



“DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE BASIC STUDENTS’ ENGLISH-SPEAKING SKILLS”

**BY
BA. IRIS ORIANA DÍAZ FLORES**

**THESIS DIRECTOR
MA. NORMA FRANCISCA MURGA TAPIA**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis was carried out at institución Centro de Idiomas Extranjeros Ignacio Manuel Altamirano (CIEX), located in Chilpancingo de los Bravo Guerrero. This is an institution that offers courses and diplomas at different levels of English and other languages such as Mandarin, French, German; as well it prepares students for English certifications and offers a Bachelor of Arts in English letters and a Master’s Degree in English Teaching and Applied Linguistics.

The topic was selected due to a lack of students’ participation in the classroom and the apparent shyness when they are asked to talk. It could be caused by the lack of vocabulary to be able to structure the sentences to speak and due to the embracement of failing with their fluency or pronunciation, which makes students feel a lack of confidence.

The importance of this study is to make conscious that it is necessary to implement didactic activities in the classroom where students practice the language throughout activities that make them speak. Understand what the vocabulary means and have a perception of what the word indicates, or to be able to have that idea when the word is said or heard, to be able to structure a sentence.

This research was carried out at the basic English level to know how didactic activities promote students’ English-speaking skills. This study is considered important because helping students speak English as a foreign language is a challenge for both teachers and students.

The purpose of this study is to explore how didactic activities promote students’ English-speaking skill. It is important to mention that English in Mexico is taught in most schools as a required

subject; that is why people have had to learn English as a foreign language; in this regard, it is important to know what didactic activities teacher can implement to obtain and keep nurturing the speaking skill ability in students.

The research strategy used is qualitative because the opinions of students and teachers were considered, and the research method is phenomenology, since it leans toward the students' and teachers' perceptions about the development of their English-speaking skill. The instruments used were two interviews, one for the teacher in charge, and an interview for students to gather the students' point of view about the development of their speaking skill. Lastly, there was an observation format that was filled out during the study to describe and reflect on the students' and teachers' perspectives, challenges, what they did, and how the didactic activities implemented promoted students' English-speaking skill.

In the main gathered results, the teacher stated that the didactic activities do promote students' English-speaking skill. Students approve that the didactic activities implemented by their teacher helped them improve their speaking skill, and they enjoy and nurture them. The teacher also observed that the activities he implemented in his classroom were helpful and engaging, thus, didactic activities do promote students' speaking ability. Didactic activities must be interactive because students must practice speaking in different contexts but also with different people. Therefore, didactic activities should provide the opportunity for students to practice. Didactic activities should be focused on developing the sub-skills that involve the English-speaking skill. Therefore, teachers must consider the importance of developing speaking skills.

It can be suggested that the activities and materials allow students to practice and produce the language through student-teacher interaction or student-student interaction, developing their English-speaking skills, such as talking roles, questionnaires, dialogues, and interviews. Activities include practicing sentence words, dialogues in pairs, reinforcing what has been practiced, talking-role-playing, and conversing as fluently as possible. In addition, some surveys and questionnaires were recommended by the teacher to expand students' speaking skill. A challenge mentioned is that students are shy because of their pronunciation, which causes demotivation. Students comprehend that it is important to overcome their fears, and through the implemented didactic materials, it is possible to develop satisfactorily their English-speaking skill. It is important to implement and develop activities in the English classroom to see if the elaborated activities help students improve their English-speaking skill. Also, this research was based on basic English courses and only focused on speaking skills; so, there is an opportunity for further research with other English levels, and it would be a good idea to apply it to other language macro skills.

In conclusion, the results of this study are not only relevant for teachers but also for students because with the gathered information, teachers can understand the phenomenon of English-speaking in Basic English students. Also, how to design and develop effective English didactic activities for promoting English-speaking skills; moreover, students might use this information for improving the way how they learn and acquire the English spoken language.

KEY WORDS:

Speaking skills, foreign language teaching, didactic activities, and language learning.

RESUMEN

El contexto se llevó a cabo en el Centro de Idiomas Extranjeros Ignacio Manuel Altamirano (CIEX), ubicado en Chilpancingo de los Bravo, Guerrero. Esta institución ofrece cursos y diplomados en diferentes niveles de inglés y otros idiomas como mandarín, francés, alemán y chino. Además, prepara a estudiantes para obtener certificaciones de inglés y ofrece una licenciatura en Letras Inglesas y la maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés y Lingüística Aplicada.

El tema se seleccionó debido a la falta de participación de los estudiantes en el aula. Ya que presentan timidez al hablar debido a la falta de uso del idioma en la comunidad. Además, carecen de vocabulario para estructurar las oraciones, lo que les genera inseguridad al no hablar debido a la aceptación de fallas en su fluidez o pronunciación.

La importancia de este estudio radica en concientizar sobre la necesidad de implementar actividades didácticas en el aula donde los estudiantes practiquen el idioma mediante actividades que los impulsen a hablar. Comprender el significado del vocabulario y comprender lo que indica o representa la palabra para poder tener esa idea al pronunciarla o escucharla y así poder estructurar una oración.

La principal razón por la que se realizó esta investigación para la Licenciatura en Letras Inglesas es saber cómo las actividades didácticas promueven las habilidades básicas del inglés en los estudiantes del CIEX. Además, se considera importante esta investigación, ya que dominar el inglés es importante hoy en día.

El objetivo de esta investigación es explorar cómo las actividades didácticas promueven las habilidades básicas del inglés en los estudiantes del CIEX. Otro objetivo es alcanzar los objetivos de la investigación. Dado que el inglés se enseña en la mayoría de las escuelas como una asignatura obligatoria, es importante saber qué actividades didácticas se deben implementar

para desarrollar y mantener la habilidad de hablar. La estrategia de investigación utilizada es cualitativa, ya que se consideraron las opiniones de estudiantes y docentes. El método de investigación es fenomenológico, ya que se centra en las percepciones de los estudiantes y docentes sobre el desarrollo de su dominio del inglés. Los instrumentos utilizados fueron dos entrevistas: una al docente a cargo, obtenida de su experiencia docente relacionada con el desarrollo de la competencia oral básica de inglés en estudiantes del CIEX. Se aplicó una entrevista a cada uno de los estudiantes para recabar su perspectiva sobre el desarrollo de su dominio del inglés. Finalmente, se completó un formato de observación durante el estudio para describir y reflexionar sobre las perspectivas, los desafíos, las actividades y cómo las actividades didácticas implementadas promovieron su dominio del inglés.

Dentro de los resultados principales del estudio se encuentran los siguientes: el docente afirma que las actividades didácticas promueven la competencia oral en inglés de los estudiantes. Los estudiantes aprueban que las actividades didácticas implementadas por su docente les ayudan a mejorar su expresión oral, las disfrutan y las fomentan. El docente también observó que las actividades que implementa en su aula son útiles y atractivas, por lo que promueven la capacidad oral de los estudiantes. Las actividades didácticas deben ser interactivas, ya que los estudiantes deben practicar la expresión oral en diferentes contextos, pero también con diferentes personas. Por lo tanto, las actividades didácticas deben brindarles la oportunidad de practicar y centrarse en el desarrollo de las sub-habilidades que implican la expresión oral en inglés. Por lo tanto, los docentes deben tener en cuenta la importancia de desarrollar la expresión oral.

Se puede sugerir que las actividades y los materiales permitan a los estudiantes practicar y producir el idioma mediante la interacción alumno-profesor o alumno-alumno, desarrollando así su expresión oral en inglés; algunos ejemplos de estas actividades son los roles en conversaciones y los cuestionarios.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Habilidades de expresión oral, enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, actividades didácticas, aprendizaje de lenguas.

Introduction

The research area in which this study is situated is education, specifically in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. The specific topic being studied is the promotion of speaking skills in basic-level students at CIEX.

The research problem being addressed is the lack of knowledge about how didactic activities promote speaking skills in basic-level students at CIEX. Despite the importance of developing speaking skills in English language learning, there is a scarcity of research that specifically explores how these skills can be promoted in basic-level students.

The main research question that guides and focuses this research is “How do didactic activities promote basic students’ English-speaking skills at CIEX?” This study is significant because it aims to contribute to the knowledge about how speaking skills can be promoted in basic-level students at CIEX. The information obtained through this research can be useful for teachers and educators seeking to improve English language teaching at this educational level. Additionally, the study may have implications for educational policy and teachers’ training in the field of teaching English as a foreign language.

This study is relevant to the field of language education because it focuses on a specific and under-explored topic in English language teaching as a foreign language. Research on promoting speaking skills in basic-level students can contribute to improving the quality of education at this level and promoting the development of language skills in students.

Literature Review

The teaching of foreign languages is a constantly evolving field, with different approaches and methods that seek to improve students’ skills. In this sense, speaking skills are a fundamental aspect of language teaching, as they enable students to communicate effectively in the target language.

The Repetition and Pattern Practice Method is one used by English teachers, and according to Rhalmi (2024), this method focuses on repetition and pattern practice to promote habit formation and ensure accurate language use. This method is centered on oral practice and develops speaking skills, improving students’ confidence and vocabulary.

Another important method is the Natural Approach which, based on Krashen (2017), this approach focuses on developing basic communication skills without emphasizing grammar. The goal is for students to learn the language naturally, through exposure to vocabulary and communicative activities.

The Communicative Language Teaching Approach is also relevant in language teaching. In American English (2023), this approach focuses on real and meaningful communication, using situations and roles to promote interaction and the development of speaking skills, and students

must interact constantly to develop their speaking skills.

Speaking skills are a fundamental aspect of language teaching, and the methods mentioned above seek to improve students' speaking skills. The choice of methods will depend on the needs and objectives of the student, as well as the teaching philosophy of the teacher.

According to Blog (2023), language teaching activities are how language educators deliver key learning objectives and help students build their skills. Awareness raising encourages students to think about what is coming and brainstorm possible future routes. Several types of speaking activities are commonly used in language teaching, such as speaking topic discussions, where students can share their opinions about a topic. According to Tekhnologic (2015), the discussion could be useful for students to practice their speaking skills because it encourages students' interest and motivates them to talk and produce the language by allowing them to express their opinions.

Blog (2023) proposes another speaking activity that could help students improve their speaking skills is information-based activities. These activities allow students to gather or find information from their peers and present the information they have gathered in front of the class. Another type would be role-play, an important factor focusing on using a particular vocabulary or grammatical concepts. Another activity suggested by Holmes (2024) is interviews, which are effective activities where the teacher pairs the students to ask personal questions to each other.

These didactic activities promote language learning in a foreign language context. Brown (1994) states that learning involves gaining knowledge or skills in a subject through study, experience, and instruction. English language learning involves developing a higher reading, writing, and speaking level. The primary purpose of language is to communicate, since it plays a dominant role in education and develops vital social and cultural skills by engaging students in meaningful cultural exploration.

Research Methodology

This study belongs to the qualitative approach. It used an observation format and two interviews to gather data. The teacher's and students' opinions were considered important. According to Girardin (2024), qualitative research seeks to understand people's experiences and perspectives by studying social organizations and human behavior.

Furthermore, the applied research method was Classroom Research, which is a method that is used to identify issues within the classroom, collect data, analyze this information, and implement

changes to improve new information or create a better understanding of a topic. According to Asokan (2023), Classroom Research is a systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers and other school/classroom professionals about their school and classroom work.

The research was carried out at Centro de Idiomas Extranjeros “Ignacio Manuel Altamirano” (CIEX), a private language school in Chilpancingo de los Bravo, Guerrero, Mexico. This language center offers English courses at preschool, elementary, basic, intermediate, and advanced levels, a Bachelor of Arts in English Program, and a Master of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics; this thesis is specifically focused on the basic English level.

Main findings

The teacher states that the didactic activities do promote students’ English-speaking skill. Students also approved that the didactic activities implemented by their teacher helped them improve their speaking skill, and they enjoyed and nurtured them. It was also observed that the activities implemented in the classroom were helpful and engaging, thus, didactic activities do promote students’ speaking ability. Didactic activities must be interactive because students have to practice speaking in different contexts, but also with different people. So, didactic activities should provide an opportunity for students to practice. Moreover, didactic activities should be focused on developing the sub-skills that involve the English-speaking skill.

Students realized that the teacher implemented activities to promote their English-speaking skill and recognize the teacher’s effort to enhance their spoken communication. Supported by Rhalmi (2024) to promote habit formation and ensure accurate language use teacher can use repetition drills and practice of sentence patterns.

The activities that promote English-speaking skill development are reporting instructions or speeches given by the teacher. In addition, interviews are beneficial since questions and answers are practiced orally. Dialogues are a great way to develop scenarios and contexts for students to expand their vocabulary and grammar. As Tekhnologic (2015) said, discussion could be useful for students to practice their speaking skill because it encourages students’ interests and motivates them to talk and produce the language by allowing them to express their opinions. Thus, implementing discussion activities might be beneficial for students to practice their speaking because they talk and justify their statements orally.

Some words are difficult because of the apostrophes or tones, the words are not pronounced as they are written, and there are even letters that have a type of pronunciation according to their consonants. This makes pronunciation difficult for students who are shy or introverted since

they are embarrassed to speak in class, so motivating them is a bit more challenging.

Based on the results of the observation format, motivation is an important factor in helping students with their difficulties to improve their speaking skill, so the teacher's intervention in motivation is crucial. As Cambridge Assessment English (2012) says, motivation is the main factor in language learning. Motivation and joy are good options for particular purposes because the person enjoys learning, but enjoyment is mentioned as the most effective.

The perception of using didactic activities for English speaking skill, based on the previous results, speaking, repeating, understanding, and identifying what words are being said in class, is important because students can practice pronunciation, fluency, and association of the sounds with the words. According to Cambridge University (2009), speaking skill is developed through a combination of practice, feedback, and exposure to the language.

Conclusion

In conclusion, activities and materials allow students to practice and produce the language through student-teacher interaction or student-student interaction, developing their English-speaking skill. Activities such as talking roles, questionnaires, dialogues, and interviews, having different contexts, vocabulary, and structures, facilitate students' English learning. The activities that are recommended are questionnaires and surveys, role-playing, practicing sentence words, dialogues in pairs, role playing and conversing as naturally as possible. Obviously, like any other process, there are challenges; in this study, shyness and weakness in pronunciation are the identified challenges. They affect students' performance when speaking English because students might feel demotivated or hesitant to speak. Students positively perceived using didactic activities. Students comprehend that didactic activities are important and must be implemented in the classroom.

This investigation was carried out to understand the phenomenon of English-speaking in Basic English students. The didactic activities must include students' needs and overcome the challenges as shyness and demotivation, This is important because teachers must design, implement, and apply efficient and helpful didactic activities that allow students' learn and acquire the English spoken language.

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