

Promoting Anxiety-Free Atmospheres Within L2 Oral Production Scenarios

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Dedications

In dedication to my mother, Sara Eugenia, whose courage, strength, unconditional love, and support has always taught me the meaning of resilience, inner force, and responsibility to accomplish my goals.

Table of contents

Introduction.....	12
1. Statement of the Problem.....	14
2. Objectives.....	19
2.1. General objective.....	19
2.2. Specific objectives.....	20
3. Diagnostic	20
4. Theoretical Framework.....	31
4.1. The speaking skill.....	32
4.1.1. Formal speaking.....	34
4.2. The Communicative Competence Approach	36
4.2.1. Savignon’s model of communicative competence	38
4.2.2. Canale and Swain’s model of communicative competence.....	39
4.2.3. Bachman’s model of communicative language ability (CLA).....	40
4.2.4. Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell’s model of communicative competence	41
4.3. Anxiety when performing orally	42
4.3.1. State anxiety.....	43
4.3.2. Situation-specific anxiety	44
4.3.2. Trait anxiety.....	44
4.3.3. Foreign Language anxiety	45
4.3.4. Fear of negative evaluation.....	48
4.3.5. Communication apprehension	49
4.3.6. Test anxiety.....	50
4.3.7. Anxiety reducing strategies	51
5. Methodology.....	56
5.1. Type of study.....	57
5.2. Participants	59
5.3. Setting.....	59
5.4. Data collection instruments	61
5.4.1. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)	61
5.4.2. Field notes.....	61

5.4.3. Self- assessment spoken question.	62
5.4.4. Questionnaire	62
5.5. Data analysis techniques	63
5.6. Ethical considerations	63
6. Pedagogical intervention and didactic sequence.....	64
6.1. Didactic sequence.....	64
6.2. Mini unit 1: The power of marketing.	66
6.3. Mini unit 2: Shopping sales.....	70
6.4. Mini unit 3: Black Friday	75
6.5. Mini unit 4: A product review.....	78
7. Findings and discussions.....	83
7.1. Anxiety Reducing Strategies.....	84
7.2. The Speaking Skill	86
7.3. Anxiety When Performing Orally.....	89
8. Discussion	93
9. Conclusions.....	97
10. Limitations and Recommendations.....	99
Bibliografic References.....	102
Appendix.....	112

Tables list

Table 1 Topics the unit called How can I manage my spending habits?65

Figures list

Figure 1 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	15
Figure 2 FCLAS Item 32: Me siento nervioso(a) cuando la docente de inglés hace preguntas que no he preparado con anterioridad.....	21
Figure 3 FCLAS Item 14: Me siento nervioso cuando no entiendo lo que la docente de inglés está corrigiendo	21
Figure 4 FCLAS Item 3: Tiemblo cuando sé que voy a ser llamado(a) en clase de inglés.....	22
Figure 5 FCLAS Item 19: Puedo sentir como mi corazón late cuando voy a ser llamado en clase de inglés.....	23
Figure 6 FCLAS Item 6: Constantemente pienso que los otros estudiantes son mejores que yo en esta clase.....	24
Figure 7 FCLAS Item 15: Me siento ansioso en la clase de inglés aun cuando estoy bien preparado	26
Figure 8 FCLAS Item 4: Me asusta el hecho de no entender lo que la profesora está diciendo en inglés en la clase de inglés	26
Figure 9 FCLAS Item 30: Me siento temeroso(a) de que mis compañeros se burles de mi cuando hablo en inglés en la clase de inglés.....	27
Figure 10 FCLAS Item 7: Usualmente me siento a gusto durante las evaluaciones o quizzes que se hacen en la clase de inglés	29
Figure 11 FCLAS Item 20: Cuanto más estudio para una evaluación, más confundido me siento	30
Figure 12 Anxiety-producing situations diagram.....	47
Figure 13 Cycle of action research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2009).....	58
Figure 14 Steps of this action research project	60
Figure 15 Video activity: Guess the logo.....	67
Figure 16 Picture: online exercise. A student completing a logo.....	68
Figure 17 Picture: students working in groups, creating their logo	70
Figure 18 Pictures: students watching the video and recreating the dialogue.....	73

Figure 19 Pictures: students working on the dialogues they wrote.....	75
Figure 20 Picture of the power point presentation about products review	79
Figure 21 Picture of an example of a product review	81
Figure 22 Picture of students' group presentations.....	82
Figure 23 Emerging categories from the data analysis	83
Figure 24 Anxiety in Oral Activities	96

Appendix list

Appendix A. Consent Form.....	112
Appendix B. Sample of a Lesson Plan	113
Appendix C. Instrument 1	114
Appendix D. Instrument 4.....	115
Appendix E. Instrument 2	116
Appendix F. Raw Data Analysis	117
Appendix G. Sample of a worksheet.....	121

Resumen

Título: Promover una Atmosfera Libre de Ansiedad en la Producción Oral Dentro de Clases de Idioma Extranjero*

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Palabras clave: Ansiedad en el Idioma Extranjero, Estrategias para Reducir la Ansiedad, el Idioma Extranjero, Habilidades en la Producción Oral.

Aprender a hablar un idioma extranjero hace que los alumnos experimenten sensaciones particulares o se comporten de manera diferente en el entorno del aula. Algunos de estos síntomas que sufren los alumnos son nerviosismo, incomodidad, tensión, miedo, evitando participar en situaciones comunicativas en tiempo real. Como consecuencia, la producción oral de los usuarios de L2 se ve afectada negativamente. Para disminuir estos resultados amenazantes, se pretende que el maestro aplique una serie de estrategias para reducir la ansiedad en las clases de idioma extranjero. El presente estudio aborda la pregunta de en qué medida las estrategias de reducción de ansiedad pueden ayudar a disminuir la ansiedad que produce hablar un idioma extranjero en las clases de lengua extranjera de noveno grado de la Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata, en la ciudad de Bucaramanga. El diseño metodológico se basó en la investigación acción y siguió el enfoque cualitativo. El proceso de recolección de datos se apoyó en la aplicación del FCLAS (Horwitz, 1986), notas de campo realizadas por el investigador, una autoevaluación de una actividad oral y un cuestionario abierto.

Algunos de los hallazgos más significativos que surgieron de este estudio fueron: que las estrategias para reducir la ansiedad deben incluirse cuando el maestro planifica sus clases. Además, los estudiantes reconocieron que necesitaban estar más comprometidos con su propio proceso FLL pues son conscientes de la importancia que tienen aspectos como el vocabulario y la gramática para tener un resultado hablado más funcional y estructurado

* Trabajo de grado.

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Abstract

Title: Promoting Anxiety-Free Atmospheres Within L2 Oral Production Scenarios*.

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Key words: Foreign Language Anxiety, Anxiety-Reducing Strategies, Speaking Skills.

Learning how to speak a foreign language causes the learners experience particular sensations or behave differently in the classroom setting. Some of the symptom's learners suffer are nervousness, discomfort, tension, fear, and avoidance to participate in real-time communicational situations. As a consequence, L2 users spoken performance is negatively affected. In order to diminish these threatening outcomes, the teacher is intended to apply a series of anxiety-reducing strategies in the foreign language classes. The present study addresses the question to which extent may anxiety-reducing strategies help diminish foreign language anxiety when it comes to speaking production in ninth grade foreign language classes at *Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata*, in the city of Bucaramanga. The methodological design was based on action research and followed the qualitative approach. The data collection process was supported by the application of the FCLAS (Horwitz, 1986), field notes made by the researcher, a self-assessment spokenquestion, and an open-end questionnaire.

Some of the most significant findings to emerge from this study were: that anxiety-reducing strategies need to be included when the teacher plans his/her classes. Additionally, students acknowledged that they needed to be more committed with their own FLL process so that they are aware of the importance of aspects such as vocabulary and grammar to have a more functional and structured spoken outcome.

*Degree Work.

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Introduction

Learning to speak a foreign language requires more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules (Shumin, 2002). It demands the ability to use language properly in social interactions. Learning a foreign language is not about memorizing what any particular course proposes; ideally language must be learned and used under the needs of the speaker, the context, and its purpose. For that reason, there should be the proper conditions to interact in order to create the act of communication. In this process, it is known that not only cognitive factors but emotional ones may have an impact on how the target language is learned and used.

Additionally, biological factors, individual characteristics, learning beliefs and previous experience with the foreign language play a major role in the learner (Nerlicki, 2011). In the foreign language classroom, learners are asked to use the target language to express and create interactive opportunities where they can show their teacher and classmates what they have learned so far. However, when students are expected to display a series of internalized structures and vocabulary, especially in speaking activities, the result is other than satisfactory. This is because there are the arousal of some feelings of discomfort, nervousness and tension that negatively influence the oral outcome.

One of those factors is what research has called foreign language anxiety. According to Horwitz et al. (1986) in Piechurska-Kuciel (2011) foreign language anxiety or language anxiety is a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process. Language anxiety

may also be seen as ‘the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language’ (MacIntyre, 1999) in Piechurska-Kuciel (2011). This type of anxiety, which is reflected in the students’ oral performance and that in some cases is not considered by teachers in the academic context, is reflected in the way they behave in the classroom. Instead, we consider that those problematic and uncomfortable situations where students struggle the most with the foreign language are due to the lack of study, responsibility or interest in the activities that are proposed in the classroom. Being able to present an oral presentation, create and act in a role-play, maintain a conversation with a native speaker or answer spontaneously any kind of question to the teacher, triggers the learner that feeling of discomfort or nervousness when using the foreign language. As said before, each person has unique experiences with the L2 and they often argue that being exposed to others who may have a better language domain, speaking more fluently and more accurately, can make them feel negative feelings, ideas and anticipated negative results. As a result, these can become understandable reasons to avoid taking any role in the process of learning and using the target language in a functional and meaningful way.

Although the four skills, listening, reading, writing, and speaking are permanently used in a class and all of them stem the effectiveness of the language, speaking is the skill learners struggle the most. Thinking about meaning, functions, and patterns all at the same time, makes this process more demanding, stressful and attention-oriented. As stated by Oxford (1999) cited in Oflaz (2019) students in foreign language classes can experience state anxiety when they have to speak, but the anxiety disappears as their foreign language skills get better and levels go upper.

The following research project was designed and implemented as a requirement to obtain the master's degree in Language Didactics at Universidad Industrial of Santander. The aforementioned work has been developed under the subsequent order: Initially, a description of the problem and the way it was identified. Secondly, the statement of the problem, which gives an account of why this project was conceived. Next, the general and specific objectives proposed for this research. Afterwards, there is a theoretical framework which illustrates the four main constructs on which this study was based: the speaking skill, the communicative competence approach, the foreign language anxiety when performing orally, including the three more anxiety-debilitating factors of spoken performance: *communication apprehension*, *test anxiety* and *fear of negative evaluation*, the anxiety-reducing strategies, methodology, pedagogical intervention and didactic sequence, findings and discussion, conclusions, limitations and finally, recommendations for future research.

1. Statement of the Problem

In Colombia, the Ministry of Education created the document called *English Basic standards for foreign language competence*. The aim of this document was to improve the quality of the educational system in order to prepare Colombian students to face current and future challenges of a globalized world.

In this document, it can be found some objectives related to the acquisition of some speaking and communicative aspects Colombian students must achieve at the end of their middle and high school program: "*La adquisición de elementos de conversación y de lectura, al menos*

en una lengua extranjera” y *“La comprensión y capacidad de expresarse en una lengua extranjera”* According to this, the Ministry of Education, decided to choose and include the guidelines of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, known as CEFR, to establish coherence and clear goals for the stages students should approve in order to fulfill the expected outcome in the development of the target language.

Figure 1

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

NIVELES SEGÚN EL MARCO COMÚN EUROPEO	NOMBRE COMÚN DEL NIVEL EN COLOMBIA	NIVEL EDUCATIVO EN EL QUE SE ESPERA DESARROLLAR CADA NIVEL DE LENGUA	METAS PARA EL SECTOR EDUCATIVO A 2019
A1	Principiante	Grados 1 a 3	
A2	Básico	Grados 4 a 7	
B1	Pre intermedio	Grados 8 a 11	• Nivel mínimo para el 100% de los egresados de Educación Media.
B2	Intermedio	Educación Superior	• Nivel mínimo para docentes de inglés. • Nivel mínimo para profesionales de otras carreras.
C1	Pre avanzado		• Nivel mínimo para los nuevos egresados de licenciaturas en idiomas.
C2	Avanzado		

The National Government has the crucial responsibility of creating the proper conditions for Colombian students to develop the communicative competence in a foreign language. In the same document, there are some reasons why it is of great relevance learning a foreign language: it is an instrument that facilitates the strategic communication in diverse areas of the human development, it fosters the comprehension and acceptance of different cultures, it allows the access of scholarships to study and live abroad, it offers better job opportunities and last, but no least, it

facilitates the exchange of knowledge and experiences with other people, which is known as Lingua Franca. (p.9).

The foreign language program at *Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata* has been designed based on the following documents provided by the National Ministry of Education, (MEN), 2006: “*Guía 22: Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lengua Extranjera: Inglés*” (*Ministerio de Educación, MEN, 2006*), “*Orientaciones para la implementación de proyectos de fortalecimiento del inglés en las entidades territoriales*” (*MEN, 2014*), *Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje de Inglés, Currículo Sugerido de Inglés and The Common European Framework (CEF)*.

The aforementioned program has been organized in the following way: from preschool to fifth grade, students take one (1) hour of English per week; from sixth grade to eleventh grade, students take three hours of English (3) accordingly.

It is worthy to mention that this school’s curriculum has been designed based on the National Ministry of Education documents that seek to ensure parents and students the opportunity to learn English since the very first years of school life. Moreover, these students count with teachers who are being qualified constantly by international organizations such as the British Council, who accompany this program and offer the academic professionals’ permanent courses and training support in the foreign language process. The English program is supported by an English textbook for each grade. This one is oriented to achieve the national and international standards proposed by the MEN and the CEFR, which provide students with the needed tools for the development of communicative competence in the target language. Nevertheless, most

classrooms are not provided with the technological resources needed to carry out the established objectives demanded by the National Bilingual Program: video beams, sound system equipment, and visual aids such as posters or flashcards are scarce which hinders classroom activities that promote a proper environment that allows learners to create communicative situations that convey meaning and give them opportunities to use English practically.

In line with the objectives proposed by the MEN and the CEFR, it is supposed that students in ninth grade of *Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata* be able to achieve B1. Getting to that level, students will be able to communicate essential points and ideas in familiar contexts. Also, they will be able to use the target language to communicate clearly with their classmates and their English teacher, to express opinions and exchange information about familiar topics related to their context; to explain and give reasons about some of their actions and decisions based on current topics related to their context; to present their ideas about an academic topic of their interest in front of the class, among others.

Being aware of the requirements of the MEN concerning to the level students must have at that grade, I started to wonder myself about what was the reason why students at *Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata* were not able to use the L2 to establish and maintain communication with their classmates and teacher in the foreign language class.

I have observed students have notorious difficulties to employ English orally: when students are asked to pass in front of the board to present something, they seem very nervous, they laugh, some girls cover their faces with their hair, others hide behind their classmate and their

voices cannot be heard because they change their tone of voice. Another aspect I noticed was the lack of vocabulary and structures in their oral outcome; they struggle when they are asked to act and interact with their classmates and teacher in the classroom and many times, their attitude is to avoid taking part in a conversation because they cannot do it in English. Additionally, they experience a feeling of discomfort and uneasiness when they are involved in tasks that require their oral performance. As described previously, there are important signs and behavior that indicate they are experiencing any form of anxiety such as lack of confidence in their speech, nervousness, and unwillingness when they are required to stand in front of the teacher and classmates and use English to interact. Therefore, it is essential to find that issue that is negatively affecting their oral skills in the classroom and based on those results, transform my pedagogical practice in order to provide students with anxiety-reducing strategies that allow them to diminish their levels of language anxiety and at the same time to navigate and accomplish oral tasks.

Having said this, the idea of starting this project was born after realizing the situation most students have in the English class. I have witnessed how most students struggle with the assigned oral tasks such as oral presentations, short monologues, role-plays and at some points, questions the teacher asks about a random topic, and as a consequence, they have negative results; they behave uncomfortably, they react nervously, some tremble and do not show interest or excitement for the activity, and because of it, the main objective of the communicative situation is not achieved. In addition, as mentioned earlier, these students' English program has only 3 hours per week, so the time constraint may be another obstacle that has hampered the development of oral performance in the classroom. In all, students do not want to use, respond, produce, or interact in English; it is clear that there may be a situation happening in their mindset and for that reason,

their oral performance is being affected negatively. As follows, some testimonies of what they think: *S14 manifested the following when the teacher asked students to create a short role-play where they were going to buy an item: “me sentí muy nerviosa por tener que pasar al frente. Si me gustaría, ya que me ayuda a pronunciar mi inglés”*; *S1 said: “me sentí muy nervioso”*. Another one expressed: *“Me gusto, pero me dan muchos nervios pasar al frente, sería un poco mejor decir solo al docente lo que realizamos.*

In line with the action research nature of this study, the following research question has been proposed:

To which extent may anxiety-reducing strategies help diminish foreign language anxiety when it comes to speaking production in ninth grade foreign language classes at Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata?

2. Objectives

To comprehend this phenomenon in a deeper and more conscious manner, the following objectives have been proposed:

2.1. General objective

To provide students with anxiety reducing strategies that help diminish their language anxiety levels when it comes to speaking production in ninth grade foreign language classes at Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata.

2.2. Specific objectives

- To diagnose students' attitudes and beliefs about speaking English in the foreign language class.
- To implement a didactic sequence that involves anxiety-reducing strategies teachers and students may apply to spoken activities in the foreign language classes.
- To assess and reflect on the didactic sequence considering its advantages and improvements.

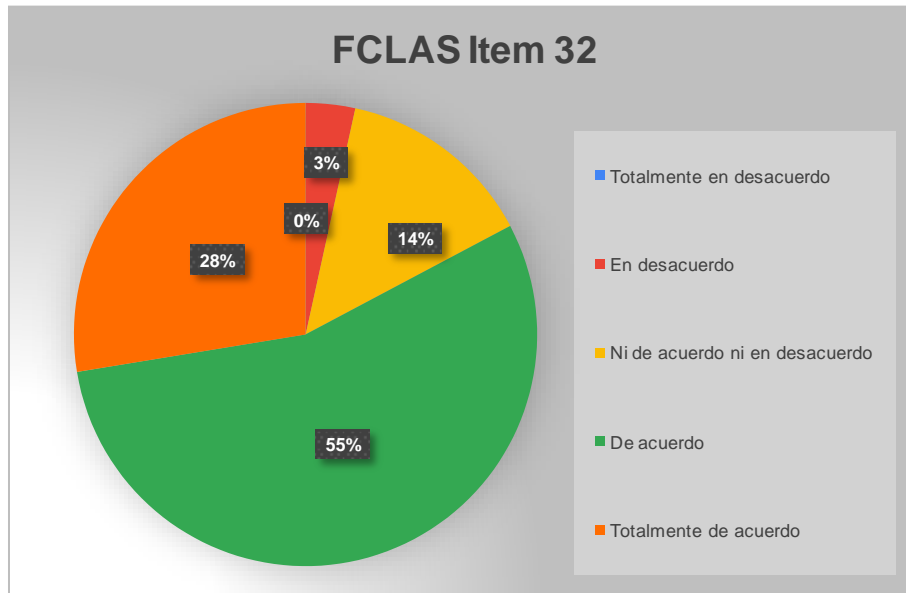
3. Diagnostic

To obtain some data about why students may experience foreign language anxiety and which situations make them feel uncomfortable when it comes to spoken activities in the foreign language classes, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, FLCAS, originally created and developed by Elaine Horwitz et al. in 1983, was the first instrument used. It was applied to 32 ninth grade students from a public school called *Instituto Técnico Dámaso Zapata*, in the city of Bucaramanga, in the first term of 2022. This scale had 33 items, each of which was answered on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “strongly agree” (Aida, Y.,1994). These items were associated to the three types of language anxiety Horwitz identified: *fear or negative evaluation*, *communication apprehension* and *test anxiety*. It is of great importance to clarify that the FCLAS was translated into Spanish in order to avoid students' misunderstandings during the diagnostic process.

In the first category, **fear of negative evaluation**, some results were obtained: 44.8% of the students expressed they feel nervous when the English teacher asks questions they have not prepared previously. (See figure 2 below)

Figure 2

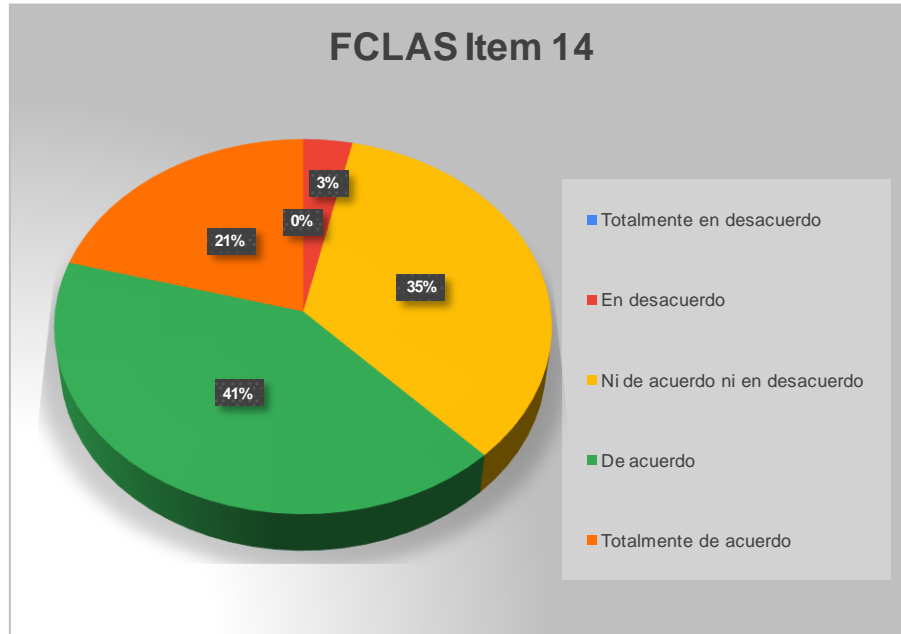
FCLAS Item 32: Me siento nervioso(a) cuando la docente de inglés hace preguntas que no he preparado con anterioridad.



Secondly, a 41.4% of students, manifested that they felt nervous when they did not understand what the teacher was correcting. (See figure 3 below)

Figure 3

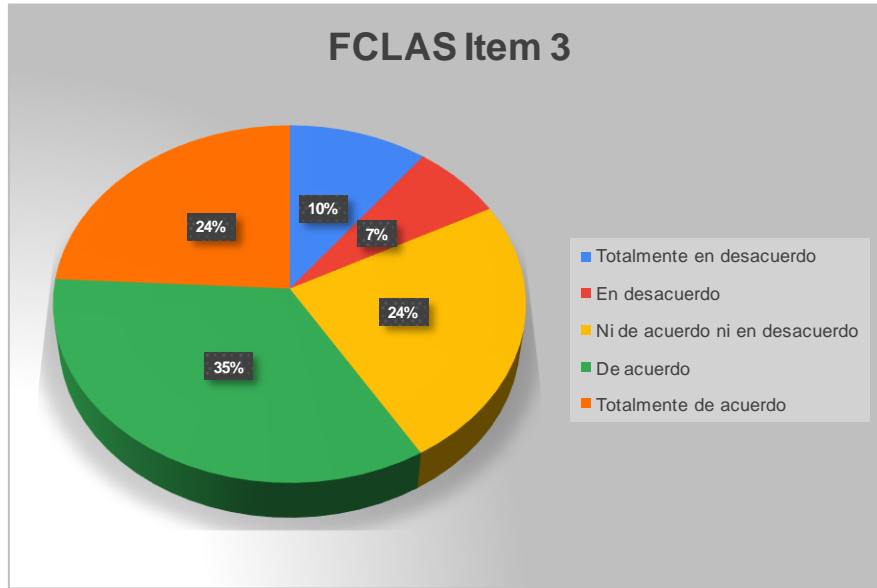
FCLAS Item 14: Me siento nervioso cuando no entiendo lo que la docente de inglés está corrigiendo.



In addition, 34,5 % of the students expressed they tremble when they know they are going to be called on in the English class. (See figure 4 below)

Figure 4

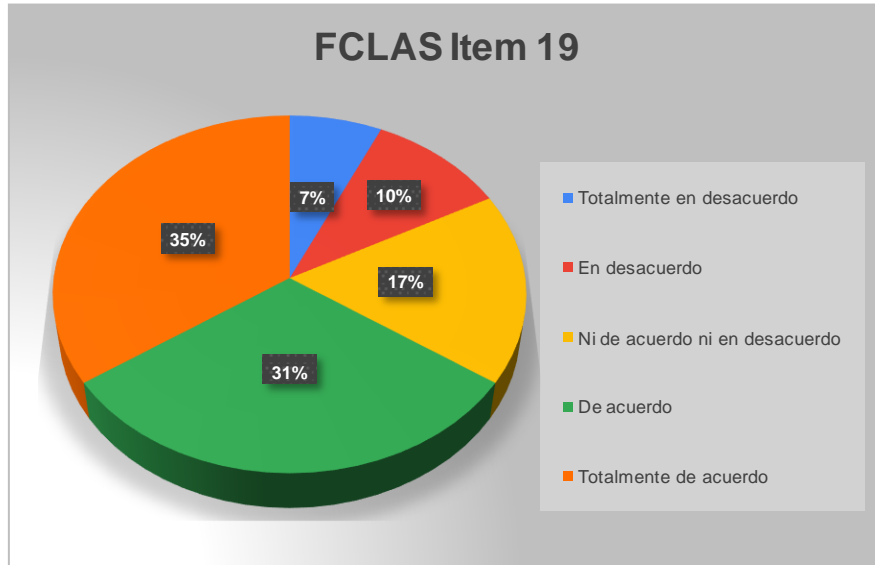
FCLAS Item 3: Tiemblo cuando sé que voy a ser llamado(a) en clase de inglés



Having the same percentage, students revealed they can feel their heart pounding when they are going to be called in in their English class. (See figure 5 below)

Figure 5

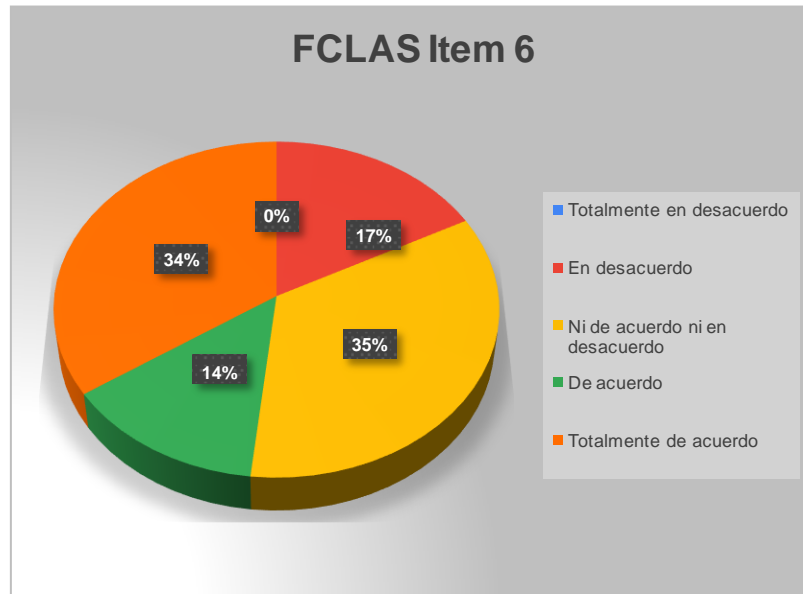
FCLAS Item 19: Puedo sentir como mi corazón late cuando voy a ser llamado en clase de inglés.



Finally, the same results were obtained in the item 6 of the scale in which students revealed that they are constantly thinking the other students are better at English.

Figure 6

FCLAS Item 6: Constantemente pienso que los otros estudiantes son mejores que yo en esta clase.

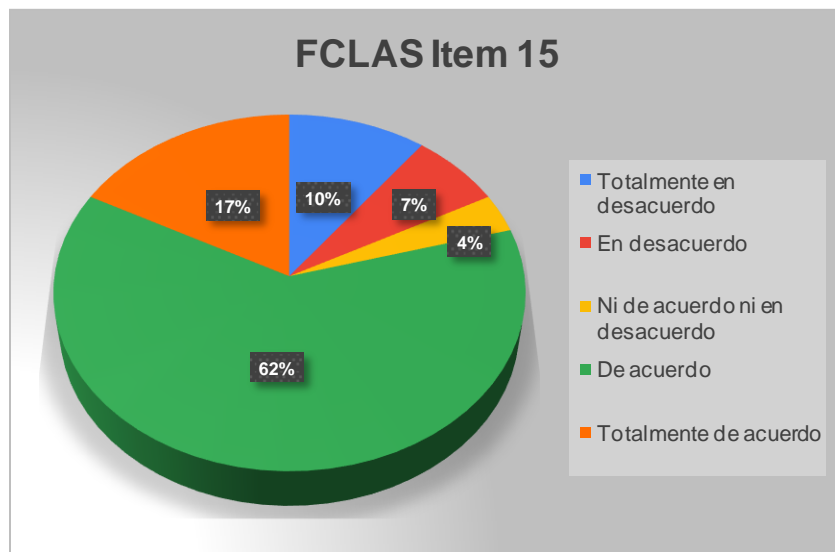


According to Zhiping, D., & Paramasivam, S. (2013) students who suffer from fear of negative evaluation do not accept their language errors as a usual part of the learning process but consider them a threat to their face. Watson and Friend (1969) cited in Aida (1994) defined this type of anxiety as ‘apprehension about others’ evaluations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively”. This explains why students prefer to avoid involving voluntarily in English oral exercises where they are exposed to others because they think their use of the language is a failure. This is more evident when students are shy and quiet and prefer not to be called on to take an active participation in class. Therefore, they decide to remain silent and do not get involved in the class activities. The results obtained after this diagnostic instrument show the negative feelings students experience when they have to use the foreign language in front of their classmates. Moreover, they consciously decide not to involve in the foreign language class and in the same way, not to use the L2 because they believe their self-image will be negatively affected.

Related to the other kind of language anxiety the scale measures, communication apprehension, some preliminary results were obtained: 62,1% of the students manifested that they feel anxious about the English class even if they are well prepared for it.

Figure 7

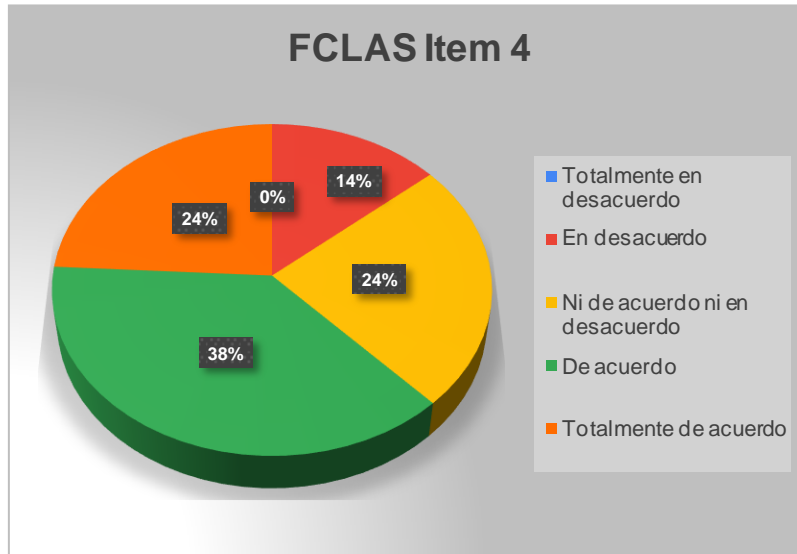
FCLAS Item 15: Me siento ansioso en la clase de inglés aun cuando estoy bien preparado.



Furthermore, 37,9% said that they get nervous when they don't understand every word the English teacher says (See figure 8 below)

Figure 8

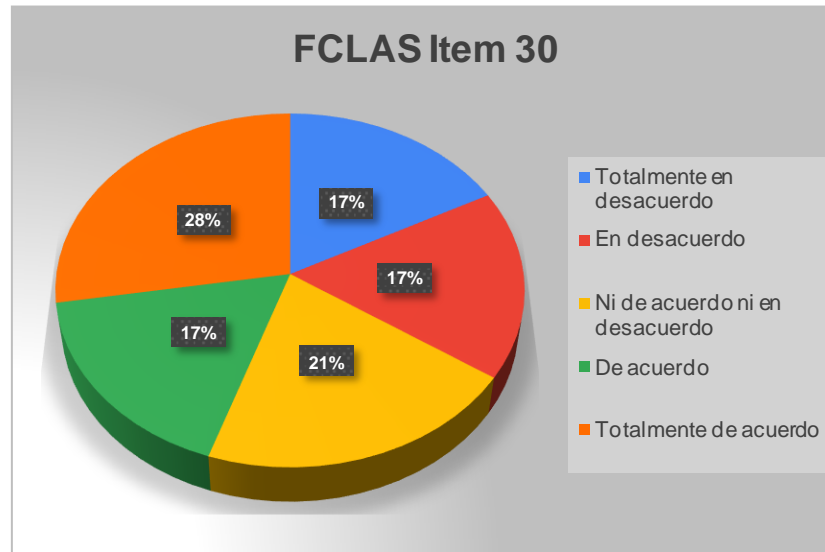
FCLAS Item 4: Me asusta el hecho de no entender lo que la profesora está diciendo en inglés en la clase de inglés.



Last but not least, there was a 27,6% that agreed that they feel afraid that the other students will laugh at them when they speak English. (See figure 9 below)

Figure 9

FCLAS Item 30: Me siento temeroso(a) de que mis compañeros se burle de mi cuando hablo en inglés en la clase de inglés.



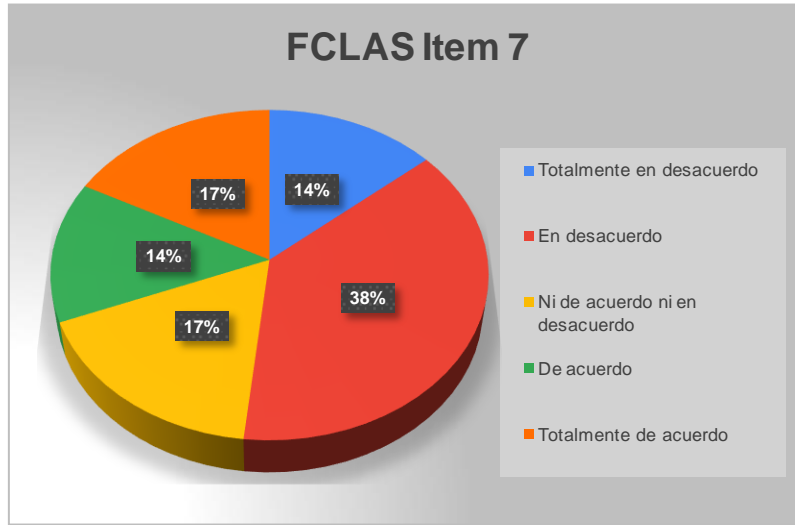
In line with these results, Horwitz (2002) in Pawlak et al. (2011) defined this kind of anxiety as one experienced in interpersonal communicative settings. It is in the classroom where the learners can interact with others to generate communication, in this case, showing their partners and teacher what they can and cannot do orally with the foreign language. Daly (1991) in Pawlak et al. (2011) refers to this anxiety as the level of fear associated with real or anticipated communicative outcomes with another person or group of people or 'the fear or anxiety an individual feels about orally communicating'. Also, according to Horwitz, et al., (1986) in Karabiyik and Özkan, (2017). Communication apprehension is the angst about oral communication and manifests in learning situations as difficulty in transmitting or comprehending an oral message. It is common to see in the foreign language class, some activities in which students are asked to give short speeches or presentations to show what they have learnt; most of them do not feel completely confident of their process and performance and feel reluctant to use the language. Their behavior changes and they act bashfully and avoid being part of communicative situations where they are exposed to others. Students do not even try to create a

little piece of communication because they are afraid of making mistakes in the foreign language class. Second language learners have the dual task not only of learning the target language but of performing in it (Mak and White, 1997). This type of anxiety not only affects the learners' cognitive process but also deals with their own self-esteem and personal relationships, interests, likes and dislikes. The impact of communication apprehension on language anxiety has to do with a fear of making mistakes, intense feelings of self-consciousness or a desire to be perfect when speaking (Pawlak et al.,2011).

Test anxiety is the third domain the scale measures. There were some results that revealed that students experience this type of anxiety. A 37.9% of students say they do not feel at ease during tests in their English class (See figure 10 below).

Figure 10

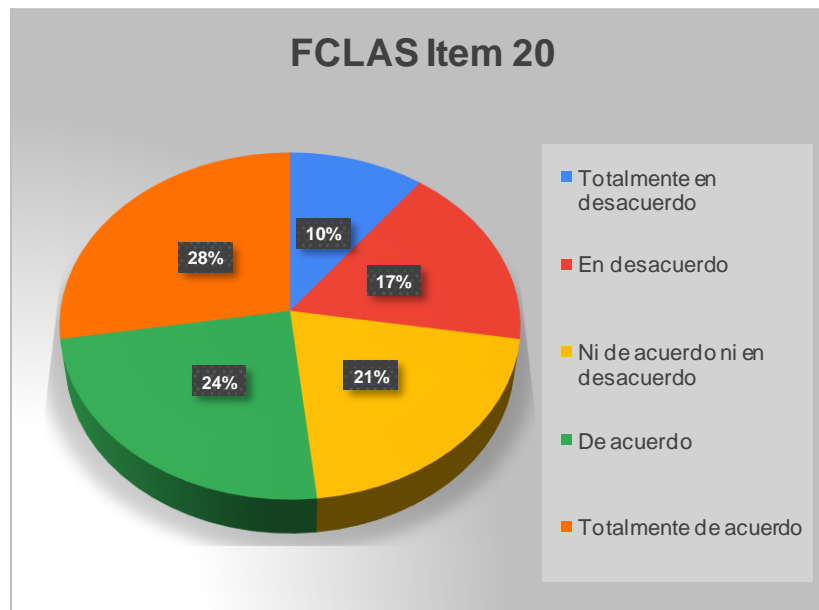
FCLAS Item 7: Usualmente me siento a gusto durante las evaluaciones o quizzes que se hacen en la clase de inglés.



Finally, a 27.6% expressed that the more they study for an English test, the more confused they get.

Figure 11

FCLAS Item 20: Cuanto más estudio para una evaluación, más confundido me siento.



Test anxiety pushes an individual to react to threatening situations with psychological, physiological, and behavioral response that are sometimes debilitating (Zohar, 1998). In line with this, test anxiety is usually connected with emotional reactions accompanying situations where one's performance (e.g., speaking) is being measured or assessed, McDonald (2001) in Pawlak, Waniek-Klimczak, and Majer, (2011). For Horwitz, et al. (1986), this anxiety refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure. Sarason (1978) in Aida (1994) defines it as the tendency to view with alarm the consequences of inadequate performance in an evaluative situation. As a result, students who are test-anxious in foreign language class probably experience considerable difficulty since tests and quizzes are frequent, and even the brightest and most prepared students often make errors. According to Horwitz et.al (1986) in Zhiping & Paramasivam (2013) students who experience test anxiety are those who do not use English as an opportunity to communicate but a testing situation. The aforementioned descriptions indicate that the learner stops considering the process of communicating in the foreign language as an opportunity to learn and interact with others in the classroom setting and are most of the times overthinking about their weaknesses and worry about how their performance will be judged not only by their teacher but also by their classmates.

4. Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, it is necessary to define four theoretical constructs: the speaking skill, the communicative approach to foreign language learning, the foreign language anxiety when performing orally and anxiety-reducing strategies. In each of the following sections, there will be an explanation about what these concepts are based on.

4.1. The speaking skill

Speaking in a language other than ours is anything but simple (Nunan, 2003). As claimed by Rao (2019) among the four key language skills, speaking is deemed to be the most important skill in learning a foreign or second language. Brown and Yuke (1983) cited in Rao (2019) say, "Speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real life situations". As stated by Hughes (2011), the human voice and the faculty of speech are inherently bound up with the projection of the self into the world. Human beings, since they are born, are undoubtedly attached to the ability to communicate, either with sounds, gestures, symbols, or words. This ability to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings is what makes them start building a society and identify them as individuals who are members of a community with their own culture. Nunan (2003) as cited in Bailey, K. M. (2003) has defined speaking as the productive aural /oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. For Chaney, 1998, cited in Kayi, H. (2006) speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts". Therefore, meaning is constructed thanks to the exchange of gestures, words, and sounds in any particular context. These researchers conclude that one crucial component of speaking is context. This one may vary, of course, but the purpose of sharing ideas, producing sounds, expressing likes or dislikes, feelings, and other human manifestations become a reality in any particular situation.

Brown (1994) and Joyce (1997) cited in Leong (2017), defined speaking as an interactive process of making meaning that includes producing, receiving, and processing information. Also, they argue that the context plays an important role because not only the form and meaning depend on it, but also other elements such as the participants, their experiences, and its purpose. Florez

(1999) cited in Zyoud (2016) manifested that speaking is one of the most important skills to be developed and enhanced as means of effective communication. Users of the language are speakers and listeners at the same time, so the act of communicating is an act on interacting. For Nunan (1995) cited in Leong (2017) speaking is a skill which is worthy of attention in both first and second language. Learning the speaking skill is the most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language and success is measured based on the ability to perform a conversation in the language.

According to Burns and Seidlhofer (2010) cited in Pawlak et. al (2011) point out that ‘(...) learning speaking, whether in a first or other language, involves developing subtle and detailed knowledge about why, how, when to communicate, and complex skills for producing and managing interaction, such as asking a question or obtaining a turn are needed’. Such difficulties, in turn, inevitably create a number of problems for teachers, particularly those in foreign language settings, as they have to produce in their classroom’s optimal conditions for the acquisition of all the components of the skill of speaking as well as ample opportunities for contextualized, meaningful, and integrated practice in using it. Speaking demonstrates a complete knowledge of a language. Nowicka and Wilczynska in (Pawlak, 2011). Moreover, for researchers it is described as a complex and multilevel skill, Djigunovic (2006). One of the reasons why speaking is considered this way is because users have to appeal to the knowledge they have of the language and activate their ability to use it considering their own limitations.

Social actions like cooperation and interaction play an important role in this process. Speaking is an activity that conveys social relationships, interpersonal skills, defines people’s

culture and identity; it is cooperatively constructed which is based on contributions, assumptions, expectations, and interpretations of the participant's utterances (Gumpertz, 1999 cited in Nazara, 2011).

4.1.1. Formal speaking. For the purpose of this study, it is necessary to define what formal speaking refers to. For Biber (1989) as cited in Nation, (2009) it represents a new use of English that requires the learners to focus on language items that are not as well as represented in other uses of language. In addition, it requires control of content, awareness of a largely passive audience and being the focus of attention. The learners have to use language under difficult and demanding circumstances (Nation, 2009).

First, Nation and Newton in their book *Teaching ESL and EFL Listening and Speaking* (2009) point out that some researchers explain that learners will not be able to speak until they are pushed to. According to Biber (1989) and Swain (2005), learners can comprehend input without paying special attention to grammar. This process changes if learners are asked to produce output. Some tasks demand learners to include more use of grammatical structures and other words. These tasks can ask the learner to talk about unknown topics, situations where learners are expected to perform in high standards, speaking without any preparation time or planning, and formal situations where they do not have the opportunity to have others' interactive support. These conditions show another stage of speaking. Knowledge of more vocabulary and different structures is required at this point. Also, in these formal situations, learners are exposed and asked to use the language because a necessity is created.

Brown (1981) as cited in Nation (2009) stated that formal speaking is transactional, it involves taking long turns, it is also influenced by written language. Additionally, the speaker

needs to be careful with style and the kind of language needed has to be taught because it is not part of the language repertoire. Also, formal speaking is affected by all the performance conditions as follows: *planning, time pressure, support, and standard of performance* (Nation, 2009).

4.1.1.1. Planning. This is related to the opportunity students have to prepare their task before it is performed, including time to think about the given topic, about what they are going to say, taking short notes about that topic. The effects of planning can be seen in aspects such as fluency, grammatical structures (complexity and accuracy). Something positive about giving learners time to prepare is that there are more possibilities of success.

4.1.1.2. Time pressure. According to Yuan and Ellis (2003) cited in (Nation, 2009) pre-task planning and on-line planning are the second outstanding performance conditions influencing learners. On-line planning demands paying special attention to turning ideas into speech while the learners speak, having better results on accuracy. On the other hand, pre-task planning is giving the learners more opportunity to focus on the range of ideas to cover and organization of these and allows them to access both their implicit and explicit grammatical knowledge which increases the quality of their speech.

4.1.1.3. Amount of support. This aspect of formal speaking refers to supported or guided talks that permit the learners to have beneficial conditions for oral production. Having patient, understanding, sympathetic and supporting listeners is the best way to achieve speech. It is necessary to train the listener with supportive listening strategies than will help the speakers to be more successful in their oral performance.

4.1.1.4. Standard of performance. This is the fourth relevant condition that affects speaking. Learners' pressure will increase because of two factors: having to speak in public and the judgement they will receive on how well they performed.

4.2. The Communicative Competence Approach

The Communicative Competence approach has its own singular and well-known history in the development of the language learning. According to the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, *the Communicative approach in foreign or second language teaching emphasizes that the goal of language learning is communicative competence and seeks to make meaningful communication and language use a focus of all classroom activities.* The communicative approach was developed particularly by British applied linguists in the 1980s against the traditional grammar-based approaches such as situational language teaching. For Littlewood (1981) communication is a two-sided process; communication is functional, rather than structural. It needs structures and patterns, but the final goal is to convey meaning, to interact and establish relationships between the users of the language.

In line with the sources and theorists above, the Communicative Competence has the following features that need to be considered to foster the foreign language process in the classroom environment:

1. Language is used to communicate.
2. Authenticity and meaning should be the main purpose in the classroom activities.

3. Fluency and accuracy are both important goals in language learning, but they cannot determine the act of communication.
4. Communication integrates the development of different language skills.
5. When learning how to communicate, creation and construction are part of the process that entails trial and error.

The two more significant models of communication that explained the theory of language were the *Linguistic Competence* by Chomsky, (1957) and the theory of *Communicative Competence* proposed by the sociolinguistic Hymes (1972). The last tried to explain how the knowledge of language rules and its understanding can be used to produce appropriate language in a variety of sociocultural settings. He was also interested in the social and cultural knowledge which speakers need to understand by using linguistic forms in order to interact in any given social situation. His view, therefore, encompassed not only knowledge but also ability to put that knowledge into use in communication (Hedge 2000) cited in Choudhury (2006). For natural communicative situation, students must be given opportunities in the classroom to interact with the teacher and peers by discussion, asking questions, conversing, among others.

These two models argue that language requires both grammatical and functional use that enable the learner to act and interact in any given context. Foreign language learners need opportunities to being exposed to situations where the emphasis is on using their available resources for communicating meanings efficiently and economically as possible. According to this situation, grammatical accuracy may be given a second place to create effective communication,

making use of strategies and linguistic aspects in any given scenario. It is to say: function over structure.

Teachers started talking about communication by stating four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Communication per se is no longer seen as an act of receiving and keeping information; now, it is more an interchange of ideas, the negotiation between the participants looking for spaces to create meaning and convey information. The communicative competences needed for participation includes not only grammatical competence but pragmatic competence. Communicative competence can be characterized by means of manifestation, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning in communication (Jeong, 2018). Development of communicative skills can only take place if learners are motivated and take advantages of opportunities to express their own identity and to relate with people around them (Littlewood, 1981). This means that the learners' surroundings should provide them with a friendly and positive atmosphere to make them feel aware of their abilities and disabilities in the process of learning and that their partners and teacher will not intend to underestimate their process. Every learner in the classroom has its own identity and this must be the cornerstone to promote the coexistence of individuals and creation of interpersonal supporting and collaborative relationships.

4.2.1. Savignon's model of communicative competence.

This model defines *competence* in terms of the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning and looks to both psycholinguistic and sociocultural perspectives in second language acquisition (SLA) research to account for its development (Savignon 1972, 1997). In her research

project, Sandra Savignon (1972) concluded that the well-known common expression “*communicative competence*” was the ability classroom language learners have to interact with other speakers, to make meaning different from the repetition of language patterns of grammatical knowledge. In this way, learners will be encouraged to ask for information, seek for clarification and whatever linguistic or nonlinguistic means either for negotiating meaning or completing the required task. These are what she defines as “coping strategies.”

4.2.2. Canale and Swain’s model of communicative competence

Canale and Swain (1980) cited in Fulcher & Davidson (2007) defined *communicative competence* as a “more useful and effective second language teaching that allows more valid and reliable measurement of second language communication skills” (p. 38). This model identified three different kinds of competences: *grammatical competence*, which refers to the knowledge of grammar, lexis, morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology; *strategic competence*, describes the knowledge of how to overcome problems when faced with difficulties in communication and *sociolinguistic competence*, which describes the knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language use and rules of discourse.

This model suffered different changes because of its limitations in the ability to use language in its whole function. Then, Canale (1981) changed “performance” for “actual communication” defined as the “the realization of such knowledge and skill under limiting psychological and environmental conditions” (Fulcher, 2007). Understanding this, Canale wanted to incorporate that knowledge of language with the skill of using it in any context under any

external circumstance in order to create interaction. What is more, Canale also made other changes in the different kinds of competence, such as the inclusion of strategic competence, which has to do with compensatory strategies in conversational settings, among others (Jeong, 2018).

4.2.3. Bachman's model of communicative language ability (CLA)

This model establishes two differences from the earlier model of Canale and Swain (1981). The first is the distinction between “*knowledge*” and “*skill*”. The second is the attempt to characterize the process in which all the components interact with each other in the context where the language occurs (Bachman, 1990). For him, there are three components of CLA: *language competence* (knowledge); *strategic competence* (the ‘capacity for implementing the components of language competence in contextualized communicative language use ‘and *psychophysiological mechanisms*, which enable ‘the actual execution of language as a physical phenomenon’ (Fulcher, 2007).

Then, in 1990, this model was restructured in Bachman and Palmer (1996). The most relevant changes are the ones McNamara (1996) and Celce –Murcia (1995) underlines, which are the introduction of affective factors in language use, topical knowledge, and metacognitive strategies. The most notorious change is the relationship that affective factors have with the topical knowledge. This refers to the relationship or connection the learner establishes with a task and if this happens, that will determine if that individual will be committed and interested to it. Finally, the other improvement made to the Canale and Swain’s model was the strategic competence, which now is intended to include all the metacognitive strategies or “high-order processes” that explain the interaction of the knowledge and the affective factors of the language.

4.2.4. Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's model of communicative competence

The model proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) consists of five main components, which are *discourse competence*, *actional competence*, *socio cultural competence*, *linguistic competence*, and *strategic competence*.

Other generalities underlying from this model is that there is no difference in the definition of topical knowledge or affective factors. It is said that this model is more specific about what each competence contains and emphasizes that the most meaningful point is that the one of the strategic competences which gives the individual the required tools to act and respond in the context he/she is in, enable him/her to use the components and subcomponents of the competence.

All these approaches have suffered different transformations or improvements due to the functions they have had in the development of communicative competence. Teachers have been trying to enhance the way the communication takes place in the classroom. Nowadays, teaching a foreign language is more dynamic, real, sincere and with a sense of progress and commitment. Teachers can provide students with the tools they need to make language the means of communication, but it is useless just to learn rules and complex grammar constructs without putting them in real contexts. In summary, what the Communicative Competence approach proposes is to allow learners to construct communication using all the available linguistic and non-linguistic resources.

4.3. Anxiety when performing orally

Anxiety is complicated, multidimensional, and crucial for FLL as well since there are many affective variables in Foreign Language Learning (FLL) process. It is not an objective but subjective feeling of stress and dread which occurs especially during second or FL learning process such as listening, studying, writing, and speaking (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1993) cited in Afrianti & Afna (2020). Anxiety is one of those factors that has been associated with students' bad performance when they have to use the foreign language orally.

Accordingly, this well-known phenomenon has been defined for many researchers in terms of language teaching and learning. (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011) as cited in (Pawlak, 2011) has described anxiety as an emotion often produced in response to stress, a normal reaction like anger or joy. Its task is to prepare the individual for action in dangerous situations. For Pekrun (1992) it is as a socio-psycho-biologic phenomenon experienced as a foreboding dread or threat resulting from the individual's appraisal of a situation and their capacity to deal with it. In addition, Spielberger (1983) cited in Piechurska-Kuciel (2011) defined anxiety as the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system.

Scovel (1991) as cited in Kráľová (2016) further states, that "anxiety is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object". Anxiety is a normal part of life when it is occasional and temporary but can become pathological or a disorder when it is frequent or chronic and begins

to interfere with daily activities such as work, school, and relationships (Mah, Szabuniewicz & Fiocco, 2016 cited in Oflaz, 2019). Budak (2000) cited in Oflaz (2019) states that anxiety can be defined as a state of uneasiness or irrational fear in the human being as a reflection of the fear of any danger. He makes a distinction between anxiety and fear because he argues that the fear is clear whereas the anxiety is objectless. In educational research, anxiety is usually classified as being *trait* or *state*.

4.3.1. State anxiety.

Novy and Nelson (1995) cited in Piechurska-Kuciel (2011) define *state anxiety* as a transitory condition of unpleasant, consciously perceived feelings of tension, apprehension and nervousness that vary in intensity and fluctuate in time as a reaction to circumstances perceived as threatening. Moreover, Spielberger (1966) states that state anxiety indicates subjective and conscious feelings of apprehension and tension accompanied by stimulation or activation of the autonomous nervous system. Physiological responses appear at this level and one of the body's most important systems reacts in order to show that something is happening, and that any reaction needs to be given. Wilt, et al. (2011) cited in Oflaz (2019) defines state anxiety as the level of anxiety over a relatively short period, which can be measured in seconds, minutes, and hours. Research shows that state anxiety is a transient reaction with some attitudes of tension and stage fright that can change according to the circumstance and can become more intense and vary due to threatening perception from the learners. Speaking a foreign language in front of the class or being part of an oral activity in which the learner is exposed to the others and his/her abilities in

the language will be assessed are definitely some situations in which this type of anxiety can be triggered.

4.3.2. Situation-specific anxiety

Adan Oflaz (2019) in his study “The Effects of Anxiety, Shyness and Language Learning Strategies on Speaking Skills and Academic Achievement, cites MacIntyre (1999) when he explains that situation-specific anxiety involves the human being who is affected by a specific situation or event over time. Afrianti & Afna (2020) claim that situation-specific anxiety can be the probability of becoming anxious in a particular type of situation, such as during tests (test anxiety), when solving mathematics problems (math anxiety), or when speaking a second language (language anxiety). This anxiety occurs when the student speaks to a foreign person in a foreign language or participates in classroom activities and oral exams in a foreign language. Likewise, Ellis (1994) cited in Piechurska-Kuciel (2011) determines that situation-specific anxiety signifies a stable trait that defines the likelihood of becoming anxious in particular situations or a single context, such as public speaking, testing, or driving.

4.3.2. Trait anxiety

On the other hand, for Spielberger (1966) cited in Pawlak, Waniek-Klimczak, and Majer, (2011), trait anxiety refers to a motif or acquired behavioral disposition a human perceives a wide variety of objectively unthreatening situations as threatening, causing their disproportional overreaction to such situations. Trait anxiety is viewed as an individual’s predisposition to be

anxious; it is to say that it is related to the personality. It can be evidenced by the following aspects: an inclination of timid reactions to situations, it is stable in time and essentially invariable. Nerlicki (2011) in Pawlak, Waniek-Klimczak and Majer, (2011) argues that people with a high level of trait anxiety tend to get anxious in various situations.

4.3.3. Foreign Language anxiety

Yet, there have been some considerable studies who have devoted some time to research this kind of anxiety which is directly associated with the foreign language learning. These studies began as early as the late 1960s and developed during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s (Pawlak, Waniek-Klimczak and Majer, 2011). To start with, Horwitz (1991) cited in Xianping (2004) established that language anxiety is a state of apprehension occurring in the process of a second/foreign language, which can be understood as the user's incompetence in communication with the language. It is a compound of variables such as individual self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that become apparent in particular development of the learning process. It is 'a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process', stressing the importance of the formal language learning context for producing self-centered thoughts, feelings of inadequacy and fear of failure (Horwitz et al.,1986) cited in Piechurska-Kuciel, (2011).

Moreover, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) cited in Oflaz (2019) defined language anxiety as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning. Foreign language anxiety may also be seen as 'the

worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language. This phenomenon takes place in the context of the classroom, where different variables converge in the normal development of the process. It is remarkable to consider that this tension or apprehension arises from the necessity to learn and use the foreign language that unfortunately has not been mastered yet. Within this distinction, Horwitz et al. (1986) discriminated three interrelated performance types of anxieties: *communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation* (Rodríguez and Abreu, 2003 cited in Subasi, 2010).

Horwitz and Young (1991) cited in (Pawlak, Waniek-Klimczak and Majer, 2011) suggested that the most anxiety provoking situation is speaking in front of peers and teachers and also concluded that the classroom environment makes it difficult to develop this skill. According to Horwitz et al. (1986) learners who fail to learn how to speak in a second/foreign language, in spite of successful acquisition of other skills, often complain of having a ‘mental block’. It is in this moment when all the anxiety signs become evident, and the oral performance is influenced negatively. Learners are not able to produce orally; tension affects their previous knowledge, and the results are not what they would expect, even if they know and have prepared any piece of oral production.

In agreement with MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) cited in Alrabai (2015) the anxious FL learner is ‘an individual who perceives the L2 as an uncomfortable experience, who withdraws from voluntary participation, who feels social pressures not to make mistakes and who is less willing to try uncertain or novel linguistic forms.’

Researchers have identified five different characteristics of anxiety-provoking situations (Daly & Buss, 1984; Richmond & McCroskey, cited in Daly, 1991.p.3-13).

Figure 12

Anxiety-producing situations diagram.



Three common causes/sources of anxiety found in EFL learners are: fear of not sounding as good as their peers in the EFL learning class, which leads them to “communication apprehension”, “fear of being evaluated by someone else or “negative evaluation”, and “test anxiety” Horwitz et al (1986) as cited in Zrekat, Abu Bakar, Latif (2016), pp,188-202).

Foreign language anxiety has three distinct types of anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986) cited in Alrabai, (2015). These are: *communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.*

4.3.4. Fear of negative evaluation

The third type of foreign language anxiety is fear of negative evaluation, also known as social-evaluative anxiety. It is defined as apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively (Horwitz, 1986). Moreover, it is the anxiety that describes how incapable learners are to produce a proper social impression to their classmates in the classroom environment. Zhiping and Paramasivam (2013) state that those students who experience fear of negative evaluation do not accept their language difficulties as part of the learning process, instead, they see they are a threat for themselves. As a result, they prefer not to take part in the development of the class procedures.

Learners' pressure not only dwells on the purpose of being successful in the foreign language but also on the idea of having their peers' judgement about how well the language is used. This situation may have unfavorable effects on the learners' performance. It is an uncomfortable moment for every individual; nobody likes to be on the spot when the activity requires trying and being fluent and accurate in the foreign language. In addition, being aware of the peer's appreciations in terms of the output production they show is another factor that inhibits the oral outcome. In a foreign language class, where evaluations occur continually, learners can be acutely sensitive to the evaluations of their peers and teachers (Kao, 2013).

To summarize, it is evident that these three manifestations of anxiety have a debilitating effect on the learner's spoken outcome. All of them are interrelated in the way that not only the process but also the act of communication fails at some point. Sensitive aspects such as the self-

image, self-efficacy and how the other agents of the communicative event which are the teacher and classmates see the learner, are a manifestation of the anxiety components and how fragile this issue can be in the classroom setting.

4.3.5. Communication apprehension

Horwitz et al. (1986) defined communication apprehension as a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people. Difficulty in speaking in pairs or groups (oral communication anxiety) or in public ("stage fright"), or in listening to or learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety) are all manifestations of communication apprehension. McCroskey (1978) cited in Young (1990) describes communication apprehension as the level of fear or anxiety an individual has related to a real or anticipated oral communication with one person or more people.

The impact of communication apprehension on language anxiety refers to a fear of making mistakes, intense feelings of self-consciousness or a desire to be perfect when speaking, Nerlicki, (2011). In the classroom, learners who experience this kind of anxiety, prefer not to be involved in the oral activities where they are exposed to the language, because having the teacher and classmates witness their oral performance can be seen as a threatening situation. People who suffer from comprehension apprehension, avoid interaction where they are asked to use the L2. Communication apprehension probably results from a number of other sources, including strict upbringing and education, lack of communication skills, and imitating others, (Smejkalová, Smejkal, Juráčková, 2017). Also, Young (1990) argued that students generally become anxious when they have to use a foreign language in front of others.

This feeling of being scared about interacting orally in a given task in the foreign language is what some learners experience in repeated situations; in their own perceptions, the idea that always remains is failure in whatever they may be asked to do. The classroom is the environment that inhibits the normal performance of the foreign language users. The sensation of being observed while they have to answer a teacher's questions, to take part in an individual or group activity or just to be an active part in the ordinary class development, enhances the possibility of uneasiness and uncertainty of what the output in the target language should be. In line with this, communication fails; functional language is deprived, in all manners, the learner is not able to use what he /she has built along the process of constructing the L2. Fear and tension become evident and as a result, communication is not effective.

4.3.6. Test anxiety

Zohar (1998) cited in Pawlak et. al (2011) defined this kind of language anxiety as 'a situation-specific form of trait anxiety' that pushes an individual to react to threatening situations with psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses that are sometimes debilitating, it is to say, that negatively affect the oral performance of the learner. As a result, this anxiety can be related to emotional reactions manifested especially in speaking situations that are assessed. In line with this, test anxiety has also been related to any manifestation of fear or failure in terms of performance, where two major agents have a direct impact: the teacher and classmates. Anxious learners will be always expecting to obtain great results in their tests, and anything less than perfect

will be considered a failure (Horwitz, 1986). In the light of this, oral tests have the potential of provoking both test- and oral communication anxiety simultaneously in susceptible students. There are other researchers who claim that test anxiety is seen as a handicap and source of interference with task performance (Sarason, 1958; Sarason & Sarason, 1990 cited in Chu, 2008). Other negative effects that can be observed in test anxiety are panic of making mistakes, strong feelings of embarrassment, or the hope to make no mistakes when spoken performance is about.

In all, test anxiety presents a more exposed learner as an individual in the process of constructing the language. It deals with the social dynamics of the learner inside the classroom setting. Moreover, test anxiety is occurring when the learner has to show how the process has been made not only inside but outside the classroom, where it is supposed all the evaluating activities become a usual part of the learning process. Education has taught us that the word “test” has a negative connotation; it immediately suggests that the presence of the teacher inhibits the learner to take part of oral activities and mistakes will declare little or no knowledge of the target language. His /her feelings and emotions are negatively affected by this uncomfortable moment when the learner is open to critics and opinions about his/her oral intervention. Becoming the center of attention during the development of the class activities has an intense sense of nervousness and tension; these dynamics produce no less than insecurity and uneasiness in the learners.

4.3.7. Anxiety reducing strategies

Theorists have also tried to come up with strategies that help diminish the anxiety levels of the students in the classroom environment. To begin with, in the light of having a clear definition

of what a learning strategy is, the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, has defined strategies as procedures used in learning, thinking, etc., which serve as a way of reaching a goal. In language learning, learning strategies and communication strategies are those conscious or unconscious processes which language learners make use of in learning and using a language. Oxford (1990) cited in Oflaz (2019) stated that language learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. For Wenden (1991) cited in Oflaz (2019), it is mental steps or operations that learners use to learn a new language and to regulate their efforts to do so.

Oxford (1990) cited in Oflaz (2019) divides language learning strategies into two main categories: direct and indirect strategies. These two categories include six groups. Direct strategies (memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies) apply skills for learning of new words and the recall of information contained in memory and include suggestions that involve direct control of language. Indirect strategies (metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies) aim to regulate language learning process and permit learners to plan and evaluate their own foreign language learning.

Taking this into account, for the matter of this paper, the kind of strategies that will be considered will be those who have been implemented in the classroom to help learners reduce their foreign language anxiety levels: *cognitive, behavioral, and anxiety-reducing strategies*. Kondo (2004) states that *cognitive strategies* declared that disturbances in the classroom setting are the ones that are responsible for the manifestations of anxiety. Some of these strategies are *rational-emotive therapy*, which deals with those irrational beliefs learners have about using the foreign language and how to manage them. *Cognitive restructuring* are the ones that learners should use

in order to change the way they think, turn positive into negative. These are used to help learners deal with irrational beliefs and learn how to manage them. The *affective strategies* are the ones that help the learner change the negative involuntary association between the classroom and the anxiety. Some of them are systematic desensitization, relaxation training, and biofeedback training, meaning learning to control some of the body functions.

There is another type of strategies, the *behavioral ones*. They state that the anxiety takes place because of the learner's poor academic skills. To control this, the aim of these strategies is to work on reinforcing study skills learners have when learning the target language. Kondo and Yang (2004) developed systematic group of coping or solving strategies students could use in order to diminish anxiety levels in the classroom settings, especially when they were asked to show their knowledge of the language through their oral outcome (Kondo and Yang, 2004) in Kao and Craigie (2013). They are *preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation*.

The first coping strategy, *preparation*, refers to those strategies that ask the learner to get used to using English, prepare him/her better for tests and work on having good summaries. Using this strategy, learners will be able to expect better results, increase the mastery of the subject and as a result, reduce the anxiety manifestations in the language class. The second strategy is *relaxation*. The target of this is to apply tactics that point at diminishing the somatic anxiety symptoms. Including phrases like "I take a deep breath" "I try to be relaxed" "Take it easy", students will try to calm down in the class. The third kind of strategy, *positive thinking* aims to suppress those problematic and negative cognitive thoughts that triggers the anxiety and proposes the learner to be confident and use positive words and ideas to enhance the use of the target

language. Including these strategies, the attention goes away from stressful moments and the mind creates positive and satisfying ideas that will ease those anxious learners. The fourth strategy, *peer seeking*, encourages learners who are having difficulties with the L2 and bring support and understanding in order to mitigate those feelings of nervousness and discomfort. When learners are aware that there are others in the same place, this moment allows them social regulation and anxiety decreases, because they will feel identified. The last strategy, *resignation*, corresponds to those situations where the learners avoid facing the problem by doing anything, they just simply ignore and are reluctant to do something to help themselves. Behaviors like sleeping in class, giving up, and ceasing to pay attention to class are typical attitudes of those learners.

On the other hand, Zheng (2008) cited in Alrabai (2015) argued that educators can create appropriate interventions to diminish language anxiety among second/FL learners. The teacher is the most indicated agent to implement those anxiety reducing strategies in order to help learners feel more confident and identified in the classroom environment. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) argued that the teacher holds the major responsibility for reducing learner anxiety by either focusing on the students' anxiety-provoking situation or by establishing a relaxing and less stressful learning atmosphere in the language classroom.

In line with this, Alrabai (2015) denotes that the teacher has a notorious influence in helping students reducing their anxiety levels. In order to achieve this, he implemented the following six strategies in the foreign language classroom:

- *Demonstrating proper behavior to your students*, invites the teacher to show passion and enthusiasm for his profession, which is teaching FL; also, the teacher should

manifest a sense of commitment towards the learners' process and progress, developing positive relationships with the group of learners. This strategy focuses on giving the teacher the opportunity to display respect, connection, and care for the learners.

- *Reducing learners' communication apprehension.* In this case, the aim is to provide learners with opportunities where they can use the L2, giving them the scope to practice before they talk in real situations in the classroom. Moreover, the teacher can identify anxiety-provoking situations if it is the case, for example, speaking in front of the class and generate a solution as soon as possible.
- *Reducing learners' fear of negative evaluation.* Using this strategy, helps the learners focused on learning tasks rather than on the evaluation of their performance, understanding the feedback moment in a formative way, so students can accept that having mistakes is a natural part of the process. The purpose of this strategy is not pointing at all mistake students have in front of the class but learning from them in order to correct them.
- *Reducing learners' fear of negative testing.* As it names indicates, the objective of this strategy is to change students' perceptions about testing. Within the techniques used by the teacher is to make them feel familiarize with instructions they work previously in class, create more opportunities for practicing before real tests, give them more time to answer the questions in the test and explain the criteria that will be considered for grading.
- *Addressing learner anxiety-provoking beliefs and misconceptions*". The aim of this strategy is to involve the learner to identify those anxiety-provoking situations, talk

about them in a comprehensible and realistic way, in order to recognize the source of the difficulties and find a solution.

- *Helping the learners establish specific and realistic goals for learning English*". This one concerns about giving the student the responsibility to set and achieve the objectives of why he/she is learning English by identifying how clear, realistic, and achievable they are. Another aspect of this strategy is relating the curriculum with their individual goals. The teacher has the possibility of helping learners by teaching them how to overcome an obstacle during this process. The teacher acts as a guidance, accompanying the learners build their path in the target language. The last strategy is *"Increasing student's self-confidence"*. The point of this one is to encourage students to be successful, by reinforcing their abilities and skills for learning English. In addition, the teacher will recognize his/her students' efforts and achievements during the process. Support and empathy will characterize the role of the teacher.

5. Methodology

The qualitative approach has been chosen for this research. According to Creswell (2007), this kind of research helps to find information about the central phenomenon explored in the study, the participants, and the research site. The researchers are the ones who observe, listen, and understand what is happening because they are inside the current situation. Qualitative research uses narration instead of numbers and qualitative data analysis to reach conclusions about the research problem (Riazi, 2016).

5.1. Type of study

The present research has taken the design of an action-research study. As Burns (2009) manifested, it is more like a “reflective practice” where the teacher acts like a researcher. Moreover, the Action Research (from now AR) is an exercise that involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your own contexts. The teacher not only teaches, but also researches in her/his classroom because a problematizing situation has been identified and wants to do something in order to improve it and help students to do better in their learning process. For this purpose, the teacher gathers information, or as research has called it, data, to start analyzing the situation in a critical and objective way.

As stated by Carr and Kemmis (1986) in Burns (2009) AR is a ‘self-reflective enquiry’ undertaken by participants in order to understand and improve the situations in which educational practices are carried out. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2010), *action* is what we do, and *research* is how we learn about and explain what you do. The knowledge we obtain is the knowledge of the practice. It has been known that this kind of research is the one used to observe, analyze, and make a change in social and cultural aspects.

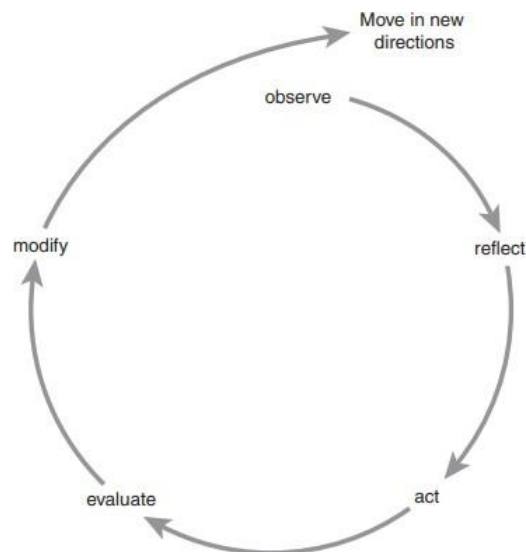
Language teachers all around the world want to be effective teachers who provide the best learning opportunities for their students (Burns, 2010). Moreover, as she states, “action research is a very valuable way to extend our teaching skills and gain more understanding of ourselves as teachers, our classroom and our students.” The aim of an action research is about improving learning for improving practice (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010). Other important purpose of this

kind of research is what contributions should be made in order to make meaningful changes to our practice.

The action research design has been developed by following the guidelines by McNiff and Whitehead (2006). This model is called “action-reflection” They state that this process is conceptualized as a cyclic process, where the steps involve: diagnosing the situation (observe), hypothesizing a treatment (reflect), administering the treatment (act), analyzing the outcome (evaluate), making contributions to theory and practice (modify) and pointing out directions for future research (move in new directions). Below, there is a modified version of what the action process consists of according to Whitehead and McNiff (2009)

Figure 13

Cycle of action research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2009).



5.2. Participants

Students who took part in this project were from ninth grade in the second semester of 2022. They were 38 students from 9-13 between the ages of 13-16 years old. They were 18 boys and 20 girls. These students were selected for this research responding to the researcher's need to implement her didactic sequence. The main reason was because the researcher, who also acted as the non-participant observer, had had more contact, and had observed this group more frequent since the beginning of 2021. Their level of English was very low; they had notorious difficulties in the use of basic structures and vocabulary, which made the communication during the foreign language class more demanding and challenging for the teacher who implemented the didactic sequence. Once they were explained about the project, they were willing to be part of it. It is worthy to mention that only 12 students, chosen for a particular reason, which is described in the data collection section, answered the last instrument which was applied almost at the end of the implementation.

5.3. Setting

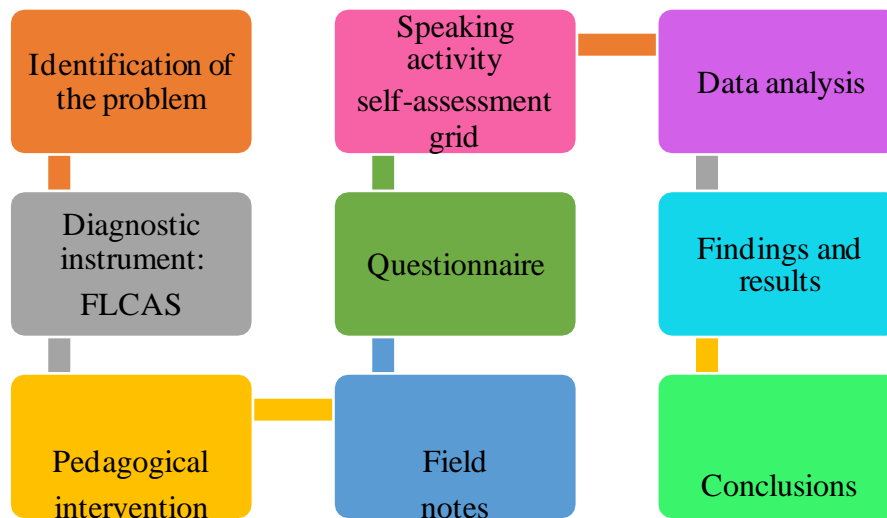
This research was conducted in the *Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata*. This public school was founded on January 20th, 1888, and has been educating children and teenagers for 135 years. Currently, it offers the levels of preschool, basic primary, basic secondary and in tenth grade, male and female students have the opportunity to decide which technical vocational program they want to specialized in. The *Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata* proposes the integral formation of the human being based on ethical, moral, cognitive, cultural values, pedagogical, technical-academic and coexistence processes, that contribute to the personal growth

of the students, developing their intellectual, axiological, and affective faculties. The school is located in “La Universidad” neighborhood, in the area of Bucaramanga, Santander. The number of students the *Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata* holds is 4650 approximately, who belong to low and middle social background. The school is also surrounded by some facilities like stationary stores, small cafeterias, the Alfonso López stadium and the Universidad Industrial of Santander. However, there are some other places and factors which are inadequate for students’ safe development; sometimes there are violence, alcohol, street fights and drug scenes students take part in or witness before and after school time.

As shown below, this diagram gives an account of the steps this research design followed:

Figure 14

Steps of this action research project.



5.4. Data collection instruments

As Burns (2009) said, data collection phase is a moment when you use ‘open-eyed’ and ‘open-minded’ tools to collect information about what is happening. The data collection process that was used to gather the information will be described below.

5.4.1. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

The FLCAS, developed by Elaine Horwitz (1986) is a five-point Likert scale that contains 33 items that measures three types of anxiety: *fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety and communication apprehension*. This scale ranges from “strongly disagree”, to “neither agree nor disagree”, to “strongly agree” (Aida, 1994) This was the first instrument the researcher applied to students right before the beginning of the implementation. The researcher used an Excel spread sheet format with the 33 items. It is necessary to mention that this scale was originally created in English, but for the sake of the research, it was translated to Spanish, so there were no misunderstandings when students were answering.

5.4.2. Field notes.

For Zaare (2013) observations are a very significant instrument for the researcher to gather data not only for the reflection on the area of concern (Wajnryb, 1992; Wallace, 1991) but also because they allow to study the processes of education in a naturalistic setting; also, they provide more detailed and precise evidence than other data sources. Therefore, they are appropriate to utilize in order to observe the classroom and what goes on in it for the purpose of continued learning and exploration. In the light of this, the researcher accompanied the teacher in charge of

implementing and observed a total of eight full lessons from September 14th to October 5th, 2022. It is worthy to say that this data collection process was permanent from the beginning to the end of the pedagogical intervention.

5.4.3. Self- assessment spoken question.

This was the second instrument the researcher applied when the didactic sequence had already started. This was used after an oral task; in pairs, students had to present a role-play about a communication situation in a shop: one of them was the customer and the other was the client. Students were asked to recreate the dialogue in pairs. Since it was the first formal assessment moment, they were given an open question that asked students about how their experience was during this speaking activity. It is worthy to mention that this instrument was applied in Spanish to avoid any kind of misunderstandings.

5.4.4. Questionnaire.

Burns (2009) says that it is best to use a questionnaire rather than interviews, when you want to get responses from several people, and you don't have time to interview. According to Dörnyei (2003) cited in Burns (2009) there are three kinds of information the researcher can obtain from students: factual or demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal. This was the third and last instrument the researcher applied, almost at the end of the pedagogical implementation. On this matter, it is pertinent to state that twelve out of thirty-two participants answered this open-end questionnaire. They were strategically chosen responding to the purpose the researcher had at that time: six of them were students whose attitude, participation, commitment to his/her own process,

spoken performance and level of English was satisfactory. The remaining six were the opposite; they were not interested in the classes; their grades and participation were very low, their improvement was not evident, their spoken performance had not shown positive or different results than the beginning and their English level was not very good.

5.5. Data analysis techniques

After having collected all the information found in each of the three instruments (questionnaire, self-assessment spoken question, and field notes), it was necessary to organize it and divide it by memos. According to Baskerville & Pries-Heje (1999) *memos* are short notes that contain the coding products, summary notes, direction for further work; they are also records of concepts that are potentially sensitive in possible theories or story lines. The questionnaire had seven questions; each memo had one question with the answers of the 12 participants. So, there were seven memos. As for the field notes, there were eight in total, corresponding to the eight weeks of the didactic sequence. The data was organized by weeks, so one memo per two lessons, there were 4 memos in all. Finally, the information from the self-assessment spoken question was organized in one memo with the answers of 32 from 9-13. Subsequently, the color-coding technique was used, which helped to identify categories and subcategories from repetitive information found in the memos. Each of these categories and subcategories were assigned one color. Then, a summary of each question was created to finally contrast and analyze this data with the theory previously mentioned in the theoretical framework.

5.6. Ethical considerations

Considering this project was carried out with human beings, it is of great deal to make sure the research participants should not be subjected to harm in any ways. In order to address ethical considerations in an effective way, this research project is supported by the CEINCI UIS (Ethics and Scientific Research Committee). First, participants were told about the project and. Right after that, and prior the first step of the project, the Principal of the school and participants' parents were sent a consent letter form to ensure their agreement and participation at school. Also, participants' names were not published in this research project in order to respect their dignity and privacy as a prioritized matter. From the beginning to the end, participants' data were treated under an adequate level of confidentiality. The didactic sequence and filed notes related to the class observations were all done inside the classroom, respecting the academic context the research project demanded. In short, all the collected data and findings were treated with honesty and transparency.

6. Pedagogical intervention and didactic sequence

In the following section, the description of the didactic sequence will be presented.

6.1. Didactic sequence

This implementation of the didactic sequence started on September 13th and finished on October 5th. It was part of a unit lesson designed for the grade 9-13 of *Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata* called *How can I manage my spending habits?* This unit lesson was planned to be implemented in 4 weeks. During each week, students were supposed to cover the following topics accordingly:

Table 1

Topics the unit called How can I manage my spending habits?

Week 1		Week 2		Week 3		Week 4	
<i>The power of marketing</i>		<i>Shopping sales</i>		<i>What we buy</i>		<i>A product review</i>	
<i>Lesson 1</i>	<i>Lesson 2</i>	<i>Lesson 3</i>	<i>Lesson 4</i>	<i>Lesson 5</i>	<i>Lesson 6</i>	<i>Lesson 7</i>	<i>Lesson 8</i>

In each of these mini units, students intended to learn vocabulary, grammatical structures, functions, and expressions that can help them understand and interact with their classmates. The main objective of this unit lesson was to raise awareness on consumerist practices in the students. It is necessary to mention that these themes are found in one of the suggested documents the MEN designed in order to develop the communicative competence in the learners. In this document, there can be found 4 different modules for each of the academic school year. In line with this, the name of the aforementioned document is “*Esquema curricular sugerido*”. As its own name indicates, teachers can use this paper as a guide to improve their classroom practices and choose the most suitable material to be taught in class. Some content of the unit lesson included the following: present simple of the verb be and other verbs, some modal verbs such as can, could and would; quantifiers, information questions, past simple and imperatives. Some expressions of functional language such as analyzing messages in an advertisement, describing advertisement messages, asking for advice and questions, giving recommendations among others. In relation to

the lexis content, there were words such as marketing logo, advertisement, places to buy, special offers, adjectives for describing a product, among others.

It is worthy to clarify one more time that the school program has only three hours of English per week. Having said this, English classes were divided into 2 days: one day the foreign class had a duration of 50 minutes and the other day, the class lasted 110 minutes. So, each mini unit consisted of two lessons per week accordingly, but all the topics and activities were related to each other, in the way that they all were part of the next topic and functional and structural items were considered necessary for the next. The narrative of each of the 8 lessons will be presented below.

6.2. Mini unit 1: The power of marketing.

Lesson 1. Tuesday, September 13th. This class lasted 50 minutes. The objective was to learn the parts of a logo and identify some hidden messages. Two grammatical topics were chosen: present simple of the verb be and modal verbs such as can, could and would. Also, the idea to prepare this topic was teaching students to analyze messages in an advertisement and to describe advertisements messages. The purpose was not to work on structural language but also to use every possible vocabulary item and grammatical aspect to help students create pieces of communicative acts in the classroom, interacting with their teacher and classmates.

To start with this 50 minute-period of class, the first activity was the warm-up. A video called "*Guess the logo in 3 seconds*" was presented. Students were asked to guess the name of the

brand or company every time they saw the logo. Students responded really positively to this activity; moreover, they knew more brands than expected, they were very participative and were involved in the activity. Then, students were handed out a worksheet #1 called “*Guess the logo*” with different activities: Activity 0 was to match some popular and worldwide recognized brands with their slogans. In activity 1, they had to match slogans with the types of products. Activity 2 was a listening comprehension exercise in which they had to choose the kind of product they heard from the advertisement. Activity 3 asked students to write the product the ad was about. Due to time constraints and the fact that some students took more time than expected, activities 4 and 5 were assigned as homework.

Figure 15

Video activity: Guess the logo



Note: QUIZ FUN. (2021, October 3). Guess the logo in 3 seconds..! | 100 famous logos | Logo quiz [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IoKOvN0Kmg>

It is worthy to mention that the worksheet was conceived to be an individual classwork per se, but students were always asking their teacher and classmates for help. This made them feel more confident, supported, and included in the dynamics of the class. Some of them used dictionaries to find the meaning of words, but most of them, did not have, so they asked a lot, and their classwork could not be finished. Students got to know other logos different from the ones they have always heard of.

Lesson 2. Wednesday, September 14th. This class lasted 110 minutes. The objective was to design the logo for their products considering all the information needed to promote their product. In this class, students were asked to use the previous grammatical content to create their advertisement and share it to the class. In order to continue with the sequence of the first lesson, the homework about the parts of the logo was checked. As a complementary exercise, the teacher showed an online example of a logo. Some volunteers passed to the board and participated by writing the words in the corresponding place.

Figure 16

Picture: online exercise. A student completing a logo.



The second stage of the class, the main resource students used was a worksheet called “*Steps to create our logo*”. This second worksheet had some specific information and examples of sentences, adjectives, verbs, and nouns in order to promote their product. Later, students worked in groups of four: two of them were in charge of the design of the advert and the other two in the paragraph they had to write following the instructions given by the teacher and the example of the worksheet. Students were assigned some time to get together and organize the information they wanted to share with the rest of the class, including adjectives, nouns and similar structures shown in the worksheet and the design of the logo with all its parts.

This group exercise was thought to provide them with the needed tools to help them produce a draft of their final design. Once again, the teacher’s role was of major relevance; she was helping them by checking and monitoring their process, answering questions, and clarifying doubts, and at the same time, she was guiding them in the creation of their final product, which was first asked to do it in a written way and subsequently, to be shared with the whole class orally. Although this class encouraged students to work in groups and time and guidance was

given, they struggled a lot with the content of it and the comprehension of what they were told to do. There were some new vocabulary sets and since they had no dictionaries, it was not easy to answer all their questions about meaning at the same time.

Figure 17

Picture: students working in groups, creating their logo.



6.3. Mini unit 2: Shopping sales

Lesson 3. Tuesday, September 20th. In this class of 50 minutes, the goal was to recognize some specific vocabulary and expressions used in a dialogue about shopping. To do so, the structural language was focused on three topics: present simple, quantifiers, and information questions; the functional part intended to work on three aspects related to shopping, which were: to identify people's spending, to ask and answer information questions and to describe a request when shopping. During this class, students were told to continue working in their groups of four.

After having corrected the first part of the task, the teacher gave it back so they could continue the process of collective creation of the written part of the project. Also, they were informed that the ad was going to be kept for their final presentation at the end of the unit.

The next part of the class consisted mainly to present more vocabulary and expressions used in different short conversations about shopping. To do so, a third worksheet called “*Shopping*” was used. It had four activities: The first one, was an introductory vocabulary exercise in which they had to match an item to the place it was sold; the second, a listening activity, asked them to listen to five situations and number them as they listened; the third activity was about vocabulary again. It consisted of matching the word and its definition. Since this class was of 50 minutes, homework was assigned: students were told to work on the fourth activity, a short writing in which they had to answer the following questions: “*What kind of products do you like to buy? Where do you buy them?*” This class was reinforcing lexis and functions of the language in terms of how to use this vocabulary in a more contextualized way, more specifically, exchanging information in short situational conversations about shopping. One positive result of this class was that many of them felt more confident when the teacher asked them to read their answers or repeat something. Although it was a short class, there were two major activities and so the class was not boring for them.

Lesson 4. Wednesday, September 21st. This class lasted 110 minutes. This class was the second part of the activities started the day before; the aim of this lesson was teaching students to recognize some specific vocabulary and expressions used in a dialogue about shopping. In this way, the most important part of these activities was to provide them with the necessary tools and

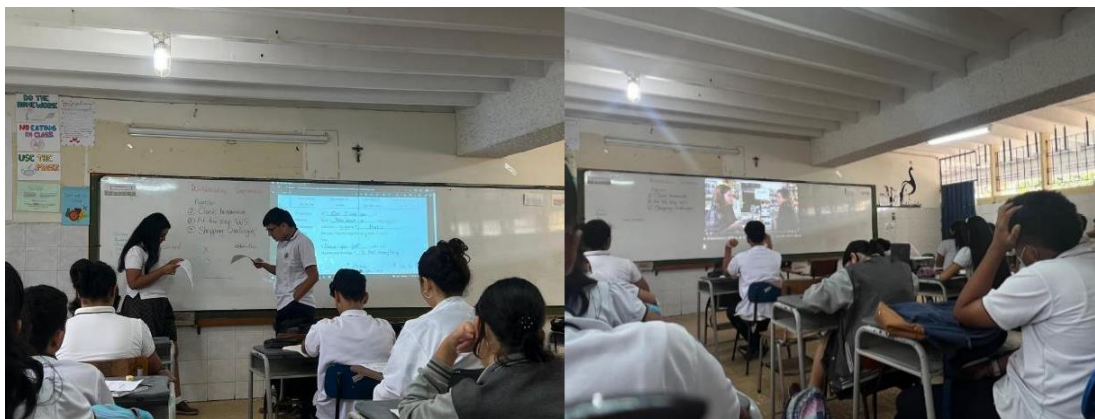
functional language to help them ask and respond in a particular situation, in this case, a short conversation about shopping. As for the structural language, the topics continued being the same: present simple, quantifiers and wh-questions.

The first part of this class was to show students an online conversation called “*At the clothes shop*”. It was divided into two parts: the first had the title of shop assistant and the other customer. Some expressions and questions related to it were also given. Volunteers were asked to pass to the board to put those into the correct place. Then, two different students were asked to read the two roles. Expressions, vocabulary, and grammatical structures were revised once again.

Afterwards, students received worksheet number 4 called “*At the shop*”. This worksheet contained a video activity which showed students a situation that took place in a store. They had six multiple-choice questions based on it. Then, they had two dialogues between two people in a shop. In the first one they had to complete it by choosing the correct expression from a box and then in the second, they had to put the conversation in order. Feedback was given to each of the activities, so students could check and correct their work. After that, they were told they had to practice those 2 conversations because they would be called to do any of them in front of the class. Students were given some time to practice with his/her classmates the two roles: shop assistant and customer. After that, some students were called to stand up and act the situation. This was done to give students the possibility to be the center of attention, to read in front of their classmates, giving them some confidence and support in these kinds of oral activities which usually are not easy to do and for most students are a very stressful moment they prefer not to be part of.

Figure 18

Pictures: students watching the video and recreating the dialogue.



Finally, at the end of the worksheet, students were asked to write any new expression they learned from the video. Right after this task, the teacher told the class to think about an item they wanted to buy and create a conversation in which one of them acted as the shop assistant and the other as the customer, using similar expressions and vocabulary previously studied. This will be presented next class. As homework, they were sent the video they watched in this class, so they had the opportunity to listen to the intonation and the way the dialogue was carried out.

During this class, the teacher's constant monitoring and feedback were evident. Students were engaged with the class and asked the teacher for some clarification of doubts and vocabulary items. Some of them had dictionaries or used their cellphones to find out unknown words, but it was not a major issue because the topic, expressions and structures were presented before. In fact, students seemed to enjoy the role-plays at a certain point, although they were nervous and shy

because they had some difficulties with pronunciation, most of them wanted to do this activity. They showed an improvement of their attitude towards the target language, since they manifested, they felt more confident and comfortable doing this activity.

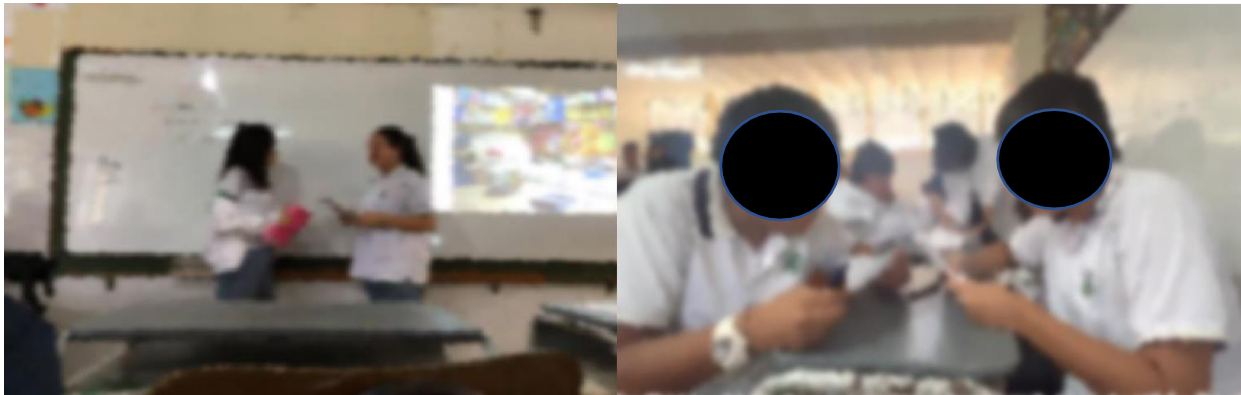
Lesson 5. Tuesday, September 27th. In this 50-minute class, the objective was to use some specific vocabulary and expressions related to shopping, especially when having a short conversation in a shop. The purpose was to evidence how students use structural language and change into situational language where the exchanging and conveying of information was the major point of this sequence. The warm-up activity was about reviewing customer and shop assistant's roles. The students were shown two similar conversions. They had to put in the correct order what each person said. This exercise was an online one, so they passed in front of the board and used the teacher's laptop to drag the expression and put it where it corresponded.

After that, the teacher gave students 10 minutes to get together with their classmate and have some practice before they presented the dialogue they had created last class. One more time, the teacher could check this earlier and give some little correction if needed. Practice time was over, and students had to present their dialogues. They followed the model given and used similar structures and vocabulary in case the dialogue required it. All students were into the activity, and it was noticeable that their previous instruction made a positive effect on these short role-plays: they cared about pronunciation, grammar structures, lexis and tone of voice compared to previous oral activities. They followed instructions and took advantage of previous listening and video activities where they were exposed to the functional language. In order to know more about how they felt doing this activity, the teacher asked them to fill in a short self-assessment grid. Because

of the little time they had before the class was over, they had to do this while their classmates were presenting their role-plays. This was not the most appropriate way to do it, but it had to be done in this class because they could express their feelings immediately considering all the process.

Figure 19

Pictures: students working on the dialogues they wrote.



Finally, students were assigned homework: they were given the worksheet number five called “*Reading comprehension: What’s Black Friday?*”. They had to read and work on activity 1, which consisted of deciding if the provided statements were True or False.

6.4. Mini unit 3: Black Friday

Lesson 6. Wednesday, September 28th. This class was 110 minutes long. The main objectives were to get familiar with the meaning of Black Friday and to identify some practices people have on this day, reflecting on how necessary they are or not. The beginning of the class

was a wordsearch puzzle with 17 words related to the main topic of the class: *Black Friday*. The teacher gave students the wordsearch in a small piece of paper they were told to paste on their notebook. Once they solved it, some of them passed to the board and showed where they found the word.

The next thing was to check the homework they were assigned about the reading found in the worksheet *What's Black Friday?* In order to encourage students' participation, some of them were asked to read the three informative paragraphs they had on their worksheet. Then, some others answered the true or false activity. However, most students did not do the homework. So, this was the first negative issue of this class. The ones who did the homework participated and their answers were corrected. After, the second activity was done. It was a vocabulary section related to the reading. They took some time because these words were not familiar to them. They had to go over the text again and use a dictionary, which was not an easy or enjoyable thing to do, to find the meaning of the words. Having checked this, the second point of the worksheet was done: there were some open questions they had to answer based on their personal experience. It is important to clarify that there were not wrong or right answers, the aim of this was to know their perceptions about when they bought presents and which ones they liked to get. The teacher monitored this activity, checking students' writing and vocabulary they needed to use. Some students shared their answers by reading and even this activity was something short and was used to introduce the next one, they liked to tell the class something they considered personal. Surprisingly, students listened and showed a very nice and respectful attitude to the others.

Subsequently, a video activity was supposed to be done. First, the teacher explained the questions and clarified any unknown vocabulary. Nevertheless, there were some drawbacks and as a result, it was not viable to have the full development of this activity and as a consequence, the expected results were different. The first obstacle was that the video beam did not work. So, the teacher had to leave the class and get another one, which took more than 15 minutes. The nonparticipant observer and researcher had to take over the class to avoid student' loss of focus and continue with the proposed planning activities. Second, the video was not easy to understand; students manifested that the language was not easy to understand, and they could not answer the questions. Third, there was a lot of outdoor noise and because of it, students were unable to concentrate. At that point, when the teacher went question by question, paused the video several times and students tried to answer, the time was over, and the activities were not successfully accomplished. As a result, they were assigned the last four questions of the worksheet they were answering.

It is worthy to mention that at that point, students seemed to be involved and engaged with all the activities; they took chances they did not take before, such as using the target language more often than at the beginning, participating in class voluntarily, passing to the board to write an answer, reading out loud, asking for the correct pronunciation of words, working with their partners more positively, paying attention to the teacher and respecting their classmates, even if they made mistakes.

6.5. Mini unit 4: A product review.

Lesson 7-Tuesday, October 4th. This was the beginning of week 4. At this point, students have learned a certain amount of vocabulary about shopping and some expressions they would use in a similar context. They had been working on structural language the teacher had been trying to include in every planning she had designed. As mentioned before, it was an evident improvement in the way learners used the target language to interact and simulate a particular situational communication scene.

As it was the last and final week of the pedagogical implementation, the purpose of those two lessons was to identify the content and language on a product review. Students had been working in groups and writing a short paragraph in which they had included specific language, vocabulary such as adjectives to describe the quality and efficacy of a product, following a model the teacher gave them before. The grammatical content was present simple, the use of imperatives and modal verbs, particularly, should. The functional language thought for that lesson was helping them to identify what a product review was and the elements it should include.

First, the teacher started by checking the homework students were assigned the previous week. They had the initiative to participate voluntarily and read the answers. The teacher gave feedback and made some comments on what they wrote, considering that they had to watch the video about Black Friday again. It was not an easy homework for them, they expressed, because those kinds of listening activities were not very often and the way the information was delivered, the speed of the speaker and the topic, made this exercise a little hard for them.

The second stage of that class was focused on identifying the most important information of a short product review. So, the teacher showed students two short products reviews, one of a

jacket and the other about a tablet. Once they read them, they had to fill in a chart with the specific information they were asked to. Some time was given and then, some students read their answers and the rest of the class corrected if mistakes were made. Right after that, the teacher asked them to unscramble some words to make two sentences where they used the imperative structure. After this exercise was done, two students passed to the board and wrote their sentences. The aim of this activity was to make students aware of the use of imperative forms because they will use them when they were writing their product review.

Figure 20


Picture of the power point presentation about products review

Read the reviews and complete the categories in the chart.

A WARM JACKET!

by Wayne, October 16
★★★★★


The K-Light Jacket is a great jacket. The jacket is at Tom's Sporting Goods Store in a lot of colors. It costs \$49.99. The jacket is warm, and it's good for hikes in cooler weather. It's not warm enough for very cold weather. Buy this jacket today. Wear it on your next hike! Note: Don't buy your usual size. I usually wear a medium, but I have this jacket in a large.




A TERRIBLE TABLET!

by Victoria, December 2
★★★★★

I'm writing this review about my new TS1 tablet. J & T Electronics sells it for \$309.00. Don't buy this tablet! It's terrible. I work hard to earn my money, and this tablet isn't worth it. There is one good thing - the size. It's very small. But it's also very slow, and sometimes it stops working. You can't download many apps on the tablet. Save your money! Don't spend it on this awful product.





Name	
Where to buy it	
Price	
What you like	
What you don't like	
Recommendation	

At the end of this lesson, students took a quiz about shopping. However, most students could not finish their quiz. So, the teacher took them and explained to students she would grade them but would give them back to be finished the next class. As homework, students had to fill in a chart by writing notes about a product they were going to write the review about. They would use that information to include it in their paragraph next class.

In general words, these activities were prepared for two main reasons: first, to help them to write short texts better and second, to teach them how to use those short-written compositions in short oral outcomes. They needed to know that planning their ideas first would ensure them better tools to use the target language in a particular communicative act. They had to understand that having some time to recall vocabulary, check structural language and functional patterns would help them to improve their oral production. It is necessary to mention that one of the drawbacks of this class was the outdoor noise. The place where this classroom was located made the listening and video activities more difficult than what they really were. Students got out of focus and attention on the proposed audio activities was completely lost. The teacher had to call their attention a lot to get them involved in the activity again. As a result, speaking moments were also scarce since they did not have the proper conditions to listen to an approximation of real English.

Lesson 8. Wednesday, October 5th. This was the last class of the pedagogical implementation. During these 110 minutes, students were asked to show what they had been doing during the classes, it is to say, they were going to present their product, a service, or an idea creatively. This activity would be the result of their group work, homework assignment and revision, teacher's guidance, monitoring, encouragement, and constant feedback. In terms of language content, students would be able to write their product review including the previous vocabulary, grammatical structures, and functional language.

Taking into account that most students could not finish their quizzes, the first thing was to give them back to finish it. Sequentially, students were asked to read their homework about the

information of the two reviews and the chart with the information about a product they recently had bought. As it was expected, there were some corrections to be made; some students had little reading comprehension difficulties; also, they had little problems writing the information about the item they had bought. They tried to translate everything as they wanted to say it in their L1 and so, the teacher had to explain and guide the correction of those students.

Subsequently, the teacher presented an example of a pair of rain boots. Students had to read and match the parts with the content. In the same line of that activity, the teacher informed students they were going to do the same: writing a product review. To do so, the teacher shared the evaluation criteria she would use to evaluate their written texts. Then, students would check their notes and following the model previously given, they would start writing their drafts on their notebooks. The teacher told students they needed to include the vocabulary and useful expressions previously studied.

Figure 21

Picture of an example of a product review.

Read the review. Label the information with the words and phrases.

don't like like ✓name of product recommendation the price where to buy



Rain Boots

name of product

¹Splashy Rain Boots are for sale ²online. They really keep your feet dry. ³They come in lots of fun colors, like purple. ⁴The price is good, too: only \$29. The boots are high enough to step in deep puddles on rainy days. ⁵The only problem is that they are too big. I am usually a size 7, but I got these in size 6. ⁶When you order them, buy one size smaller!

The second part of the class was dedicated to present their final group work, which was the presentation of their creative and innovative item with its corresponding logo and important information. At this moment, students were told to get together and organize their ideas in a 4-minute concise presentation. This one had to include: first, the product, second, the logo with its parts, and third, the information about why it was innovative or creative. In that time, they would try to convince two judges to buy their products. Because of some time constraints, some students could present their products while others could not. As part of this mini project, they had to finish and personalize their own reviews and bring them for the next class. With the homework assignment, the mini-unit project came to an end and the pedagogical implementation did too. As an observer, it is necessary to say that even though there were some unexpected situations, the teacher in charge of implementing the didactic sequence knew how to manage them. Also, the students' process was very enjoyable to see, they showed improvement in different degrees; they started from with very low motivation and their own attitude was not the best.

Figure 22

Picture of students' group presentations.

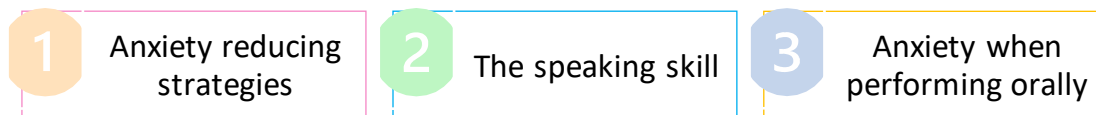


7. Findings and discussions

This section will be dedicated to reveal the findings the researcher obtained after the process of collecting the data and analyzing it. A discussion will be presented too. After analyzing the instruments, there were three main categories that emerged from the analysis: 1. Anxiety reducing strategies, 2. The speaking skill, 3. Anxiety when performing orally.

Figure 23

Emerging categories from the data analysis.



The above-mentioned categories were evidenced in the three instruments implemented by the researcher along her pedagogical implementation: a. The self-assessment spoken question, b. The field notes, and c. The questionnaire. With this in mind, the following section will present the findings that emerged from analyzing and comparing the collected data. Consequently, some supporting evidence will be shown from each of the three instruments.

7.1. Anxiety Reducing Strategies.

To begin with, the first two instruments that had this category in common were the questionnaire and the self-assessment spoken question. Half of the participants agreed on having certain shame when it comes to participating in their English lessons: **P2**: “*A veces me da vergüenza, pero desde que la profe Ana se hace al lado de mi he tenido mejoras y menos nervios que otras veces.*”; **P7**: No, siento que si participo aprendo más ya que las profesoras me corrigen y así *la próxima vez no me sentiré tan insegura* de lo que vaya a hacer o escribir.

However, the other participants stated that they do not feel in that way, they see participating as an opportunity to improve their L2.:

P4: “*No, me gusta participar en clase de inglés porque me gusta que me corrijan o me feliciten. En las clases a las que he participado la profesora Ana me ha felicitado.*”

P3: No, siempre me aseguro de que mi respuesta sea correcta y la digo seguramente y pues si queda mal *lo sigo intentando en otras ocasiones.*

Regarding the open question made in the self-assessment, three patterns were scrutinized. On one hand, it was seen that participants experienced divergent emotions such as: nervousness, pressure, safety, anxiety, comfort; being nervousness the most repeated one.

P4: “*Me sentí un poco presionada, pero logré dar lo mejor de mi.*”

P13: “Al principio me senti con mucha ansiedad y miedo a equivocarme pero poco a poco con estas actividades mas seguidas mi miedo se a desvanesido y me e liberado un poco mas al participar.”

P15: “Sentí muchos nervios al equivocarme, si me gustaría seguir trabajando estas actividades.”

On the other hand, the thirty-two participants’ answers revealed that doing these kinds of activities boost their English level as they consider that pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition can be fostered.

P17: “pues me senti bien, aprendia pronunciar algo que no sabía y asi me gustaria seguir trabajando”

P19: “Me gustaría seguir trabajando asi por que es mas practico y mucho mas sencillo de aprender.”

P21: “Si me gustaria que hagan más ejercicios de estos para perder mi miedo ha hablarle a todo el salón.”

Last but not least, it was perceived that participants are committed with their L2 learning process and they want to continue these activities that involve speaking to master that skill.

P23: “Me senti comoda hablando frente a mis compañeros aunque tenia mucha pena pero me gustaria seguir haciendo actividades asi.”

P24: “La verdad aprendi más sobre la pronunciación y me gusto mucho la actividad. Y si me gustaria trabajar más en Estos trabajos.

7.2. The Speaking Skill

This second category was found after analyzing the raw data from the questionnaire and the field notes. Here are some crucial aspects to consider about the speaking skill. Participants agreed on having the same strategy in order to get ready for an important task that must be performed in front of their classmates. What they do is to plan ahead what they are going to say, in that way, they achieve the objectives proposed by the teacher. Furthermore, having the assistance of their English teachers is of the utmost importance to succeed in these kinds of tasks.

P4: Si soy sincero, estudio poco en casa y practico mucho en la clase, ya que estoy con las profesoras y ellas me corrigen automáticamente. La profesora Ana enseña muy bien y por eso mis exposiciones normalmente son mejores que las de los demás. Pero si es una tarea, exposición o nota importante, practico en casa.

P6: Normalmente preparo lo que voy a decir en un guión, después busco la pronunciación de palabras que no se decir, después practico el guión y listo.

P9: Me preparo en la noche le día antes de la exposición, leyendo y aprendiendo lo que tengo que decir frente a el espejo o frente a mi madre y hermanas.

Additionally, when participants were asked about their thoughts towards their classmates' English level, most of them stated that even though they are aware that some classmates have higher levels of the language, they do not feel bad about that. On the contrary, they feel that they can find support in those students to improve their skills in the language.

P7: Algunos si hablan mejor inglés que yo pero **no me causa incomodidad** porque ellos también nos explican.

P8: Si algunos compañeros usan mejor el idioma y **no me siento incómoda** pero sí un poco de nervios al saber que otra persona puede y yo no casi.

P11: Si, hacen mejor uso del inglés, pero **no me causa incomodidad** ni nervios ni ansiedad me da como más ganas de aprender como ellos lo hacen y poder participar en clase y ser más segura al momento de hablar en inglés.

Moreover, students manifested that the situations that cause anxiety in students in English classes, they stated that they are the ones that do not allow them to prepare answers in advance such as going to the board to write something, participating in class, or being asked by the teacher during the lessons. Moreover, one of the participants said that s/he is afraid of getting a bad grade in an exam due to his/her reading comprehension skills in English.

P3: a veces presentar frente a todo el salón o que me **pregunten algo en inglés y no sepa responder.**

P9: Me da ansiedad cuando tengo que exponer, **hablar en inglés o pasar al tablero** a resolver la actividad del tablero.

P12: **Pasar al frente que pregunten algo**, hablar en inglés y hacer actividades de diálogo frente a mis compañeros.

What is more, at the beginning of the implementation, three patterns were perceived. While some students were focused on the lesson by taking an active role in their learning process, other students were distracted; therefore, their performance was poor. Although participation was strenuous to encourage, some students were determined to take some notes and to ask some questions to their teacher. Nonetheless, the teacher's rapport was not as good as it is supposed to be.

Students were focused working on the class activities.

Students seemed to be more involved in the development of the class.

As a final point, there were some changes during the third week of the sequence. It could be displayed that even though students remained a little shy, they decided to be involved in the activities done that week. It is evident that some of them are committed to improving their language skills, for instance, when they have an important assignment, they make use of some strategies such as planning as a means to succeed in their performance.

They showed a very different attitude towards that activity. Even though they were a little nervous and shy because they were in front of their classmates, they did it. The ones who were sitting showed more respect and were paying attention to what was happening in front.

Although time was short, students were actively working and participating in class activities.

They took time to prepare their presentations and practice pronunciation which made it easier when going to the front of the class. It was a successful speaking activity and improvement was noticed in comparison to the previous conversation role-played in class

Some students still are very shy, and these kinds of activities make them feel even worse. More speaking activities like this are needed, so they can have a little more exposure to the target language.

7.3. Anxiety when performing orally.

The following section will inform about the findings obtained after analyzing the raw data from the questionnaire and the field notes. In the first place, most students are afraid when it comes to speaking in English. One of the most repeated answers conveyed by participants is that they are fearful of other classmates mocking them.

P2: si me causa un poquito de temor, ya que cuando paso al frente aveces se burlan de uno por la manera en que pronuncio.

P8: Si en frente de mis compañeros pues me da miedo equivocarme y se rian y pues me da pena.

Nonetheless, two of them stated that their teachers have played an essential role in supporting them during their English learning process.

P4: No me causa temor, porque se que las profesoras me corregirán y así tendre mejor pronunciación. Aunque puedo sentir un poco de nervios si es una evaluación oral importante, ya que se que podría sacar mala nota.

P5: No por que soy bastante seguro de mi mismo y me gusta mucho el inglés gracias a la profesora.

Furthermore, they expressed that they feel different emotions when they have to interact with their teachers.

P9: siento que todo mi cuerpo tiembla de miedo.

P12: Muchos nervios al equivocarme o decir alguna frase o palabra mal.

In addition, the positive role of the teacher in their learning process is reiterated as they not only build trust, but also play a supportive role in students' journey to be proficient in their L2. Conversely, one participant expressed his/her fear of getting a bad grade in an important assignment.

P1: Con la profesora me siento segura ya que ella no va a criticar y me va a ayudar a corregir mis errores.

P4: Un poco nervioso, "lo normal", pero como dije, se que la profesora me ayudara a mejorar mi pronunciación y me motivo también. Pero si es una nota importante, voy a tener un poco de nervios, ya que puedo perderla.

When talking about students' fear with respect to getting feedback while speaking in English, the vast majority of them agreed on being confident when the teacher assesses their performance as they always do it in a constructive way.

P1: No, ya que asi aprendo mas con las correcciones que me de ella y puedo ser mucho mejor en inglés, y pues me gusta que me corrija.

P2: No, ya que la profesora nos corrige muy bien sin necesidad de regañarnos, creo que si lo hace por a amor a su profesión.

P4: No, me gusta mucho que las profesoras, en especial Ana me corrijan, ya que así aprendo y mejoro mucho mi pronunciación. Se que corrijen con buena intención.

As classes went by, different things were observed by the researcher. Teacher's attitude changed to a positive one; thus, rapport was built. Students had a better attitude towards the activities proposed in those lessons. Moreover, since they were focused, they reflected confidence when providing various answers in each part of the class. However, from time to time this concentration was lost.

The teacher seemed more opened and oriented to accompany students along this class.

Ss could ask the teacher for some help when they need some explanation about vocabulary or structures. They showed more confidence this time.

Students followed the worksheet activities easily and participated giving their answers.

It is important to highlight that more students were willing to take the lead in grasping an active role while learning English. Additionally, not only did students' concentration increase, but also their confidence. Receiving feedback from the teacher was useful in order to prepare their product review. Nevertheless, stress and worry were still perceptible in them when facing an important task. Finally, they acknowledged the importance of improving their L2.

Participation increased considerably. Positive behavior: little by little, more students have decided to be involved by themselves, they don't wait for the teacher to be called.

They were more focused on the explanation the teacher gave about the structure of another product review.

Students worked on the product review draft receiving feedback from the teacher allowing them to make corrections during class time.

8. Discussion

The section below, presents some of the illustrated premises that were mentioned at the beginning of this paper in the theoretical framework and how they correlate with each other.

To start with the first category, “*Anxiety reducing strategies*”, it is necessary to consider the different situations that have led students to experience anxiety; it seems that volunteering in classes is left aside as one of the reasons. As a means to overcome problematic situations and enhance various content in the target language, teachers must improve communicative skills to propose language that can be used in positive ways. As a result, students will keep in mind the purpose of learning, trying, and completing tasks in the L2, losing negative thoughts in relation to English and any other target language of interest (Kondo and Yang, 2004), (Zheng, 2008). As for Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) the teacher has been proved to be one of the most significant parts for reducing students’ anxiety. Alrabai (2015) explains that the teacher can identify anxiety-provoking situations if it is the case, for example, speaking in front of the class and generate a solution as soon as possible. Furthermore, the teacher should also seek for a realistic set of goals for students, in accordance with the language skills that are going to be worked on, this would match the first plan of reducing-anxiety strategies. (Alrabai, 2015).

Concerning to the speaking skill, especially formal speaking, it is successful to plan activities where students have time to prepare. The responses towards presentations of higher language demand encourage students to challenge themselves to get better language skills (Biber,

1989 cited in Nation, 2009). Not only will it give students the task of completing greater speaking assignments, but also will expand the use of the L2 in out-of-the-class activities.

For the purpose of diminishing the anxiety rate in the classroom, it is important to acknowledge the time intervals teachers leave for each activity. Increasing the quality of students' speech highly relies on the time given by activity, taken into account that time pressure takes away the chance of accessing better implicit and explicit grammatical knowledge (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). From the data collected, it is worthy to analyze that the problems encountered during the classes were common in the foreign language setting. Student's passive role is identified by attitude towards the planned activities and did not improve as time went by. The active moments of the class were determined by the attractiveness of the lesson task (Burns and Seidlhofer, 2010). Considering the information studied, improving learners' speaking skill demands a huge structuring in the planning and attention to the strategies that help building the right environment to encourage students to make an effort when using the L2 (Bygate cited in Djigunovic, 2006).

From the aforementioned information, it is important to highlight that as a way of achieving speaking language improvements, the teacher must consider creating spaces where students can prepare and pay attention to details according to the oral activity. Grammar and pronunciation are two of the aspects that are built when previous preparation is given (Biber, 1989 and Swain, 2005). A reflection of this information is the variation of feelings from students prior to activities that involved planning and the activities that work by immediate response.

Improving English speaking activities represents a greater use of the student's ability of planning. Following this idea, implementing activities that go beyond the language level of the classroom ends up boosting their speaking abilities and showing students the different contexts where they can make use of the language (Alrabai, 2015). Notwithstanding, the student's reaction to these activities strongly depends on the role of the teacher, which must be working out strategies to reduce consternations (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986).

Regarding the third category that emerged, anxiety when performing orally, a common pattern from the perspective of the participants was *fear*. This is a very common factor between students due to sneering behavior among classmates and the exposure to public speaking (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011). On one hand, some of the participants find public speaking a good part of oral language learning since they can expect feedback from the teacher. On the other hand, the participation of the teacher in these oral activities can work as a cause of anxiety and increase the fear of failing in students (Afrianti & Afna, 2020).

The positive feelings towards talking to the English teacher. Participants circled their sensation into safety, peace of mind, and excitement. As a matter of fact, Alrabai (2015) manifests demonstrating proper behavior to you students is an opportunity to display respect, connection, and care for the learners. However, this activity also provokes nervousness and fear among them since they are talking in front of others (Young, 1990). There is a tendency for students to measure the level of negative feelings in concordance to the consequences, if oral activities are directly linked to grading, they will feel insecure and hinder their performance (Pawlak, Waniek-Klimczak,

and Majer, 2011). Assessment plays an important role to balance students' feelings towards oral activities.

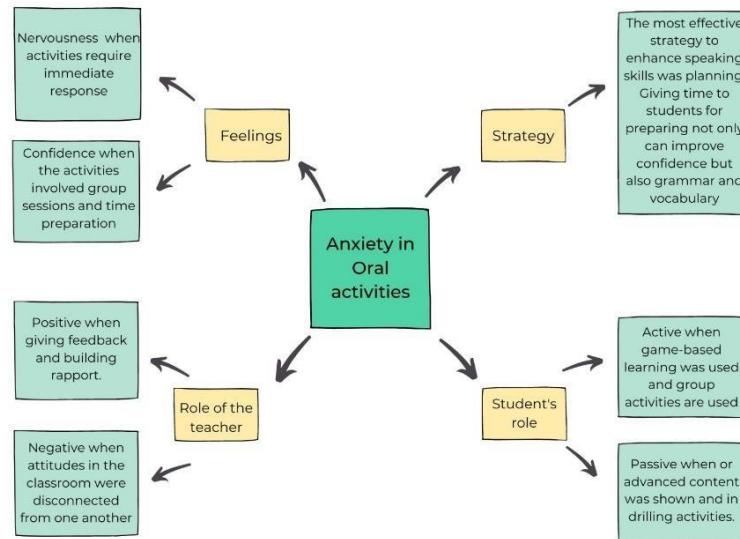
Teacher's opinions carry on the anxiety of the students depending on the comments they are about to say. Demonstrating proper behavior to your student invites the teacher to show passion and enthusiasm for his profession. (Alrabai, 2015). Finding feedback as a positive part comes hand in hand with the teacher's attitude with the course, yet it is important to have in mind that the anxiety caused by feedback only takes seconds to minutes for the students (Oflaz, 2019).

The principal aspect to be analyzed is the positive response got from the students when the teacher became more approachable and likable. In spite of that, it still seems common for students to develop feelings such as shyness due to insecurities regarding language proficiency (Oflaz, 2019). In due course, the moments where anxiety was not a recurring feeling for students were closely related to an approach to language ability improvement such as feedback sessions. When enhancing speaking skills between students it is important to bear in mind the familiarization of the work done each lesson (Daly & Buss, 1984; Richmond & McCroskey, cited in Daly, 1991).

The following graphic organizer illustrates and summarizes the results of how anxiety affects oral activities.

Figure 24

Anxiety in Oral Activities.



From the previous strategies implemented in the lessons, students' participation took a positive turn, changing students' anxiety feelings towards oral activities into incentives to practice in the L2 (Kondo, 2004). Something that could be observed is the domain of fear of evaluation, even though students took an active role to their language learning, their impulse of participating was disturbed by having oral activities graded and letting them create a barrier to block constructive feedback and acceptance of errors (Zhiping and Paramasivam, 2013). As stated by Alrabai (2015) addressing learner anxiety-provoking beliefs and misconceptions seeks for involving the learner to identify those anxiety provoking situations, talk about them in order to recognize the source of the difficulties and a find a solution.

9. Conclusions

This research project was set out to provide anxiety-reducing strategies in order to boost a free-anxiety atmosphere within L2 oral production scenarios. In the light of this, foreign language

anxiety is a common factor that happens to appear at different stages of the foreign language process. It is necessary to understand that it cannot be completely avoided, because it is part of the personality's traits. Learners' beliefs and early experiences have a consolidated impact and influence the development of speaking anxiety exceptionally.

Furthermore, the teacher should promote open, safe, and friendly scenarios where s/he and students can freely identify and discuss those particular anxiety-provoking situations that make them experience a set of negative feelings when having to use the L2 in the foreign language classroom. To do so, the teacher can start the discussion and express that speaking anxiety has affected her/his at any part of her/his life. Having this gesture of humbleness does not show other thing than comprehension, acceptance, and caring from the teacher's side. Sharing experiences and thoughts may create an idea of low-stress situations in the classroom settings.

Participants demonstrated that they want to continue learning essential aspects of the target language, such as lexis sets, structural patterns of the language, pronunciation, among others. They are aware of how important this is for the construction and improvement of their own process; they have recognized that having some other classmates that give them an explanation about something made them feel comfortable. In addition, they manifested that they have to work more and be committed, responsible and interested about everything that involves them as active agents of the process.

As previously stated, anxiety reducing strategies should be considered in the teacher's planning from early stages of the L2 instructions. Sadly, these are not thought as relevant or even

worthy to be implemented in the classes. They are fundamental basis for the learners' success in all the activities, especially, speaking activities that require more time, dedication, patience, and planning. These strategies not only offer the learners opportunities to improve their process in the way they study for test, prepare different speaking activities, learn new vocabulary and grammatical structures but also, how they react and assume a series of situations that can either enhance their learning process or mitigate their wrong practices and attitudes toward the language.

I could assure that one of the more significant conclusions that emerged from this study is that I have discovered that there were some underlying procedures and aspects of the dynamics and didactics of the foreign language class that I had forgotten some time ago. One of those is definitely the role I have in the class and how my students see me, as a teacher but also as a person. In fact, they need to feel the teacher cares and comprehends they are not the same and that all of them needs attention and understanding. I have to acknowledge that the most earthshaking anxiety-reducing strategy is the teacher's supporting role in the classroom atmosphere.

10. Limitations and Recommendations

One of the limitations this research project had was the limited amount of time English classes are given. Having only three hours per week makes the construction of the learning process and the proper development of the spoken production scenarios deficient. If the Ministry of Education wish for Colombian citizens to be competent in the target language and be able to act and communicate all around the world, this organization should consider a program that permits

an approachable, satisfactory curriculum that allows establishing real objectives for Colombian academic institutions.

An additional uncontrolled factor was the current uncomfortable noise during the time the pedagogical implementation. For the teacher, it was a repetitive obstacle that affected the development of the planning as it was originally designed. Constant outdoor noise made students lose their focus and get lost at many crucial points of some lessons. As a result, there were two evident drawbacks: first, for the teacher was quite difficult to accomplish some of the set goals and second, students' misbehavior interfered with the proposed activities and so, the teacher had to tell them off more than once. Subsequently, these interruptions attempted against the progress of the class.

Even though the students showed an improvement on their own process and agreed on saying that they wanted to be better at speaking and in order to do so they had to study more and participate more actively, it was crystal clear that their English level was very low. The didactic sequence that was designed followed some of the content the suggested curriculum proposed. Nevertheless, most of the students revealed that language knowledge was not the one expected for that grade. One of the reasons why this could have occurred was attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic; students were locked down for over two years, and so their learning process was seriously affected. They were aware of this situation, and they recognized they had identified serious weaknesses right after they had returned to face-to face classes. At the end of the implementation, they expressed they needed to work more and devote some time to study at home, do homework and plan and prepare the required speaking activities accordingly.

On the other hand, further studies regarding the importance of creating low-stress learning environments at early stages would be worthwhile. The current data highlighted the importance of offering learners from all ages more enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences in a safe and caring academic atmosphere, where educators promote the well-being of each member of the process; as a matter of fact, the teacher being the role model of the classroom, should foster the appreciation for a culture of understanding and support within the foreign language classroom that pervades students experiences, beliefs and as a result, diminish the premature formation of speaking anxiety.

Continued efforts are needed to make speaking activities meaningful and realistic opportunities that teach them how to communicate in the academic atmospheres. These opportunities should consider the following five principles of how the teaching and learning should be done: meaning, interest, new language, understanding and stress-free. (Nation & Newton, 2020). Colombian public classrooms are limited in some aspects such as resources, proper environment, and teachers' academic preparation. These settings do not guarantee students' interest in learning how to speak a foreign language. That's why, the educator is invited to act as a facilitator of these dynamics and think of innovative scenarios where students have the opportunities to create and recreate speaking situations in the L2.

As a final point, a greater focus on anxiety-reducing strategies could produce interesting findings that account more for having better results when it comes to foster speaking abilities in our students. As educators, it is of great importance to be more instructed on these strategies that

will show different results in our classrooms. The findings reported here shed new light on the way students need to be connected to the teachers so they can feel support and confidence to use the L2 more efficiently and functionally.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Consent Form



Universidad Industrial de Santander
 Maestría en Didáctica de la Lengua
FORMATO DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO



PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN:

Promoting anxiety-free atmospheres within L2 oral production scenarios

Investigadora: Docente Ana María Alviar Rueda

La presente investigación es conducida por la estudiante de la Maestría en Didáctica de la Lengua, de la Universidad Industrial de Santander, **Ana María Alviar Rueda**. La meta de este estudio es promover espacios de aprendizaje libres de ansiedad brindando estrategias cognitivas y emocionales a los estudiantes en los diferentes ejercicios orales en el idioma inglés dentro del aula de clase.

1. Objetivo de la Investigación.

Proporcionar estrategias cognitivas y emocionales a los estudiantes de la asignatura inglés del grado 9-13, para reducir los niveles de ansiedad generados por la habilidad de habla en el idioma extranjero inglés.

2. Procedimiento.

El desarrollo del estudio requiere la autorización de los acudientes de los participantes para:

- La observación de las clases bajo la modalidad presencial con el fin de describir las actividades de enseñanza más recurrentes en el trabajo de aula y así identificar las estrategias didácticas más implementadas por la docente en el aula de clase.
- Expresar su opinión tanto en encuestas como en entrevistas, con el objeto de identificar los estilos de aprendizaje que prevalecen en el aula de clase de esta institución educativa.
- Podrá participar en todos los aspectos descritos, si así lo desea. No obstante, tiene total libertad de decidir en cuáles de ellos quiere ser parte activa. De igual manera, aún si firma este consentimiento, podrá expresar en cualquier momento su deseo de excluir sus datos del estudio. Su participación es totalmente gratuita y no requiere ninguna preparación previa.

3. Tratamiento de información

Toda la información recopilada en este estudio se tratará de acuerdo con las disposiciones definidas por la ley estatutaria 1581 de 2012, de protección de datos personales. Lo anterior implica que los participantes tienen derecho de conocer, modificar o suprimir la información suministrada, así como a revocar su autorización para el uso en este proyecto.

4. Riesgos

La participación en este proyecto no entraña riesgo alguno, puesto que en ningún momento su integridad psicofísica se verá expuesta. Esto implica que la probabilidad y la magnitud del daño o el malestar previsto no son superiores a los que se encuentran en la vida diaria o en el curso de una actividad académica normal.

5. Beneficios

Con su participación contribuirá de manera significativa a entender y caracterizar las estrategias utilizadas por la docente para el desarrollo de la habilidad oral en el idioma extranjero en el curso 9-13 del Instituto Técnico Superior Dámaso Zapata; los resultados de esta investigación redundarán en el mejoramiento de los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje de la comunidad académica.

6. Aceptación



Appendix B. Sample of a Lesson Plan



School of Languages – English Teaching
Program
Pedagogical practicum 3
Lesson plan format

Teacher: Silvia Gelvez		Date of implementation: Tuesday, September 13 th	
Didactic sequence and no participant observer: Ana María Alviar Rueda			
Main Theme: What is the hidden message?		Lesson No: #11	Length: 50 minutes
Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will identify some hidden messages in their logos. - Students will learn the parts of a logo. 			
Language content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common slogan and logos. - Information about what companies promote. 		Assessment: Formative assessment	
Grammar: -Present simple: verb be and other verbs. -Modal verbs: can, could, would.	Functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyzing messages in an advertisement. - Describing advertisements messages. 	Skills: -Speaking -Reading -Writing -Listening	Vocabulary: Present simple verbs be and other verbs: buy, eat, read, cost, live, think, believe: etc. Famous brands: Apple, Adidas, Nike, McDonald's, Honda, Subway, M&Ms, Disneyworld, Play station.
STAGES	ACTIVITIES		MATERIALS
Warm-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video: <i>Guess the logo in 3 seconds</i> The teacher will welcome the ss and start the class. In order to continue the topic about brands, the teacher will play a video called: Guess the logo in 3 seconds. The activity is to ask ss to say the name of the company when they see the logo. 		Video-Youtube Video beam Speakers
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matching activity: The teacher will give ss a worksheet with some popular and worldwide recognized brands. SS will match the logos with the slogans. After some time, the teacher Will ask ss to read their answers. 		Slides Worksheet
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening: logos and brands After that, ss will work on listening tasks. They will identify specific information about advertisement logos and slogans. In pairs, they will answer the questions. Then, those activities will be corrected by the teacher. 		Worksheet Slides Speaker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The parts of an advertisement The teacher will show an example of an advertisement and its parts. The teacher will ask them to read and repeat the words. After, ss will be given some time to place the words in the slogan and later, some of them will pass to the board and write the parts in the corresponding place. Next, they will be show two more examples of logos. In pairs, they will identify some information other logos have. Corrections will be made if necessary. 		Audio

Appendix C. Instrument 1

	A continuación encontrará un listado de afirmaciones que deberá leer muy bien. Una vez las haya leído, marque una X debajo de la columna con la que se sienta más identificado(a). Recuerde responder con mucha honestidad, pues para mí es muy importante cada una de sus respuestas.					
# Pregunta	Afirmación	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo
1	Yo nunca me siento totalmente seguro de mi mismo(a) cuando estoy hablando en mi clase de Inglés.					
2	No me preocupa cometer errores en mi clase de Inglés.					
3	Tiemblo cuando se que voy a ser llamado(a) en clase de Inglés.					
4	Me asusta el hecho de no entender lo que la profesora está diciendo en inglés en clase de Inglés.					
5	Durante la clase de Inglés, pienso en cosas que no tienen nada que ver con la misma.					
6	Constantemente pienso que los otros estudiantes son mejores que yo en esta clase.					
7	Usualmente me siento a gusto durante las evaluaciones o quices que se hacen la clase de Inglés.					
8	Entro en pánico cuando tengo que hablar en inglés sin ninguna preparación previa en clase de Integrated studies.					
9	Me preocupa sobre las consecuencias que pueda tener si pierdo la asignatura de Inglés.					
10	No entiendo la razón por la cual algunos compañeros se preocupan en la asignatura de Inglés.					
11	Siento muchos nervios cuando olvido cosas que se en la clase de Inglés.					
12	Me avergüenza responder voluntariamente en clase de Inglés.					
13	No me pondría nervioso hablar en inglés con hablantes nativos.					
14	Me siento nervioso(a) cuando no entiendo lo que la docente de Inglés está corrigiendo.					
15	Me siento ansioso(a) en la clase de Inglés aún cuando estoy bien preparado.					
16	Con frecuencia, me gustaría no asistir a la clase de Inglés.					
17	Me siento cómodo(a) cuando hablo en inglés en la clase de Inglés.					
18	Siento temor al pensar que mi docente de Inglés esté lista para corregir cada error que comento.					
19	Puedo sentir cómo mi corazón late cuando voy a ser llamado en clase de Inglés.					
20	Cuanto más estudio para una evaluación, más confundido(a) me siento.					
21	No siento presión alguna preparar muy bien mi clase de Inglés.					
22	Siempre siento que mis otros compañeros hablan inglés mejor de lo que yo lo hago en clase de Inglés.					
23	Me siento consciente de mi mismo al hablar en inglés al frente de mis compañeros en la clase de Inglés.					
24	La clase de Inglés avanza tan rápido que me preocupa quedarme atrasado.					
25	Me siento más tensionado(a) y nervioso(a) en clase de Inglés de lo que podría sentirme en cualquier otra clase.					
26	Me siento nervioso(a) y confundido(a) cuando tengo que hablar en clase de Inglés.					
27	Cuando se que tengo clase de Inglés, me siento muy seguro(a) y relajado(a).					
28	Me siento nervioso(a) cuando no entiendo cada una de las palabras que la docente dice en clase de Inglés.					
29	Me siento abrumado(a) por la cantidad de reglas que debo aprender para hablar en inglés.					
30	Me siento temeroso(a) que mis compañeros se burlen de mí cuando hablo en inglés en clase de Inglés.					
31	Probablemente me sentiría muy cómodo(a) estando rodeado(a) de hablantes nativos del inglés.					
32	Me siento nervioso(a) cuando la docente de Inglés hace preguntas que no he preparado con anterioridad.					
33	No me molestaría tomar más clases de inglés					
Adaptación de la Escala de ansiedad de idioma extranjero. Elaine Horwitz et al. (1986)						

Appendix D. Instrument 4

9



Universidad Industrial de Santander
Maestría en Didáctica de la Lengua

12

INSTRUMENTO # 4: CUESTIONARIO: actitudes del estudiante frente al

Querido (a) estudiante: uso del idioma inglés dentro de clase.

Es de su conocimiento que me encuentro realizando mi tesis de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica de la lengua, con énfasis en inglés. Es por esto que como parte de la investigación que me encuentro realizando, he venido aplicando unos instrumentos como evidencia de la actividad oral de los estudiantes dentro de la clase de inglés. Es por esto que a continuación encontrará una serie de preguntas relacionadas con su desempeño en las actividades que requieren el uso del idioma inglés en las clases. Lo (a) invito a responder con mucha apertura y sinceridad, pues es de valiosa importancia toda la información que usted me pueda brindar en este cuestionario.

1. ¿Hablar en inglés le causa temor? Si es así, ¿cuándo y en frente de quien? ¿Puede decir por qué?

2. ¿Qué siente cuando tiene que hablar en inglés con su profesor?

3. ¿Siente temor al hablar inglés y que su profesor esté corrigiendo todo lo que dice?

4. ¿Cómo se prepara para una presentación o actividad oral (exposición, quiz oral, diálogos con compañeros, etc) que tiene que mostrar en inglés frente a sus compañeros y profesor?

Appendix E. Instrument 2



**Universidad Industrial de Santander
Maestría en Didáctica de la Lengua**



INSTRUMENTO # 2

Self-assessment open question

Querido(a) estudiante:

La docente quiere que compartas tu experiencia con ella sobre la actividad oral en parejas realizada el día de hoy. En el siguiente espacio, escribe cómo te sentiste, qué aprendiste de esta actividad, y si te gustaría seguir trabajando en ejercicios como estos.

Appendix F. Raw Data Analysis

Date: January 31st, 2023

Data Collection Instrument: Self-assessment

Category: Anxiety-reducing strategies

Codes: Feelings, Advance in the language; Engagement

Subcode: nervousness, pressure, safety, anxiety, comfort; vocabulary, pronunciation; committed.

Raw Data:

Q6: La docente quiere que compartas tu experiencia con ella. En este cuadro, escribe cómo te sentiste, qué aprendiste de esta actividad, y si te gustaría seguir trabajando en ejercicios como estos.

P1: me sentí muy nervioso

P2: Me sentí bien y no tuve nervios al presentar la exposición además aprendí nuevo vocabulario

P3: Igual que todas las clases es dinámico pero no entiendo nada, hoy aprendí un poco de vocabulario eso ya es un avance gracias a mi compañero

P4: Me sentí un poco presionada, pero logré dar lo mejor de mí.

P5: me gustó la temática y que fuera en grupos 10/10

P6: Me sentí muy bien por que lo único que me tocaba hacer era hablar.

P7: Me sentí seguro, la teacher Ana me ayudo mucho y aprendi bastante de ella, si me gustaria seguir con estos ejercicios.

P8: de esta actividad aprendi un poco mas de la pronunsiacion de las palabras y números. Si me parece buena la idea de seguir trabajando en ejercicios comoe estos.

P9: Me gustan mucho las actividades Asi aunque me dan muchos nervios, me agrada tambien la dedicación de las profes por ayudarnos y corregirnos.

P10: me gusto la actividad por que me ayudo a aprender mas y interactuar con mis compañeros y me encantaria trabajar haci.

P11: Me gusta hablar al frente de todos por que me gusta saber que hablo duro y tengo una pronunsiacion buena. ¡Estas actividades me gustan mucho!

P12: Me gusto, pero me dan muchos nercios pasar al frente, seria un poco mejor decir solo al docente lo que realizamos.

P13: Al principio me senti con mucha ansiedad y miedo a equivocarme pero poco a poco con estas actiidades mas seguidas mi miedo se a desvanesido y me e liberado un poco mas al participar.

P14: me sentí muy nerviosa por tener que pasar al frente. Si me gustaria, ya que me ayuda a pronunciar mi inglés.

P15: Sentí muchos nervios al equivocarme, si me gustaría seguir trabajando estas actividades

P16: si me gustaria porque asi se pierde el miedo a equivocarse

P17: pues me senti bien, aprendia pronunciar algo que no sabía y asi me gustaria seguir trabajando

ANXIETY-FREE ORAL PRODUCTION SCENARIOS

119

P18: pues me gusto por que aprendí a pronunciar un poco mas

P19: Me gustaría seguir trabajando así por que es mas practico y mucho mas sencillo de aprender

P20: me gustaria estar trabajando con ella, ya que mi pronunciacion a fluido mejor.

P21: Si me gustaria que hagan más ejercicios de estos para perder mi miedo ha hablarle a todo el salon

P22: la pronunciacion de diferentes palabras que no concia

P23: Me senti comoda hablando frente a mis compañeros aunque tenia mucha pena pero me gustaria seguir haciendo actividades asi.

P24: La verdad aprendi más sobre la pronunciaci3n y me gusto mucho la actividad. Y si me gustaria trabajar más en Estos trabajos.

P25: Me gusto mucho pero me sentí un poquito nerviosa Pero me gustaria volver a hacerlo ya que me entretiene mucho la pronunciaci3n.

P26: Me parecio muy interesante y bonito, me gustaría mas actividades asi

P27: Esta vez no me sentí tan nerviosa y aprendí diferentes expresiones, también me gustaria repetir estas actividades porque aprendo a perder el miedo a hablar

P28: me sentí muy bien aprendi mucho y pudo expandir mi aprendizaje gracias a la profesora y mi compañero

P29: aprendi nuevo vocabulario

P30: fue entretenido

P31: muy nervioso

P32: Me senti bien, aprendí que las palabras con doble o se convierten en U, si me gustaria seguir trabajando en cosas haci



FINDINGS SUMMARY

Regarding this open-question made in the self-assessment instrument, three patterns were scrutinized. On one hand, it was seen that participants experienced divergent emotions such as: nervousness, pressure, safety, anxiety, comfort; being nervousness the most repeated one. On the other hand, the thirty-two participants' answers revealed that doing these kinds of activities boost their English level as they consider that pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition can be fostered. Last but not least, it was perceived that participants are committed with their L2 learning process and they want to continue these activities that involve speaking to master that skill.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Improving English speaking activities represents a greater use of the student's ability of planning. Following this idea, implementing activities that go beyond the language level of the classroom ends up boosting their speaking abilities and showing students the different contexts where they can make use of the language (Alrabai, 2015). Notwithstanding, the student's reaction to these activities strongly depends on the role of the teacher, which must be working out strategies to reduce consternations (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). Seeking for a realistic set of goals for students, in accordance with the language skills that are going to be worked on, would match the first plan of reducing-anxiety strategies Alrabai (2015).

Appendix G. Sample of a worksheet

	<p>School of languages - English Language Program Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata Grade: 9-13 Week: 8 Class No: 18-19 Student-teachers: <u>Silvia Juliana Gelvez</u> Topic: <u>What is Black Friday?</u></p>	
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Reading comprehension: What's Black Friday?

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Read about Black Friday. Then, decide if the statements are true or false.

Black Friday

Ever since 1932, Black Friday has signaled the beginning of the Christmas shopping season in the United States. This shopping extravaganza follows Thanksgiving, on the fourth Thursday of November, and comes just before 'Cyber Monday'.

Use of the name "Black Friday" was first recorded as coming from Philadelphia, where it was used to describe heavy, disruptive vehicle and pedestrian traffic the day after Thanksgiving. Apparently, loads of people would go into town on the Friday after Turkey Day, before the yearly Army/Navy football game on Saturday; stores would take advantage of all the extra business by promoting big sales.



As 'Black Friday' became more popular in the early eighties, one "explanation" for the event became that this day represented the point in the year when retailers begin to make a profit, going from being "in the red" (debtors) to "in the black" (be free of debt).

Black Friday is not an official holiday in the United States, but in some states government employees are given the day off. Schools and non-retail employees are normally given Thanksgiving Thursday and Black Friday as public holidays.

Most major retailers offer promotional sales with big discounts, and it has been the busiest shopping day every year since 2005. In 2014, sales revenues for Black Friday reached a whopping \$11.5 billion, falling slightly to \$10.4 in 2015. In 2013, overall spending from Thanksgiving Thursday up to Cyber Monday topped \$56 billion!

<p>1. Black Friday signals the start of the Easter season.</p> <p>True ___ False ___</p>	<p>2. Black Friday comes before Thanksgiving.</p> <p>True ___ False ___</p>	<p>3. The term Black Friday was first recorded in Philadelphia.</p> <p>True ___ False ___</p>
<p>4. To be "in the red" means that you owe people money or are in debt.</p> <p>True ___ False ___</p>	<p>5. In 2014, sales revenues for Black Friday reached more than \$12 billion.</p> <p>True ___ False ___</p>	<p>6. Overall spending from Thanksgiving to Cyber Monday was more than \$56 billion in 2013.</p> <p>True ___ False ___</p>

2. Now, pay attention to the underlined words and write them next to their meanings.

<u>extravaganza</u>	<u>disruptive</u>	<u>retailers</u>	<u>revenues</u>	<u>whopping</u>	<u>topped</u>
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- Income from business activities or taxes: _____
- To be larger than a particular amount: _____
- A large and impressive celebration or event: _____
- People or companies that sell goods directly to the public: _____
- Extremely large: _____
- Causing difficulties that interrupt something: _____

Taken from:

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