

Promoting Oral Production through the Task-Based Learning Approach: A Study in a Public Secondary School in Colombia*

El enfoque de aprendizaje basado en tareas como medio para promover la producción oral: un estudio en un colegio público de secundaria en Colombia

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Spoken language is used less confidently by learners in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom in secondary schools, and this has become a challenge for most teachers. This article describes an action research experience carried out at Francisco de Paula Santander, a public school in Bogotá, in 2004. The study was developed with a sample of learners belonging to four groups of seven graders along nine months. Data were collected by means of audio recordings, field notes and proformas. The results of the study let us analyze the different demands of transactional and interactional activities among novice EFL speakers. They can also be considered an attempt to understand the implications of such activities within the framework of the Task-Based Learning approach presented by Willis (1996).

Key words: Oral interaction, Task-Based Learning (TBL)

Los estudiantes de los colegios de secundaria usan con menos seguridad el lenguaje oral en las clases de inglés como lengua extranjera y esto se ha constituido en un reto para muchos profesores. Este artículo describe una experiencia de investigación acción adelantada en el colegio público Francisco de Paula Santander en Bogotá, en el año 2004. El estudio se realizó con una muestra de estudiantes pertenecientes a cuatro cursos de séptimo grado, a lo largo de nueve meses. Los datos se recolectaron mediante grabaciones de audio, notas de campo y proformas. Los resultados del estudio nos permiten analizar las exigencias diferenciadas de las actividades interaccionales y transaccionales para hablantes novatos del inglés como lengua extranjera. También se pueden considerar como un intento por comprender las implicaciones de dichas actividades en el marco del enfoque de aprendizaje basado en tareas, presentado por Willis (1996).

Palabras clave: Interacción oral, aprendizaje basado en tareas

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Introduction

It is very important to communicate, to express our ideas and to say what we feel in a comprehensible way. Indeed, effective communication gives us the opportunity to create a better world. Unfortunately, human beings do not always take advantage of this unique ability in everyday life. Part of this weakness is observed in language classrooms because of various reasons that can include methodology selection, availability of resources and even teacher's profile. In our case, due to the approach implemented in our institution as part of the curriculum, a higher emphasis on literacy has been given in English class. The oral skill is very often set aside and regular classes tend to develop cognitive processes mostly by reading and writing. Most of the time we lack enough reflection on how to encourage learner's potential in regard to their communicative competence. This situation gets worse when the institution's concern is to have learners provided with tools to do well on future standardized tests.

Despite this emphasis, we observed how important and motivating it was for learners to get involved in communicative situations which allow them to express their own ideas and feelings about familiar topics. For this reason, our main purpose during this research was to design and implement tasks which encouraged students' oral output. Thus, having oral skills as the target of our project, we expected to identify starting points that may lead us to the answer of the following main query with its two supportive questions:

- What do students' performances tell us about oral output when they engage in activities that follow the task-based learning approach?
- What happens when an oral activity implies individual performance?

- What happens when an oral activity implies pair performance?

In the present research report the reader will find some theoretical considerations concerning the importance of oral skills as one of the elements that constitutes communicative competence. We present the implications that framed our analysis and further reflection about the oral skill development.

Theoretical Framework

Very often when we want to know about someone's skills in terms of language, we ask whether s/he speaks English. This is probably the most evident way to demonstrate language proficiency. However, in an EFL context like ours, speaking is not necessarily the easiest way to confirm familiarity with a language because of the prerequisites of such a skill.

The Oral Skill

Speaking is something students do when they drill particular language patterns, but the oral skill is much more than this. It involves speaking and listening as a two-way process where responding is expected. According to Byrne (1991), oral tasks involve the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding. It means that learners have to be taught to speak as well as to listen. Both listening and speaking are such common activities in the daily routine that we seem to confuse ourselves as being experts when we are only users. Hence, when learners understand the difference between hearing something and listening attentively to someone, they can then grasp a variety of communication requirements that range from talking to an audience in a meaningful transactional mode, to speaking

with each other by building up the discourse as the conversation flows in an interactional task. The conjunction of these relevant elements in the classroom is a contribution to the gradual achievement of communicative competence. This is precisely what we want to clarify so that the outcomes of this research can be valued in their right dimension.

We focused on analyzing the oral skill, which is just one of the aspects to be tackled when dealing with the umbrella concept of communicative competence. Let us keep in mind that various skills constitute a competence. In this regard, when Hymes (1972) refers to the capacity to communicate effectively within a particular speech community that wants to accomplish its purposes, we can take into consideration the tasks we propose in class as the context where learners start acting as members of a community.

In general, despite students being exposed to L2 in class, they cannot express themselves effectively when they are asked to participate orally in communicative activities. According to Nunan (1993), this may happen because there is no distinction between knowing various grammatical rules and being able to use them effectively and appropriately when communicating. By the same token, learners feel that they have to perform perfectly from the first time they try to speak partly because teachers sometimes highlight accuracy rather than fluency, and thus errors are not considered part of their learning process. As Ran (2001) states, this results in learners losing confidence and in discouragement to speak English. In this regards, Littlewood (1981) suggests that learners must develop skills and strategies for using the language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations. Note that he highlights understanding meaning over the use of structures. This makes it crucial to include

speaking activities in the English language class since they promote meaningful activities within a cooperative learning environment, strengthening self-esteem, and improving social relationships.

Transactional and Interactional Skills in Oral Communication

Transactional and interactional skills are both relevant elements in oral communication. Regarding these aspects Nunan (1993) states that they are related to skills in taking short and long speaking turns; skills in the management of interaction; skills in negotiating meaning and conversational listening skills.

Successful conversation requires good listeners as well as good speakers. Brown & Yule (2001) define the transactional aspect as the transfer of information, and the interactional as the key element for maintaining social relationships. This statement can be easily associated with the distinction established by Nunan (1993), between monologue and dialogue, given that the ability to give an uninterrupted oral presentation is rather different from interacting with one or more speakers. In everyday situations, any speaker is able to use language in an interactional way. This means in a dialogue. However, when dealing with an oral presentation, which is a transactional skill, even a native speaker has to be trained and needs time for practice and preparation. For the purposes of this study, learners were motivated to participate in both kinds of communication tasks so that we could observe their performance in each situation.

Something that must be clarified and taken into account is that the learners' oral performance demands time and student-teacher collaboration as well as attitudinal changes from both of them. Brown & Yule (2001) state that teachers should

realize that simply training the student to produce short turns will not automatically yield him or her to produce long turns. Although it may seem fashionable in language teaching to pay particular attention to the forms and functions of short turns, we have to be aware that students who are only capable of producing guided utterances may experience a lot of frustration when they try to communicate. The challenge for teachers then is to avoid learning practices that become frustrating or overloading. In this respect, the Task-Based Learning Approach constituted a useful source to balance the tension between doing well and feeling fine with what you do.

Task-Based Learning

Taskbased learning (TBL) was the methodology we adopted for this research. In this approach the basic and initial point of organization is the task. Class work is arranged as a sequence of tasks and

it is the task that generates the language to be used. Thus, in TBL teachers ask learners to carry out a series of tasks for which they will need to learn and recycle some specific items of language. The focus is on the tasks to be done, and language is seen as the instrument necessary to carry them out.

TBL highlights the instrumental value of language. Under this approach, activities have a perceived purpose and a clear outcome. That helps students to keep in mind what they will be doing at the end of the task. Students are initially accompanied by the teacher on activities which are similar to the ones they are supposed to work on autonomously, and thus can see the logic involved in the final task.

The figure we used to represent the basic steps of TBL highlights the learners' role in the process. In the first phase, the pre-task, they get acquainted with rich input about elements they will need later on. Then in the phase called task cycle, learners start their first trials by observing the way the elements

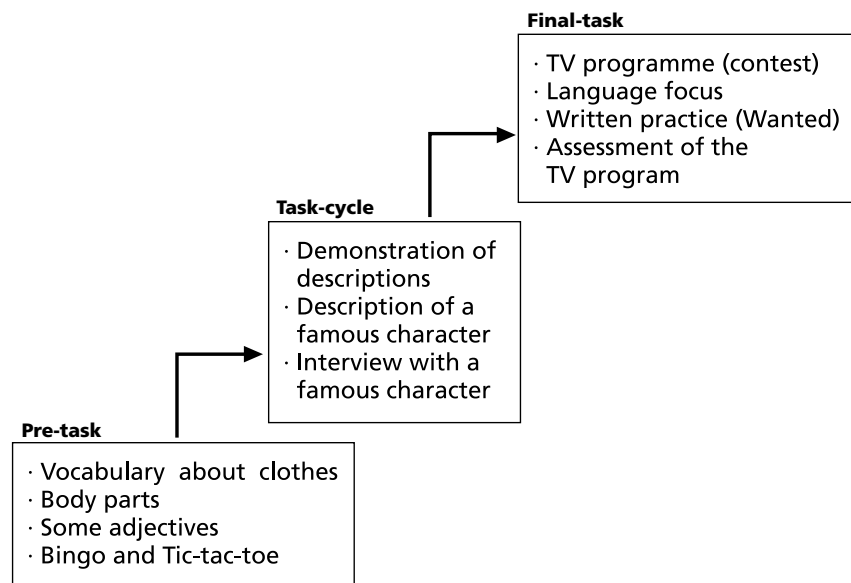


Figure 1. Pedagogical design based on TBL principles (Sample unit summary)

previously presented work in contextualized tasks. In the final task they will have the teacher's support, but it will be their own decisions and efforts that will make it possible to move forward.

Context

Francisco de Paula Santander School was founded sixty nine years ago as a public elementary school. It was only in the year 2000 that the levels of secondary started to be implemented. Nowadays, our institution has one or two groups of each level from preschool up to eleventh grade. Most of the students of our institution belong to the socio economic strata 1 and 2 (lower economic class). They live in a context with many social, economical and affective needs. In general, the students have a good attitude towards the school. Many of them like to be there because they find other kids for social interaction, and in some cases, the affection they do not receive at home. The PEI¹ of our school is focused on the integral education of the learners under the philosophy of humanism as an opportunity for the learners to develop both their intellectual and social skills for active participation in society.

As we previously mentioned, the teaching of English at Francisco de Paula School focused on developing activities in which students' work was mostly centered on reading and writing processes. In the last levels of secondary school these activities had the additional purpose of training students for passing written tests. Consequently, learners' oral potential was not improved sufficiently. In others words, we identified that the ELT curriculum at the school stressed writing and reading practices at the expense of speaking activities which could promote students' oral skills.

We wanted to listen to students' voices developing speaking activities in the classroom. As a result, an interview was administered and recorded. Data gathered from this instrument informed that 84% of the students, most of them boys, were interested in activities which implied speaking. Having this preference in mind we decided to promote students' oral presentations which served as point of departure for analyzing their levels of speaking. During the activity, students seemed nervous when they forgot specific vocabulary or expressions. They laughed or simply did not talk, especially if they were in front of the tape recorder. Most of the ones who dared to participate learned by heart what they wanted to say. Although a few of them were confident doing the oral activity, other students did not want to participate since they felt panic in front of their classmates. We have to remark that recording those classes provided insights which let us identify situations that we usually could not notice, such as learners' anxiety and difficulties when they expressed themselves orally.

Participants

Although all the students belonging to seventh grade participated in the activities as part of their habitual classes, only four students in groups 7A and 7B provided the data gathered for the present research. Adding two groups in the morning and two in the afternoon made a total of sixteen students for the sample. They were selected at random once they and their parents were asked for consent to participate. For the purposes of this research, students were codified by giving them numbers which were used in order to organize data more easily.

¹ PEI = Proyecto Educativo Institucional (School Institutional Project).

Pedagogical Procedure

As already stated, for the purpose of our research project we decided to implement task-based learning activities, following the well-known proposal by Willis (1996). The author claims that TBL has three phases: Pre task, task cycle and language focus. The first phase introduces the class to the topic and the task by providing words and phrases related to the topic. The second one encourages the holistic use of the language which favors an inductive, cognitive style to re-create natural learning conditions in the classroom. The last phase allows a closer study and assessment of the features used during the task cycle.

As we have pointed out, our interest in this research was to explore useful tasks for encouraging oral output so that they could be implemented as part of the habitual work in class. The implementation of these tasks took into account the following steps:

1. Determine theme or interest area
2. Plan final task or series of tasks (to be done at the end of the unit)
3. Define unit objectives
4. Specify contents and thematic aspects to be dealt with
5. Plan the process determining communication tasks which lead to the final task
6. Select appropriate materials and sources
7. Plan instruments and procedures for the evaluation and assessment process.

We decided to apply two different kinds of strategies to encourage oral production. Some focused on interaction with peers, which involved conversation, formal and informal interviews, and dialogues. The other ones focused on individual presentations based on the topics they had suggested and were interested in (See Appendix 3).

Research Method and Instruments for Data Collection

We implemented a set of activities as part of an action research plan that provided us with a clearer picture of our students' oral skill performance through time when working with the task based approach. Among the varied interpretations of the action research cycle, which traditionally considers reflection, action and observation, as stated by Kemmis & McTaggart (1998), we adopted the perspective given by Carr & Kemmis (1986). According to these authors, the dialectical tension between action and reflection strengthen each other through a process of planned change, monitoring, reflection and modification. We also described in a more informed way the social situation that occurred along the whole year of implementation at our school.

At the beginning of the process we made a diagnosis with the purpose of discovering students' speaking level. For that, students did oral presentations which served as a point of departure for analyzing their oral level. Students gave oral reports dealing with "*Talking about my friend*", and "*Talking about my family*". Grammar and pronunciation mistakes were evident. However, we observed learners' positive attitude towards the use of English. This information was audio recorded and it allowed us to discover special situations which we usually could not notice such as the learners' anxiety and their difficulties to express something.

In short, the instruments we used for gathering data were audio recordings, field notes and proformas. We audio recorded most of the sessions as a way to complement the information gathered through our field notes. According to Lankshear & Knobel (2004), audio recordings represent a good tool to "revisit" scenes and "find" more 'things' in

them. An audio recording and subsequent transcription of the lessons provided us with valuable information about students' attitudes and speaking characteristics that we had not noticed during the classes. The rest of the information was collected by means of field notes (See Appendix 1) and proformas (See Appendix 2). These instruments gave us two kinds of information. Firstly, data came from our direct observation and the analysis of our lessons and our students' attitudes. Secondly, information also derived from our students' performance while interacting with their partners.

Burns (1999) claims that field notes provide the researcher with insights about events, participants and contexts in detail. They generally take into account non verbal aspects, characteristics of places, individual or group dynamics and interaction among participants. On the other hand, proformas helped us to identify in an easy and quick way the information emerging from data. In Burn's words (1999), proformas allow identifying the day-

to-day issues that arise, the actions taken by the teachers as well as the evaluation of those issues.

Findings

In this section we present the outcomes of our reflection and revision of data with a grounded approach based on Creswell (1998). Following his recommendations, we started relating particular situations in order to find the meanings that were finally summarized as shown in Figure 2. After deep analysis of the patterns they were grouped into three categories according to the phenomena we observed.

The first phenomenon refers to our students' mistakes as a necessary step in the learning process; the second one has to do with some strategies they empirically used in order to keep on-task, and the third deals with the external elements implied in learners' oral presentations which are closely related to their social character.

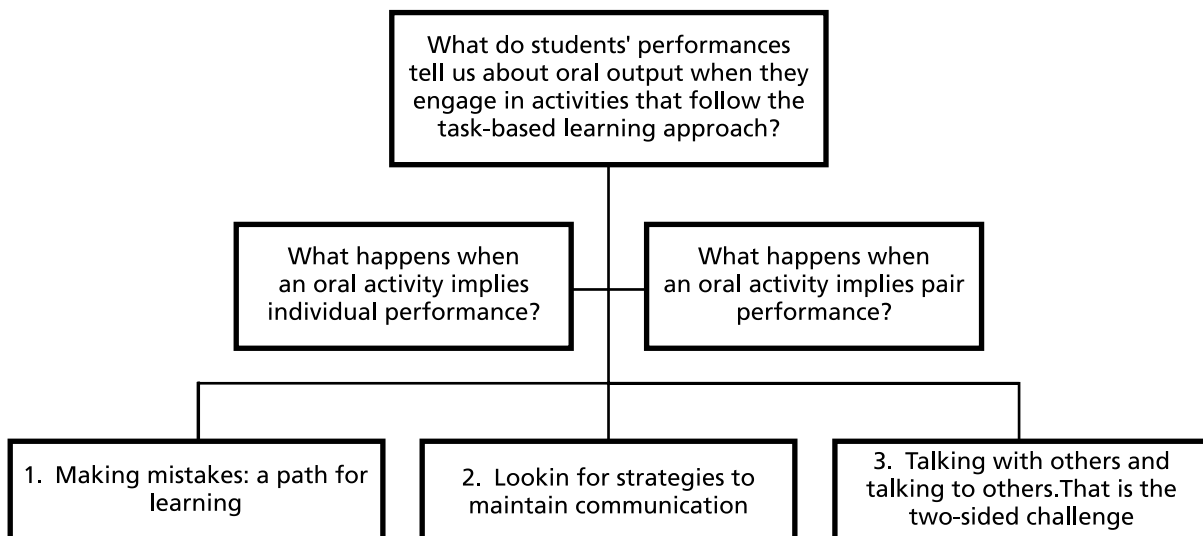


Figure 2. Research questions and categories found in the data analysis

Making Mistakes: A Path for Learning

Mistakes related to different language aspects were constant in our instruments and invited us to have a closer look at them as a recurrent message representing something else. They are neither negative nor positive elements of a particular task. After questioning our data we considered mistakes evidenced a learning process was going on. As Krashen (1987) explains in his second hypothesis about language acquisition, the monitor skill is a conscious evidence of such process. It implies a learner making mistakes while s/he confirms what can be accepted as correct or appropriate. Though it might sound obvious within a pedagogical context, mistakes in grammar, intonation and pronunciation are to be tolerated and even ignored when the objective of a task is to promote the oral skill. In the case of the seventh graders we worked with, their progress was relevant after lowering their anxiety by avoiding both teacher's correction and peers' critique. During the first months of our investigation, the students participated in oral activities talking about themselves, as reported in the research method section. Later, they gained more confidence to prepare role plays and other presentations where they were supposed to act. In the examples below we can see how learners created words to replace the ones they did not know and to keep track of the message when they engaged in an interview:

- J: House eh... of Colombia
 N: Ah... eh... is an excellent eh... country
 J: Yes, yes, /?/ -por supuest-
 N: Ahm... eh... which, which dress?
 J: is a pants eh... brown, he thin, eh... gooo, eh... hm... Black shoes
 N: Ah... unhhm... she is tall and she is /?/... Ah extrangere-!!

J: Yes, yes – por supuest- we are in the park.
 Extract 1 (Transcription 08-10-04)

- J: Naim (name) is Claudia Dominguez. Profession model. Eh from Colombia
 Description uhm... /?/ in the eyes Black, hair brown eh... legs red
 T: You mean lips?
 J: No lips red eh... eh, pants, pants colours Black, sandals, eh plataform
 [referring to a special kind of shoes]
 eh... Black blouse in the blue. Is she sobresalient [referring to famous, relevant] ¡Gracias!

Extract 2 (Transcription 25-08-04)

The joy of sharing with others in a friendly environment made the difference. In this respect we could also observe that the use of disguises helped them in two ways: First, in getting learners' engaged with the role they were playing and second, in giving them the option to speak about topics they were not used to. The fact of having a character speak up through their voices worked as the perfect excuse to take risks with the target language with the shelter that anonymity gives. It was their character making the mistakes while they were safely learning from such events.

Looking for Strategies to Maintain Communication

The second category has to do with the strategies that students used in order to maintain communication. We reflected on why phenomena such as word invention, transfer and overgeneralization occurred among the group of speakers and observed that they simply did not want to lose track of their ideas so that they used those strategies as a valuable resource. Oxford (1990) has

made a detailed classification of many language learning strategies, which have been considered in the present data analysis stage so that we could see how important it is to be aware of these techniques independently from the characterization of the sample but relating them to their status of novice foreign language speakers. Amongst the oral strategies used by students to express orally, we can also mention: word invention and the combination of English and Spanish as a way to counteract their lack of vocabulary. Additionally, they used “transparent words” to surpass the oral difficulties or the lack of repertoire. We found what we called solidarity between interlocutors. When speakers have a sense of solidarity, they simply need enough input to grasp the meaning of the sentence in order to give their interlocutor a hand by providing the information requested. The extracts below illustrate linguistic solidarity among interlocutors:

- A: Excuse me eh... a little question, what do, what do they, eh... separate?
 B: Eh... for problems and for construction ...eh... of one ...family...
 thanks

Extract 3 (Transcription 08-10-04)

- S: // name is Paola
 J: What is she from?
 S: He's from Cartagena
 J: What do she do?
 S : eh...
 J: She is a actress?
 S: She's a actress
 J: What does good looking?
 S: eh... eyes brown eh... short, short
 J: What's she wearing?
 S: Shirt brown and tank top yellow

Extract 4 (Transcription 06-09-04)

Here it is clear that the interviewer wanted to know the reasons for the separation of the group and despite that it was not correctly organized, the interviewee understood and answered appropriately again without correctness. They do not wait to hear perfect questions in order to answer. Oxford (1990) calls this phenomenon cooperating with others. What is important to consider is that in order to be able to cooperate with an interlocutor the listener must be aware of the other's communicative intention or need. That is what really counts. This actual connection between their minds is the one that provokes dialogue and keeps communication flowing.

- T: now we have Stefany and ehmm Gloria
 G: Ehm... what's her name?
 S: Manuel
 G: Where is he from?
 S: Francia
 G: What do... look like? Ehmm...
 what do his good looking?
 S: ehmm... medium, medium ehmm... short,
 Black hair
 G: ehmm what is he wearing
 S: ehmm (smiles nervously)... black jacket... ehmm blue
 trousers ehmm green coat... ehmm blue... es esshirt
 T: Ok that's all.

Extract 5 (Transcription 06-09-04)

Another common aspect dealing with language use was transfer, understood as the act of borrowing patterns and structures from the mother tongue and assuming they work the same way in the target language. Transfers were observed in both pronunciation and grammar. In the case of overgeneralization the use of the verb ‘to be’ was very common. From a communicative perspective either “*He is tall*” or “*He is short hair*” reaches the goal of describing a person, and utterances like the

ones shown below only demonstrate that certain linguistic aspects have not yet been internalized.

G: eh...she... is lo /?/ eh , ha hair... long is /?/.. eh your eyes... eh your }Black... your nose is little, your mouth is colou Pink.. your eh. little your.. she /?/ and has one clo clothes white and your name is Nathalia Paris

Extract 6 (Transcription 9-12-04)

Here we can observe an increase of pet words, longer pauses, expressions of hesitation, and a big effort to express. However, the student did not lose track of talking until the end. Furthermore, we noted that code switching, along with word invention and the use of false cognates, was basically attempts made by the students to hold on to their speech. Those are positive resources students profited from, showing in this manner a desire not to break communication.

Talking with Others and Talking to Others. That Is a Two-Sided Challenge!

We confirmed in our context the idea stated by Brown & Yule (2001) about short and long turns in oral presentations. They state that having students participate coherently in short turns does not warrant the same results in longer participations. The individual participation time of the students who took part in our investigation ranged from 15 seconds to 1.5 minutes. However, longer turns did not mean better fluency. In fact, we noted that pauses were used better in short participations, whilst in longer turns many pet words and hesitation expressions occurred. Having observed a good performance at a basic level in transactional activities did not necessarily mean the same speaker doing well in interactional tasks or in longer transactional ones.

Let us observe that in the first two presentations the students take just enough time to give basic information. There are no long pauses or relevant grammar mistakes; however, they did not seem natural taking into account that a casual speaker would not talk so correctly for an introduction like this. In these cases we could see how memorization favored fluency, but it was against natural speaking:

Time: 10 seconds

S: He is Carlos Vives. He is from Santa Marta. He's forty three years old and long hair.

Extract 7 (Transcription 12-08-04)

Time: 1,5 seconds

This is Jorge Villamizar... He is from Barranquilla Colombia... He is a singer. He is tall, thing and good looking. He has short black hair and black eyes.

Extract 8 (Transcription 27-08-04)

Time: 1 min and 5 seconds

O: He is, she, he is name Cumba, eh she is

T: She or he?

O: She or he, eh... vestid, jacket [chacket] eh... jacket brown, eh ten [maybe tennis] black eh... t-shirt White, eh... panta eh... black y shoes eh... brown eh... he is from... Mexico. Eh... hair... Black... eh has mustache eh has eh arms ugly eh... finish.

Extract 9 (Transcription 9-12-04)

Observing the development of the tasks in the first two presentations, the students took just enough time to give basic information. There are no long pauses or relevant grammar mistakes; however, their speeches did not seem natural if we take into account that a casual speaker would not talk so directly for a self introduction. We could observe that memorization favored fluency but worked against speaking naturally. In the other cases we observed an increase in pet words, longer pauses, expressions of hesitation and a bigger

effort to use the target language all the time. This was the case of extroverted students. As Willis (1996) states, these kinds of learners appear to be more active and more willing to take risks with language. Thus, although fluency decreased, they used the language purposefully. Another relevant observation we made was that fast speaking did not mean accurate use of structures but good learning of vocabulary.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

One of the most relevant tenets of this research deals with our view of mistakes. Based on the findings of this research project we consider that mistakes allow the individuals to monitor their learning process. The fact of being wrong, in some cases, causes humans to take actions and modify behaviors in order to establish changes and needed corrections. In other words, making mistakes represent a good opportunity to learn, recreate and complement individuals' previous knowledge.

Looking at this research experience retrospectively we concluded that getting learners to speak in the EFL classroom is both rewarding and demanding because there are many elements to be considered when dealing with oral skills. In order to see confident speakers in a task, we cannot take for granted the use of vocabulary, the practice of intonation patterns and other language aspects. But above all, we should keep in mind students' awareness of their learning as a process, rather than a last stage product. It means that they have to learn how to cope with mistakes and drawbacks in the development of a task. Not doing well in a task is just one of the options they may be faced with, and if it is the case, they should still consider it an opportunity to improve individual weaknesses.

We understood that although learners must be exposed to ideal or accurate pieces of the target language, they are not obliged to reach the same level of expertise. In this case it is important for teachers to get to know their learners in advance. For highly motivated learners, this particular recommendation becomes really useful since their affective filter will decrease remarkably and will generate better results. However, in the case of demotivated or low achievers, the same suggestion would become the authorization for presenting a non-acceptable oral task.

Another conclusion we drew from our analysis is that letting learners observe a model during the task cycle is an excellent guide to better understand the purpose and possible outcome of a task. Nevertheless, it is important to let learners know that although they have a sample, it is their own ideas with maximum use of their creativity that are still the focus. Students should keep in mind that their goal is to challenge themselves for the pleasure of practicing their learning. That is what really counts for their lives since school should not be the place for doing what others command, but for trying under the auspices of their teacher their habit of acting autonomously and talking about their ideas according to the task life poses them. Paraphrasing Freire & Macedo (1987), learners in the language class should speak about their world in their own words so that they can avoid unnatural utterances occurring during a task.

It is important to provide the students with a confident learning environment to speak. This was the key to making classmates act in a sympathizing way. This meant that oral activities, both transactional and interactional, created less anxiety. Finally, in relation to the new education policies, which have organized school work into cycles, we consider it important to reserve a space for discussion in regard to the implications

of managing the process and practice of skills according to the cognitive, social and linguistic development of learners, and the way they contribute to the consolidation of the learners' communicative competence.

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Appendix 1: Field Notes Sample

Field Notes

Class observations

Date: Sep. 2004
 Grade: 7th
 Teacher: Amparo Onatra
 Shift: Afternoon
 Teacher observer: Mireya Peña

Topic: Personal Information

Observations	Comments
After some general tips and recommendations from the teacher, the pupils started going to the front to do their first trials. Some of them were not well prepared because they had not realized the real proposal of the activity. That is why some asked for a second opportunity to do their presentation.	That is good because students show their interest in improving their job. During the presentation students seemed nervous and that made the exercise more difficult for some of them. I could notice that some students used supporting pictures to lower insecurity

Appendix 2: Proformas' Sample

Proforma for Task 3

Teacher: Amparo Onatra.

Observer: Mireya Peña

Date: Sep 8th 2004

Group: 7A

Performance: Pair work

Shift: Afternoon.

Task: Interviewing a famous character

Cassette No. 1 Side A

Student	Pronunciation	Fluency	Performance
- Student No. 8	- Good vocalization - Words clearly pronounced - Speaks aloud	- Tendency to repeat the first word of the sentence as pet word - Participation in short turns	- Knows the vocabulary about body parts and clothes - Some grammar mistakes - Was sitting during the interview - He wears a costume, representing Chavo

Appendix 3: An Example of a Task-Based Unit Designed to Promote Students' Oral Production

Task-Based Unit

Contents

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| A. Thematic aspects | B. Linguistic content |
| -Recycle topics: | -Be -Have |
| -Body parts | -Wear -Look like |
| -Clothes and accessories | -Prepositions |

New topic: Adjectives

Pre-Task Phase

1. Reinforce vocabulary about clothes and body parts by associating image, pronunciation and spelling. Students make a picture dictionary.
2. Develop simple listening comprehension by means of word dictation.
3. Create a bingo card including 24 pieces of vocabulary about parts of the body, clothes and adjectives.
4. Increase vocabulary studying new words, including the bingo cards.
5. Practice isolated pronunciation of words.
6. Play tic-tac-toe with full group participation.
7. Give a model in class on how to describe a famous character taking into account name, place of origin, occupation and physical appearance.

Task Cycle phase

1. Create a character with magazine cuttings, following a description given by the teacher with specific characteristics.
2. Prepare and do an oral presentation of the character using a photo or a poster.
3. Model questions and answers: What does he/she look like? What is he/she wearing? And yes/no questions by means of a dialogue.
4. Wear costumes to present a famous person by means of an interview. Whole class participation answering questions about the character.
5. Create with magazine cuttings, the two characters described in the model.
6. Share information about the posters they have made (team work).
7. A pair work activity in which students must identify differences between the two pictures.
8. Prepare a TV show taking into account the following conditions:

- The class is going to be divided into teams of eight: a model, a presenter and six participants divided into two sub-teams A and B.
- Presenters from all the teams select the character for the contest.
- The day of the contest, presenters interview participants having in mind personal information for the public to know them.
- The contest consists of participants asking questions about a secret famous person and the presenter answering yes / no.
- The models give the points, help the presenter with the answers and point at the options chosen by the participant.

Language Focus

1. Present an advert with a missing person. Students design a missing person flyer.
2. Assessment of the final task.