



**Universidad del Azuay**

**Facultad de Filosofía**

**Escuela de Ciencias de la Educación**

*A methodological proposal for improving English  
language productive skills in the third year of high-  
school at Maria Auxiliadora High School*

**Trabajo de graduación previo a la obtención del título de  
Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación Mención Inglés.**

**Autor: María Catalina Jaramillo Astudillo**

**Director: Mst. Nancy Criollo**

**Cuenca, Ecuador**

**2012**

## **DEDICATION**

---

This graduation work is dedicated to all my family who have always been my support and inspiration to achieve my professional goals; to my loving husband, Diego and my adored children, David and Rafaela who stood by me and handled my absences with patience, love and a great smile. It encouraged me to continue and not give up. They always embellish my life.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

---

First, I thank God for the strength and courage given to me during the elaboration of this graduation project.

I am very grateful to my tutor, Professor Nancy Criollo, whose direction and valuable advice enabled me to accomplish the present research work.

Thanks to the Administration of Unidad Educativa Salesiana “María Auxiliadora” for their permission to use the High School installations to carry out this study and achieve my goals.

I would also like to thank my students who collaborated with enthusiasm and willingness in the implementation of the present project.

It is important to express my gratitude to my colleagues and friends of the English Department as well, who considered this research project as an important contribution to the teaching of EFL at the school.

Special thanks to all my family for their endless love and patience. Finally, to my parents who have always taught me to persevere and follow my dreams.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE ENGLISH LEARNING PROCESS IN THE THIRD YEAR OF MARIAAUXILIADORAHIGH SCHOOL</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>1. RESEARCH TECHNIQUES APPLICATION</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>1.1. DOCUMENT REVIEW</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<i>1.1.1. Maria Auxiliadora High School Background Information</i> .....	<i>11</i>
<i>1.1.2. The Educational Curricular Project of the Daughters of St. Mary Auxiliadora</i> ...	<i>12</i>
<i>1.1.3. The English Department of Maria Auxiliadora High School</i> .....	<i>13</i>
<i>1.1.4. English Curriculum for Year 3 at Maria Auxiliadora High School</i> .....	<i>13</i>
<b>1.2. RESEARCH DESIGN</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<i>1.2.1. The students' survey</i> .....	<i>15</i>
<b>1.3. DIAGNOSIS OF THE STUDENTS' SPEAKING AND WRITING DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<i>1.3.1. Students' Speaking Grades Analysis</i> .....	<i>28</i>
<i>1.3.2. Diagnosis of the Students' Written Work</i> .....	<i>30</i>
<b>1.4. TEACHERS' SURVEY</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<i>1.4.1. Results of the Teachers' Survey</i> .....	<i>33</i>
<b>1.5. CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>2.1. CONSTRUCTIVISM</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<i>2.1.1. Vygotsky's Social Interactionism Theory and the Construction of Knowledge</i> .....	<i>41</i>
<i>2.1.2. Ausubel's Significant Learning Theory</i> .....	<i>43</i>
<b>2.2. THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<i>2.2.1. The Communicative Approach</i> .....	<i>49</i>
<i>2.2.2. Accuracy and Fluency</i> .....	<i>51</i>
<i>2.2.3. Oral and Written Communication Strategies</i> .....	<i>52</i>
<i>2.2.4. Speaking and Social Interaction Activities</i> .....	<i>53</i>
<i>2.2.5. Writing Activities</i> .....	<i>54</i>
<i>2.2.6. The Student's Role in the Communicative Approach</i> .....	<i>55</i>



2.2.7. <i>Designing the Tasks</i> .....	56
2.3. CONCLUSION.....	62
<b>CHAPTER 3: THE PROJECT: THE METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRODUCTIVE SKILLS IN SPEAKING AND WRITING IN YEAR 3 AT MARIA AUXILIADORA HIGH SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>65</b>
Introduction.....	65
3.1. PROJECT DESIGN .....	65
3.1.1. <i>Communicative Tasks Design</i> .....	66
3.2. CONCLUSION.....	122
<b>CHAPTER 4: VALIDATION OF THE PROJECT .....</b>	<b>123</b>
4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN .....	123
4.1.1. <i>Students' Survey</i> .....	124
4.2. THE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS' SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT DURING THE APPLICATION OF THE PROJECT .....	135
4.2.1. <i>The Analysis of the Students' Performance in Speaking Activity 5</i> .....	137
4.2.2. <i>The Analysis of Students' Performance in Speaking Activity 7</i> .....	139
4.2.3. <i>The Analysis of the Students' Speaking Performance in the Post Test</i> .....	140
4.3. THE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS' WRITING DEVELOPMENT DURING THE APPLICATION OF THE PROJECT.....	144
4.3.1. <i>The Analysis of the Students' Development in Writing Activity 5</i> .....	144
4.3.2. <i>The Analysis of Students' Writing Development Activity 8</i> .....	146
4.3.3. <i>The Analysis of Students' Development Writing Post-Test</i> .....	147
4.4. STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPEAKING AND WRITING ACTIVITIES.....	149
4.5. TEACHERS' VALIDATION OF THE PROJECT.....	150
4.5.1. <i>Teacher's Evaluation for Speaking Activity 3</i> .....	150
4.5.2. <i>Teacher's Evaluation for Writing Activity 4</i> .....	152
4.6. CONCLUSIONS.....	153
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>155</b>
5.1. CONCLUSIONS .....	155
5.1.1. <i>Limitations</i> .....	158
5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	159
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>161</b>

ANNEX 1 .....	166
ANNEX 2 .....	168
ANNEX 3 .....	170
ANNEX 4 .....	172
ANNEX 5 .....	173
ANNEX 6 .....	175
ANNEX 7 .....	177
ANNEX 8 .....	178
ANNEX 9 .....	179
ANNEX 10 .....	181

## *ABSTRACT*

---

Few high school English students in Ecuador achieve even basic levels of competence in speaking and writing. One reason for these poor results could be the lack of communicative approach in teaching the language. This study examines whether a communicative methodology for English language enhances the students' speaking and writing skills. A group of 44 students of year three from Maria Auxiliadora High School were the participants of this six-month study. The communicative activities were designed according to the principles of the Communicative Approach and the students' interests in order to give them a sense of language progress and achievement. A pre-test and post-test were taken. The scores obtained are presented in statistical graphs. The results achieved in the post-test demonstrated that the use of communicative activities in the speaking and writing lessons yielded a significant improvement in the students' productive skills in terms of accuracy and fluency.

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

Nowadays globalization has led every human being to learn and manage a foreign language as an essential part of their educational process in order to be able to develop a better role in society.

English has become an international language because over time it has been used widely all over the world not only for sharing information, but also for business, technology, entertainment, and education. Therefore, students should feel motivated to acquire a proficient level in English since it is considered to be an important tool, either to increase future opportunities for success in life or to rely on professionally and personally.

The students' learning process should inspire and encourage them to achieve higher levels of proficiency in English. They should be presented situations where they can gain knowledge in a broader scope of fields, talents, and routines to be able to communicate fluently and accurately in a language that is not theirs.

In line with what was stated before, the intention of the educational and formative process at Maria Auxiliadora High School is to enhance the students' personal and professional development. Therefore, to study English is a school requirement. The main objective of the English Department is to prepare all the students of the different grades and specializations to communicate effectively. The aim is to help students improve their English language communicative and linguistic competence gradually throughout their high school years, providing them with the necessary skills bringing about a positive impact on their progress.

One of the main concerns among teachers and members of the English Department at our school is the use of the vernacular language in a foreign language classroom. This fact results in lessons that turn out to be uncommunicative, irrelevant and boring.

The presence of the vernacular in the classroom and the lack of real communication and promotion of classroom opportunities did not allow students to learn the language in real situations. Students, in general, were not used to the target language as a means of communication. So they were not accustomed to making any effort and dealing with English for communication purposes. Likewise, the students were not able to organize and link their ideas into paragraphs, or to use suitable vocabulary and grammar to express their ideas appropriately when writing a composition.

Indeed, the purpose of this study is to share with the reader the problem and the findings of a meticulous research which established that most students of Year 3 at Maria Auxiliadora High School responded poorly in the productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing. The results of this diagnosis are presented in Chapter 1.

EFL traditional methodology has been substituted by updated methodology which aims to promote communication while learning a foreign language. This new parameter determines success in foreign language education programs if students can communicate effectively. Students' success or failure is judged by accuracy and fluency in speaking and writing. This is the challenging part of this study. The idea is to apply the techniques of the communicative method to find out to what extent this methodology can enhance language competence and performance of students in terms of accuracy and fluency.

The literature that has been reviewed for this work in Chapter 2 is the Constructivist Paradigm which considers the student as the central axis of the pedagogical game. Vygotsky's Social Interactionism is another important theoretical element present because the student interacts in order to communicate with others and also he needs the others to learn from and to learn with. Ausubel's Significant Learning has provided us with the theory referring to learning through the result of the interaction of prior knowledge with new knowledge and its adaptation to the context. The individual learns by understanding the world around him/her and integrating this knowledge to meaning. The Communicative Approach refers to the creation of as many opportunities as

possible in the classroom to expose the students to interact with each other and in the target language.

Chapter 3 contains 10 speaking activities as well as 10 writing activities designed under the theoretical framework that constitutes the basis for this research.

Chapter 4 makes reference to the analysis of the data of Year 3 students and the validation of the application of the communicative activities and tasks while the research process was carried out.

Chapter 5 contains the conclusions and recommendations arrived at in the light of the research project carried out for this thesis.

**CHAPTER 1**  
**DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE ENGLISH LEARNING PROCESS IN**  
**THE THIRD YEAR OF MARIAAUXILIADORA HIGH SCHOOL**

**1. RESEARCH TECHNIQUES APPLICATION**

The following research has been carried out in order to demonstrate how the English language learning process has developed in Year 3 students of Maria Auxiliadora High School. Several research instruments have been applied to students and teachers to fulfill this objective.

**1.1. DOCUMENT REVIEW**

First, this technique was applied in order to obtain some background information about the school and its educational project. Second, it was important to identify the goals of the English Department and determine what the English curriculum and the annual program recommend for the third year of high school.

**1.1.1. Maria Auxiliadora High School Background Information**

Maria Auxiliadora High School is a private school with five hundred and seventy-seven students; it is located in Cuenca, the capital city of Azuay province, Ecuador. The school offers two areas of specialization: Science and Bilingual Administration. Its educational program is based on both the “Saint Bosco Prevention System” and the national program entitled “The Educational Project of the Daughters of St. Mary Auxiliadora (FMA)”.

“Saint Bosco Prevention System” is a philosophy of education based on the principles of guidance, conduct and support. This philosophy is intended to help students make

appropriate choices which will allow them to reach their potential as active and responsible citizens.

The mission of “The Educational Project of the Daughters of St. Mary Auxiliadora” is intended to give the students a comprehensive education based on academic excellence along with the development of high moral values and Christian commitment. This allows the students to become active agents of change and social development as “good Christians and honest citizens” (7).

In addition to utilizing these programs, the school has extensive projects focusing on pastoral applications, education and journalism, social well-being, sports and recreation, health and ecology, education, culture and English as a Foreign Language.

### **1.1.2. The Educational Curricular Project of the Daughters of St. Mary Auxiliadora**

According to the Educational Curricular Project of the Daughters of St. Mary Auxiladora, the curriculum design is the base for the educational planning and its application in the different levels that form part of Ecuadorian education, so it becomes necessary to establish guidelines in order to interrelate the curricular elements which constitute the referential goals to those upon which the education activity will be based. Thus, the curriculum that guides the FMA institutions is designed to support the development of general and individual competencies which are structured on contents, values and skills to be accomplished at each level of study in this project.

The content at each level of education and area of study is organized in sequence according to the socio-cultural context demands as well as the scientific and technological developments. This allows a holistic vision of the scientific knowledge of the students from the first year of basic education until the third year of high school. In addition, there is a systematic list of values which guides the individual and social development of the students. And finally, the enhancing of skills which are related to the



“knowing to do” and “knowing to learn” is a fundamental part of the acquisition and improvement of the competencies. This requires the autonomous construction and expansion of critical thinking on the part of the students; in this manner, the teacher’s role is first and foremost to guide and mediate the students’ learning.

### **1.1.3. The English Department of Maria Auxiliadora High School**

The main objective of the English Department is to constantly improve and strengthen the English language learning process. The goal is to achieve communicative competence and fluency in English. Consequently, the English curriculum places a strong focus on the skill-building criteria through the development of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All four of these skills are subject to performance indicators, but there is an expectation that the students will come to appreciate the value of each of the skills. Thus English is divided into Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking and Grammar.

This change was made primarily because the school began to participate in the national program of the Daughters of St. Mary Auxiliadora which underlines the necessity of becoming bilingual in five years. Secondly, it was made because the school management and the teachers were not satisfied with the results obtained with the previously adopted structural methodology. Finally, the English Department determined that the study of language occurring through a cultural perspective would motivate students to more effectively learn the language and have better job opportunities in the future. As a result, lessons are presented based on cultural topics that lead into the practice of the four skills.

### **1.1.4. English Curriculum for Year 3 at Maria Auxiliadora High School**

The students “**profile**” in both areas of specialization requires that the students achieve a high level of communicative competence in the English language. Students should be able to listen, speak, read, and write fluently and competently in English in different contexts and situations. In order to accomplish these objectives, the curriculum is

divided into competencies; therefore, the annual program divides the content into four categories which describe the students' skills as follows:

**-Pragmatics**

Competence: Use of a wide range of grammar structures and vocabulary in order to communicate accurately with others in formal and informal situations.

Content: Family relationship, jobs, sports, travel, fashion, lifestyles, environment, education, technology

**-Semantics**

Competence: Understanding and respecting different contexts and stylistic resources by finding their main ideas and characteristics.

Content: Conjunctions/linking words and phrases, the relative clauses "who" and "where", adjectives ending in -ing and -ed, conjunctions, compound nouns, positive/negative adjectives, frequency adverbs, prepositions, expressions of agreement/disagreement, phrasal verbs

**-Morphosyntax**

Competence: To identify structures within a context and work out the function and meaning of unknown words by inferring from the context.

Content: The passive form, formation of adjectives, past simple, past continuous, past perfect, error correction, would, would rather, comparatives, the modals could, should, can, might, simple present, present continuous, connectors, wish/if only

**-Phonology**

Competence: To use accurately punctuation and orthography rules for effective communication.

Content: Intonation, different sounds, stressed syllables, unstressed syllables.

## **1.2. Research Design**

Since the general objective of this research was to improve the productive skills of the Year 3 students at Maria Auxiliadora High School, it was decided to apply a survey to both students and teachers. The purpose of this survey was to find out what methodology the teachers were using to develop the students' oral and writing competence. Besides, it was aimed at highlighting the students' difficulties when carrying out speaking and writing tasks as well as identifying the types of errors in paragraph and essay writing. In addition, the aim was to establish what methodology and evaluation should be used when designing the curricular instruments for Year 3 according to the communicative approach outlined in this work.

### **1.2.1. The students' survey**

Forty-four students of Year 3 from Maria Auxiliadora High School took part in the survey. Two questionnaires were designed: one concerning speaking and one concerning writing activities in class. The speaking survey questions were applied to 22 students specializing in Bilingual Administration while the writing survey questions were administered to 22 students of Science. The questions are shown in Annex 1 and 2. The objective was to acquire clear information about the learning process from the students' point of view.

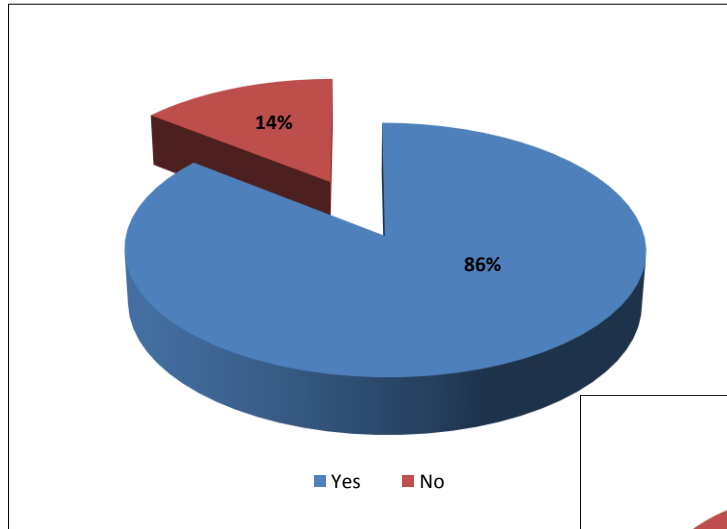
#### **1.2.1.1. Students' Survey Data Results: Speaking Survey**

Below are the results of the survey given to the students from Year 3.

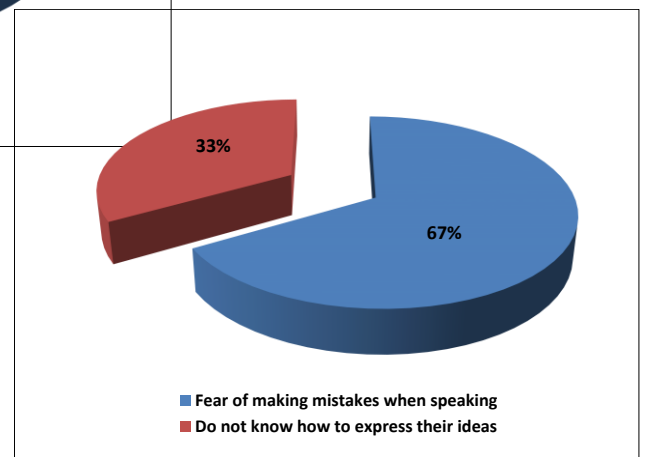
**QUESTION 1**

**CHART 1**

**Do you speak English in your English classes?**



**WHY NOT?**



**QUESTION 1a**

**CHART 1A**

**If yes, how much English do you speak in your classes?**

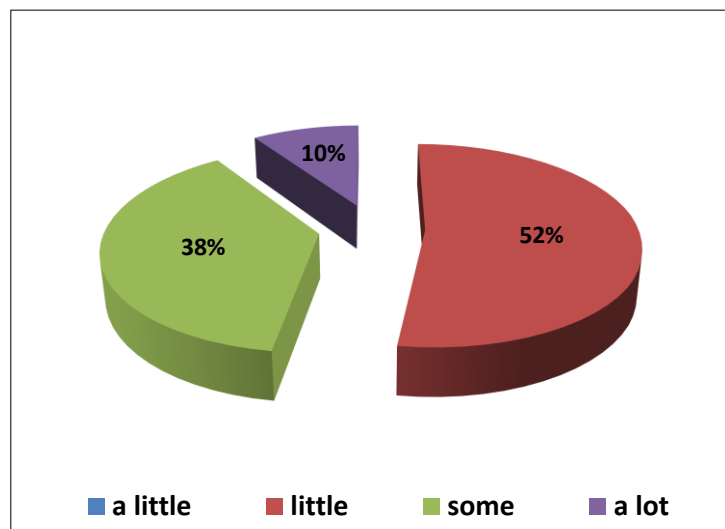


Chart1 shows that 86% of the students speak English in their English classes, but 14% do not. Those who do not speak say that this is either because they are afraid of making mistakes when speaking (33%), or they do not know how to express their ideas in English (67%). However, as it can be seen in Chart 1A, even those who answered “yes” do not speak that much English in class. In fact, just 10% of them use the language as a speaking activity. Thirty-eight percent of them speak some English, and 52% speak a little.

**QUESTION 1b:**

**What do you speak English for? (Tick only one)**

**CHART 1B**

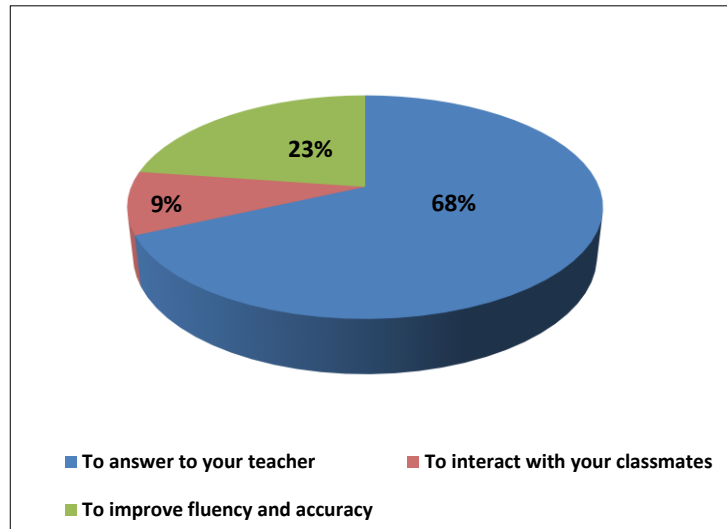
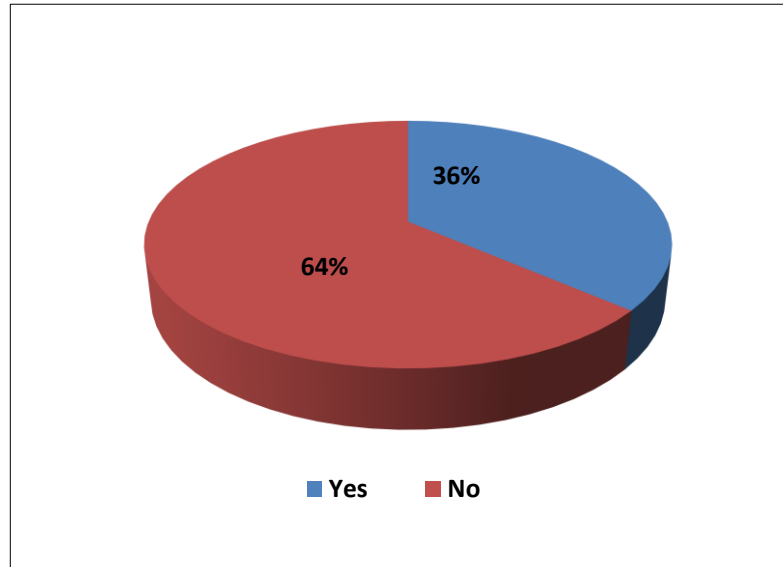


Chart 1B shows that 68% of the students speak English in their English classes to answer their teacher’s questions, 23% of the students speak English to improve their fluency and accuracy, and only 9% use English to interact with their classmates.

**QUESTION 2:**

**CHART 2**

**Do you apply your knowledge of English to talk about your own life and experiences in your English classes?**

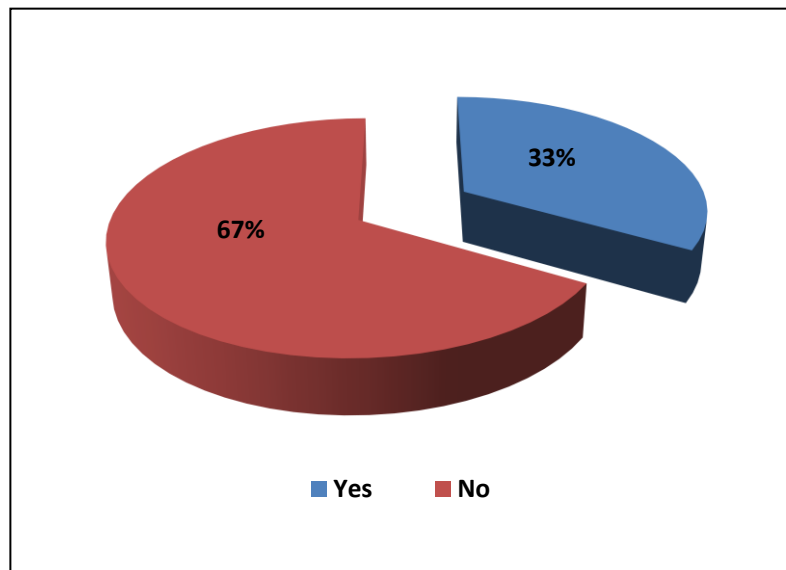


It can be seen in Chart 2 that 64% of the students do not apply what they have learned in English to express their ideas or talk about their lives and experiences in their English classes.

**QUESTION 3:**

**CHART 3**

**Do you get a great amount of significant practice of a new topic?**



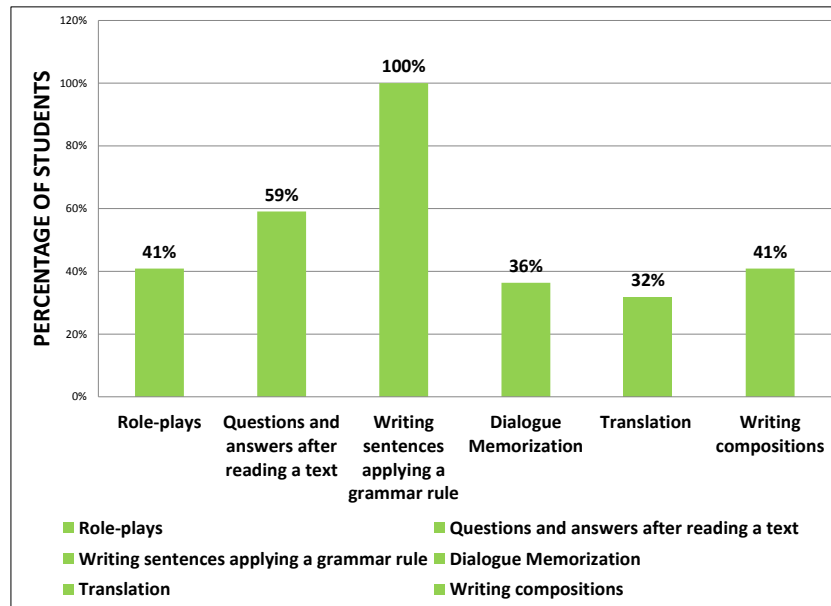
The graphic above shows that 67% of the students have stated that they do not get a great amount of significant practice of a given topic.

#### QUESTION 4:

#### CHART 4

**What does the teacher do to help you practice English in your speaking classes?**

**You can tick more than one answer.**



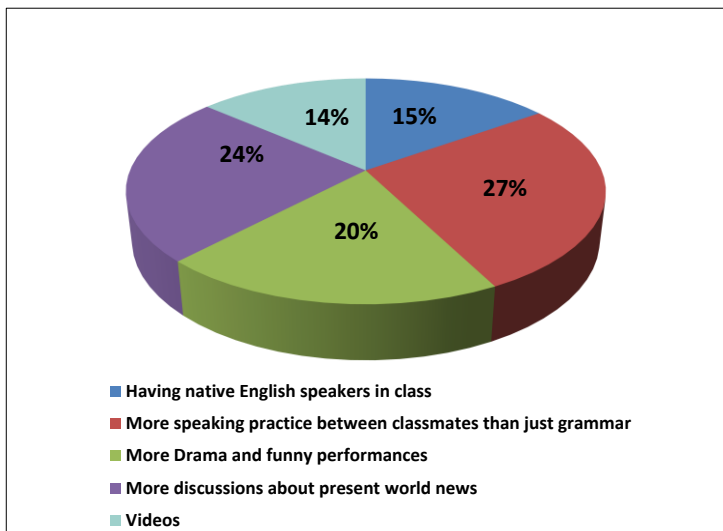
As it can be seen in chart 4, the students answered that the most common activities that their teacher uses to help them communicate in English are: writing sentences applying a grammar rule (100%), dialogue memorization (36%), translation exercises (32%), writing compositions (9%), questions and answers after reading a text (59%), and role-plays (41%).

It is interesting that two writing activities are mentioned for the improvement of speaking skills.

**QUESTION 5:**

**CHART 5**

**What else would you like your teacher to do to improve communication in English in the classroom?**



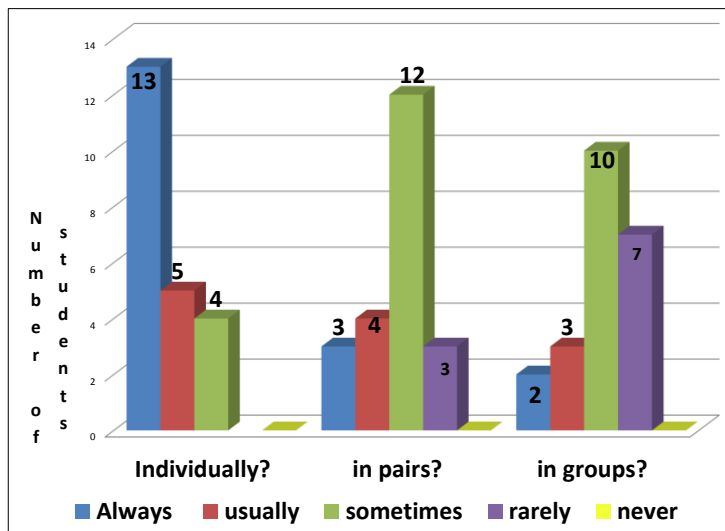
The results in Chart 5 show that the students believe it would be useful to do other kinds of activities in the classroom to improve their communication in English. They think the most important ones are the following: more speaking practice between classmates (27%), more discussions about news and current affairs (24%), more drama and funny performances (20%), producing videos (14%) and having native English speakers in class (15%).



**QUESTION 6:**

**CHART 6**

**In your English classes, how often do you work individually, in pairs and in group?**



This chart displays the frequency with which students work individually, in pairs, or in groups in their English classes. It is to be noted that 13 students said they carry out most of the work individually. 12 students answered that they sometimes work in pairs, and 10 stated that they sometimes work in groups.

**QUESTION 7:**

**CHART 7**

**Does your teacher use a “speaking rubric” or speaking parameters to evaluate your speaking performance in class and tests?**

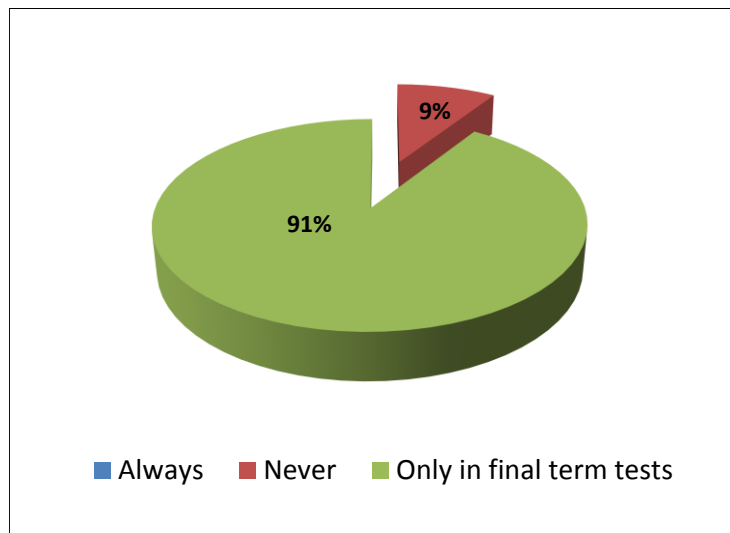


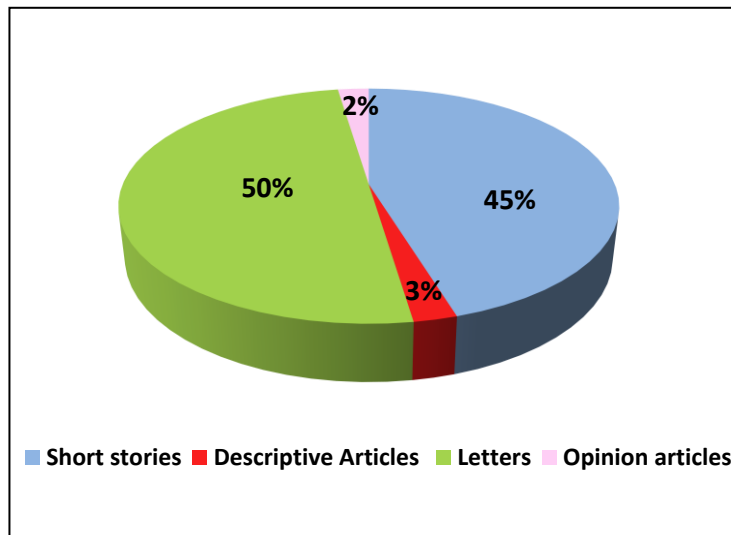
Chart 7 shows that 91% of the students answered that their teacher uses a speaking rubric or speaking parameters to evaluate their oral performance for the final term tests only and 9% said the teacher never uses this evaluation method.

### 1.2.1.2. Students' Survey Data Results: Writing Survey

#### QUESTION 1

**CHART 8**

**Do you know the process for writing short stories, descriptive articles, letters, opinion articles?**



As can be seen in Chart 8, 50% of the students know the process for writing letters in English and 45% the process for short stories. On the other hand, just 3% of them know how to write descriptive articles and only 2% know are aware of the process used to write opinion articles.

**QUESTION 2:**

**CHART 9**

**How often do you write compositions such as short stories, letters, descriptive articles, opinion articles?**

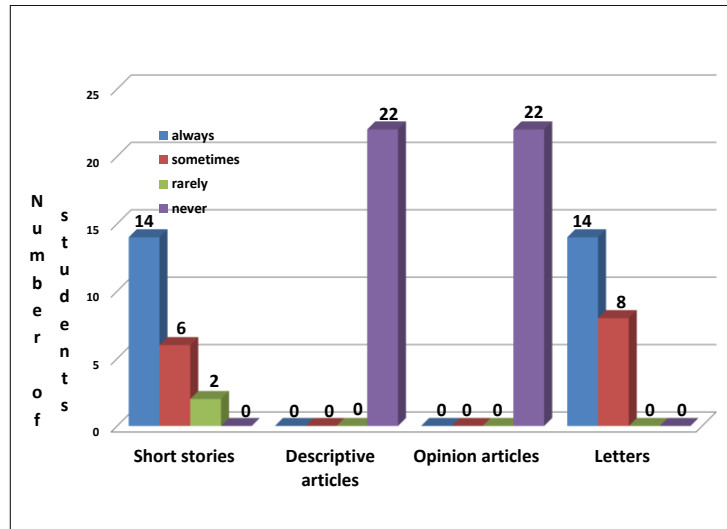


Chart 9 shows the frequency with which the students write different kinds of compositions in their English classes. According to the survey, 14 of them said they always write letters and short stories, and 22 stated that they never write descriptive or opinion articles.

### QUESTION 3

**CHART 10**

**What activities do you do in your English classes to practice writing?**

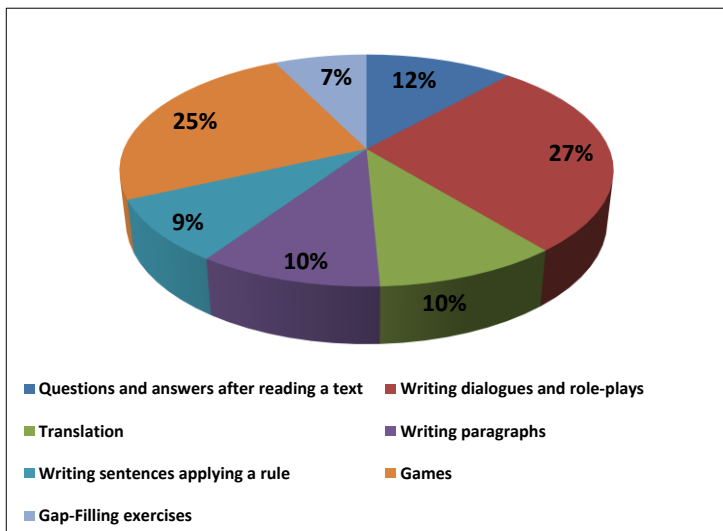


Chart 10 shows that 24% of the students practice English composition by writing sentences applying a grammar rule, 23% by answering questions after reading a text, 17% by doing gap-filling exercises and 14% writing paragraphs about a topic.

#### QUESTION 4

CHART 11

What else would you like your teacher to do to improve writing in the classroom?



Chart 11 above shows the activities the students would like to do to improve their English composition. The majority answered that they could progress in their writing skills by writing dramas and skits, playing games, using ICT and authentic materials.

## QUESTION 5

CHART 12

How does your teacher evaluate your writing work?

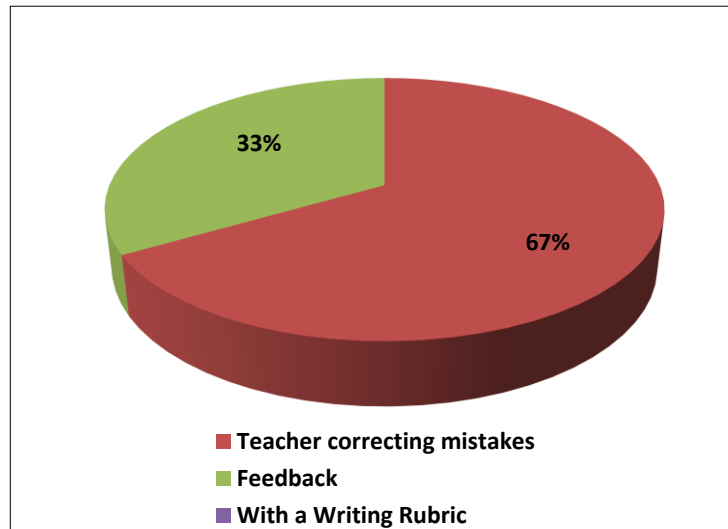


Chart 12 shows how the teacher evaluates the students' written work. Thus, as it can be seen, 67% of the students said their teacher revises their composition by writing the correct word or phrase so they can just replace it. Thirty-three percent said it is common that they get feedback on the mistakes they made in their written work. The teacher is not using a writing rubric at all.

In brief, the results of this study suggest that there might be a need to enhance and improve the current methods used by teachers in speaking and writing classes. Techniques which allow students to speak and write more efficiently and motivate them to do so are implicit in the activities proposed in this project in Chapter 3.

### **1.3. Diagnosis of the Students' Speaking and Writing Development**

The study was applied to 44 students of Year 3 at Maria Auxiliadora High School specializing in Bilingual Administration and Science in the academic year 2011-2012; they were 14 and 15 years olds.

This study was made with the objective of demonstrating the students' development in two English production skills, speaking and writing. It consists of two sections: an analysis of the students' grades in speaking tasks and an error analysis of students' written work.

#### **1.3.1. Students' Speaking Grades Analysis**

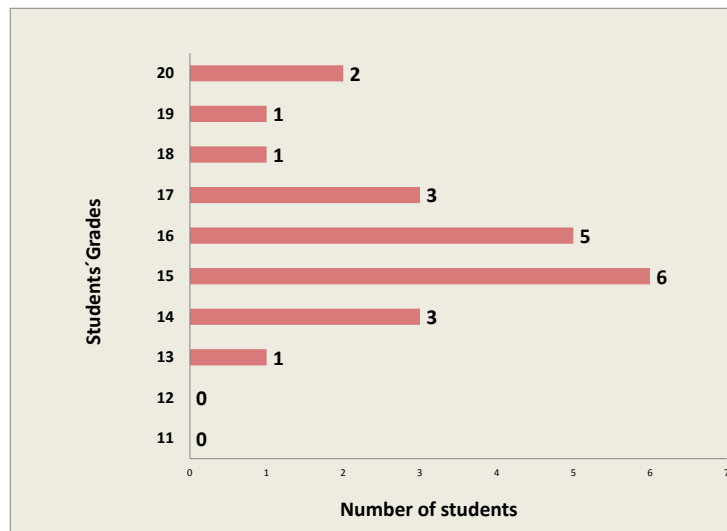
Twenty-two students of Year 3 Science at Maria Auxiliadora High School took an oral test at the beginning of the year. The diagnostic test was a discussion about a topic they had in their coursebook. A speaking rubric was used to diagnose the students' oral communicative performance (See Annex 3).



### 1.3.1.1. Results of the Diagnostic Test

The following chart shows the grades obtained by the students in the speaking task.

**CHART 13**  
**STUDENTS' SPEAKING GRADES**



According to the results displayed in Chart 13, fifteen students obtained a grade between 13 and 16. Only seven students obtained grades between 17 and 20. Therefore, only 32% of the students displayed good speaking skills in this task.

**CHART 14**  
**STUDENTS' SPEAKING PROFICIENCY**

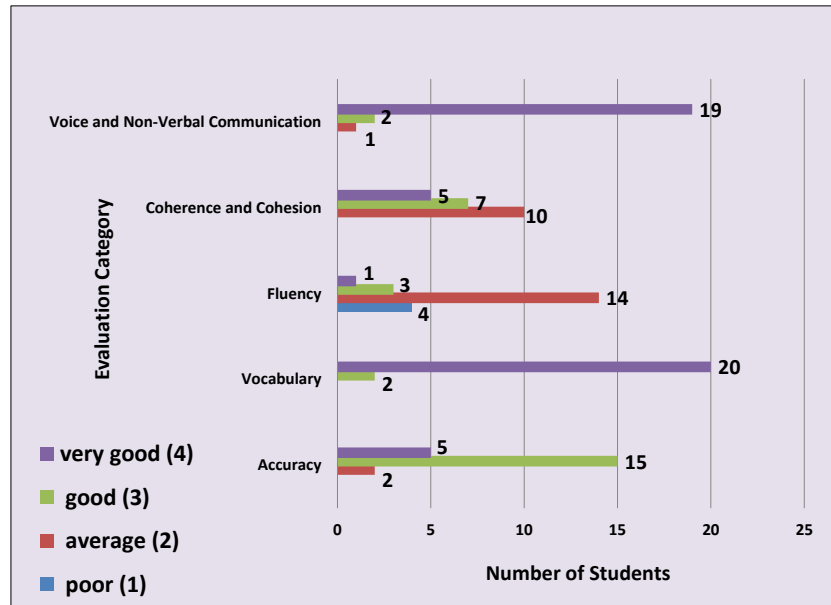


Chart 14 confirms the results that the majority of students achieved low grades in the task. Thus, fourteen students obtained a grade of 2 “average” in fluency as well as 4 “poor”. This means that eighteen students cannot construct sentences and phrases with sufficient ease to talk about the topic. Ten students obtained a grade of 2 “average” in coherence and cohesion. This was because they could not link their ideas using different linking words to talk about the topic. Two students obtained a grade of 2 “average” in accuracy and in voice and non-verbal communication.

### 1.3.2. Diagnosis of the Students' Written Work

A written quiz was applied to 22 students of Year 3 at Maria Auxiliadora High School. The objective of this quiz was to identify the types of errors students make in paragraph and essay writing in English. The 22 students were assigned to write a descriptive article as a diagnostic task required by the school at the beginning of the year. A standard format consisting of 11 symbols was used to analyse their writing. Figure 1 illustrates the error correction symbols used and their meanings.

**FIGURE 1**  
**ERROR CORRECTION SYMBOLS**

<b>SYMBOL</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>S</b>	Incorrect spelling
<b>w.o.</b>	Wrong word order
<b>T</b>	Wrong tense
<b>C</b>	Concord. Subject and verb agreement
<b>WF</b>	Wrong form
<b>S/P</b>	Singular or plural form wrong
<b>^</b>	Missing words
<b>[ ]</b>	Unnecessary words in the sentence
<b>?m</b>	Meaning is not clear
<b>NA</b>	Words used inappropriately
<b>P</b>	Wrong or Missing Punctuation

Source: Byrne, D. Teaching Writing Skills. Pearson Education Ltd

After correction, grading and feedback, the copies of the 22 students' written work were retained for use in this study.

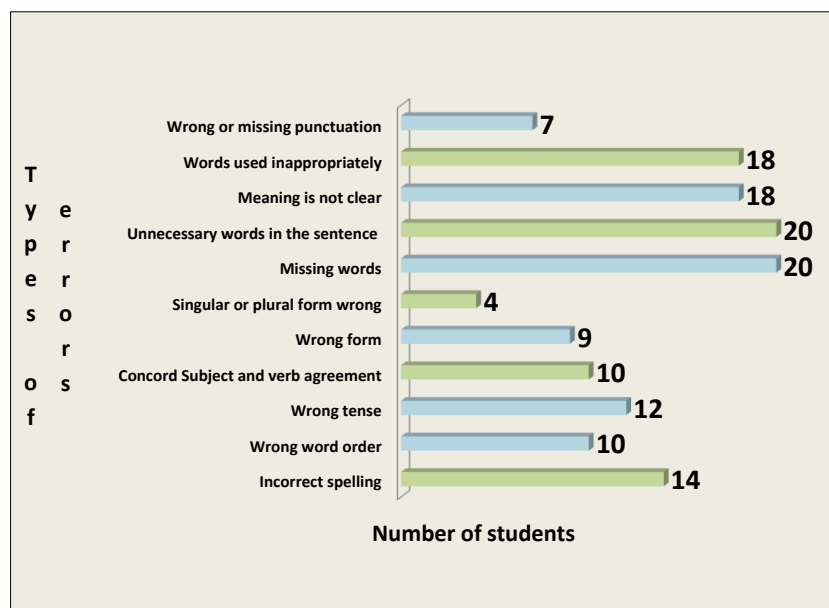
### **1.3.2.1. Results**

The following analysis exposes the most common errors found in the students' writing.

Chart 15 displays the occurrence of errors according to the number of students who made the same type of mistake.

**CHART 15**

**Students' most common writing errors**



According to the results, the students' errors can be described as follows:

The predominance of unnecessary words in sentences (20) and missing words (20) in the students' written work is remarkably high. Their most common form of error was absence of subject, verb, pronouns as well as the lack of conjunctions to join or contrast ideas in the paragraph.

In addition, the diagnosis revealed significant weaknesses in using words appropriately (18), which points to a clear interference of L1 (Spanish) because they confused prepositions such as "for" "by" and "to", conjunctions "so" and "because", personal pronouns, object pronouns and possessive adjectives.

Another frequent error that could be noticed was that some words do not have a clear meaning when the students use them in the sentence (18). Moreover, there are other types of errors such as incorrect spelling of words (14) and inappropriate use of the tense of the verbs.

All in all, the results are instructive, as they quantify the extent of the problems faced by the students who demonstrate little awareness of writing down their ideas efficiently.

#### **1.4. Teachers' survey**

This survey was applied to four English teachers of the three last levels in Maria Auxiliadora High School with the objective of identifying the most important characteristics of their teaching methodology supporting the learning process of the students. This was done so that the results could be used as a basis for this study. The questionnaire applied is presented in Annex 5.

##### **1.4.1. Results of the Teachers' Survey**

###### **1.4.1.1. The Teachers' Speaking Survey**

The results of the speaking survey showed that the teachers follow a syllabus based on a combination of structures and functions. In addition, they stated that between 60 and 70% of their students achieve natural oral communication and fluency by the time they graduate.

**FIGURE 2**

**Strategies and techniques used by teachers**

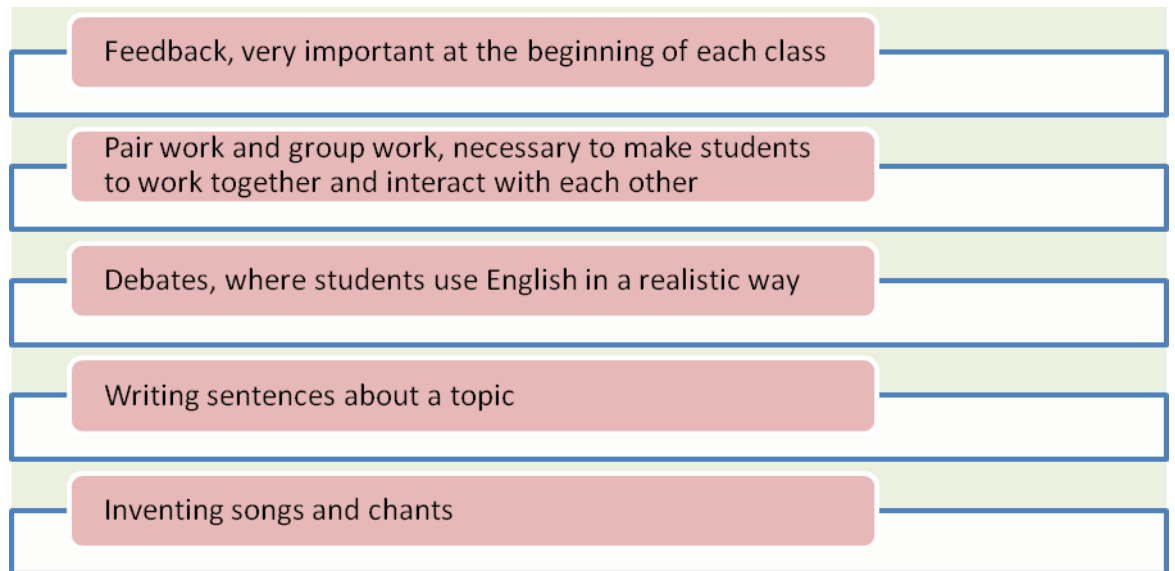
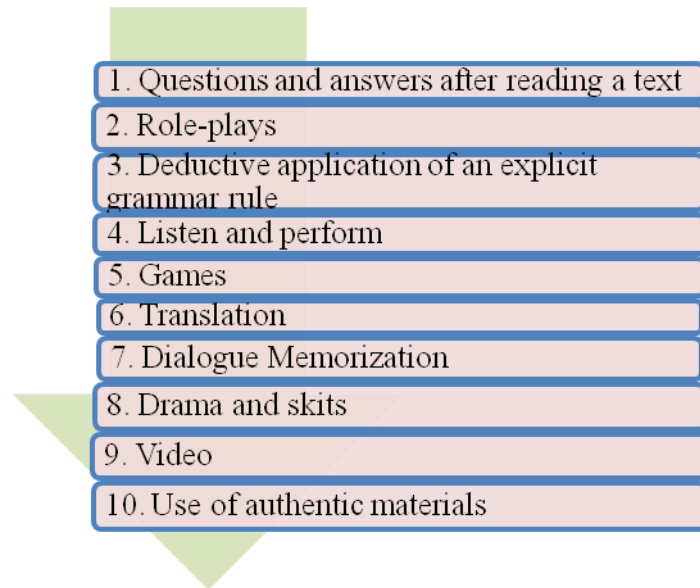


Figure 2 shows the strategies and techniques teachers consider essential to help their students to connect the language structures with the language functions.

The activities teachers use in their classes to encourage students to produce English orally during their English classes are displayed in Figure 3. The teachers checked the activities shown according to the most frequent and important to the least frequent and important.

**FIGURE 3**

**Activities teachers do to encourage students to produce English orally**



Other frequent activities that the teachers mentioned were:

- Debates
- Discussions, and
- English book reviews.

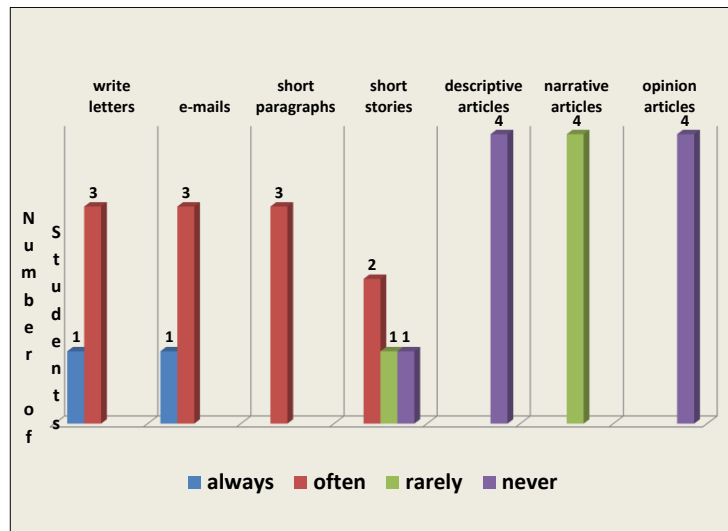
Regarding the criteria teachers use to evaluate oral language proficiency, it is important to mention that every teacher has different standards which are based on parameters such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, presentation, coherence, content, and vocabulary. Each parameter is valued as poor, fair, good, very good or excellent, according to the task the students were asked to perform.

#### **1.4.1.2. Teachers' Writing Survey**

The results of the writing survey stated that the teachers make their students write letters, e-mails, short paragraphs and short stories as the most common styles “frequently”; narrative articles “rarely” and descriptive and opinion articles “never” (Chart 16).

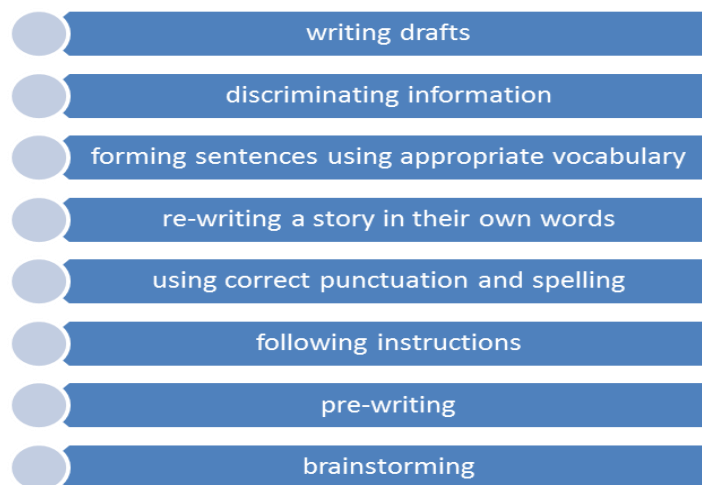
However, the teachers think that these types of composition should also be taught to the students.

**CHART 16**  
**Students' Compositions Frequency**



The teachers also consider it very important to develop the students' writing skills because it allows them to practice the language in a realistic way so that they can become proficient writers in order to succeed in their professional lives. Thus they believe that the most important writing skills to develop are the ones shown in Figure 4.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Teachers' perceptions about important writing activities**





Following instructions and brainstorming might be perceived as pre-writing activities.

The techniques teachers use to develop their students' writing skills are explained in Figure 5 that follows:

**FIGURE 5**

**Techniques used by teachers to develop students' writing skills**



The writing proficiency evaluation is based on parameters such as punctuation and spelling, content, structure of sentences and grammar; all these are graded over the number of errors students make in their compositions under each parameter.

Finally, the teachers indicated that it would be very useful to have a methodological proposal to improve speaking and writing skills. They think having a guide would help them determine which methodology is the best to improve and achieve proficiency and also because it would serve as a supporting material for their English classes.

### **1.5. Conclusions**

Based on the results obtained in this diagnostic assessment and its different stages, it can be concluded that there are a number of students whose speaking and writing performance is below the required standard. Therefore, it is important to determine some

techniques to improve this competence to meet the objectives as defined in the Educational Curricular Program of the school.

In addition, the results of this diagnostic process can help enhance and improve the current methods used by teachers in speaking and writing classes. Techniques which allow students to speak and write more efficiently as well as motivate them to do so are implicit in the activities proposed in this project.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Everything a teacher says and does in the classroom is the result of conscious choices among a variety of teaching alternatives. These are also the result of methodological considerations which come from underlying pedagogical theoretical principles. This project will take into consideration two underlying constructivist theories of learning: Vygotsky's Social Interactionism perspective combined with the Construction of Knowledge and Ausubel's Significant Learning. Additionally, the project will be developed in the light of the Communicative Approach. Utilizing these constructivist theories and a communicative perspective, this study will advocate the application of communicative activities for speaking and writing with a strong connection between theory and principles on the one hand, and classroom teaching and practice on the other.

In order to contextualize constructivist teaching and learning, this project will briefly describe the changes in pedagogy with powerful classroom implications nowadays.

Traditional pedagogy is centered on the teacher and puts emphasis on content. According to this pedagogical view, the teacher's role is to fill up the learners' minds with knowledge during the school year. Moreover, the teacher<sup>1</sup> is the person who always knows, speaks, sets the rules, and chooses the topics of the lesson; on the contrary, the learner is the person who does not know and has to learn from the teacher. This pedagogical model does not value the knowledge, interests and experience that students bring to school.

---

<sup>1</sup>For the purpose of this project "the teacher" will be referred to as "she" and the "student" or "learner" as "he".

Current pedagogical trends have changed this situation greatly. Nowadays, the role of the teacher is to be aware of the students' potential and interests. Therefore, students are recognized for their knowledge and experiences that they have acquired through interaction with others and the physical world. This new pedagogical position leads the teacher to organize the learning process according to the students' interests and needs. Thus, the learner is the starting point when making choices about what and how he learns.

In this way, the learner has become the center of the educational process. Learners are active participants in the construction of their own ideas and the process leads them to learning. The learner-centered classroom focuses on the fact that it is the learner who builds up and contributes to his own learning. When it comes to a learner-centered classroom, foreign language acquisition is facilitated since the student is gradually provided with more and more opportunities for interaction through the introduction of motivating classroom activities. A learner-centered model does not mean that the teacher lays all the responsibility on the students. Rather it is a matter of educating learners so that they will be more autonomous; they will become critical thinkers, active participants and constructors of their own knowledge rather than mere receptors of the teacher's knowledge. In fact, the human side of the students, the development of their personality and the encouragement of positive feelings go hand in hand with foreign language learning (Nunan 14).

## **2.1. CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Current foreign language learning and teaching methodologies and approaches have based their principles on constructivist theories whose main exponents are Piaget and Vygotsky. From a constructivist point of view, "the learner is the constructor of his own knowledge and understanding" (Williams and Burden 30). Constructivism is a theory that puts emphasis on the learners as actors in the creation of their own knowledge and the active agents of the learning process. The learner constructs his knowledge based on what he already knows about the world. The learner is seen as an active participant and

thinker, a sense-maker who is constructing his own knowledge by thriving on realia and ideas.

One aspect of the constructivist theory which cannot be overlooked is the social interaction in which communication takes place. Social Interactionism is the theoretical basis for a communicative approach to language learning. We learn a language by using it to interact meaningfully with other people. Learning a language is learning to communicate through language.

### **2.1.1. Vygotsky's Social Interactionism Theory and the Construction of Knowledge**

Vygotsky is the main exponent of the Social Interactionism Theory. The idea most relevant to our discussion is that “children are born into a social world, and learning occurs through interaction with other people” (Williams and Burden 39). While Piaget puts emphasis on the fact that individuals construct their own personal understanding from their own experience in the world, Vygotsky states that from the time we are born we interact with others in our daily lives and it is through these interactions that we make our own sense of the world. Vygotsky emphasizes that knowledge is not something out there to be learned; it is constructed through interaction and dialogue.

Vygotsky's theory can be understood through the comprehension of the following premises:

- New concepts and ideas are constructed through interaction; knowledge is acquired when concepts move from the social interaction to the mind of the learner.
- Cognitive development depends on the grasp of the world through mediation. Namely, it is the use of **psychological 'tools'** or **'signs'** that changes the relationship between the world and its social members. These tools include counting systems, writing and diagrams, maps, and language.

- A child’s learning is determined by his social interactions. He learns better “when meanings are negotiated through discussion with others” (Randall and Thornton 53).

The most important concept in Vygotsky's model is the '**zone of proximal development**'.

“The zone of proximal development is ... the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.” (Vygotsky 10)

By the zone of proximal development, therefore, he means the area between what the child is capable of at the moment and the point you want him to reach next, if appropriate help and support are given.

There are, then, two developmental levels in Vygotsky’s theory. One, which is usually measured by psychologists interested in intelligence and cognition, is the ability of the child to solve tasks set by an adult, but which the child tackles on his own. The second level is what the child can do with help from the adult. This second measure demonstrates the skills which the child has not yet mastered, but which he is working on now. Vygotsky’s theory about the Zone of Proximal Development underlines the important role of peers and adults in the construction of knowledge in the minds of the students. This idea of learning through interaction with others has led teachers to reflect on their role which is not simply to act as transmitters of knowledge, but to be more like guides and facilitators. Teachers tend to assist students in the process of learning providing them with the necessary tools so they can perform different activities in a successful way. Jerome Bruner called this assistance “scaffolding” (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976 qtd in Wolkfolk 48).

Scaffolding is essentially a way to push the student up toward a higher level of performance. From this point of view, it is important to consider how scaffolding is seen in foreign language acquisition. This can be best explained by Krashen's input hypothesis ( $i + 1$ ) which builds upon the scaffolding approach and means  $i$  = actual level and  $i + 1$  = potential level of language development (Krashen and Terrell, 1983 qtd in Hill and Flynn 16).

Krashen's hypothesis states that a speaker will move to the next level of acquisition when the experience of the target language (the input) includes some of the structures that are part of the next stage of acquisition, and the speaker is encouraged to use language that reflects that more advanced stage.

### **2.1.2. Ausubel's Significant Learning Theory**

David Ausubel was a psychologist who made an important contribution to Constructivism with his Theory of Significant Learning. He believed that an individual acquires or incorporates new knowledge when he relates it to prior knowledge. It follows, then, that Significant Learning is the result of the interaction of prior knowledge with new knowledge and its adaptation to the context. The individual learns by understanding the world around him and integrating this knowledge to meaning, being functional in a definite moment of an individual's life. Moreover, the individual needs to be interested and willing to learn. Significant learning comes from the student's own interest. In other words, anything that the student assimilates because he knows that it is useful, will be valued as important and helpful. Significant learning occurs when the learner has some knowledge in relation to what he wants to learn. Thus, the learner's interest in a certain topic increases. This involvement on the part of the individual helps the retention of new knowledge, causing the newly acquired information to last much longer in his long-term memory. The process becomes personal because new knowledge depends on what the student knows about the world and the relationship that knowledge has with what is being displayed or presented.

Ausubel elaborated three aspects of his theory:

- Logical Significance refers to the internal structure of the content.
- Psychological Significance refers to the non-arbitrary relationship that may coexist between prior knowledge and new knowledge. It is relative to individual learning and depends on previous experiences or ideas.
- Motivation refers to the fact that students must be willing to learn. Its intensity depends on each person and it generates different motivational states.

The following are several basic principles on significant learning that will back up the development of this research project.

Previous knowledge must not only relate to new knowledge, but support it.

The cognitive mental structure incorporates the new information which becomes part of the comprehension report. There is a substantial relationship between new information or knowledge and previous familiar experiences held within an individual's mental structure.

1. Active participation on the part of the students is required. This becomes the basis of the study of how an individual assimilates learning.
2. Students learn from either their own discoveries or a teacher's exposure of the content.
3. Significant Learning is permanent as it is stored in long- term memory.



4. Meaningful learning helps the individual arrive at a new awareness or it provides him with focused challenges and questions to allow for internalization of new ideas. There is a cognitive change during which students move from the unknown to the known through the construction of meaning. Through this process, the learner adopts and adapts the new concepts by constructing his own version. (Brown 56)

In addition, Brown clearly illustrates how these relationships interact during rote learning and, by contrast, in a meaningful one (84).

**FIGURE 6**

**Schematic representation of meaning learning and retention (subsumption)**

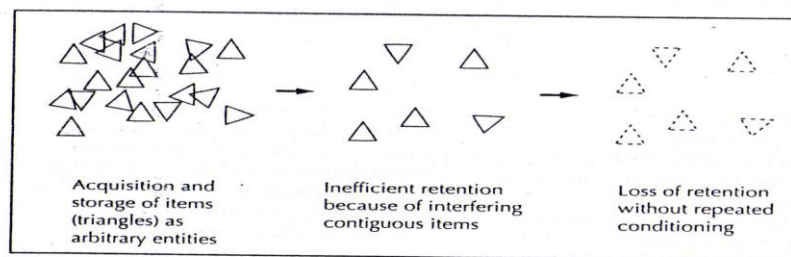


Figure 4.1. Schematic representation of rote learning and retention

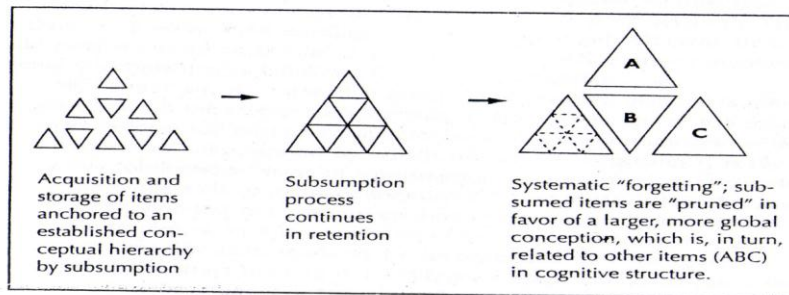


Figure 4.2. Schematic representation of meaningful learning and retention (subsumption)

Source: Brown, Douglas. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Longman, 2000. Print.

5. Mechanical learning and meaningful learning are not opposites. They are complementary in the language learning process. Most of the time, they happen simultaneously. For example, in the foreign language learning process, the

learner assimilates the form of the language through a drilling exercise; the student then uses that same form to solve a problem of communication. Thus the two kinds of learning go hand-in-hand in the classroom (Brown 131).

#### **2.1.2.1. Advantages of Meaningful Learning**

Meaningful Learning (ML) produces long-lasting retention of the information presented. When new information is related to prior information, the former is then kept in long-term memory. The fact that knowledge is made clear in the cognitive structure aids the retention of new content.

ML is an active procedure, since the assimilation of the learning activities is made by the learner through an interactive process.

ML is based on personal experience, since the meaning gained depends on the learner's cognitive resources.

#### **2.1.2.2. The Teacher's Role**

The teacher's role is that of a mediator. He orients and guides the constructivist activities of the students. They must interact in order to build their own learning process generally through the use of mind-maps, dynamics or prompts which encourage the reactivation of previous knowledge. Therefore, a space for discussion and reflection must be encouraged in order to reach an enhanced level of comprehension and motivation.

In order to promote meaningful learning, the teacher must

- Create situational and guided learning.
- Foment learning strategies.
- Use productive feedback to guide and motivate the learner.
- Re-create information and provide familiarity.
- Explain through examples and situations.
- Guide the cognitive process.

Some activities that stimulate meaningful learning include:

- Setting learning objectives and purposes
- Summarizing
- Non-verbal Representations
- Advance Organizers
- Cues, Questions and Answers
- Analogies

(based on: Hill, Jane D. and Björk, Cynthia L. 6)

Ausubel maintained that learning is a constructive process and should be viewed as a set of actions that promote this process. The student organizes the material which is comprehensible and restructures the material as a result of the interaction between what the student knows about the world and the newly learned knowledge. When Ausubel explained the way learning occurs in the classroom, he pointed out that the presented material must be meaningful and logical to the student. “It is necessary to build a cognitive bridge between this new concept and a more general idea already present in the mind of the student. This bridge is called cognitive advance organizer and would consist of one or several general ideas presented before the proper learning materials to facilitate their assimilation.” (Ausubel 267-272)

## **2.2. The Communicative Approach for Foreign Language Learning**

The Communicative Approach for foreign language learning can be best defined in the words of the psychologists Marion Williams and Robert L. Burden. In their book on psychology for teachers of languages they state that "the language and its manifestations either oral or written, or by signs, is the main instrument of communication between individuals within a society". Therefore, the language used between individuals within a society must be considered an indispensable tool of communication and a vehicle for interaction. It can also be said that language is an integral part of each person's identity and is used to convey this identity to other individuals with whom the person interacts in her everyday life (48).

Education, an important series of interactions, is one of the most complex processes in the life of human beings. Within this macro-process, we find micro learning processes, such as the learning of a foreign language. In the foreign language learning process, different variables coexist and interact as important pieces that fit in a whole: the intentions and actions of teacher and students, individuality, personality, motivation, and knowledge of both teacher and student, the level of self-confidence, the climate of the classroom, intergroup attitudes, the diversity of culture, etc. Therefore, teachers must understand their practice from this "multivariate" perspective.

Research indicates that in modern times, the process of the teaching and learning of a foreign language has been influenced mainly by traditional and structural approaches (Calle A.) A structural approach to language learning considers the first language as a system of elements encoded structurally and related to meaning (Richards and Rogers 4). The first main objective of this approach is the learning of the system which is a set of phonetic rules, morphosyntax and lexical items regardless of actual situations of communication. Secondly, the only person that performs the process is the teacher, who is the transmitter of her knowledge; students are merely recipient subjects who absorb it. Thirdly, the types of activities used in the classroom are focused on making students aware of structures, controlling vocabulary and drilling grammar points and sentence patterns through repetition which involves memory and repetitive learning.

These points serve to demonstrate that the structural approach does not help students internalize structures nor does it promote meaningful learning in the classroom, since there is no record of what is learned in the long-term memory. Therefore, when the student wants to express his own ideas or hold a simple conversation, he cannot do it because he doesn't know how. This could be simply because he did not use the linguistic item in class, or because he does not know how to adapt the language learned and use it in a slightly different situation. Widdowson (21) in his article entitled "The Teaching of English as Communication" says this difficulty may arise because the transfer approaches and methods used by the teacher in the teaching-learning process are not correct.

Therefore, one can conclude that the transfer between the student's native language and the foreign language is possible when the student is developing a different skill which is interpretation or translation. Teaching a foreign language for communicative purposes involves an entirely different language perspective and considerations.

The most important goal when learning a language is to be able to say something meaningfully in a given situation to a specific person. To reach this point in language use, we need the correct form of sentences both grammatically and phonologically and we need fluency in meaning and use.

The Communicative Language Teaching Approach perceives language exactly in the terms described above.

### **2.2.1. The Communicative Approach**

The Communicative Approach began to develop in the late 1970s and originally came about in opposition to approaches based on structural language theories, namely the situational teaching of language and the audio-lingual method; these were criticized and questioned by British and American methodologists because they could not support the natural use of the language. On the other hand, the Communicative Approach also arose from the need to develop alternative methods for language teaching in Europe due to the continuous changes in education and the growing interdependence among countries.

Many philosophers, psycholinguists, educators and sociologists contributed to the development of the Communicative Approach. Some names include philosophers John Searle and Paul Grice; philosophers of language, Noam Chomsky and John Firth, the British functional linguist Mark Halliday, and American sociolinguists Dell Hymes, John Gumperz and William Labov, Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson.

This approach is also rooted in the criticism of Chomsky's structural linguistic theory. The Communicative Approach demonstrated that Chomsky could not explain the

creativity and appropriateness of the language of each speaker (Richards and Rodgers 67). Chomsky presents language as grammatical knowledge. He refers to it as language (or linguistic) competence with which a native speaker is born and allows the speaker to make grammatically correct sentences in that language. "Language competence is the tacit knowledge of an ideal speaker-hearer who has a limited number of rules to produce an infinite number of sentences in the language." (Chomsky qtd. in Richards and Rodgers 67).

It should be noted that in this sense Chomsky develops his theory only focusing on language competence based on the use of grammatical rules existing in the mind of the person that uses the language. Thus, his theory supports an ideal speaker-hearer interacting in a linguistically homogeneous community. In this sense, Chomsky did not test other factors that fit into language learning such as the context and the environment (both internal and external) in which a learner is acquiring the language. (Chomsky qtd. in Richards and Rodgers 68).

Dell Hymes questions Chomsky's point of view with regard to language learning and adds social and cultural dimensions to the list of factors affecting learning. In this way he establishes the concept of "communicative competence". He claims that language learning is a set of abilities and skills on the part of the language user. The speaker-hearer-writer-reader of a language must bring the language into play to produce or comprehend speech acts appropriate for the situation and the context of communication and the required degree of formalization (Hymes qtd. in Harmer 13-15). Therefore, communicative competence, as well as socio-cultural, sociolinguistic, discursive and linguistic knowledge will be the set of skills and knowledge that enable members of a community to interact through language. In this sense, communicative competence refers to the ability of a person to interpret and use the social meaning of language in any circumstance or situation. However, in order to communicate, the speaker needs to have linguistic competence of a certain level in order to use the language appropriately. Thus, English teaching should be at least partly communicatively oriented, so that students can acquaint themselves with appropriate language use.

The Common European Framework (CEFR) defines communicative language competences as “those which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means” (9).

In conclusion, communicative competence involves principles of appropriateness and a readiness on the part of the learner to use the language for different situations.

### **2.2.2. Accuracy and Fluency**

One of the principles of the Communicative Approach is to provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency.

Students who are learning English in a non-English speaking country have less of a chance to learn acceptable levels of English inside the classroom. Therefore, the question arises as to the relationship between accuracy and fluency: which one should be more important if the ultimate goal of foreign language learning is communication.

Accuracy is attained when the student masters the language forms through classroom language practice. He is expected to manipulate the language system as spontaneously as possible. When focusing on accuracy, the student is extremely particular about linguistic details. When a student is keenly interested in the exact words and tends to focus on discrete grammar points and specific syntactic constructions, the learning is dominated by accuracy.

Fluency is natural language use. It occurs when a learner tries out meaningful interaction and maintains meaningful communication despite his limitations. Moreover, communicative language learning emphasizes that making mistakes while communicating is part of the natural way of engaging in a foreign language. A student who has learned the grammar patterns or the language forms needs to go far beyond that. He ought to be given intensive fluency practice integrating the newly acquired grammar

point in the foreign language that the student already knows (also referred to as interlanguage) (Brown 268).

### 2.2.3. Oral and Written Communication Strategies

During the foreign language learning process, learners use many language learning strategies either consciously or unconsciously when processing new information, facing problem solving activities, etc. Learners use their own devices to express something meaningfully when faced with some difficulty, for example, lack of words or grammar and, therefore, need to communicate using their own means to convey meaning. Stern refers to these “as techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language”. (32). The more strategies the learners develop, the better they will get on in their discourse and speech.

According to Stern the most common communication strategies are as follows:

- Paraphrasing: This refers to learners using different words or phrases to express their intended meaning. For example, if they do not know the word “grandma” they may paraphrase it by saying “my mother’s mother”.
- Substitution: Learners may avoid a difficult word by using a different one. For example, a learner will overcome the difficult word without losing much of the meaning by substituting the word “however” with “but”.
- Coining new words: This refers to learners creating new words or phrases for words that they do not know. For example, a learner might refer to a church as a “*pray place*”.
- Language switch: Learners insert a word from their first language into a sentence. For example, a learner might write “In the last *siglo*, many people learned *como* use the computer.”
- Clarification: This strategy consists of asking an interlocutor for the correct word. It is an oral communication strategy.
- Non-verbal strategies: The use of gestures and miming to convey meaning.



- Avoidance: Learners often avoid talking about topics which they do not know enough or for which they do not have the necessary vocabulary or other language skills in the foreign language. There are other times when language learners might start to talk about a topic, but abandon it because they discover that they lack the language resources needed to complete the message (Stern qtd. in Thao)

#### **2.2.4. Speaking and Social Interaction Activities**

Stephen Krashen states “The learner must receive comprehensible input”. Stephen Krashen holds a strong position on immersion. This means that the more the learner listens to the foreign language the better he will progress and gradually will be pushed to modify his speech because he will be constantly facing breakdowns in communication and will have to negotiate for meaning. In this manner, he will activate background knowledge and integrate new language while communicating and interacting with his peers. (54).

Swain’s Output Theory (76) argues that learners realize what linguistic items they are missing when they notice differences in conversation with others. This helps them construct or reconstruct their own language production. This theory advocates that speakers can notice the differences between themselves and another speaker in conversation, which may also be used to develop rules about language discourse and how these rules can be applied to other linguistic situations.

Speaking activities include such tasks as learners comparing sets of pictures and noting similarities and differences, working out a likely sequence of events in a set of pictures, discovering missing features in a map or picture, one learner communicating behind a screen to another learner and giving instructions on how to do something, following directions, and information gap style activities.

Social interaction activities include conversation and discussion sessions, dialogues and role plays, simulations, skits, improvisations and debates. These two types of activities

(speaking and social interaction) give the learner a lot of speaking practice in possible real life situations.

Speaking and oral interaction activities reflect the natural use of language and have the following characteristics in common:

- Focus on achieving communication.
- Require meaningful use of language.
- Require the use of communication strategies.
- Produce language that may not be predictable.
- Seek to link language use to context.

An example for such an activity is when the teacher uses an informative text. For example, information about two holiday resorts and accommodation or it could be a pamphlet with information about a couple of exhibitions. What is important here is to be sure that there are different pieces of information in the texts offering different options so that one has to think and talk about his/her choice and justify it. This is organized in pairs. One student reads the text and then shares the information with his/her partner who doesn't understand the language of the text. Thus, the reader must provide the general idea of the text to the other student.

The range of activities is unlimited. These activities enable learners to attain the communicative objectives of the curriculum, they engage learners in communication, and require the use of such communicative processes as information sharing, negotiation of meaning and interaction.

### **2.2.5. Writing Activities**

We use written language for a variety of purposes, usually in a social context. Therefore, language learning activities must be set up in a social context and must have relevance to our learners as individuals. Written activities must be personalized. This means that the

learners will be expressing their own ideas and feelings and generally communicating about things that matter. Summarizing and note-taking are two types of written activities.

- Summarizing: A summary is picking out the more important parts of a text, story, film, narrative, etc. An example of a written activity goes as follows. The teacher gives out a narrative. Students have to pick out the most important events of the story, but these have to be in order. Then they have to draw a chart, on one side of the chart they have to draw a picture relevant to the events in the story, and on the other side of the chart they have to write out the event. It looks like a little story.
- Note-taking is closely related to summarizing. Students take information and synthesize it using their own words. The purpose is to help students integrate knowledge. If students have problems in note-taking, the teacher can ask them to draw what they understand after they have read or listened to a text. For language learners, the more graphics, the better. There are many note-taking activities. The students can process information using outlines, webbing, graphic representations, etc.

#### **2.2.6. The Student's Role in the Communicative Approach**

Students are expected to interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher, and the correction of errors may be absent or infrequent. Students are encouraged to see that failed communication is a joint responsibility and not exclusively the fault of the speaker or listener. Similarly, if the learners can communicate successfully, it is considered to be an achievement to be acknowledged. Students must be made aware that they are learning a language through using it to communicate either orally or in written form. In addition, they need to know that authentic and meaningful communication is the goal of classroom activities and that fluency is an important aspect of communication. Students must integrate the four skills to use the language for

communication through a process of creative construction which involves trial and error. This is defined as “interlanguage” which is an emerging language system in the mind of a foreign language learner. The student’s interlanguage can be characterized by the following features:

- Language transfer: Learners rely on their first language to be able to create their new language system.
- Overgeneralization: Learners learn rules of the foreign language in a way that native speakers will not. This includes overgeneralizing certain features and disregarding exceptions.
- Simplification: Learners often use a highly simplified form of language. (Lightbown and Spada 80-84)

### **2.2.7. Designing the Tasks**

In order to design the communicative tasks for this research project, it was necessary to determine a communicative theoretical basis to support this design. This theoretical basis is constructed according to what the communicative approach for teaching languages establishes.

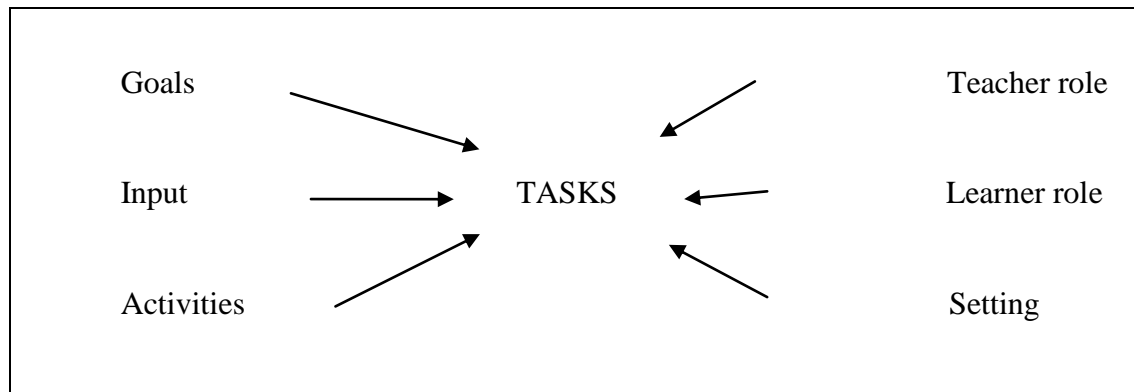
First we will look at the concept, purpose and characteristics of communicative tasks as well as the sequence to follow in their design. Also, this section will expose the differences between the speaking and writing activities. Finally, some principles are stated as a foundation for the construction of the tasks presented in Chapter 3.

David Nunan defines a communicative task as “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form” (10).

Nunan (11) states that communicative tasks should have 6 components:

**FIGURE 7**

**A framework for designing communicative tasks**



**Source: Nunan, David. *El diseño de tareas para la clase comunicativa*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.**

**Goals:** Goals are the vague general intentions behind any given learning task. They provide a point of contact between the task and the broader curriculum; it is the teacher's general aim for the task.

**Input:** Data that form the point of departure for the task. It can be derived from a wide range of resources.

**Activities:** Specify what learners actually do with the input which forms the point of departure for the learning task.

**Teacher role:** Monitor and Facilitator

**Learner role:** A conversational partner.

**Setting:** Classroom/Pair work.

It is important to understand that communicative tasks have a direct relation to the syllabus design. The teacher prepares the list of contents that will be taught; moreover, she thinks immediately of the way these contents can be developed. Therefore, the

development of appropriate communicative classroom tasks will be the result of a process of preparation, elaboration and sequencing of learning activities that stimulate interactive language use.

Communicative tasks fulfill two important learning needs; they prepare learners for real-life language use and they encourage the automatization of language knowledge. The intention of a communicative task is to encourage purposeful and meaningful interaction between students in class. Thus a communicative task has to be designed so that students have a reason or purpose for speaking or writing. These tasks should be motivating as well as offer a challenge in which real-life interaction should be represented.

Communicative tasks are characterized by the following features:

- The motivation of the activity is to achieve some outcome, using language.
- The activity takes place in real time.
- The outcome requires the interaction of the participants.
- The outcome is not predictable.
- There is no restriction on the language use.

A communicative task which aims to teach new language is frequently organized into a three-phase instructional sequence consisting of Preparation, Presentation, Practice or Production.

- **Preparation:** Brainstorming is the best way to activate what students know about the subject. There are also graphic organizers, teacher demonstration, use of videos and films, visiting websites, etc.
- **Presentation:** The topic related information is presented and explained to the whole class. The teacher presents the topic through visuals, tables, charts, questions, etc. to help them contextualize the topic. The teacher should vary the way of presenting the topic.

- **Practice:** During this stage, students will interact in different oral and written activities. This means that students work together in groups or in pairs, they share information and help each other. It can be compared to team work in which all the members strive to their best in order to achieve goals successfully. In the practice stage students apply the new knowledge and use it in different contexts. Figure 8 shows one type of practice for writing and speaking activities.

**FIGURE 8**

**The type of practice for writing and speaking tasks**

<p><b>For Writing Tasks</b></p> <p><b>Guided Writing:</b> Douglas Brown says “Guided writing loosens the teacher’s control but still offers a series of stimulators. For example, the teacher might get students to tell a story just viewed on a video by asking them a series of questions such as: Where does the story take place? Describe the principal character....” (144)</p>	<p><b>For Writing and Speaking Tasks</b></p> <p><b>Free Production:</b> These activities are designed to give either creative practice opportunities for predicted language items, or general fluency practice, where the specific language focus is less relevant. Besides in this stage the students have the opportunity to experiment, to see how far they can communicate in different situations, and to practice the language they know fluently. In addition, these activities increase students’ motivation since they talk for themselves. (Gower, Philips and Walters 101).</p>
--	--

## Differences between Speaking and Writing Tasks

When we talk about productive skills we refer to Speaking and Writing. Even though, they, both share the characteristics of using the language to create language output, they are different in the way they are taught because of the following reasons:

**FIGURE 9**

### Differences between Speaking and Writing Tasks

<b>SPEAKING</b>	<b>WRITING</b>
Speech is full of redundancy, hesitations, interruptions, self-corrections, pauses, etc.	A piece of writing is complex and needs to be concise. Writers must learn how to remove redundancy.
Fluent speech is phrasal not word by word. It is characterized by contractions, reduced vowels, stress, pitch, accent, intonation which convey important messages.	Spelling and punctuation conventions exist.
Oral language production relies on gestures.	Written language is elaborated.
It is based on turn-taking.	It takes the form of a monologue.
It is less organized or structured.	Written language is highly structured and organized.
A speaker can refer to people, objects by pointing with gestures or by using pointing words.	A writer does not share an immediate environment with their readers and has to make explicit references to people and objects.
A speaker can check whether they are being understood by looking at the listener's expression, by asking or being directly prompted.	A writer has a limited means of knowing whether the reader will understand the message.
A precise sequence is not a requisite	A plan is required to achieve sequence



for effective communication.	and selection that will lead to effective communication. (Gower, Philips and Walters 101).
------------------------------	--

There are some principles that should be taken into account when designing a communicative task to develop either speaking or writing skills. According to Brown (277) these principles are as follows:

### **Principles to Develop Speaking Skills**

1. Using techniques that cover the spectrum of learner needs from language-based focus on accuracy to message-based focus on interaction, meaning and fluency
2. Encouraging the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts
3. Providing appropriate feedback and correction
4. Giving opportunities to initiate oral communication
5. Encouraging the development of speaking strategies
6. Asking for clarification
7. Asking someone to repeat something
8. Using fillers
9. Using conversation maintenance clues
10. Using mime and nonverbal expressions

### **Principles to Develop the Writing Skill**

1. Providing as much authentic writing as possible
2. Accounting for cultural/literary backgrounds
3. Balancing process and product
4. Framing your techniques in terms of prewriting, drafting, and revising stages

- Prewriting stage: reading a passage, skimming or scanning a passage, conducting some outside research, brainstorming previous knowledge, listing individually, clustering or free word association, discussing a topic or question, etc.
- Drafting and revising stages: The drafting and revising stages are the core of process writing. Drafting and revising is viewed as a set of important strategies. Several starts and skills apply to the drafting/revising process in writing
  - Adapting the free-writing technique
  - Monitoring one's own writing
  - Peer-reviewing for content
  - Using the instructor's feedback
  - Editing for grammatical mistakes
  - "Read Aloud" technique. (In small groups or pairs, students read their almost final drafts to each other for a last check or errors.
  - Proofreading. (348)

### **2.3. Conclusion**

Based on the study of Vygotsky's Interactionism and Construction of Knowledge as well as Ausubel's Significant Learning and the Communicative Approach for language learning, the following conclusions can be drawn which will support the elaboration of the project to improve the oral and written competence of the Year 3 students at Maria Auxiliadora High School.

1. Constructivism advocates learner-centered activities. In the Communicative Approach for language learning and teaching, the learner is considered the central agent of the learning process. Students express their emotions, feelings, desires, and needs and they are encouraged to volunteer their thoughts as a strategy for learning. The teacher is the facilitator who creates opportunities for students to practice and produce language and is the mediator who encourages them to talk about their own topics and ideas.

2. Ausubel's Significant Learning Theory contributes to this study since students learn meaningfully when what they learn is fun, familiar and comprehensible. Meaningful learning will lead toward better long-term retention. Students will learn better when the subject matter appeals to their interests, age, academic and career goals. Moreover, new topics or concepts must be anchored in the students' existing knowledge and background so that they become associated with something they already know. Thus, classroom activities must have a clear purpose and meaning.
3. Vygotsky's theory concentrates on learning in cooperation with others. In the era of communicative language learning interacting with others is communicating with others. We send and receive messages every day, we internalize and understand them, and we negotiate meaning. Wilga Rivers puts it this way when she refers to classroom interaction "through interaction students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the output of their fellow students in discussions, skits, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals. In interaction, students can use all they possess of the language—all they have learned or casually absorbed—in real life exchanges" (4-5).
4. Learning through stages is another premise taken from Vygotsky's view. The teacher has to determine in which stage of language acquisition the student is. Recognizing the level of language proficiency is an important factor for setting language learning objectives and classroom activities suitable for the language level at which the learner is.
5. The Communicative Approach for language learning highlights the interaction with language use. Students talk about their interests and their feelings with creativity and innovation. Students will progress in the use of language by means of trial and error, by processing feedback, and building hypotheses about language, etc. Namely, teachers do not simply tell students how language works;

instead, they give students opportunities to use language as they have to face the complex features of the foreign language. For example, role-plays and simulations, research projects, hands-on projects, etc. This is how students will enhance their foreign language learning and will become skilled users of the target language for communication.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**THE PROJECT: THE METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING**  
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRODUCTIVE SKILLS IN SPEAKING AND WRITING**  
**IN YEAR 3 AT MARIA AUXILIADORA HIGH SCHOOL.**

**Introduction**

The present research project took place at Maria Auxiliadora High School, whose main objective is to enhance the students' personal and professional development providing them an integral education with high levels of excellence in line with the current scientific and technical innovations towards nurturing active agents of social change and development.

The students' "profile" requires the students in Year 3 to achieve a high level of communicative competence in the English language. The objective of this project is precisely to provide the students of the third year with a variety of opportunities to develop their communicative skills.

In addition, the activities proposed in this piece of research aim at establishing situations where the students can gain greater levels of proficiency in English production skills, (speaking and writing) so they can acquire higher levels of fluency, coherence and accuracy when they have to use the language either orally or in writing.

**3.1. Project Design**

This project took place at Maria Auxiliadora High School. Forty-four students of Year 3 from the institution took part in it. It was divided into two sections: one concerning speaking and one concerning writing activities in class.

The speaking part was applied to 22 students specializing in Science while the writing part was directed at 22 students of Bilingual Administration. This project was applied during the first two terms of the school year between September 2011 and March 2012.

### **3.1.1. Communicative Tasks Design**

The communicative tasks proposed in this research were designed according to the characteristics and principles stated in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.7)

These communicative tasks intend to facilitate the students to achieve a higher level of communicative competence in both speaking and writing. Moreover, they aim to involve the students in **communication** through the use of a communicative process which includes information sharing, negotiation of meaning, and interaction.

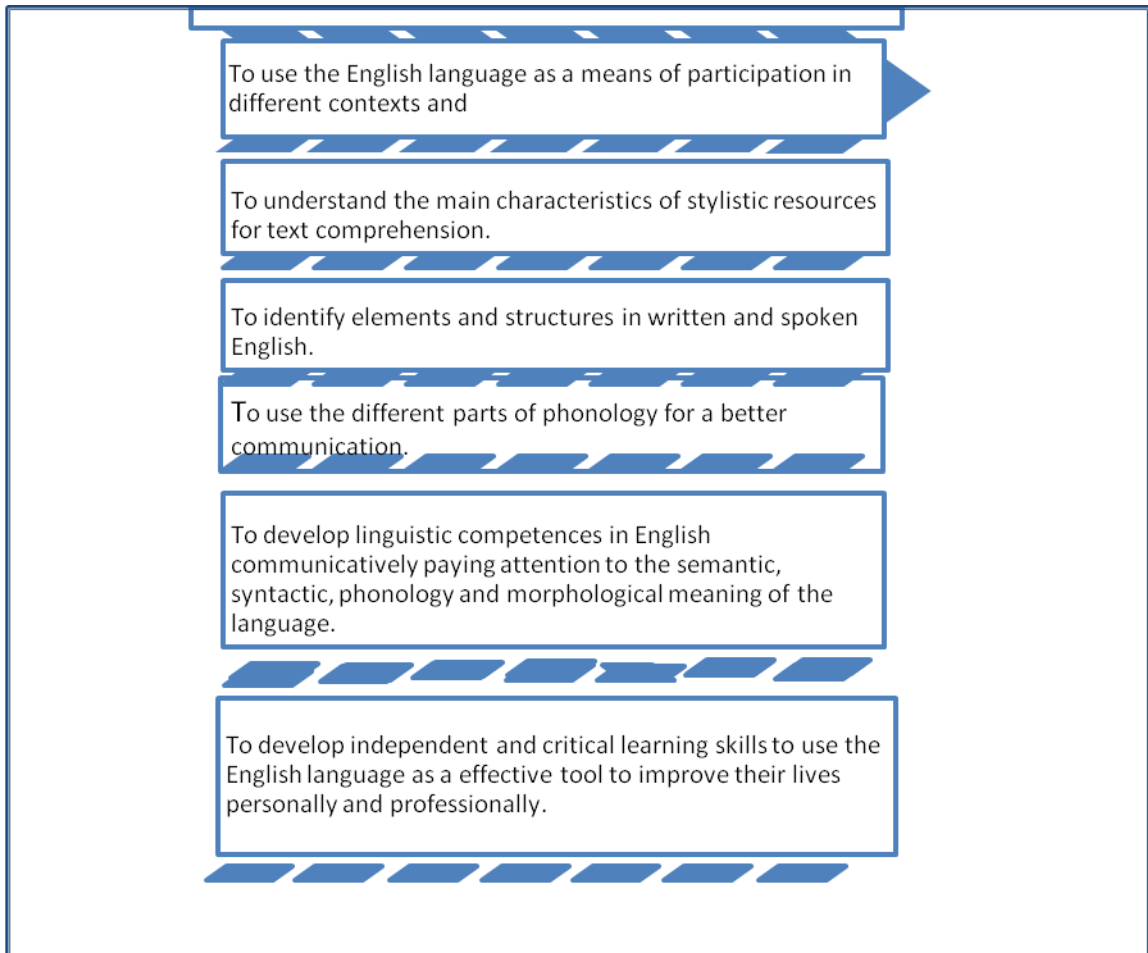
Every activity was based on the three stages mentioned in Chapter 2. These are:

- The **preparation stage** in which the main purpose was to arouse students' interest and activate their previous knowledge of the topic through brainstorming ideas using different materials such as pictures, videos, movies, charts, and comprehension questions. All of these resources involved the students in the topic and prepared them to perform.
  
- The **presentation stage** in which the activity was set up giving to students instructions of what they had to do. In this part of the process, the teacher always checked that the students have understood the aim of the activity and what they were to do by using different techniques for clarifying students' doubts.
  
- The **production stage** in which the students develop the activity in pairs or groups by using the different materials presented as charts, role-plays, games, jigsaws, internet, and realia.

Likewise, the tasks designed, for speaking and writing, refer to the objectives and contents required by the Annual Plan for Year 3 at the school.

The objectives defined in the Annual Plan for Year 3 are shown in Figure 10.

**FIGURE 10**  
**Language Objectives for Year 3**



**Source: Annual Plan. Third year of Maria Auxiliadora High School**

Figure 11 shows the list of contents required for Year 3.

**FIGURE 11**  
**List of Contents**

SUBJECT	COMPETENCE	CONTENT
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH	PRAGMATICS	<p><b>SPEAKING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• True life experiences</li> <li>• Fashion</li> <li>• Animals in Danger</li> <li>• Sports and games</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Traveling</li> </ul> <p><b>WRITING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptive articles</li> <li>• Narrative articles: Stories</li> <li>• Opinion Articles</li> </ul>

**Source: Maria Auxiliadora High School. Annual Plan**

### 3.2.1.1. Writing Activities

Ten communicative tasks for developing writing were applied to Year 3 students during the months from September 2011 to March 2012. The tasks developed are listed in Figure 12.

**FIGURE 12**  
**Communicative Tasks for Writing**

True life experiences Narrative articles in first and third person	<p><b>Beauty Pageant Experience</b></p> <p>Narrate an event</p> <p><b>What a Relief!</b></p> <p>Narrate a true story in third person</p>
Animals in Danger	<b>Preserving Endangered Species</b>



Opinion Article	Giving and defending an opinion
Sports Website Feature Article	<b>More Gain, Less Pain</b> Giving advice to keep fit
Fashion A Survey Report	<b>Girls' Fashion Survey</b> To write a report based on a diagram.
Technology Opinion Articles	<b>Watching TV is a Waste of Time</b> To give suggestions and recommendations.  <b>Will Life in the Future Be Better?</b> To write a short article expressing opinion
Fictional Characters Descriptive Article	<b>What a Character!</b> Describing a fictional character
Education A Promotional Flier	<b>A Writing Course</b> To become familiar with the writing process.
Travelling Descriptive Article	<b>"The Most Amazing World Cultural Heritage Place on Earth"</b> Describing a famous place

## WRITING ACTIVITY 1

### BEAUTY PAGEANT EXPERIENCE

**PURPOSE:** To narrate an event

**TIME:** 60 min

#### PROCEDURE

1. Brainstorm some vocabulary related to these categories:

Feelings and  
Emotions

Qualities and  
Skills

Embarrassing  
Moments

Suggested questions for eliciting the vocabulary:

- **Feelings and Emotions:** The teacher can ask “If you were a candidate in a beauty pageant, how would you feel?”
- **Qualities and Skills:** The teacher can ask “What qualities and skills must a candidate show on stage?”
- **Embarrassing Moments:** The teacher can ask “What could be embarrassing for a candidate on stage?” The teacher helps the students to come up with vocabulary and expressions such as: *The participant fell down/staggered while walking on stage; the participant’s mind blocked up; the participant could not understand the question; the participant didn’t give a coherent answer; the participant stammered while talking.*

2. Present the students with the following situation: “Imagine that two days ago you participated as a candidate in the Miss Ecuador Pageant, representing the city of Cuenca. Everything was going well. However, in the final part of the selection process, you did not answer the questions correctly, because your mind blocked

up and the ideas did not come to you. You felt overwhelmed. You did not want to talk to anybody but decided to write up the story in your diary.

3. Tell the students to write a story about what happened that night.
4. Explain to the students that they have to break the story into three parts:
  - a. What happened before the embarrassing moment?
  - b. Narrate the embarrassing moment.
  - c. What happened after the embarrassing moment?
5. Tell them to start like this:

*On the night of March 17, I experienced the most embarrassing moment of my life. This day, I woke up very happy .....*

## WRITING ACTIVITY 2<sup>2</sup>

### WHAT A RELIEF!

**PURPOSE:** Narrate a true story in third person

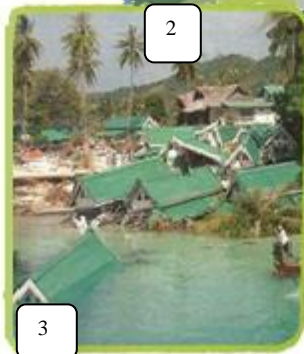
**TIME:** 60 min



1



2



3

### PROCEDURE

1. Tell students to look at the pictures and say what they can see in them. Elicit answers from the students. Suggested answers: *hill, mountains, sea, canoes, big waves, beach, people, palm trees, beach houses under the water.*
2. Have students look at the pictures again. Tell them that these pictures summarize a true story that happened to some people when they were on holiday in Thailand and ask them questions for each category described below. Make the board look similar to the cloud chart below.

Suggested questions for eliciting ideas:

**WHO?** Who do you think was involved in this story?

**WHERE?** Where were they?

**WEATHER?** What do you think the weather was like?

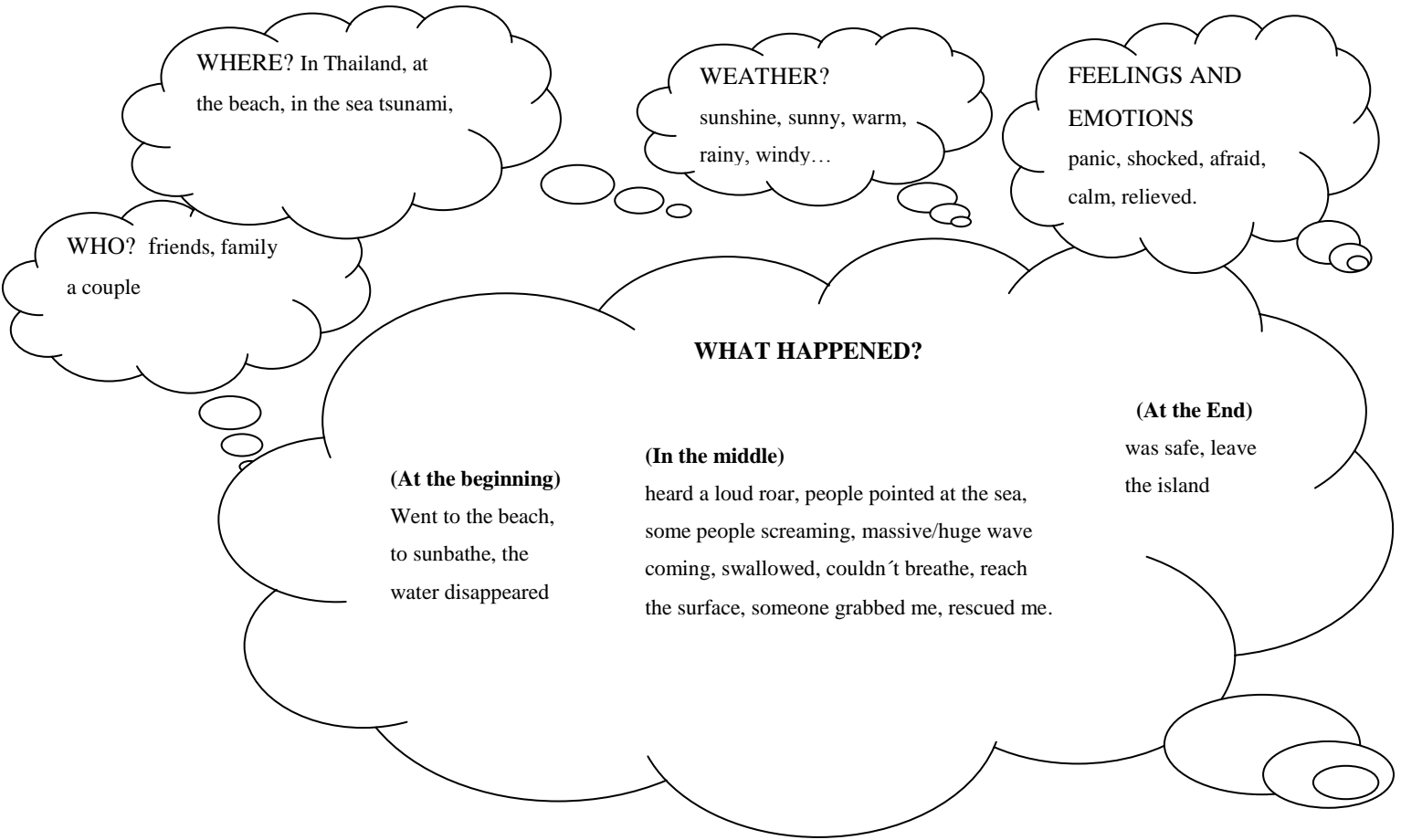
**WHAT HAPPENED?** What kind of a story do these pictures tell?

How do think this story begins? What happened (to) then? How do you think this story ends?

**FEELINGS:** How do you think people felt?

---

<sup>2</sup> Activity adapted from Evans, Virginia, and Jenny Dooley. *Access. Student's Book*. Newbury: Express Publishing, 2008. Printed



3. Present the students with the following situation: Imagine that a close friend of you and her family travelled to Thailand on holiday. They were enjoying the trip a lot, but there was a terrible tsunami the morning before they were going to come back to Ecuador. Your friend and her family were at the beach sunbathing. Your friend told you that it was the most terrifying moment she had ever had. You were very shocked of her experience. So, as a member of the school magazine club you decide to share this story and write an article about it.
4. Tell the students to write the story of what happened that morning to their friend.
5. Explain to the students that they have to break the story into four parts:
  - a. Set up the scene: How the story begins, people involved in the story, weather, atmosphere, feelings.

- b. Narrate the moment the tsunami occurred.
- c. Narrate what happened after the tsunami hit.
- d. Feelings and reactions experienced afterwards.

**6.** Tell them to start like this.

*One beautiful sunny morning my friend, Laura, and her family were at the beach in Thailand having lots of fun. It was very hot so she decided to go sunbathing.....*

### WRITING ACTIVITY 3

#### PRESERVING ENDANGERED SPECIES

**PURPOSE:** Giving and defending an opinion

**TIME:** 80 min

#### PROCEDURE

1. In groups, the students must complete the following table.

What do you know about National Parks?	What would you like to know about National Parks?	What should people know about El Cajas National Park?

2. Watch this video about national parks.

<http://www.ket.org/nationalparks/experience.htm>

3. Review some suggested words and expressions

*Beautiful scenery, wildlife, conservation, natural world, enjoy, landscape, trails, paths, threaten, ecosystem, harm to the water, rivers, in danger of extinction, endangered species, water source, preservation, etc.*

4. Give the students the following imaginary situation. Suppose the Mayor of Cuenca, wants to build a huge amusement park similar to Disney World in the middle of El Cajas National Park. Some people in Cuenca are excited because the project brings millions of dollars for the city. However, you and your friends are famous environment activists. You support nature protection, and advocate animal and birds preservation and want to protect the various species in danger of extinction.
  
5. Have the students write in groups a newspaper article in which they give their opinions. Tell them to break the article into three paragraphs.
  - a. In the first paragraph, write four things you know about National Park El Cajas.
  - b. In the second paragraph, write four reasons why El Cajas National Park should not be destroyed.
  - c. In the third paragraph, write four consequences that would make the Cuencanos feel sorry if El Cajas National Park disappeared.



## WRITING ACTIVITY 4

### MORE GAIN, LESS PAIN!<sup>3</sup>

**PURPOSE:** Giving advice to keep fit

**TIME:** 90 min

#### PROCEDURE

1. Take two photocopies of the Web Page handout for each group of four students.
2. Cut up one for each group and leave the other one whole.
3. Brainstorm some vocabulary from the students about sports, ways of doing exercise and keeping fit.

**Suggested questions to elicit vocabulary are:**

Do you do exercise or are you a couch-potato?

What kinds of exercise do you like doing?

Do you play any sport?

What sports do you like playing/doing?

How often do you play/do sports?

Who do you play/do these sports with?

4. Put students in groups of four. Give out one copy of the top part of the Web Page including Section A to each group. Explain that it is part of a web page about keeping fit. Ask them to decide, as a group, what kind of people visit the website. Feedback as a whole class. (Suggested answer: Teenagers who think their friends or people they know are unfit).

---

<sup>3</sup> Activity adapted from Palmer, Graham. *Writing Extra: A resource book of multi-level skills activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.

5. Ask the groups to re-read Section 1 and find the three pieces of advice. Feedback as a whole class. (Answer: Do exercise; do exercise every day; Walk instead of having your parents drive you around.)
6. Elicit how the structure of the section reinforces the message, i.e. a statement (Show your parents...), then advice (You should ....), and then a positive possibility (You could...)
7. Give out one copy of the remaining sections of the cut-up Web page per group. Tell them to read the headers of each section and decide as a group what each might be about.

Suggested answer:

- A. Encouraging small children
  - B. Encouraging people/parents/friends to be sensible about how much exercise they do/or they should do.
  - C. Showing people/parents/friends that keeping fit is fun
  - D. Encouraging teenagers to keep fit.
8. Divide each group in half and tell the pairs to take two of the sections each and think of three pieces of advice to include in each. Tell the students to write them on both sections of the Web page. When they have finished, tell them to swap with the other pair in their group, read the new sections and check if they understood the advice given.
  9. Give out one copy of the Web page per group. Tell them to combine their sections into one Web page, and re-write the web page.

## WEB PAGE

Firefox  
http://www.keepfit.org  
AVG Secure Search

Enter search term here Search Diseases and Conditions Symptoms Drugs and Supplements Tests and Procedures Healthy Lifestyle First Aid

Home > Healthy Lifestyle > Fitness > In-Depth > Exercise: 7 benefits of regular physical activity

### Fitness

Text Size: - +

***MORE GAIN, LESS PAIN.....***

***.... KEEPING FIT***

1 Mum and Dad- get fit

Show your parents the benefits of keeping fit. – If they know what they can gain from doing some exercise or playing a sport, they will probably be more likely to exercise and enjoy doing it. You should have them to read some articles where the benefits of keeping fit are shown. You should have them once to go with you to the gym, go jogging, playing basketball or football on the weekend or just dancing at home for some time.... You should also tell them they can walk instead of going by car to a near place. Anything they could do to convince themselves that exercising is good can help!

-----

2 Little Kids – keeping fit starts early...

-----

3 Don't overdo it!

-----

4 It's not all hard work!

-----

5 Teenagers: keep on keeping fit

-----

**WRITING ACTIVITY 5**

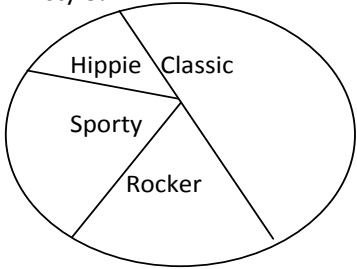
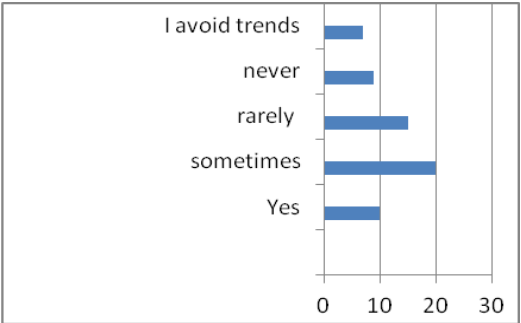
**GIRLS' FASHION SURVEY**

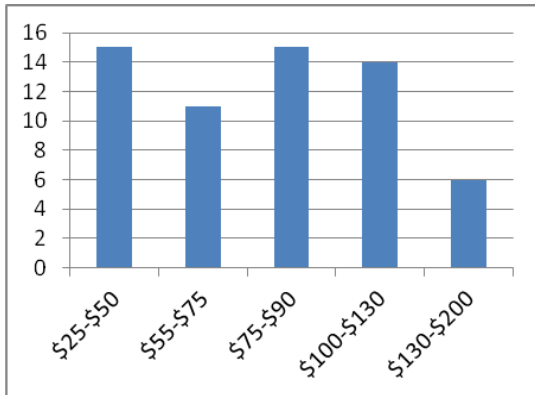
**PURPOSE:** To write a report from a diagram.

**TIME:** 60 min

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Explain that each diagram represents some information.
2. Then, have the students write three statements for each diagram until they become familiar reading information out from a diagram.

<p>a. How would you describe your style?</p>  <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>b. Do trends have any impact on how you dress?</p>  <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
--	--



a. What's the largest amount of money you have ever spent on an item of clothing?

---



---

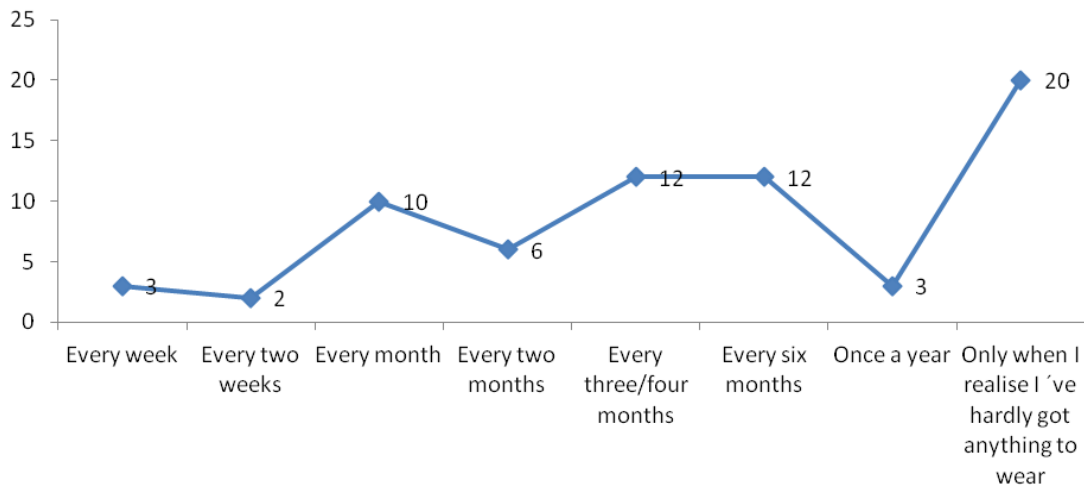


---



---

b. How often do you buy new clothes/shoes/accessories/?




---



---



---



---



---

3. Explain to them what a survey is and that each diagram represents the result data of a survey about fashion.
  
4. Ask them to write a report using the data of the survey. Each paragraph should look like this:

The first question was put to 61 girls of .....about their fashion style. First of all, we asked them what their style was. Most of them answered their fashion style was classic. Some said .... A few said ..... Not many said .....

The second question was asked to ..... girls. It was about the impact of trends on how they dress. Ten people gave a straight affirmative answer to the question. ....

The third question .....

The fourth question .....

## WRITING ACTIVITY 6

### WATCHING TV IS A WASTE OF TIME

**PURPOSE:** To give suggestions and recommendations

**TIME:** 50 min

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Start by asking questions about the students' own experiences.

Do you watch TV?

How often do you watch TV?

How many hours a day do you watch TV?

What would you do if your TV was broken and you did not have a TV at home?

2. Give the students the following situation: Imagine you have not watched TV for about a month because your TV was broken and it could not be repaired. You need to wait another month until the parts come from Europe. During this waiting time, you have discovered many things you could do instead of watching TV. You feel happy because you are not a TV addict any more.
3. Have the students write an article in which they tell the reader their story and share some advice and suggestions about a great number of activities teenagers can do instead of watching TV.

4. Start the story like this.

Dear reader:

I would like to share my story with you. ...

## WRITING ACTIVITY 7

### WILL LIFE IN THE FUTURE BE BETTER?

**PURPOSE:** To write a short article expressing opinion

**TIME:** 80 min

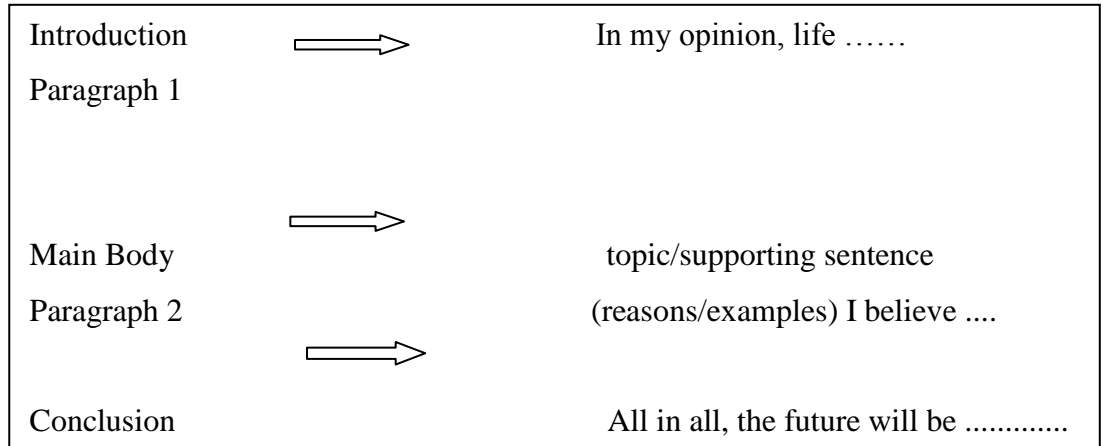
#### PROCEDURE

1. Get in pairs.
2. Give each pair a different sheet. Student A and Student B.
3. Tell them not to show their partners the texts.
4. Student B starts asking the questions he has on his sheet. Student A answers the questions according to the text he has. Then they take turns to ask or answer the questions.
5. When they have found out the information through questions, they proceed to write the paragraphs.
6. Hand out the answer sheet. The paragraphs written by the students must look very similar to the answer sheet. Students compare their paragraphs with the answer sheet for feedback.
7. Next, the teacher will introduce expressions such as

<b>Expressing opinion</b>	<b>Agreeing</b>	<b>Disagreeing</b>	<b>Summarizing/Concluding</b>
In my opinion	I agree with	I do not think ....	All in all,
To me	I agree that	I do not agree ....	To me
I think/believe		I do not disagree ...	



8. Students will write a short opinion article based on this outline. The article must have three paragraphs.



### STUDENT A

1. Futurologists predict that life will probably be very different in 2050 in all fields of activity, from entertainment to technology. First of all, it seems that TV channels will have disappeared by 2050. Instead, people will choose a programme from a 'menu' and a computer will send the programme directly to their television. Today, we can use the World Wide Web to read newspaper stories and see pictures on a computer thousands of kilometers away. By 2050, music, films, programmes, newspapers and books will come to us by computer.

### 2. QUESTIONS. Write complete answers to the questions

What will have arrived by 2050?

What are Holograms?

Do simple holograms exist today?

What is popular today?

Will we be able to see, smell and touch the things that we see on TV?

**(USE THE ANSWERS TO WRITE THE PARAGRAPH)**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Water will have become one of our most serious problems. In many places, agriculture is changing. People are growing fruit and vegetables to export. Demand for water will increase ten times between now and 2050. Some futurologists predict that water could be the cause of war if we don't act now.

**QUESTION 5. Write complete answers to the questions.**

- What will happen in transport?
- Why will cars have computers?
- Will this contribute to avoid accidents?
- By 2050, what will the computer of the car do?
- Will there also be space planes? What will they look like?
- What will take people around the world in two hours?
- Where will space planes fly?

***(USE THE ANSWERS TO WRITE THE PARAGRAPH)***

---

---

---

---

---

4. Robots will have replaced people in factories. By 2050, there will be robots everywhere: in factories, schools, offices, hospitals, shops and homes.

**5. QUESTIONS. Write complete answers to the questions.**

What will have medicine technology conquered?

What kind of devices are there today?

By 2050, what contribution will we be able to do for blind and deaf people?

By 2050, what will scientists be able to produce?

***(USE THE ANSWERS TO WRITE THE PARAGRAPH***

---

---

---

---

---

**STUDENT B**

**1. QUESTIONS. Write complete answers to the questions.**

Does it seem that TV channels will have disappeared by 2050?

How will people choose a TV program?

Will a computer send the program directly to the television?

What can we use to read newspaper stories and see pictures on a computer thousands of kilometers away?

By 2050, how will music, films, programmes, newspapers and books come to us?

***(USE THE ANSWERS TO WRITE THE PARAGRAPH)***

Futurologists predict that life will probably be very different in 2050 in all fields of activity, from entertainment to technology.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. By 2050, 'Holographic Feedback TV' will have arrived: holograms are pictures that have height, width and depth. Simple holograms exist today and virtual reality games are already popular. By 2050, we will be able to see, smell and touch the things that we see on TV.

**3. QUESTIONS. Write complete answers to the questions.**

- Why will water have become one of our most serious problems?
- How is agriculture changing?
- Why are people growing fruit and vegetables to export?
- Why will demand for water increase ten times between now and 2050?
- What do some futurologists predict about water if we don't act now?

***(USE THE ANSWERS TO WRITE THE PARAGRAPH)***

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. In transport, cars will run on new, clean fuels and they will go very fast. Cars will have computers to control the speed of the car and there won't be any accidents. By 2050, the computer will control the car and drive it to your destination. On the other hand, space planes will take people halfway around the world in two hours. By 2050, space planes will fly all over the world.

**5. QUESTIONS. Write complete answers to the questions.**

- What will have replaced people in factories?
- Where will robots be?

***(USE THE ANSWERS TO WRITE THE PARAGRAPH)***

---

---

---

---

6. Medical technology will have conquered many diseases. Today there are electronic devices that connect directly to the brain to help people hear. By 2050, we will be able to help blind and deaf people see again and hear again. By 2050, scientists will be able to produce clones of people and decide how they look, how they behave and how much intelligence they have.

## WRITING ACTIVITY 8

### WHAT A CHARACTER!<sup>4</sup>

**PURPOSE:** To write a description of a fictional character

**TIME:** 50 min

#### PROCEDURE

1. Start by asking questions to elicit students' previous knowledge. The teacher can ask questions such as:

What is a fictional character?

Do you know who these fictional characters are?

Which film or TV series do they appear in?

What role do they play?



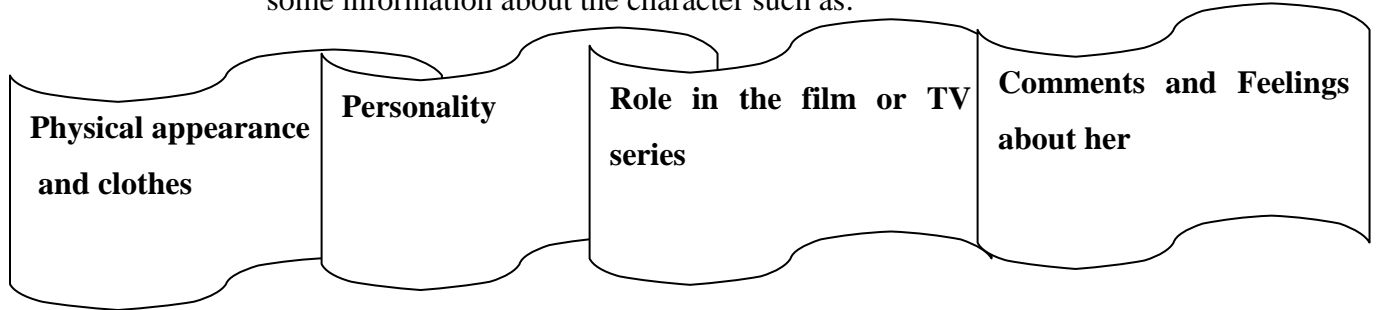
2. Explain to the students that they are going to write about a fictional character describing it in a group, planning together, writing a section each, and checking each other's drafts.

1. Organize the students into groups of four and appoint a group leader whose role is to get things started and to direct discussion.

---

<sup>4</sup> Activity adapted from Evans, Virginia, and Dooley, Jenny. *Targets: Reading and Writing*. Student's Book 3, Swansea: Express Publishing, 1999. Printed

- Tell them to choose one of the character presented above and brainstorm some information about the character such as:



- Give the students the following situation: A TV guide has asked readers to submit an article about popular screen characters. They said the best article will be published in the next edition of the TV guide. You love writing so you decide to send an article on your favourite TV character.
- Ask students within their group to organize the writing into four paragraphs as presented in the chart below. Each student is to write one section of the character description.

Paragraph 1	General information about the character: who/where the character is, title of the film/TV series, its part in the story.
Paragraph 2	Appearance. Physical appearance, clothes, etc.
Paragraph 3	Personality (using adjectives)
Paragraph 4	Feelings and comments about the character

- When the various parts are completed, students exchange their work with other members to assemble the various pieces according to the instructions given above.
- Students check their writing together to ensure coherence between the lines and paragraphs and correct any mistakes.

## **WRITING ACTIVITY 9**

### **A WRITING COURSE**

**PURPOSE:** To become familiar with the process of writing.

**TIME:** 40 min

#### **PROCEDURE**

1. In pairs, give each pair a copy of the College Prospectus. Brainstorm what it is and why you might read it.
2. Tell students that someone wants to get more information about the course and has written an email.
3. Ask the students to have a look at the three emails.
4. Highlight the flow chart.
5. Tell the students to pay attention to the following points when they are writing.
  - **FIRST CHECK AND REWRITE**
    - Check for meaning and formality.
    - Cut or add ideas.
  - **SECOND CHECK AND REWRITE**
    - Check for punctuation, spelling and grammar.
6. **Situation:**

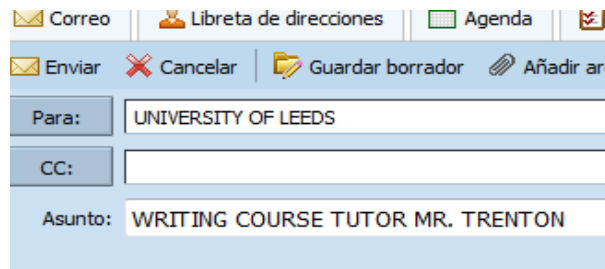
The College wants to attract students for the writing course. You are going to help the college to advertise the course through a short promotional flier. The flier must include concise information and contact details; the course needs to appear relevant and exciting.



Students can use the information in the advertisement/prospectus as a basis for their leaflet.

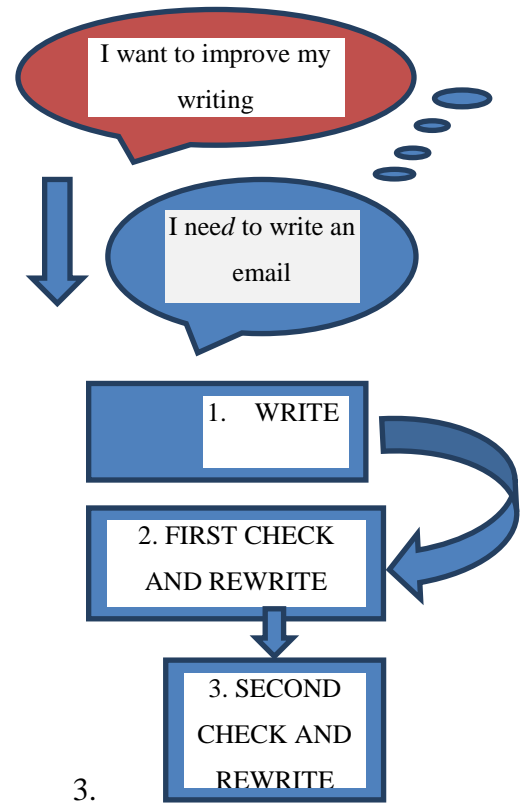
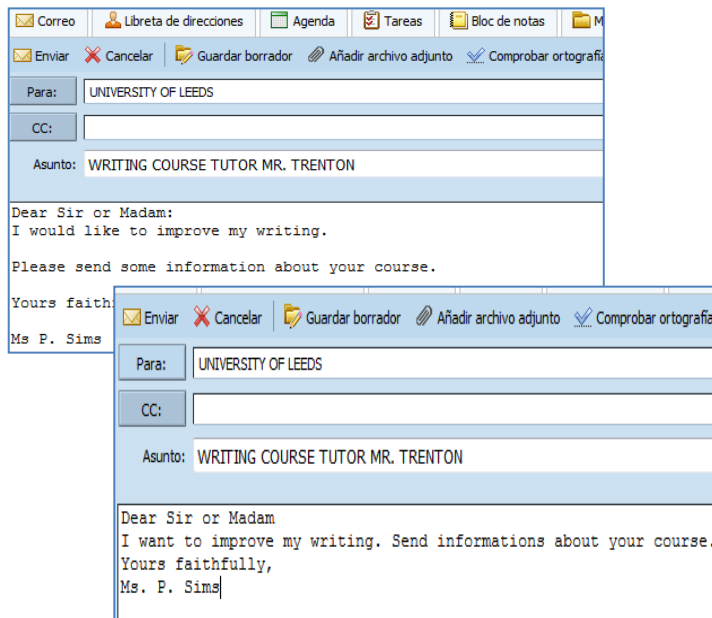
7. After 12 minutes, ask each pair to exchange fliers with another pair. Give each pair a checklist and tell them to use the code to mark any areas where the flier needs to be improved.
8. After five minutes, ask the pairs to swap their fliers back and feedback to each other. Ask them to rewrite their own flier to make it clearer.
9. Ask them to check for any grammar mistakes and rewrite it again.

COLLEGE PROSPECTUS      WRITING COURSE      In this evening course students will learn the basics of writing. The course examines the process of drafting, editing and writing a finished piece. Students will learn to write e-mails, letters, reports, fiction and much more.



Dear College:  
 I want to improve my writing.  
 Love P.  
  
 Send informations about your course.]

2.



3.

## WRITING ACTIVITY 10

### “THE MOST AMAZING WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE SITE ON EARTH”.

**PURPOSE:** Describing a famous place

**TIME:** 90 min

#### **PROCEDURE:**

1. In groups of four or five, students must share information and complete the following chart based on the questions they have here.

What do I know about World Cultural Heritages Sites?	Why are they named World Cultural Heritage Sites?
What should people know about World Cultural Heritage Sites?	Why should World Cultural Heritage Sites be conserved/protected?

2. Watch the video of one of the most famous World Cultural Heritage sites, Machu Picchu in: }

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/ancient/machu-picchu.html?fs=travel.nationalgeographic.com>

3. Review some vocabulary and expressions used in the video.

*Incas, ancient city, remains, buildings, houses, temples, cut stones, fountains, terracing system, canals, green land, mountains, roads, waterways, water system, doorways, passages, wonderful landscapes, legacy, calculating system, virgin of the sun, royal family, worship, sacred area, religious center, Inca trail, unbelievable dream, lost city.*

4. After watching the video give the students some questions to answer. Questions are suggested as follows:

- What is Machu Picchu? Where is Machu Picchu? (Location)
- Who created Machu Picchu? How did they create the city?
- What kind of architecture is found in Machu Picchu?
- How many structures are there? (Buildings, houses, temples)
- What aspects of the Inca’s culture does Machu Picchu show?
- Why is it considered as a legacy for Peruvians and the world?
- Who found the city many years after it was abandoned?
- When did Hiram reach the top of the mountain and find the city?
- What did Hiram think he found?
- What is the biggest problem that Machu Picchu has today?

5. Give the students the following imaginary situation: Imagine that a magazine you enjoy reading is holding a competition for the best article entitled “The most amazing World Cultural Heritage place on Earth”. The prize is a free trip to the place you are to write about. You decide to enter the competition and write about Machu Picchu since it is one of your favorite places in the world.

6. In groups students share and brainstorm ideas to write the composition by completing the following chart.

Introduction			
M A I N  B O D Y	Inca's Architecture and Culture that Machu Picchu shows.	Machu Picchu History	Reasons for protecting it.
	Conclusion		

7. Tell the students they have to split their composition into five parts.

- a) Introduction: Name, location, a general idea about it.
- b) How Machu Picchu reflects Inca architecture and culture.
- c) Machu Picchu history. (from the time it was built until the time Hiram Bingham discovered it again)
- d) Why should Peruvians protect it?
- e) Conclusions: your comments and feelings about the place

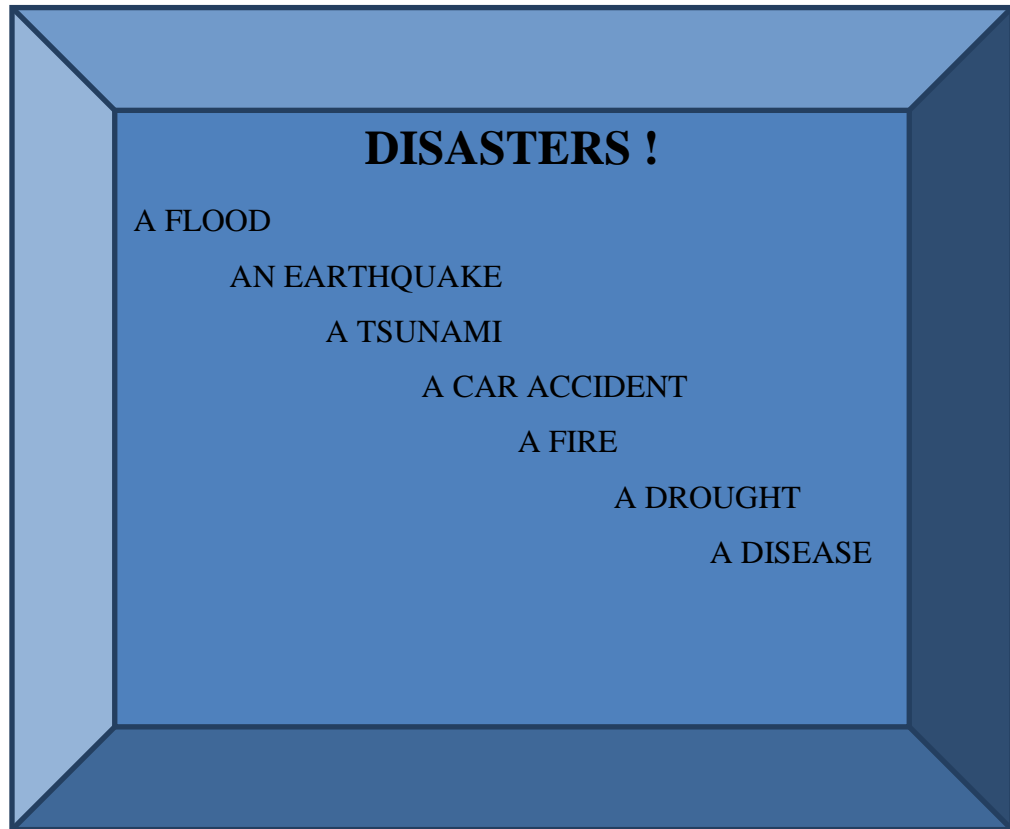
### 3.2.1.2. Speaking Activities

Ten communicative tasks for developing speaking were applied to Year 3 students of Science during the months from September 2011 to March 2012. The tasks developed are listed in figure 13.

**Figure 13**  
**Communicative Tasks for Speaking**

True life experiences	<b>DISASTERS</b> To develop thinking and descriptive skills
Animals in Danger	<b>ANIMALS MINGLE</b> To produce a free conversation about animals
Sports and games	<b>Talking Football!</b> To give and ask personal opinions about sports  <b>Who wants to be a millionaire?</b> <b>Trivia on sports.</b> To communicate cooperatively
Fashion	<b>FASHION SHOW CONTEST</b> To describe clothes, colors, sizes and features.
Technology	<b>Black Bags.</b> To describe objects  <b>Artificial Intelligence Movie Review</b> An oral review about a movie
Travelling	<b>GRAND TOUR OF ECUADOR</b> To exchange information about a tour.  <b>GOING ON HOLIDAY: “Teenage Dilemmas”</b> To talk about holidays
Education	<b>Survey Project: Academic Experience at UESMA</b> To talk about places, subjects, likes and experiences at school.

## SPEAKING ACTIVITY 1



**PURPOSE:** To develop thinking skills

**TIME:** 30 min

**PROCEDURE:**

1. The teacher prepares a set of small cards. These cards will have questions about
  - a. A symbol that depicts a flood, an earthquake, a tsunami, a car accident, a drought, a disease, or a fire.
  - b. A proper (everyday) or slang expression someone will say when caught up in any of these experiences.
  - c. A very brief story so that students know about these disasters.
  - d. A color that best describes the disaster and why.

Questions can look like this:

How would you interpret an earthquake with an icon?

What would be an authentic expression that people said in a fire?

Can you give an account of a car accident (that has happened to you or someone else you know)?

If you were to describe a tsunami, what color would you give it and why?

2. Divide the students into groups of six. Each group sits at a table with its pack of cards in the middle and face down.
3. Give each group a die.
4. Tell students that each player should be assigned a number from 1 to 6.
5. Explain that everybody in their group should throw the die. The student who gets the highest number starts the game. Then he throws the die and the player with the number shown picks up a card and answers the question. The second player throws the die and the person with the number shown picks up a card and answers the prompt. The game continues until they have answered all the questions they have.

## **SPEAKING ACTIVITY 2**

### **ANIMALS MINGLE**

**PURPOSE:** To produce a free conversation about animals

**TIME:** 35 min

#### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Before doing the activity collect 5 prizes to give to the winners.
2. Copy a handout for every student in the classroom
3. Tell students to go around the class asking a partner a question according to the situation they have in the square in the handout (see below). For example, “Can you tell me what would animals say to humans if they could speak?” Only one question should be asked of each person.
4. When the students find someone who can give an answer to the question, they write down their partner’s name. They have to be sure that their partner, whose name was written down on the paper, can perform the activity later to the class.
5. Give the students 20 minutes to get the information required. The first five students who have noted down all the answers to their questions will have to give the paper to the teacher.
6. The teacher stops the activity and asks the students to report their answers back to the class.



7. The students whose names appear on their partner's handouts have to perform four or five activities in front of the class. If they copy out the activity, he and his partner will win a prize.
  
8. The teacher can highlight the most interesting responses about animals.

**ANIMALS MINGLE!**

**FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN SAY/DO...**

What animals would say to humans if they could speak	Walk backwards as a crab	What animal your partner would like to come back to earth as after she died	What animal ability or talent your partner might want to have
Act out like a little dog after having eaten	What reasons your partner might think of for keeping animals in the zoos	What the biggest differences between animals and humans are	A rooster crowing
What animals have disappeared in the Andes mountains of Ecuador. Why?	What animals your partner likes least. Why?	Pick things up using the mouth as an animal does	Which animals represent your partner's character best

## **SPEAKING ACTIVITY 3**

### **Talking Football!<sup>5</sup>**

**PURPOSE:** To give and ask personal opinions about sports

**TIME:** 40 min

#### **PROCEDURE**

1. Before class, cut out the game equipment that is printed below.
2. Make copies of fact sheets for TEAM A and TEAM B.
3. During class brainstorm some vocabulary about sports. The teacher can ask questions such as:
  - What sort of sports are there? Outdoors, indoors, extreme, water, sky, individual, group.
  - What sports are..... individual, group, water, extreme, indoors, outdoors..., etc.
  - What do you need to play/do....basketball, ice skating, cricket, baseball, skates, goggles, helmet, parachute, gloves, wicket, bat, racquet, goalpost, etc.
  - What adjectives would you use to describe.....ice-hockey, football, cycling, swimming, water polo, etc.?
4. Check with students the expressions that can be used to express and ask for personal opinions, as well as for agreeing or disagreeing.

---

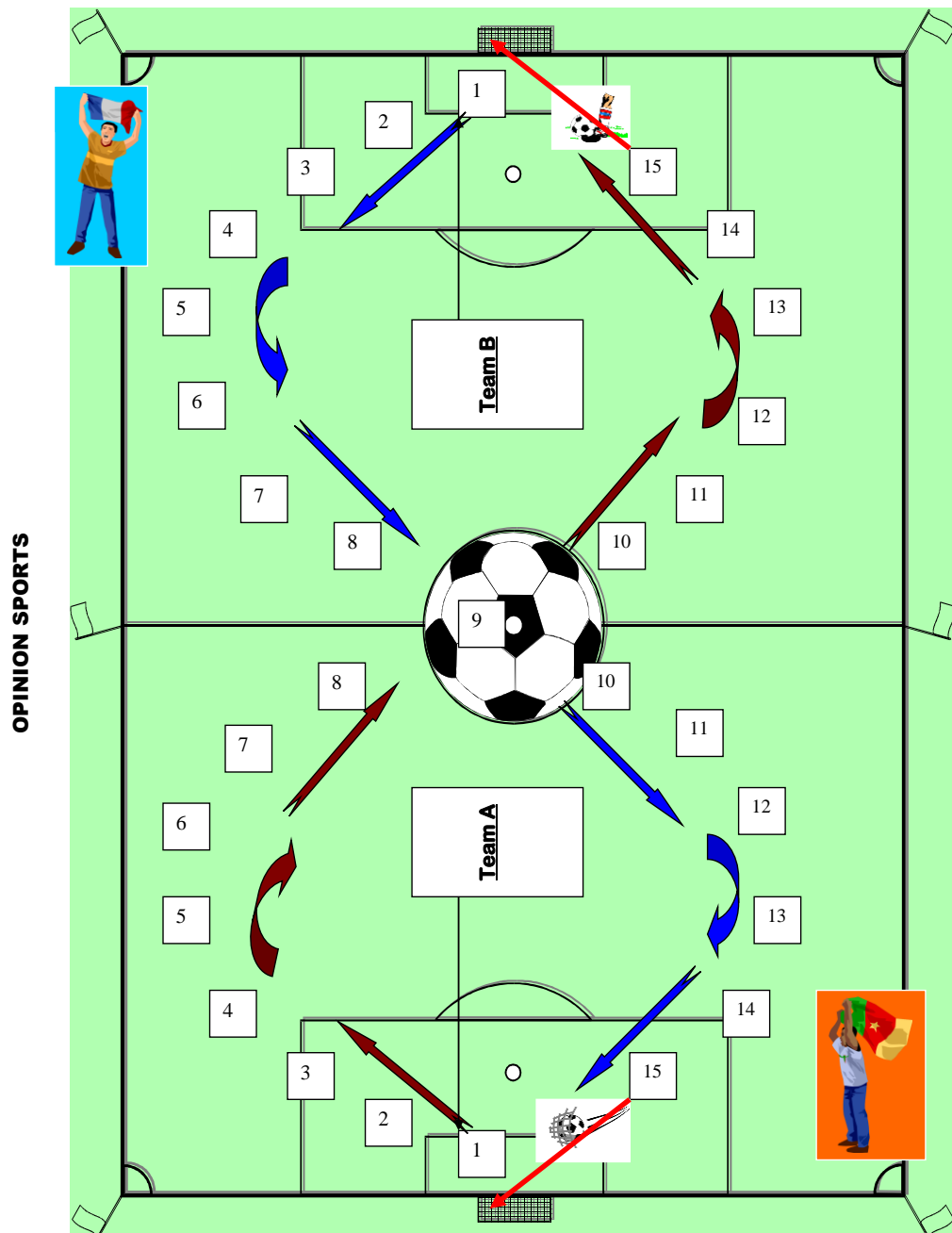
<sup>5</sup> Activity adapted from **Futonge, Kisito**. *An ESL/EFL Lesson Plan & Teaching Resource Portal*. ESL Galaxy. 2006. Web.30 October 2011. <<http://www.esl-galaxy.com>>

<b>Expressing opinion</b>	<b>Agreeing</b>	<b>Disagreeing</b>
In my opinion	I agree with	I do not think
To me	I agree that	I do not agree
I think/believe		I do not disagree

5. Divide the students in pairs. (Student A and Student B)
6. Hand out the copies to A and B respectively.
7. Students fill in the 16 spaces of the fact sheets with at least two or three words as clues they are going to use later to give their opinions about sports.
8. Student A and Student B should have different words on their fact sheets. The idea is to get each student to build different statements.
9. Students toss a coin to see who starts playing. The student who loses the coin tossing has to start giving their opinion about a sport. The other students listen to the sentence and make a comment, agree or disagree with what their classmate said. For example Student A says: A: "Football is such fun. I think the players deserve the money they earn." B: "I do not agree with you that they should earn all that money. Anyway, I think football is boring."
10. If the other student successfully states her opinion based on the fact of what the other student said, they can advance by one space. If the student shows too much hesitation, he gets a yellow card. A yellow card means that the student does not advance and loses a turn. Six yellow cards equal 1 red card. One red card means the student goes back by two squares. Forgive minor mistakes. The idea is to get them talking.

11. When the students get to Square No 15, they need to make one last opinion statement to drive the ball into the goal. If it is correct they win and get the trophy.

12. To make it more exciting, give each student a country name according to the football flags below.



# Team A Fact Sheet

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
16.

# Team B Fact Sheet

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
16.

**Football Game equipment**



*Player B*



*Player A*

## **SPEAKING ACTIVITY 4**

### **WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? TRIVIA ON SPORTS**

**PURPOSE:** To communicate cooperatively

**TIME:** 30 min

#### **PROCEDURE**

1. Prepare at least 30 questions about sports.
2. Get paper money for the game.
3. Divide the class into four big groups.
4. Start the game. One member of each group comes out and answers a question made by the teacher. If he does not know the answer he goes back to his team and finds out the answer from them. Give the students 30 seconds to answer the question.
5. If they answer correctly, they get 1 dollar.
6. If a group does not know the answer after the 20 seconds, ask the same question to the next group until the question is answered. The group that answers correctly gets 1 dollar.
7. The group that accumulates most of the “money” is the winner.



## TRIVIA QUESTIONS

1. Who is talking? “The ball touched the net”. (*A volleyball player*)
2. In which sport does the catcher play with a mask? (*Baseball*)
3. Which sport do you do in the water? (*swimming*)
4. You play it on a table with wooden bats and a small plastic ball. Table tennis
5. A sport you play on ice. (*Hockey*)
6. You can't use your hands when you play. (*Soccer*)
7. Where do basketball games take place? In a court, in a field or in a rink?  
(*Court*)
8. Sports you don't play with a ball. Choose: bowling, ping pong, skateboarding, running. (*skateboarding, running*)
9. Sports you play with a glove. Choose: Boxing, handball, karate. (*boxing*).
10. Sports that use a net. Choose: Frisbee, golf, tennis, darts. (*golf, tennis*)
11. Sports with at least two players. Choose: Tennis, weightlifting, racquetball, cycling. (*Tennis, racquetball*)
12. Sports played indoors. Choose: Bowling, skateboarding, skydiving, trampolining. (*Bowling, trampolining*)
13. Sports played on a table. (*Pool, handball, table tennis*).
14. Sports played outdoors. Choose: Roller skating, running, Frisbee, racquetball.  
(*Roller skating, running, Frisbee*)
15. A sport in which you can get bruised or knocked out. (*Wrestling, boxing*)
16. Three sports that use the floor and walls. (*Racquetball, squash, Randball*).
17. Three sports that require wheels. (*Skateboarding, skating, cycling*)
18. Two sports that require holes. (*cricket, golf*)
19. Lacrosse is played on a hardwood floor. True or False. (*False*)
20. For which sport do you wear an air tank? (*Scuba diving*)
21. You need paddles. (*Canoeing*)
22. You need a mask and flippers. (*Snorkeling*)
23. You wear goggles. (*Scuba diving, windsurfing, snorkeling, swimming*).
24. Name a piece of equipment that goes very fast but stays still. (*Exercise bike*).

25. Name a sport that was first played on green grass in Scotland. (*Golf*).
26. A heavy padded uniform protects the players. (*American football*).
27. A bathing cap is worn on your feet, on your back, over your face, none of them. (*none of them*)
28. You hit, pitch and catch when you do aerobics, do gymnastics, play baseball. (*Play baseball*)
29. You serve when you play tennis, play football, do gymnastics or do aerobics. (*Play tennis*).
30. You do jumping jacks, leg-lifts, and deep knee bends when you do aerobics, do gymnastics, play football, play basketball. (*Do aerobics*).

## **SPEAKING ACTIVITY 5**

### **FASHION SHOW CONTEST**

**PURPOSE:** To describe clothes, colors, sizes and features

**TIME:** 40 min

#### **PROCEDURE**

1. Tell your students to bring a Barbie doll with different outfits to class.
2. Explain them that the Barbie dolls will participate in a fashion show contest.
3. Brainstorm vocabulary about clothes, colors, sizes and features of material and clothes.
4. Tell the students to dress their Barbie for the fashion show.
5. Each student will present the Barbie to the whole class in terms of her name, her clothes, her hobbies and the reason why she should be the winner of the contest. The student tries to persuade the others to vote for her favorite.
6. At the end students vote for the five best participants. One will be Miss Barbie 2012. The second will be “Barbie Queen”. The third “Barbie Princess”; the fourth Barbie “Beautiful Face”; the fifth” Barbie Sympathy”

## **SPEAKING ACTIVITY 6**

### **BLACK BAGS.<sup>6</sup>**

**PURPOSE:** Describing objects, speculating, and comparing.

**TIME:** 30 min

#### **PROCEDURE**

1. Collect four opaque bags (cloth, paper, or plastic) and as many small electronic articles as you can. The objects can be a cell phone, an electronic book, an iPod, a calculator, a camera, a film recorder, an MP4, a memory stick, among others.
2. Put the electronic articles into the bags, one object per bag, and close the bags securely.
3. Divide the class into groups of three or four and give each group one of the bags.
4. Tell the groups to agree on a description of the object they can feel in the bag and say what they think this article is used for. Emphasize that it is a description that is wanted and it is not important for them to be able to name the objects at this stage. Remind them also they have to pass on the bag so everybody can have the opportunity to touch and contribute to the description. Encourage students to make some notes as they are describing the objects in their groups.
5. Pair each student with someone from another group. Tell the students their task at this stage is to take turns to describe the object they felt so that their partners

---

<sup>6</sup> Activity adapted from Sion, Christopher. More recipes for tired teachers. Menlo Park: Addison-Wesley, 1991. Print.

can draw it. The students should use their notes as a starting point to which they then add more details.

6. Have students go back to their seats and let them say what they think the objects are and what they are used for. Then, open the bags one by one and compare the contents with the drawings.
7. Conclude by having students rename the objects and explain again their functions.

## **SPEAKING ACTIVITY 7**

### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REVIEW**

**PURPOSE:** An oral review about a movie

**TIME:** 2h 20 min

#### **PROCEDURE**

1. Have the students guess the topic of the movie by watching the first few minutes of it with the sound off.
2. Students answer the section “Before Watching”.
3. Students watch the movie and take notes of the storyline.
4. Students role-play the scenes shown in the handout.
5. Get the students in groups of four to discuss the questions of the section “After Watching”.

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**  
Directed by: STEVEN SPIELBERG



**BEFORE WATCHING**

**Pair work: Watch the first five minutes of the movie. Go over these questions:**

Who do you think the man is?

Who do you think he is talking to?

What do you think he is talking about?

Who do you think the girl is?

What do you think the man does to the girl?

What do you think the man wants to do? What do you think will happen next in the movie?

**AFTER WATCHING**

**Choose two scenes and role-play them.**



**Group Work: Discussion. Consider the following guide questions to lead the discussion.**

Make a short criticism about the movie. Think about the following: How did you like the movie? If not, why not? What do you think about David, his mother/father/brother?, What do you think about the robots?, What do you think about the robot's creator? What do you think about the plot of the movie? Does the movie teach you anything?

## **SPEAKING ACTIVITY 8**

### **GRAND TOUR OF ECUADOR**

**PURPOSE:** To exchange information about a tour

**TIME:** 50 min

#### **PROCEDURE**

1. The teacher draws a thought bubble entitled “A tour” on the whiteboard to brainstorm thoughts and ideas from the students about tours in general. She asks them about what people like to see/do in a tour, what is included and what is not included, prices, dates, meals, etc.
2. The teacher presents some useful vocabulary and expressions such as  
Upon arrival  
Departing,  
Could (possibility)  
Might (probability)
3. Divide the class into pairs of Students A and Students B. Students A get sheet A and Students B get sheet B. Students A will be travel agents and Students B will be prospective tourists.
4. Have students sit in two concentric circles (an “outer” and an “inner”), facing each other. The travel agents sit in the outer circle and the prospective tourists sit in the inner circle.
5. Students use the prompts to keep a conversation going for about three minutes. Students B register the information in the grid. When the time is up



the students sitting in the outer circle stand and move to the left until the teacher says stop. Students sit down, facing a new random partner. Again, when time is up, the outer circle “spins” and new pairs are formed. This is repeated until they complete the number of the days of the tour.

## SHEET A

### GRAND TOUR OF ECUADOR

See the best of Ecuador. Enjoy sightseeing and evening programs. Visit country towns and the capital city Quito.

#### 6-night tour

Day 1 Depart Kennedy Airport for Quito. Go to Hotel Sheraton. Overnight in Quito.

Day 2 Limousine departs at 10:00 a.m. for a sightseeing tour of churches, parks, and volcanoes. Then lunch in La Mitad del Mundo town.

Day 3 Depart Simon Bolivar Airport for Cuenca. Sightseeing tour of Cuenca upon arrival.

Go to Hotel Crespo. Visit the small shops and stores in the downtown area. Shopping time. Late lunch at the hotel. Musical and Folklore Night at the Hosteria Duran in Baños.

Day 4 A trip to El Cajas National Park. You have lunch at a village restaurant and can watch the traditional fishing of trouts. The afternoon is free. Suggested activities: Visit museums, the Cathedral, restaurants opened in old houses, etc.

Day 5 A morning journey to Guayaquil. Sightseeing tour of the city. You visit El Malecon 2000, Las Pencas Neighborhood, La Rotonda, and the beautiful river Guayas. Go to Hotel Sheraton. In the evening, you have a splendid hotel reception.

Day 6 Free day for more sightseeing and shopping.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Places and times of departure						
Places to visit						
Lunch, Dinners						

Sheet B

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Questions about places and times of departure						
Questions about Places to visit						
Questions about different activities						
Questions about meals						

## SPEAKING ACTIVITY 9

### GOING ON HOLIDAY: “Teenage Dilemmas”<sup>7</sup>

**PURPOSE:** To talk about holidays

**TIME:** 40 min

#### PROCEDURE

1. Get the students in pairs.
2. Give each student a role play card. One student is the daughter and the other is the mom.
3. Each student assumes the role stated in the card.
4. Students role-play.

#### “Teenage Dilemmas”

**Daughter:** You’re going to ask your mom if you can go on holiday with your friends. You should tell her where, when, for how long, with who you will go and who is paying for the holiday. You think your mom is not going to allow you to go. So, explain why she should let you go. Give also an example of something you did recently that shows how responsible you are. Try not to get angry or upset with your mom, but continue trying to persuade her.

#### “Teenage Dilemmas”

**Parent:** You are a mother of a 17-year-old girl who is going to ask if she can go on holiday without you. Find out the details: where, when, for how long, with whom she will go and who is paying for the holiday. You love your child and want the best for her, but you don’t think she should go. Tell her why. Listen to what she says, but explain your reasons too. Give an example of something she did recently that shows that she is not really responsible enough yet.

---

<sup>7</sup> Activity adapted from Katie. WhyGo TEFL. Katie. 17 January 2007 Web. 10 December 2011. <http://www.teflologue.com/in-the-classroom/esl-speaking-activities-two-fun-roleplays> (This is no longer available.)

## **SPEAKING ACTIVITY 10**

### **SURVEY PROJECT: ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AT UESMA**

**PURPOSE:** Sharing Information about School

**TIME:** 90 min

#### **PROCEDURE**

1. Brainstorm some vocabulary about school, school subjects, facilities and levels at school. The teacher can ask questions such as:  
What levels are there in Ecuador's educational system?  
What kind of schools are there?  
What subjects are taught in schools?  
What kind of facilities do schools offer to students?  
What activities can students do in schools?  
What common sports do students play at school?
2. Have students watch the video "Saint Andrews Presbyterian College. An Academic Experience".
3. Check students' comprehension by asking some questions about the video such as:
  - a. What kind of facilities does St. Andrews offer to its students?
  - b. What subjects do students learn in St. Andrews? What do you think they learn in each subject?
  - c. Why do students like St. Andrews?
  - d. What do they think of their teachers?
  - e. What sports can students play/do at St. Andrews?

- f. What other information did you find interesting about the college in the video?
4. Gather students in groups of 4.
  5. Tell them they will have to design a survey for their classmates to carry out a project called “The Academic Experience at UESMA” taking the video of St. Andrews as an example. For this survey, they have to prepare a set of 7 or 8 questions to ask their classmates about teachers, facilities, subjects, likes/dislikes, sports, and any other interesting facts that would be helpful to know for the project.
  6. Have students walk around the classroom asking each other the questions and collecting the information.
  7. After they have collected all of the information they will report the results to the class.
  8. As a follow-up activity students make a video about the school to show what they discovered in the survey.

### **3.2. Conclusion**

Since the main objective of this project was to improve Year 3 students' speaking and writing skills, all of the twenty communicative tasks presented in this chapter were designed to provide students with exemplified situations of real life so that they could have opportunities to practice the language through interacting with their classmates, and feel motivated to use the language meaningfully.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **VALIDATION OF THE PROJECT**

This chapter discusses the classroom procedures through which Year 3 students of Maria Auxiliadora carried out the speaking and writing activities described in Chapter 3, the factors that contributed to their progress and the problems they faced during the application process.

It also shows the students' improvement of their speaking and writing skills after the aforementioned activities were applied. A speaking and writing post-test were the best option to evaluate the improvement level.

Additionally, it was determined that a questionnaire should be completed by the students in order to investigate their point of view, and to evaluate the level of satisfaction of having these kinds of activities in their speaking and writing classes. Similarly, a questionnaire was completed by the two English teachers' of Bachillerato in order to gauge their opinion about this research project, its activities and to validate it.

Finally, this chapter aims to analyze if the development of such motivating and challenging communicative tasks could further support the students' learning process.

#### **4.1. Research Design**

A survey was considered to be the most appropriate tool to collect data in order to gauge both the students' and teachers' opinions and reactions towards the methodology proposed in this project, and its application through communicative tasks designed with the aim of being meaningful and inspiring.

### 4.1.1. Students' Survey

Fourty-four students of Year 3 specializing in Science and Business Administration at Maria Auxiliadora High School participated in this survey. A questionnaire was developed in order to measure the students' point of view towards the communicative activities applied during the first and second trimester.

#### 4.1.1.1. Students' Speaking Survey Data Results

The questionnaire used for the speaking survey applied to the students of Year 3 Science is shown in Annex 7.

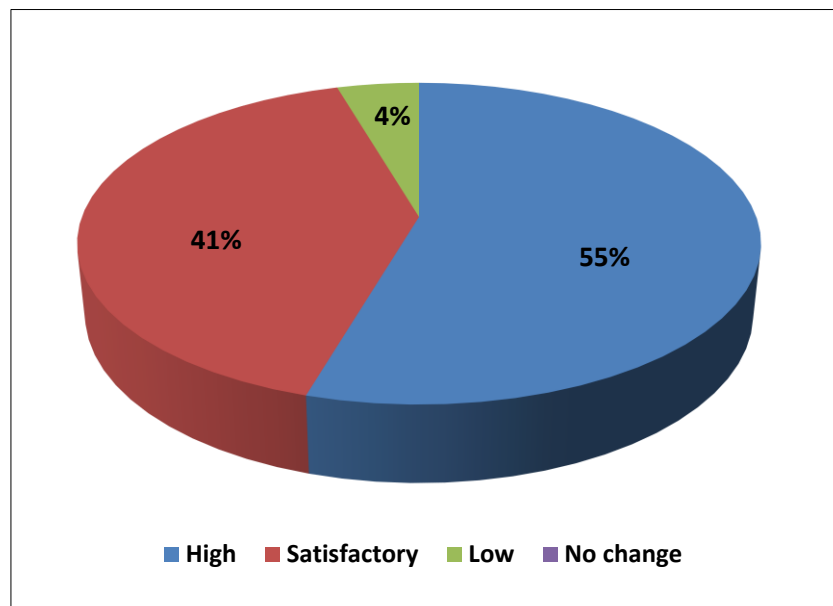
The results of the speaking survey given to the students of Year 3 are shown below.

**QUESTION 1: The communicative activities helped me to develop a \_\_\_\_\_ level of confidence to communicate in English.**

High\_\_                      Satisfactory\_\_                      Low\_\_                      No change\_\_

**CHART 17**

**Percentage of students who think the communicative activities helped them to develop their level of confidence.**





As it can be seen in Chart 17, fifty-five percent of the students think that the communicative activities helped them to develop a high level of confidence to communicate in English. Further, forty-one percent said they developed a satisfactory level of confidence.

**QUESTION 2: The communicative activities helped me to improve my fluency, coherence and accuracy when communicating in English.**

A lot \_\_\_                      To some extent\_\_\_                      A little\_\_\_                      No change\_\_\_

**CHART 18**

**Percentage of students who think that the communicative activities helped them to improve their fluency, coherence and accuracy in speaking**

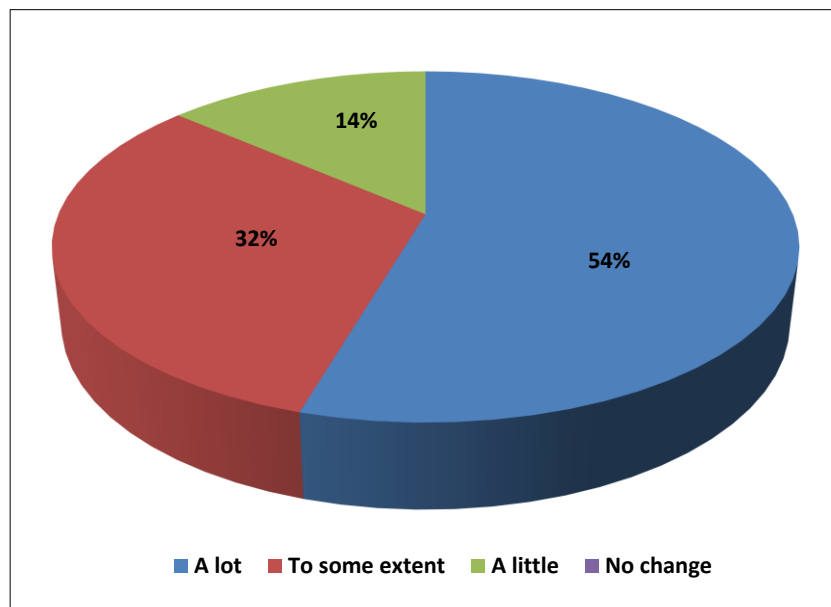


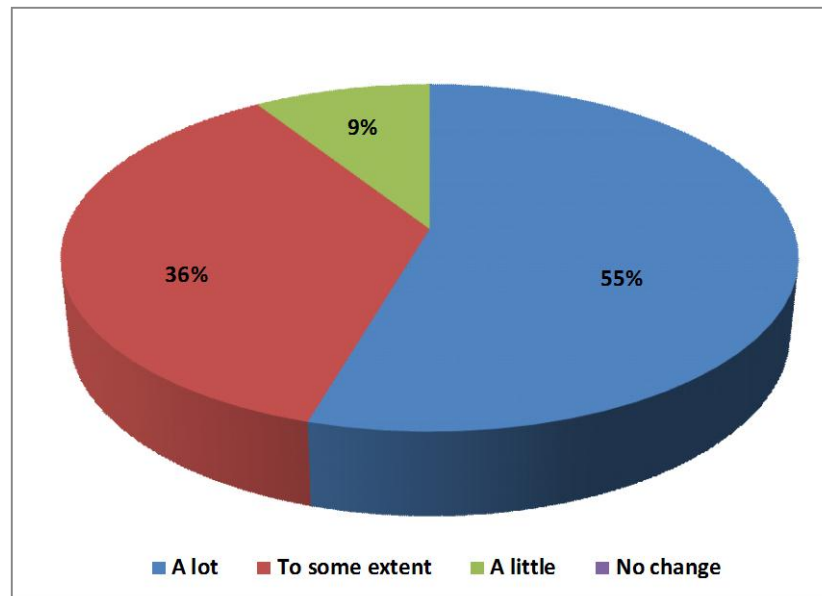
Chart 18 shows that the majority of students believed that the activities they did in class helped them to improve their fluency, coherence and accuracy when communicating in English. Fifty-four percent thought they had a high increment and only 14% reported just a little increment.

**QUESTION 3: I have increased my vocabulary to be able to have a real conversation in English**

A lot\_\_\_                      To some extent\_\_\_                      A little \_\_\_                      No change\_\_\_

**Chart 19**

**Percentage of students who think they have increased their vocabulary in terms of speaking**



According to Chart 19, 55% percent of students responded that by doing the speaking activities they were able to experience a high increment in their vocabulary in order to have a real conversation in English. In addition, 36% answered that they were able to achieve at least some improvement.

**QUESTION 4: The speaking activities we did in class were motivating and interesting**

Very motivating and interesting                      To some extent\_\_\_                      Not really\_

**CHART 20**

**Percentage of students who think the communicative activities were motivating and interesting**

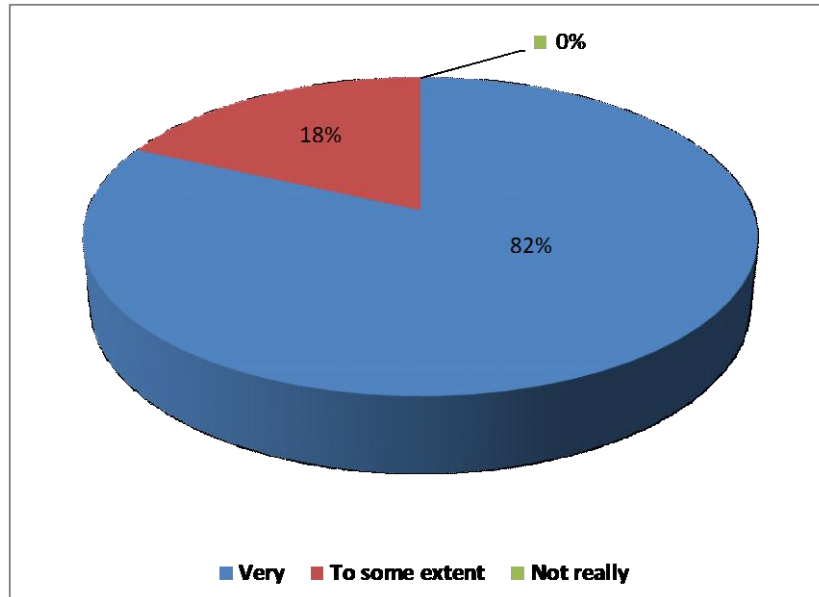


Chart 20 demonstrates that the majority of students (82%) considered the communicative activities done in class to be very motivating and interesting. None of the students found them to be completely uninteresting or unmotivating.

**QUESTION 5: The activities we did in class let me talk about “real world” situations.**

Yes\_\_

No \_\_

**CHART 21**

**Percentage of students who think they spoke about “real world” situations.**

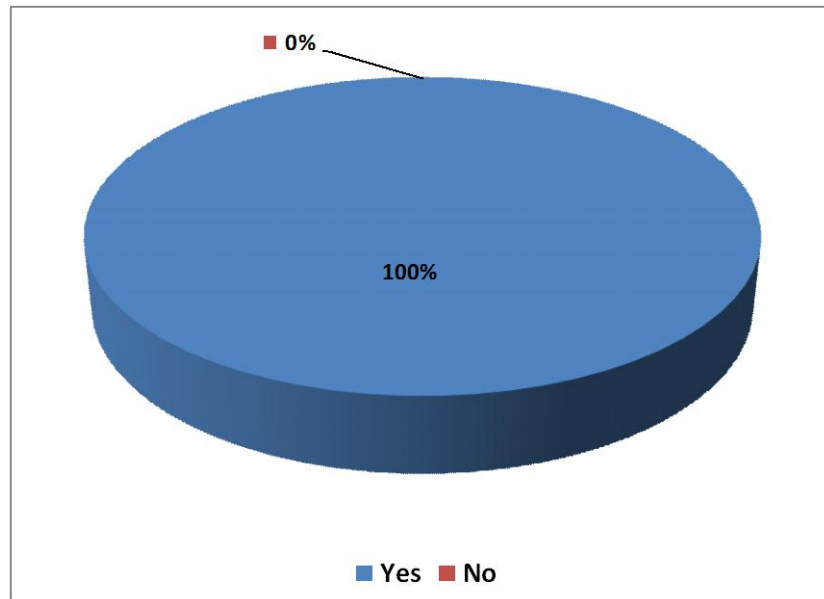


Chart 21 shows that all of the students believed that the activities they did in class made them talk about “real life” situations.

**QUESTION 6: I consider that interaction through pair work and group activities helped me to improve my speaking skills in English.**

A lot\_\_\_                      To some extent\_\_\_                      A little \_\_\_                      Not at all \_\_\_

**CHART 22**

**Percentage of students who think that interaction through pair work and group activities helped them to improve their speaking skills**

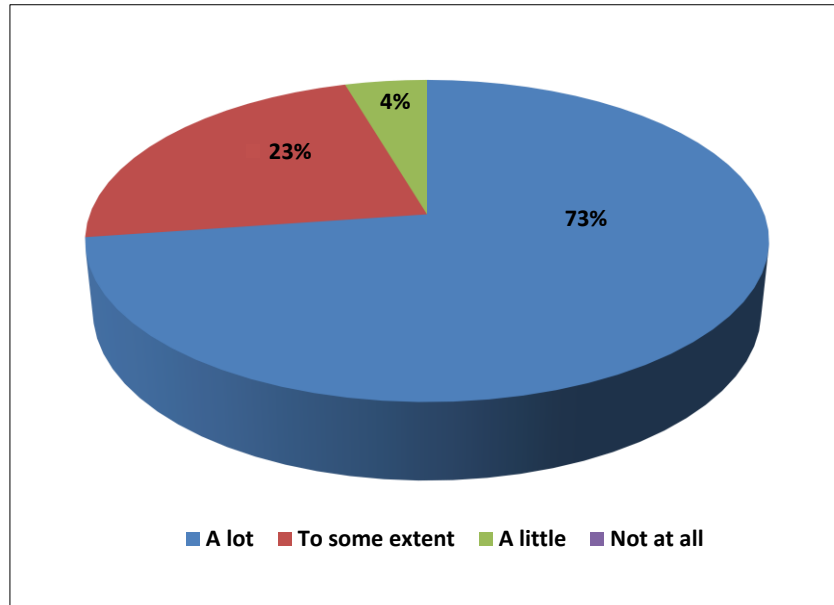


Chart 22 displays that seventy-three percent of the students considered the interaction through pair work and group activities to be helpful in augmenting their ability to speak.. Twenty-three percent said they experienced some improvement and just four percent considered they experienced only increment slightly.

#### **4.1.1.2. Students' Writing Survey Data Results**

The questionnaire used for the writing survey applied to students of Year 3 Administration is showed in Annex 8.

The results of the writing survey given to the students are displayed below.

**QUESTION 1: The communicative activities helped me to develop a \_\_\_\_\_ level of confidence to write in English.**

High\_\_                      Satisfactory\_\_                      Low\_\_                      No change\_\_

**CHART 23**

**Percentage of students who think the communicative activities helped them to develop a level of confidence to write in English.**

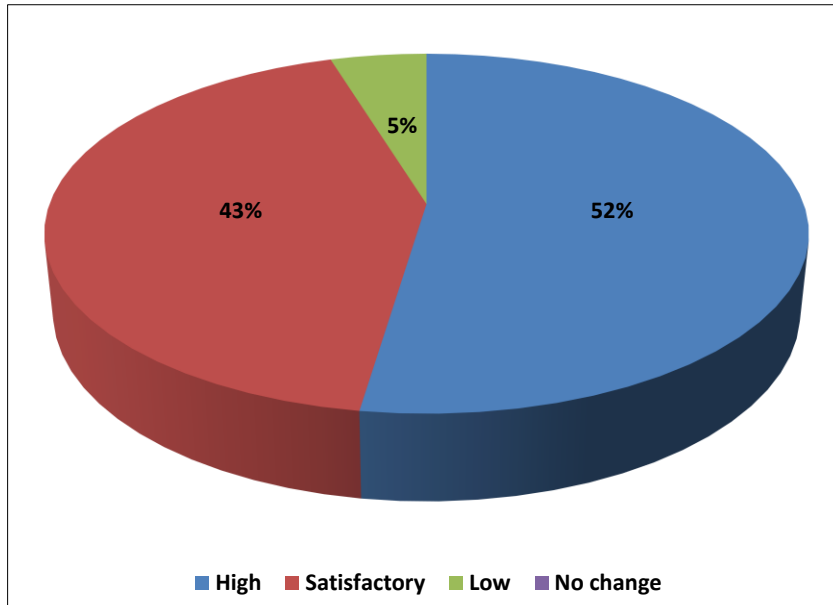


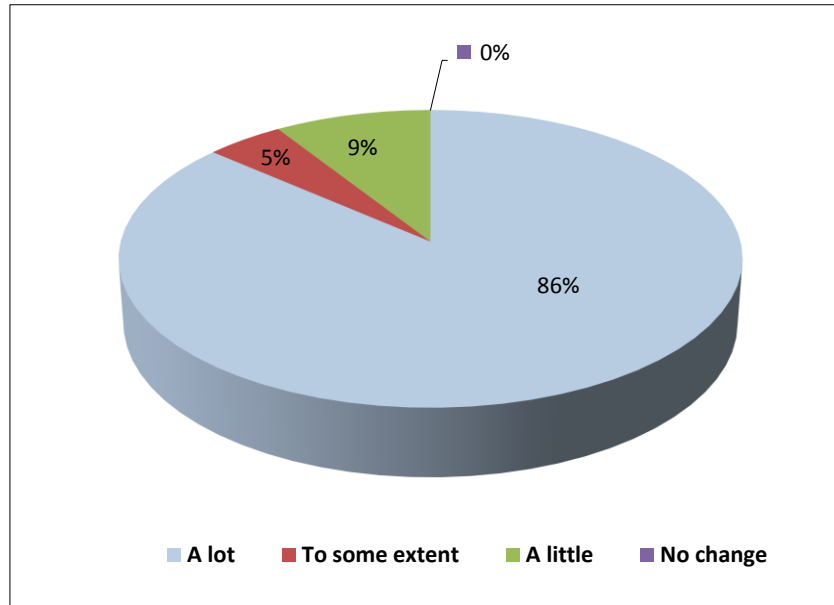
Chart 23 shows that 52% percent of the students think that the communicative activities they did in class during the application of the project helped them to develop a high level of confidence to write in English. Forty-four percent stated that they developed a satisfactory level of confidence and 5% said that they developed a low level.

**QUESTION 2: I have increased my vocabulary to be able to write in English**

A lot\_\_\_                      To some extent\_\_\_                      A little \_\_\_                      No change\_\_\_

### CHART 24

**Percentage of students who think they increased their vocabulary to be able to write in English**



The chart above shows that most of the students think they have improved their vocabulary to be able to write in English. Just nine percent of the students said they have improved their vocabulary “a little”.

**QUESTION 3: The writing activities we did in class were motivating and interesting**

Very\_

To some extent\_\_

Not really\_

**CHART 25**

**Percentage of students who think the writing activities they did in class were motivating and interesting**

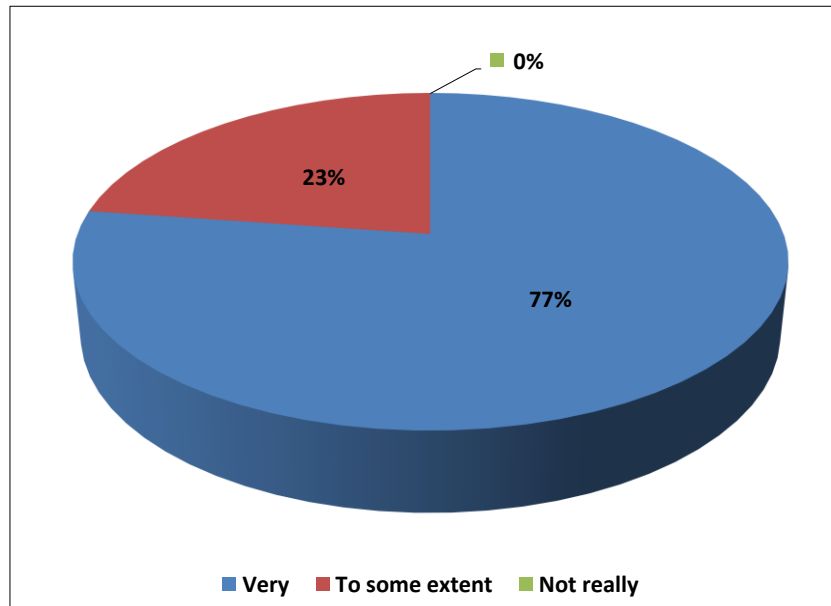


Chart 25 shows that seventy-seven percent of students considered the writing activities done in class to be very motivating and interesting. Twenty-three of the students thought that the activities were to some extent motivating and interesting. None of the students found them to be completely uninteresting or unmotivating.

**QUESTION 4: The activities we did in class let me write about “real world” situations.**

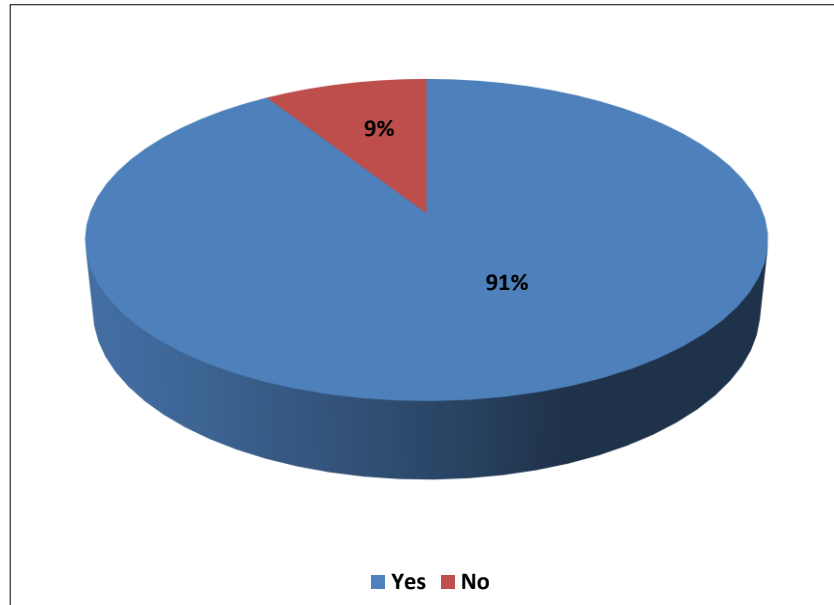
Yes\_\_

No \_\_



### CHART 26

**Percentage of students who think the activities they did in class let them write about “real world” situations**



The chart above illustrates that 91% of the students considered that the activities they did in class let them write about “real world” situations. Just 9% of students said the activities were not related to the real world.

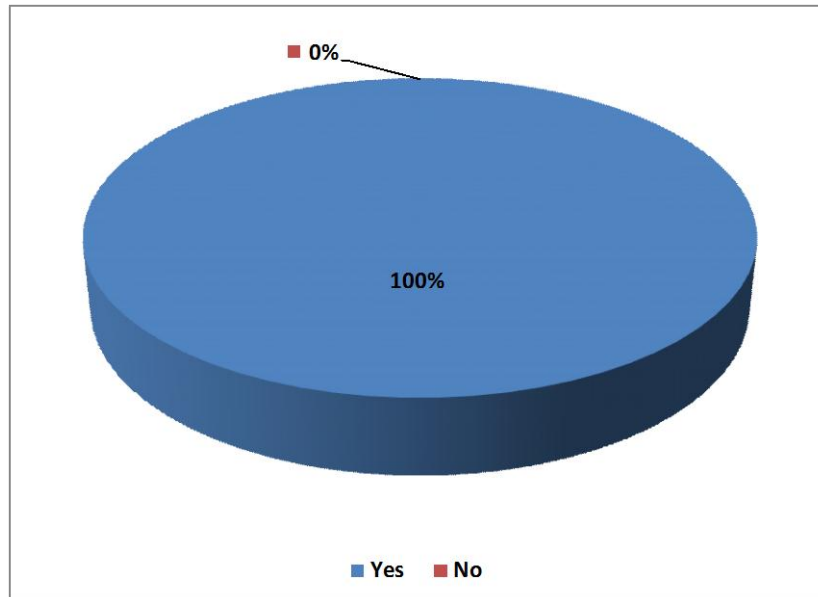
**QUESTION 5: The activities we did in class help me to organize and sequence my ideas better when writing in English**

Yes \_\_\_

No\_\_\_

### CHART 27

**Percentage of students who think the activities they did in class help them to organize and sequence their ideas better when writing in English**



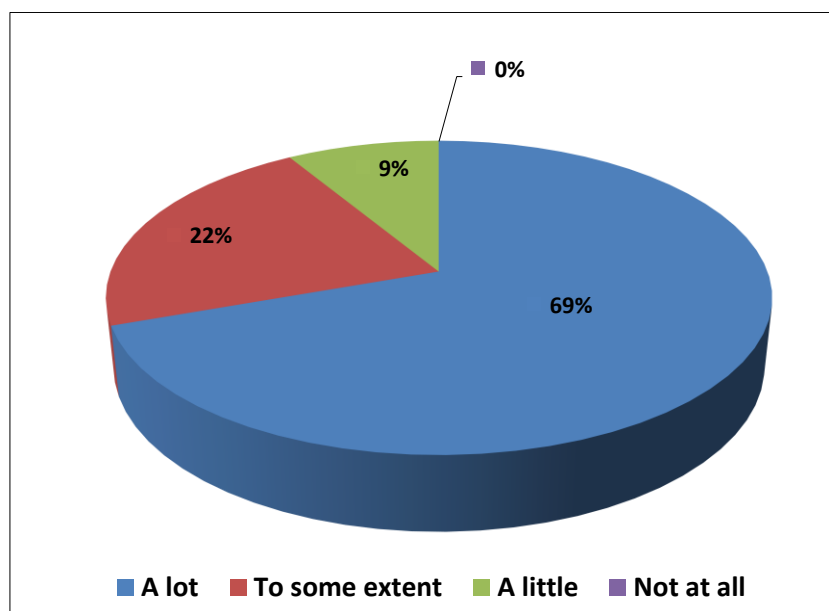
All 22 students said that the activities they did in class from September 2011 to March 2012 helped them to organize and sequence their ideas better than before when they had to write in English.

**QUESTION 6: I consider that interaction through pair work and group activities helped me to improve my writing skills in English**

A lot\_\_\_      To some extent\_\_\_      A little \_\_\_      No at all \_\_\_

**CHART 28**

**Percentage of students who considered that interaction through pair work and group activities helped them to improve their writing skills in English**



As it can be seen in Chart 28, sixty-nine percent of students considered the interaction through pair work and group activities to be helpful in augmenting writing skills. Twenty-two percent of students said they had some improvement, and just nine percent considered they experienced only a slight increment.

#### **4.2. The Analysis of the Students’ Speaking Development during the Application of the Project**

Let us now turn to the issue of how students’ speaking skills have improved owing to the treatment.

The students of Year 3 specializing in Science carried out all the different oral activities described in Chapter 3; these activities were designed to provide students a special purpose for speaking and encourage “real-life” interaction between them. These

activities served as free-production class tasks in which the students had to work in pairs or groups interacting and performing them naturally and spontaneously.

All of the activities were monitored by the teacher, who walked round the class and listened to the students without interfering; except when help was required by the students or some encouragement was necessary.

In addition, feedback was provided after each activity. This was aimed at supporting their development, and at noting which aspects the students had to be aware of in future tasks in order to improve their speaking skills.

Because the activities encouraged free production of the language, observation was focused more on whether the students managed to achieve their communicative aim, could express what they wanted to say, and were able to understand each other, rather than being concerned with grammatical accuracy. Thus the teacher indicated to the students in general how well they communicated, how fluent they were, and how successfully they interacted as a group. The teacher also indicated the improvements they had made and what still needed improvement.

A note of errors was used in order to give feedback to the students. The teacher collected some general students' mistakes on them; these were checked with the whole class after the activity was completed. Individual mistakes were discussed in private with the students. When these mistakes were recurrent errors in grammar and use of vocabulary suitable remedial work was recommended to be completed at home. Figure 14 shows the note of errors used for feedback.

**FIGURE 14**

**Note of Errors for Speaking Classroom Tasks**

		FORM			MEANING	FLUENCY
Grammar	Word choice	Word Order	Missing words	Pronunciation		

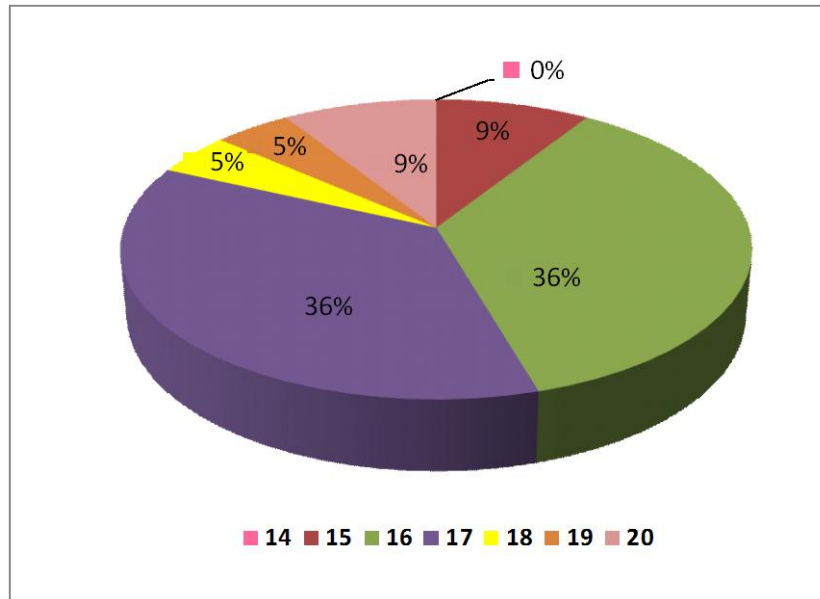
**Adapted from: Gower, Roger, Diana Phillips, and Steve Walters. Teaching Practice Handbook. Heinemann, 1995. Print**

Most of the activities were given a grade during the school year, but only two of them (speaking activities 5 and 7 from Chapter 3) were chosen to analyse and evaluate the students' performance and proficiency development.

**4.2.1. The Analysis of the Students' Performance in Speaking Activity 5**

The main objective of this activity was to describe clothes, including their colors, sizes and features. The students were asked to bring a Barbie doll to class in order to make a fashion show contest in which they had to present their Barbie to the whole class in terms of her name, her clothes, her hobbies and the reason why she should be the winner of the contest. The students tried to persuade the others to vote for her as their favorite. As they made their performance, the teacher monitored and evaluated them by collecting and writing down some students' mistakes on the note of errors (See above Figure 14) to give feedback after the activity was completed. For this activity the students were evaluated with a grade out of 20 according to the speaking rubric in Annex 3. The following chart displays the students' grades in this task.

**CHART 29**  
**Students' Grades Speaking Activity 5**



As it can be seen in Chart 29, fifty-five percent of the students' performance in the activity were quite good, obtaining grades between 17 and 20. Thirty-six of the students obtained a grade of 16 and just nine percent obtained a grade of 15. Nobody got a score less than 15.

**CHART 30**  
**Students' Speaking Proficiency Activity 5**

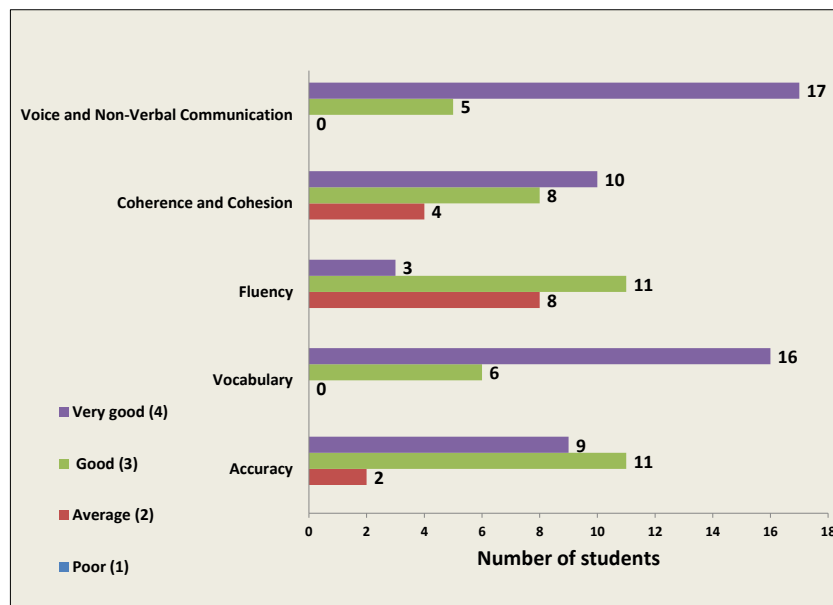


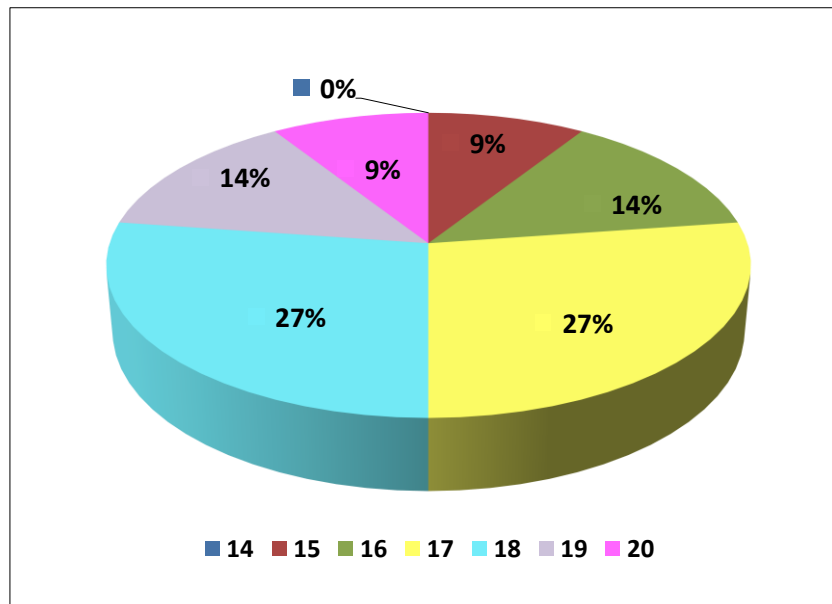
Chart 30 explains the reasons why the students got the grades mentioned above. This was mainly because they did well on various aspects of speaking proficiency. Only 4 students got a score of “average (2)” in coherence and cohesion, 8 students obtained “average (2) in fluency, and 2 students had “average (2)” in accuracy. The rest reached “good” or “very good” scores.

#### 4.2.2. The Analysis of Students’ Performance in Speaking Activity 7

The purpose of this activity was to make an oral review about the movie “Artificial Intelligence”. After the movie, the students had to role-play certain scenes of the movie and later discuss some questions in groups. For these two stages of the activity, the students were also given a grade according to the speaking rubric described in Annex 3.

The following chart shows the grades the students obtained in this task.

**CHART 31**  
**Students’ Speaking Grades Activity 7**



Seventy-six percent of the students attained grades between 17 and 20 indicating that the majority of the students were able to perform well in the activity. Further, nineteen percent of the students had a moderate performance obtaining grades between 15 and 16.

**CHART 32**  
**Students' Speaking Proficiency Activity 7**

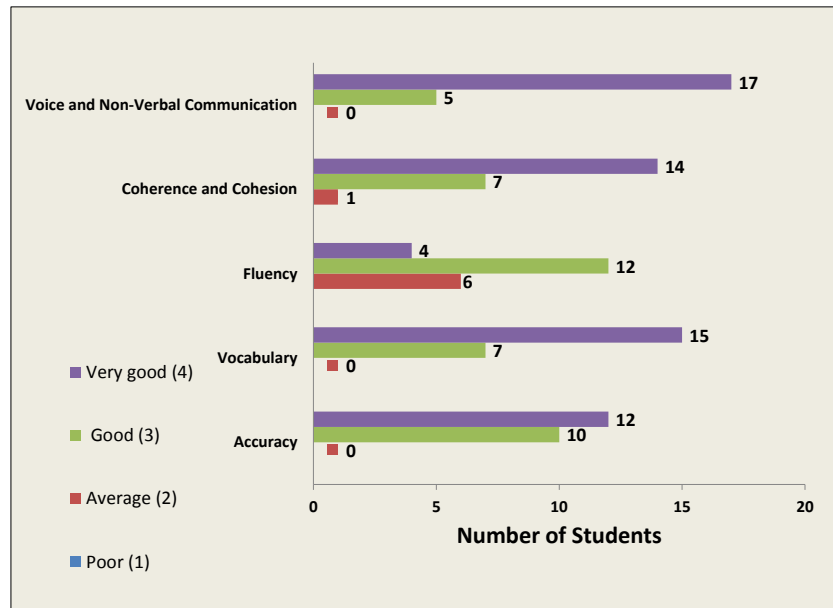


Chart 32 shows that the students did not have any major difficulties in completing this type of activity. There were just 6 students who obtained a score of “average (2)” in fluency and only 1 student got “average (2)” in coherence. There were no other students who acquired a grade lower than “good (3)” in voice and non-verbal communication, vocabulary and accuracy.

#### **4.2.3. The Analysis of the Students' Speaking Performance in the Post Test**

The speaking test applied to students was designed to be taken as their trimestral evaluation. It consisted of carrying out the development of a communicative task, namely Speaking Activity 10 described in Chapter 3. The activity was about a project named “Academic Experience at UESMA”. The objective of this activity was to exchange and share information about the school according to applicable categories:

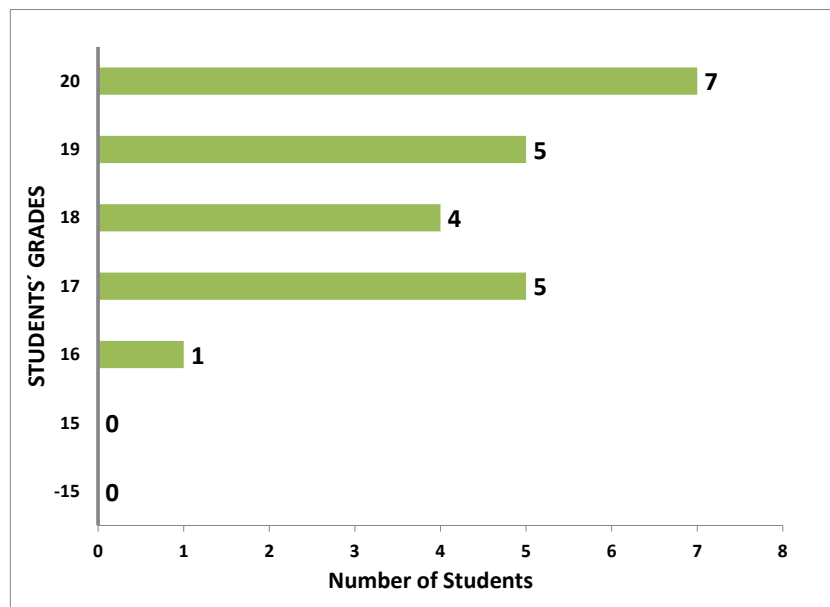


school facilities and places, lessons, subjects, teachers, likes, dislikes and feelings. The students were gathered into groups of four. Then they had to conduct a survey with their classmates as respondents. In order to do this, they prepared seven or eight questions to discover sufficient information about the previously mentioned categories. After that, the students were required to walk around the room and ask questions of their classmates in order to collect the necessary information. Next, they had to note down their classmates' answers and make some charts about the results. Finally, they reported the information found in the survey as well as their own comments regarding the categories.

#### 4.2.3.1. The Analysis of the Student's Speaking Performance Post-Test Grades

It is important to mention that the evaluation of the students' speaking performance was made according to the speaking rubric described in Annex 3. Because this test was given in coordination with another teacher, the students' final grade was averaged out between the two scores that the teachers determined. Chart 33 shows the grades obtained by the students in the test.

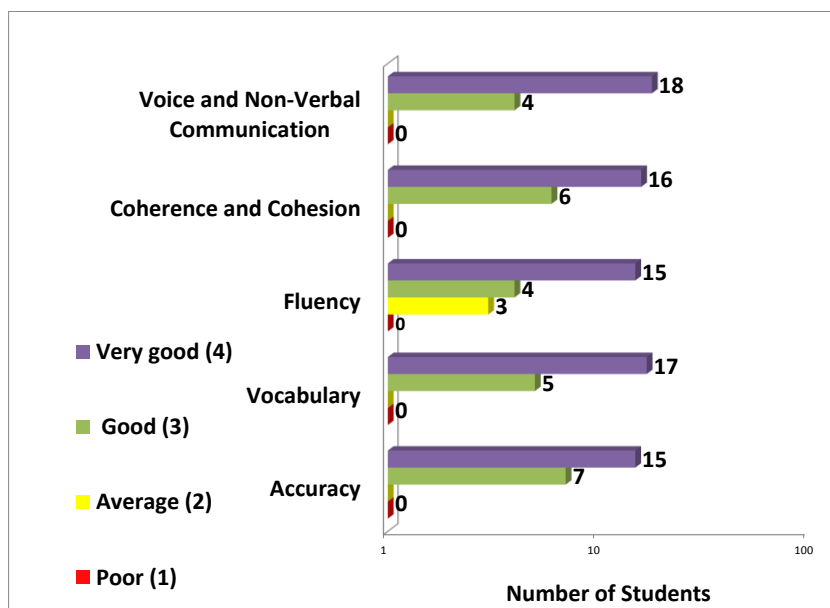
**CHART 33**  
**Analysis of Students' Speaking Grades Post Test**



According to the chart above, the majority of students obtained good grades in their speaking tests. Thirty-two percent of the students obtained a grade of 20, twenty-three percent got 19. Forty-six percent of them had a score between 17 and 18. Just 14% students obtained less than 17.

The results displayed in Chart 34 confirm the results showed in Chart 33. A high number of students presented a good speaking performance. Fifteen students were able to communicate about the topic with a good control of grammar, so they made very few mistakes despite the influence of their first language, Spanish. Seven obtained a grade of 3 in accuracy which demonstrates that they could communicate the topic in spite of the basic mistakes in grammar. Nevertheless, they were inaccurate with the verb tenses. They mixed up past tenses with present tenses. However, no student obtained a grade less than 3.

**CHART 34**  
**Students' Speaking Proficiency Post-Test**



In addition, it can be noted that the majority of students (17) used a reasonably wide and appropriate vocabulary relevant for the topic, in spite of a few incorrect word choices; all in all, the mistakes did not obstruct the meaning. Just a few students (five)

made some vocabulary errors when they were asked to talk about a new idea, but these errors did not inhibit the communication of the topic.

According to the fluency parameter, 15 students were able to express the topic with relative ease, even though they had some pauses when speaking. They were able to keep communicating the topic effectively without help. Four students were able to keep going, but paused for grammatical and lexical planning. In addition, they occasionally had to repair some phrases, especially when they were asked for longer ideas.

Only very few students (three) had to make a real effort to maintain the flow of communication. They were able to manage the topic using short utterances, but they had to make frequent pauses in order to search for expressions and words and repair communication.

In a similar pattern, 16 students were able to connect their ideas in an efficient way using a number of appropriate linking words. This made the relationship between the ideas clear. The other six students were able to join their ideas by using basic connectors such as “and”, “but”, “because” and “so”.

The majority of students (18) had a very good pronunciation, even their foreign accent was occasionally evident, and at time mispronunciations did occur. However, their pronunciation was clear and facilitated communication and comprehension. Just a few students got a grade of 3 over 4 because they had a noticeable foreign accent and sometimes they had to be asked for repetition; still, they did not have any serious problems that would have hampered communication and the comprehension of the topic.

### **4.3. The Analysis of the Students' Writing Development during the Application of the Project**

The aim of this section is to provide an analysis of how of the Year 3 students developed their writing skills during the application of the writing activities described in Chapter 3.

Most of the writing activities described in Chapter 3 passed through two stages. In the first stage, the students were presented with different situations to motivate them to write about real life issues as their first draft. These first drafts were revised using the symbols for error correction showed in Annex 4. Then, their corrected written tasks were returned for revision. In the second stage, the students wrote their final drafts. These final drafts were revised using the same error correction symbols as the first drafts, as well as given a grade.

For the purposes of the present research work two written tasks were analysed to evaluate the students' performance.

#### **4.3.1. The Analysis of the Students' Development in Writing Activity5**

The main objective of this task was to write a report of a fashion survey using the diagrams presented in the worksheet task described in Chapter 3.

Chart 35 shows the types of errors students made when writing this report. The percentages displayed in this chart were calculated according to the number of students who made the same type of mistake.

**CHART 35**  
**Students' Writing Errors Activity 5**

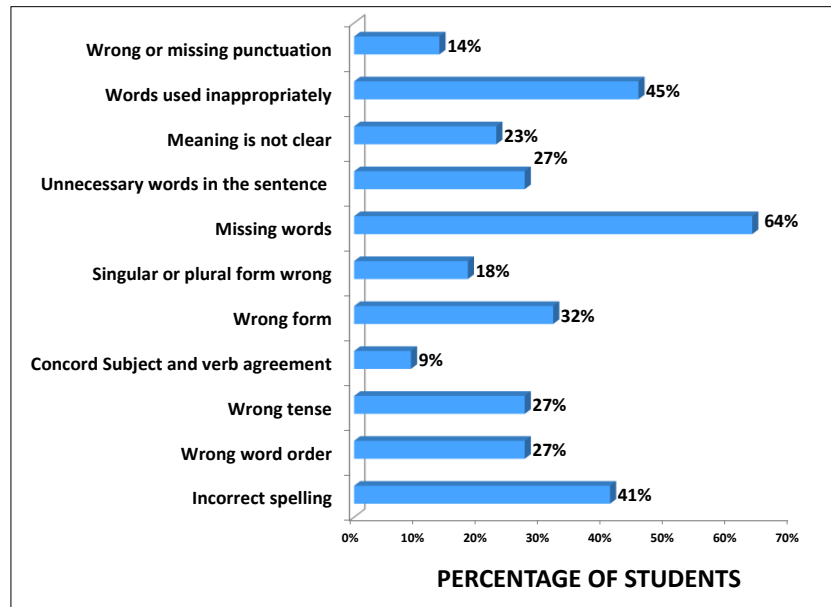


Chart 35 shows that sixty-four percent of the students made errors such as omitting words in the sentences. The majority of them omitted the subject “It”, and in some cases relative pronouns such as “who” or “which” to join to ideas. Only few students did not write “than”, or “as” in the comparative structure “as...as”. Additionally, forty-five used words inappropriately in the sentence such as the preposition “for” instead of “by”, the time word “when” instead of “while”. In addition, they used adjectives ending in “-ing” such as “scaring” instead of “scared” when they wanted to refer to a person’s feelings.

Furthermore, the chart exposes a lack of awareness in writing the words correctly (41%). A common mistake is that they used the wrong form of words, such as writing possessive pronouns instead of object pronouns, choosing the demonstrative “this” instead of “these”, and confusing the words “other” and “another”. All of these errors were made because the students in these cases translated what they wanted to write from their first language (L1), so it must be noted that there is still an interference of Spanish when they write in English.

Other important errors observed were the inappropriate use of the tense of the verbs (27%) and wrong word order (27%) as well as unnecessary words in the sentences.

Taking everything into account, these results are useful in determining how far the students have improved their writing proficiency, because the percentage of the students of making the same errors is not as high as it was in the diagnostic test taken and analyzed in Chapter 1.

#### **4.3.2. The Analysis of Students' Writing Development Activity 8**

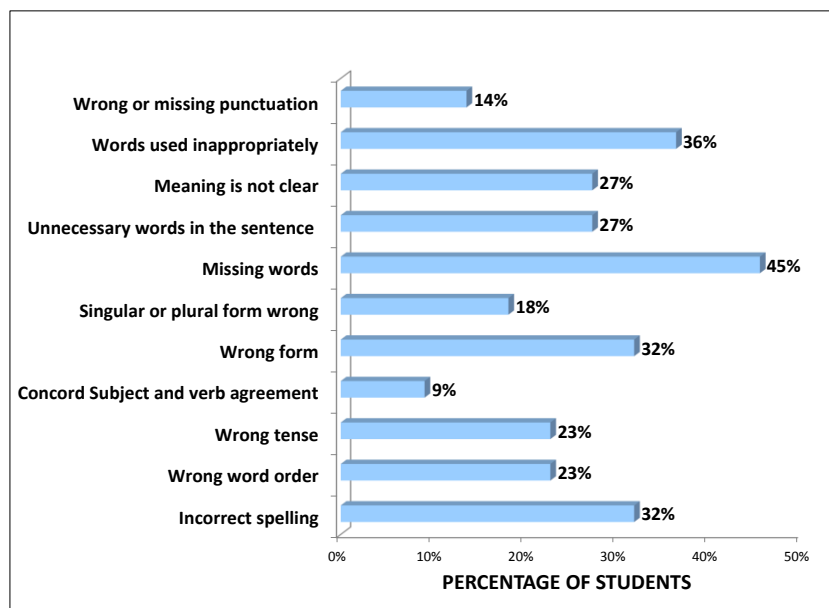
This activity aimed to provide students with a cooperative writing activity in which they had to share information and write about their favorite fictional TV character.

Chart 36 shows an analysis of the percentages of common mistakes made by the students in this descriptive article. Less than half of students (45%) omitted some words in the sentences they wrote. Some of them still forgot to write the pronoun "it" as the subject of the sentences; others did not remember to write the word "to" in the infinitive of the verb or use the verb "is" or "was" when using passive voice. Just few of them wrote their compositions without using "text connectives" such as "in addition", "moreover", "furthermore", among others. Thirty-six percent of students used words inappropriately in the sentences. Some of them confused the adjectives ending in "-ing" and "-ed" and few students mixed up the conjunctions "because", "so" and "since".

In the same way, about a third of the students (32%) wrote the wrong form of some words such as the past simple or second column of the verbs instead of the past participle in passive voice structures and the comparative form "more" instead of the superlative "most". In addition, it can be seen that the students were more aware of the spelling of the words, thus only 32% of students had spelling mistakes.

**CHART 36**

**Students' Writing Errors Activity 8**



**4.3.3. The Analysis of Students' Development Writing Post-Test**

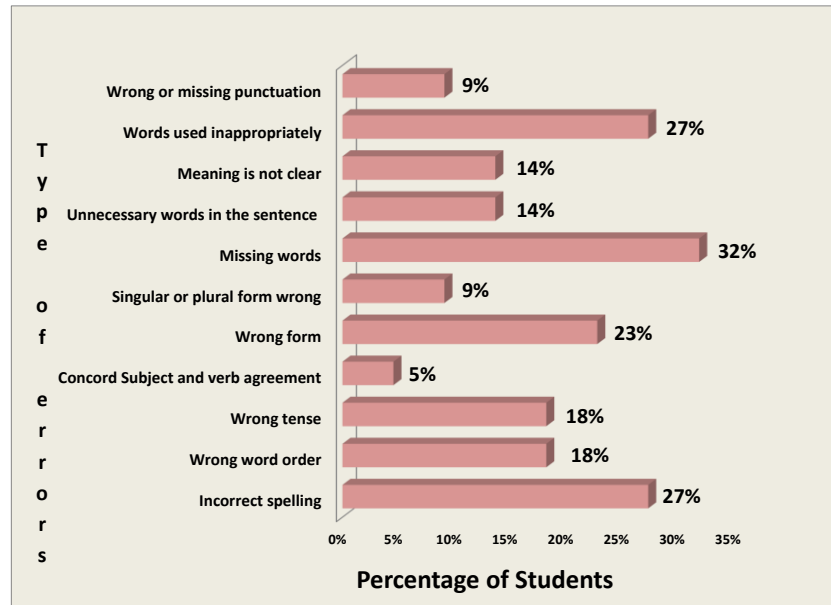
The writing test applied to students consisted of the application of Writing Activity 10. The task was given as their second trimestral exam. The students were given an imaginary situation in which they had to write an article entitled “The Most Amazing World Cultural Heritage Site on Earth” for a magazine competition. They were encouraged to write about Machu Picchu, including its architecture, history and needs of protection.

In order to develop the activity, the students had to follow specific steps leading to the final writing process. First, they were divided into groups to share and discuss some information about World Cultural Heritage sites and fill in a chart using the information. Then they had to watch a video about Machu Picchu which is considered to be one of the most famous World Cultural Heritage sites. After the video, the teacher led a brainstorm of ideas and a review of some useful phrases and vocabulary from the video; the students then were asked to answer some comprehensive questions about the video individually. Next, the students commented in groups about what they saw in the video,

and shared ideas to complete the chart as a way of brainstorming and organizing their ideas for writing. After that, each member of the group was asked to write the first draft of the article. Finally, it was collected for revision. Once the drafts were reviewed, they were handed back to the students on the day of the trimestral test. They checked for the corrections, edited and wrote their final drafts. These drafts were revised again and given a grade.

Chart 37 shows an analysis of the students’ errors in their first drafts.

**CHART 37**  
**Students’ Writing Errors Post-Test**



As it can be seen in Chart 37, “Missing words” in the sentence is the common error that 32% of students made. These errors could be referred to as the same ones the students made in the previous activities. The most common error was omitting “to” in the infinitive form of the verb, and the pronoun “it” as the subject of the sentence. In addition, there were some students (27%) who used words inappropriately such as the connectors “on the one hand”, “on the other hand”, “however”, “therefore” and the preposition “despite of”. It could also be observed that just 27% of the students made



mistakes in spelling. Finally, relatively few students (23%) made mistakes in writing the wrong form of the words such as “this” instead of “these”, the present or past form of the verbs instead of using the past participle form in passive sentences.

In addition, the chart shows that there were few students who made other types of mistakes such as using the wrong tense, especially the present and the past, writing the words in the wrong order especially when they used adjectives and nouns, among other common mistakes.

#### **4.4. Students’ Difficulties during the Implementation of the Speaking and Writing Activities**

Certain problems appeared at the beginning of the project application. The students’ reactions towards the change of methodology and evaluation for the speaking and writing activities were mixed because it was not easy for them to adjust to the system.

It could be perceived that it was hard for the students to get used to performing free-production speaking activities because these involved a different and more demanding preparation.

Additionally, students were notably accustomed to developing the speaking activities by first writing what they wanted to say and then reading it aloud, instead of just producing it.

It was also challenging for them to be evaluated and graded with a speaking rubric for almost all of the speaking tasks they performed. In the previous year, they had had a similar evaluation system for tests alone.

Likewise, the students showed difficulties in getting used to having their written tasks checked with a writing rubric based on error correction symbols. Following a process for

editing their first drafts themselves without their teacher correcting their mistakes was an activity that brought some complaints from the students.

These difficulties disappeared with time, because the students started enjoying the activities and getting used to doing them. They felt motivated to learn and work on more challenging activities. Moreover, they appeared to be pleased with their grades which were improving little by little as time passed. They also appeared to be content because they were gaining more confidence to communicate in English despite their errors.

#### **4.5. Teachers' Validation of the Project**

The teachers of speaking in Year 3 Administration and writing in Year 3 Science were asked to apply a speaking and writing activity to their students in order to carry out the validation of this research project. The activities that the teachers did with the students were Writing Activity 4 “More Gain, Less Pain”, and Speaking Activity 3 “Talking Football”.

##### **4.5.1. Teacher's Evaluation for Speaking Activity 3**

This analysis explains the teacher's opinion after the application of the Speaking Activity 3 to the students of Year 3 Administration in which they had to give and ask personal opinions about sports (See Chapter 3)

The teacher was given a questionnaire to evaluate the activity. This questionnaire is shown in Annex 9.

Looking at the answers given by the teacher, it can be seen that she considered the activity interesting because students worked actively by practicing the stated expressions and their background knowledge to talk about sports (Question 1). But she stated that the application was based on students' likes and dislikes about sports and that may have limited its use for students who are not interested in sports.

For Question 2 the teacher said the activity was well presented and structured according to the process students should follow in class.

With reference to Question 3, the teacher wrote down that the communicative skills enhanced by the activity were the following:

- Individual participation
- Sharing opinions
- Respecting and accepting others' opinion

In relation to Question 4 the teacher replied that the thinking skills involved in the activity were the ones listed below.

- Cognitive Skills
- Metacognitive Skills
- Socio affective Strategies.

For Question 5, the teacher indicated that the majority of students were able to use the language freely and felt comfortable doing the activity. However, few of them did not enjoy the activity too much because they were not keen on sports.

As for Question 6, the teacher thought that the activity was ideal to involve all the students in speaking practice because it had different and varied tasks to provide students useful resources to enjoy learning English and promote their participation.

For questions 7 and 8 the teacher did not give any answers.

#### **4.5.2. Teacher's Evaluation for Writing Activity 4**

This section shows the teacher's judgment regarding Writing Activity 4 which was applied to the students specializing in Science, in which they had to write in groups an opinion article for the topic "More Gain, Less Pain" giving advice to keep fit (See Chapter 3)

After the teacher did the activity with the students, she was given a questionnaire to evaluate the development of the activity. The questionnaire given to the teacher to complete is shown in Annex 10.

The results of the teacher's opinion are described as follows.

For Question 1 the teacher said that through the activity the students were given the opportunity to use English in the classroom as they use their own language in everyday life to achieve a specific outcome.

Referring to Question 2 the teacher said that by using a structured outline students were able to focus on meaning and the task helped them to induct knowledge.

According to Question 3 the teacher thinks that the communicative skills that are enhanced by the activity are:

- Spontaneous Interaction
- Chance of negotiating turns to speak
- Use language purposefully and cooperatively
- L2 (Second Language) acquisition skills

As regards Question 4 the teacher answered that the activity gave learners the following thinking skills:

- Confidence in trying to share their ideas
- Opportunity to use their own communicative strategies
- Metacognitive skills because they were able to recognize their own problems in the task and to reach an agreement.
- Collaborative skills because students were able to work with others

For Question 5 the teacher believed that students were highly engaged in the activity. They felt motivated and showed interest in the topic.

In relation to Question 6 the teacher responded that students had the opportunity to use their knowledge and skills in a meaningful way. She said that they listened and talked, read and wrote and reflected on the content.

Regarding Question 7 the teacher said she did not make any adaptations to the activity.

Answering Question 8 the teacher made the additional remarks listed below.

- The students showed responsibility before, during and after they accomplished the activity.
- The students were motivated intrinsically to do the activity, they wanted to show their article to other students in other groups and read what others had written.
- The students used the target language contextually.
- Teachers can easily apply and follow the activity because of its organization.

#### **4.6. Conclusions**

- The students agreed that the activities described in Chapter 3 and applied during the months from September 2011 to March 2012 helped them to develop a high level of confidence to speak and write in English. They also thought that through pair work and group activities they improved their speaking and writing proficiency. Besides, they stated that the activities were motivating and interesting and allowed them to talk about

“real world” situations. In addition, they said the activities helped them to improve their vocabulary, fluency, accuracy, coherence when speaking and to organize and sequence better their ideas when writing.

- The results obtained in the analysis of the speaking and writing activities and the post-tests are useful in order to conclude that the results were positive. For instance, the charts showed that the students’ grades in speaking increased and the mistakes they used to make in writing decreased after the application of the activities proposed in this project. Accordingly, the majority of students obtained grades between 17 and 20 in their speaking tasks. They also got scores of 3 and 4 in fluency, accuracy, cohesion and coherence. All the above proves that they were able to overcome a lot of the difficulties that they had struggled with at the start of this study.

- Likewise, most of the students were able to get over the difficulties they faced initially in writing, principally in the use of inappropriate words, words with unclear meaning, and omission of words in the sentences.

- The teachers’ observation demonstrated that the activities were well structured and gave the students the opportunity to practice the language freely, meaningfully and cooperatively. In addition they stated that the activity enhanced the students’ confidence to speak, interact and expressed their opinions about “real world” topics. They also indicated that the activities developed various communicative and thinking skills involving active student participation. Thus, students felt motivated and enjoyed performing the varied tasks presented.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Conclusions**

The results of the diagnosis in Chapter 1 clearly showed that there was a need to take action in order to enhance the English learning process toward the achievement of the students' profile set up in the English Curriculum for Year 3 at Maria Auxiliadora High School.

In order to solve this problematic situation, this project consisted of the application of a communicative methodology for EFL learning. This application was aimed to find out whether a systematic use of communicative activities in speaking and writing would help the students of Year 3 at Maria Auxiliadora High school to improve their productive skills.

The methodological orientation and classroom implications went hand in hand with the theoretical foundations. Thus, the application of the communicative activities during the English lessons meant a shift of focus from traditional teacher-centered methods to student-centered methods. The students had a central role which allowed them to interact and improve their speaking and writing proficiency.

The teacher, as a facilitator, created a comfortable classroom environment, suitable for the age group of the students. It provided opportunities for physical movement during the activities. In addition, students were encouraged to take risks and participate in the speaking and writing activities in spite of their differences in proficiency and ability level.

Significant Learning was produced through the use of authentic materials. Students were taught through videos, magazines, internet, graphics and multimedia such as photos and

images. In addition, graphic organizers were used to help students to find and organize information. Cues and visual support were provided to students to enable them to improve comprehension and production of the target language. All of these materials ensured the students' understanding regarding both the content of the activity and what they were to do. Thus, the students' engagement in the task motivated them to use language for an authentic, purposeful activity.

The communicative methodology used in the application of the present project promoted Social Interaction. Students were engaged in social learning interactions through pair, group and whole class work. They had the opportunity to use the language by sharing knowledge with their peers and classmates. All of the students contributed to the task and then communicated the results of their group work to the rest of the class. Classroom activities had a central role in enabling the students to interact and thus improve their speaking and writing proficiency.

The speaking and writing activities were designed by taking into account the students' needs, interests, and previous knowledge. They connected their own personal experiences with the class content.

A metacognitive skill was developed by each student. Students became aware and engaged with their own progress. They evaluated their products and behavior. This new student attitude increased self-esteem. Thus, work completion accuracy and fluency improved.

After the completion of each activity, feedback was always provided to the students. This time was for individual attention which helped students to improve and monitor their individual work. They acknowledged their mistakes and tried to rectify them. This also permitted the teacher to establish a good rapport with the students.



The students' survey in Chapter 4 revealed that students gained more confidence to communicate in English. The tasks allowed students to develop confidence in their ability to use the language either orally or in written form.

The analysis of the students' performance in Chapter 4 provided evidence of the students' improvement in their productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing. The tasks designed enabled the students to use a wide range of language and to draw topics and activities from many sources. Furthermore, the communicative activities provided the students with actual language production and practice. They felt comfortable and the interaction with their peers contributed to the development of their speaking and writing proficiency.

The teachers who replicated the tasks were of the opinion that they could see the organized structure of the communicative activities involved. It helped students to transfer their skills to appropriate language use in their own different situations. The students were given chance to practice the language significantly feeling motivated to perform each activity presented.

From all that has been mentioned above, it can be concluded that the general objective of this project has been fulfilled. The methodology presented in this project through the speaking and writing activities enabled students to achieve a significant improvement of their speaking and writing skills by providing them with an effective environment for interaction and motivating them to enhance their communicative skills.

### **5.1.1. Limitations**

The research project has shown that speaking and writing skills can be improved through meaningful and engaging activities that promote communication. Most of the 44 students at Maria Auxiliadora High School have shown some improvement; some students' grades have improved markedly. Both students and teachers appear to have been satisfied with the way these communicative activities were introduced and conducted in class.

It has to be said, however, that it is not very easy to decide whether the improvement in the students' communication skills has been brought about exclusively by the new methodology. It is quite possible that the students matured in the six months of the research period, namely between September 2011 and March 2012. We cannot neglect the impact of the outside world (parents) or that of the students' peers and other subject matter teachers. In order to find out the exact measure of improvement, one would need to have a treatment group and a control group: the treatment group receiving the intervention (being treated to the above described communicative activities), while the control group would be taught by some "traditional" methodology.

However, it has been decided that all 44 students should have the same treatment in order not to be at a disadvantage in their second language development. As a result, we can only hope that the improvement has been, to a large extent, owing to the activities detailed above and that subsequent research would come to the same conclusion.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

The experience gained from the application of the present project has suggested that teachers' research can be turned into a new way of teaching. In addition, it can change teaching practice into a more creative and motivating one. Thus, it can contribute effectively to the improvement of the students' learning process.

With the purpose of integrating the new methodology presented in this project into the current curriculum of Year 3 in Maria Auxiliadora High School, it is essential to make some recommendations.

An investigation of students' learning process must be completed before implementing any learning project.

Teachers should be aware that the methodological implications of the constructivist theories such as Vygotsky's Interactionism and Construction of Knowledge, and Ausubel's Significant Learning result in a student-centred education. It enables students to be active agents of their own knowledge and learn a foreign language meaningfully.

Active learning should consider students' needs, interests, and previous knowledge. According to this way of teaching, the activities should link the students' own experiences with the class content.

According to the Communicative Approach, the students' learning process should provide the students with a variety of challenging and motivating activities to encourage them to use the language in real communication contexts.

The activities based on the communicative methodology to improve speaking and writing should take place in different situations where students ought to work mainly in pairs or groups to facilitate interaction. It will engage them so as to improve their learning of the language by sharing knowledge and experiences.

Teachers should always provide the students with supportive and formative feedback after each communicative activity in order to increase students' confidence to speak or write in English.

Teachers must be aware that when using this new methodology of teaching to develop speaking and writing skills, it is necessary to implement efficient strategies in order to develop students' responsibility and autonomy.

The current research can be applied to teach content-based courses, because it lets students learn and improve the use of the language with motivation and interest rather than just learning about the linguistic aspect of the language.

Teachers should feel motivated to carry out similar pieces of research to improve their students' learning of the English Language, especially in the receptive skills such as Reading and Listening.

Finally, teachers should feel welcome to use the activities presented in this research project and also to adapt these activities for students with different levels of English.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ausubel, D. P. *Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968. Print.
- Brown, H. Douglas. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Longman, 2001. Print.
- . *Teaching by Principles. An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 2001. Print
- Buehl, Doug. *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. N. p. International Reading Association, 2006. Print.
- Byrne, D. *Teaching Writing Skills*. Cresswell: Pearson Education, 2000. Print.
- Colegio Maria Auxiliadora. *English Subject Annual Plan September 2011- July 2012, Third Year*. Cuenca: CMA, 2012. Print.
- . *Proyecto Educativo para las Instituciones de las Hijas de María Auxiliadora*. Cuenca: CMA, 2009. Print.
- Council of Europe. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. New York: Council of Europe, 2011. Print.
- Doff, Adrian. *Skills for fluency*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. Print.
- Doty, Jane K., et al. *Teaching Reading in the Content Areas: If Not Me, Then Who?* N. p. Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory, 2005. Print.
- Evans, Virginia, and Jenny Dooley. *Targets: Reading-Writing*. Student's Book 3. Swansea: Express Publishing, 1999. Print.
- . *Access. Student Book*. Newbury: Express Publishing, 2008. Printed

- Futonge, Kisito. *An ESL/EFL Lesson Plan & Teaching Resource Portal. ESL Galaxy*. 2006. Web. 30.Mar. 2012 <<http://www.esl-galaxy.com>>.
- Gower, Roger, Diana Phillips, and Steve Walters. *Teaching Practice Handbook*. Heinemann, 1995. Print.
- Harmer, Jeremy. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. London and New York: Longman, 2001. Print.
- Hedge, Tricia. *Writing: A Resource Book for Teachers*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print
- Hill, Jane D., and Cynthia L. Björk. *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners. Participant's Workbook*. Virginia: ASCD, 2008. Print.
- Hill, Jane D., and Kathleen M. Flynn. *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners*. VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Publications, 2006. Print.
- Katie. *WhyGo TEFL*. 17 January 2007. Web. 10 April 2012. <<http://www.tefllogue.com/in-the-classroom/esl-speaking-activities-two-fun-roleplays>>. (This is no longer available)
- Kentucky's National Parks*. The PBS Ken Burns Series. The KET Production. Kentucky Educational Television. 2012. Web. 1 Jan 2012. <<http://www.ket.org/nationalparks/experience.htm>>.
- Krashen, Stephen. *The Input Hypothesis*. New York. Longman 1985. Print.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. *Techniques and Principles in Language Learning*. China: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.
- Littlewood, William. *Communicative Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. Print.

“Machu Picchu.” *National Geographic* 2012. Web. 15 March 2012.  
<[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)>.

Matthews, Alan, Mary Spratt, and Les Dangerfield. *At the Chalkface: Practical Techniques in Language Teaching*. England: British Library, 1989. Print.

Nunan, David. *El diseño de tareas para la clase comunicativa*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.

---. *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. New York: Heinle & Heinle, 1999. Print.

Palmer, Graham. *Writing Extra: A Resource Book of Multi-Level Skills Activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

Randall, Mick, and Barbara Thornton. *Advising and Supporting Teachers*. Cambridge Teacher Training and Development Series. Cambridge UP, 2001. Print.

Richards, Jack C. “Communicative Language Teaching Today.” Web. 5. Jan. 2012.  
<[http://www.cambridge.org/other\\_files/downloads/esl/booklets/Richards-Communicative-Language.pdf](http://www.cambridge.org/other_files/downloads/esl/booklets/Richards-Communicative-Language.pdf)>.

---. *The Context of Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.

---. *The Language Teaching Matrix*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.

Richards, Jack C., and Theodore S. Rodgers. *Enfoques y métodos en la enseñanza de idiomas*. Cambridge UP, 1998. Print.

Rodríguez, Mayra R., and Emilio G. Garcia-Meras. *Las estrategias de aprendizaje y sus particularidades en lenguas extranjeras*. Cuba: Universidad Central Marta Abreu de las Villas, N.d. Print.

Sion, Christopher. *More recipes for tired teachers*. Addison-Wesley, 1991. Print.

Singleton, Jill. *Writers at Work: The Paragraph*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. Print.

- Stern, H. *Issues and Options in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992. Print.
- Swain, Merrill. "The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue." *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning*. Ed. James P. Lantolf. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.
- Thao Quoc Tran. "Language Learning Strategies in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning." *Japan TESOL Journal*. Web. 23 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.japantesoljournal.jp/styled-6/>>.
- Vygotsky, L. S. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1978. Print.
- Widdowson, Henry. "The Teaching of English as Communication." *ELT Journal* 1972. Web. 20 May 2011. <<http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org>>.
- Williams, Marion, and Robert L. Burden. *Psicología para profesores de idiomas*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. Print.
- . *Psychology for Language Teachers: A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. Print.
- Woodward, Tessa. *Planificación de clases y cursos*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Print.
- Wolkfolk, Anita. *Educational Psychology*. New York: Pearson, 2007. Print.

#### Web Pages

- <http://books.google.com.ec/books?id=QZCw9IhPQUMC&pg=PT1&lpg=PP1#v=onepage&q=&f=false>. 11-24-2009, 13-21, 23:29
- [http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca\\_ele/antologia\\_didactica/claves/arnold\\_fonseca04.htm](http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/antologia_didactica/claves/arnold_fonseca04.htm). 11-23-2009, 4, 20:45



[http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca\\_ele/diccio\\_ele/diccionario/motivacion.htm](http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/diccio_ele/diccionario/motivacion.htm).

[11-24-2009](#), 1, 21:36

[http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca\\_ele/diccio\\_ele/diccionario/interaccionismo](http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/diccio_ele/diccionario/interaccionismo).

[htm](#)

11-24-2009, 2, 22:08

<http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org>. 11-23-2009, 7, 21:47

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teaching>. 11-25-2009, 12, 20:25

<http://www.scribd.com/APORTES-DE-STENHOUSE/d/30170407>.11-26-2009, 21-29,

23:54

**ANNEX 1**  
**STUDENTS' SPEAKING SURVEY**  
**PRE-TEST**

**STUDENTS' SPEAKING SURVEY**

**Dear student:**

I will appreciate very much if you can take few minutes of your time to answer the following questions:

**QUESTION 1: Do you speak English in your English classes?**

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_. Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ( if not go to question 2)

**1a. If yes, how much do you speak in your English classes?**

A little\_\_\_

some\_\_\_ a lot\_\_\_

**b. What do you speak English for? (Tick only one)**

To answer to your teacher \_\_\_

To interact with your classmates \_\_\_

To improve fluency and accuracy \_\_\_

**QUESTION 2: Do you apply your knowledge of English to talk about your own life and experiences in your English classes?**

Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**QUESTION 3: Do you get a great amount of significant practice of a new topic?**

Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**QUESTION 4: What does the teacher do to help you to practice English in your speaking classes? You can tick more than one answer.**

translation	___	dialogue memorization	___
games	___	questions and answers	___
writing	sentences	applying	a
		after reading a text	___
		role-plays	___

grammar rule__	
----------------	--

**QUESTION 5: What else would you like your teacher to do to improve communication in English in the classroom? List 3 important ideas.**

\_\_\_\_\_ -  
 \_\_\_\_\_ -  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION 6: In your English classes, how often do you work individually, in pairs and in groups?**

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Individually	_____	_____	_____	_____
In pairs	_____	_____	_____	_____
In groups	_____	_____	_____	_____

**QUESTION 7: Does your teacher use a “speaking rubric” or speaking parameters to evaluate your speaking performance in class and tests?**

Always\_\_\_\_\_      Never\_\_\_\_\_

Only in term tests \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNEX 2**  
**STUDENTS' WRITING SURVEY**  
**PRE-TEST**

**STUDENTS' WRITING SURVEY**

**Dear student:**

I will appreciate very much if you can take few minutes of your time to answer the following questions:

**QUESTION 1: Do you know the process for writing...?**

Short Stories \_\_\_\_ Descriptive Articles \_\_\_\_

Letters \_\_\_\_ Opinion Articles \_\_\_\_

**QUESTION 2: How often do you write compositions such as short stories, letters, descriptive articles, opinion articles?**

Short Stories      Always \_\_\_\_      Sometimes\_\_ Rarely \_\_      Never\_\_

Descriptive Articles   Always \_\_\_\_      Sometimes\_\_ Rarely\_\_      Never\_\_

E-mails              Always \_\_\_\_      Sometimes\_\_ Rarely\_\_      Never\_\_

Letters                Always \_\_\_\_      Sometimes \_\_ Rarely\_\_      Never\_\_

Opinion articles      Always \_\_\_\_      Sometimes \_\_ Rarely \_\_      Never\_\_

**QUESTION 3: What activities do you do in your English classes to practice writing?**

Questions and answers after reading a text \_\_\_\_

Translation \_\_\_\_

Games \_\_\_\_

Gap-Filling Exercises \_\_\_\_

Writing dialogues and role-plays, \_\_\_\_

Writing sentences applying a grammar rule \_\_\_\_

Writing paragraphs\_\_

**QUESTION 4: What else would you like your teacher do to improve writing in the classroom? (You can tick more than one answer).**

Writing other kind of compositions \_\_\_\_\_

Games \_\_\_\_\_

Drama and Writing Skits (funny performances) \_\_\_\_\_

Listen and write \_\_\_\_\_

Problem-solving activities \_\_\_\_\_

Use ICT and authentic materials \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION 5: How does your teacher evaluate your writing work?**

Teacher correcting mistakes \_\_\_\_\_

Feedback \_\_\_\_\_

With a Writing Rubric

### ANNEX 3

#### SPEAKING RUBRIC EVALUATION

SPEAKING RUBRIC EVALUATION CATEGORY	Verygood 4	Good 3	Average 2	Poor 1	S c o r e
<b>Accuracy</b>	Student communicates the topic, good grammatical control though noticeable mother tongue influence. Few errors occur but he can communicate effectively what he is trying to say.	Student communicates the topic systematically but making some basic mistakes in grammar for example tends to mix up tenses and forgets to mark agreement.	Student communicates the topic showing limited control of grammatical structures Grammatical errors usually occur leading to many minor difficulties in communication.	Student communicates the topic with many grammatical errors which severely hamper communication.	
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Lexical accuracy is generally reasonable and appropriate, though little confusion and incorrect word choice does occur without hampering communication.	Student shows some control of vocabulary and expressions but major errors still occur when expressing complex thoughts or handling new topics and situations.	Student is able to control a narrow repertoire of vocabulary. Some difficulties arise due to limited vocabulary	Lexical accuracy is not appropriate. Communication is severely hampered due to lack of vocabulary.	
<b>Fluency</b>	Student can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning. Repair is at times	Student can make himself understood in the conversation, even though pauses and reformulations	Student can manage short, pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less	Student cannot make herself understood in the conversation. Long pauses while searching for expressions,	

	evident, especially in longer stretches.	are very evident. But student can construct phrases on the topic with sufficient ease.	familiar words, and to repair communication. Some effort is required to maintain the conversation.	and repair communication. Much effort is required to maintain the conversation.	
<b>Coherence and Cohesion</b>	Student can link a series of elements into a connected, linear sequence of points. Can use a good and different number of linking words efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas.	Student can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple ideas in order talk about the topic.	Student can link words or simple sentences with very basic linear connectors like 'and' or 'then'.	Student cannot use connectors to link his ideas to talk about the topic.	
<b>Voice and non-verbal communication</b>	Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.	Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite some noticeable foreign accent.	Pronunciation of words and phrases can be understood with much effort by conversational partners. Some communication problems arise due to unclear pronunciation.	Pronunciation is not clear enough to be understood due to noticeable L1 accent.	

**Source: Council of Europe. *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning teaching, assessment.* New York: Council of Europe, 2011. Print.**

**ANNEX 4**  
**ERROR CORRECTION SYMBOLS**

<b>SYMBOL</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>S</b>	Incorrect spelling
<b>w.o.</b>	Wrong word order
<b>T</b>	Wrong tense
<b>C</b>	Concord. Subject and verb agreement
<b>WF</b>	Wrong form
<b>S/P</b>	Singular or plural form wrong
<b>^</b>	Missing words
<b>[ ]</b>	Unnecessary words in the sentence
<b>?m</b>	Meaning is not clear
<b>NA</b>	Words used inappropriately
<b>P</b>	Wrong or missing Punctuation

Source: Byrne, D. *Teaching Writing Skills*. Cresswell: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000.

**Print.**



**ANNEX 5**  
**TEACHERS' SPEAKING SURVEY**  
**PRE-TEST**

Dear Teacher:

I appreciate very much if you can take few minutes of your time to answer the following questions:

1. What kind of syllabus do you follow? (Check one answer)
- based on structures? \_\_\_\_
- based on functions? \_\_\_\_
- based on a combination of structures and functions? \_\_\_\_

2. What activities do you use to encourage your students to produce English during their classes? Check them in order of importance. Consider #1 as the most used and #10 the least used.

Role-plays \_\_\_\_

Listen and perform (acting out) \_\_\_\_

Translation \_\_\_\_

Questions and answers after reading a text or listening something \_\_\_\_

Deductive application of an explicit grammar rule \_\_\_\_

Dialogue memorization \_\_\_\_

Games \_\_\_\_

Drama and skits (funny drama) \_\_\_\_

Video production \_\_\_\_

Use of Authentic materials \_\_\_\_

3. Besides the activities mentioned above, what else do you do to develop your student's own learning strategies? Mention three more you consider the most frequent.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

4. On what level do your students achieve oral natural communication and fluency when they graduate? Tick a number.

0% -20%    20%-40%    40%-60%

60%-80%    80%-100%

5. What strategies and techniques do you use to help students connect language structures with language functions so they can communicate orally and meaningfully?

---

---

6. What speaking skills/subskills do you consider the most important to develop in students during their last year of high-school? (senior year)

---

---

7. Under what criteria do you evaluate your students' oral language proficiency?

---

---

---

8. How useful for you would it be to have a methodological proposal to improve the English productive skills such as speaking and writing as a guide to your English teaching practice? Why?

---

---

**ANNEX 6**  
**TEACHERS' WRITING SURVEY**  
**PRE-TEST**

Dear Teacher:

I appreciate very much if you can take few minutes of your time to answer the following questions:

1) How important do you consider to develop students' writing skills in the third year of high-school? (senior year) And why?

---

---

---

2) How often do you make your students write:

- a. Short paragraphs \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Short stories \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Letters \_\_\_\_\_
- d. e-mails \_\_\_\_\_
- e. descriptive or  
narrative articles \_\_\_\_\_
- f. essays \_\_\_\_\_

3) Is there any other kind of writings would you consider important to teach students?

---

---

---

4) What writing skills do you consider important to develop in the students?

---

---

---

5) What techniques do you use to develop your students' writing skills?

---

---

---

6) Under what criteria do you evaluate the writing proficiency of your students?

---

---

---

7) How useful for you would it be to have a methodological proposal to improve the English productive skills such as speaking and writing as guide to your English teaching practice? Why?

---

---

---

**ANNEX 7**  
**STUDENTS' SPEAKING SURVEY**  
**POST-TEST**

**Dear Student:** Please read each statement carefully and tick the option which best describes your experience developing the speaking activities during these months of class over the past months. (September 2011 to March 2012).

**1. The communicative activities helped me to develop a \_\_\_\_\_ level of confidence to communicate in English.**

High\_\_\_                      Satisfactory\_\_\_                      Low\_\_\_                      No change\_\_\_

**2. The communicative activities helped me to improve my fluency, coherence and accuracy when communicating in English.**

A lot\_\_\_                      To some extent\_\_\_                      A little \_\_\_                      No change\_\_\_

**3. I have increased my vocabulary to be able to have a real conversation in English.**

A lot\_\_\_                      To some extent\_\_\_                      A little \_\_\_                      No change\_\_\_

**4. The speaking activities we did in class were motivating and interesting.**

Very\_                      To some extent\_\_\_                      Not really\_

**5. The activities we did in class let me talk about real world situations.**

Yes\_\_\_                      No \_\_\_

**6. I consider that interaction through pair work and group activities helped me to improve my speaking skills in English.**

A lot\_\_\_                      To some extent\_\_\_                      A little \_\_\_                      No at all \_\_\_

**ANNEX 8**  
**STUDENTS' WRITING SURVEY**  
**POST-TEST**

**Dear Student:** Please read each statement carefully and tick the option which best describes your experience of developing the writing activities during these months of class over the past months. (September 2011 to March 2012).

- 1. The communicative activities helped me to develop a \_\_\_\_\_ level of confidence to write in English.**

High\_\_                      Satisfactory\_\_                      Low\_\_                      No change\_\_

- 2. I have increased my vocabulary to be able to write in English.**

A lot\_\_                      To some extent\_\_                      A little \_\_                      No change\_\_

- 3. The writing activities we did in class were motivating and interesting.**

Very\_                      To some extent\_\_                      Not really\_

- 4. The activities we did in class let me write about "real world" situations.**

Yes\_\_                      No \_\_

- 5. The activities we did in class help me to organize and sequence my ideas better when writing in English.**

Yes \_\_                      No\_\_

- 6. I consider that interaction through pair work and group activities helped me to improve my writing skills in English.**

A lot\_\_                      To some extent\_\_                      A little \_\_                      No at all \_\_

**ANNEX 9**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHER'S VALIDATION OF THE SPEAKING  
ACTIVITY**

**Dear Teacher:** Please take a few minutes of your time to describe the experience you had applying the speaking activity.

- 1) **How far was the content of the activity relevant with regard to “real world” applications?**

---

---

- 2) **How did the content of the activity relate to the students' previous knowledge?**

---

---

- 3) **What communicative skills do you think were enhanced by the activity?**

---

---

- 4) **What thinking skills were involved in the activity?**

---

---

- 5) **To what extent were the students engaged in the activity?**

---

---

- 6) **How far did the activity promote active learning and student participation?**

---

---

- 7) **Did you make any adaptations to the activity? If so, what were they?**

---

---

**8) What other remarks would you like to add about the activity?**

---

---



**ANNEX 10**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHER'S VALIDATION OF THE WRITING  
ACTIVITY**

**Dear Teacher:** Please take a few minutes of your time to describe the experience you had applying the writing activity.

- 1) How far was the content of the activity relevant with regard to “real world” applications?**

---

---

- 2) How did the content of the activity relate to the students' previous knowledge?**

---

---

- 3) What communicative skills do you think were enhanced by the activity?**

---

---

- 4) What thinking skills were involved in the activity?**

---

---

- 5) To what extent were the students engaged in the activity?**

---

---

- 6) How far did the activity promote active learning and student participation?**

---

---

- 7) Did you make any adaptations to the activity? If so, what were they?**

---

---

**8) What other remarks would you like to add about the activity?**

---

---



UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
UNIVERSIDAD DEL AZUAY

FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA

THESIS PAPER OUTLINE PRIOR TO OBTAINING THE  
BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN EDUCATION, ENGLISH SPECIALTY

"A METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING ENGLISH  
LANGUGGE PRODUCTIVE SKILLS IN THE THIRD YEAR OF  
HIGH-SCHOOL AT MARIA AUXILIADORA HIGH SCHOOL"

CATALINA JARAMILLO

SUGGESTED DIRECTOR:

MST. NANCY CRIOLLO



CERTIFICADO: Que este Documento

es una Copia del Original

el día 05 de Julio del 2012

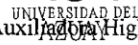
Mra Lourdes Eraso M.  
SECRETARIA

2009-2010

Falt No:

Edición autorizada de 20.000 ejemplares  
Del 0438501 al 0458500 N° 0455725

**TOPIC:** A methodological proposal for improving English language productive skills in the third year of high-school at Maria Auxiliadora High School.



## INTRODUCTION

Maria Auxiliadora High School is a private school with five hundred and seventy-seven students located in Cuenca, the capital city of the Azuay province of Ecuador. The school offers two areas of specialty; 1) Science, and 2) Bilingual administration. Its educational program is based on both the "Saint Bosco Prevention System" and the national program entitled "The Educational Project of the Daughters of St. Mary Auxiliadora".

The "Saint Bosco Prevention System" is a philosophy of education adhering to the principles of guidance, conduction and company. This philosophy is intended to help students make appropriate choices which will allow them to reach their potential as active and responsible citizens.

The mission of "The Educational Project of the Daughters of St. Mary Auxiliadora" is to give the students a comprehensive education based on academic excellence along with the development of high moral values and Christian commitment. This allows the students to become active agents of change and social development as 'good Christians and honest citizens'. Also, the school has extensive projects focusing on pastoral applications, education and journalism, social well-being, sports and recreation, health and ecology, education and culture and English as a foreign language.

Since the English language is a universal language and because it increases future opportunities for success in life; the main objective of the school English Department is to constantly revise and strengthen the English language learning process. The basic education students, as well as, the high school students take English as a required subject. The goal is to achieve communicative competence and fluency in English. This is accomplished through the development of four skills: 1) listening, 2) speaking, 3) reading, and 4) writing. All four of these skills are subject to some performance indicators, but there is an expectation that students learn the value of each of the skills.



UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
AZUAY  
FACULTAD DE  
FILOSOFIA  
SECRETARIA

Edición autorizada de 20.000 ejemplares  
Del 0428501 al 0458500

Nº

0455727

Beginning with the previous academic year, the English curriculum has placed a strong focus on the skill-building criteria.) Thus, English is divided into three courses; 1) Reading and Writing, 2) Listening and Speaking, and 3) Language Grammar. This change was made primarily because the school began to participate in the national program which highlights the necessity of becoming bilingual in five years. Secondly, because the authorities and teachers were not satisfied with the results obtained with the previously adopted structural methodology. Finally, the English Department considered the idea that the study of language occurring through cultural venues can motivate students to more effectively learn the language. As a result, lessons are presented based on cultural topics that lead into the practice of the four skills.

**1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:** There is little development of the linguistics and productive skills.

Teacher observation and experience exposed a lack of development with regard to the linguistic and productive skills in the third year of study. This was seen in a trend line of several years. Furthermore, this can be seen in the results of the speaking and writing evaluations completed by students during the first, second and third terms. During this time, 20% obtained a grade of more than 18/20, while approximately 65% received a grade of between 12/20 and 16/20. Moreover, it should be mentioned that the English teachers were interviewed as part of the research study. They agreed that the development of student productive skills is the greatest level of concern. In addition, research was conducted with third-year students, finding that they do not feel confident enough when having a conversation with a native English speaker, a foreign person, or while writing short texts.

To get a broader view of the situation, the following aspects can be mentioned as the main causes of these problems:

- English lessons are taught based on the teaching of grammatical structure mainly, thus becoming monotonous and authoritative lessons, while producing a lack of student interest in the learning the language. This makes the students indifferent and unmotivated in English classes.





UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
AZUAY

- Students are afraid to communicate and use English to express their ideas spontaneously and confidently
- Lack of opportunities to develop communicative skills in English
- The pressure on the teacher to comply with the content of the course plan established for a predetermined time.
- Little teacher knowledge of new methods and techniques for teaching the English language when using the communicative methodology.
- Few methodological strategies are applied in class.
- The students do not show metacognitive skills and study habits.

### 1.2.OBJECTIVES:

#### GENERAL:

- To improve the of English language productive skills in the third year of high-school at Maria Auxiliadora High School

#### SPECIFIC:

- To diagnose the current situation of the learning English process in the sixth year of high-school.
- To design a curriculum based on the communicative approach as an axis for the English language productive skills of speaking and writing.
- To validate the proposal with teachers of the English Department, students of the previous year, and the authorities of the school.

### 1.3.PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the educational and formative process at Maria Auxiliadora High School is to enhance the students' personal and professional development. From this perspective, it is important to provide the students with a variety of opportunities to develop their skills. It is also necessary to provide situations where the students can gain knowledge in a broader scope of fields, talents, routines, etc, since their personal and professional development is dependent upon the academic preparation and training received at school.



UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
AZUAY  
FACULTAD DE  
FILOSOFIA

Edici3n autorizada de 20.000 ejemplares  
de 0438501 a 0458500

Nº

SECRETARIA  
0455728

Learning a foreign language is essential and vital in the process of education and training. English is a compulsory subject at Maria Auxiliadora High School. This is due to the fact that English is considered the most important and universal language which could open many doors, not only professionally but also personally. Students who have acquired a good level of English when they finish school find it as a tool or a resource in which to rely professionally. Therefore, the teaching-learning process should motivate and encourage students to reach greater levels of proficiency in the English language.

Also, the learning process must arouse the students' enthusiasm to use the language in order to achieve natural communication and fluency in a language that is not theirs.

Using the Communicative Approach for the teaching-learning process could help improve the level of communication and the development of language skills. This will encourage students to develop their own learning strategies. Memorization and rote learning is a less effective way to acquire language fluency and competence. Students will learn through a process which includes significant practice in which the students can gradually acquire higher levels of both accuracy and fluency. The Communicative Approach bases its techniques on progression in significance and use of the foreign language. Thus, students at low levels are encouraged to use English for a variety of functions and situations and as they gain higher levels of language and accumulate more periods of English language instruction, they get to advanced vocabulary and dominate the language structures and functions, allowing them the "internalization" of the foreign language, resulting in the fluid communication of their ideas.

Finally, this research aims to provide a new and important contribution to the education and training of third-year English language students at Maria Auxiliadora High School. It specifically aims to help develop and improve the teaching-learning process of the English language by raising the students' level of communicative English language competence at the institution.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This explanation will begin by using the words of psychologists Marion Williams and Robert Burden. In their book "Psychology for Language Teachers" they state that "the



language on its manifestations either oral or written, or by signs, is the main instrument of communication between individuals within a society (1999). Therefore, the language used between individuals within a society must be considered as an indispensable tool of communication and a vehicle for interaction between them. It can also be said that language is also part of each person's identity and it is used to convey this identity to other individuals whom he/she interacts in everyday life.

On the other hand, the education process is one of the most important and complex in the life of human beings. Within this macro process, we find micro learning processes, for example, the learning of a foreign language. In this learning process coexists the interaction of different variables involved to learn a foreign language: the intentions and actions of teacher and students, individuality, personality, motivation, and knowledge of both teacher and student, level of self-confidence, the climate of the classroom, intergroup attitudes, and the diversity of culture, among others. Therefore, teachers must understand their practice from this multivariate view.

Likewise, it has been researched that nowadays the process of teaching and learning of a foreign language is influenced mainly by traditional and structural approaches. A structural approach for language learning considers the first language as a system of elements encoded structurally related to the meaning. (Richards and Rogers, 60 1986). The first main objective of this approach is knowledge of the system which is a set of phonetic rules, morphosyntaxis and lexical items regardless of actual situations of communication. Secondly, the only person that performs the process is the teacher, who is the transmitter of his/her knowledge and students become recipient subjects who absorb it. Thirdly, the types of activities used in the classroom are focused on being aware of structures, control vocabulary, and fix grammar points and sentence patterns through sentence repetition which involves memory and repetitive learning.

The points mentioned above can set that this structural approach does not help students internalize structures nor learn them meaningfully in the classroom, since there is no record of what we learned in the long-term memory. Therefore, when the student wants to express her ideas or hold a simple conversation, she cannot do it because she doesn't know how to say it, simply because she did not use it in class, or do not know how to adapt



UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
AZUAY  
FACULTAD DE  
FILOSOFIA  
SECRETARIA

Edición autorizada de 20.000 ejemplares  
Del 0438501 al 0458500

Nº 0455729



the language learned and use it in a similar situation. According to Widdowson (1972) in his article called "The Teaching of English as communication" this difficulty may arise since transfer approaches and methods used by the teacher in the teaching learning process were not correct. Therefore, one can conclude that the transfer between the student's native language and the foreign language is possible when the student is developing a different skill which is interpretation or translation. Teaching a foreign language for communicative purposes has a whole different language perspective and considerations.

The most important thing when learning a language is to be able to say something meaningfully in the correct situation to a determined person. To reach this point in language use, we need the correct form of sentences both grammatical and phonological and fluency in meaning and use.

Precisely, the above ideas are based on what the Communicative Approach of language is. The communicative methodology of teaching of a foreign language begins to develop in the late 1970s and arises opposed to the approaches of that time: situational teaching of language and audio-lingual method; methods that were criticized and put into doubt by British and American methodologists since these could not sustain the real behavior of the language. On the other hand, the Communicative Approach also arises from the need to develop alternative methods for language teaching in Europe due to the continuous changes in education and the growing interdependence among countries.

Many philosophers, psycholinguistics, educators, and sociologists contributed to the development of the Communicative Approach. Some names include philosophers L Austin, John Searle and Paul Grice; philosophers of language; Noam Chomsky and John Firth, the British functional linguists Mak Halliday, American sociolinguists Dell Hymes, John Gumperz and William Labov, Christopher Candlin, and Henry Widdowson.

This approach arises as a criticism on Chomsky's structural linguistic theory. The Communicative approach demonstrated that Chomsky could not explain creativity and appropriateness of the language of each speaker, (Richards and Rodgers, 1986; 67). Chomsky sets the language as grammatical knowledge. This is language competence that a native speaker is born with since he has a subconscious knowledge of the grammar rules of



UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
AZUAY  
FACULTAD DE  
FILOSOFIA  
SECRETARIA



UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
AZUAY

his language which allows him to make sentences in that language. Language competence is the tacit knowledge of an ideal speaker-hearer which has a limited group of rules to produce an infinite number of sentences in the language, (Chomsky, 1965:7).

It should be noted that in this sense Chomsky develops his theory only focusing on language competence based on the internalization of grammatical rules existing in the mind of the person that uses the language and it is this process that uses the bases for understanding linguistic relations, (Chomsky 1965; 7). Thus, his theory supports an ideal speaker and hearer interacting in a linguistically homogeneous community. In this sense, Chomsky did not try other factors that fit in language learning such as the context and environment both internally and externally in which a learner confronts the time and the place while learning the language.

Dell Hymes questions Chomsky's point of view of language learning and adds social and cultural items. This way he establishes the concept of "communicative competence". He supports that language learning is a set of abilities and skills on the part of the language user. The speaker-hearer - writer-reader of a language must bring the language into play to produce or comprehend speeches appropriate to the situation and the context of communication and the required degree of formalization. (Hymes, 1966; 15). Communicative competence, socio-cultural, sociolinguistic, discursive and linguistic knowledge will be the set of skills and knowledge that enable a community to interact through language. In this sense communicative competence refers to the ability of a person to interpret and use the social meaning of language, in any circumstance or situation.

Another significant contribution to this approach is the British linguist Wilkins who proposes a functional or communicative language definition. This language "of doing" Wilkins called "functions". Functions are areas of language where the language is actually used to do things. Wilkins analyzed the communicative meanings that a person needs when learning a language to be able to understand and communicate. (Richards and Rodgers 1986; 68)

In curriculum planning this investigation will determine the curriculum definition in different ways.



UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
AZUAY  
FACULTAD DE  
FILOSOFIA  
SECRETARIA

Edición autorizada de 20.000 ejemplares  
Del 0438501 al 0458500

Nº

0455730

According to Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) the curriculum is: "An attempt to communicate the principles and essential features of an educational purpose so that remain open to critical discussion and can be moved effectively to practice". According to UNESCO, the curriculum refers to "all activities, experiences, materials, teaching methods, and other means used by the master, considered by him for the purposes of education purposes".

According to Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner (1980): "The curriculum includes learning experiences and responses expected, made from systematic knowledge and experiences under the auspices of the school, and the continuous development of personal and social competence reconstruction of the learner".

Taking into consideration all these definitions and for the purpose of this investigation, it can be said that curriculum is the process of teaching and learning a foreign language: all actions, experiences, methods, classroom activities and learning materials that the learner uses to raise meaningfully and systematically her communicative competence which is the main objective of the communicative language teaching approach.

Thus, the design of this curriculum must first start by deciding the general purposes of the curriculum in the process of learning a foreign language to then set the contents or purpose of learning. Determining the kind of contents: functional, notional, and grammatical and appropriate that will help reach the purpose. Also, I need to establish assessment and determine the results. As the curriculum refers to the content and tasks in the process it must also establish the way how these two elements are integrated. (Nunan 1989; 17). It should be noted that the contents must be targeted to the meaning and the use of the language and the tasks have to be designed in such a way that facilitate language acquisition and internalization.

In addition, when designing the curriculum, it must include the role that the student and the teacher must have in the communicative approach. Active learning, task-based learning, self-assessment, interaction, cooperative learning, social and cultural needs, organized activities for communication, including processes of information sharing, negotiate the meaning of the language are pieces that fit together. (Nunan, 1989; 215.).



UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
AZUAY  
FACULTAD DE  
FILOSOFIA  
SECRETARIA



And finally, the materials chosen should be based on real tasks that reflect real-world situations to promote the communicative use of the language.

As a conclusion, the application of a methodological model in the last year at Maria Auxiliadora High School to develop the productive skills in English based on the Communicative Approach for foreign language learning will help the students not only to acquire these skills appropriately but also a competence to enable them to speak English when the opportunity arises in real situations of communication outside the classroom.

For this reason it is necessary to mention that the curriculum must be designed in such a way that will help students achieve the communicative competence. The curriculum will include learning tasks organized around real problems and situations that students will solve through the development not only of vocabulary and grammar but also of communicative skills for the interaction with all the elements involved in learning. Thus, the teacher will encourage active participation of her students; allowing them to practice the "real-world language", which they may potentially need for real communication.

#### 2.1. Theoretical Basis: The Communicative Approach.

#### 2.2. Research Questions:

1. Will a new methodological proposal help to develop the productive skills in the third year of high-school at Maria Auxiliadora High School?
2. How is The English Language Learning Process currently developed in the third year of high-school and what factors shall determine the process of English language learning for the classroom?
3. Under what pedagogical criteria is the methodology determined and what methodology and evaluation should be used for developing curricular instruments according to the communicative approach?
4. What are the elements in favor or in contrast to the proposal issued by the participants?



UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
AZUAY  
FACULTAD DE  
FILOSOFIA  
SECRETARIA

Edición autorizada de 20.000 ejemplares  
Del 0438501 al 0438500.

Nº

0455731

### 3. METHODOLOGY:

#### a. TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

TECHNIQUE	TO WHOM/WHICH:	FOR:
Book Review	Institutional Project	Analysis of the Project
Book Review	Third Bachelor Class's PCI and PUD	Analysis
Book Review	Books	Theoretical Frame design
Book Review	Books	Curriculum Design
Book Review	Books	Methodological Proposal Design
Observation	English classes	Finding learning necessities
Interviews	English teachers	Finding learning necessities
Surveys	Third Bachelor Students	Finding learning necessities
Interviews	School Authorities	Finding learning necessities
Surveys	Graduated Students	Finding learning necessities
Interviews	English teachers	Validation Plan
Interviews	School Authorities	Validation Plan

#### 4. TABLE OF CONTENTS:

##### 1. CHAPTER I: Diagnostic of the learning English process in the sixth year of high-school

###### 1.1. Implementation of the technical research.

###### 1.1.1. Research Techniques Application.





**2. CHAPTER II: The Theoretical Framework**

UNIVERSIDAD DEL AZUAY

**2.1. ENGLISH TEACHING APPROACHES AND METHODS**

2.1.1. The Communicative Approach

2.1.2. The teacher and the students' roles

**3. CHAPTER III. The Methodological Proposal for improving English language production skills in speaking and writing during the third year of high-school at Maria Auxiliadora high school.**

**3.1. CURRICULUM DESIGN**

3.2.1. Curricular Annual Plan and Didactical Unit Plan

3.2.1.1. Contents

3.2.1.2. Objectives

3.2.1.3. Methodological strategies

3.2.1.4. Evaluation

3.2.1.5. Reference Books

**4. CHAPTER IV: Validation of the Proposal**

4.1. Validation plan:

4.1.1 Objectives

4.1.2. Material design

4.2. Validation and plan application

4.3. Research results.

**5. CHAPTER V: Conclusion and Recommendations**



UNIVERSIDAD DEL AZUAY  
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA  
SECRETARIA

Edición autorizada de 20.000 ejemplares  
De 0438501 al 0458500

Nº

0455732

**5. ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK**

**a. SCHEDULE**

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE																							
	MONTH 1			MONTH 2			MONTH 3			MONTH 4			MONTH 5			MONTH 6			MONTH 7			MONTH 8		
CHAPTER I Diagnostic of the learning English process in the sixth year of high-school																								
CHAPTER II The Theoretical Framework																								
CHAPTER III The Methodological Proposal for improving English language production skills in speaking and writing during the third year of high school at Maria Auxiliadora high school.																								
CHAPTER IV: Validation of the Proposal																								
CHAPTER V: Conclusion and Recommendations																								

**b. ESTIMATED BUDGET:**

ACTIVITIES	
Institutional Project Review	10
PCI and PUD review	10
Book Research	50
Learning necessities research	100
Meeting Teachers and School Authorities	50
English Classes observation	50
Applying surveys to students	30
PCI and PUD Design	10
Validation Plan design	30
Validation Plan application	50
Designing the final Inform	200
TOTAL	590

**c. BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

1. BUEHL, Doug. Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning. International Reading Association, 2006. Second Edition.
2. DOFF, Adrian. Skills for fluency. Cambridge University Press, 1995. First Edition.
3. HARMER, Jeremy. The practice of English Language Teaching. Longman Handbooks for Language Teachers. 1991.
4. HILL, Jane D., FLYNN, Kathleen M., Classroom Instruction that works with English Language Learners. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 2006.
5. LITTLEWOOD, William, Communicative Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press, 1987. Eighth Edition.





6. MATTHEWS, Alan, SPRETT, Mary, DANGERFIELD Les, At the chalkface: Practical Techniques in Language Teaching. British Library. 1989. Third Edition.
7. NUNAN, David, El diseño de tareas para la clase comunicativa. Cambridge University Press, 1996. First Edition.
8. RICHARDS, Jack C., RODGERS, Theodore S., Enfoques y métodos en la enseñanza de idiomas. Cambridge University Press, 1998. First Edition.
9. RICHARDS, Jack C., The Context of Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press, 1990. First Edition.
10. RICHARDS, Jack C., The Language Teaching Matrix. Cambridge University Press, 1990. First Edition.
11. WILLIAMS, Marion, BURDEN, Robert L., Psicología para profesores de idiomas. Cambridge University Press, 1999. First Edition.
12. WOODWAR Tessa, Planificación de clases y cursos. Cambridge University Press, 2002. First Edition.

ARTICLES:

1. RODRIGUEZ, Mayra R., GARCIA-MERAS, Emilio G. Las estrategias de aprendizaje y sus particularidades en lenguas extranjeras. Universidad Central Marta Abreu de las Villas, Cuba.

WEB PAGES:

<http://books.google.com.ec/books?id=QZCw9IhPOUMC&pg=PT1&lpq=PP1#v=onepage&q=&f=false>. 11-24-2009, 13-21, 23:29.

[http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca\\_ele/antologia\\_didactica/claves/arnold\\_fonseca\\_04.htm](http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/antologia_didactica/claves/arnold_fonseca_04.htm). 11-23-2009, 4, 20:45.

[http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca\\_ele/diccio\\_ele/diccionario/motivacion.htm](http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/diccio_ele/diccionario/motivacion.htm). 11-24-2009, 1, 21:36.

[http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca\\_ele/diccio\\_ele/diccionario/interaccionismo.htm](http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/diccio_ele/diccionario/interaccionismo.htm). 11-24-2009, 2, 22:08

<http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org>. 11-23-2009, 7, 21:47.



Edition autorizada de 20 000 ejemplares No. 0455734  
Del 0438501 al 0458500



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teaching>. 11-25-2009, 12, 20:25

<http://www.scribd.com/APORTES-DE-STENHOUSE/d/30170407>. 11-26-2009, 21-29  
23:54.

<http://www.neoei.org/deloslectores/965Rodriguez.PDF>. 11-25-2009, 4-7, 21:30.



UNIVERSIDAD DEL  
AZUAY  
FACULTAD DE  
FILOSOFIA  
SECRETARIA