptively or productively, some particular linguistic feature." The use of these tasks depends on the purpose that the teacher has for his or her classes (16).

Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun propose five different types of task according to the type of interaction that occur while completing them (qtd. in Richards and Rodgers 234).

1. *Jigsaw task*. Students have to work in pairs or groups to combine pieces of different information to complete the task.

2. *Information-gap task*: students have to exchange information among them to find the missing information and complete the task.

3. *Problem-solving tasks*: students have to find a solution to a problem.

4. *Decision-making tasks*: students have to solve a problem which has some outcomes, and they have to choose a solution to the problem by discussion and negotiation.

5. *Opinions exchange task*: students exchange and express ideas and opinions.

All these kinds of activities proposed by the different authors have a unique end, which is that students use the language in an active, interactive, and authentic way.

2.1.5 SEQUENCE OF A TASK

Task-based learning offers teachers a useful tool to help their students to involve them in the learning process. Due to this, it is important that teachers follow a sequence so that students can fulfill a task in a successful way. Jane Willis, in her book, proposes the following sequence of a task: Pre-task, Task Cycle, and Language Focus (38-41).

Pre-task. - Before the task, the teacher has to explore the topic with the class. He/she has to introduce the topic or task by giving clear instruction about it. Also, the teacher has to give some vocabulary to the students that will be useful for the task, or may show how the task should be done by presenting recordings of others doing a similar task. The teacher can use pictures, texts, songs, etc. to lead into the topic. The teacher should allow the students to have enough time to plan the task during which they can use brainstorming, comparing ideas, and sharing experiences to fulfill the task (42).

The Task Cycle. - This is divided into three stages: task, planning, and report. During the task, the teacher has to monitor students and encourage them from a distance to complete it. Students can work in pairs or small

groups to do the task. During the planning of the task, students have to prepare their report for the whole class; at this stage, the teacher has to give language advice to help students in their work. Students then have to present the report in front of the whole class; at this stage the teacher can give some comments on the content to foster fluency and accuracy (53-60).

The Language Focus. - consists of analysis and practice. Students have to examine and discuss the task. Also, the teacher should encourage the practice of the new words or phrases that appear. In this phase, the teacher has to highlight the language that students used during the report phase for analysis. The teacher then can run some guided practice, and after that, students have the opportunity to reflect on their work and also, students have to reflect about the new language that they used to complete the task (38-40).

2.2 CONDITIONS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

Willis proposes three essential conditions for language learning: exposure, use, and motivation. Another condition that is not essential, but desirable, is called instruction (11).

Exposure: under this condition, students should be exposed to spoken and written input which they can read and listen to in order to have an idea about how they have to write or speak. Also, students have to assimilate what they have read and listened to in order to be able to express what they want. Thus teachers have to carry out a careful selection of the input used in classes, and many times teachers should modify the input according to the level of their students. Besides, teachers have to modify their speech in order to help students' comprehension. In addition, the input should be rich and authentic, and above all, the quality of the input is more important than quantity. Moreover, the input has to contain the target language that the students will use outside the classroom or in future situations (11).

Use of language: Students need to know that they have to make real use of the target language. So they have to pay attention to what they hear and read in order to analyze and notice different features of the language. The purpose of this is that students should be able to produce oral and written responses. Moreover, students need to be active participants in the learning process, because during interaction students can acquire the language. Due to this, students need opportunities to express what they want, think, or feel. Thus the teacher has to provide different situations where students can use the language according to the given circumstances. In addition, the atmosphere of the classroom should be relaxed to encourage students' creativity and risk-taking when they interact during classes (13).

Motivation: Students need to be engaged and exposed to language that helps them communicate the ideas they are interested in. When students are motivated, they try to use the language in different situations, and also, they try to be exposed to listening and writing materials that they can use to increase their knowledge of English (14).

Instruction: Although, this condition is not essential, it helps students to notice specific features of the target language. Some students acquire the language while they are exposed to adequate input. Others learn when the teacher gives an explicit explanation about a grammar point. Each student learns according to their natural capacity and, due to this, teachers have to look for the best strategies to teach. It is important that students have learning opportunities, activities or tasks where they can acquire and use the language naturally in their own time and level (16).

It is important to examine if the language learning process is fulfilled under these conditions, because the teacher needs to create a good classroom environment where students have enough exposure and motivation to use and acquire the target language. If the teacher notices that his/her students find it difficult to speak, or they lack confidence to speak, this

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means that they need to be exposed to more spontaneous spoken English, and they need to have more opportunities to use the language to improve their confidence.

2.3 SPEAKING SKILLS

Nowadays speaking English is an essential tool, because English, as a global language, can open a lot of doors in our future and improve some aspects of our lives. However, according to Willis many secondary school students leave high school not being able to communicate in English (4). It is known that English is a difficult language to acquire because secondary school students are not exposed to the target language in real context in classrooms and, due to this, students cannot develop their speaking skills in an efficient way.

According to Chaney, speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts" (qtd. in Hayriye Kayi 1). In other words, speaking is the ability to express what we want in different situations in our lives. Beyond doubt, the only way to learn to speak English is by speaking. Citing the proverb mentioned by Willis "practice makes perfect" (5). We can deduce that students have to practice a lot to attain to perfection. Also, it is important to introduce and practice real communication in our classes. Teachers have to teach English by using real social contexts where the students have the opportunity or feel the need to communicate. Speech, as a vehicle to link an individual to society and the way humans communicate with others, should be the preoccupation of teachers, especially teachers of a foreign language.

Consequently, speaking is an interactive process in which people produce, receive, and process information. Then the goal of teaching how to speak English is that students will be able to communicate with others using the target language. Due to this, teaching English speaking skills should provide many opportunities to practice speaking in order for the students to

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be ready to use the language extensively. This practice should have as its goal the oral interaction where students need to negotiate, infer, think, express, and process the received information to be able to use this language in their real lives outside the classroom. Arnold suggests "teachers should use talking-with and real-speak to develop interactive speaking skills" (qtd. in Al-Badi 47). She explains that real speaking should be used for expressing students' ideas and practicing structures in a personalized context in order to develop spoken fluency.

In addition, Howarth indicates that there are some problems that teachers face when they try to increase oral interaction among students (qtd. in Al-Badi 48). She mentions that some students display resistance to speak English because they prefer to use their native language. Another problem is self-consciousness. Howarth says that students feel nervous and embarrassed when they try to speak English. Due to this, Howarth suggests that teachers have to look for strategies to motivate students to speak in English. She also says that students need to have sufficient language to use in class interaction (48).

In order to help students to speak English, teachers have to provide enough input so that students are exposed to the target language. Furthermore, teachers have to create opportunities where students can use the language orally.

2.4 MOTIVATION

Motivation is an important factor in the learning process especially in learning a language. It is one of the biggest challenges that teachers have to face during the learning process. At the beginning, some students have a great interest in learning English, but over time they lose interest because they assume that this subject is difficult as they are not able to pronounce or understand English words or use these words to communicate. Therefore, teachers have to create an appropriate classroom atmosphere where

students can use what they learn in a communicative way. Moreover, students not only need extra points or prizes when they do something well to feel motivated, but they also need to realize that what they learn is useful or will be useful in the future. Due to this, teachers have to create different situations where students can use the target language in a communicative way and motivate students to learn the English language.

Harmer in his book, "The Practice of English Language Teaching," mentions that there are two types of motivation: "extrinsic motivation, which is concerned with factors outside the classroom, and intrinsic motivation which is concerned with what takes place in the classroom" (3).

Extrinsic motivation: the author talks about integrative motivation in which learners are attracted by different aspects of the culture; often they are interested in becoming part of the target language community. He also talks about instrumental motivation in which students think that mastery of the target language is an instrument that will help them in the future to get a good job, or better life (3-4).

Intrinsic motivation: according to the writer, there are some factors that affect intrinsic motivation such as physical conditions, method, the teacher and success. The physical conditions have an important effect on the learning process and good physical conditions can motivate students to acquire the language in an easy way. It means that a classroom should be decorated with some posters, pictures or students' works that motivate students to learn English. Also, the method used by teachers has to motivate students, and therefore, teachers have to find different methods to use with their students in different situations. Teachers, as the most important factors of intrinsic motivation, should have sympathy with their students, inspire confidence, show patience, and, most importantly, show the same interest in all their students. Besides, success is an essential part of motivation, so the activities should constitute an appropriate challenge to students, namely they

should not be very easy or very difficult, but should have a level of difficulty which means that the students will feel satisfied after completing the task (4-6).

In others words, the task of the teacher is to create a motivating class environment where students feel encouraged to learn English, and feel confident to use the target language during the activities that the teacher has prepared for the learning process. Moreover, all these aspects help the students and the teacher to get close psychologically.

2.5 EXAMPLES OF TASK-BASED ACTIVITIES

These task-based activities are useful tools that teachers can use to foster speaking skills.

Activity 1

What can you do?

Aim: At the end of this activity, students will be able to express things that they can do or they cannot do.

Vocabulary:

Speak English	Play soccer
Drive	Swim
Act	Rollerblade
Ride a bike	Sing
Draw	Dance

Warm up: What do I do?

-The teacher mimes and students have to guess what the teacher is doing.

Pre-task

Introducing the topic and task

-The teacher indicates that on this day they are going to talk about what they can or cannot do. The teacher uses pictures to practice the vocabulary and asks students to repeat the words three times.

Figure # 1: Abilities

Source: http://1.bp.blogspot.com/abilities.jpg

-Then the teacher asks some questions about the students' ability. E.g.: Who can speak English/dance? While asking, the teacher can use body movements to clarify the meaning.

Task cycle

-After the students have worked on the vocabulary, the teacher uses some of the students' answers to write some sentences using "can". The teacher writes some positive and negative sentences with can or cannot.

-After that, the teacher asks students to read these sentences, and asks more questions about their abilities, in order to check if the students have learnt the use of "can".

-Then the teacher presents a video in which the students have to pay attention to the abilities that each pumpkin has in order to complete the following chart.

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❖ Check yes or no according to the video	Yes	No
The first Pumpkin can run and jump.		
The first Pumpkin can fly.		
The second Pumpkin can't climb.		
The third Pumpkin can fight.		
The fourth Pumpkin can swim.		
The last Pumpkin can eat a tree.		

This video helps students to hear the pronunciation.

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tScUb08F7os

Language focus

-After this activity, the teacher asks students to work in pairs. Each student has to exchange information about their abilities and disabilities. In this activity, students use the target langue in order to find out about their abilities and disabilities.

-Finally, students have to present the information about their partner in front of the class, which helps the teacher and students to notice the mistakes and correct the pronunciation.

Activity 2

My daily routine

Aim: At the end of the activity, students will be able to talk about their daily activities.

Vocabulary:

Take a shower	Brush my teeth
Get up	Get home from school
Go to school	Watch TV
Eat or have breakfast	Comb my hair
Eat or have dinner	Go to bed
Do homework	Get dressed

Warm up: Guess what is in the bag?

-The teacher asks the students to make questions to discover what thing is in the bag. -The student who guesses right will receive a prize.

Pre-task

Introducing the topic and task

-The teacher indicates that on this day they are going to talk about what they do during the day. The teacher uses the pictures of the student's book to practice the vocabulary that the students need to accomplish the task.

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Figure # 2: Daily Routines

Source: http://3.bp.blogspot.com/1600/Flashcard2%5B1%5D.jpg

-Then the teacher asks some questions about the students' daily routine. E.g.: What do you do in the morning? The whole class participates in this part.

-The teacher presents the vocabulary through pictures in the book, or can use flash cards. Then the teacher reads and repeats the new words, and asks students to repeat the words.

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-After that, the teacher asks students to share more information about their daily routines in order for them to compare their daily routines.

Task cycle

-In order for students to be more involved with the new vocabulary, the teacher asks students to read the following paragraph and then listen to it.

-The teacher asks students to pay attention to the different activities that Brian does on a typical day.

❖ **Brian's typical Day**

Every morning, on a school day, my alarm goes off at 6:30. But I usually turn it off and close my eyes again. Of course, it is never easy to go back to sleep after the alarm goes off, so I get up.

I do the same things every day. First, I take a shower and get dressed for school. Then I eat breakfast. After that, I brush my teeth. I sometimes have cereal. But I usually just grab a banana and eat it at the bus stop. My bus leaves at exactly 7:30.

School starts at 8:00. I'm never late for school. Lunch break is at 12:00. On nice days, my friends and I sometimes sit outside. Classes end at 3:00, but I never get home until after 6:00. I am on the track and field team, and I practice after school. After practice, I usually go to the gym. At 8:00, I get back to my house. I usually eat a sandwich and watch TV. Finally, I go to bed at 10:00.

Source: Abbs, Brian. Barker Chris, and Freebairn. *English level 2*. Quito: Editográn S.A.

-After reading and listening, the students have to complete the following chart.

Activity	Time
Get up	
Take the bus	
School start	
Lunch break	
Class end	
Arrive the house	

-Then the teacher asks students more questions about their daily routines. The teacher tries to include the whole class.

-After that, the teacher asks students to work in pairs in order to interview each other about their daily routines. The students have to use the following questions.

What time do you get up?

What do you usually eat for breakfast?

What time do you start your classes?

What do you do after school?

What time do usually do your homework?

Where do you go after the school?

What time do you go to bed?

-During this activity, the teacher has to monitor if all students are working and control the use of the target language.

-After that, the teacher makes some observations about the language, and gives students some key words which help them to perform the task.

Language focus

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-Now students have to prepare an oral presentation about their daily routine and be prepared to answer questions about it.

-During the preparation, the teacher has to monitor and help students if they need it.

Activity 3

My town

Aim: At the end of the activity, students will be able to talk about places in the town.

Vocabulary:

Bank	Drugstore
Supermarket	Museum
Restaurant	Bookstore
Movie Theater	Post office
Mall	Zoo
Park	Disco

Warm up: Broken telephone

-In this activity, the teacher has to think of a sentence or phrase and whisper it to the student sitting at the first desk. This student has to whisper what he or she heard to the next person, and so on until it reaches the last student, who has to say aloud what he or she has heard. This game gets people laughing because the message often gets distorted.

Pre-task

Introducing the topic and task

-The teacher introduces the topic and says to the students that they are going to learn about places in their town or neighborhood. Then the teacher presents the vocabulary using flash cards.
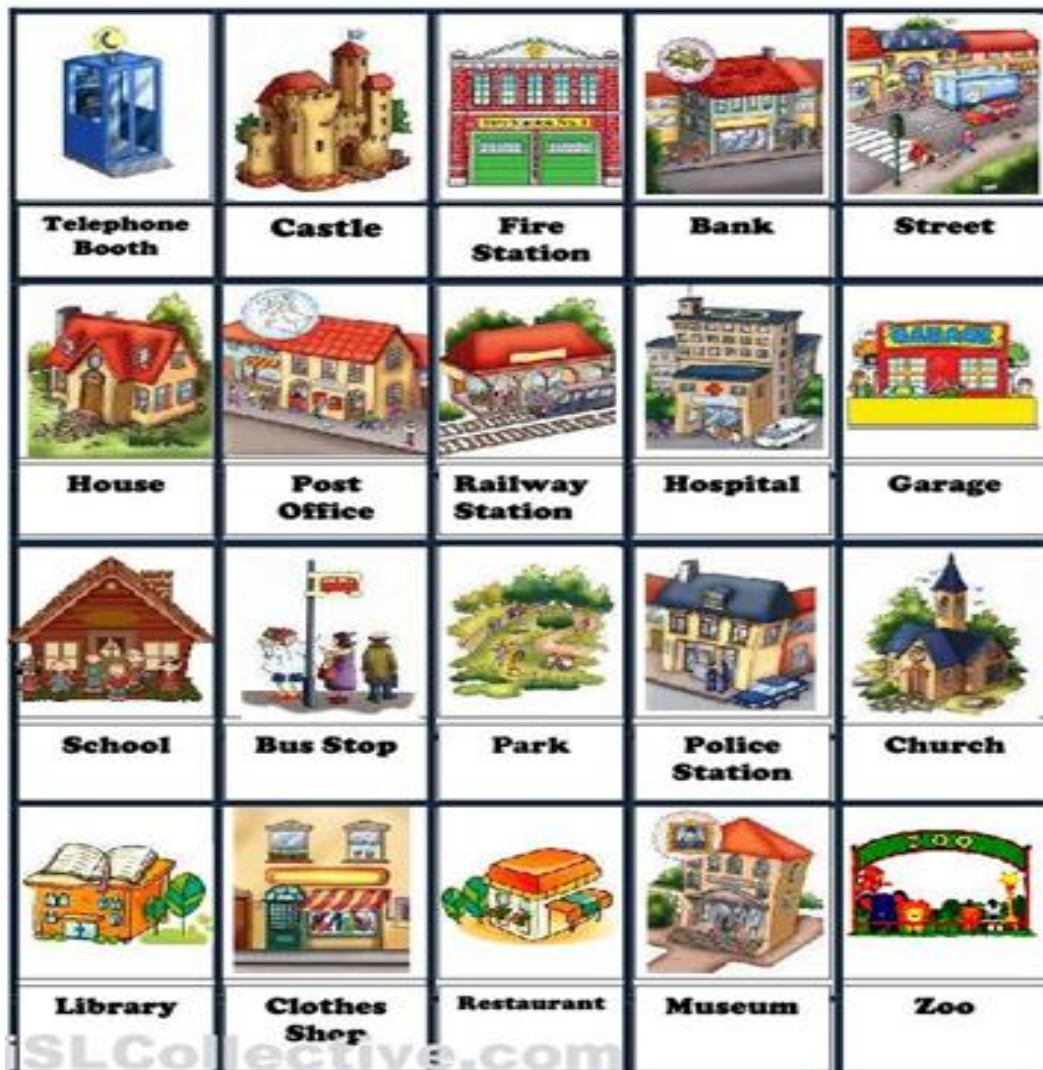
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Figure # 3: Places in Town

Source: http://4.bp.blogspot.com/places+city+pictionary.jpg

-After that, the teacher asks students some questions. For example: Where can I get some bread? Or: Where are a lot of stores? Or: Where can I see a movie? The whole class should participate in the activity.

-Finally, the teacher uses the map of the book and asks students some questions using there is / there are.

Task cycle

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-In order to check students' understanding, the teacher asks students some questions about their neighborhoods using there is / there are.

-Next, the teacher asks students to work in pairs and use the maps below. The students have to make questions using the vocabulary learned.
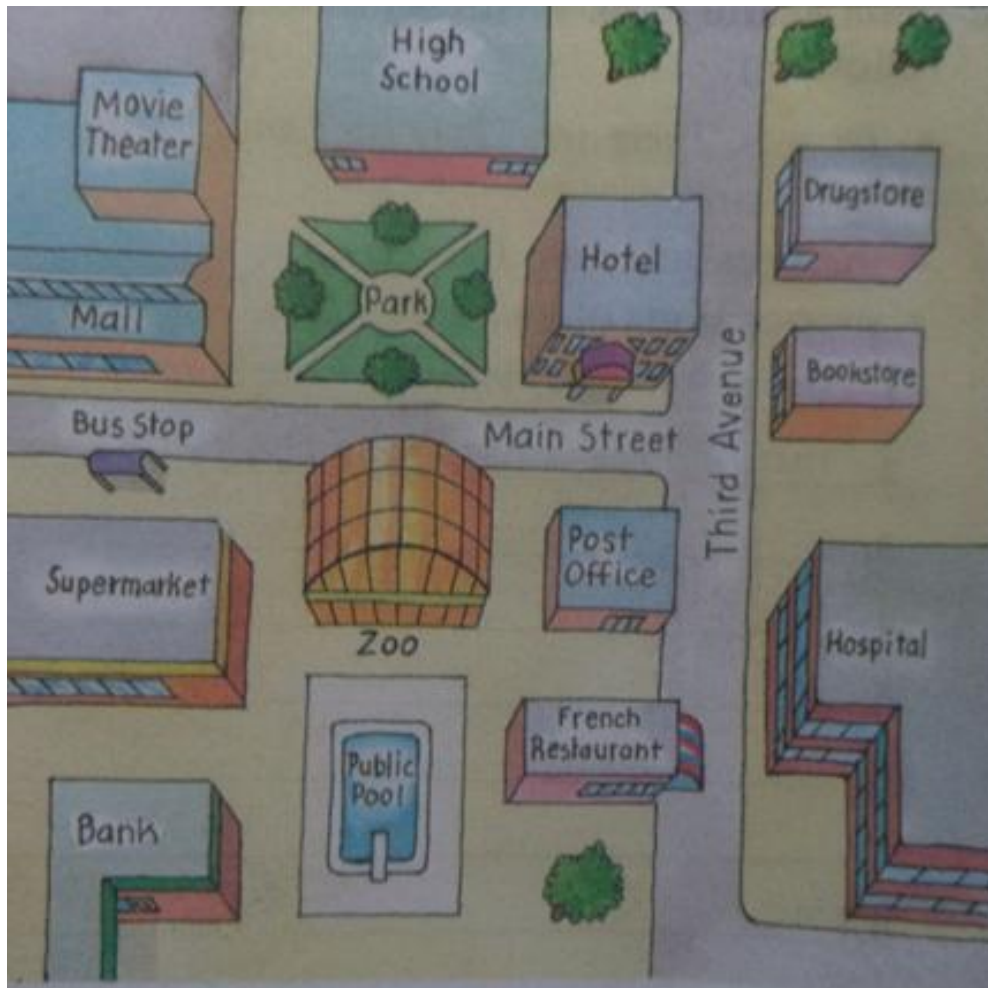

Figure # 4: Map 1

Source: Abbs, Brian. Barker Chris, and Freebairn. *English level 2*. Quito: Editográn S.A. (27).
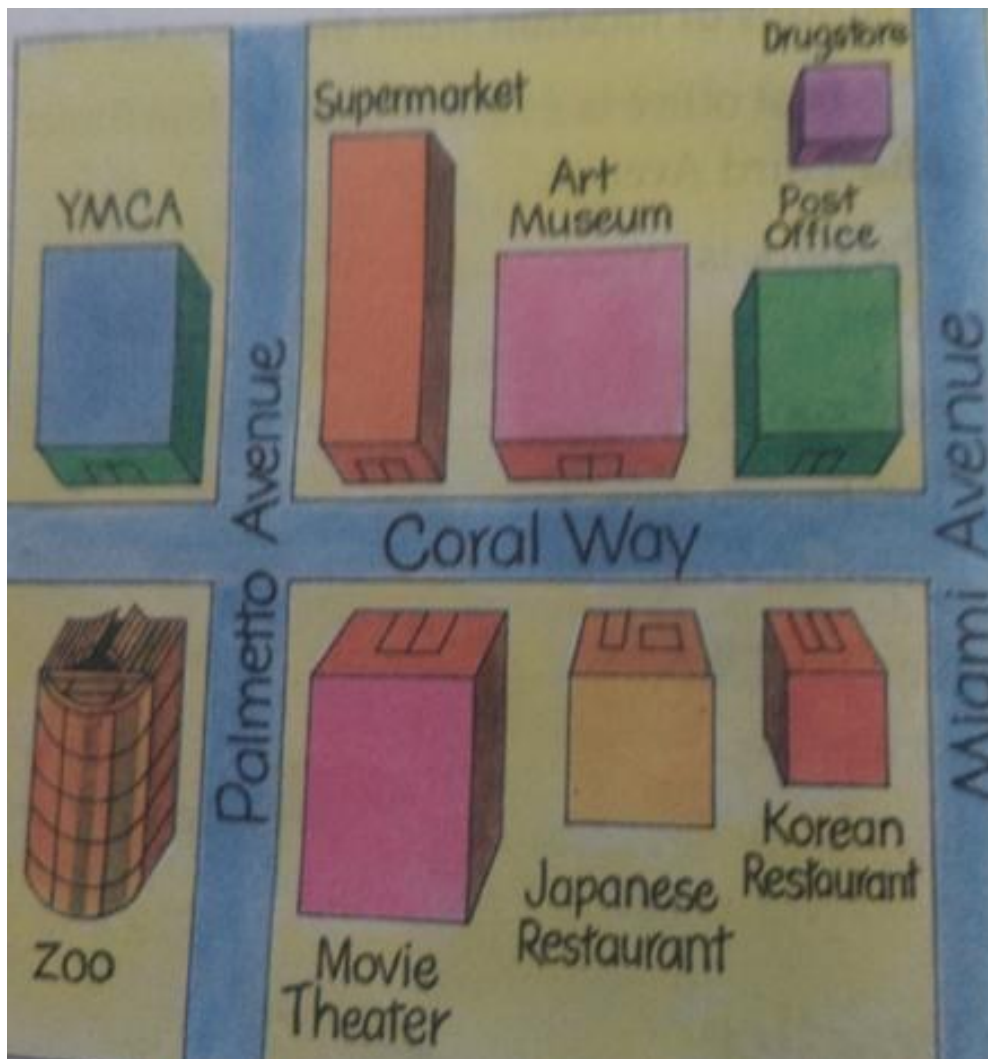
Figure # 5: Map 2

Source: Abbs, Brian. Barker Chris, and Freebairn. *English level 2*. Quito: Editográn S.A. (28).

E.g.: *Is there a place where I can get some bread?*

Are there restaurants on your map?

Is there some place where I can swim?

-During this part of the activity, the teacher has to monitor the class in order to notice some mistakes that the students might make. The teacher also has to verify if students are using the target language.

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Language focus

-At this stage, the teacher asks the students to plan a new area in their town for teenagers. Students have to follow these instructions:

1. Discuss the places you want to include in your town.

2. Make a map of your town on a big piece of paper.

3. Name your town

-Finally, the groups of students have to present their plans to the whole class using the language learned.

Activity 4

What are you doing?

Aim: At the end of the activity, students will be able to express what they are doing at a specific moment in time.

Vocabulary:

Use the computer   /   Take a shower   /   Do homework   /   Play tennis

Warm up: Alphabet game

-The teacher has to say a letter and ask a student to say a word with this letter. Then the student does the same with another classmate until the whole class participates. This activity helps students to remember the vocabulary learned.

Pre-task

Introduce the topic and task

-The teacher indicates that on this day they are going to talk about what they are doing at a specific moment in time. First, the teacher makes sentences about what is happening at the moment. E.g.: I am writing on the white board. / I am speaking English. You are listening to me.

-After that, the teacher uses the pictures in the student's book depicting actions that are taking place at the moment in order to introduce the vocabulary. The teacher writes sentences about the pictures on the board.

Figure # 6: Action Verbs

Source: http://www.kids-pages.com/folders/flashcards/Verbs_1/Verbs1.jpg

Task cycle

-The teacher asks some questions about the cards.

E.g.: *What are they doing?*

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What is he/she doing?

-In order for students to practice, they have to work with a picture and describe what the people are doing in the picture.

-Students have to work in pairs. Student A has to look at the picture for a moment. Then student B asks student A what the people in the picture are doing. Then they swap roles.

Example: *What is Brad doing?*

Figure # 7: Classroom

Source: Abbs, Brian. Barker Chris, and Freebairn. *English level 2*. Quito: Editográn S.A. (38).

-During this stage, the teacher has to walk around the class to monitor the activity.

Language focus

-At this stage, the teacher asks students to do a role play in pairs. Students have to imagine that they are at home after the classes and have a phone conversation like the following one.

Liza: Hello.

Annie: Hi Liza. What are you doing right now?

Liza: I am watching TV in my room. And you?

Annie: I am listening to music. And what is your brother doing?

Liza: He is playing soccer in the backyard.

Annie: ……………………

-Finally, students have to perform the conversation in front of the whole class.

Activity 5

My last weekend

Aim: At the end of the activity, students will be able to talk about their past experiences.

Warm up:

-The teacher asks some questions about an event that happened last weekend in order to engage students in the topic.

Pre-task

Introduce the topic and task

-The teacher indicates that on this day they are going to talk about their experiences in the past. He/she asks some questions about the students' weekend.

-On the board, the teacher writes questions in order to introduce the past tense form.

E.g.: *Did you do your homework last weekend?*

Did you eat ice cream last weekend?

What did you do last weekend?

Where did you go last weekend?

Task cycle

-In order to reinforce students' knowledge, the teacher asks students to read the dialogue between Liza and Annie.

Liza: Hello, Annie! I waited for you all day yesterday. What happened?

Annie: Oh, sorry. Sam called, and we talked for hours. I didn't realize the time.

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Liza: Sam's your boyfriend now?

Annie: Liza! No, he is not my boyfriend.

Liza: Ok, I am kidding. Oh, did you hear about Brian and Joey?

Annie: They shopped together yesterday?

Liza: How did you know?

Annie: I met with them at the mall.

Liza: They talked all day yesterday, too.

Annie: Relax, Liza. They are just friends.

Liza: I hope so.

Annie: Ok. Talk you later.

Liza: Bye.

Source: Abbs, Brian. Barker Chris, and Freebairn. *English level 2*. Quito: Editográn S.A.

-After reading the conversation students have to answer the following questions:

Who did Liza wait for yesterday?

What did Annie do yesterday?

Where did Brian and Joey go?

What did they do there?

Language focus

-Finally, the teacher asks students to prepare a short oral presentation about their last weekend answering the following questions.

What time did you get up last weekend?

What did you do?

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Who did you go out with?

What did you eat?

Activity 6

Interview a classmate

Aim: At the end of the activity, students will be able to exchange past information in and outside of the classroom.

Pre-task

Introducing the topic and task

-The teacher introduces the topic and says to the students that they are going to learn how to interview their classmates.

-Then the teacher asks students to read the conversation below and practice it with a partner in order for them to have an example.

 A: Could you tell me a little about yourself?

   Where were you born?

B: I was born in Korea.

A: Did you grow up there?

B: No, I did not. I grew up in Canada.

A: Where did you go to high school?

B: I went to high school in Ecuador.

A: And when did you graduate?

B: I graduated last year. Now I work as a salesperson.

A: Did you have a favorite teacher when you were a child?

B: Yes, I did. I had an excellent teacher named Mr. Woods.

A: What did he teach?

B: He taught English.

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Task cycle

-After this, the teacher asks students to work in pairs. Students have to take turns to ask questions. They can use questions in Part A of the conversation. Also, students have to answer questions providing their own personal information.

-Then the teacher asks students to prepare six questions to interview another classmate. Questions can be like these:

Where did you go to elementary school?

Were you a good student in the elementary school?

Did you enjoy your childhood?

Who was your hero when you were a child?

When did you start learning English?

-After that, the teacher asks students to interview their partners.

-During this phase, the teacher monitors the activity by walking around the class.

Language focus

-Finally, each student has to talk about what they have learnt about their classmates in front of the class. Also, he or she should be prepared to answer questions.

Activity 7

My family

Aim: At the end of this activity, students will be able to talk about their families using the present tense.

Vocabulary:

Father	Brother
Mother	Aunt
Grandfather	Uncle
Son	Cousin
Daughter	Wife
Sister	Husband

Pre-task

Introducing the topic and task

-The teacher indicates that on this day they are going to talk about their families. In order to engage students in the topic, the teacher presents a picture with his or her family. He/she asks students to look at the picture and identify what member of the family each person in the picture could be. (A real picture can be used)
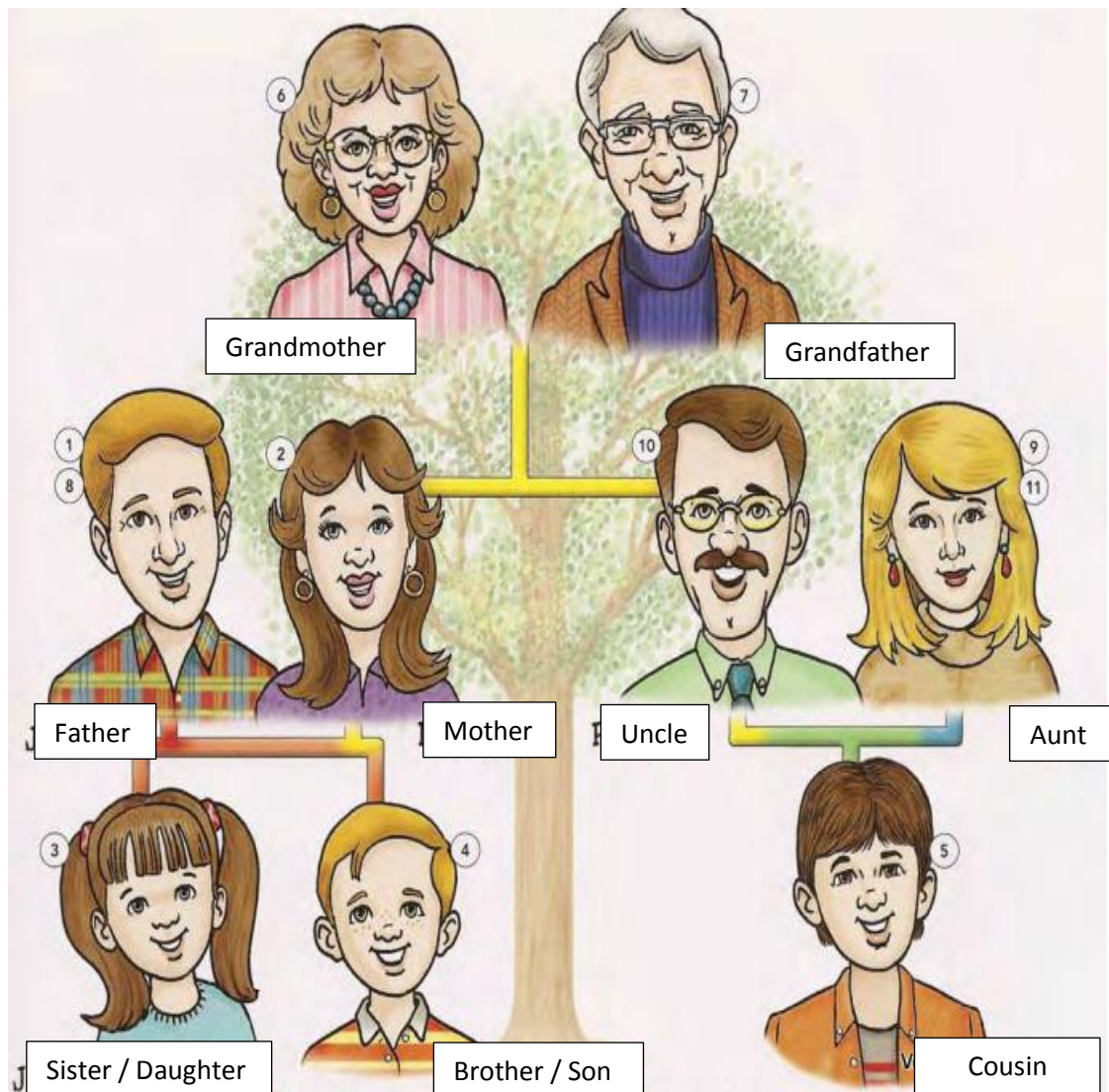
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Figure # 8: Family Picture

Source: http://www.google.com.ec/imgres?imgurl

-Then the teacher gives a short description of his or her family.

For example:

> *The old man in the picture is my grandfather. He is sixty years old. The woman with brown hair is my Mom, Delia. She is forty years old. And she is a dentist. And so on………*
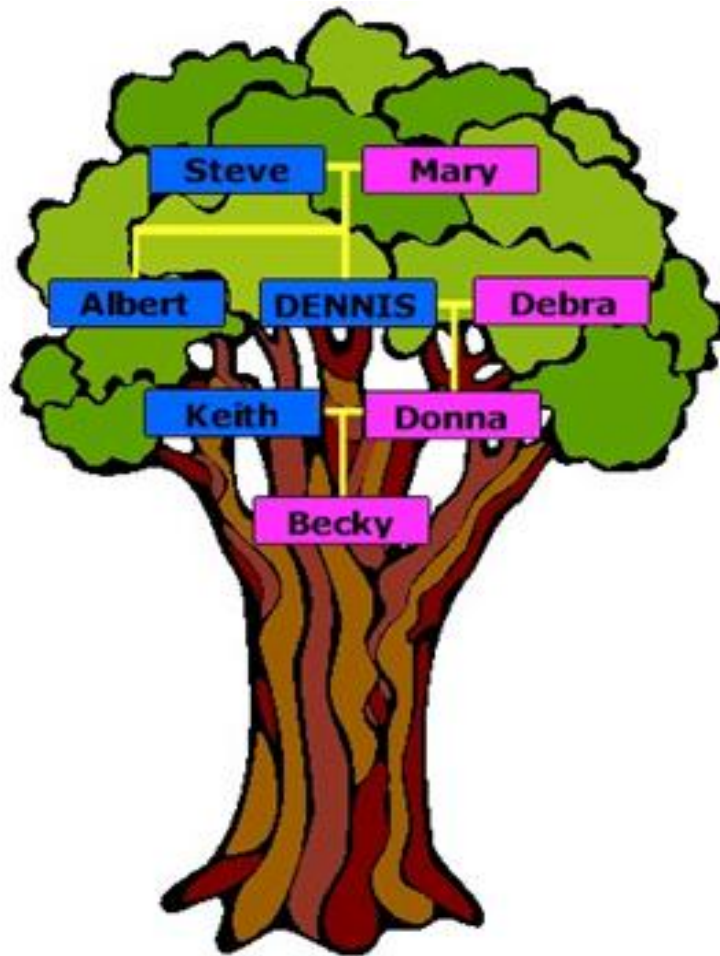
Figure # 9: Family Tree

Source:www.englishlanguageworld.com/Beginning_English_Lesson5/Reading

My name is Dennis and this is my family tree. My father's name is Steve. He is an architect and he lives in New York with my mother Mary. I live with my parents. My mom is a very talented artist. She paints beautiful pictures. I have one brother named Albert. He is a computer engineer. Debra is my wife. She is a nurse at the same hospital where I work. I work in the lab. My daughter Donna is a doctor in San Francisco. Donna's husband's name is Keith. Here is a restaurant manager. They have a little girl named Becky who is three years old.

-After reading the paragraph, the teacher asks students some questions about Dennis' family. All students participate.

Ex.: *Who is Dennis' father?*

What is Dennis' father's profession?

Where does Dennis's wife work?

How many brothers does Dennis have?

-Then the teacher asks students to draw a family tree on a piece of paper.

-After the students have finished their family trees, the teacher asks students to form groups of four. Next, the teacher asks students to share information about their families. The information that they have to provide is:

Name / age / profession / married or single / how many members their family has/…

-During the activity, the teacher has to monitor the students' work.

Language focus

-Finally, the teacher asks students to prepare an oral presentation using the family tree that they prepared before.

Activity 8

My favorite food

Aim: At the end of the activity, students will be able to give instructions about how to prepare their favorite food.

Vocabulary:

Cooking verbs:

to beat / to bake / to boil / to fry / to peel / to mix / to blend

Ingredients:

 salt / tomatoes / bread / onions / eggs / milk / sugar / lettuce / flour

Sequence adverbs:

First / Then / Next / After that / Finally

Warm-up: Describing a thing

-In order to engage students in the topic, the teacher starts to give the instructions of the game. He/she says:

-First, you have to get into pairs. One of you will be Student A, and the other one Student B. Student A has to think of an object and Student B has to get a piece of paper and a pen. Next, student A has to start describing the object and Student B has to draw the thing. Finally, Student A has to say if Student B drew the correct thing that he/she described.

Pre-task

Introducing the topic and task

-The teacher indicates that on this day they are going to learn about how to give instructions to do something.

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-Then the teacher explains the procedure and writes on the board some important points for the performing of the task, like ingredients, cooking verbs, etc.

-Then the teacher presents a paragraph in which students can read the instructions on how to make a milkshake. First the ingredients are presented.

Ingredients:

Milk, bananas, ice cream, some ice, and some cinnamon

Procedure:

First, you peel the bananas and add them to the blender. **Then** pour some milk in the blender and add two or three spoons of your favorite ice cream. **After that,** add some ice to the blender and mix everything for a minute. **Next**, pour the milkshake in a glass. **After that,** you can add some cinnamon on top. **Finally**, enjoy it with some cookies! It's delicious.

Source: wwww.slideshare.net/guest4cb60e/lets-cook-presentation

-After this, students read the recipe, and the teacher has to indicate the adverbs of sequence in the recipe. The teacher explains that they can use the adverbs of sequence to give instructions on how to do something.

-In order to check students' understanding, the teacher provides a mixed-up recipe which the students have to put in the right order.

A tuna sandwich recipe

___ *Then put the other slice on top and you have a tuna sandwich.*

___ *Then open a can of tuna and put the tuna in a bowl.*

 ___ *First, take two slices of bread.*

___ *After that, spread the mixture on one of the slices of bread.*

___ *Put some lettuce and tomato on top.*

_____ *Then add mayonnaise, salt, pepper, and spices.*

Source: Richards, Jack. *Full Contact Interchange.* Third Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge. (16)

Task cycle

-After this activity, the teacher asks students to work in groups of four.

Then the teacher asks students to think about how to prepare an easy recipe and what is the sequence that they have to use to prepare it.

-During the activity, the teacher should check if the students are using the target language and are focusing on the activity.

Language focus

-The teacher asks students to share their recipes in front of the class in order for the students to use the language in an active way.

Activity 9

Eat out at a restaurant

Aim: At the end of this activity, students will be able to order food at a restaurant.

Vocabulary:

<u>Menu</u>

Drinks: water, tonic water, wine

Desserts: ice cream, piece of cake

Meal: chicken, lobster, soup, salad

Warm up: The teacher asks students about their favorite food.

What is your favorite dish?

What is your favorite fruit?

Do you like apples?

Pre-task

Introducing the topic and task

-The teacher indicates that on this day they are going to learn to order food at a restaurant.

-In order to engage students in the topic, the teacher asks students about the last time that they went out to eat. At this point, the whole class participates.

-Then the teacher presents a dialogue of ordering food at a restaurant. Next, the teacher asks students to read the dialogue as well as asks some questions about the dialogue in order to check students' understanding.

E.g.: *Which restaurant did the friends go to?*

What did Customer 1 order?

What did Customer 2 order?

What did Customer 2 ask to drink?

Dialogue

Waiter: Welcome to Antico's. Here are your menus. Today's special is grilled salmon. I'll be back to take your order in a minute.

. . .

Waiter: Are you ready to order?

Customer 1: *I would like* the seafood spaghetti.

Waiter: And you?

Customer 2: *I would like* a hamburger and fries.

Waiter: Would you like anything to drink?

Customer 1: I would like a coke, please.

Waiter: And for you?

Customer 2: Just water, please.

Waiter: OK. So that's one seafood spaghetti, one hamburger and fries, one coke, and one water. I'll take your menus.

. . .

Waiter: Here is your food. Enjoy your meal.

. . .

Waiter: How was everything?

Customers 2: Delicious, thanks.

Waiter: Would you like anything for dessert?

Customer 1: No, just the bill please.

Source: bogglesworldesl.com/survival_travel_english/restaurants.htm

-Then the teacher points out the phrases that people use to offer or ask for food.

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E.g.: *to offer something to drink the waiter says:*

Would you like anything to drink?

Asking for drink, the customer says:

I would like a coke, please.

-After that, the teacher presents a video about people in a restaurant.

Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5dkB_Bcb_M

In order to check students' understanding, the teacher asks some questions about the video.

Task cycle

-At this stage, the teacher asks students to work in groups of three.

-After that, the teacher asks students to design a menu.

The menu should include:

-Main dishes   /   salads   /   drinks   /   desserts   /

Something like this:

Figure # 10: Restaurant Menu

Source: ddeubel.edublogs.org/2011/01/07/textbook-talk-using-scc/

-After the students are finished with the menu, the teacher indicates that students have to perform a dialogue at a restaurant.

-The teacher says that one member of the group is going to be the waiter and the others are going to be the customers.

-While the students prepare the dialogue, the teacher has to make sure that the students are using the appropriate target language.

Language focus

-In this stage, the teacher asks students to act out the dialogue in front of the class.

And finally, the teacher and students make an analysis about the presentation.

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Activity 10

At the cloth store

Aim: At the end of the activity, students will be able to buy clothes in a clothes store and ask about prices.

Vocabulary:

Cap / Dress / Shoes / Shorts / Overalls / Socks / Pajamas / Sweater / Pants / T-shirt

Pre-task

Introducing the topic and task

-The teacher indicates that on this day they are going to learn how to buy clothes at a store.

-Then the teacher uses pictures to introduce the vocabulary of clothes, and also introduces words for materials.

cap		shoes	
dress		shorts	
jacket		skirt	
overalls		sock	
pajamas		sweater	
pants		t-shirt	

Figure # 11: Clothes

Source: http://www.maitrilearning.com/images/cccloth.jpg

-After that, the teacher asks students to read the conversation in order for them to notice the language used in the dialogue.

Dialogue:

Kim: Excuse me. How much is this leather jacket?

Clerk: It is $20.

Kim: How much are these pants?

Clerk: Which ones?

Kim: The red ones.

Clerk: They are $30.

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Kim: Excuse me. I am looking for some jeans…

Clerk: What color would you prefer?

Kim: Black, please.

The How much is this sweater?

Clerk: Which one?

Kim: The red one.

And what material is it?

Clerk: Wool.

Kim: How much is it?

Clerk: It is $25.

-Then the teacher explains that "how much is" …? is used with singular nouns like cap, jacket etc., and "how much are …?" with plural nouns such as pants, gloves, shoes.

-After that the students have to practice this dialogue using other items.

Task cycle

-Next, the teacher asks students to watch the video about buying clothes.

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhMH58_fUYI

-After that, the teacher asks some questions about the video to check students' understanding.

-In this stage, students have to draw some articles indicating the price, material, and color.

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-Then the students have to create a dialogue in pairs using the drawings they made about the clothes store.

-While the students prepare the dialogue, the teacher has to monitor the activity.

Language focus

-Finally, students have to present the dialogue in front of the class in order for their classmates to hear and comment on these presentations.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 BASIC METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out primarily by qualitative research and action research. It used quantitative research methods to facilitate the readers' understanding and explain the results by figures.

Qualitative research explores all about the given issue, understanding the problem, and answering questions. Action research is a process in which researcher, participants, and all elements involved in this problem play a role in the investigation. Finally, quantitative research collects numerical data in order to explain, predict, and control the investigation results.

Therefore, this study focused on qualitative research because the project analyzed and measured the effects of task-based activities on students' speaking skills. Thus, as a piece of research I sought to understand students' experiences in order to look for solutions in their English learning. Also, this study was carried out through action research because the investigation was set up in order to learn how students act when performing task-based activities in class. Finally, this research involved quantitative methods to extend and explain data results.

Previous research on the topic of "Task-based activities to foster speaking skills in students at high school" have demonstrated that it is a transferable project because these kinds of activities have been used in others part of the world to teach speaking skills in English in a useful way, and also, these kinds of activities can be used in Ecuador with any level of students, especially in high schools where students have already gotten the

vocabulary and the basics of grammar structures, which facilitates communication.

3.2 HUMAN RESOURCES

This investigation was carried out at Carlos Cueva Tamariz High School in Cuenca. The subjects chosen for the study were 19 Eleventh Grade students. They study English as a foreign language, and this subject is made mandatory by the government. They have a coeducational system. Thus, in this class there are 10 females and 9 males. Their ages ranged from 15 to 19. Normally, they have forty minutes of English each a day. Most of them are outgoing, but some of them are shy, especially when they have to talk in English. Their level of speaking skills and vocabulary are fairly low according to the test they had to do. In addition, their classroom is small, which makes the teacher's work difficult.

3.3 MATERIAL RESOURCES

In order to perform this study, the material used to gather information consisted of a survey, speaking pre-test, post-test, an interview with an expert and an English teacher.

3.3.1 SURVEY

The survey, which was approved by the class teacher, was applied to 19 students of the Eleventh Grade in an urban high school located in the downtown of Cuenca. This survey had 13 open-ended questions. It was designed to obtain information related to my topic and the students' perceptions about English, their English classes, and speaking skills. This survey took 30 minutes. Students had enough time to answer the questions, but they had to be translated for the majority of the students to avoid any misunderstanding.

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3.3.2 PRE-TEST/POST-TEST

A speaking pre-test was also applied before starting the study. This pre-test had five questions. Students had to answer these questions in order for the author to gauge the level of the students´ speaking skills in English. Finally, a posttest was applied to accomplish the study. This post-test had six questions. Students answered these question so that their improvement could be evaluated.

3.3.3 INTERVIEWS

Additionally, an interview was performed with an expert. The name of the interviewee was Professor Kate Youman. She has been an English teacher for 35 years. To perform the interview a questionnaire of seven questions was used in order to get more information about her experience related to the topic and in order to clarify some points. The interview took place in the Philosophy Faculty building.

In addition, an interview with the institution's teacher was conducted. The name of the teacher is Ana Mosquera. She has worked as an English teacher for five years. To perform this interview a questionnaire of eleven questions was used in order to get information about her experience as an English teacher, and some information about how she manages her classes and how she motivates students to speak in class which helped me to have a general view of the students. The interview took place at the "Carlos Cueva Tamariz" High School.
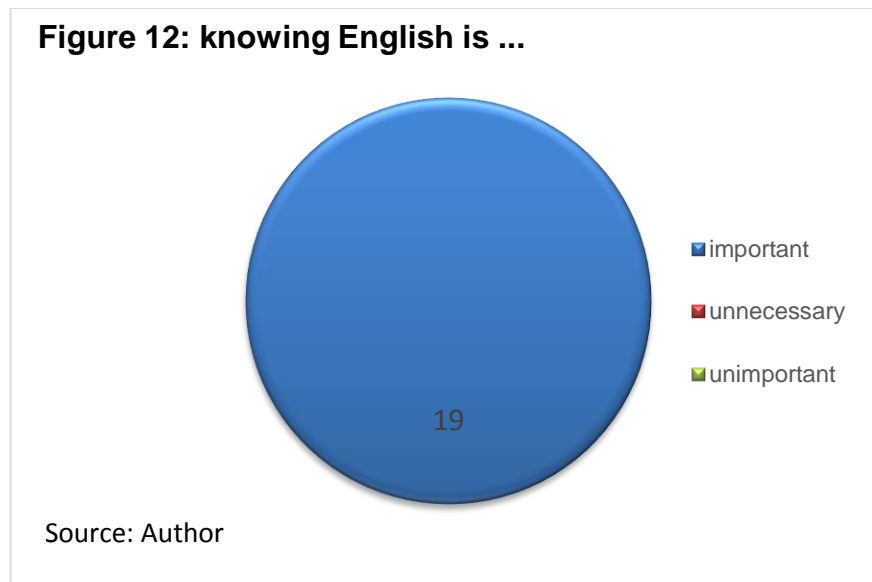
CHAPTER IV
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The present chapter explores the information collected by a survey, pre-test, post-test, and two interviews.

4.1 SURVEY

The survey was administered to 19 students. It was done at Carlos Cueva Tamariz High School.

Figure 12: knowing English is ...

- important
- unnecessary
- unimportant

19

Source: Author

Question 1: Do you think that knowing English is considered important, unnecessary, or unimportant?

All of the students answered that knowing English is important. They expressed that knowing English can improve their professional future, and personal lives. Also, they said that it helps them to communicate with foreigners, and travel to English-speaking countries.

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Figure 13: Reason to learn English
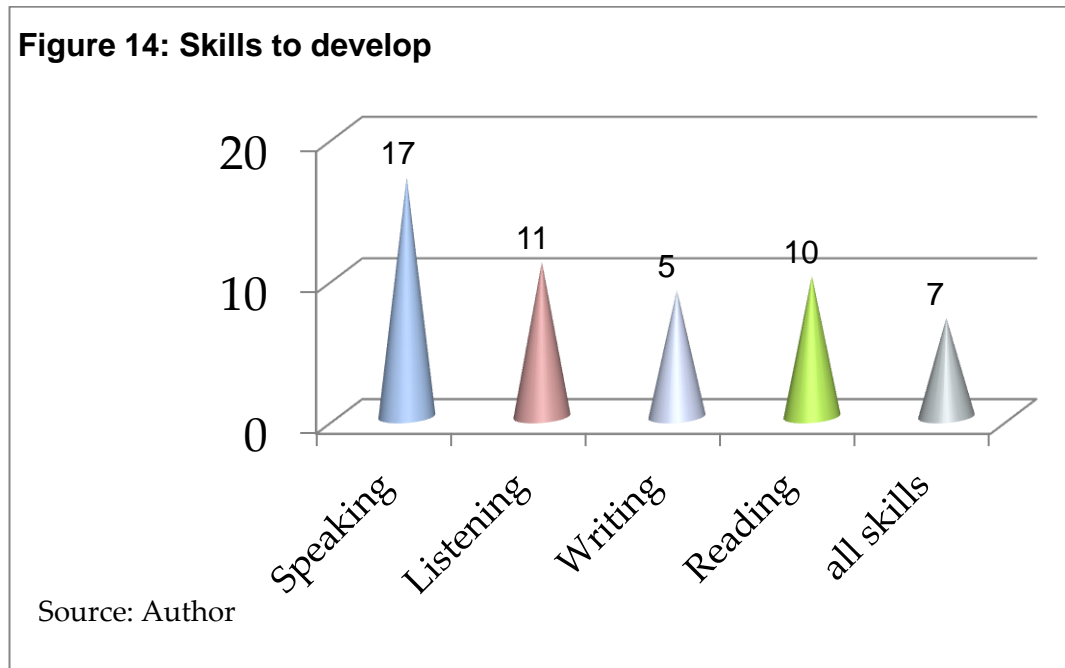

Source: Author
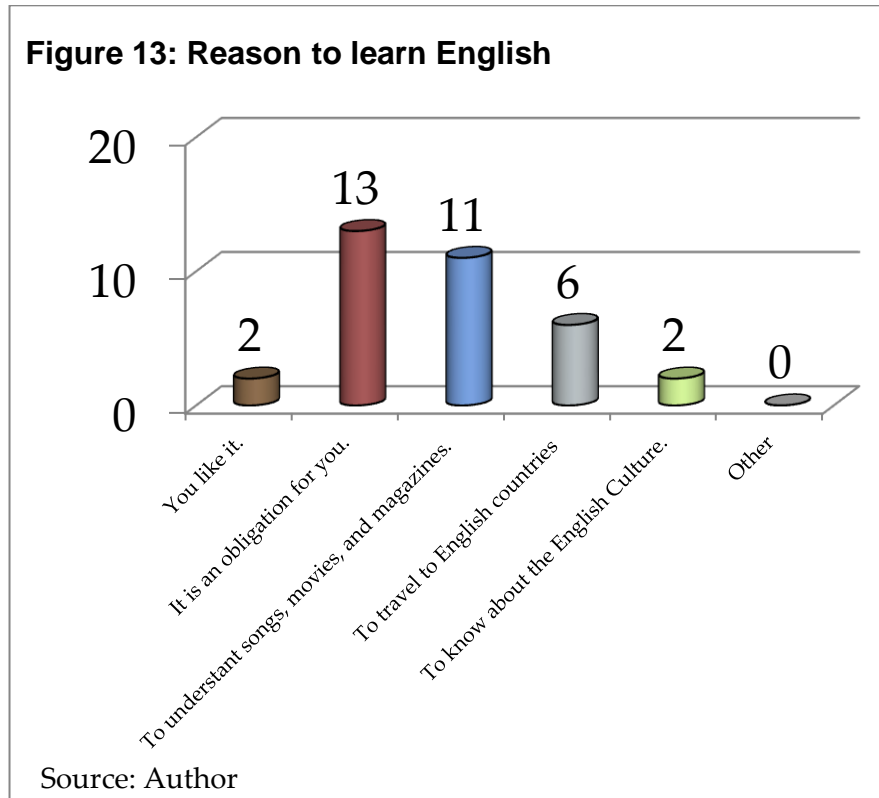
Question 2: Why do you learn English?

In this question students could choose more than one answer. Most of them said that they learn English because it is compulsory. Eleven said that they study English because they wanted to understand songs, movies, magazines written in English. Six manifested that they want to travel to countries where English is the official language, and two of them said that they want to learn about English culture.

Figure 14: Skills to develop

Source: Author

Question 3: What skill would you like to develop in English?

In this question, students could choose more than one answer. Most students expressed that they wanted to develop speaking skills in English because they wanted to work in other countries, and to get to know other people. Eleven said that they wanted to develop listening skills because they wanted to understand what people say in real situations and in movies. Five mentioned that they wanted to learn to write in English to work with foreign people. Ten of them said that they wanted to learn to read in English because they wanted to understand manuals, instruction, and other texts. Seven students replied that they wanted to develop all skills to become good users of English.

Figure 15: The most difficult skill

- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing
- reading

Source: Author
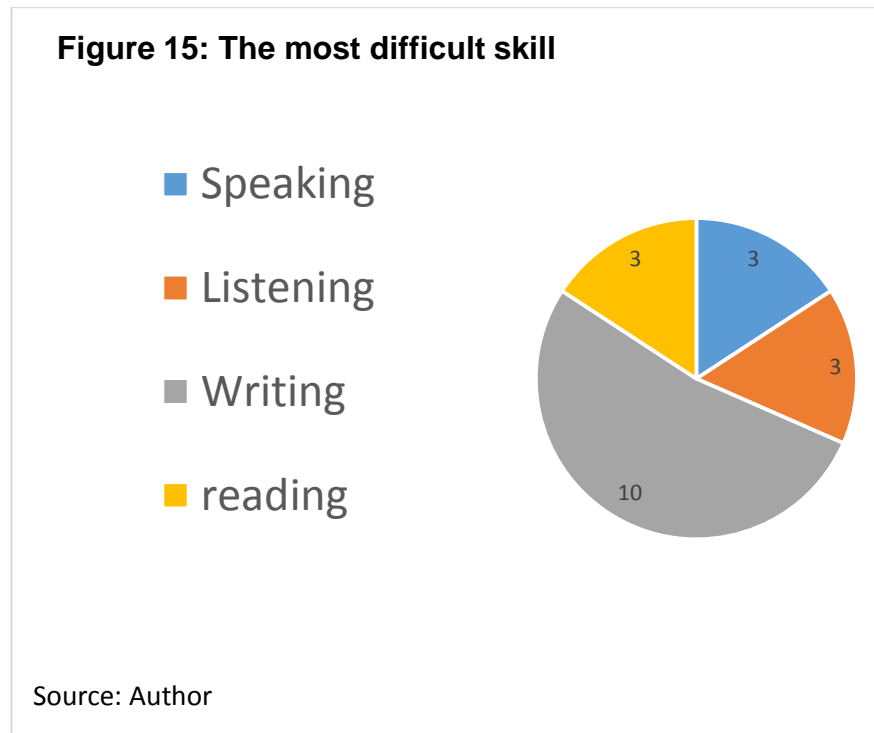
Question 4: What skill do you think is the most difficult to learn in English?

In this question, the majority of students said writing in English was the most difficult skill to learn because words are different in English. Also, they told writing in English is confusing because words are not written as they are pronounced. Three students said that speaking is the most difficult because they do not know how the words are pronounced. Three of them said that reading in English is difficult because they do not know the meaning of the words. Three of them said that listening skill is difficult to learn because there are many strange words.

Figure 16: Work in class
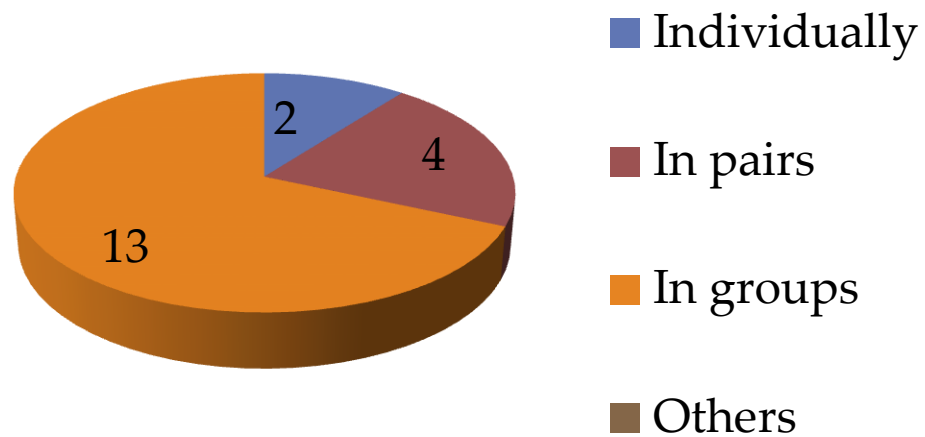
Source: Author

Question 5: How do you prefer to work in class?

Most students replied that they prefer to work in groups because they could help each other, give better answers and learn more easily. People who prefer to work in pairs and individually say they can learn more easily this way because in groups there is always somebody who bothers the others or does not work.

Figure 17: Preferences to learn English


Source: Author
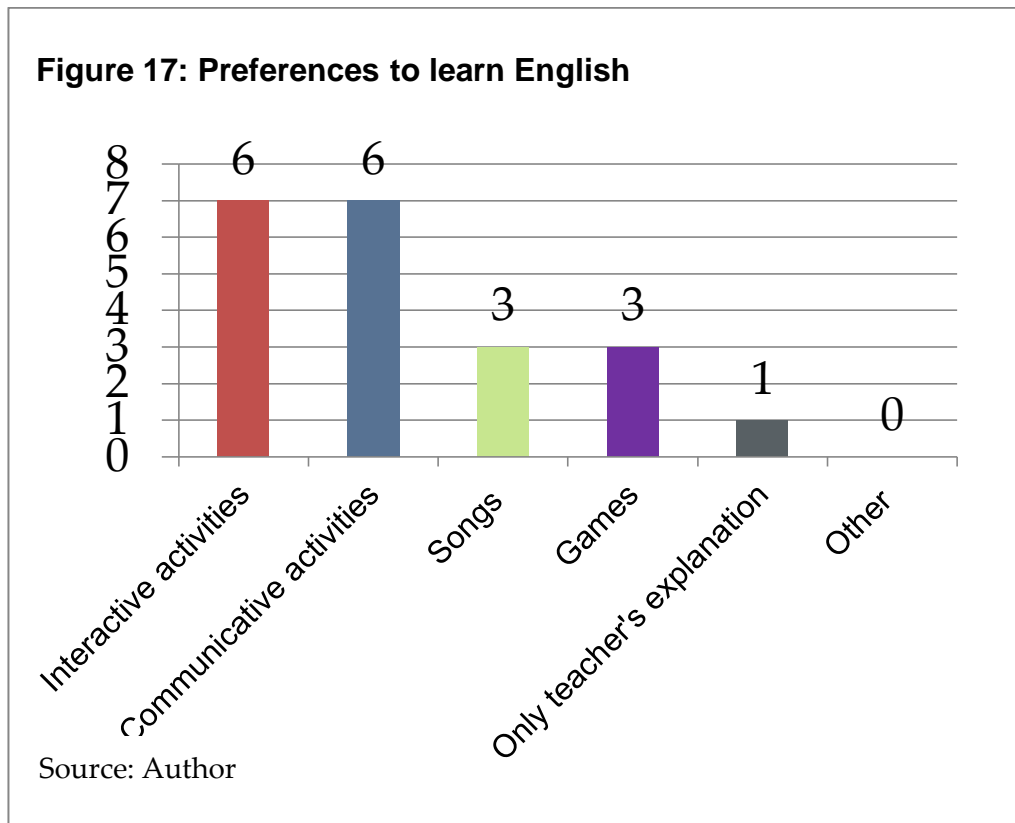
Question 6: How do you prefer to learn English?

   Most students said that they prefer to learn English by interactive activities and communicative activities because these make classes more interesting and fun, and they said that they can develop their intelligence and learn better if they practice the language in life-like situations. Three of them said that they prefer songs because they can learn to pronounce the words better. Three replied that they prefer games because they are fun in class and also they like to play. One student said that he/she prefers to learn with the teacher's explanations because they always help in understanding subject better.

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Figure 18: Speaking in English is difficult.

Source: Author
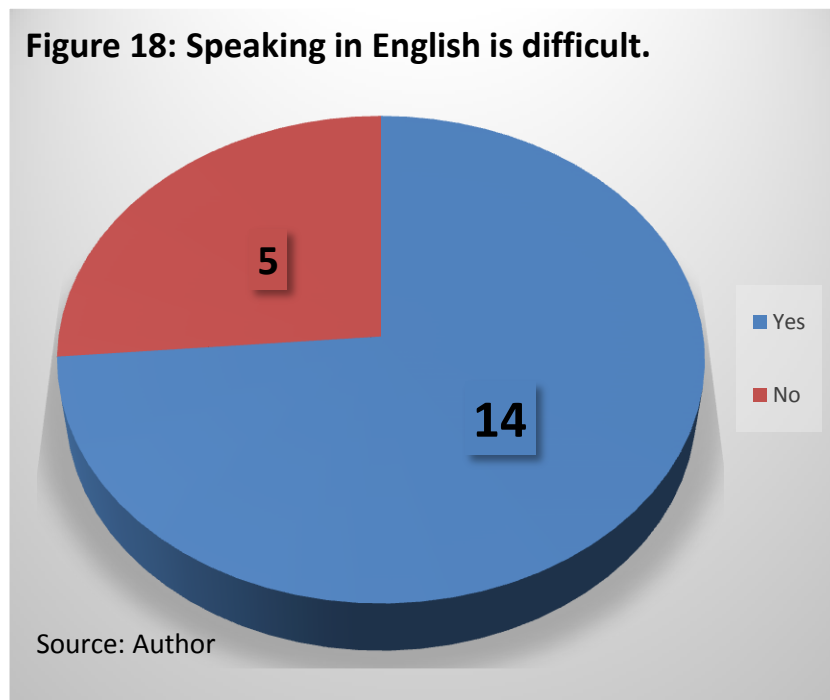
Question 7: Do you think that the speaking skill in English is difficult to develop?

Most of them said that it is difficult because they do not know the pronunciation and meaning of the words. Also they stated that speaking in English requires a lot of practice to get to perfection, and they do not have opportunities to listen to other people talk in English. Respondents who said "no" explained that they need to practice a lot to develop their speaking skills.

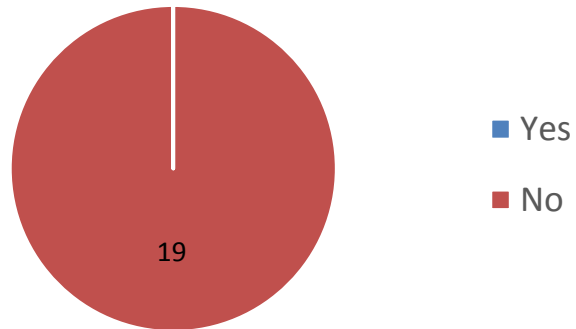**Figure 19: Resources**

Source: Author
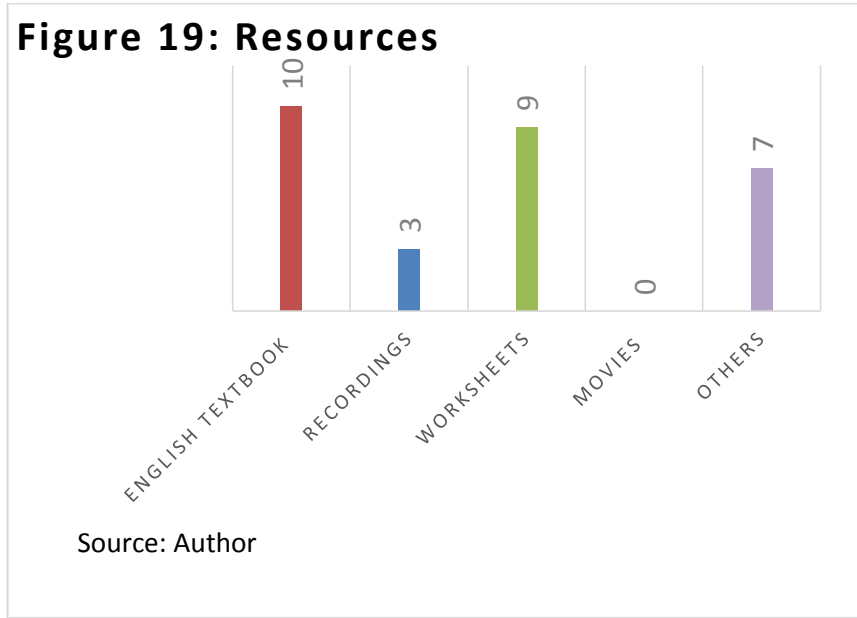
Question 8: What resources does your teacher use to teach English?

In this question, students could choose more answers than one. According to Figure 8, the students' teacher uses different resources to teach English in her classes.

Figure 20: English Laboratory

Source: Author

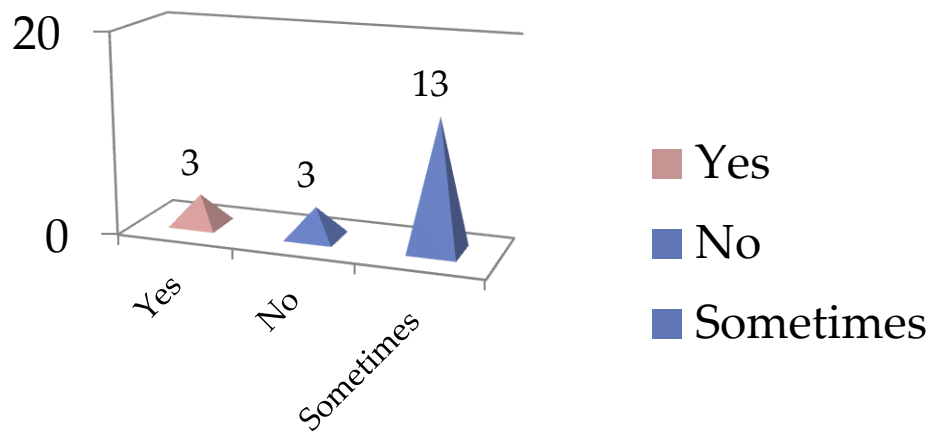Question 9: Does your institution have an English Laboratory?

To this question all students replied NO.

Figure 21: Collaborative Student

Source: Author

Question 10: Are you a collaborative student in your English class?

Most learners said "sometimes" because they mentioned that sometimes they don't understand the teacher's explanation or what she says. Also, they said that they collaborate in class when they want to do so. Students who said "yes" mentioned that they like English and when the teacher asks something, they answer. Finally, people who said "no" stated that they do not like English, and they do not understand it.

Figure 22: Useful Resources
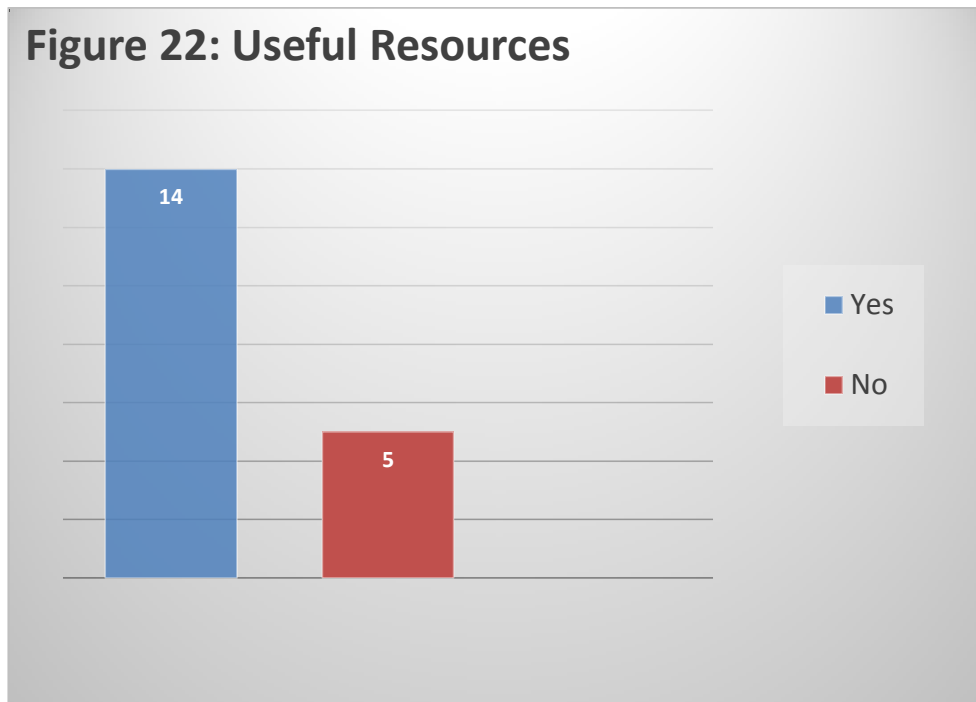
Question 11: Do you think that the resources used by your teacher to teach English are useful?

Answering this question, fourteen students said that the resources are useful because they help to understand the English language better. Students who said "no" said that sometimes the resources are impossible to understand.

Figure 23: Activities to develop speaking skill
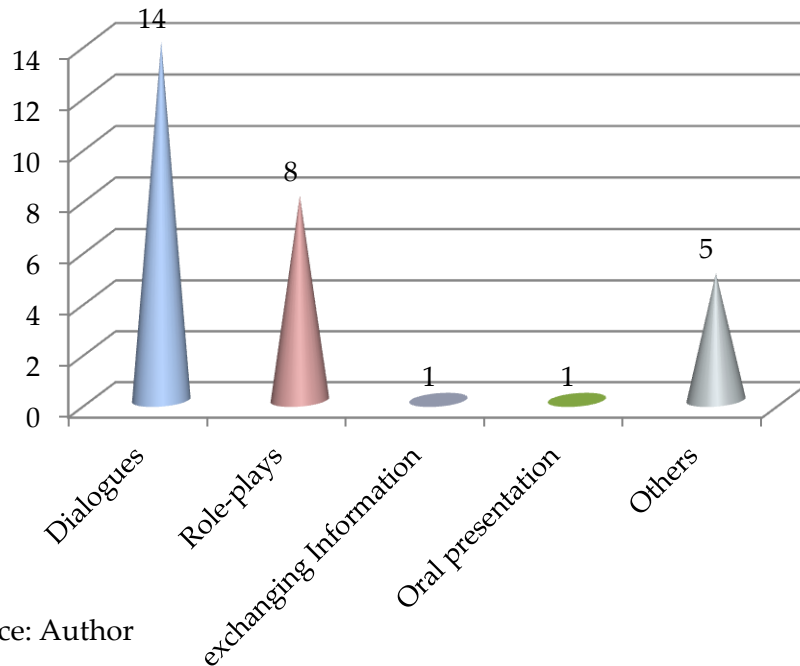
Source: Author

Question 12: What kind of activities does your teacher use to foster speaking skills?

When answering this question, students could chose more than one answer. The majority of students said that they practice speaking skills by dialogues and role plays. They mentioned that in these kinds of activities everybody participates and learns more.

4.2 PRE-TEST

As it was mentioned before, there was a pre-test that was administered to the students. A coding system was used to differentiate students using (s) meaning "student" and a number from 1 to 19 next to it. For the data analysis, the names of the learners were omitted, and the codes were used instead.

Figure 24: Pre-test

Source: Author
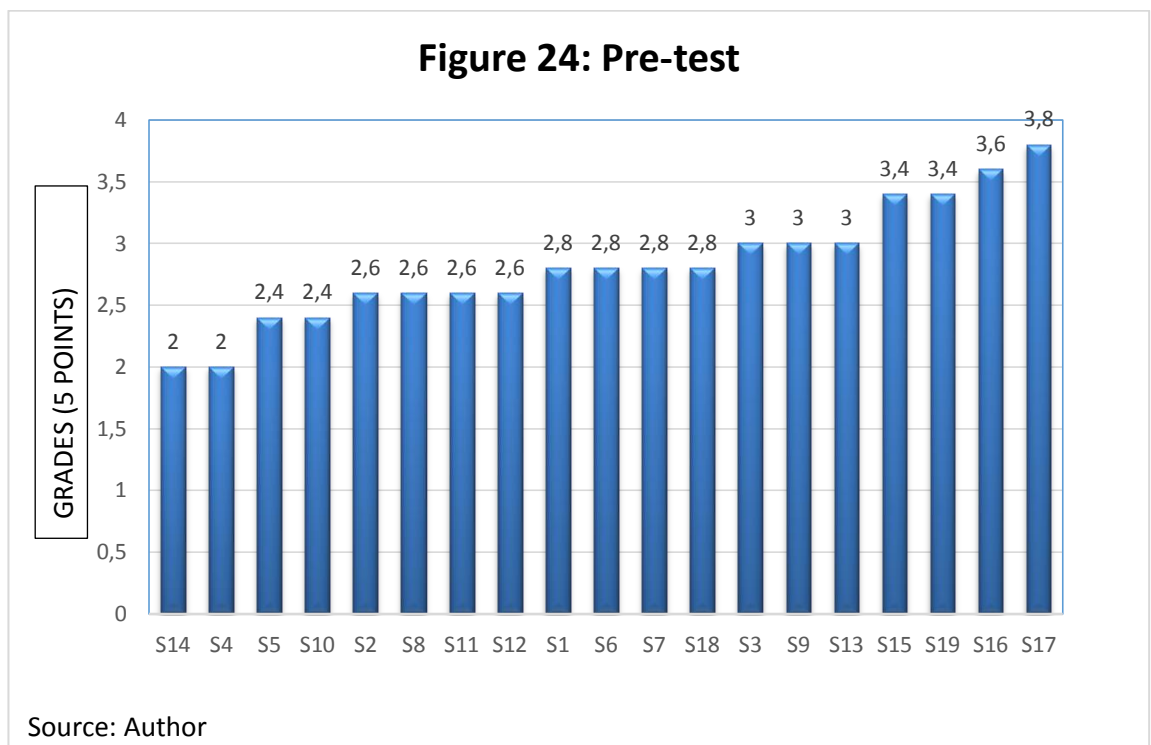
This chart illustrates the grades which occur from (2) two to (3,8) three point eight points over (5) five. There are two students with (2), two with (2,4), four with (2,6), four with (2,8), three with (3), two with (3,4), one with (3,6), and one with (3,8). In total, nineteen students were evaluated. From my point of view, this chart exemplifies an intermediate level of knowledge.

4.3 POST-TEST

Figure 25: Post-test

Source: Author
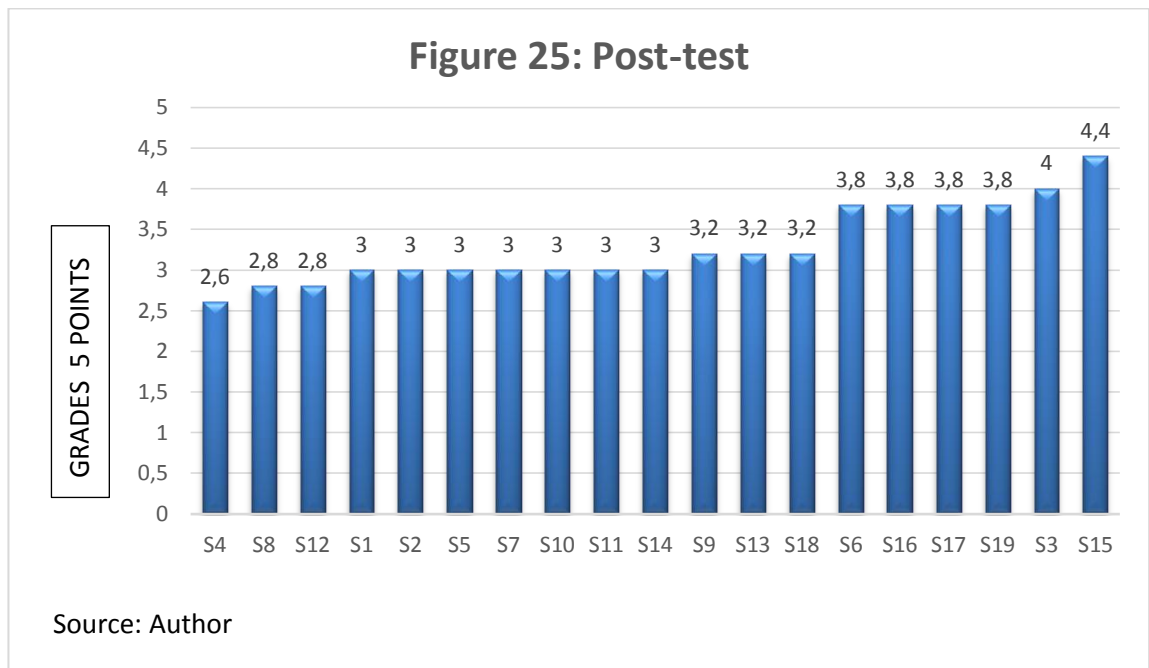
This chart illustrates the grades which occur from (2,6) two point six to (4,4) four point four points over (5) five. There is one student with (2,6), two with (2,8), seven with (3), three with (3,2), four with (3,8), one with (4), and one with (4,4). In total, nineteen students were evaluated. From my point of view, this chart exemplifies that students have, to some extent, improved their level of knowledge.

Figure 26: Average

POST-TEST
3,3 (54%)
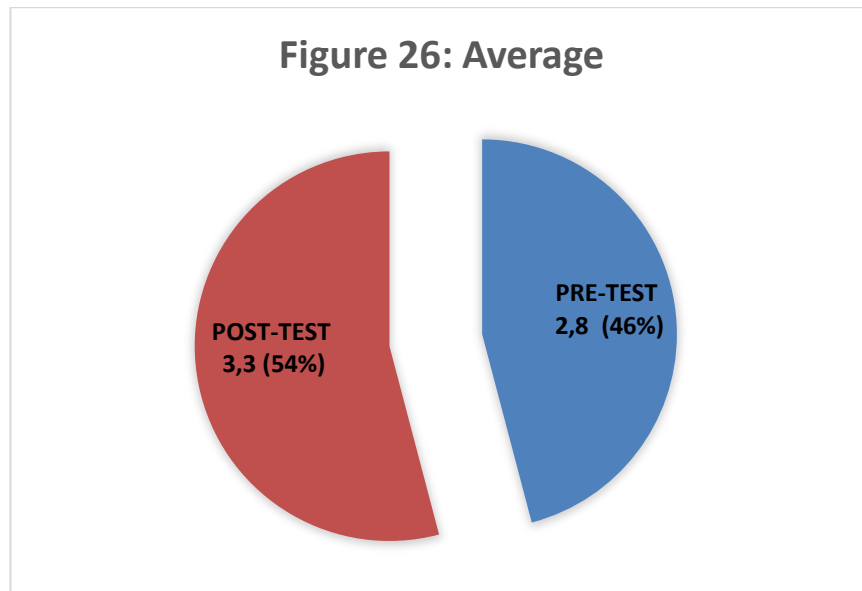
PRE-TEST
2,8 (46%)

This chart shows the results of both the pre-test and the post-test. Thus, students in the pre-test obtained 2,8 representing 46% and in the post-test obtained 3,3 representing 54%. In this figure, we can observe the progress that students had after the study.

4.4 INTERVIEWS

Expert

-Interview with an expert, Professor Kate Youman. During the interview she mentioned that task-based activities help students to be more involved in the process of learning because in these kinds of activities the teacher is only a guide in the class, and not the principal actors. In this manner, the teacher can avoid teaching frontally.

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Institutions' teacher

-Interview with the institution's teacher, Ana Mosquera. During the interview she mentioned that although her students are shy, and have only an intermediate level, they participate in all the activities that she prepares. Also, she said that she uses videos, photos and other activities in her classes. Moreover, she mentioned that she needs more resources to teach, especially tips; computers, and an English laboratory where students can be active and learn efficiently. Also, she said that the physical environment is small and crowded which makes teaching difficult. In addition, she mentioned that she tried to foster speaking skills by summaries, compositions, and discussions about the topics. Also, she mentioned that it is important that the students are exposed to audio materials in order to hear other than the teacher's pronunciation. Finally, she said that she tried to motivate students to speak in English all the time. She expressed that "it doesn't matter if they make mistakes. The idea is that they produce and practice."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study provided a view of how students react to task-based activities, and how these foster students' speaking skills. These kinds of activities require that students interact among themselves and their teacher using the target language. In this way, students gain confidence to use the target language in different situations in their lives. Due to this, it is important that the teacher creates learning opportunities where students have to use the language in real situations.

Also, it is important that students are exposed to adequate input, especially spoken input because it helps them to have ideas on how to pronounce the words and how to use the language in different situations.

Moreover, motivation in the class should be a tool to be used more efficiently. With adequate motivation, students can fulfill the tasks successfully.

In addition, it is important that teachers and students work together to achieve success in the learning process, especially in the learning of a second language where the teacher needs to have the knowledge and love for his or her job, and students have to demonstrate their interest in learning the language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers have to use task-based activities to foster speaking skills because these kinds of activities make the use of the language easy and more interesting.

Also, teachers have to take into consideration that in these kinds of activities the principal characters are the students and they, as teachers, should only be the facilitators of the learning process.

In addition, the topics of the tasks should take into account the students' interests, and their daily lives, which help them to be more involved in the leaning process.

Teachers always have to motivate their students during class, and they should never intimidate or ridicule students when they make mistakes. Teachers have to say that mistakes are part of the learning process, and these mistakes help the students to get more experience, and in the future correct mistakes in order to accomplish their tasks correctly.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey

Template

The following survey intends to collect information related to Task-based activities. The result will be used as basis for a thesis investigation.

Age: _____   Class: _____

1) Do you think that knowing English is considered…

☐ Important   ☐ Unnecessary   ☐ Unimportant

Why?

_____

_____

2) Why do you learn English?

☐ You like it.

☐ It is an obligation for you to study this language.

☐ You learn English to understand songs, movies, and magazines written

In this language.

☐ You want to travel to countries where English is the official language.

☐ You want to know about the English Culture.

☐ Other

3) What skill would you like to develop in English?

☐ Speaking   ☐ Listening

☐ Writing   ☐ Reading

Why?

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_____

_____

4) What skill do you think is the most difficult to learn in English?

☐ Speaking   ☐ Listening

☐ Writing   ☐ Reading

Why?

_____

_____

5) How do you prefer to work in class?

☐ Individually   ☐ In groups

☐ In pairs   ☐ Other

Why?

_____

_____

6) How do you prefer to learn English?

☐ Games   ☐ Only teacher´s explanation

☐ Songs   ☐ Interactive activities

☐ Communicative activities   ☐ Other

7) Do you think that the speaking skill in English is difficult to develop?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Why?

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_____

_____

8) What resources does your teacher use to teach English?

     ☐ English textbook

     ☐ Movies

     ☐ Recordings

     ☐ Worksheets

     ☐Other

9) Does your institution have an English laboratory?

☐Yes   ☐ No

10) Are you a collaborative student in your English class?

☐Yes   ☐No   ☐ Sometimes

Why?

_____

_____

11) Do you think that the resources used to teach English is useful?

☐Yes   ☐No

Why?

_____

_____

12) What kind of activities does your teacher use to foster the Speaking skill?

☐ Dialogues

    ☐ Role-plays

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☐ Exchanging information (pair work)

☐ Oral presentations

☐Other

Appendix 2: Interview with an expert

Question Template

1)   How long have you been working as an English Teacher? And how about your   experience?

2)   Do you prefer to work with children, teenagers, or adults? Why?

3)   What kind of activities do you usually use in your English classes?

4)   Have you ever worked with task-based activities? How about your experience?

5)   Do you believe that the task-based activities can foster learners' speaking skills? Why?

6)   Could you give me some advice to work with the task-based activities?

7)   Could you tell me an event that had been important in your experience as an English teacher?

Appendix 3: Interview with an institution's teacher

Question Template

1) How long have you worked as an English teacher?

2) How do your students work during the English class?

3) What resources do you use in your class?

4) How do you foster students to speak in class?

5) What is the level of your students concerning the speaking skill?(Rate from 1 to 10)

6) Which are the problems to foster speaking skills with your students?

7) In your class, are there enough opportunities to develop the speaking skills? How?

8) Do you believe that you need more resources to use in your classes? Why?

9) Is the physical structure of the classroom adequate to teach English? (explain)

10) Are your students exposed to audio and reading materials?(explain)

11) What will you do to improve the learning and development of speaking skills in your classes?