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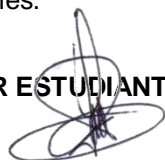
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**TÍTULO COMPLETO DEL TRABAJO:** An Inquiry about Oral Communication Development through Culture-Based Tasks

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2. Microhabilidades	Microskills	
3. Tareas basadas en contenido cultural	Culture-based tasks	
4. Percepciones de los estudiantes	Students' perceptions	
5. Conciencia intercultural	Intercultural awareness	

**RESUMEN DEL CONTENIDO:** (Máximo 250 palabras)

Debido a las dificultades presentadas por los estudiantes durante las actividades que requerían el uso del idioma inglés en el aula de clase, las investigadoras implementaron una investigación con un grupo de estudiantes de grado octavo de una institución educativa pública en Pitalito-Huila, Colombia para analizar el desarrollo de las micro habilidades en la producción oral, por medio de la inclusión de contenido cultural enmarcado desde un enfoque basado en tareas. Este estudio se orientó desde el enfoque cualitativo e investigación acción. Además, las investigadoras exploraron la percepción de los estudiantes sobre la articulación de contenido cultural y la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera. Se implementaron cuatro instrumentos para recolectar información: transcripción de audios, diarios de los estudiantes, cuestionarios y diarios de campo durante el desarrollo de las tareas. La información recolectada fue analizada desde el análisis cualitativo de la teoría fundamentada. Los resultados demostraron un progreso por parte de los estudiantes en la producción oral de frases y oraciones. Además, los estudiantes fueron más respetuosos al dar su opinión al analizar casos sobre la diversidad cultural.

**ABSTRACT:** (Máximo 250 palabras)

Due to the difficulties in oral production presented by students when they were asked to use the foreign language in the classroom, the researchers implemented an inquiry in a group of eighth graders at a public institution in Pitalito-Huila, Colombia to analyze the development of microskills (if any) of oral production through the inclusion of cultural content framed on a task-based approach. This study was oriented from qualitative approach and action research. Also, the researcher explored the students' perception towards the articulation of foreign language learning and culture. We used four main instruments to gather data: audio transcripts, students' journals, questionnaires, and field notes during the main tasks development. The data was analyzed from Grounded theory. The results demonstrated learners' progression in the production of reduced forms and phrases orally. What is more, the students were also more respectful when being exposed to intercultural diversity.

**APROBACION DE LA TESIS**

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An Inquiry about Oral Communication Development through Culture-Based Tasks

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**Dedication**

*To my God, my dearest parents, Jose Educarado Valencia Muñoz, and Amparo Triana, together with my lovely family who all the time have been supporting me in the way that I decided to live.*

*In memory of my lovely grandma Natalia Triana*

*Yuli Paola Valencia Triana*

*To the owner of my life, God; to my beloved family, parents, brothers and sister, who have been my guide and strength to climb upper. To my husband and children, who have had enough patience and affection and have been my support to overcome the obstacles.*

*Luz Nery Barbosa Álvarez*

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### **Abstract**

Due to the difficulties in oral communication presented by students when they were asked to use the foreign language in the classroom, the researchers implemented an inquiry in a group of eighth graders at a public institution in Pitalito-Huila, Colombia to analyze the development of microskills (if any) of oral communication through the inclusion of cultural content framed on a task-based approach. This study was oriented from qualitative approach and action research. Also, the researcher explored the students' perception towards the articulation of foreign language learning and culture. We used four main instruments to gather data: audio transcripts, students' journals, questionnaires, and field notes during the main tasks development. The data was analyzed from Grounded theory. The results demonstrated learners' progression in the production of reduced forms and phrases orally. What is more, the students were also more respectful when being exposed to intercultural diversity.

*Key Words:* microskills, oral communication, culture-based tasks, culture

### **Resumen**

Debido a las dificultades presentadas por los estudiantes durante las actividades que requerían el uso del idioma inglés en el aula de clase, las investigadoras implementaron una investigación con un grupo de estudiantes de grado octavo de una institución educativa pública en Pitalito-Huila, Colombia para analizar el desarrollo de las micro habilidades en la producción oral, por medio de la inclusión de contenido cultural enmarcado desde un enfoque basado en tareas. Este estudio se orientó desde el enfoque cualitativo e investigación acción. Además, las investigadoras exploraron la percepción de los estudiantes sobre la articulación de contenido cultural y la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera. Se implementaron cuatro instrumentos para recolectar información: transcripción de audios, diarios de los estudiantes, cuestionarios y diarios de campo durante el desarrollo de las tareas. La información recolectada fue analizada desde el análisis cualitativo de la teoría fundamentada. Los resultados demostraron un progreso por parte de los estudiantes en la producción oral de frases y oraciones. Además, los estudiantes fueron más respetuosos al dar su opinión al analizar casos sobre la diversidad cultural.

*Palabras claves:* micro habilidades, comunicación oral, tareas basadas en cultura, cultura

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### **Introduction**

Currently, society requires citizens to be able to think and reflect upon their actions. Nevertheless, the educational process, developed over many decades, has been worried with traditional methods under ambitious policies, ignoring the valuable contribution that teachers, students, and context can add to enhance the teaching-learning process. This can be evidenced in some public institutions in Colombia with challenging settings in which teaching a foreign language is complex. However, the learning process seems to be standardized without taking into account the context.

There are a variety of difficult conditions that teachers and learners must encounter during their daily instructional and learning practices, such as classes of large groups of students, a shortage of instructional resources, a lack of motivation by students to learn a second language, and an instructional process centered on grammar content, not communication.

Due to these circumstances, one of the skills that teachers do not widely promote in their practices is speaking, a productive skill. That fact is explained by Thornbury (2005) when he states “for a long time it was assumed that the ability to speak fluently followed naturally from the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, with a bit of pronunciation thrown in” (p. 1). We as teachers tend to assume that knowing the grammar and vocabulary of a language is enough to speak a foreign language. However, more often than not, language learners complain about their lack of confidence, insufficient key vocabulary, inadequate knowledge of useful expressions, fear of making mistakes in pronunciation, and little motivation to develop this verbal skill. In addition, the same author claims that “the nature of the speaking process means that the grammar of spoken language differs in a number of significant ways from the grammar of written language...the study of only written grammar may not be the most efficient preparation for speaking” (Thornbury, 2005, p. 1). Therefore, the process oriented by teachers in the school has

to include more than only one type of activities under a linear approach. We, as foreign language teachers, have to enrich our practices and methodologies through innovative and inclusive pedagogical interventions. As a consequence, we wanted to place special emphasis on the types of tasks and content selected as part of the instruction to contribute to the development of oral communication.

The present study stems from a need identified by the teacher and her eighth graders in regards to their difficulties to produce coherent phrases when they speak in English. As a way to address this issue, the study intended to use cultural content framed on a task-based approach to motivate students' oral communication in L2 at Institucion Educativa Municipal Guacacallo.

The main goal in working with cultural content was to respond to current educational and socio-cultural challenges, because "bringing a foreign language to the classroom means connecting learners to a world culturally different from their own. Therefore, all foreign language educators are now expected to exploit this potential and promote the acquisition of intercultural competence in their learners" (Sercu et. al., 2005, p. 1). In that sense, teaching implies encouraging the learner assumption of a new role in this globalized society, being more tolerant and responsible about his/her appreciations towards cultural differences.

The present study is organized in five chapters. Chapter one is divided into four main sections. The first is focused on the statement of the problem based on a need analysis process. The second section deals with the related studies that helped to shape our proposal. The third section includes the setting and rationale; the fourth section tackles the research question and research objectives. Chapter two corresponds to the literature review providing an overview of theoretical constructs stated by diverse authors to support the purpose of the present study considering the microskills of oral communication, the role of the culture in L2 learning, and the implementation of a task-based approach. Chapter three corresponds to the definition of the



research design and the type of study selected to shape our proposal. In addition, this chapter entails a detailed description of the participants and the instruments chosen to gather data during the implementation phase. Finally, the instructional design is addressed in terms of our proposal design to encourage learners to speak in English during a specific period of time. Chapter four includes the exploration and analysis of the data and the findings related to the learners development of microskills of oral communication, the role of the culture in learning the L2, and the perceptions of learners about the introduction of cultural content for learning a foreign language. Finally, Chapter five deals with the conclusions derived from the process and pedagogical implications in the development of communicative competence in English for high school students.

## Chapter I

### Research Problem

#### Statement of the Problem

Language is a source to convey messages and interact with others; Shumin (2002) states that the main purpose of language is not only the transmission of separated structures and words from the target language but also the promotion of social interaction, paralinguistic elements of speech and non-linguistic factors immersed in the process and content. Teaching a foreign language then, implies exposing learners to the language as a system of symbols, representations, codes, and the culture embodied in the group of people who communicates through it.

According to the Colombian General Law of Education (1994), it is mandatory to promote the learners' comprehension and ability to express themselves in a foreign language. In order to fulfill these expectations, the government has implemented certain actions such as Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo, Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras, Derechos básicos de aprendizaje, and Currículo sugerido to guide, orient, assess and standardize educational programs at all levels.

Nonetheless, those policies seem to be overly ambitious taking into account the conditions where teachers must work, including the students' reluctance to speak English, inadequate hours devoted to teaching English, the large numbers of students within a classroom, and a lack of technological and bibliographical resources.

The Institucion Educativa Municipal Guacacallo is not an exception. Based on a process of observation and assessment throughout the first and second terms of the school year, we could identify that students were having serious difficulties performing activities related to oral communication. As a matter of fact, this inquiry was developed to respond to a specific need

identified by the researchers and their students based on their difficulty with the production of oral language.

First, the document revision (See Appendix D) suggests a structural gap in promotion of oral communication, in regards to a lack of activities oriented to this purpose. Also, the selection of topics and the organization of curriculum were focused mainly on long lists of writing grammatical formulas instead of promoting oral communication. Similarly, after having identified this issue, two additional instruments were implemented as an attempt to understand students' perceptions towards speaking including a survey (See Appendix B) and three class observations (See Appendix C). The survey was conducted with the purpose of gathering general insights on the development of oral communication, the types of tasks and topics students would like to work on in class. Responses from 30 eighth graders are summarized below:

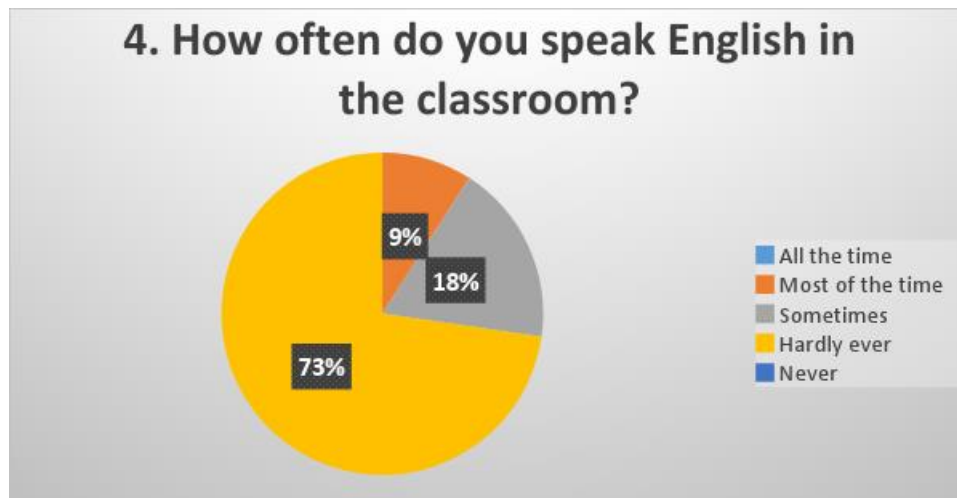
- 82% of the students expressed a positive response to their oral communication.

Learners think that learning English is important to express their opinions in a foreign language and represents a distinctive positive characteristic for a future job.

- 68% of the students agreed that speaking in English is a challenge for them; they do not feel confident speaking this language. This is due to their limited vocabulary, not enough opportunities to practice the language, a lack of confidence, and their limited practice with this type of language task.
- 73% of learners agreed that they rarely speak English in the classroom due to a lack of engaging, active strategies and instructional materials implemented by the teacher. See results illustrated in the Graph 1.

Graph 1.

*Results of Question 4 - Needs Analysis*



What was evident during the observations of these classes was the difficulty of eighth graders to perform oral activities; most of the time learners avoided speaking in English even for a short activities. Frequently, students evaded teacher's eye contact and appeared reluctant to participate in these activities. In fact, some students did not participate at all. In addition, the instruction was teacher-centered as it was the teacher who spoke most of the time in English during the entire class. The learners' participation was limited to repeating randomly the words and expressions given by the teacher without any deliberate interaction.

When being asked on what topics they would like to talk about, the students' answers focused on celebrations 22%, environmental problems 14%, and trends 17%. This information allowed us to consolidate the concept of integrating cultural content to promote the oral communication.

From the information and circumstances explained above, the aforementioned elements gave ground for the development and proposal of the current research study, which intends to

explore pedagogical alternatives through the inclusion of cultural content following task-based approach.

### **Related Studies**

The development of learners' microskills of oral communication based on communicative tasks has been widely recognized for its benefits and positive results in foreign language learning. Articulating them with interesting topics seem to promote students' oral communication even in the basic levels. In view of those assertions and with the purpose to inform this research, we will relate noticeable studies linked to the objectives to be addressed in this paper. The constructs that inform this section are oral communication, micro skills of oral communication, task-based learning and cultural content.

In regard to oral communication in EFL settings, Vaca & Gómez (2017) carried out an action research study with 30 ninth graders from a public institution in Bogotá, Colombia with the aim of enhancing the speaking skill in English as a foreign language classroom through project-based learning. Evidently, students improved significantly in three main components: (a) increase of oral communication through lexical competence development; (b) learners overcame fears of speaking in L2, and (c) they increased their interest in learning about personal and local facts. The data were collected through field notes, transcripts of learners' oral performance, and one interview. Based on Vaca & Gómez's conclusions the students were concerned about learning language to communicate messages related to their personal interests and academic needs, rather than just learning words in isolation as traditionally done in many EFL classes. The results of the study evidenced that learners were able to express in the target language despite their limitations and weaknesses. These results are essential for our project since the students showed willingness to speak English and get involved in conversations to communicate and negotiate meaning.

Regarding the oral communication through the Task-Based Learning, Peña & Onatra (2009) conducted a qualitative research study among sixteen students from seventh grade in a public institution in Bogotá, Colombia aimed at encouraging students' oral output. The study was developed along nine months in the light of Willis' framework; the interventions were based on two different kinds of strategies to encourage oral communication: learners' interaction and individual performances. The instruments to collect data were audio recordings, field notes and perform. Results obtained showed that mistakes in the initial stages of oral communication demonstrated a learning progression. In addition, the mistakes in grammar, intonation and pronunciation were tolerated and even ignored when the objective of a task was to promote the oral skill. However, the learners were more confident during the subsequent tasks and presentations where they were supposed to act. In addition, the researchers stated that memorization favored fluency, but it was against natural speaking. Evidently, learners improve their oral communication when they were exposed to Task-Based approach because the teacher offered enough opportunities to get the goals.

This study provides us a connection between the development of oral communication and task based approach. These results are essential for our project since they reflect how the process of encouraging novice language learners by communicative tasks allows them to express their insights under a more appropriate atmosphere.

In the same line of thought, Gutiérrez (2005) undertook an action research study to explore the effectiveness when applying communicative and interactive tasks to enhance students' skills of oral communication in a group of forty ninth graders in a public institution in Bogotá, Colombia.

The methodology implemented allowed the author to reflect upon students' needs, while, at the same time, being aware of the major changes needed to introduce interesting tasks for the

students in the pedagogical practice to develop common situations with large groups of students in an effective way. The instruments used to gather data were questionnaires, videotapes and audiotapes, observation and researcher diaries.

The findings showed that through interactive and communicative tasks, learners were able to improve the quality of sentence structure by linguistic patterns; pronunciation of short sentences and inclusion of some paralinguistic devices when speaking. However, there was not a significant use of cohesive devices by the learners. This study is relevant for us, due to its contribution towards understanding that the development of the speaking microskills is linked to the type of tasks selected to the students.

Concerning the cultural content involvement in the classroom, Castañeda (2012) conducted a qualitative and interpretative case study to explore the role of culture in the teaching practice with a group of eighth graders at a public school in Bogotá, Colombia; This study was aimed at establishing students' reactions and views about culture-based materials considering their own and foreign cultures. The instruments used to collect data were video and audio recordings, surveys, field notes and students' artifacts. After analyzing the data collected through the study, the researcher found that students used their own context to comprehend other contexts. They made comparisons between others' characteristics and theirs. Through the evidence, the author also states that teaching can be based on cultural aspects, not only to acquire the language easily, but also to boost students' awareness about their social context and intercultural differences.

As shown in this study, we hope our students become interested in other cultures, are able to analyze the similarities and differences among the various cultures, and seek to explore new information through adapted tasks to broaden their views of the world.

According to the process and our findings, we noticed that language was not a priority in this study, but was simply one of the tools used to evaluate the intercultural awareness of the adolescents. However, there was an unconscious gain of language knowledge, even when the students' production of oral language was limited. At times, students were forced to use the L1 and some colloquial expressions to translate into the other language. This study helps us understand the importance of integrating interesting content in the foreign language sessions to promote different opportunities to learn English in an English Foreign Language (EFL hereafter) classroom.

To sum up, the previous studies significantly contributed to our proposal to reinforce the concept that cultural content combined with task-based instruction would foster the development of the speaking microskills in students from a similar setting.

### **Setting and Rationale**

This research project took place in a public school named Institucion Educativa Municipal Guacacallo. This rural institution is located about fifteen minutes from Pitalito-Huila, Colombia. It consists mostly adolescents from the rural area, chiefly belonging from families in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> social – strata. Also, a certain number of families face up conditions such as forced displacement, mothers who are heads of families, and adolescents who must contribute financially to the family support, facts provided by learners in a document named “Hoja de vida de los estudiantes” which is part of the teachers' mandatory set of information from learners. Although the institution has a computer system room, there is not Internet access.

Teaching English is not an easy task in a context where learners do not find a real interest to make use of it, hence, teaching students how to speak in a foreign language is a challenge. The learners do not see English as a need. Through this project, we attempted to create that need encouraging learners to be involved in pedagogical tasks with cultural content to make English as



a useful tool to reflect upon their closed needs. It was carried out with students from eighth grade who had difficulties with their speaking skill. Similarly, this project is important for us to explore and broaden our knowledge about development of the speaking skill, suitable and engaging selection of topics, and perception of the learners.

With this proposal, we expect teachers to design communicative tasks with cultural content considering the students' interests and curiosity. By using oral presentations in our teaching proposal, students will have to develop specific activities with intended purposes aimed at exploring their microskills of oral communication in terms of production of reduced forms and phrases, production of chunks of language of different lengths, production of fluent speech at different rates of delivery, use of cohesive devices in spoken discourse and use of non verbal with verbal language to convey messages.

The contribution of this research study is based on exploring the connection between cultural content used and the development of the learners' microskills of oral communication. By applying series of cultural-based tasks, we expected to discover the implications that implementing cultural content has on the students to foster them to speak in English.

As it was previously mentioned, the majority of students show a low development of microskills of oral communication required to use English. The necessity to introduce interesting topics to foster learners' use of the language is evident. One meaningful strategy to make students work collaboratively exchanging their own ideas is through tasks. Another important strategy that may boost the use of L2 is integrating cultural content within these tasks. Cultural content takes an important role to make tasks more interesting for students. This study aims at transforming teaching practices at our workplace through the implementation of cultural content designed in the light of the task-based approach to promote the development of microskills of oral communication in eighth graders.

**Research Questions**

- What microskills of oral communication are developed when implementing culture-based tasks with eighth graders in a public school?
- What is the students' perception towards the articulation of cultural content in the foreign language process?

**General Objectives**

- To analyse oral communication skills development in eighth graders through the implementation of culture-based tasks.
- To determine the students' perceptions towards the articulation of cultural content in the foreign language process.

**Specific Objectives:**

- To identify what microskills of oral communication emerge during the implementation of culture-based tasks.
- To explore the students' perceptions towards the articulation of foreign language learning and culture.

In this initial chapter we claimed a typical issue presented in a similar setting as the selected one: The difficulties of students from the public sector to access quality education that allow them to develop their skills and experiential knowledge. Nevertheless, with the purpose of exploring new approaches for the group of students, we attempted to contribute in a certain way to students' development of oral communication through the connection between language and culture.

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

The present study addresses three main theoretical principles. The first principle is focused on oral communication development. This section highlights the definition of speaking as a skill and the description of the microskills of oral communication, relevant for the present study; this information is complemented with the Common European Framework's characterization of competences for language users at a basic level.

The second section deals with the definitions and theoretical foundations related to the role of the culture in L2 learning; in terms of linking culture and foreign language, the intercultural communicative competence, components of intercultural competence, the role of the teacher and learners and the type of cultural content.

Lastly, the third principle entails the description of a task-based approach and also the types of tasks related to the development of microskills of oral communication linked to cultural content in the classroom.

### **Generalities about oral communication development**

At the present time, as social beings, we feel the necessity to interact with others, not only in our closed communities, but also with foreigners for academic, commercial, business, or social purposes. It is observable that people use a variety of ways to communicate and speaking is one of them. In that sense, speaking implies a variety of factors explained by Burns and Joyce (1997) who define speaking as

An interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, the participants, and the purposes of speaking (As cited in Fattah, 2006, p. 30).

Therefore, the act of speaking denotes the construction of meaningful messages among the stakeholders. The previous assumption supports speaking skill development in when the language user needs to articulate a set of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic rules to convey a message during an interaction. Generally, the notion of speaking has been defined from two different approaches, the bottom-up and the top-down. Cornbleet and Carter (2001) define the bottom-up approach as “teaching the smallest units- sound and move through mastery of words and sentences to discourse” (as cited in Fattah, 2006, p. 33). In this perspective, it supposes learners construct their own repertoire of words and expression little by little limiting the social connotation of speaking.

However, Alternatively, Bygate (1998) advocates adopting a definition of speaking based on “interactional skills which involve making decisions about communication. This is considered a top- down view of speaking” (as cited in Fattah, 2006, p. 33). In that sense, the learners build by themselves what they need to express, from the language to meaning.

Likewise, Hadfield and Hadfield (2012) make sense of what speaking involves when they mention that learners need to be able to create phrases and sentences that are grammatically correct, use proper pronunciation and intonation in order to express what they wish to say in a way that can be understood by others, while seeking “to keep up the flow of the conversation being reasonably fluent” (p. 105). The same authors also relate interactional factors involved in oral communication episodes, such as “learners need to find ways of expressing their meaning, responding to what they say; taking turns in conversation, encouraging others to speak, expressing interest, changing the topic, asking them to repeat and so on” (Hadfield & Hadfield, p. 105). In that sense, speaking means not only an ability to produce words and phrases, but also a process of interaction and negotiation of meaning.

**Microskills of oral communication**

Skills are being widely defined by diverse authors as abilities to do something in a proficient way. In regards to the speaking skill definition, Bailey (2004) states a relevant assertion.

Language generated by the learner (in speech or writing) is referred to as productive skill. Language directed at the learner (in reading or listening) is called receptive. Another important idea is the channel, which refers to the medium of the message (aural/oral or written). Thus, speaking is a productive aural/oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. (p. 43)

In view of that, language teaching has to be oriented from the articulation of more than only one perspective; it has to allow learners to keep in touch with challenging and real content and situations to connect all components necessities to express themselves in a foreign language.

In the same line of thought, Harmer (2001) states “the receptive skills are the ways in which people extract meaning from discourse they see or hear” (p. 199). Under these circumstances, it is noticeable the need to be consistent when planning classroom activities for allowing learners to construct their own ideas little by little. According to Harmer (2001) speaking as a skill implies not only the use of lexical phrases and pre-studied words, but also the rules of conversation according to cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It is relevant to embrace the four skills, receptive and productive, to promote meaningful learning for students. The development of oral communication skill is a process in which the language becomes a way to express and share learners’ opinions, thoughts, feelings and even culture with others.

Researchers such as Brown (2000), Harmer (2001), and Thornbury (2005) agree on the fact that oral communication skill requires the development of specific and complex processes to have a proper conversation. In more specific words, Brown draws as a goal of communication

“the demonstration of an ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through interactive discourse with other speakers of the language” (p. 267). The same authors explain that speaking development embraces a set of skills and microskills such as conversational discourse, pronunciation, accuracy, fluency, affective factors, and the interaction effect. They also states the characteristics of spoken language that can facilitate or hinder its learning such as clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation, and interaction.

Therefore, considering the complexity of the process, the characteristic of the setting exposed, and the limited time allotted per week for English classes, we decided to focus on a more specific skill classification derived from the general one called Microskills of Oral Communication (MOC, hereafter).

With respect to MOC, Brown (2000) proposed a list of sixteen microskills in which he mentions the relevance of focusing on forms and function of language. However, according to the reasons explained above, the set of microskills giving account in our study includes the following:

1. Producing chunks of language of different lengths
2. Producing reduced forms and phrases
3. Producing fluent speech at different rates of delivery
4. Using cohesive devices in spoken discourse
5. Using facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language to convey meanings. (p. 272)

In this classification, we can see how the production and use of diverse elements of the speech combined with non-verbal cues are important for encouraging novice language learners to develop their oral communication.

**How to assess speaking skill development**

The Council of Europe (2002) describes in the Common European Framework (CEF hereafter) “what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively”(p. 1). In this document we find the description of the different levels of English proficiency the student needs to develop, starting from A1 as the lowest level up to C2 as the highest level to reach.

The Colombian Ministry of Education in their policies, more precisely in the Competence Basic Standards, has recognized a scale of levels that learners have to present at different grades. In the case of eighth graders, the level has been established as pre-intermediate. However, as we already mentioned, the learners’ background did not allow us to work from that level; therefore, we decided to work from the basic level.

In addition to this, the CEF contains the description of the diverse tasks related to each skill, that a language learner has to be able to develop.

Figure 1 contains the relevant categories that we took into account in terms of qualitative aspects of spoken language use to level A1.

	<b>Range</b>	<b>Accuracy</b>	<b>Fluency</b>	<b>Coherence</b>
	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorized repertoire.	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like ‘and’ or ‘then’.

*Figure 1.* Common Reference Levels: qualitative aspects of spoken language use.

### **Articulating foreign language teaching and culture**

One of the main purposes stated in the CEF (2002) for teaching, learning, and assessing English, embodies a linguistic field, and, also a social scope when it mentions as a goal for foreign language teaching the promotion of a “mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity through more effective international communication” (p. 3). Consequently, through this perspective, the vision of foreign language learners implies two dimensions, on the one hand, the recognition of the necessary linguistic elements to be understood, and, on the other hand, the proper use of that linguistic knowledge according to the socio cultural setting.

The concept of culture varies according to different perspectives and is not easy to define because culture incorporates a broad scope of concepts and ideas. Moran’s (2001) attempts to relate culture as an “evolving way of life of a group of people consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world and a set within specific social contexts” (p. 24). Meanwhile, Gómez (2015), following Henkel’s ideas perceives culture from different views, he makes a distinction of surface culture and deep culture, where surface culture is the observable characteristics and “deep culture embraces invisible meanings associated with a region, a group of people, or subcultures that reflect their own particular sociocultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs, and values” (As cited in Gómez, 2015, p. 169). The previous quote calls for the recognition of more than only observable behaviors from a group of people. Also, advocates for the understanding of traditional practices underestimated by others.

We also share, Kramsch (1998) ideas in regards to the relationship that exist between language and culture in terms of a mutual construction from experiences, points of view and “signs that seen as having itself a cultural value...because language expresses, embodies and



symbolizes cultural reality” (p. 3) worth for the group of people who communicate through it. Hence, if the purpose of learning a world language, in the most essential sense, is to interchange experiential, empirical, scientific and social knowledge, therefore, it is indispensable to include cultural content in language teaching (Sercu et. al., 2005). So far, Obando, Obando, and Sánchez (1997) affirm that: “Culture is an integral part of language, and there is no reason for it to be taught separately” (p. 62). Under this perspective, teachers need to re-direct education as a transfer of knowledge or content to a more inclusive scenario integrating opportunities for learners become in good users of the language, and, also, more tolerant citizens.

One advantage to linking culture and foreign language teaching is explained by Byram (1998) when he states “language cannot be used without carrying meaning and referring beyond itself...The meanings of a particular language points to the culture of a particular social grouping, involves the analysis of those meanings and the comprehension of that culture”(p. 41). This idea of teaching language forms a cultural perspective allow EFL teachers to enrich their daily practices and address more than only the linguistic competence.

**The use of L1 and L2 talking about culture.** Bearing in mind the inclusion of culture in language teaching, Byram (1998) warns about a probable learner’s reluctance of using L2 because the students are not familiar with the vocabulary and content. In that sense the author mentions:

In particular, this kind of teaching involves pupil in using language- in this case both first and foreign languages- as a tool for learning...the use of the learners mother tongue for comparative analysis of own and foreign culture...the study of language would in turn be combined with the study of culture, both of these carried out with comparative techniques using learners’ mother tongue. (p. 137)

As previously mentioned, when referring to teaching from a cultural perspective, the outcomes generated by learners not necessary have to be stated in the target language due to the low level of language knowledge presented by learners in the initial stages. However, students' opinion and point of view, even pronounce in L1, consist in a valuable resource of information.

Therefore, as Sercu et. al. (2005) insists "the objective of language learning is no longer defined in terms of acquisition of communicative competence in a foreign language. Teachers are now required to teach intercultural communicative competence" (p. 2). This idea of addressing more than just content in the class sessions frame our hope to contribute with the learners personal vision of diversity and responsibilities as social being.

**Implications to include cultural content.** With the introduction of cultural content in English lessons it is imperative the emergence of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC hereafter), and it is essential that learners assume a new role according to Sercu, et al. (2005) because throughout this process "people revise their social identity, to reconsider the ideas they have held about out-groups, and to reconsider their position towards these out-groups since they have now themselves become members of the out-group" (p. 2). Consequently, through this perspective for the recognition of otherness, it is highly necessary to provide learners opportunities to analyze their prejudices and pre-established ideas about diversity to reconsider or reaffirms those ones.

In this sense, ICC in Sercu et. al.'s words (2005) entail a set of competencies and characteristics require achieving a cultural perspective in the classroom with EFL students:

1. The willingness to engage with the foreign culture.
2. Self-awareness and the ability to look upon oneself from the outside.
3. Seeing the world through others' eyes.
4. Acting as a cultural mediator, to evaluate others' points of view.

5. Reading the cultural context.
6. Understanding that individuals cannot be reduced to their collective identities. (p. 2)

Using this as a reference, the relevance of those competencies and characteristics give account of what is necessary to address when planning the diverse tasks for learners to evoke learners ICC.

In addition, Oliveras (2000) defines ICC as “the skill to acting in an appropriate and flexible way to face up actions and expectations to people from other cultures” (as cited in Belmonte & Fernández, 2013, p. 184). Considering the facts mentioned in the previous quotes, the main component for promoting ICC is colloquial situations to persuade students’ personal reactions and state a post reflection over their point of view.

Consequently, the ICC embraces the promotion of the learners’ decision-making about their own behavior towards their surrounding conditions and common issues related to mutual understanding, tolerance and respect for everyone.

**Components of ICC.** The ICC exhibits a set of components described by Byram (1998) in terms of “the knowledge, skills and attitudes which together make up IC organized in a framework comprising by five components (as cited in Sercu et. al., 2005, p. 3). Those are divided into three categories including knowledge, skills and attitudes; knowledge of specific and general cultural aspects, the individual-societal interaction and perceptions towards communication and language based on cultural interpretations. The skills include the abilities to interpret, relate, discover and acquire new knowledge to interact properly. Finally, attitude regards to value perceptions of others (Sercu et. al.). The three categories are outlined in the five *savoirs* defined by Sercu, et al., in terms of:

- Savoirs* is the knowledge about social groups and their culture in one’s own country...the

frame of reference of the people living in a particular culture.

- ☑ Savoir-apprendre refers to the “capacity to learn cultures and assign meaning to cultural phenomena in an independent way” (Byram & Zarate, 1997. p. 241)
- ☑ Savoir-comprendre refers to the capacity to interpret and relate cultures.
- ☑ Savoir-faire refers to the overall ability to act in an interculturally competent way in intercultural contact situations; that is, act in a respectful and co-operative way.
- ☑ Savoir-etre is the capacity and willingness to abandon ethnocentric attitudes and perceptions and the ability to establish and maintain a relationship between one’s own and the foreign culture.

In this classification, it is noticeable the remarkable importance to integrate more than only one component in the learning process. The learner has to be able to combine their knowledge, skills and attitudes when facing up a productive task. Nevertheless, it is imperative that the teachers promote challenging situations which allow students to activate all those components.

**The role of an intercultural teacher.** With an intercultural approach it is necessary that the stakeholders assume new roles. Therefore, teachers need to recognize sociocultural knowledge about the culture he/she integrates in teaching, the assumption of attitudes, competences, and skills to be a “skillful creator of (cross-curricular) learning environment promoting in his/her learners’ the acquisition of ICC...he/she can help pupils relate their own culture to foreign cultures, to compare cultures and to empathize with foreign cultures’ points of view (Sercu et. al., 2005, p. 5). This idea of reconsider the content selection of topics for teaching gives account of the raising need to engage learners from more holistic perspectives. Also, the empowerment of learners in regards to diverse points of view.

In the process of becoming a “favorably disposed teacher to teach ICC” it is imperative that teachers show a strong degree of “willingness to provide pupils with more knowledge regarding the unfamiliar cultures to help them become more tolerant towards other cultures and people, and the conviction that every subject, not just world language teaching should promote the acquisition of intercultural skills” (Sercu, et al., 2005, p. 135). Cultural content is important for making sense of interpreting and understanding what people do and relate their behavior to their culture, traditions and beliefs. Those interpretations could motivate changes in the way how learners relate each other in smaller settings such as their classroom.

Furthermore, it is demanding that teachers under the light of an intercultural approach have “a sufficient degree of familiarity with the foreign culture...know their own culture well and possess culture-general knowledge...to explain similarities and differences between cultures and learners...also know both what stereotypes pupils have and how address these in the classroom” (Sercu et. al., 2005, p. 155). In this respect, teachers also can promote the empowerment of learners own culture for understanding how they act and what moves them to act in that way.

**Type of cultural content.** The purpose of implementing cultural content in L2 instruction is to develop both MOC and the ICC in learners. Therefore, it is important to determine the type of cultural content required to achieve those goals. Two important dimensions about culture and its relation to language learning have been defined by Belmonte and Fernández (2013).

On the one hand the semantic dimension of culture is related to the connotative meaning that acquires certain words in the linguistic community in which they are used. And on the other hand, the pragmatic dimension of the culture...there are those behavioral conventions that are specific from a spoken community, such as the turn-taking, politeness and linguistic realization of speech acts. (p.187)

The authors further state a distinction between cultural content:

The contents in uppercase C are related to the music, the literature, art, history, and the popular culture focused on customs, habits and folklore presents in their daily lifestyle. However, the contents with lowercase c aim to beliefs, behaviors and cultural values that are behind a lot of linguistic, paralinguistic and nonverbal behaviors, than differ from a particular linguist community to another one. (Belmonte & Fernández, 2013, p. 186)

Language takes an important role in culture; given that, it reflects the way of acting of a group or individual. In connection with this, learners will reflect upon his/her inherent culture to be tolerant and respectful about the target language and culture. Integrating the concepts explained above in the classroom does not guarantee soon noticeable students' behavioral changes. Nevertheless, through a continue exposure to cultural content, we hope learners expand their perception of cultural difference and tolerance.

### **Task-based approach**

Since the term “task” was introduced in teaching-learning, there has been a great variety of definitions from different perspectives for it. In regards to the present research study, the definition of task goes in accordance with Nunan's (2004) assertion:

A pedagogical piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, middle, and an end. (p. 4)

In this manner, the class session entails a lab for learners prove different combination of words and expressions with the purpose to share their insights and thoughts in the target language. Assuming the teaching process from this perspective ensure learners to have more

opportunities to develop their oral communication. Hence, a task clearly involves a pedagogical act in which students are expected to produce or interact in a world language after having not only comprehended, but also manipulated the task, focusing on meaning, not form.

Regarding tasks as a pedagogical act where students are expected to interact in the target language, Nunan (1989) proposes a framework for analyzing communicative tasks; every task must contain goals, input, activities, the role of learners, the role of teacher and setting. When designing a task, the first consideration is the definition of goals for learners' achievement. We need to provide them with enough and appropriate input to get them to know the topic, vocabulary, cohesive devices and expressions necessary to perform the main task. Indeed, the class center moves from the content to the learner. The teacher is the one who provides the input, controls the activities and guides learners to the goal. Finally, the learner is who does the major part in the process of finding out the more suitable way to be understood in target language.

Besides this, Willis (1996) adds interesting insights of tasks usefulness for English classes; representing an example of how address this approach in EFL settings. Basically, the Willis (1996) states a series of steps in which the teacher assembles students with key target vocabulary, expressions and facts when developing the task. The first phase is called Pre-task in which the teacher explores the topic with the class, highlights key vocabulary, and helps students understand task instructions. Pre-task activities in Willis' words, are activities "to explore topic language that should actively involve all learners, give them relevant exposure, and above all, create interest in doing a task related to the topic (p. 43). In the second phase students are involved in the Task Cycle which includes (a) Task: students do the task, in pairs or small groups; (b) Planning: students prepare to report to the whole class orally or in writing how they completed the task and what they decided or discovered and; (c) Report: some groups present

their reports to the class, or exchange written reports, and compare their results ( (Willis, 1996, pág. 45).

Finally, in the post task, learners examine and discuss specific features of the text or transcript of the recording, practice new words, phrases and patterns, either during or after the analysis (Willis, 1996). Considering this, the task based approach gives individual opportunities for learners to state their personal point of view in regards to the topic presented, and finally, carry out a step by step process in which the students explore, interact and be aware of the vocabulary and expressions necessary to participate actively during the sessions.

**Type of tasks.** Regarding the purpose of the task, in language learning, it is worth to mention there is a wide classification of tasks in which we can find pedagogical, cognitive, psycholinguistic, or rhetorical types. However, for the main purpose of our research study, the type of task suitable for our pedagogical interventions was based on Willis (1996) categorization:

- ***Ordering and sorting task:*** sequencing, ranking, categorizing and classifying.
- ***Comparing:*** involves comparing information of similar nature, but from different sources or versions to identify common points and/or differences.
- ***Sharing personal experiences:*** some of the processes required are narrating, describing, exploring and explaining attitudes, opinions and reactions.
- ***Developing creative tasks:*** it often involves the connections and mix of diverse types of tasks to achieve a big goal. (as cited in Zambrano, Insuasty, & Cárdenas, 2010, p. 79)

Belmonte and Fernández, (2013) propose a set of cultural tasks in which we have:

- ***Performing role plays:*** which allow students to take the role of others.
- ***Enrolling in cultural capsules:*** cultural capsules are focused on developing and exemplifying descriptions of a particular cultural aspect of target language culture in contrasts with the mother tongue culture.



In addition, Belmonte and Fernández (2013) also provide a list of tasks regarding this framework. As a matter of fact, the term “culture-based task” invoked in this research study was stated from the link of task-based approach and cultural content.

Figure 2 exemplifies the type of task and its corresponding description of activities related to each one.

Type of tasks	Description
Observation	These activities serve to explain the different conceptions that students have about C2 (target language) and to expand and complement them from exposure to cultural content. They often used the image and, by extension, the world of the senses (with the direct perception of smells, tastes, sounds and visual observation). Furthermore, the observation can be performed directly by photographs or retelling stories.
Activities designed to address and analyze the cultural shock	Certain activities are especially suitable for students to explore their reactions to culture shock and to help you avoid or deal with it. This is to train them in tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty that often leads to the intercultural encounter. An activity of this kind is to have experiences that have surprised us or conflictual situations that could not solve a problem. (López García 2006, p. 66).
Comparison and contrast	These activities primarily affects the analysis and comparison between C1 (native culture) and C2 under study, key to contribute to the development of IC and which is one of the foundations underlying the methodological framework that we continue to work.

*Figure 2.* Structure and type of cultural activities adapted from Belmonte and Fernández, 2013, pp. 200-201.

Through chapter two we made a description of the theoretical constructs which support the purpose of the present study considering the microskills of oral communication, the role of the culture in L2 learning, and the implementation of a task-based approach.

The following chapter entails the description of the pedagogical intervention carried out during the development of the research study. Furthermore, we will show the articulation between the background of the participants and our purpose, the instruments of data collection and finally the description of the pedagogical implementation.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Methodological Design**

##### **Research Approach and Type of Study**

This research study is framed in a qualitative approach, which seeks to describe and analyze particular situations from a very detailed point of view. Qualitative approach has been defined by diverse authors in terms of “any type of research that produces findings not arrived by statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 10). This definition goes in accordance with Creswell (2014) when he states “qualitative research is a form of interpretive inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear and understand” (p. 178). Our study tries to evaluate the students’ behavior and development of microskills through different qualitative instruments which include a continuous observation and interpretation of data collected throughout the process of intervention.

In addition, the same author adds “Qualitative researchers try to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. This involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges” (p. 178). Through the triangulation process, we pretend not only to analyze the problem and situations around it from our perspective, but also from students’ view and the evidence provided during the process.

The present proposal pushes teachers to reflect on their teaching practices through the implementation of tasks focused on different purposes, and acting according to these reflections. According to Burns’ assertion (2009) “Action Research involves taking a self – reflective, critical and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching context” (p. 2). What is more, in Jimenez, Luna, and Marin’s words (1993) “Action Research embraces an ongoing process in

which teachers continue their own development through revising and evaluating their work” (p. 7).

Following these authors’ words, action research is seen as a reflective process to appraise our practices in our real context and improve our teaching performance through that reflection.

A suitable way to evaluate our work as teachers is best centered on our individual teaching settings; it is looking at our classroom through the cycle of action research: planning, action, observation and reflection.

Following this cycle adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), who are major authors in the field of action research according to Burns (2009), and integrating it with tasks based on cultural features, we intend to contribute not only to our teaching development, but also to our students’ language learning process, appealing to Richards and Farrell’s construct (2005) “Action Research refers to teacher- conducted classroom research that seeks to clarify and resolve practical teaching issues and problems” (p. 171).

For the reasons explained above, on the first step of action research (planning) it was essential to observe and interview the participants in the classroom, previously agreed by their parents through a consent form (See appendix A). Thanks to this process, we could identify the problem and establish an action plan to overcome this situation, within the possibilities provided by the context.

On the second phase, the plan was put into action through a period of about four months of classroom intervention divided in four cycles, one task per cycle.

During the action phase, we as teacher-researchers not only observed, but also took evidence and opinions of the participants, collected and systematized the information to be scrutinized later.

At the point of reflection, the data collected was analyzed and evaluated at the end of each cycle and based on the effects; we re-planned the new one intending to improve the situations presented in the previous one.

As it was earlier mentioned, Action Research integrates both practice and theory, conceiving hypothesis and researching foundations, within the classroom setting to encourage the reflection and empowerment of the stakeholders to their common and daily situations to create a convenient learning environment from the adjustment of their own practices.

### **Participants**

Participants are students from a public institution located a few minutes from the city center of Pitalito, Colombia. The group of eighth graders at the beginning comprised 30 students, 19 of them are female and 11 are male. Throughout the research intervention five students (two males and three females) moved from this school. The main reason to select this school is that it represents a challenging setting located in a rural area immersed in traditional ways of life.

The students in the current study have been learning English for two years. However, they constituted a heterogeneous group in terms of their learning English history and level of proficiency. Generally, their disposition towards the English class is quite positive and motivated. Eighth graders usually have three sessions of English class per week. Each session lasts 55 minutes. The English language syllabus consists of sets of vocabulary, grammar rules, reading and writing activities. The language teacher is a full time teacher willing to implement new strategies and activities to increase the students learning proficiency.

### **Instruments and Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection instruments of this study are oriented from students' performances and perceptions produced by learners during the different kinds of tasks. As our project is focused on

speaking, the audio monitoring and video recordings of the learners explained by Stawarski and Pulliam (2008) were defined as the main source of data.

Video recording as an observation method has the obvious advantage: the video camera registers every detail of behavior and provides a permanent record.

However...participants may be nervous or self-conscious about being videotaped...

Monitoring the conversations of participants who are using the skills they were taught in a program is an effective observation technique. (p. 31)

The video recording and audio monitoring were transcribed according to the symbols of transcription recommended by Silverman (2006) to describe the microskills of oral communication that emerged during the implementation of the culture-tasks with the eighth graders. These activities allowed us to obtain data on first hand.

Additionally, this research proposal includes the use of field notes, students' journals and questionnaires. These instruments will be defined below according to the type of data collected.

**Field notes.** Hopkins (2002) defines field notes as "a way of reporting observations, reflections and reactions to classroom situations" (p. 103). As previously mentioned, field notes are important to our research because through them it was possible to obtain the teacher's observations and reflections on the class. This instrument was beneficial, not only to register the students' reactions, but also to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses found during class instruction to then make adjustments on the proposed cultural-based tasks oriented to develop eighth graders' microskills of oral communication (See Appendix E).

**Students' diaries or students journals.** According to Hopkins (2002), students' diaries can be used "as feedback on a particular teaching episode or to gain an indication of the general class climate, or to assess the progress of an individual pupil" (p. 107).

Students' diaries are important to our research because they showed us the students' perceptions about different aspects not perceived by the researchers-teachers; this allowed us to compare and contrast our observations with their opinions and beliefs. As this group of students were not familiar with this instructional strategy, the researchers instructed students on how to use diaries and journals (See Appendix F).

**Questionnaires.** Hopkins (2002) describes questionnaires as “a quick and simple way of obtaining broad and rich information from pupils” (p. 117). Questionnaires are important to our research because, through the diverse questions contained in them, we could broaden our understanding about the students' feelings and ideas about the implementation of tasks. Questions emphasized on the relevant aspects to examine allowed us to be more assertive when analysing findings and establishing changes to plan the subsequent interventions (See Appendix G).

Figure 3 exemplifies the way data obtained from the pedagogical intervention and data obtained from the research instruments are intertwined throughout the four tasks implemented.

STAGE	TASK	PEDAGOGICAL OBJECTIVE	PEDAGOGICAL PRODUCT – DATA	RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	RESEARCH DATA
Cycle 1	1	To explain the relation between clothing and cultural aspects from diverse cultures in a poster session.	<b>-Detail description of traditional attire.</b> <b>- Students' perception in regards to cultural differences.</b>	<b>Field notes</b> <b>Transcripts</b>	Students' performance in pedagogical and cultural oral tasks. Teachers' observations and reflections on the class.
Data analysis and re-planning	1			<b>Students journals</b> <b>Questionnaires</b>	Students' feelings, opinions and suggestions.
Cycle 2	2	To recognize and exchange information	<b>- Students' thoughts about cultural aspects.</b>	<b>Field notes</b> <b>Transcripts</b>	Students' performance in pedagogical

(task, planning and report) ● <b>post-task</b>		about the different ways how people celebrate Christmas around the world through a fair.	- <b>Students' reports of the particular ways of celebration in other countries.</b>		and cultural oral tasks. Teachers' observations and reflections on the class.
Data analysis and re-planning	<b>2</b>			<b>Students journals Questionnaires</b>	Students' feelings, opinions and suggestions.
Cycle 3 ● <b>pre-task,</b> ● <b>task cycle</b> (task, planning and report) ● <b>post-task</b>	<b>3</b>	To illustrate the advantages and limitations of abroad institutions and communities experiences about the implementation of recycling projects through a role play.	- <b>Students' report of recycling implications in a community.</b> - <b>Students' perception in regards to advantages and limitations of recycling</b>	<b>Field notes Transcripts</b>	Student's performance in pedagogical and cultural oral tasks. Teachers' observations and reflections on the class.
Data analysis and re-planning	<b>3</b>			<b>Students journals Questionnaires</b>	Students' feelings, opinions and suggestions.
Cycle 4 ● <b>pre-task,</b> ● <b>task cycle</b> (task, planning and report) ● <b>post-task</b>	<b>4</b>	To discuss orally differences between ordinary holidays and religious festivals in a forum.	- <b>Characterization of components in religious festivals.</b> - <b>Students' points of view on what means for a community their religious festivals.</b>		
Data analysis	<b>4</b>			<b>Students journals Questionnaires</b>	Students' feelings, opinions and suggestions.

Figure 3. Implementation of the Pedagogical Intervention. Source: Own

During development of the main tasks, we made use of field notes to follow a sequence in the observations and make a better reflection. Those field notes were evaluated during the process to make changes when necessary.

The students' journals were administered by the teacher-researcher at the end of each cycle; the structure and type of questions were adjusted based on three main aspects; feelings, sense of improvement and things to change. The learners' answers allowed us to reflect upon

their participation, progress or personal opinion by chart of comments, reflective short questions or small paragraphs. This data was collected to contrast the students' interpretations with the teacher observations through the field notes.

The questionnaire was an instrument used to confirm or deny our impressions and views after analysing teachers' field notes and students' journals. It was applied at the end of every task cycle intervention as a way to widen the information already collected.

### **Instructional Design**

This section provides the description of the pedagogical intervention proposed to expand learners' opportunities to interact in the target language. The difficulties identified during the learners' interventions were tackled by the implementation of culture-based tasks. In addition to this, another relevant feature of the interventions was the selection of topics. This selection came from the results gathered in the initial survey (See Appendix A) in which the learners had the opportunity to express their preferences.

### **Pedagogical Intervention**

This study aims at transforming teaching practices at our workplace connecting theory and practice, based on culture-based tasks including learners' active participation in the process and authentic materials with an intercultural scope.

Consequently, the pedagogical intervention included three weeks of implementation per task cycle and a week devoted to the evaluation stage at the end of each one. This pedagogical intervention was carried out with eighth graders from a rural institution. These students had serious difficulties performing activities related to oral communication due to their limited vocabulary, not enough opportunities to practice the language, and lack of confidence. With this in mind, we decided to address this issue by implementing culture-based tasks, which pretended to provide the learners with the tools and opportunities to overcome their weaknesses.



The lesson plan presented in Figure 4 shows a sample of the procedure and steps that learners followed to achieve the final goal; in this case, to explain the relation between clothing and cultural aspects from diverse cultures in a poster session.

**Enabling objectives:****Pre-tasks**

- To identify vocabulary related to clothing.
- To relate words and pictures with their meaning.
- To follow instructions in a dressing people activity.
- To describe people clothing in a turn-taking oral game.

**MAIN TASK 1: CULTURAL DIVERSITY THROUGH CLOTHING**

**Goal:** To explain the relation between clothing and cultural aspects from diverse cultures in a poster presentation.

**Learning strategy:**

**Input:** Texts and videos taken from the Internet

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Organize the students in groups of four and ask them to choose a country that call their attention related to its traditional attire.
- Ask them to read information from diverse sources such as documents, pictures, photos, etc. about the traditional way of clothing in the culture that they chose to the class.
- Monitor the groups work and ask them questions to clarify terms and expressions they can use during the poster session.
- Give them enough time to make their posters in class and guide the process but allow the students organize the presentation according to the following criteria:
  - The poster is a guide to support the information presented by speakers. Only has to include a big picture, the name of the clothing items and hints related to its description.
  - All members in the group have to participate equally.
- Randomly assign the order of presentations.

*Figure 4.* Sample of a lesson plan.

The four culture-based tasks were designed responding to Kumaravadivelu's parameters (2006). In regards to *particularity*, teachers and learners' goals and expectations in the entire process were tackled following a set of steps described in task-based learning framework, starting from real context conditions to foster learners' awareness and interest, ensuring enough target language exposure for the students. In this sense, we implemented Willis' scheme which includes:

1. To determine the topic and subject of interest.
2. To plan the main task or the final result from the task.
3. To define the goals of the unit.
4. To specify the type of content and the thematic aspects to carry out the task.
5. To plan the necessary steps to get to the final goal.
6. To select and design the required materials.
7. To design the instruments and procedure to evaluate and assess the task. (As cited in Zambrano, Insuasty, & Cárdenas, 2010, pp. 89-90)

In the intervention process each task was designed based on this scheme, first, through the survey and observation done at the beginning of the study, we could find common students' interests and based on those, the main tasks were planned considering that with the expected results the goals defined could be achieved.

We had a clear idea about using cultural content, however, culture involves many aspects, so we had to decide the specific topics and cultural content to be used, centered on students interests.

The steps followed were already defined in the task phases described above, hence the necessary plan to adjust, was a detailed consideration of the specific topics as well as the

preparation of accessible material needed to offer students enough input and possibilities to perform the tasks.

To complete the scheme, one of the most relevant issues is to design the instruments and decide the procedure to evaluate each task, in our case those instruments did not vary for each task and the procedures were determined by the instruments used.

In terms of *practicability*, the main goal was focused on the connection between the components of the task-based framework, culture content and even intercultural awareness relating the construction that O’Halom defines as “personal theories such as those that are developed by teachers by interpreting and applying professional theories in practical situations while they are on the job” (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 172).

The last parameter *possibility* embraces “the importance of acknowledging and highlighting students’ and teachers’ identity, and encourages them to question the status quo that keeps them subjugated” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 174). Hence, through the students’ analysis of real situations, we fostered a critical vision of their own context.

It is important to note that, meanwhile Kumaravadivelu (2006) affirms that tasks only consist of curricular content and for that reason it must not be considered as a methodological construct. In contrast, many scholars such as Ellis (2003), Nunan (2004), and Willis (1996) take the task-based as an approach. What is more, Edwards and Willis (2005) state Task-based language teaching as the approach oriented to “provide better contexts for activating learner acquisition processes and promoting L2 learning. TBLT is thus based on a theory of language learning rather than a theory of language structure” (p. 15).

Figure 5 illustrates our intervention plan. In the first column there is the description of each task cycle in which the pedagogical design was applied. The second column encloses the name of the task bearing in mind the cycle. The third column shows the terminal objectives

proposed as learners’ outcomes and the steps determined to implement the pedagogical intervention. Finally, the fourth column introduces the types of tasks selected to provide learners with familiar situations, characters and values to promote the development of their oral communication skills in the classroom.

Cycle	Name of the main task	Terminal objective	Types of tasks
1	<b>Cultural diversity through clothing</b>	To explain the relation between clothing and cultural aspects from diverse cultures in a poster presentation.	-Description of what people wear in a picture according to a specific culture in a turn-taking oral game. -Sharing information related to traditional attire in the country selected by the group. -Poster session.
2	<b>Celebrating Christmas around the world!</b>	To recognize and exchange information about the different ways how people celebrate Christmas around the world through a fair.	-Identification of the vocabulary and main cultural aspects related to Christmas decoration. -Collection and report of information from readings through questions and answers.
3	<b>A Breathing Earth!</b>	To illustrate the advantages and limitations of abroad institutions and communities experiences about the implementation of recycling projects through a role play.	-Recognition of the recycling implications in a written text. -Collection of information about how to develop a recycle project from the environmental school project. -Identification of advantages when recycling the waste from abroad institutions. -Information exchange in a dialogue completion activity and oral questionnaire game.
4	<b>The faith that moves the world</b>	To discuss orally differences between ordinary holidays and religious festivals in a forum.	-Association of pictures with religious symbols in a memory game. -Relation of religious and ordinary holidays dates in a calendar. -Recognition of characteristic components in religious festivals from an aural text.

Figure 5. Sample of terminal objectives for the pedagogical intervention. Source: Own.

At the end of the pedagogical intervention, we examined the students' improvement in the development of oral communication skills through the culture-based tasks designed during the planning stage.

It was important to propose and rehearse new activities for learners; hence through the implementation of challenging tasks, combined with cultural content, we encompassed different experiences in which learners embodied the use of the language, not only as a linguistic system, but also as a channel to express their thoughts and ideas.

### **Theory of Language Learning**

**Language Learning.** The idea of language learning which underpins our research proposal is taken from Tudor (2001), who talks about learning as “experiential learning” in terms of learning by doing and experience in context. Under the same vision, Kolb (2014) affirms that “the aim of ELT is to create, through a synthesis of works of the foundational scholars, a theory that helps explain how experience is transformed into learning and reliable knowledge” (p.21). Based on this, the author describes learning “as a process whereby concepts are derived from and continuously modified by experience” (Kolb, 2014, p. 21).

From this perspective, language learning from and for our study implies that the students focus their learning process from active participation based on their own experiences, and prepare themselves for new experiences through the development of tasks, which occurs as a natural process that allow them be the authors of their own learning.

### **Methodological Approach**

Teaching a world language entails a progressive and active method focused on learners' cognition and metacognition to learn a target language. Then, to tackle effectively educational goals is paramount to consider language learning and teaching from an active point of view. In Tomlinson's words (2012), it is essential “to propose more experiential approaches to using

language-learning materials” (p. 160). In this sense, the same author mentions task-based as “an approach in which the learners are involved in a set of tasks with non-linguistics outcomes” (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 160), confirming the importance of the meaning, not only the linguistic structures and grammar.

As previously stated, researchers such as Foster (1999) agrees on the fact that “this contemporary view of language learning relies on focusing learners’ attention on both the comprehensibility and interactivity of the language they and their peers use when carrying out different sorts of tasks” (as cited in Zambrano, Insuasty & Cárdenas, 2011, p. 71). Hence, “one of the greatest strengths of task-based teaching is that much, or all, language use occurs in a natural, communicative context” (Beglar & Hunt, 2002, p. 102 )

When encouraging students to get involved in different tasks, they become the main actors of their learning process, without seeing it as a language learning process itself, but as a way of being part of a team, where members communicate each other and define roles to get a product. And the interesting part of it is that the development of that product brings also the progression of language microskills in a natural and unconsciously way.

As discussed, “task-based learning offers many advantages in the designing of communicative activities and in the development and improvement of oral skills” (Gutiérrez, 2005, p. 84). In our daily life we perform many tasks to achieve learning and communicative goals making a connection between the social context and the teaching practice, leading teachers to use daily tasks and adapt them to the classroom to promote oral interaction in a contextualized way.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

The present study was designed under the scope of action research to identify and describe the process in which students develop their microskills of oral communication of target language during EFL class sessions. The main purpose of this study was to analyze oral communication microskills development through the implementation of culture-based tasks. The study also aims to explore the students' perceptions about the articulation of world language learning and culture.

This chapter contains the analysis of the set of data collected after sixteen weeks of pedagogical intervention at "Guacacallo" high school with eight graders. It also entails the findings which give account of the main constructs of the study. Also, it is display de description of the data analysis procedure. The first element examined was in regards to the analytical model. It shows the relationship between the main inquiry topic (learners' oral communication in terms of microskills through the exposure to culture-based tasks), the two main categories identified: microskills of oral communication development, and learners' perception towards EFL by culture-based tasks as well as the data supporting them. Finally, this document covers the finding of each one of those outlines (microskills of oral communication development, and learners' perception towards EFL by culture-based tasks) along with their data samples and the relevant theory.

#### **Data analysis procedure**

After sixteen weeks of pedagogical interventions, we obtained raw data through different instruments such as field notes, video/audio recordings, students' journals, and questionnaires. Once the necessary transcriptions were done (video/audio recordings), we transcribed the information gathered when learners perform the main tasks through the use of word processing.

With the purpose to organize the raw data, the digital files were labeled according to the type of instrument and the date in which were applied. Therefore, we obtained the following names:

FNMT1\_G801\_07\_09\_2016 (for field note), TRMT1\_G801\_07\_09\_2016 (for audio transcriptions in regards to the main task), SJMT1\_801\_ACNT\_07\_09\_2016 (for students' journals), and, finally, SQMT1\_G801\_S1\_12\_09\_2016 (for students questionnaire).

The files were compiled in a folder in regards to the main task in which were fulfilled. As a matter of protect the participants identity, we named the students as S1, S2, and so on throughout this chapter. The teacher-researcher was named as "T" and the teacher observer with and "O".

**Coding the data.** With the purpose to conduct the analysis of the wide range of facts and allow the triangulation of data from different sources (Yin, 2011), after gathered and digitalized all files at the end of pedagogical interventions, we uploaded the whole labeled files in the Qualitative Data Analysis software Atlas.ti. Consequently, we shaped codes based on the information collected and bearing in mind the research study objectives, two main categories emerged to answer the research questions presented at the beginning. As a result of coding process, a hermeneutic unit was created in Atlas.ti including the emerging categories. The set of information within this unit consists of teacher-observer and teacher-researcher field notes, students' feelings, and opinions from journals and questionnaires and learners oral performances through transcripts. All of this consists of data for the process of analysis.

The approach selected to analyze the data collected was Grounded Theory regarding to Creswell (2014) assertion of grounded theory as systematic steps which involve generating categories of information. However, we did not cover the whole methodological approach. We entailed the recognition of remarkable relations "among set of concepts, which are directly developed from data analysis. Theory, in this sense, provides a set of testable prepositions that help us to understand our social world more clearly, rather than absolute truths" (Lacey and Luff,



2007, p. 10). The use of this approach led us identify the possible contributions that oral communication development through cultural-based task have in language learning.

In order to understand the analytical model obtained from the analysis of the data set through Atlas.ti we assemble information under the categories explained above (microskills of oral communication development, and learners’ perception towards EFL by culture-based tasks). As a result we established the analytical model for the whole study, figure 6 shows how the central topic of the research was related to two main categories which comprise codes supporting them. These categories emerged and were consolidated through a process of triangulation.

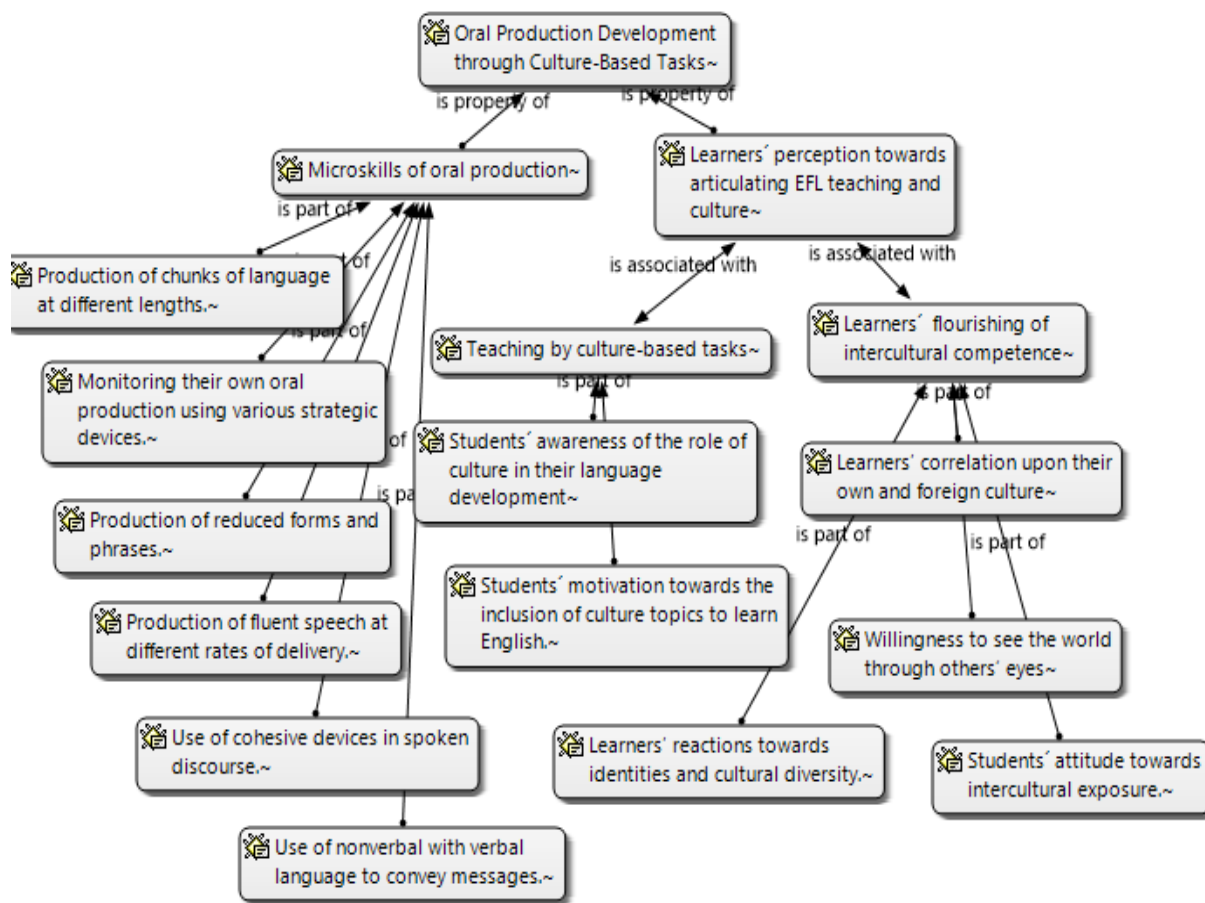


Figure 6. Analytical model.

As a result, we have two categories “microskills of oral communication development” with the sub-categories and codes derived from the data analysis. And, the second one “learners’ perception towards EFL by culture-based tasks” with its subsidiary classifications and codes.

Afterward, figure 7 evidences the first category resultant from the analysis of the hermeneutic unit called “Microskills of oral communication development”. In this category, five subcategories are displayed as follows: (a) production of reduced forms and phrases; (b) production of chunks of language at different length; (c) production of fluent speech at different rate of delivery; (d) use of cohesive devices in spoken discourse; and (e) use of nonverbal with verbal language to convey messages.

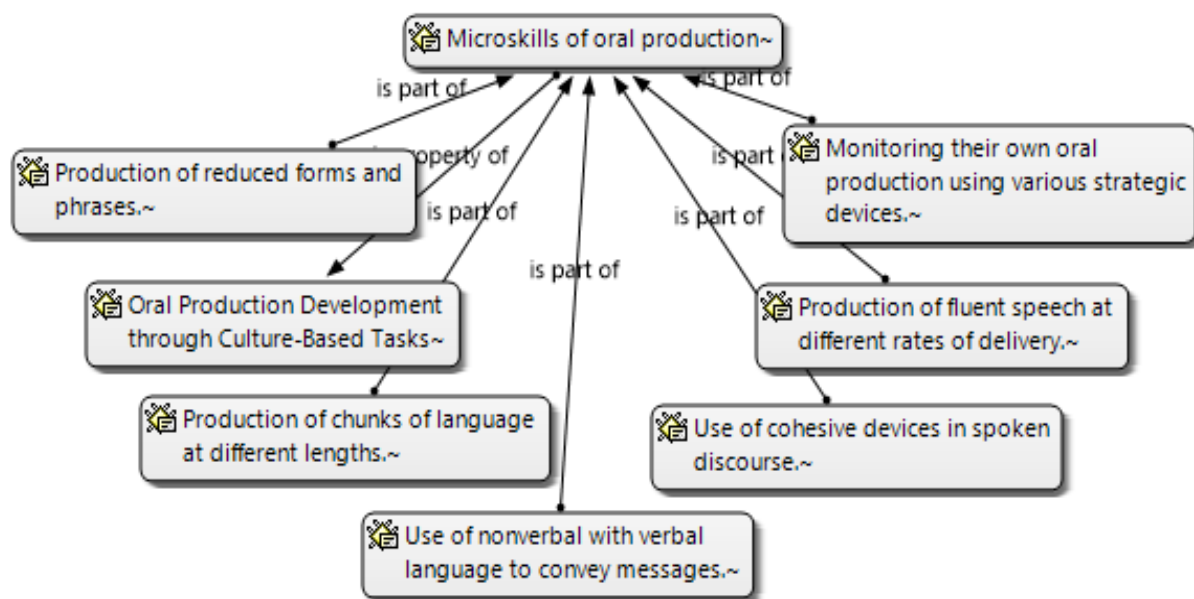


Figure 7. Category 1: Microskills of oral communication development.

The aforementioned analytical model supports the proposed research question of: “What microskills of oral communication are developed when implementing culture-based tasks with eighth graders in a public school?” In this sense, the analysis targeted to address the objectives of the study, which were related to the analysis of how the microskills of oral communication were

developed by learners through the implementation of the culture-based tasks. All this was aimed at describing how culture-based tasks allow students to develop their speaking skill in English.

This second category elicits two emerging sub-categories: (a) “Learner’s interaction with intercultural competence”; and (b) “Teaching by culture-based tasks”. Such categories are explained from specific lineaments represented by its classification for (a) “Learners’ reactions towards identities and cultural diversity”; “Students’ attitude towards intercultural exposure”; and “Learners’ correlation upon their own and foreign culture”. Meanwhile for “Teaching by culture-based tasks” the classification entails; “Students’ awareness of the role of culture in their language development”; and “Students’ motivation towards the inclusion of cultural content to learn English”.

The analytical model (See figure 8) supports the proposed research question of: “What is the students’ perception towards the articulation of cultural content in the foreign language process?” the analysis targeted to address the objectives of the study, which were related to the analysis of how the microskills of oral communication were developed by the implementation of the culture-based tasks. Finally, the specific objectives were also considered to explore the students’ perception towards the articulation of foreign language learning and culture.

### **Research Categories of Analysis**

Five categories emerged from the process of analyzing data handled along with the inquiry instruments and the data obtained from them. In addition, a thorough interpretation of each category will be given by supporting the information presented with theory.

**Microskills of oral communication development.** Taking into account that the present investigation deals with the development of speaking skill, the data collected during the intervention provided evidence regarding students’ speaking skill development related to

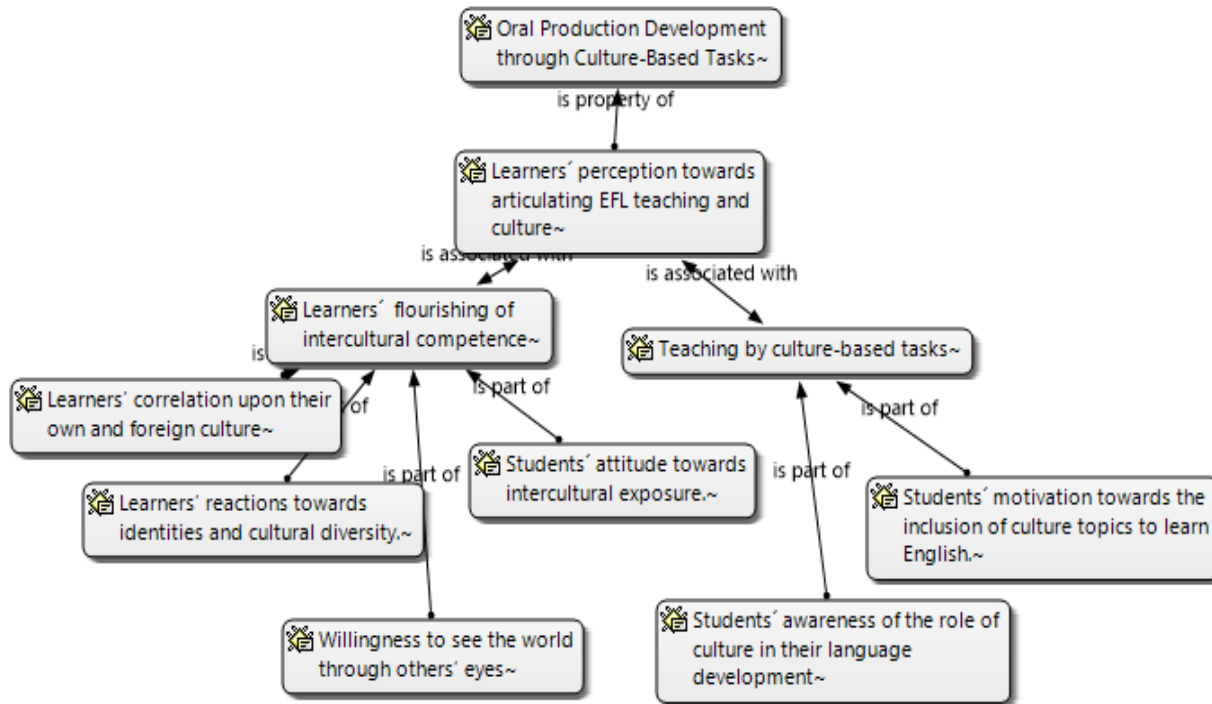


Figure 8. Category 2. Learners’ perception towards EFL by culture-based tasks.

“Production of reduced forms and phrase”; “production of chunks of language at different length”; “production of fluent speech at different rate of delivery”; “use of cohesive devices in spoken discourse”; and “use of non-verbal with verbal language to convey messages”.

This evidence is expanded and detailed here, and allowed us to establish the effectiveness of the introduction of culture-based tasks in the development of speaking skills.

**Findings**

In the process of analyzing data the development of the five microskills proposed were examined one by one following a triangulation process bearing in mind the teachers’ view, students’ perceptions and evidence collected.

**Production of reduced forms and phrases.** The process of triangulating data for this category embrace the recognition of patters in the transcripts, field notes, learners’ journals and questionnaires in regards to production of reduce forms and phrases. In that sense, during the

implementation of the first task we could document that the majority of students resulted in their interventions producing orally basic repertoire of words with elemental grammatical mistakes when using plurals, pronouns or quantifiers, ordering adjectives, and verb conjugation. There was evidence of syntactical errors related to negative and affirmative structure of sentences in different tenses. In addition, it was common to find difficulties with the order of words when they spoke in L2 “*this my group is conformed Laura, Laurent; Carolina and my person*”. Most of them indicated failures linking key vocabulary during their performance. Consequently, their production was limited to short phrases with low cohesion as is exemplified in Excerpt 1. The number in the brackets indicates the number of seconds that a learner spent in silence, giving no oral response.

*Excerpt 1.*

**SS2:** My person and Angie Carolina Nieto (.) ehh (.) we like (0.9) a Chinese clothe because the color are blink and (.) and symbol (.) and very represented. [sic]

*(TRMT 1\_G801\_CH\_07-09-2016)*

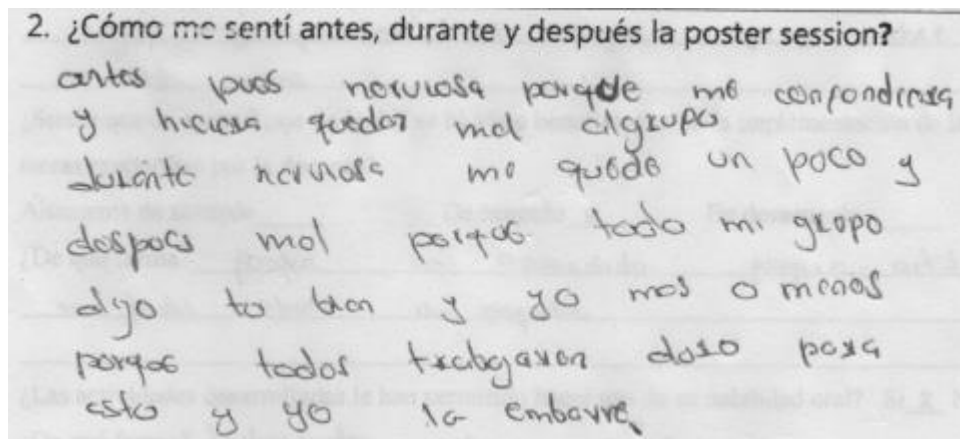
Meanwhile in Excerpt 2, a student attempted to produce a complete message in the target language; however, he had limitations to organize the order of adjectives, express disagreement, state a sentence in present continuous tense, use the prefix “ful” and finally he overused some words without cohesion.

*Excerpt 2.*

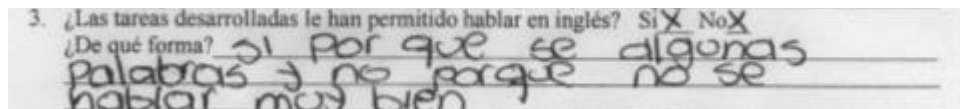
**SS1:** The idea the color the (.) the color the cloth is red (.) ehhe because the dynasty ehhe (0.3) we like color (.) Chinese cloth but (.) ehhe but we are no agree but the idea ehhe because ehhe the idea is terrible that the person cloth/wearing the cloth of the same color (.) ehhe we are ehhe respect but I’m not share. [sic]

*(TRMT 1\_G801\_CH\_07-09-2016)*

In this initial finding we claimed that students generally showed limited management of key vocabulary. Also, they repeated the same words and phrases many times to make themselves understood. It is important to highlight that from students perceptions collected by journals, and confirmed by some questionnaires answers, the role of nervousness, deficiency of training in this type of task, and unfamiliarity with the vocabulary were facts related to their limitations when encouraging this initial activity.



(SJMT1\_801\_ACNT\_07\_09\_2016.jpg)



(SQMT1\_G801\_S2\_12\_09\_2016.jpg)

In this regard, Hadfield and Hadfield (2012) agree that “learners need to create phrases and sentences...to express what they wish to say in a way that can be understood by others” (p. 105). Building on this idea, due to the low level of learners’ target language, the oral tasks were not performed properly. Nevertheless, this task allowed students to have an initial contact with the language and produce short phrases.

In the second task, students continued using basic structures, such as simple present. In the Excerpt 3, a student represented by SS15 attempted to make a negative sentence. However, he

was not accurate with the selection of the auxiliary verb with regard to the pronoun. But, he somehow used correct adjective order before nouns “*three magic kings*”.

*Excerpt 3.*

**SS15:** In *Italy don't believe* the *three magic kings* they believe in the magic which (.) the magic which is the gift of of present. Ehhhhh ummmm the:::::::::: most of people believe in Santa Claus, but *in Italy don't believe* in Santa Claus, ehh they believe in the San Nicolas.

[sic]

(TRMT2\_G801\_J\_18102016)

In viewing the evidence, we could notice that although students still had difficulties building complete phrases, they were more motivated to look for a way to communicate their knowledge, and the overuse of words was diminished, as is exemplified by the teacher-observer in the following segment of field note:

*The groups gave a good first impression because the first part of the exposition was well built, they introduced the members in their teams and explained some of the main characteristics of the cultural aspects of the country for example the name of the country and where is located. During the description of the house' elements the majority of students made lot of errors with the order of adjectives.*

*They looked confuse when the teacher made questions during their intervention, they did not understand the questions at once, and they also did not ask for clarification, the teacher waited some seconds and repeated the question until a student attempted to answer it, however not always they gave a proper answer. [sic]*

(FNMT2\_G801\_10202016.docx)

In connection with the aforementioned quote from the teacher-observer, we can state in the second opportunity the learners were more confident when speaking, so they made use of a wider number of words and clearer phrases such as “*let me show you a Mexican modern home at Christmas*” or “*you can see a Christmas tree*”. In contrast to the wide adopted approach to teach speaking, the bottom-up approach defined as the smallest units first to move through of words

and sentences to discourse (Cornbleet & Carter., 2001). In this opportunity evidently, the learners observed the whole picture and decided which pieces take for expressing in the target language.

For the third task, the results were not faultless; nevertheless, their language improvement became more successful. Students were able to use more uncommon words such as: environment, basket, inhabitants, recycling, among others. Some of them produced short sentences in a more precise way. Meanwhile, another group of learners tried to include longer and complex sentences.

*Excerpt 4.*

**SS19:** Good morning, the Japan city is the one that recycles most waste. Is in Kamikatzu there are not containers or ( ) collector trucks so each person is responsible for calling their waste. [sic]

*(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017)*

**SS9:** Is when the students separate the food and packaging residues that ( ) for lunch the separation depend in the materials origin in the projects separate in three categories: lunchtime recycling, green team and bottles and cans. In the project that bonus and children lets go less contamination and recycling.

They could make affirmative and negative short phrases and also some questions. However, they had problems remembering grammatical rules like collocations, the gerund or infinitive form of the verbs, the relation to adverbs of quantity according to the noun, and the use of superlatives when participating orally (See Excerpt 5).

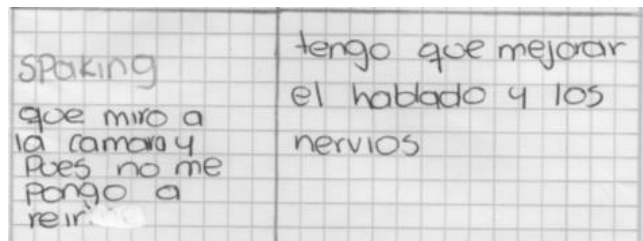
*Excerpt 5.*

**SS12:** Ehh we *want to* recycling in Guacacallo, we *want put* basks and what so *much the students* and inhabitants recycling each and material in this ehhh the basket to have an environment better. [sic]

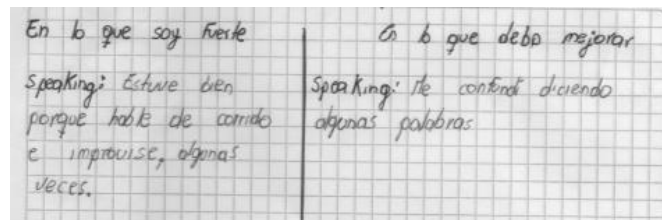


All of this data indicates the misuse of grammatical structures, incorrect usage of some words, and the lack of cohesion in the construction of sentences; however, their ideas were comprehensible and more protracted. According to Bailey (2004) assertion “speaking is a productive aural/oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning” (p. 43). For that reason, it is necessary to foster students’ ability to get through a message, which has been partially achieved so far.

For the third student journal, the learners were asked to reflect upon their strengths and weaknesses when developing the oral task, it is worth noting that from learners’ point of view, the difficulties to speak in English were basically associated to confusion, nervousness and lack of previous rehearsals. Those reflections are documented in the following excerpts:



(SJMT3\_G901\_ER\_28032017.jpeg)



(SJMT3\_G901\_FRT\_28032017.jpeg)

The students struggled when facing up oral tasks even in the final stage; this situation goes in accordance with the problems of speaking discussed by Munjayanah (2004, p.17): (1) inhibition; (2) nothing to say; (3) low or uneven participation. Consecutively, the previous quotes confirm that the difficulties presented by learners to produce reduce forms and phrases are linked to the lack of enough exposure of this type of tasks.

Finally, in the last task, the students decided when to participate. Several of them made interesting interventions while others preferred to keep silent. The following excerpt displays how a student made a significant improvement producing forms and phrases.

*Excerpt 6.*

**SS2:** Ehh the Holy week *begins* with the celebration of ehhh, Palm Sunday and *ends* Easter Sunday of the resurrection. Ehh Holy week is the Christian annual commemoration of the, of the passion, death and mmm resurrection of of Jesús Nazaret. Ammm (.) During the Holy week has samples of popul religion.

[sic]

*(TRMT4\_G901\_GRHW\_17032017)*

As noticed above, she stated correct phrases in simple present adding the “s” to the necessary verbs, and the syntax of the phrases correspond to the basic structures.

In summary, the majority of the students did not produce complete and well-structured messages, but they showed a significant advance in the production of reduced forms and phrases. While in the first task the short phrases shaped by students were hardly understood; in contrast, during the last task the messages were clearer and better structured. In this sense, we can affirm that the majority of learners “demonstrate of an ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through interactive discourse with other speakers of the language” (Brown, 2000, p. 267) when addressed oral communication to tasks.

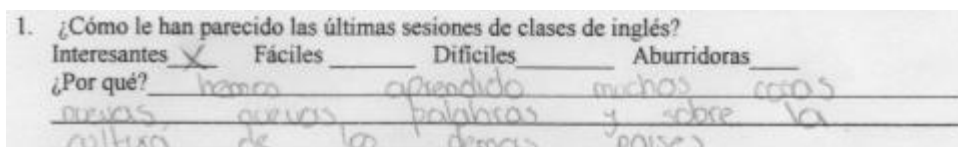
***Production of chunks of language of different lengths.*** This second sub-category represents the multiple ways in which words are combined to produce coherent messages. Concerning the classification of chunks, Lewis (2008) states that chunks of language “consists of single words while all the others are multi-word items” (p. 7).

A) *Words*: The first kind of chunks is related to words “which...are lexical items, as are words where a single substitution produces a totally new meaning” (Lewis, 2008, p. 8).

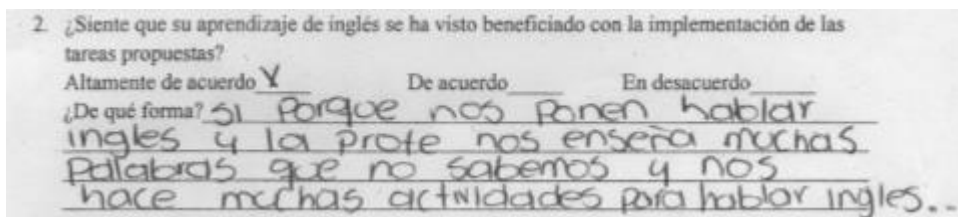
Throughout the four tasks the students varied the selection of words. In the first opportunity they used a basic repertoire of nouns (*dynasty; uniform; part; name; idea; symbol; school*), adjectives (*colors; respect; terrible; different; elegant*), and verbs (*represent; has; wearing; using*) when speaking in L2.

Meanwhile, in the third task the vocabulary selection of words included longer, more complex lexical items. The learners encompassed many words from the preparatory tasks during the main oral presentation such as *viewers; projects; community; donation; benefits; packaging; contamination; environment; responsibility; journalist; inhabitants; strategies; recycling* (nouns); *separation; incentive; improved; reduce* (verbs); and *quality; responsible; interesting; excellent* (adjectives).

In light of the students perceptions gathered by the questionnaires, they confirm from the very beginning the inclusion of diverse words throughout the four main tasks development. Evidence from data concerning this aspect is provided as follows.



(SQMT1\_G801\_S15\_12\_09\_2016)



(SQMT3\_G901\_SS13\_25102016.jpeg)

In addition to this, different learners opted to use diverse words not only to refer the same thing (*containers; basket*) as it is exemplified in the Excerpt 7, but also to provide and answer (See Excerpt 8)

*Excerpt 7.*

**SS9:** Is when the students separate the food and packaging *residues*...

**SS16:** Ehhh the project is recycling *trash* in Kamikatzu.

**SS19:** Good morning, the Japan city is the one that recycles most *waste*. [sic]

(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017.docx)

*Excerpt 8.*

**T:** What is the purpose to do that?

**SS3:** The intention is Santa Claus put presents on the socks. [sic]

(TRMT2\_G801\_X&S\_18102016.docx)

To sum up, even the words are lexical items such as

A central task for learners is the acquisition of a sufficiently large vocabulary in the traditional sense of that word. Competent users of a language have, at a minimum, several tens of thousands of words at their disposal, at least for receptive purposes” (Lewis, 2008, p. 21).

Considering this, the learners were familiar with new vocabulary through the pre-tasks based on cultural content. Consequently, the learners incorporated those words to enrich their presentations.

*B) Collocations:* The second chunk makes reference to collocations understood as “those combinations of words which occur naturally with greater than random frequency” (Lewis, 2008, p. 25).

The data set below shows the way students appealed to use collocations throughout the four implementations.

**SS12:** Ehhhh boots ((pointing with his finger a pair of Mexican boots in the poster)) is *very tropical* ehhhh the party .the painting whose are up. Mmmmmmm \_\_\_\_\_ is *very elemental* in the culture Mexican.

**SS5:** Is *very fancy* and my cultural. [sic]

(TRMT 1\_G801\_MX\_07-09-2016)

The data previously mentioned came from the first intervention and shows how the learners used a collocation that functionally represents an adjunct of intensifier consisting of an adverb of degree, in this case *very*, and an adjective such as *well, big, tropical, elemental, fancy and common* to remark an aspect relevant for them.

The second set of collocations registered in this cultural-based task addressed the students' purpose to express disagreement. Their selection of words included formally a negative and a verb.

*Excerpt 9.*

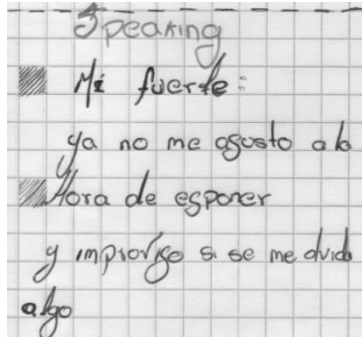
**SS3:** The idea the color the...ehhhh but *we are not agree* but the idea ...we are eh hh respect but *I'm not share*.

**SS9:** In my opinion *no like* this dress and *not combine* this colors. [sic]

(TRMT 1\_G801\_BZ\_07-09-2016)

The aforementioned quotes and excerpts show language learners' attempts to link arbitrary words to state a personal position. In regard to this, Lewis (2008) suggests "collocations are not just an extension of the concept of 'words'; they provide learners with a powerful organizing principle for language (p. 26). Accordingly, it seems that involving learners in tasks that require addressing diverse purposes using the language help them to become better language users.

In addition, the learners make sense of the term “improvisation” in regards to the possibility to link collocations when speaking in the third main task. Further evidence from these statements is present in the following excerpt.



(SJMT3\_G901\_BAG\_28032017.jpeg)

The third collocations that students mentioned were related to description and introduction such as *they are a group of*, *colorful skirt*, *the name*, *good morning*, and *hello class*.

During the subsequent cultural-based tasks, the learners used collocations frequently. The data set below shows students using them to introduce their groups in different ways.

*Excerpt 10.*

**SS15:** *Good morning, ehh I am going to ehh introduce you my work ehh I am going to talk about the Italian Christmas house or home...[sic]*

(TRMT2\_G801\_J\_18102016)

*Excerpt 11.*

**SS14:** *Good morning, I am going to (.) introduce you ehhehhh my group he is Brayan and me ehheh we are going to talk about mmmmm ehhehhh ( ) home. [sic]*

(TRMT2\_G801\_L&B\_18102016)

*Excerpt 12.*

**SS1:** *Mmm ammm the project is (.) we are going to plastic bags sudafric.*

**SS2:** *ehhh we are going to present four projects, one plastic bag ((she sees her partner))*

**SS3:** *Going to benefits.* [sic]

(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017)

In the previous excerpts we observe that the students attempted to link collocations such as *going to* and *talk about* in order to make the sentences longer.

The excerpts presented above are an example of the previously mentioned aspect. In these cases the three students made reference of *going to* when refers to future events. However, only one of them used it properly. The majority of students kept their attention to keywords, but not to the syntax or grammatical details. However, the use of chunks allowed them to use longer sentences. The following field notes provide the perception from the teacher-observer.

**O:** *A significant number of students did not pay much attention to the correct way of organizing or pronouncing the sentences; they were limited to saying a group of words according to his/her part in the program. However, their phrases sounded natural because they pronounced them quickly and clearly and the presentations were better structured.*

[sic]

(FN03\_G901\_OBO1\_03282017)

In addition, in order to make a description, the learners used collocations as *pay attention, the nature of, quality of environment, and protection of nature*.

The following example demonstrates students` use of collocations to describe relevant aspects of a project through the use of prepositions of place and time (*in, for, from*), order of adjectives and partnership expressions.

*Excerpt 13.*

**SS9:** *Is when the students separate the food and packaging residues that ( ) for lunch the separation depend in the materials origin...*[sic]

(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017)

The excerpt illustrates how a student intended to use the collocation “depend on”, but instead of the preposition “on” said “in”. Although, the syntax of the sentence is not correct the chunk has a coherent meaning.

What is more, in the following segment taken from the third culture-based task, another learner used the same collocation in three opportunities to relate and describe a belief in another country’s culture.

*Excerpt 14.*

**SS15:** In Italy don’t believe the three magic kings they *believe in* the magic which (.) the magic which is the gift of of present. Ehhhhh ummmm the:::::::::: most of people believe in Santa Claus, but in Italy don’t *believe in* Santa Claus, ehh they *believe in* the San Nicolas.  
[sic]

(TRMT2\_G801\_J\_18102016)

The previous data shows a learner relating cultural facts from the extension of his lexicon. This episode confirms that speaking is a process of constructing meaning (Burns and Joyce, 1997) from the continual reflection on our own oral communication. Similarly, Lewis (2008) advocates that “the idea of collocation is a very powerful one in helping learners maximize the value of the language to which they are exposed, but they need help in identifying the powerful and useful partnerships in a text” (p. 30). This evidence denotes the effectiveness of using culturally-based tasks to help learners expand their knowledge and use of language.

In addition, the student who characterized a news presenter combined different adjectives to support his opinion for the third intervention as it is illustrated in the set of excerpts below.

*Excerpt 15.*

**SS1:** Thank you Sebastian ahh *the project is interesting* and they wait final...



**SS1:** Thank you Eliana and *the project is excellent...*

**SS1:** Thank you, thank you Kahory *the project is like...*[sic]

(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017)

In support of this analysis, Lewis (2008) argues that “it is more efficient to learn the whole and break it into parts, than to learn the parts and have to learn the whole as an extra arbitrary item” (p. 32). From this perspective, learners’ development of speaking skill should be framed from the learning in context of the words and phrases and link of set of words in a coherent way to convey messages.

*C) Fixed and Semi-fixed Expressions:* Throughout the pedagogical interventions, it was also evident that the students included fixed and semi-fixed expressions for different language functions.

Semi-fixed expressions in Lewis (2008) words “consist of a pragmatic (or ‘functional’) frame, which is completed by a referential slot-filler” (p. 34). The learners also made use of this resource to describe general and specific aspects from the topics they shared; to reveal and support their opinion; to express needs and likes, and finally, to make comparisons and interpretations.

Herein are some examples of evidences that illustrate the previously mentioned type of chunk.

*Excerpt 16.*

**SS7:** ...I am students in integral an is *the project plastic bag pack. People from this community* are benefit...

**SS9:** ... students separate the food and *packaging residues* that ( ) *for lunch the separation depend in the materials origin* in the projects separate ... In the project that bonus and children lets go *less contamination and recycling.* [sic]

(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017)

*Excerpt 17.*

**SS13:** *Most of the time* the Christmas socks are red, golden or green. [sic]

(TRMT2\_G801\_X&S\_18102016)

In terms of interpretation, the learners used expressions of different lengths to highlight her/his understanding. “Expressions which are more common, more central to the spoken language, and much more useful for learners... those made of common words where the meaning of one or more of the key words is in some sense metaphorical rather than literal” (Lewis, 2008, p. 37)

*Excerpt 18.*

**SS16:** Ehhh eh hh *going speak the green team.* The green team, green team or this projects *we can copy strategies* how is *incentive students to continue recycling.*

**SS9:** *And help people.*

**SS13:** The the recycling is bitter and *protection the environment.* [sic]

(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017)

Finally, the learners made comparisons and contrasted information using chunks of language such as words, collocations and expressions. The excerpts below provide a comprehensive account.

*Excerpt 19.*

**SS17:** Yes, this project is *very good for the world is best* what this eh hh *Long Meadow is best.*

**SS16:** Ehhh *Long Meadow is best,* eh hh is muy, *more important for reduce contamination...*

**SS17:** Yes, *is very good for you for me for everything. Thank you. Good bye.* [sic]

(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017)

In general terms, the students combined sets of words with different linguistic and pragmatic purposes; they associated new groups of words on the basis of linguistic patterns. It is worthy to mention that, from their initial level, they tended to produce meaningful units of language and to further use expressions or collocations. In connection with the abovementioned feature, “teachers

need to focus on collocations which do occur, rather than combinations which ‘ought’ to exist, or which are easy for learners to understand” (Lewis, 2008, p. 26). In this regard, the learners’ recognition of diverse chunks of language was useful to help learners develop their speaking skill.

To sum up, in relation to the use of chunks throughout the oral tasks acquired by the students, we could register significant improvements. In the initial cultural-based tasks, the learners selected short associations of adverbs and adjectives to emphasize their opinions, and also used basic words. However, in the subsequent interventions they integrated new “units at various functional and formal levels of grammar hierarchy” (Krishnamurthy, 2002, p. 289) expanding their vocabulary and including collocations. It is important to mention that a high percentage of students appeared to use chunks at least once during their performance. They also recognized collocations as verb + preposition, adverb + adjective + preposition and superlatives not only to describe, and infer information, but also to make comparisons and relate cause and effects. The length of the chunks evidenced in the excerpts was constant and varied from two to six words with complete expressions.

With the evidence collected, it was observed that students developed the microskill of oral communication in reference to production of chunks of language at different lengths throughout the entire implementation.

***Production of fluent speech at different rates of delivery.*** This sub-category entails students’ production of oral discourses making emphasis on their capacity to convey meaning and elicit messages at different rates.

In the first task the majority of students appeared to be using hesitations, L1 + L2, fillers, chunks of language, and memorization in order to produce “fluent” speech during the oral presentations. However, students’ performances were characterized by lengthy periods of silence,

consistent hesitations in short sentences, frequent mistakes in pronunciation and intonation, a lack of key vocabulary use, and hesitancy in use and knowledge of the language.

The first issue that includes this microskill deals with the students' prolonged silences and very consistent hesitations during the production of short sentences. This concern is widely documented in the following excerpts from Main Task 1 transcripts. The number in brackets represents how many seconds a learner was silent.

*Excerpt 20.*

**SS7:** My person and Angy Carolina Nieto (.) ehhhh (.) we like **(0.9)** a Chinese clothe...

**SS3:** Because in the school ehhhh **(0.5)** (.) the different cloth. [sic]

*(TRMT1\_G801\_ACNT\_EYNC\_SAC\_07\_09\_2016)*

*Excerpt 21.*

**SS16:** ...my skirt violet mmmmm **(0.14)** beautiful mmmm pantyhose mmmm large and boots.

**SS16:** Wear as accessories (.) much of (.) it skirt (.) are is (.) red and low (.) low so. [sic]

*(TRMT1\_G801\_YYAB\_DFAT\_JSTM\_CACD\_07\_09\_2016)*

The second factor that characterized students' performances was the frequent use of fillers such as ehhh, ammm, ahhh and mmmm, not only at the beginning of their interventions but also at the end or even between two words. Below is evidence to illustrate.

*Excerpt 22.*

**SS13:** ehhhh mmmm serenatas mmmm

**SS8:** ehhhh is (0.2) this beautiful, mmmm I like elegant is...((laughs))

**SS25:** ehhh, good morning my group is conform ehhh of the ehhh we to speaking of the original cultural ehhhh clotng. ((Laughs)). [sic]

*(TRMT1\_G801\_KSAA\_FRT\_EYHM\_LDMA\_07\_09\_2016)*

The third factor regarding to students' production of fluent speech was related to the marked frequency that the students use the mother tongue linked with some words in foreign language, as the following excerpt shows.

*Excerpt 23.*

**T:** Then, what do you think about that idea? Are you agreeing with that? In some parts it is important that all people use the same cloth. What do you think about that?

**SS3:** Because...ehhh...pero osea eso no compartimos la idea de que porque el emperador dice que todos se tenían que vestir de rojo todos se vestían así. [sic]

In this opportunity the learner attempted to answer the teacher's question in English. However, he only pronounced the first word in L2 and the rest of the response in Spanish.

We could register only a few cases of short sentences in which learners were fluent. However, the grammar compositions of most of the sentences were not accurate.

*Excerpt 24.*

**SS12:** In my opinion no like this dress and not combine this colors.

**SS26:** El turban is solid red have green accessories in the head.

**SS16:** She is wearing color, solid red skirt, colorful skirt.

**SS18:** In my opinion terrible. [sic]

*(TRMT1\_G801\_07\_09\_2016)*

Concerning this, there are some other factors that affected students' performance such as anxiety, nervousness and the video-recording. The following written comments illustrate the perceptions of students related to their performance for the task. They used words like panic, frustration and nervousness to describe their feelings while performing the task.

2. ¿Cómo me sentí antes, durante y después la poster session?  
 Pues me senti muy bien pero al momento de presentar nose estaba super nerviosa estaba super fria y tras de eso seme olvido todo pero creo que salimos bien nos falta opiniones pero bien me senti muy bien con esta experiencia

(SQMT1\_801\_SS13\_07-09-2016)

Pues me senti nerviosa cuando sali, seme olvido lo que iba a decir, fue un momento de panico, pero cuando ya acabamos fue un momento de tranquilidad por que ya abiamos echo la presentacion

(SQMT1\_801\_SS5\_07-09-2016)

pues al principio estabamos confundido porque todos estabamos bravos, porque no sabia que aser.

(SQMT1\_801\_SS12\_07-09-2016)

According to the results of the first task, it is evident that fluency was poorly achieved. The majority of students only tried to convey messages orally by memorizing phrases or the use of chunks of language. Also, they manifested, in their commentaries, they were not used to doing these kinds of activities, which, undoubtedly, makes students feel stressful, nervous and anxious.

Through the first culture-based task, we noticed an issue in terms of oral communication development because the students had many difficulties expressing their ideas and opinions about some topics as they expressed in the questionnaire:

**SS18:** “Me sentí mal porque no se pronunciar esas palabras”

**SS19:** “No me gustó porque no puedo hablar inglés”.

**SS1:** “Me sentí un poco frustrado porque no pude hablar mucho” [sic]

(SQMT 1\_S801\_24\_08\_2016)

In this regards, Bailey (2004) remarks the importance of enrolling learners in this kind of task and “provide students with fluency-building practice and realize that making mistakes is a natural part of learning a new language” (p. 55). In this sense, students need to be encouraged to convey messages in L2 even at the beginning of the process to develop their fluency.

The few opportunities for students to participate in this kind of activities was also noticed by the observer who expressed it on a field diary:

*O: I could observe that the fact that the students have to be in front of the group is scaring for them, and it does not allow them to have a good performance. I think they are not used to presentations, and it makes it more difficult for them to produce fluent language.*

*They make a lot of pauses; they make use of lifesavers as fillers, the first language, or just the invention of new words through the wrong adaptations of their first language words.*

*In spite of those failures, students were able to face their fear and produce short but complete sentences, which allow them to produce phrases at a slow but understandable speed. [sic]*

(FN02\_G801\_OBO1\_02 102016)

Regarding the second task, the learners’ oral communication was more fluent with less use of fillers such as ehh and amm, not only at brief, but also long rates of delivery. The excerpts below give a comprehensive account as to how a significant group of learners attempted to reduce the length of the fillers improving the quality of the sentences.

*Excerpt 25.*

**SS15:** Good morning **ehh** I am going to **ehh** introduce you my work **ehh** I am going to talk about the Italian Christmas house or home. We are show you **ehh** the Italian christmas model house. **Ehhh** ¿sigo? Profe ¿cómo se dice primer piso?

**SS18:** **Ehhhhh ummmm** the:::::::::: most of people believe in Santa Claus, but in Italy don't believe in Santa Claus, **ehh** they believe in the San Nicolas. [sic]

(TRMT2\_G801\_J\_18102016)

The following transcriptions illustrate how a learner made use of only a few words in Spanish to overcome a gap in vocabulary. In the first case, the interjection “*well*” and in the second one the short sentence “*in order to uncover them*”. However, the student did not hesitate in those moments and just continued conveying the message in English.

*Excerpt 26.*

**SS15:** Ehhh the first floor are there living room, chicken. Ehhhh they use decorate ammmm ( ) tinsel **bueno** they ehhhhh the Christmas tree they use to decorate babble, firelights, ehhh tinsel, star and u:::::der the Christmas tree put the present. Ehhhh

**T:** Why do they put the presents under the tree?

**SS15:** Because o **para destapartlos** or for every, every person in the family. Ehhh the Christmas tree conformed the messiah coming ehhhhh [sic]

Another relevant characteristic of fluency observed in the second task was the frequent repetition of words or phrases. However, the repetition made it difficult to clearly understand the idea. In the following excerpt the learner used repetition to complete her response.

*Excerpt 27.*

**SS11:** In Italy don't believe the three magic kings they believe in *the magic which (.) the magic which* is the gift of of present. [sic]

(TRMT2\_G801\_J\_18102016)



Finally, language learners attempted to produce more fluent oral interventions as compared to the previous task. The examples below in which a learner and the teacher kept a natural rate of a conversation confirm this variable.

*Excerpt 28.*

**T:** Where is the star?

**SS3:** The start is on the Christmas tree.

**T:** How they decorate the rest of home?

**SS13:** They put in the living room Christmas socks.

**T:** What is the purpose to do that?

**SS3:** The intention is Santa Claus put presents on the socks.

**SS13:** Most of the time the Christmas socks are red, golden or green. [sic]

*(TRMT2\_G801\_USA\_18102016)*

Despite the fact that a small group of students could pronounce more fluent sentences, a large number did not show improvement and continued including long periods of silence or an overuse of fillers and hesitations.

In the third task we found of evidence two different levels of fluency among the group of learners. 80% of students showed a low development of fluency as their interventions were marked by long periods of silence, short sentence production, continuing use of fillers, a mix of L1 and L2 vocabulary, and the frequent repetition of words. The next set of excerpts taken from the Main task 3 supports this pattern.

*Excerpt 29.*

**SS14:** Our project **ehhh** pay attention the nature of life **ammm (0.10)**. No se.

**SS10:** Hello my name is Laura Daniela is students ha (.) e **(0.6)** green team **(0.9)** is the live and environment *ah ah ayuda al* environment *a reducir a* reducic *la contaminacion* thank you.

**SS4:** **Ehh ehhh** my name is Ingrid. **Ehh y** community **ehh** fat **y recolección de** plastic bag **ehh** plastic bag **ehhh** if inform **ehh** tre **ehh** three format **ehhh** elaboration the plastic bag.

[sic]

(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017)

In contrast, few students showed an improved level of fluency as they could produce fluent answers, descriptions, and responses to topics. In the Excerpt 29 the learner conveyed three long sentences avoiding hesitations or pauses while he was looking at the camera directly with few grammatical mistakes. However, the message had a precise message.

*Excerpt 30.*

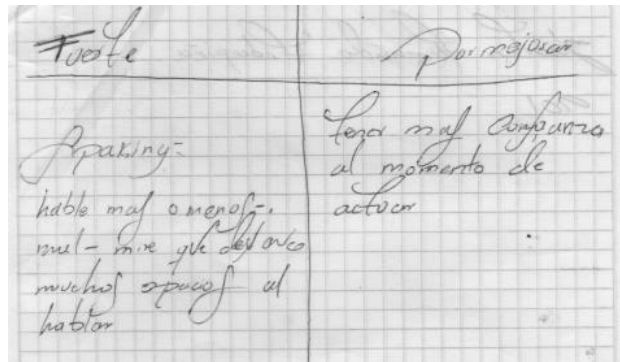
**SS9:** Is when the students separate the food and packaging residues that (.) for lunch the separation depend in the materials origin in the projects separate in three categories: lunch time recycling, green team and bottles and cans. In the project that bonus and children lets go less contamination and recycling.

In the following set of excerpts the students

**SS15:** First question. What is your project?

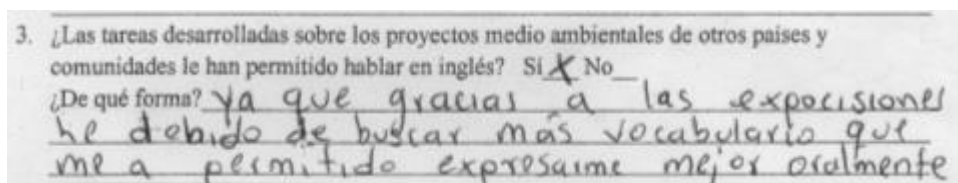
**SS16:** Ehhh the project is recycling trash in Kamikatzu. [sic]

The learners' perception about their sense of fluency is exemplified in the following comments from students' journals. In which they were asked to relate their strengths and weaknesses during the main task. The following is an excerpt in which a student relates fluency as the capacity of conveying a message without hesitation. And at the same time, he reflected upon his oral communication concerning this microskill.

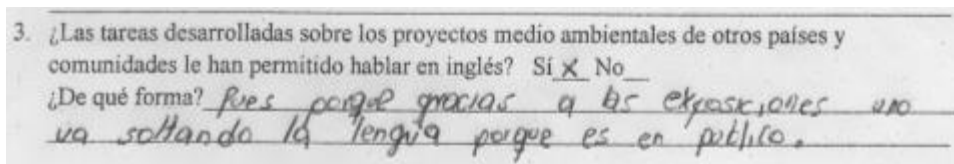


(SJMT3\_G901\_JAA\_28032017.jpeg)

The previous ideas meet and are similar when learners' described fluency based on expressions such as “hablar de corrido, improvisar, ir soltando la lengua”. The fragments of learners' questionnaires corroborate the premise.



(SQMT3\_G901\_SS3\_25102016)



(SQMT3\_G901\_SS3\_25102016)

To sum up, in the third task some the learners showed a difference in terms of fluency rates of delivery. Most of them correlated their emerging ability to produce fluent phrases to key vocabulary usage, better pronunciation, and their recognition of the task structure. However, a few of them considered those facts as a barrier to achieve the goals.

In the final task, the learners showed a similar production than in the previous one. The oral participation of the students was framed on the basis of fillers, hesitations, and repetitions. However, the examples of fluent speech were limited to short sentences. The following examples provide such evidence. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that students also tended to not

pay attention to grammar aspects. Finally, they attempted to provide a meaningful answer to the questions.

*Excerpt 31.*

**SS13:** The cross represents death and resurrection of Jesus.

**SS9:** The resurrection of the Jesus in the cross is important.

**SS18:** Ehh tell us where the celebration of skeletons is developed?

**SS1:** Is celebration Mexican. [sic]

*(TRMT4\_G901\_GRHW\_17032017)*

An intervention that we documented related to this microskill is one in which the student was clear in her statements, thereby producing a fluent answer. She only made use of short fillers, and hesitations to describe the main aspects of a celebration in the class and the message was clear.

*Excerpt 32.*

**SS2:** Ehh the Holy week begins with the celebration of ehhh, Palm Sunday and ends Easter Sunday of the resurrection. Ehh Holy week is the Christian annual commemoration of the, of the passion, death and mmm resurrection of of Jesús Nazaret. Ammm (.) During the Holy week has samples of popul religion. [sic]

*(TRMT4\_G901\_GRHW\_17032017)*

From the learners' perceptions collected in the journals and questionnaires, their development of this microskill is related to their ability to answer a question, or to make a presentation without pausing. They also mentioned the importance of remembering and using key vocabulary, while at the same time, noting the role of stress or anxiety as a barrier.

1. ¿Cómo me sentí hablando en inglés?  
Pues bien porque, supe responder las preguntas que hicieron y siempre fluido.

(SJMT4\_G901\_FRT\_25042017)

me sentí bien ya con mas pocas nervios  
y si pudiera estudiado mas que me ubiera ido bien

(SJMT4\_G901\_JO\_25042017)

Having described and provided examples of the relevant features embraced by the learners' production of fluent speech at varying rates of delivery, the following explains those included in the first research category. Throughout the development of the culture-based tasks, the language learners produced mostly short phrases in a fluent way, and had more difficulties expressing complex and longer phrases. At the beginning, it was common for learners to use long periods of silence and prolonged fillers even in short sentences. However, in the last two tasks a group of learners tended to use hesitations and short fillers rather than long silences to improve, in a significant way, the rate of delivery of the messages.

Another relevant fact in relation to fluency is the learners' reduction of L1 usage. On the basis of the data gathered, we can affirm that the majority of the learners reduced L1 use during the oral task as they only pronounced a few words in Spanish when answering questions, giving suggestions, and expressing their opinions in English to overcome their gaps in vocabulary.

The findings of this study further suggest that the chunks of language incorporated by the learners are closely related to fluency. When the learners recognized a set of linguistic and pragmatic chunks, they used them to convey messages orally, improving the rate of delivery of that message.

The aforementioned excerpts and quotes give strong evidence of the role played by oral tasks in allowing learners to extend their immediate use of the language. Bailey (2004) highlights that “in language lessons- especially at the beginning...they (learners) cannot develop fluency if the teacher is constantly interrupting them to correct their oral errors” (p. 55). Considering this, the cultural-based task helped students to build their own set of words and expressions shaped from the previous information. However, it must be mentioned that, although not all the students showed a high improvement related to fluency because they continued to demonstrate difficulties when speaking in English, the learners at different levels used the language quickly and were more confident.

*Use of cohesive devices in spoken discourse.* This sub-category entails another particular microskill manifested in the learners’ speech-- the use of basic words to connect his/her ideas. These words are considered cohesive devices and are classified into different language categories such as pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs, and ellipsis. In regard to this, Bamberg (1987) explains that linguistic devices “serve as children of different ages begin to strategically employ them in their own productions of cohesive/ coherent discourse” (p. 17).

During the first culture-based task, in some cases, learners did not use a conjunction at the end of the list of adjectives; “SS6: She is wearing color, solid red skirt, colorful skirt”. In contrast, another student overused “and” to introduce his peers; “SS4: My group there is L. A. and L. B. and E. N. and F. C...” and finally, another group of language learners used improperly conjunctions “also” and “but” as it is noticeable in the following examples.

*Excerpt 33.*

**SS8:** Mmm The mariachi mmm they are a group of musician taken of Jalisco, also the mariachi like chilli mmmm food, also the mariachi but this culture is sure with the personation how Colombia. [sic]

(TRMT01\_G801\_MX\_07-09-2016)

Very few examples of appropriate use of conjunctions were evident in the initial students' speech. This information told us that coherence needed to be taught and practiced even more with the following tasks. Also, there was a noticeable gap in the use of the pronouns. In the excerpt 34, the learner linked a singular noun with a plural pronoun. The subsequent example displays how the student avoided the necessary use of a pronoun to begin a phrase.

*Excerpt 34.*

**SS12:** And y the hat ((indicating with her hand the hat in the poster)) (0.4) I have ammmm the hat Mexican is so tradition and the conform ammmmm they is children and very big.

[sic]

(TRMT01\_G801\_LN\_07-09-2016)

*Excerpt 35.*

**SS22:** Is very fancy and my cultural. [sic]

(TRMT01\_G801\_LN\_07-09-2016)

Another cohesive device presented in a brief scale during this task is the use of prepositions such as in, of, for. Even when, in some cases, students made a good use of them, they are rarely used throughout the students' speech. In some other cases, they used them improperly following L1 forms as in these examples "*for the climate for the four seasons*"; "*Because in the school...*" and in the next excerpts.

*Excerpt 36.*

**SS3:** Is...is...the person eh hh *in the uniform* is (.) se ven iguales.

**SS7:** Ahhh yes, yes, *for the climate for the four seasons*, osea yes, yes (laughs) [sic]

Through the development of the second task, students showed some progression, but not enough to claim that cohesive devices were being improved significantly. The Excerpt 37

shows a strong similarity between the results in task 1 and 2, in which a learner started a sentence using because, however, he did not state two sentences.

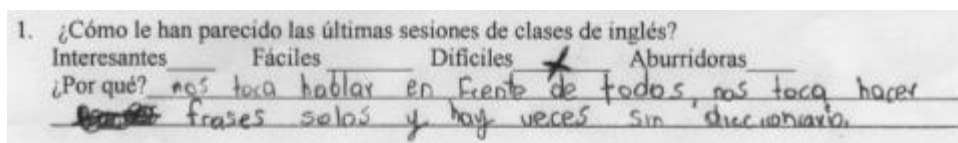
*Excerpt 37.*

**SS15:** *Because* o para destaparlos or *for* every, every person in the family. Ehhh the Christmas tree conformed the messiah coming ehhhhh or the::: (0.4) the outside home decorate *with* tinsel, firelights, babbles (0.4) around the window. [sic]

(TRMT2\_G801\_J\_18102016)

When the students did not find a word to connect their ideas, they insisted on the use of L1 as a lifesaver tool in order to continue their communication. On the above excerpt, it was observed that there is an absence of not only linking words, like prepositions, but also verbs necessary to give coherence to the phrase “*the Christmas tree conformed the messiah coming*” “*the outside home decorate with tinsel...*”

One of participants expresses through his student journal a personal interpretation one of the consequences related to the lack of knowledge about the cohesive devices in spoken discourse due to a process centered on senseless translation.



(SQMT1\_G801\_S9\_12\_09\_2016)

Even though the limitations evidenced, improvements in language usage began to be demonstrated during the third intervention, where students’ oral discourse was accompanied of more coherent phrases as evidenced in this resultant extract:

*Excerpt 38.*



**SS9:** Is when the students separate the food and packaging residues that ( ) for lunch the separation depend in the materials origin in the projects separate in three categories: lunch time recycling, green team and bottles and cans. In the project that bonus and children let's go less contamination and recycling. [sic]

*(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017)*

Although the beginning of the development of this microskill was observed, it was evident that there was insufficient use of cohesive devices like connectors, linking words, phrasal verbs and other linguistic elements, which would contribute to coherence.

In the implementation of the fourth task, there was little participation of students. The lack of cohesion sometimes did not allow students to understand the message; some students did not show enough preparation and there was evident lack of investigation.

*Excerpt 39.*

**SS20:** A:::n history Mexican was died celebration for Mexican and particular (.) by central south (.) religion and be people of Mexican and century believing in other place special is ( ).

**SS13:** The symbol represent the death and and re...resurrection [

**SS3:** The cross.

**SS2:** ehh because this celebration is to reflect and be with God and unlike others that are cheerful more divernias ehh rumba and liquor. [sic]

*(TRMT4\_G901\_GRHW\_17032017)*

As a conclusion, we can affirm that, although the students' low English level is noticeable and does not allow students to speak with cohesion, the outstanding result of this process was the progression of students' language improvement starting from the first to the fourth intervention. Unfortunately, some students did not achieve significant advancement.

Guided on the Common European Framework, students continued to perform at a beginning level. However, they did show improvement as they moved from level A1 to level A2 (can link group of words with simple connectors like “and”, “but” and “because”).

*Use of facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language to convey messages.* Brown (2000) suggests that the students should be encouraged to develop their own strategies, including the use of fillers, using conversation maintenance cues, using mime and non-verbal expressions to convey meaning.

Following, Brown’s (2000) ideas, along with verbal language to convey messages, the students’ use of nonverbal cues, such as, the deliberate use of their hands to try to convey meaning, and the use of pictures to support their oral interventions were observed. This occurred, to some extent during the pre-task, but to a greater extent during the main task combined with verbal language to complement, explain, or emphasize what they wished to express. The following fragments exemplified that premise.

*Excerpt 40.*

**SS8:** And y the hat ((indicating with her hand the hat in the poster))

**SS15:** eh hh good morning, hello class eh hh this my group is conformed L, L, C, and my person ((pointing out each student and finally putting his hand on his chest)).

**SS15:** Eh hh boots ((pointing with his finger a pair of Mexican boots in the poster)) [*sic*]

*(MT01\_G801\_MX\_07-09-2016)*

There were quite a number of important commonalities in terms of language learners’ use of facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues when they performed the subsequent tasks. Most of the time, the students deliberately used hand gestures and the substitution of words by referring to visual aids to supports their insights. The following extracts provide some evidence to illustrate the previously mentioned issue.

*Excerpt 41.*

**SS7:** Let me show you (.) a Mexican modern home at Christmas. You can see a Christmas tree ((While pointing the elements in the house with the finger)). [sic]

(TRMT2\_G801\_L&B\_18102016)

*Excerpt 42.*

**SS15:** Thank you very much Esteban. Ehhh and from Japan Karen Guzman ahhh with is Kamikatsu project ehh they are...((each student said their name, while she points out each one of them)) [sic]

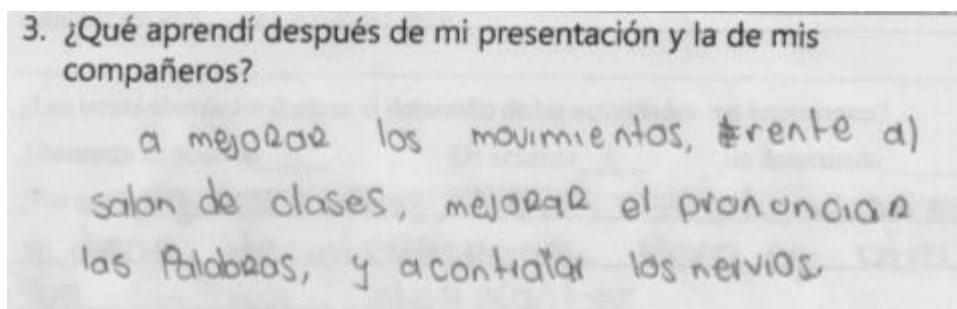
(TRMT03\_G901\_03282017)

*Excerpt 43.*

**SS20:** Estoy de acuerdo con ella ((while putting her hand on the shoulder of her classmate)) ya que la creencia de la family no se pierde, I like the celebration. [sic]

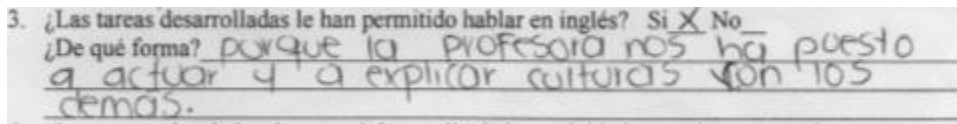
(TRMT4\_G901\_17032017)

A relevant aspect of learning how to express or relate information in L2 is the development of adequate linguistic and nonlinguistic clues to achieve that goal. The learners need to find ways of expressing their meaning (Hadfield and Hadfield, 2012). Seemingly, the participants gave account of the relation between oriented movements to reinforce and clarify oral messages. This is evidenced in a student journal, where a student mentioned the importance to join verbal utterances with natural movements when speaking in the target language.



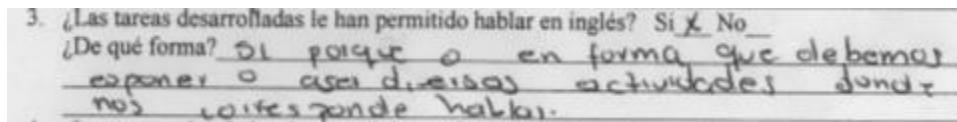
(SJMT1\_801\_LA\_07\_09\_2016.jpg)

What is more, other participants also remark the role of nonverbal clues when performing the oral tasks. The following are the excerpts which support the previous statements.



3. ¿Las tareas desarrolladas le han permitido hablar en inglés? Si  No   
 ¿De qué forma? porque la profesora nos ha puesto a actuar y a explicar culturas con los demás.

(SQMT1\_G801\_S3\_12\_09\_2016)



3. ¿Las tareas desarrolladas le han permitido hablar en inglés? Si  No   
 ¿De qué forma? Si porque o en forma que debemos exponer o así de esas actividades donde nos corresponde hablar.

(SQMT1\_G801\_S4\_12\_09\_2016)

However, in this opportunity the scope of this microskill was not widely developed, a small group of learners raised awareness of the nonverbal factors which contribute to convey messages during an oral presentation. The majority of the learners limited the potential of this only to occasional movements without a target aim.

***Learners' reactions towards identities and cultural diversity.*** This first category refers to language learners initial perceptions when they were exposed to cultural diversity throughout the four interventions. Those learners' perceptions were framed by the topics, concepts, beliefs and cultural representations from foreign cultures registered in the transcripts and teacher-observer field notes.

In this sense, we could evidence that the majority of learners' opinions and comments related to unknown facts were judgmental at the beginning. Only few of them could interpret and react in a more sensitive way. As suggested by Belmonte and Fernández (2013) "language learners have positive and negative reactions to culture shock" (p. 200). This attitude was also evidenced by the

teacher observer through students' reflective journals. The following fragment is part of a debate exhibited during the pre-tasks stage:

*O: When the picture was showed to them, they were surprised about the way of dressing; most of them opened their eyes and mouths and looked each other when they looked the man outfit. [sic]*

*(FNPT5, 25-09- 2016)*

Similarly, this set of data reveals situations regarding students' reactions to cultural diversity.

*Excerpt 44.*

**SS4:** Excuse me for interrupt you....and he is wearing an....skirt. elegant, beautiful...mmmmmm...terrible...skirt

**SS9:** and terrific light green shirt...short...

*Some other groups participated and gave their descriptions.*

**T:** ¿Qué opinan de la parte cultural?

*All of them said: horrible!!!*

**T:** Para nosotros pueden ser horrible, pero es el traje tradicional de los guerreros de escocia, así va la gente a las fiesta, a la guerra. Los hombres no van el pantalón van así.

**SS3:** profe ese es el suit de ellos.

**SS9:** es como el smoking de ellos.

**T:** Supongamos que Xiomara hace una fiesta...y entonces llego un escoces a este salón y ella lo invita a la fiesta, él por su cultura se va a presentar así a la fiesta. ¿Ustedes que piensan si él llega así?

**SS15:** No muy feo.

**SS13:** Se voltio, es gay!!.

**SS20:** Hasta el peinado es de hombre.

**SS16:** Ese como que lo peinan a calbazos.

**SS3:** ...is a terrific suit.

**SS10:** In my opinions es muy feo, es terrible.

**SS7:** es que él ya está enseñado a usarlo, por eso para él es normal.

**T:** es su cultura.

**SS4:** es normal. [sic]

*(TRPT 5\_G801\_25-09- 2016)*

The students in the previous example interchanged both L1 and L2 to compare conceptions from C1 (own culture) to C2 (target culture), “**SS3:** profe ese es el suit de ellos.” State stereotypes relating to C2 “**SS13:** Se voltio, es gay!.” and interpret beliefs and values identifying components of other cultural perspectives more than his/her personal worldview. “**SS7:** es que él ya está enseñado a usarlo, por eso para él es normal.”

This intercultural exposure situation refers to the implicit connection between language and culture. Even when students tried to use the language to describe something, their ideological prejudices were present all the time. The major percentage of learners’ participation denotes a deliberate judgment about the clothing and traditional ways of life of foreign cultures; most of them expressed their opinions in a disrespectful or intolerant way. Those attitudes also were presented in another opportunity in the following segment:

*Excerpt 45.*

**SS6:** África

**T:** Yes, from Africa. This is a typical African outfit and what you think about the way how they dress? Y si en este salón tuviéramos la oportunidad de que llegara una Africana y viniera a clase, por ejemplo el día que hacemos el jean day, y ella viniera así tal cual, ustedes ¿qué le dirían?

**SS13:** Que viene a vender cocadas. [sic]

*(TRPT6\_G801\_29-09- 2016)*

In the second task the learners’ reactions were related to Christmas celebration around the world. Here, they showed awareness about the factors immersed in the different ways people

from foreign cultures practice celebrations similar to their own. In addition, they analyzed how economic factors are also part of these social encounters. Below are some students' artifacts that illustrate the previously mentioned detail.

1. Do you believe in Santa Claus? Yes \_\_\_ No

2. Why do we integrate Santa Claus in our way to celebrate Christmas?  
 Because the stores introduce the santa claus for win more money.

(QSMT2\_801\_GROUP2\_10202016)

**E. Star**

1. Do you put a star on the top of your Christmas tree? Yes   
 No \_\_\_

2. What is the meaning of a star on the top of the Christmas tree?  
 Because it's a tribute for the Belen star  
 Also is a symbol for the messian coming our here

(QSMT2\_801\_GROUP2\_10202016)

Although, every task was framed to include the development of the speaking skill together with the cultural topic, in the third task, this code did not have significant evidence. However, in the last task, more often than not, language learners reacted in a more open-minded, respectful and tolerant way towards identities and cultural diversity than in previous sessions. The students' reactions were documented in the following questionnaire:

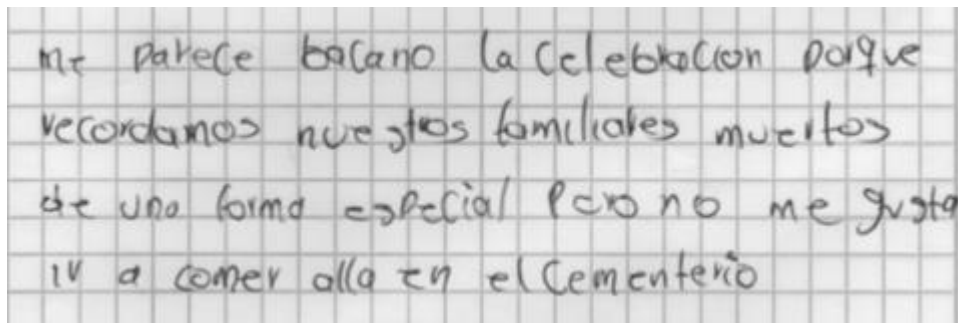
Es bueno saber de otras culturas tener mas conocimiento me parecieron muy cheveros porque es nuevo saber sobre algo que no es comun.

(SJMT4\_G901\_LB\_25042017.jpeg.jpeg - 110:3)

Their reactions also reveal an empowerment of learners' own religious traditions and their influence in the way of address certain celebrations.

Some of the students' comments reviewed here suggest that they are in the process of developing favorably "sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture" (CEF, 2002, p. 2)

This goes in accordance with what a learner mentioned in his journal.



(SJMT4\_G901\_JO\_25042017)

A feature that stands out here is the fact that students made adaptations on how to react when were exposed to intercultural diversity. They recognized that traditions came from the "way of life of a group of people...associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world and a set within specific social contexts" (Moran's., 2001. p. 24). Finally, this finding suggests the group of learners were more respectful and tolerant when expressing their opinions about other cultures.

***Students' attitude towards intercultural exposure.*** In this opportunity it was evident a new component, the change of attitude by a few learners, who showed an ability to put themselves in someone else's situation with regard to cultural traditions that have value for those people. Such is exemplified in the following fragment:

*Excerpt 44.*

**SS3:** Se respeta pero pues osea no se comparte.

**SS9:** Se respeta pero no se comparte la idea de vestirse así.

**Teacher:** ¿Y cómo hago yo para respetar pero no compartir la idea de vestirse así?



**SS9:** Pues nooo, normal se trata como una persona porque primero es una persona normal, simplemente heee la respetaría no la criticaría pero yo no lo usaría.

**SS16:** Es igual que cuando pues alguien se viste diferente a los demás, pues si no le gusta cómo se visten ellos pues no critiquen. [sic]

*(TRPT 6\_G801\_29-09- 2016)*

*O: At the end of the class session, all learners, even those who never participate in the class or develop common exercises started to share with their peers personal experiences in which they have used or seen someone else wearing different kind of clothing.” [sic]*

*(FNPT 6, 29-09- 2016)*

Working and talking about cultural topics contribute in a certain way that learners develop their Intercultural Competence because they are enrolled in a process of reflection, and self-evaluation. Students have a less self-centered perspective of their own culture and others, contributing to build the diverse learners' identities, because “requires people to revise their social identity, to reconsider the ideas they have held about out-groups, to reconsider their position towards these out-groups since they now themselves become members of the out-group” (Sercu, et al., 2005, p. 2).

During the subsequent task, the learners' participation was related to a set of important attitudes regarding the intercultural exposure. When they were immersed in research and asked to state a position about intercultural content students were positive, showed curiosity, commitment, and the most important one, an active participation in the different tasks. However, they had difficulties in the L2 when they performed the initial tasks. The following field notes illustrate the perception of the teacher observer in the second task.

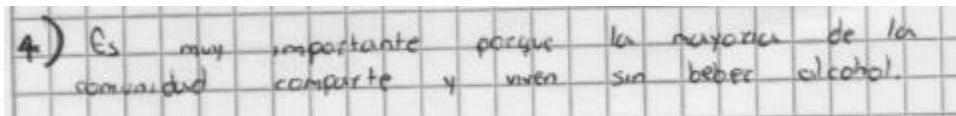
*O: The students made detailed houses at Christmas depending on the different countries, some of them having real fairy lights and interesting representative elements in their*

*models. In terms of cultural aspects, they provided superficial facts because they only mentioned general information. [sic]*

(FNMT2\_G801\_10202016)

In the final task, the students' growth in positive attitudes was evident. In the first excerpt, a student, during the Main Task 4, reacted positively and stated his willingness to be part of a foreign celebration. He was being respectful of their traditions and also showed his curiosity to learn about their traditions when he said, "Mmm participar and activities of the death and hacer lo mismo."

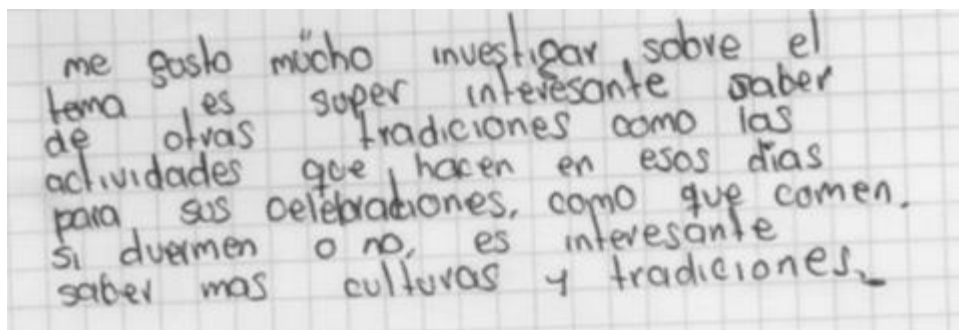
The following includes several examples of learners' perceptions of their own attitude in the last task development. These reveal that the students understand the importance of knowing how other people have the same celebrations, make decisions, and share both commonalities and differences.



4) Es muy importante porque la mayoría de la comunidad comparte y viven sin beber alcohol.

(SJMT4\_G901\_AFH\_25042017)

Finally, in these reflections, students note the importance of fostering research in the classroom.



me gusta mucho investigar sobre el tema es super interesante saber de otras tradiciones como las actividades que hacen en esos días para sus celebraciones, como que comen si duermen o no, es interesante saber mas culturas y tradiciones.

(SJMT4\_G901\_LA\_25042017)

Having described and exemplified the relevant features embraced by the learners' attitudes towards intercultural exposure, it is worthy to mention that most of the time, the gaps that language learners presented in relation to acceptance and value of the others came from the lack of activities oriented to achieve those educational goals. When they were exposed to these situations they made little adjustments in terms of their way of addressing the topics and presented a more comprehensible point of view.

*Learners' correlation upon their own and foreign culture.* This subcategory is related to students' ability to make comparisons between their native culture and foreign ones. And contribute to the development of IC from the base of respectfulness and tolerance.

After exposing students to unfamiliar situations, they should be able to establish the connections between cultures, especially their own in relation to the others. At the end of the first cycle, the comments of some students were superficial about relevant features for some cultures, because they experienced difficulties on using the language. However, they opted to use their native language, L1. The following set of data supports the aforementioned issues:

*Excerpt 46.*

**T:** Yes, yes but, for us it's very very complicated, because if you look at yourself all of the girls wear the same uniform and all of the guys wear the same uniform. Then, what do you think about the idea to unify people way of dressing?

**SS1:** because in the school heeee (0.5) (.) the different cloth.

**T:** Yes that, that is my question you have to wear a uniform, the same uniform, and then you are dressed like in a dynasty in the high school. My question it's why is important a uniform?

**SS1:** In my opinion terrible.

**T:** It's terrible, that you have to wear uniform! Why? Why is it the reason?

**SS1:** is...is...the person heeee in the uniform is (.) se ven iguales. [sic]

*(TRMT1\_G801\_LD\_07-09-2016)*

Incorporating cultural content in foreign language teaching supports the introduction of learners "to new meaning systems and their associated symbols, to provide them with the opportunity to acquire new competences and to allow them to reflect upon their own culture and cultural competence" (Byram, 1998, p. 44). In consequence, the learners were interested in the recognition of diversity and were willing to explore different perspectives in regards to the topic exposed.

Generally, the students' perceptions about the importance of articulating foreign language learning and culture were positive. Some opinions are related to the fact that culture implies conversation about external backgrounds and also personal experiences.

In chapter four we included the exploration and analysis of the data and the findings related to the learners development of microskills of oral communication, the role of learning the L2, and the perceptions of learners about the introduction of cultural content for learning a foreign language.

In the following chapter the conclusions derived from the process and pedagogical implications in the development of communicative competence in English for the high school group studied are presented.

## Chapter V

### Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

#### Conclusions

In this chapter, the conclusions derived from the process of analysis of the data gathered from the pedagogical interventions will be analyzed. These conclusions aim at answering the questions “What microskills of oral communication are developed when implementing culture-based tasks with eighth graders in a public school?” and “What is the students’ perception towards the articulation of cultural content in the foreign language process?”

Oral communication was examined in terms of microskills development. The data analysis suggests that students were resourceful to communicate their ideas using L2. In addition, the nervousness, deficiency of training in this type of task, and unfamiliarity with the vocabulary were limitations for learners when encouraging oral tasks in the initial stages. Building on this idea, we can affirm that oral tasks allowed students to have an initial contact with the language and produce short phrases. Although students continued to have difficulties building complete phrases, they were more motivated in looking for a way to communicate their opinions. In the light of the evidence, it was noticed that although the majority of the students did not produce complete and well-structured messages, they showed a significant improvement in the production of reduced forms and phrases. In this sense, Brown (2000) draws as a goal of communication “the demonstration of an ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through interactive discourse with other speakers of the language” (p. 267).

With regard to the learners’ production of chunks of language, it was possible to document and analyze episodes to confirm that speaking is a process of constructing meaning (Burns and Joyce., 1997) from the continual reflection on our own oral communication. In addition, the data

exhibited “the idea of collocation...a very powerful one in helping learners maximize the value of the language to which they are exposed, but they need help in identifying the powerful and useful partnerships in a text” (Lewis, 2008., p. 30). All of this denotes the usefulness of cultural-based tasks to help learners expand their language knowledge and culture of the L2. In support of this analysis, Lewis (2008) argues that “it is more efficient to learn the whole and break it into parts, than to learn the parts and have to learn the whole as an extra arbitrary item” (p. 32). Thus, the interaction of chunks of language such as words, collocations and expressions represent a meaningful linguistic and pragmatic resource for learners’ development of oral communication skills.

The study also focused on the learners’ production of fluent speech at different rates of delivery. Throughout the development of the culture-based tasks, the language learners produced mostly short phrases in a fluent way, and had more difficulties expressing complex and longer phrases. At the beginning, it was common for learners to use long periods of silence and prolonged fillers even in short sentences. However, in the last two tasks, a group of learners tended to use hesitations and short fillers rather than long silences to improve, in a significant way, the rate of delivery of the messages.

Another relevant fact in relation to fluency was the learners’ reduction of L1 used. On the basis of the data gathered, it is evident that the majority of the learners reduced L1 use during the oral task as they only pronounced a few words in Spanish to overcome their gaps in vocabulary. The findings of this study further suggest that the chunks of language incorporated by the learners were closely related to fluency. When the learners recognized a set of linguistic and pragmatic chunks, they used them to convey messages orally, improving the rate of delivery of that message.

The aforementioned excerpts and quotes give strong evidence of the role played by oral tasks in allowing learners to incorporate and extend immediate use of the language. Bailey (2004) highlights that “in language lessons- especially at the beginning...they (learners) cannot develop fluency if the teacher is constantly interrupting them to correct their oral errors” (p. 55). Considering this, the cultural-based tasks helped students to build their own set of words and expressions shaped from the previous information. However, it is worthy to mention that although not all the students showed a high improvement related to fluency because they continued demonstrating difficulties when speaking in English, the learners at different levels used the language quickly and were more confident.

The study also looked at the use of facial features, kinesics, body language, and other nonverbal cues along with verbal language to convey messages. The majority of the learners limited the potential of linking linguistic resources and also nonlinguistic clues to achieve communicative goals. However, the learners need to find ways of expressing their meaning (Hadfield and Hadfield., 2012); however, in this opportunity the scope of this microskill was not widely developed.

In regards to the second category, learners` perceptions towards EFL by culture-based tasks, evidence demonstrates that students made adaptations of how to react when were exposed to intercultural diversity. Students recognized that traditions came from the “way of life of a group of people associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world and a set within specific social contexts” (Moran`s., 2001. p. 24). Finally, findings suggest that the group of learners were more respectful and tolerant when expressing their opinions about other cultures and diversity. It is worthy to mention that, most of the time, the gaps and difficulties that language learners present, in relation to acceptance and value of the others, came from the lack of meaningful situations and challenging activities proposed by teachers to achieve

the educational goals. As was evident in this research, when students were exposed to these situations, they made little adjustments in terms of their way of addressing the topics and presented a more comprehensible point of view.

Finally, the language learners made comparisons taking into account symbols, elements, and characteristics or particularities regarding to religious festivals from their own perspective and an unfamiliar one. However, there was not a strong evidence of a deeper understanding of what implies making decisions from religious and traditional sides.

To sum up, students' development of microskills of oral communication was minor than expected, due to different circumstances such as students' low English level and short time a week dedicated to the English subject. However students' motivation towards learning aspects from other cultures allowed them to improve considerably that low English level and find a way to communicate orally their findings and thinking about those.

More studies will be needed to establish the influence of culture not only in the perception of students and improvement of oral communication, but also in the development of other language skills.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

Students at Institución Educativa Guacacallo had a low English level, particularly when referring to oral communication. They felt afraid of participating using a second language, hence the teacher preferred to implement different exercises focused on grammar-translation.

The task-based learning is an interesting method to work with different ages and language levels, since it permits the development of different activities, establishing goals according to the possibilities given by the context.



Task-based approach also promotes the teamwork activities, which allow students to share ideas, participate actively and collaborate each other with the planning and performing of the task.

With the implementation of culture-based tasks, the students not only increased their confidence in themselves but they learned from others and gained awareness about the intercultural differences among people from different countries.

When planning our classes, one of the most relevant aspects is to consider students' interests and needs, our students showed enjoyment working with the proposed topics, they were interested in searching more information about other cultures and comparing them with their own, and it allowed them unconsciously to develop oral microskills.

Finally, we would like to point out that the culture-based tasks are a good opportunity for teachers to implement in their classrooms, not only to develop oral communication, but also to work the other language skills meaningfully.

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## Appendix A

### Sample of Informed Consent Letter for Parents

#### CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PADRES O ACUDIENTES DE ESTUDIANTES

Institución Educativa: \_\_\_\_\_ Código DANE: \_\_\_\_\_

Municipio: \_\_\_\_\_

Yo \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, yo \_\_\_\_\_ o

yo \_\_\_\_\_, mayor de edad,

madre,  padre,  acudiente o  representante legal del estudiante

\_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_ años de edad, he

(hemos) sido informado(s) acerca del proyecto de investigación “An Inquiry about Oral Communication Development through Culture-Based Tasks” el cual se requiere para que la docente de mi hijo(a) realice la aplicación de la intervención pedagógica sobre el desarrollo de la producción oral a través de tareas basadas en contenido cultural.

Luego de haber sido informado(s) sobre las condiciones de la participación de mi (nuestro) hijo(a), resuelto todas las inquietudes y comprendido en su totalidad la información sobre esta actividad, entiendo (entendemos) que:

- La participación de mi (nuestro) hijo(a) en este proyecto o los resultados obtenidos por el docente no tendrán repercusiones o consecuencias en sus actividades escolares, evaluaciones o calificaciones en el curso.
- La participación de mi (nuestro) hijo(a) no generará ningún gasto, ni recibiremos remuneración alguna por su participación.
- No habrá ninguna sanción para mí (nuestro) hijo(a) en caso de que no autoricemos su participación.
- La identidad de mi (nuestro) hijo(a) no será publicada y las imágenes y sonidos registrados durante la implementación se utilizarán únicamente para los propósitos de la investigación.

Atendiendo a la normatividad vigente sobre consentimientos informados, y de forma consciente y voluntaria  DOY (DAMOS) EL CONSENTIMIENTO  NO DOY (DAMOS) EL CONSENTIMIENTO para la participación de mi (nuestro) hijo (a) en la implementación y práctica educativa del docente en las instalaciones de la Institución Educativa donde estudia.

Lugar y Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

FIRMA MADRE CC/CE: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRMA PADRE CC/CE: \_\_\_\_\_

FIRMA ACUDIENTE O REPRESENTANTE LEGAL CC/CE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B****Need Analysis Survey**

Estimado estudiante.

El siguiente instrumento de comunicación, pretende recoger información estrictamente académica, relacionada con las prácticas desarrolladas en la clase de inglés en pro del desarrollo de habilidades comunicativas en ese idioma. La presente encuesta es de carácter confidencial y de uso exclusivo del grupo de investigación. Por favor lea detenidamente y marque su respuesta donde corresponda.

1. ¿Le gusta hablar en inglés?

- a. Si
- b. No

¿Por qué?

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2. Considera que hablar en inglés es:

- a. Muy fácil
- b. Fácil
- c. No muy fácil no muy difícil
- d. Difícil
- e. Muy difícil

3. ¿Cómo se siente cuando tiene la oportunidad de hablar en inglés:

- a. Muy cómodo y seguro
- b. Cómodo
- c. No muy cómodo
- d. Incomodo

4. ¿Con que frecuencia habla en inglés en el salón de clases?

- a. Todo el tiempo
- b. La mayoría del tiempo
- c. Algunas veces
- d. Casi nunca
- e. Nunca

5. Si su respuesta anterior fue *algunas veces, nunca o casi nunca* ¿Por qué cree que sucede esta situación?





h.) Otro ¿cuál?: \_\_\_\_\_

¡GRACIAS POR LA ATENCIÓN PRESTADA!

**Appendix C**  
**Sample of class observation**

Date: Monday, February 8 <sup>th</sup> 2016.	Start time: 9:35 am	Finish time: 10:30 am
Grade: 801	Goal: To observe an English class and document the activities developed throughout it.	
<b>FIELD DIARY 1</b>		
A posteriori	IN SITU	
	<p>Topic: Jobs.</p> <p>Grammar: Like/love +ing.</p> <p>Firstly, the teacher arrived classroom and called the list while learners organized their chairs around the room.</p> <p>Secondly, the teacher drew a line on the board and wrote indoor on the left and outdoors on the right. Also, she put 7 pictures on the floor, those picks was about different jobs such as police officer, mechanic, chef, surgeon, firefighter, builder and, post woman. (Some learners started to relate the job and their translation in English)</p> <p>The teacher asked the students for volunteers and was some hands raised. So, she selected a guy for this exercise, then she read the following description to learner choose the correct picture:</p> <p>“I wear a black hat, a black jacket and black trousers. I need a radio to talk to other officers. What’s my job”</p> <p>When the teacher ended to read, the student was confused, then she said them that they can use the next expressions when they need something. “Could you repeat it? Please. I do not understand, could you repeat?” Some students repeated those expression several times. But they</p> <p>She repeated the description again, and the student took the police officer pic, then, he received a piece of tape and had to decide the correct location to develop that job. The gay stuck it on the right. When teacher asked him about how he guessed the job, the student answer “por el color, yo escuche black y era el unico vestido de negro”</p> <p>Sometimes learners forgot the expression and said “¿cómo? !hay profe, hable en español; repeat”</p> <p>The game continued until all pictures were stuck on the board, and the learners wrote the jobs in English over each picture. Afterward, students drew the picks on their notebooks.</p>	

## Appendix D

### Document revision

<b>Goal:</b> to describe the structure of English syllabus for students in eighth grade form IEM Guacacallo.	
<b>Document:</b> English syllabus for eighth grade.	
Facts	Observations
Organization	The English syllabus is organized according to three main categories named: achievement, achievement criteria and content.
Aims	<p>-Positive aspects: There are main goals established for the end of the term. There is a list of objectives to cover linguistic, procedural and behavioral aspects</p> <p>-Aspects to improve: The four main goals are wide to be attained in a short period of time in the setting described.</p> <p>The objectives proposed are broadening. Also, do not illustrate a sequence to achieve the main goals and do not provide a clear way to assess the learner's outcomes.</p>
Content	<p>-Positive aspects: There is a list of content in which is evident the language description in terms of structural approach. The language points are established in terms of some grammatical structures and vocabulary. It has a list of learners' outcomes called evidences.</p> <p>-Aspects to improve: The list of grammatical structures in the content is too long and doesn't provide an attainable path. In the content is not listed any micro-skill or the materials used to achieve the aims. The content is organized around a particular language structures, however there is a mismatch between content and objectives. The evidences proposed are too abroad and do not match in a supportive way the objectives. The content sequence does not provide an organized path to guide the process.</p>

**Appendix E****Field notes.**

Main-Task 2	
<b>OBJECTIVE:</b> To recognize and exchange information about the different ways how people celebrate Christmas around the world in a fair.	Date: October 20, 2016
OBSERVER APPRECIATIONS	
<p>-The students made a really detailed scale model houses at Christmas depending on the different countries, some of them have real lights and interesting representative elements in their works.</p> <p>-The groups gave a good first impression because the first part of the exposition was well built, they introduced the members in their teams and explained some of the main characteristics of the cultural aspects of the country for example the name of the country and where is located.</p> <p>-During the description of the house´ elements the majority of students made lot of errors with the order of adjectives.</p> <p>-They looked confuse when the teacher made questions during their intervention, they did not understand the questions at once, and they also did not ask for clarification, the teacher waited some seconds and repeated the question until a student attempted to answer it, however not always they gave a proper answer.</p> <p>-In terms of cultural aspects, they provided superficial facts because only mentioned general information.</p>	

## Appendix F

## Sample of students' diaries or students journals

Students' journal (3)	
Name: Ana Jameth Cortes	Date: September 7, 2016
<p>1. ¿Cuál fue mi papel en el desarrollo de la tarea 1 <b>Cultural diversity through clothing</b>? Pues fui la que hizo el vestido de la muñeca y pues entre todos aportamos ideas y soy la que voy a presentar ante mis compañeros</p>	
<p>2. ¿Cómo me sentí antes, durante y después la poster session? Pues me sentí muy bien pero al momento de presentar nos estaba súper nerviosa estaba súper fría y tras de eso se me olvidó todo pero creo que salimos bien nos falta opiniones pero bien me sentí muy bien con esta experiencia</p>	
<p>3. ¿Qué aprendí después de mi presentación y la de mis compañeros? Pues que sinceramente pararse al frente de tanta gente y que lo estén mirando a uno y que te salga a uno alguna sinceramente entiendo a la profesora cuando se enoja por que no le ponemos cuidado es muy difícil estar aya parado pero bien me sentí bien</p>	

## Appendix G

## Questionnaires.

Universidad Surcolombiana  
 Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés  
 Cuestionario 3 dirigido a estudiantes

**Objetivo:** conocer las impresiones y sugerencias de los estudiantes sobre el proyecto realizado cuyo propósito es desarrollar la habilidad de hablar en inglés por medio de tareas enfocadas en aspectos culturales.

**Instrucciones:** Apreciado estudiante, por favor lea y responda cada una de las siguientes preguntas.

1. ¿Cómo le han parecido las últimas sesiones de clases de inglés?  
 Interesantes  Fáciles \_\_\_\_\_ Dificiles  Aburridoras \_\_\_\_\_  
 ¿Por qué? he aprendido hablar ingles y pues la profesora nos da tema divertidos y nos pone a exponer en ingles y es muy divertido
2. ¿Siente que su aprendizaje de inglés se ha visto beneficiado con la implementación de las tareas propuestas?  
 Altamente de acuerdo  De acuerdo \_\_\_\_\_ En desacuerdo \_\_\_\_\_  
 ¿De qué forma? si porque nos ponen hablar ingles y la profe nos enseña muchas palabras que no sabemos y nos hace muchas actividades para hablar ingles.
3. ¿Las tareas desarrolladas sobre los proyectos medio ambientales de otros países y comunidades le han permitido hablar en inglés? Sí  No \_\_\_\_\_  
 ¿De qué forma? si porque toca improvisar y sacar palabras y con esas actividades aprendemos mucho el idioma ingles
4. ¿Los temas abordados durante el desarrollo de las actividades son interesantes?  
 Altamente de acuerdo  De acuerdo \_\_\_\_\_ En desacuerdo \_\_\_\_\_  
 ¿Por qué? descubrimos cosas y países y aprendemos las culturas, aprendemos cosas no vistas y desarrollamos el idioma ingles
5. ¿Qué le gustaría que continuara o cambiara de acuerdo a las actividades desarrolladas?  
 Continue: pues las exposiciones que nos hace hablar ingles, y pues que la profe siga siendo mas actividades  
 Cambie: que salgamos hacer mas actividades a diferentes países