Speaking practice using web 2.0 technologies in TEFL

Analysis of a Case study.

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Educational Analytical Summary

Case study: Speaking practice using Web 2.0 Technology in TELF. Analysis of a case study

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 Description: This search aims to improve TEFL strategies focusing web 2.0 tools, in virtual educative environments. In general, the level of English in Colombia is relatively low, and teachers training in one angle stone in the process of enhancing a better English level. This issue also generates an impediment to be hired in internationally interlinked companies. There are several influencing factors related to such a deficient English language proficiency in Colombia. Some of them are educational policies, scarce economic resources, a very mountainous geography, poor access to information networks, and little didactic material, among others.

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Contents: This paper presents the results of a case study analysis in which oral English practices are conducted, seeking strategies to strengthen this ability, considered by many students as the most difficult to achieve.

The level of English spoken in Colombia is relatively low, making it difficult to obtain international jobs. Research shows that both teachers and students also lack the training to perform well in the English language. Thus, the training of teachers who teach English is important to raise the level of English spoken in Colombia. In this case study, the use of web 2.0 tools is analyzed in order to determine their performance in improving English speaking practices.

As research method, the qualitative method is applied, specifically the case study already mentioned, as the most appropriate to know and analyze the phenomena given in the social and educational field. The present work presents the problem to be addressed, its theoretical foundations and moves on to a description of the case studied, to subsequently provide the relevant findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Methodology: The investigation was based on a qualitative paradigm, no manipulative observation conducted at UNAD, Centro Educativo, Abierto a Distancia CEAD Jose Acevedo y Gómez, in Bogotá. It's also articulated to the Research line of Bilingualism in distance education mediated by technologies.

The selected tool to gather research information is observation. Observation is the best instrument when authentic and spontaneous human responses are essential to obtain optimal results.

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Introduction

This Case study aims to generate teaching/learning strategies to enhance a better performance in speaking English in TEFL. It analyzes and makes recommendations based on web 2.0 Technology tools used in a speaking practice case study and using a no manipulative observation. It also takes as a reference the question "Which strategies are viable to improve English language speaking practices mediated by web 2.0 Technologies? Observes and examines English practices performed at UNAD, CEAD Jose Acevedo y Gómez. These activities were applied with the purpose of training students of the Bachelor of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language program.

The research presents a description of the problem that motivates it, followed by the corresponding justification and objectives; later on, it includes the theoretical foundations, the proposed methodology for taking the research itself to the practical field. Then the field work itself, to move on to the results obtained and the resulting conclusions and recommendations. Is completed with appendices containing the location of the participating students, each located in different regions of the country. Also the request for permission and response, addressed to participants, for the use of the information in this research. Respect for the privacy of students is treated with due respect.

The theoretical framework is based on constructivism theories. The method utilized is a case study, which is considered a kind of qualitative research used to understand in depth the social and educational reality. It gives priority to the notion of the existence of a tight relation between learning efficiency and cognitive load hence teachers should have in mind

the former relation in order to establish the appropriate cognitive load. The sample of populations is made up of 16 students of TEFL from different regions of Colombia.

The results of the analysis are focused to enhance scope as well as quality in English language teaching/learning, in virtual learning environments, also to help students to remain persevering up to the end of their bachelor and avoiding dropout.

A common paradigm among English learners is that in order to learn to speak English as a foreign language, it is essential to travel to a place where English is commonly used. This statement may be contradictory because when traveling to a country where the first language is English, English learners in that environment would no longer be learning English as a foreign language but as a second language. The above statement would undermine the learning of English as a foreign language and limit students to longing for a journey that in most cases never happens.

Statement of Problem

Despite the great effort from the National Ministry of Education in Colombia as well as educative institutions, in general, the level of English in Colombia is relatively low, and teachers' training is one angle stone in the process of enhancing a better English level. This low English level also generates an impediment to be hired in many internationally interlinked companies. There are several influencing factors related to such a deficient English language proficiency in Colombia.

Simultaneously there is also need of better English language speaking levels, according with Sanchez (2013) "most students and teachers are ranked at the lowest levels" and this entire context finally may be interpreted as a higher demand of effective and actualized learning practices. Sánchez (2012) concluded that, in general, the level of English in Colombia is relatively low, and that the proportion of students who can be classified as bilingual is approximately 1%.

One of the causes is the geographical conditions of Colombia, with a very mountainous territory, and its many cultural niches widespread all over the country making difficult to offer a high-quality instruction even to the remotest places in little cities, villages and rural areas. Appendix 1 shows how widespread and far, one form the other, students are in this case of study all over the colombian territory.

Glossary

Speaking practice: The act or skill of giving a speech at a public event. The connotation in this work implies also the speaking training performed by students during their English classes in order to enhance this foreign language skill. Cambridge University Press (2017).

Web 2.0 tools: When it was first invented, the Internet was merely a place to store and locate information. It was static and non-interactive. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with one another as content creators in a virtual community using wikis, blogs, web applications, social networking sites such as Facebook or video sharing sites such as YouTube, and more. University Center for Teaching and Learning (2017).

Case study: detailed account giving information about the development of a person, group, or thing, especially in order to show general principles. Cambridge University Press (2017).

Bilingualism: the fact of being able to use two languages equally well. Cambridge University Press (2017.

Constructivism: 0theory that learning is an active process and that people gain knowledg and understanding through the combination of experiences and ideas. Cambridge University Press (2017).

Didactic: intended to teach, especially in a way that is too determined or eager, and often fixed and unwilling to change. Cambridge University Press (2017).

Strategy: a detailed plan for achieving success in situations such as war, politics, business, industry, or sport, or the skill of planning for such situations.   Cambridge University Press (2017).

Cognitive load: refers to the amount of information the active part of human memory can process at one time. The brain can store and process a vast amount of data, but it is limited in the number of things it can think about simultaneously. In educational settings, knowing this limit exists and understanding how it impacts learning is important. The effects of cognitive load can have implications in many everyday situations, too. Ungvarsky, J. (2017).

Justification

Given that the level of English in Colombia is relatively low, and that teachers training is so important, and that there is insufficient didactic material, this investigation attempts to help developing strategies in TEFL, in particular, to enhance speaking skills.

The aim of this investigation is to enhance effective performance of speaking English as a factor that contributes to boosting the effective training of English language learners, so that they in turn are in a position to multiply this dynamism when in due course they become teachers of English. Given that the low level of English spoken in Colombia is well known, it is intended that the results of this research will contribute to establish factors that positively drive the pace of acquisition of a better performance of English teachers at UNAD.

The selected population is composed of students of the English as a foreign language career in virtual environments developed by the UNAD. This group has 10 different origins in Colombia. It is considered that it is precisely this group that represents most faithfully the students in virtual media that study English at UNAD. This selected group, and by extension those represented by them, is the one that justifies this investigation, and would be the one that would receive in the first instance the impact of the results of this investigation.

The methodolgy is qualitative and rely in a case sudy. The case study is a method of qualitative research that has been widely used to understand in depth the social and educational reality The online training segment is one of the fastest growing. Fernández

(2017) cites a study by the Colombian Ministry of National Education, according to which virtual education in Colombia has grown at a rate of 500% between 2010 and 2015.

The speaking skill is one of the four skills to develop in the professional formation of an English language teacher, one of the Bachelors of Arts, offered by the School of Education at the National Open and Distance University in Colombia.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language is a career increasing students in Colombia, many of them enrolled in a distance pre-grade programs and needing effective speaking practice strategies adapted to their learning style and situation.

Without a doubt, English is one of the most important languages used in today´s civilization, by number of users, by its use as an official language, by its economic power and the volume of information spread out in that language, among other factors.

As a mean of retention strategy and as a solution to one of the academic causes of leaving the university program the web 2.0 tools application is evaluated. The students' desertion facts show how important is to establish group activities to humanize virtual environments, because one of the desertion causes is the academic stress and the lack of friendly contact with peers, also the knowledge creation is powered by the social intercourse resulting from the discussion and the sharing of individual contributions, as stated by Martin & Arendale (1992).

The aim of this investigation is to enhance effective performance of speaking English in order to enhance the students' satisfaction as a consequence of the higher grades resulting

from the utilization of adequate learning strategies and at the same time impelling a decreasing trend of desertion.

Objectives

General objective

To enhance effective performance of speaking English by means of applicable teaching strategies using web 2.0 tools in TEFL.

Specific Objectives

- To observe speaking English practices developed at UNAD, identifying weakness and strengths as well as students reactions in their English speaking practices.

- To search innovative solutions applicable to speaking English skills practices engaging students' attention and enjoyment.

- To analize pedagogical strategies adopting web 2.0 tools in developing speaking English skills.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

This case study is based on the learning Cognitive theories.Cognitive models considered the effects of mental activities in learning Vygotsky´s Socio-historical-cultural theory of high mental functions development focused on the cultural instruments function is "historically and scientifically, the only important source of research on metacognitive processes in contemporary psychology. According to Topel (1998) "Vygostky hypothesis: the thinking which develops from practical activity is mediated by speech, by the word"

This paper is based on the learning Cognitive theories as conceptualized by J. Sweller (2016) who makes emphasis in Cognitive Load Theory applied to human problem solving and by extension to educational problems. His earlier investigations showed him that students were able to solve problems but not necessarily to learn the subjacent principles that lead them to the found solutions.

The role of these processes in education and development has an importance that can never be overestimated" (Ivic 1994.p.9). In the present research, Vygotsky´s theory is considered part of its conceptual framework, because up to now ICT is one of the most impacting cultural developments not only in almost all daily life aspects of these days civilization but also in educative practice. In fact, his theories were taken in order to generate several learning methods by authors as "Perret-Clermont, (1979); Doise & Mugny (1981); Cresas, 1987; Hinde, Perret-Clermont y Stevenson-Hinde (1988); Rubcov (1987); Wertsch (1985a y 1985b)". Ivic (1994).

Moreover, Cognitive models considered the effects of mental activities in learning promotion, becoming adequate models to sustain Web 2.0 tools as means of motivation and impulse of mind performance on meaning creation (Jonassen et.all. 1995 p.2). Now, as Leppink (2017 p.2) states "we define learning as the development and automation of cognitive schemas" and additionally explains there is a tight relation between learning efficiency and cognitive load hence teachers should have in mind the former relation in order to establish the appropriate cognitive load.

Methodology

One of the lines of research of the School of Education is Bilingualism in distance education mediated by technologies and to this line is linked the present work.

The present research deepens in a case study lived by students of Teaching English as a Foreign Language at UNAD, in Bogotá, observing their online pedagogical strategies practices, based on Web 2.0 teaching tools, applied in a set of speaking practices performed by them, during an academic semester, determining the favorable as well as the unfavorable aspects defined of the aforementioned practices.

The case study is a method of qualitative research that has been widely used to understand in depth the social and educational reality. For Yin (1989) the case study consists of a detailed description and analysis of social units or unique educational entities, and for Stake (1998) it is the study of the particularity and the complexity of a singular case, to come to understand its concrete circumstances.

At this point, the web 2.0 technologies appear accessible as a way to facilitate the English Language learning in Virtual Learning Environments, surpassing traditional classrooms, physical didactic materials, and professional teachers' limitations.

In this research the core issue spins around: "Which pedagogical strategies, using web 2.0 Technologies as tools, are viable to improve English language speaking practices, at UNAD English language courses?.

The case of study took place at UNAD; Centro de Educación, Abierta y a Distancia, CEAD, José Acevedo y Gómez based in Bogotá city, during the first academic semester of the year 2017, and with participation of twelve beginners' teacher students and one last semester teacher-student, all of them studying Bachelor of Arts in English Language as a Foreign Language, during their learning/teaching speaking practice.

Applied research paradigm

The qualitative research method is applied with predilection to small samples or niches of human realities that often fail to be detected or understood by the figures that are accurate for large masses or broad and general cases. In this type of research information is presented as quantitative information. Therefore, it is the optimal one for the population chosen in this study. Applying what Flick (2012) said when he said that "The defenders of postmodernism have affirmed that the era of great narratives and theories has passed: today, limited narratives are required locally, temporarily and situationally".

Continuing with Flick (2012), in qualitative methods the participation of the researcher is an intrinsic part of the research process itself, and his inferences and emotions have room for par excellence, unlike the usual established quantitative methodology.

With regard to the background of qualitative research, he also illustrates this, stating that Wilhelm Wundt (1900-1920) had already used it, while in North America it was predominant until 1940, when it was re-established in 1960. Subsequently in Germany, Jürgen Habermas (1967) recognized the applications generated in North America. Then in

the 1980s it was revitalised by Schütze (1977). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) have already structured the qualitative research methodology since 2000, all this in accordance with what Flick (2012) has said.

The qualitative method of research is confronted with the quantitative research method. The qualitative method is mainly applied to the observation, analysis and evaluation of human behavior, mainly, and therefore its data and inferences are characterized by the variability and subjectivity of human beings. However, this does not disqualify him in his field, but on the contrary, it makes him the most suitable one to deal with the facts and events generated by the rich and sometimes unpredictable human culture.

While the quantitative method focuses on the objective analysis of the concrete and measurable nature of its objects of research, which apparently detracts from the characteristics of the qualitative methodology, this is only a partial assessment of the whole. A broader and more complete perspective of being and its circumstances allows us to appreciate the complementary function of both the qualitative and quantitative methods.

More specifically, speaking of the qualitative method, this one is applied more effectively to the cases in which human behavior is the one that generates the inputs from which inferences will be made in order to understand in depth causes, consequences and, eventually, projections of them. Qualitative research is preferably applied to the social sciences, within which education is included.

This is how the qualitative research method is determined as the most suitable for the study of the strategies for the teaching of Speaking in English as a Foreign Language.

Foreign, in the context of the Bachelor's Degree in English as a Foreign Language given at the National Open and Distance University UNAD, given that as Flick (2012) mentions, "Qualitative Research is oriented to analyze specific cases in their temporal and local particularities, and from the expressions and activities of people in their local contexts", specifically through the case study.

Population

The population of this research is English learners in virtual learning environments, of course including the sample population. "But in Research Methodology population means characteristics of a specific group. For example secondary school teachers of, who have some specific features like teaching experience, teaching attitudes etc" as Pandey & Pandey (2015) mentioned. Appendix 1 place the students origins in different colombian regions.

Sample of the Population

The sample population is the one that, by participating in the characteristics common to the target population, is accessible to the researcher and is the one that will be effectively studied.

The sample population of this work is made up of 16 students of English as a Foreign Language, enrolled to develop their distance learning studies at UNAD, in Colombia. Following Pandey & Pandey (2015) ideas "Sampling is indispensable technique in

behavioral research and not so common in physical sciences. It is fundamental to all statistical methodology of behavioral and social research. It makes research findings economical and accurate." Making this a privacy-friendly research, Appendix 2 contains students permisions to use the speaking practice information.

Instrument

Observation is the selected instrument in order to gather research information. Following to the concept of Pandey & Pandey (2015) "Observation seeks to ascertain what people think and do by watching them in action as they express themselves in various situations and activities. Observation is recognized as the most direct means of studying people when one is interested in their overt behavior".

Observation has an advantage in relation to survey and is that observation facilitates authentic human responses instead of the elaborated ones that sometimes may propitiate survey or another investigation tools.

Fieldwork

Opportunities of Distance Learning Technologies

The World Wide Web opened a valid alternative to transcend the limitation imposed by the learning process in the classic face to face education system, is to say the traditional one-way discourses from the teachers to the passive students. At the beginning of the implementation of the Web the first strategies were based on Web 1.0, delivering only textual contents, and thus the only obtained benefit was by means of reading. Instead, Web 2.0 strategies offer a two-way interchange in Virtual Learning Environments involving teachers and students as active partners in the knowledge creation and at the same time facilitating the learning of the English Language and in this case the speaking practices.

Likewise, ICT surpasses past times limitations determined by time, space, distance and budget, characteristic of traditional educative institutions and policies. ICT allow at the same time to break excluding factors that created masses of people segregated from education.

Web 2.0 and web 2.0 tools

When it was first invented, the Internet was merely a place to store and locate information. It was static and non-interactive. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with one another as content creators in a virtual community using wikis, blogs, web applications, social networking sites such as Facebook or video sharing sites such as YouTube, and more. (http://teaching.pitt.edu/blog/web-2-0-tools-in-teaching-and-learning/).

When learning is very important to apply as many senses as possible, the more sensations and cognitive impressions involve in the learning/teaching process the better yielded academic results. Traditional classrooms education allow teachers and students interact in order to achieve the benefits of the human relationship. In the so-called web 1.0 communications where asynchronous and always one way, making difficult a fluid and productive teacher students' relation, but now, by means of technological advance, the creation of web 2.0 make it possible to interact with synchronicity obtaining the total exchange of ideas and concepts.

Using web 2.0 tools such as YouTube, Google Hangouts, Skype, among others, the speaking practices were developed in alive lessons, carried out in 64 hours, in two sessions per week, 2 hours long each one, during 8 weeks, in two groups of 6 students' each approx.

The speaking practices aim to improve students' speaking skills fostering, mainly; but of course, at the same time, side by side students´ will improve their management of grammatical rules in order to appropriate English language correctness, as well as the other related 3 skills: listening, reading, and writing.

Practices Description

The present research deepens in a case study lived by students of Teaching English as a Foreign Language at Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia, UNAD, in Bogotá by observing the Pedagogical Practices, based on Web 2.0 teaching tools. Pedagogical practices were carried out during an academic semester, and these papers are determining the favorable as well as the unfavorable aspects found in the mentioned practices and finally aim to propose pedagogical strategies in order to enhance students' satisfaction depending on academic results.   Very often students' satisfaction is a consequence of the higher grades resulting from the utilization of adequate learning strategies, and at the same time, students' satisfaction is a factor impelling a decreasing trend of desertion.

The case study took place at UNAD CEAD José Acevedo y Gómez based in Bogotá, during the first academic semester of the year 2017, and with participation of twelve beginners' teacher students and one last semester teacher-student, all of them studying Bachelor of Arts of Teaching English as a Foreign Language, engaged in a training of speaking skills.

Student´s notion about native speaking English

Creating opportunities to informal speaking interventions makes language go deeper and deeper spreading main roots and little roots and this interaction allow involving issues

from daily student's life and, consequently, they acquire self-empowerment in managing spontaneously English language.

One of the most menacing psychological ghosts, stalking, subjectively, students of English as a foreign language, is their conception about native speaking English. Although being subjective, this concept generates real and adverse consequences on learning and resembles a very high wall blocking pupils' path toward C1 level, according to Common European Reference Framework, CERF, standards. The specific skill involved in this notion is pronunciation, and when students realize that there are many different intonations and accents problem becomes greater.

In Colombia there are heard most often the American pronunciation; American culture the closer one to people and thus American English´s sounds are relatively common, at least in bigger Colombian cities. British accent is not so known, but several English teaching institutions from England have established headquarters in main Colombian cities and because English proficiency test are based on CERF, British speaking suddenly appear in front of many students and just at the beginning of a certification test which may mean a significant grade reduction of the final test score, with disappointing consequences over learners.

Frequently some students feel frustrated because they cannot afford English language studies abroad in an English speaking country. They know that to speak a foreign language is not merely to manage the four skills related to it, in other words, listening, reading, writing and speaking but all this knowledge besides phonetics, grammar, semantic, literature and so

on should be backed by a clear cultural vision of the nation that generate that culture and language.

The web 2.0 tools mitigate the frustration derived from the impossibility of affording a trip abroad to get closer to the natives pronunciation and culture. In this days advances in Information and communications technologies, in Colombia, are enough to give to average students possibility of interact actively with residents of many English speaking countries and get closer to their culture and their country's characteristics in order to reach an adequate level of empathy facilitating communication, being communications the very goal of learning any language.

Another obstacle to starting developing speaking abilities is students' shyness. Fear of ridicule becomes a heavy burden for students, and, again, web 2.0 tools help to this students because allow them to participate gradually in conversations without being seen, and at home comfy, free from direct judgments and just a click away from embarrassing situations.

Going alive

Several days before starting the Speaking Practice, all students are informed about the procedure which starts with everybody getting connected through the website called YouTube. By the live streaming option the teacher sets up his/her personal YouTube channel and streams live to the students. To start streaming, the teacher starts his/her encoder and the status bar will indicate when he/she is live. Each event generates a code same which is

emailed to every student. Once he or she receives the code they copy and paste it into a

browser in order to get into the online meeting. Figure 1 shows the code sent by skype, down

right corner.
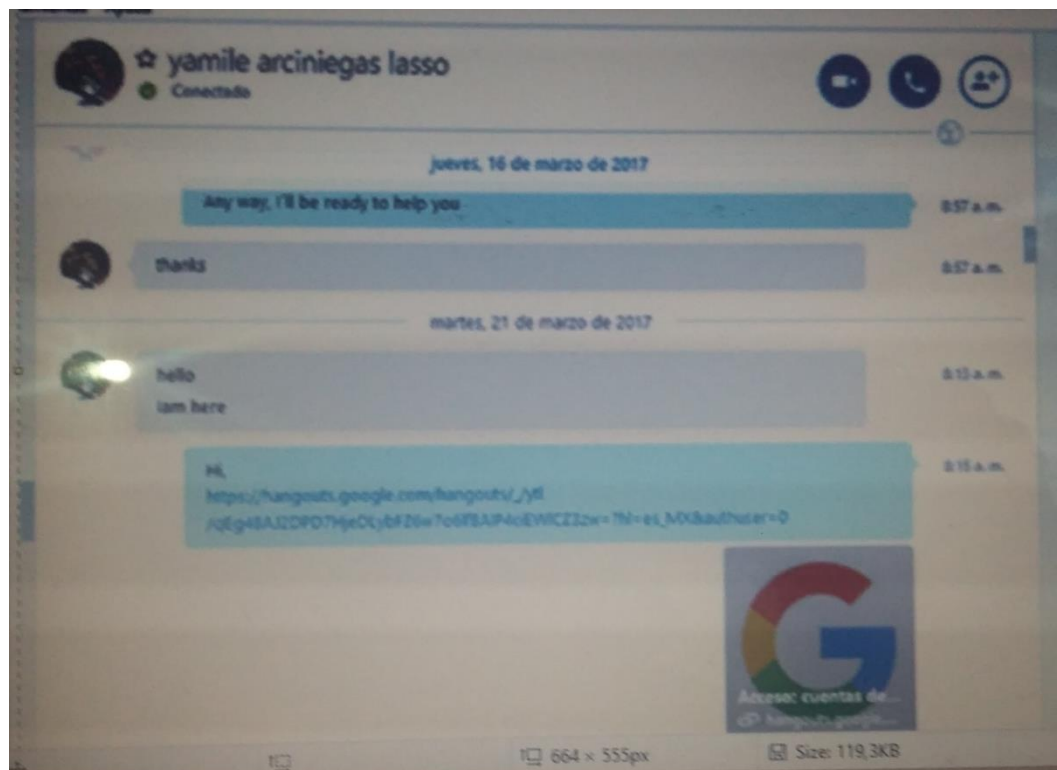
Figure 1 Hangout Code sent to students via Skype. Source: Author.

Immediately after switching the event, there opens a new window or screen displaying

a Google Hangout on Air so the teacher streams live from his/her webcam. From now every

student, using the aforementioned code, pops up in the hangout allowed to see and hear other

participants as well as showing himself/herself and speak to others when considered

convenient, creating a fully functional virtual classroom. When the stream is complete, a

public video will be automatically created and uploaded for his/her students to view later.

Figure 2 displays Google Hangout on Air wich works as a classroom board, where every

student participates synchronously.
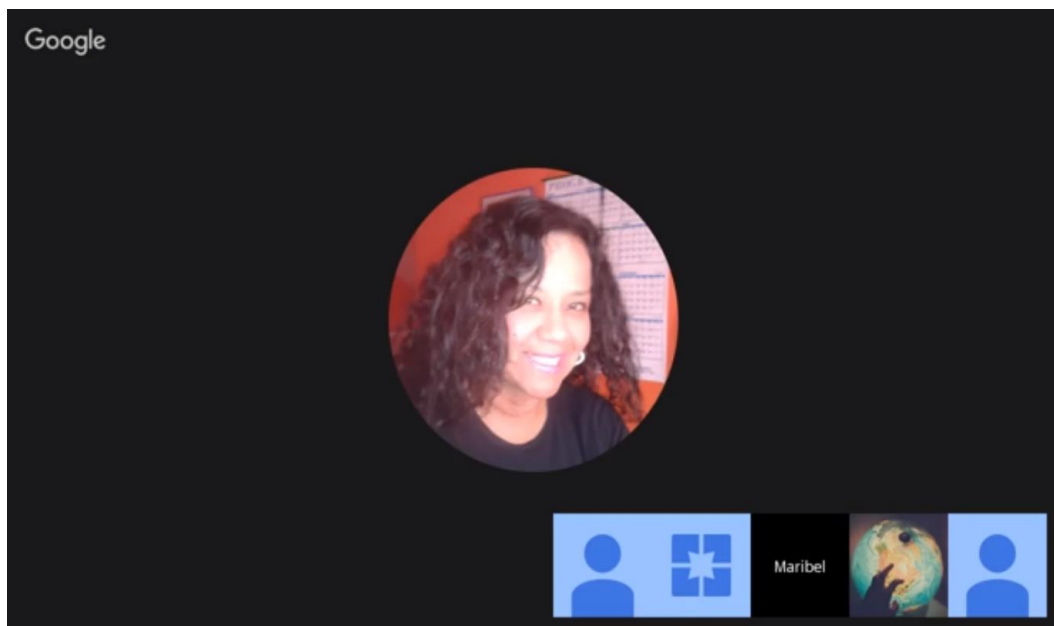
Figure 2: Google Hangout Screen. Source: Author.

Each student is emailed asking him or her to sign up a Gmail account because this is

the one which better works with the web 2.0 applications to be used. In the same e-mail is

given the schedule containing dates as well as hours at which speaking practices will be held.

Several minutes before each session begins, every student is emailed informing him or her

the hangout code which gives them access to the speaking practice every time it occurs.

The teacher developed the scheduled topics, trying to bring to class different and cultural related themes. Figure 3 shows some issues to develop in a typical class.
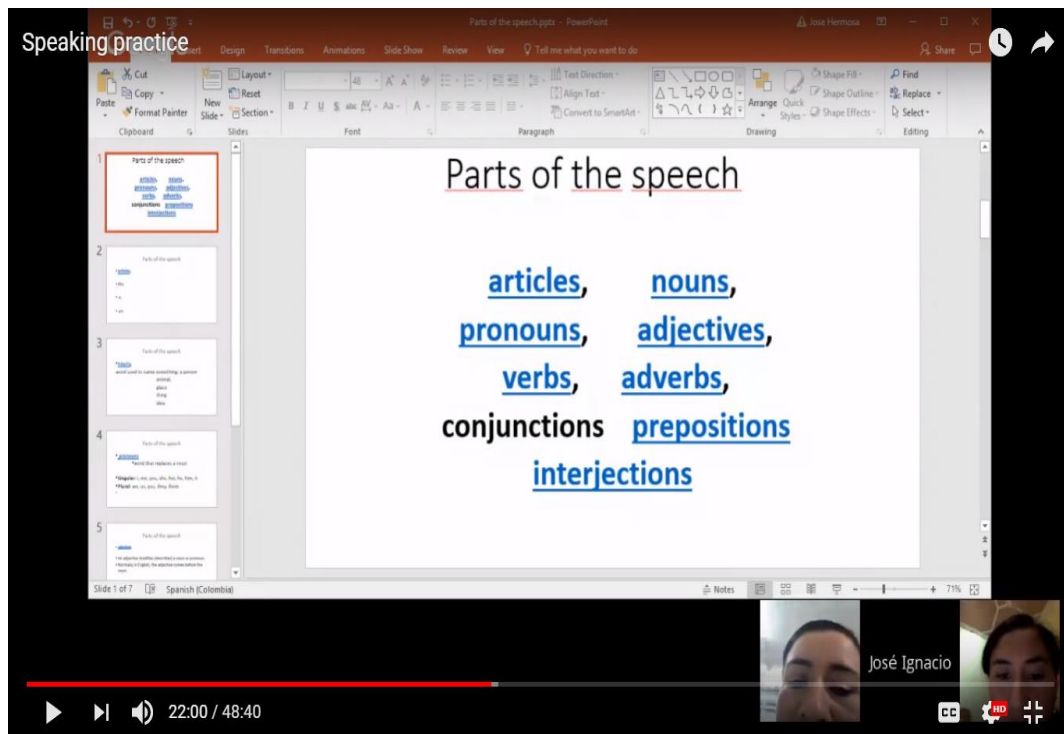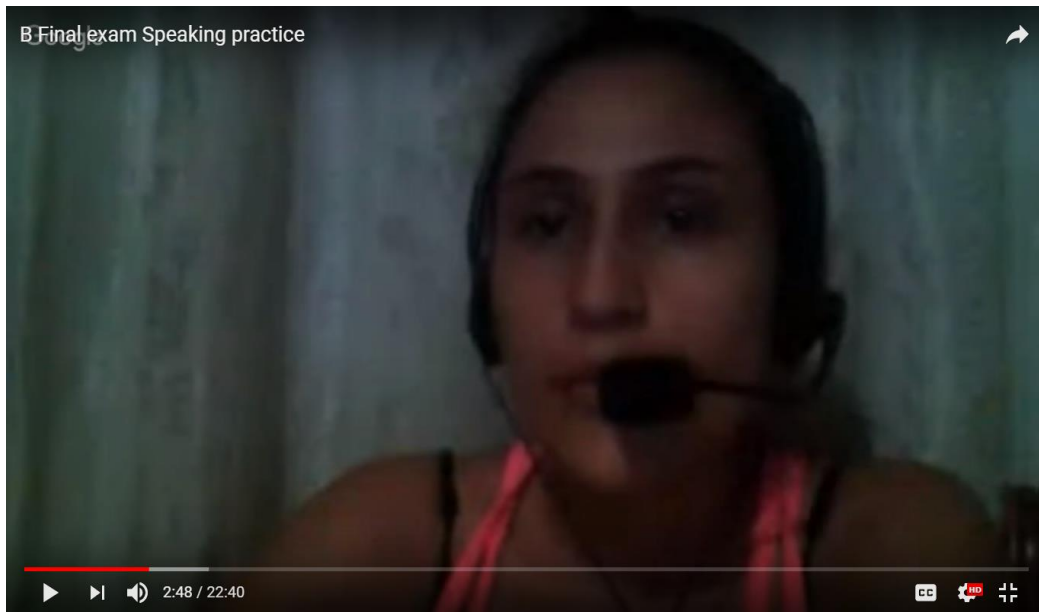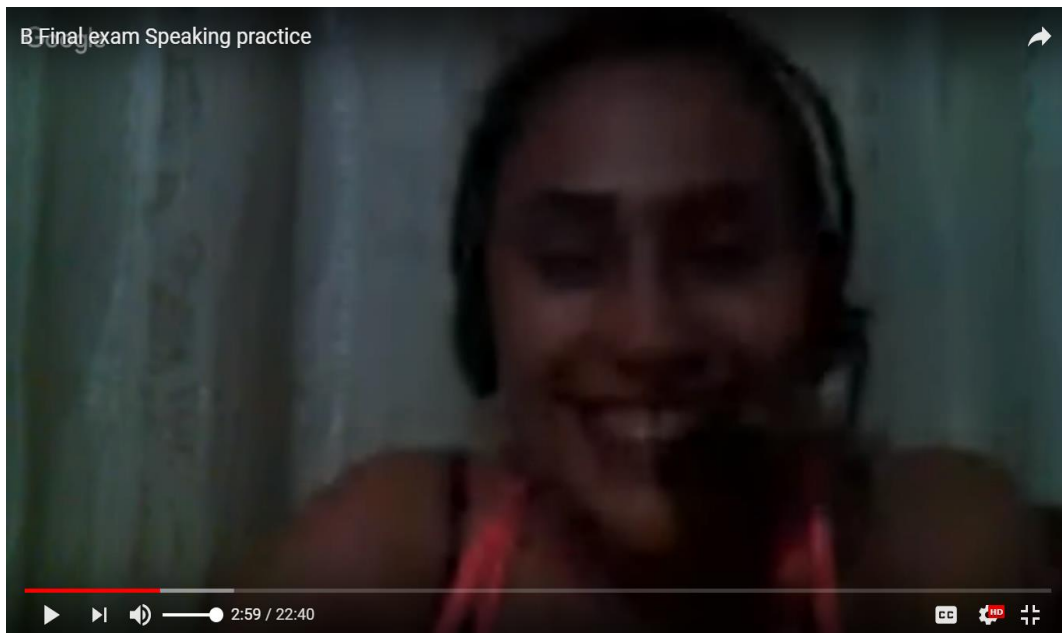

Figure 3 Class topic to be developed in a typical online class. Source: Author.

Spontaneous participations were propitiated as well as warm relationship between students and teacher. Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7, are demostrating how authenctic and emotive are the students participation in class.
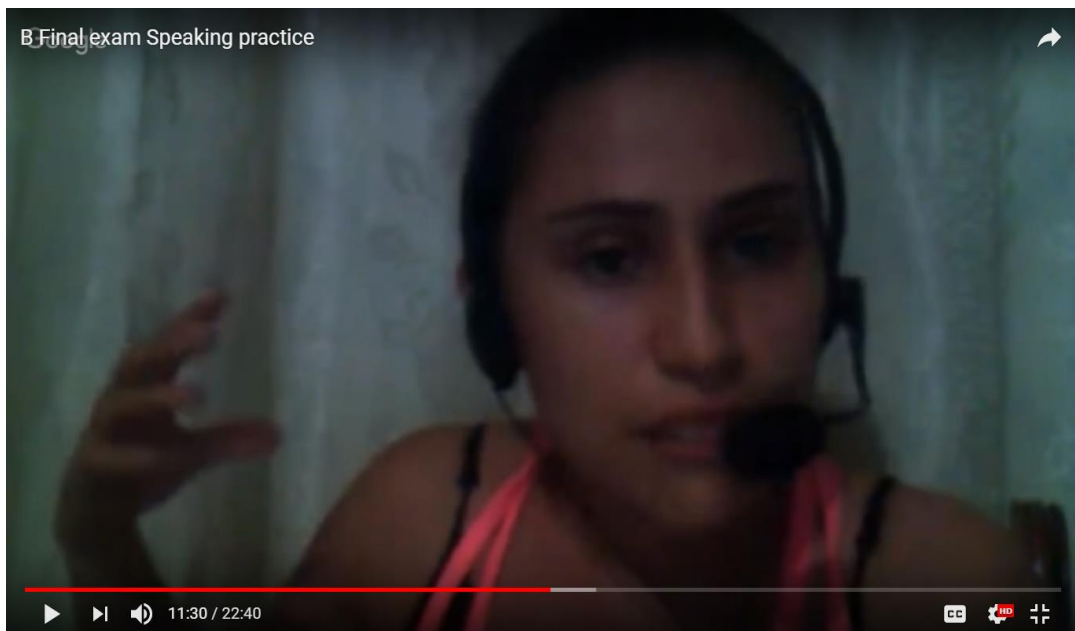
Figure 4. Student very attentive on class. Source: Author.

Figure 5. Student spontaneous and expressive participation on class. Source: Author.

Figure 6. Virtual classes may be as warm as presential classesses may be. Source: Author.

Listening Practice

Other 3 language skills were practiced in every class, let´s say listening, reading and writing. Figures 7, 8 and 9 show students practicing listening and reading skills respectively.

Figure 7. Student practicing listening English skill. Source: Author.

Reading Practice

Figure 8. Student practicing reading English skill. Source: Author.

Writing Practice

The investigative practice is speaking, mainly, but, of course, all four language skills are trained in every session. Figures 9, 10 and 11 are samples of writing students performance.
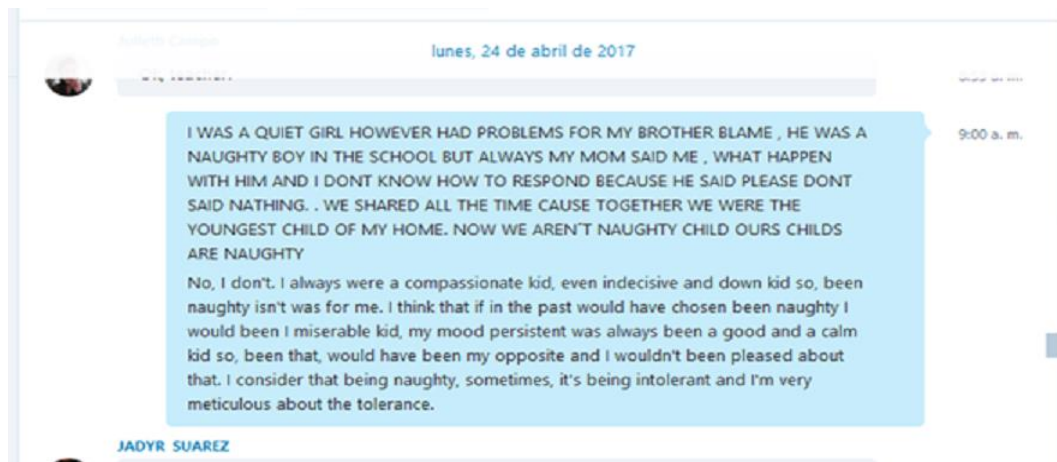

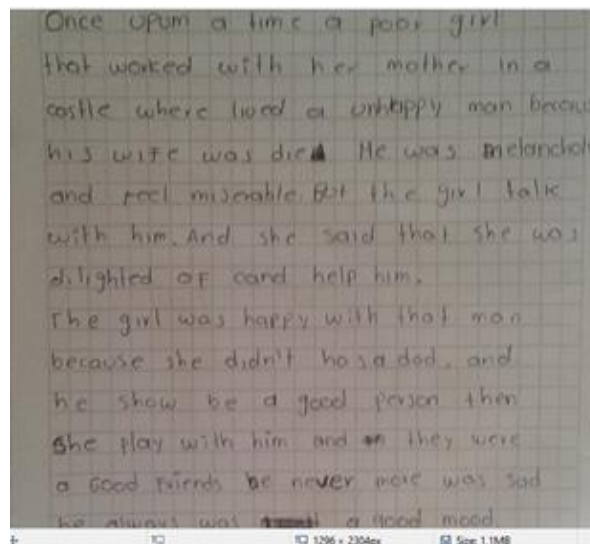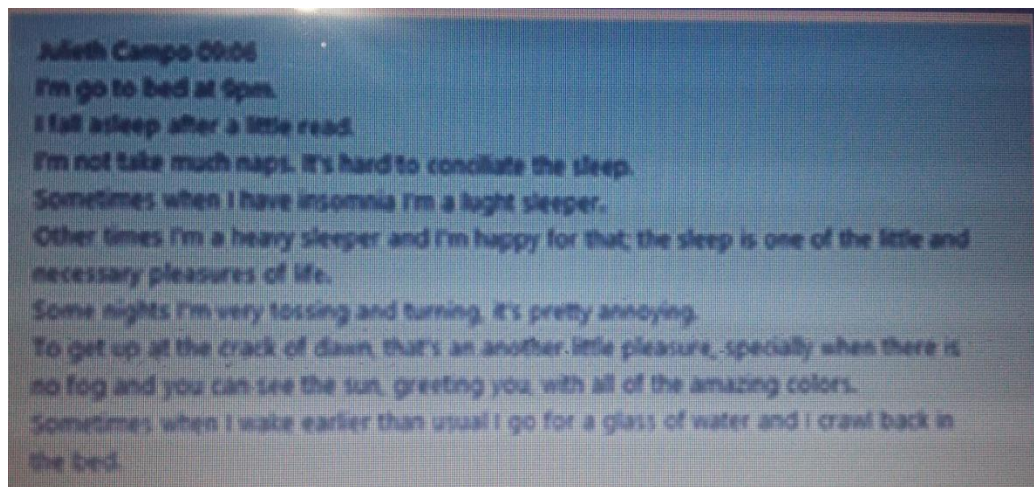*Figure 9.* Writing performance in virtual class. Source: Author.

Figure 10. Flexibility in writing performance in virtual class. Source: Author.

Figure 11. Writing practice in online class. Source: Author.

´

Assesment

Assessment was integral part of sessions, in order to measure students advance in their skills learning. Different presentations of test were offered adding interest and challenge to the students habilities. Figures 12, 13 and 14 are samples of several assesment systems.
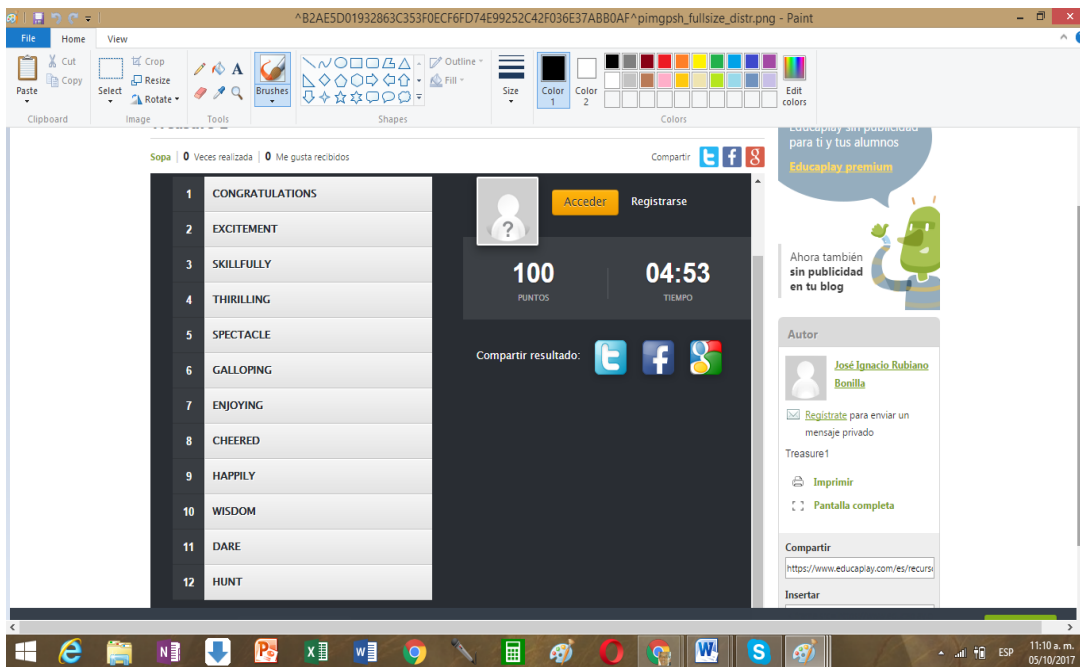
Figure 12. Educaplay assesment tool. Source: Author.
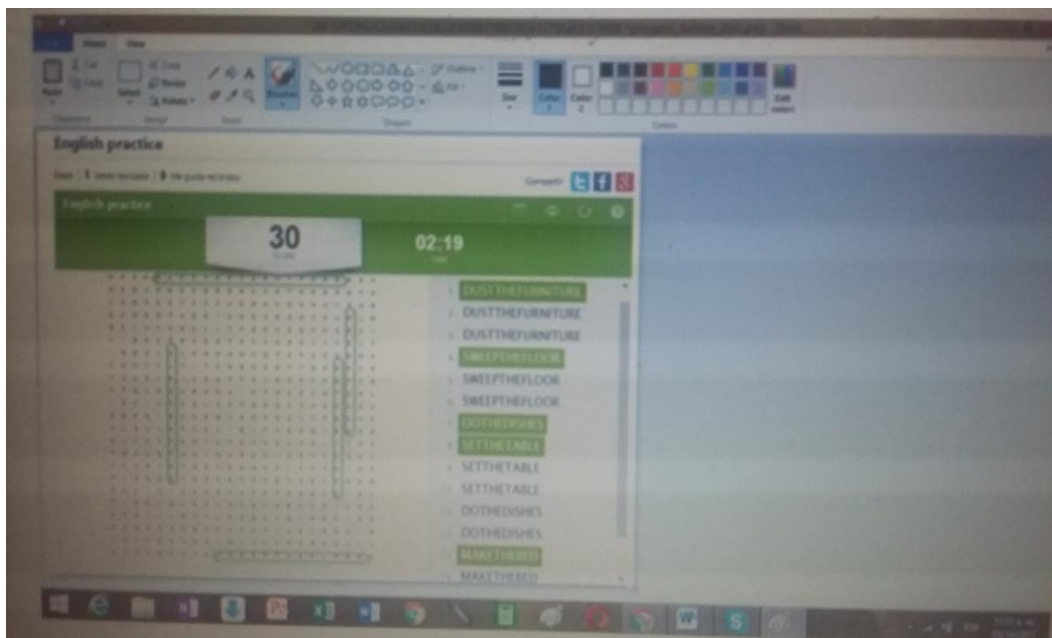
Figure 13. Crossword test. Source: Author.
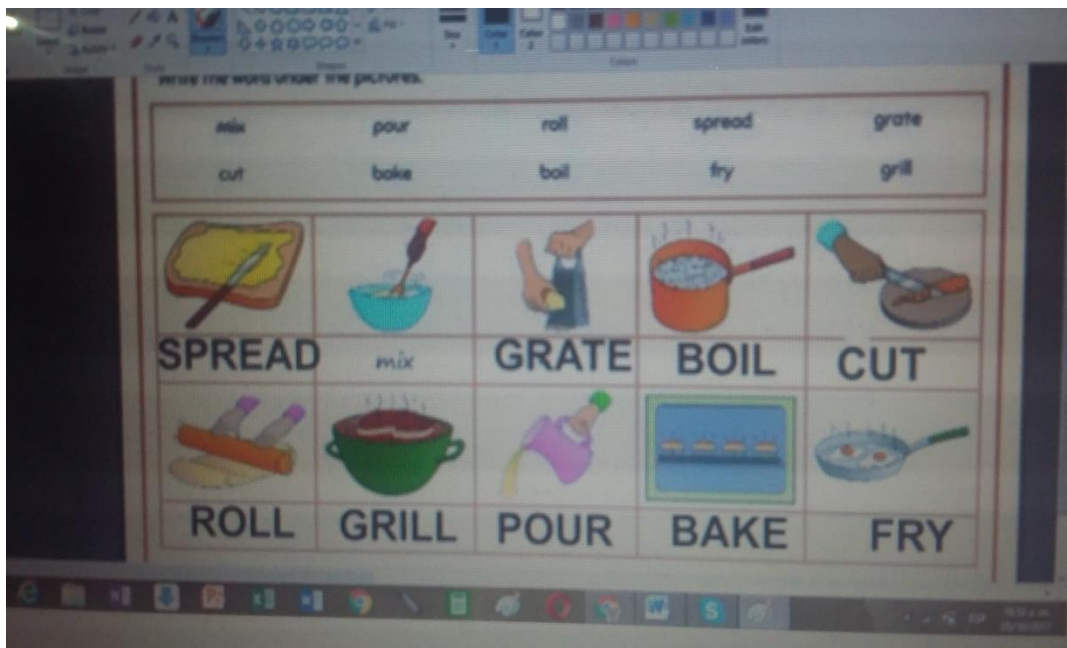
Figure 14. Identifying and writing objects names test. Source: Author.

Results

Level of assistance and punctuality was high and constant. Students declared to have reached their expectatives.

Web 2.0 tools were applied as Web 2.0 presented by Youtube to generate live sessions, Google Hangout, Skype and various applications to generate simultaneous and synchronous evaluations. The tools themselves proved to be ideal in facilitating communication and interaction that would allow for the practice of speaking in English with good achievement by all the students involved.

The main objective is achieved since the proposed observations were advanced and both strengths and aspects to be improved were known within the process of practicing English speaking in the sessions observed. The use of web 2.0 tools is effective in the practice of distance English speaking, regardless of the geographic location of the participants.

Adequate electronic equipment and basic technical knowledge are necessary to ensure that the sessions run smoothly and without delays. On the other hand, it is important to ensure that the environment within which the student connects, in order to participate in virtual meetings, is calm and as far as possible separate from other events that take place in the family, so that family activities do not interfere with the normal development of the activities of the training..

In addition to the development and strengthening of English language speaking, complementary skills were practiced, i.e. listening, reading and writing, which led to the production of individual texts by each student.

It is estimated that the objectives were partially achieved. Although the fundamental circumstances for the development of research, and the structural guidelines in terms of theoretical conception and methodology, as well as the collaboration and enthusiasm of the participating students, only an approximation to the proposed goals is repeated.

Students who merely receive information perpetuate remedial tendencies while thinking allows them to build knowledge; Supplemental instruction can provide a safe environment where they can discuss and process the material, and interact with other peers; Group work in addition to improving academic performance, raises self-esteem and competitiveness; and Speaking practice of students.

Students created a very friendly and warm relationship, this relation seems to boost their creativity and speed their speaking, breaking the old conception about cold online apprenticeship.

Discussion

The qualitative information compiled, based on the observations, gives rise to the impression that the creation of an informal environment is of great help for the practice of speaking in English to become fluent. The psychological barrier created by the fear of making a fool of themselves and with them a kind of social degradation is minimized when participants feel that they are welcomed and that everything they say will be listened to and properly attended to.

Often, especially for beginners, the limitations in the knowledge of the correct vocabulary as well as the ignorance of the corresponding grammatical compositions oblige them to express basic or rudimentary ideas, making them seem to be people of short comprehension or even with mental disabilities, a circumstance that reinforces their growing fear of ridicule. On the other hand, their pronunciation difficulties tend to increase making the understanding of what they want to express more difficult, especially when their interlocutors are English-speaking.

One aspect that is also relevant is body language, whose interpretation provides the student with information about his or her speech performance and the effect it has on his or her interlocutors. In the case of English speakers, the level of tolerance is lower than that of interlocutors belonging to the same cultural group of the student. When the newcomer belongs to the same cultural group as his interlocutors, the created atmosphere is friendlier and they often come to the understanding of the message sooner than an English speaker

would, because they share similar vocal sounds, intonations and pronunciations even if they are not adjusted to the foreign language being practiced.

Thus, in the interaction developed between the groups observed, the psychological barrier raised by the fear of ridicule was practically non-existent, with the risk of even falling into the use of a "protolanguage" apart from the ideal language in terms of fidelity in pronunciation and more aspect that characterize the language to be learned. Obviously, if it is considered that in infants during the learning of speech, they also babble and utter expressions far from the ideal language, they come closer and closer to it with each new attempt they make.

It is considered, as a point of discussion, that although the web 2.0 tools are very useful, as demonstrated in the present case study, for the practice of speaking English, some aspects have to be polished when the process has advanced, since the communicative interaction conjugates aspect involving broader and more complex aspects that are only fully satisfied through face-to-face interaction.

Conclusions

Inferring from this research results, feeling uncertainty when speaking a foreign language increases the cognitive load at the end of the process creating a wall that separates the student and his/her interlocutor, and thus blocking a fluid communication between them, and consequently the importance of carry out strategies that make aware students of this psychological reactions that avoid an adequate messages interchange.

The retrieved positive feedback given by the students of a warm relationship between them and between them and the teacher is evidence of the favorable effect on the speaking practices of this kind of human relation. The virtual educative environment is known as cold spaces, psychologically speaking, in consequence, humanization becomes a positive fact boosting learning and appropriation of the speaking skills, in TEFL.

In spite of all the difficulties and shortcomings presented, whether of technical or human origin, the atmosphere of friendship and solidarity allowed the students to show their respect and consideration and finally help each other. In the first instance, the group of students with the same level of English proficiency, i. e. with the same skill level, would be considered ideal. However, after the first moments of confusion, the fact that students have had significant differences in their level of command of the English language is considered as enriching, because this allowed us to recreate an environment of speech practice more similar to that of real life in which each person develops spontaneity in their expressions

instead of prefabricated and stereotyped responses that disappear once they have left the classroom session.

Another conclusion, no less important, is flexibility in relation with studied topics. Students by themselves have inherent motivations that impulse them to speak about specific topics and that inner motivation adds emotion, strength and thus recordation to the studied concepts. Motivation produced from students is a fact leading pupils to involve foreign language with their own cultural roots and social medium.

Additionally, the Web 2.0 tools are optimal on creating an excellent workspace in order to train foreign language speaking skills on virtual environments. Consequently, Web 2.0 tools, interlinked with the World Wide Web, let overcome natural limitations imposed by long distances, mountainous region, and even economical and policies adversities.

As aspects to be strengthened in the practices of speaking English as a foreign language at the UNAD, as induced, based on what has been observed and analyzed in the activity developed by the sample population, there is basic training in the technological aspects involved in teaching and learning in virtual environments, for students. The training would mainly emphasize specialized software in web 2.0 tools, since these specifically favour full human interaction between students and teachers and vice versa, as well as between students themselves, with obvious benefits for all in terms of knowledge creation.

The distance learning platform established by UNAD promotes cutting-edge solutions to make bilingualism accessible at the national level. In addition, the dissemination and

appropriateness of the programmes offered become determining factors in overcoming the barriers imposed by a geography characterized by mountainous systems that make it difficult for students to access urban educational centres. In addition, it minimizes the impact of education and budgetary policies that do not allow education to be provided with the required population coverage and quality.

Recommendations

A recommendation in this research is that teachers will help efficiently to their pupils if besides the pronunciation and grammatical exercises they also explain to them how to go beyond the "solution" of each class aim, and really get empowered of their learning process as much as to be capable of performing their speaking skills in front of a native speaker as fluently as they usually do it in class.

It seems it will be useful to know the student´s notions about what they think is their speaking obstacles and confront those notions with reality in order to abolish wrong cultural ideas without logical or scientific roots.

The current degree of interaction with electronic devices and programs linked to the Internet is of great magnitude among the general population, and this fact propitiates the recomedation of strongly boosting the appropriate applications and methods so that the practice of English as a foreign language skills, especially to practice speech, ability in which it notes a greater need for support for students.

It is also recommended that some of the subjects include clarifications regarding the inaccurate cultural notions surrounding the learning and acquisition of a foreign language, in this case English.

The magnitude of the objectives, in terms of extension and depth, make it advisable to continue the research activity, through other projects with similar approach and bases, in order to complement what has been known so far. The premises that originated the research

continue to hold true and the students' need for English as a foreign language learning strategies as well.

The challenges are vast, yet the opportunities offered by information and communication technologies are rapidly advancing and are expected to be equally rapidly resourced to meet the challenges.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 - Students´ background

Stars indicate student´s hometowns in Colombia. Source: Adaptation from Mapa de Colombia, retrieved from http://mapadecolombia.org/mapa-de-relieve-de-colombia.by the Author

Appendix 2 - Participants Permissions

Re: Greetings from Jose Ignacio

olga restrepo <**olgamilenarestrepo@gmail.com**>   18 may.

Hello tutor!!!

Of course, my dear tutor you can use our past interaction information as investigative material. If I can help in another way, just let me know.

Best regards

Olga Restrepo

Cead Yopal - Casanare

2017-05-17 18:43 GMT-05:00 José Ignacio Hermosa <jignaxi@gmail.com>:

Dear Olga, I´m really so impressed with our English speaking practice performance that I´m thinking to draw up about it an investigation paper in order to describe our experience and try to write conclusions that may help future English Language teaching/learning process.

That´s why I´m now asking for your permission to use our past interaction information as investigative material. If you agree please let me know answering this note.

Wishing   you   the   best.

Jose Ignacio