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Reinforcing Ninth Graders' Oral Production through Multiliteracies Approach

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Abstract

This action research project was meant for implementing the Multiliteracies Approach in order to reinforce ninth-grade students' oral production in a public institution in El Carmen de Viboral. This research involved the participation of thirty-seven ninth grade students. The data collection methods used in this study were teacher's journal, audio-recordings, students' products and a focus group interview. After the data analysis, results showed that students reinforced their oral production performance by means of the activities implemented from the four components of the Multiliteracies Approach: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, transformed practice.

Key words: *Multiliteracies Approach, situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, transformed practice, oral production*

Requirement Page

This action research project is submitted as a requirement of the Bachelor of Education in Teaching Foreign Languages (English-French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, in El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia.

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Preface

When I was in high school, I was very attracted to the way certain teachers taught and educated. I was amazed by how someone could be in front of a room with students and share the knowledge they had and be part of the construction of a subject, directly or indirectly, and promote changes. Having these ideas in my mind and heart, I decided to lean towards the challenging world of teaching. This trip started at Universidad de Antioquia. Day after day, I kept learning many things that let me understand that teaching languages is not only tied to grammar and pronunciation features but also to culture, to a new world. I also understood that in most public schools, there is a great gap because students neither understand and / or produce meaning and language nor do they question what they receive. Regarding this gap, I decided to implement the Multiliteracies Approach which would help students to work on oral language production by means of the construction and deconstruction of meaning.

Table of Contents

Context

This section comprehends information about the characteristics of the institution, features of the syllabus for the English course, the resources of the classroom, the qualities and perceptions of English language of the students and the cooperating teacher.

The study was carried out at the public rural educational institution Santa María located in El Carmen de Viboral, Antioquia. The institution has 4 other rural centers: La Milagrosa, El Cerro, La Sonadora and El Quirama. It offers a holistic education at preschool, basic middle and high school levels. Santa María's institutional vision is to be one of the best mid-level educational options in eastern Antioquia whose graduates will effectively contribute to the construction of a new society that generates peace and sustainable integral development for the region. The mission of the institution is to educate children and young people in a peaceful environment and contribute to the construction of a more responsible, fair, ethical and equitable society for all (Santa María school, n.d.).

The institution follows the Suggested English Curriculum Structure and the Basic Learning Rights (DBA for their acronym in Spanish) that define basic knowledge and skills in language and math that students from 6th to 11th grade of the Colombian education system should acquire. This is the most recent proposal made by the Ministry of Education. The English course where I conducted this study does not follow a specific methodology but the institution recommends to plan the classes taking into account the holistic method (know, do and be) (Santa María school, n.d.).

Concerning the resources that the institution provides to develop an English class, the classroom where I conducted my study had a chalkboard, a big T.V with a CPU that was available for teachers and students. The classroom was quite bright since on the left side there was a door and several large windows with bars and opaque glass that prevented distractions from the outside. Although the classroom was large, activities that involved movements could not take place due to the number of students. There were also some English posters with commands, rules and expressions that students could use like "can I go to the bathroom?", "I don't understand" and " keep the classroom clean and tidy". Concerning the organization of the classroom, it was divided into a semicircle structure that allowed the teacher a free movement in the room and a total vision of the students.

The class was composed of 38 ninth-grade students, 21 girls and 17 boys who belonged to low and middle socioeconomic strata. Their ages ranged from 14 to 16. Most of them lived in rural areas in El Carmen de Viboral and La Ceja. Concerning the English exposure, they received three hours of English class per week, and their language proficiency level was in the A1 level. Regarding the students' attitudes towards the use of English, although 93 % of the students thought that it was important to study English because it was a big opportunity to achieve many goals, 85% of them did not like it because they did not feel engaged (Survey, February 14th, 2020).

At the time of the study, the cooperating teacher (CT) held a bachelor's degree in Humanities Spanish-English education from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana and she had a

specialization in Bilingual Education from Universidad Única de Bogotá. She also had a master's

degree in Processes of Learning and Teaching of Second Languages from Universidad Pontificia

Bolivariana. Concerning her teaching experience, she had been teaching for 14 years, 11 of them

at this institution. She stated that English is a fundamental tool and an opportunity to access

professional and academic life. Moreover, everytime she prepared a class, she looked for

activities that could make the class more dynamic and at the same time, allow students to have

fun and acquire new knowledge so that they would not see English as a barrier.

Statement of the Problem

As Harmer (2007) stated, through oral production, students have the opportunity to

experiment with the target language and they are encouraged to express meaning by producing

oral utterances. For instance, after one and a half months observing, I identified that these

ninth-grade students did not have enough opportunities to produce orally in the English class.

Due to this lack of chances to produce language, students were not acquiring and practicing

language basic structures to communicate in the target language. Moreover, students did not

have opportunities to express their ideas and opinions, thus neglecting a space to interchange

meaning.

It was evident that students did not have opportunities to acquire and practice oral

language forms to communicate in English. During the observations, I noticed that the classes

were more focused on receptive skills such as reading and listening and writing was the

productive skill fostered; while speaking was the least practiced language competence (Student-teacher journal, August 1st, 6th, 8th, 20th, September 3rd, 2019). For instance, there were six activities focused on reading and writing and only one oral exercise performed by the students. In this exercise, students read what they had done in a written task evidencing that one oral production activity is not enough to practice language. Thus, as Harmer (2007) stated learners need to be exposed to language as much as possible and take as many opportunities as possible to produce language.

In addition to this lack of students' chances to acquire and practice language forms, students did not have spaces to express their ideas and opinions, thus overlooking an authentic space to exchange meaning. In the classes I observed, students' answers were limited to one specific reading exercise in which they had to say the explicit information about it and explain some grammatical issues such as the conjugation of verbs (Student-teacher journal, August 27th, September 3rd, 2019). Thus, if a student had wanted to express an opinion, idea or concern about the topic they were studying, they would not have had the opportunity to do it. As a result, the students were not urged to share their own insights and opinions but to read aloud what they had to present. According to Becerra and McNulty (2010), it is important that students assume a more active role in class sharing their ideas, experiences and knowledge about both languages and class topics by questioning them.

Taking into account this lack of spaces for oral production, I decided to implement the Multiliteracies Approach in my classes. This approach allows students to support their "language

development by providing them with authentic, communicative purposes for learning and
practicing language" (Rajendram, 2015, p.10). Multiliteracies approach is an integration of
multimodal forms of expression through the exploration of the different modes of
communication. In this sense, I consider that it is important to use this approach as a possible
solution because students are in constant contact with the diverse modes of communication and
they can practice language through different sources; therefore, they become consumers of
meaning as well as producers of it (The New London Group, 1996).

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this action research was to investigate the effects that the Multiliteracies
Approach may have on reinforcing ninth-graders' oral production. In this section, I present the
main concepts that frame this action research project, namely Multiliteracies Approach and its
four pedagogical principles: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed
practice, then I define the concept of oral production as well.

Multiliteracies Approach (MA)

The term Multiliteracies is a pedagogical approach that was developed by The New
London Group (henceforth NLG) in 1994. This group was composed of ten different researchers
and educators. NLG argues that there is an increasing multiplicity of communication channels
and an integration of significant modes of meaning-making where the textual is also connected to
the visual, the audio, the spatial, the gestural and so on (The New London Group, 1996). This

evolving society now requires that we interact effectively using multiple channels to share

meaning. It is evident that nowadays, we communicate through different media that are

influencing the way we express ourselves as is the case of social networks. As the days go by,

the ways of understanding and communicating are changing and because of this, we must adapt

to a society of constant changes. Boche (2014) remarks that Multiliteracies acknowledge both the

increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in the new globalized society and the new variety of

text forms from multiple communicative technologies.

These changes in the global context have considerable repercussions on the goals of

literacy education. The New London Group (1996) argues that "to be relevant, learning

processes need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different subjectivities,

interests, intentions, commitments, and purposes that students bring to learning" (p. 18). As a

consequence, teachers need to evaluate and reevaluate the knowledge that is in constant change

and be coherent with the multiple and varying discourses; teachers are seen as designers of

learning processes and environments, "not as bosses dictating what those in their charge should

think and do" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 19). Regarding students' role, Boche (2014)

states that they must see themselves as active participants in these changing practices as learners

who can be active designers and makers of meaning. With this view, both participants of this

action research project, the students and the teacher, attemped to change those roles that inhibit

the active and critical participation in the teaching and learning processes.

To carry out this action research, it was important to take into account the four pedagogical dimensions of MA proposed by the NLG: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. According to NLG (1996), situated practice refers to the utilization of available meaning-making of the students and the immersion in their experience. That means, students use their backgrounds as a resource to understand and construct meaning. According to Angay-Crowder, Choi, and Yi (2013), this meaning-making is authentic and unique to the students and their contexts, hence they are capable of using it to favor their learning. The second concept, overt instruction, makes reference to the development of the analytic, systematic, and conscious understanding by the learners. Overt instruction does not imply rote memorization or direct drills, but includes an active participation of the teacher to scaffold students' learning activities helping them to gain explicit information (The New London Group, 1996, p. 86).

In spite of the importance of situated practice and overt instruction, these elements are insufficient to help learners to develop critical understanding of language, thus critical framing and transformed practice complement them (Willis & Paesani, 2010). Through critical framing, learners interpret and analyze the social contexts and purposes of particular meanings. In this sense, students step back from what they are studying and critically see learning in relation to their own context. With the final concept, transformed practice, learners transfer, reformulate and redesign the meaning-making practice to different contexts (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013).

Learners are able to remake and integrate diverse realities or discourses in their realities to adjust their purposes.

Concerning the benefits of the Multiliteracies Approach for the development of speaking in the setting where this study took place, the learners were expected to produce different ways of meaning using different modes of communication like discussions and audio-recordings. As previously mentioned (Boche, 2014, p.7), the role of the learners is to be active creators of meaning increasing the multiplicity of communication channels by connecting them with real world experiences. This dynamic process allowed my students to create oral texts from their interpretation and understanding of healthy issues (this theme is one of the proposals of the Suggested English Curriculum). The activities and different modes to guide the students can range from PowerPoint presentations, website construction, oral debating, semantic mapping, critical summaries or comparisons (Mills, 2006) to rewriting a text from a different perspective or elaborating an original text to express additional ideas or intentions (Willis & Paesani, 2010).

Oral Production

According to Burns and Joyce (1997) and Bailey (2005), speaking is an oral skill and interactive procedure in which speakers construct meaning in a process of producing, receiving and sharing information; while producing it, learners must be conscious of the message they are transmitting. Moreover, McDonough and Shaw (2003) state that "speaking involves expressing ideas and opinions, expressing a wish or desire to do something, negotiating or solving problems

or establishing and maintaining social relations" (p. 157). Speaking skill is the oral practice to produce language and every opportunity for speaking in an EFL class should be taken in order to increase the development of oral production.

Concerning the function of speaking skill, Richards (2008) uses a classification of oral production. He describes "talk as interaction, talk as transaction and talk as performance". Regarding the nature of this project, the focus was on talk as performance. Richards (2008) states that this kind of talk is employed to transmit and present information to an audience, as in the events of speeches, class debates, classroom presentations and public announcements. It is often assessed in respect of its effectiveness on the listener. The main features of this kind of talk are a focus on both message and audience, predictable organization and sequencing, importance of both form and accuracy. Taking into account the time to develop this study, students performed an oral class discussion and two individual critical reflections.

Research Question

How may the Multiliteracies Approach reinforce the oral production of a group of ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Santa María in El Carmen de Viboral?

Objectives

General Objective

To analyze how Multiliteracies Approach reinforce ninth-grade students' oral production.

Specific Objectives

- To apply the four pedagogical dimensions of the Multiliteracies Approach as a means to improve the students' oral production.

- To promote speaking activities that connect the students' life with the evolving social and global environment.

- To help students acquire a broad repertoire of skills that will enable them to take advantage of the diverse modes of communication.

Action Plan

For the implementation of this action research project, I planned to develop some strategies for ten weeks following the Multiliteracies Approach and its four pedagogical components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice to reinforce ninth-graders speaking. The actions of the first two weeks would consist in developing a class discussion in which students used the knowledge they already had to express their ideas and to gather baseline data to determine how to follow the process along the implementation. For the next two weeks, students would record an audio to reflect on themselves and their relationship with health issues. In the weeks five, six and seven, the students would work on the analysis and creation of an advertisement to construct and deconstruct the meaning of that specific text and an alternative way to present the new meaning. The last three weeks, the idea is

that the students design an interview to apply in a context different from the school, to put into practice the knowledge they developed during the implementation of the action research project.

The data collection instruments to gather information were the following: a) teacher's journal since it was useful to add and complete information that I could not see with other data collection methods like students' discussions, behaviors and reflections. Additionally, it was beneficial because I could make my reflections that emerged during or after the implementation of the class based on the students' performance; b) audio-recordings were gathered with the objective of following the students' oral performances to compare their performance (at the level of meaning and forms) at the beginning and at the end of this project; c) students' products such as work in class that were collected to complement the audio recording information and analyze the possible changes in the students' process; d) a focus group was conducted, concluding the implementation, to support and contrast the data collected with the students' feelings, thoughts and perceptions towards the whole project.

Development of Actions

In this section, I describe the actions that took place to develop this project. Those actions were based on the four principles of the Multiliteracies Approach: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice.

I designed one three-hour lesson per week. The implementation of the actions lasted 10 weeks, with some drawbacks such as scheduling institutional events on days assigned for the

English class and the appearance of the Covid-19 which spread throughout the world, forcing the population to remain in their homes, in mandatory confinement here in Colombia. This situation changed the means of teaching. Regarding the research project, the time and the way to collect data changed as well. Due to the mandatory quarantine, students went on vacation in the middle of the implementation. Some data then could actually be collected, but others could not. For instance, the interview and the students' last presentation could not be carried out.

The topic chosen to talk about during the different research actions was "healthy lifestyle", which is one of the recommended topics by the Ministry of Education (Equipo Colombia Bilingue, 2016). During the first two weeks, before the confinement, we worked on a [video](#) about health problems. This text was a starting point for the students' hypotheses about its content, its purpose and to think about their lives in terms of a healthy lifestyle. Based on these hypotheses and their previous knowledge about the topic, we conducted a Socratic Seminar in which the students exchanged their insights, reflections and comments about the video we saw in class. The students had one week to prepare their ideas to share them in the seminar. The goal of this seminar was for students to be able to express what they had in mind with the help of their classmates.

During the following two weeks, the students reflected on their own healthy practices. This reflection was audio-recorded in groups of three students. They had to answer five questions in English: *a) In what ways do you try to stay healthy? b) Are you careful about what you eat? c) How much junk food do you eat? d) How easy is it for you to keep fit where you live?*

e) What part of your lifestyle would you change to make it healthier?. Through this activity,

students were able to produce oral language using the knowledge they had at that moment

(situated practice). The students had time to prepare and receive feedback from me as the

teacher. I corrected the recurrent mistakes or difficulties after every activity (overt instruction).

The following two weeks were devoted to analyze, deconstruct and recreate five different

advertisements about health habits ([see here](#)). This activity was developed in groups of three and

four students. At the beginning took place the small group analysis in which they discussed the

message and the purpose of the original advertisements. The students then shared with the whole

class their final reflections about the advertisements concluding that those advertisements were

created to promote misconceptions and unhealthy habits in the community. With this activity, the

students could critically analyze with their classmates the intentions of this type of text (critical

framing). Once they shared those thoughts, they had to redesign the advertisements in order to

promote healthy ideas. At this time, the virus arrived and the mandatory confinement interrupted

the implementation for a long period (five-week vacation). Due to this situation, the way we

were teaching changed drastically; we went from face-to-face classes to remote worksheets. We

had to adapt our research project and pedagogical objectives to those conditions. Then, I

designed worksheets week by week because this was the agreement I had with the cooperating

teacher.

The first two weeks after the students came back from vacation, they redesigned the

advertisements. Some of them could do it in groups and, some others, individually because of the

lack of internet connection and technological resources. Some advertisements were made in PowerPoint, some others on paper (transformed practice). During the last two weeks of the implementation of this project, the students were to do an individual voice recording reflecting on the situation of the pandemic and its effects developing the same initial topic of healthy habits. Some students did not accomplish the last two activities because of the availability of resources; however, I explained that once they had the possibility to do the work, they could present it. Those students' productions were not used as data due to the time they returned their work.

Findings and Interpretations

Throughout the implementation and analysis of the data collection techniques used in this study such as the teacher's journal, students' products, audio recordings and the focus group, I could gather information that helped me understand the impact of the project on an English foreign language class. The information gathered from my journals was analyzed and codified. The process to codify that information was based on Saldaña's (2009), coding it from patterns that emerged during the process and that emerged from theory (a mixture of inductive and deductive approach). Concerning the other three data collection methods, students' protocols, audio recordings and the focus group; these were transcribed and analyzed following the same process based on Saldaña, so as to take the most relevant information that helped me to answer the research question.

The data collected was organized in an Excel document to triangulate the information by contrasting it with theory. After the analysis, four main categories were created from the Multiliteracies Approach theory: a) situated practice, whose result shows that students were able to express complete ideas by using their backgrounds and prior knowledge, b) overt instruction, which reveals that students acquired vocabulary in English and reinforced some features of pronunciation by means of correction, c) critical framing, which evidences that students were able to use complete sentences while critically analyzing their context, and d) transformed practice, which shows that students used advertisements as a means to communicate their ideas. The ideas of the results will be developed in this section in order to give more clarity about them.

Situated Practice

Data revealed how this phase of the approach helped the students to express complete ideas in English based on their background and prior knowledge. Below, I provide further details.

Students were able to express complete ideas about their healthy lifestyle by using their backgrounds and prior knowledge. Data from this study revealed that the use of the students' prior knowledge about a familiar theme helped them to easily express complete ideas in English and make their ideas clear for the receiver of the information, as illustrated in the following excerpts from my journal in which they made predictions considering the

consequences of suffering of obesity and talked about themselves expressing their habits to stay healthy:

> (...) it is easier for them to talk about topics they are familiar with because they feel more comfortable, contextualized and feel that freedom to talk about their insights. (...) their backgrounds, experiences and previous knowledge helped the students to orally express assumptions of the situation of the character involved in the activity (Student-teacher journal, February 14th, 2020).

In this vein, exposing the students to information they are familiar with, made the process a little easier for them of orally producing and expressing ideas that are complete and coherent:

> Lorena: Sometimes I try, I don't feel satisfied with what I eat and besides I don't like salad and vegetables very much. (Voice recording class discussion, April 30th, 2020)
>
> Estefania: During the first week of quarantine, I was sleeping a lot, eating excessively. I was spending more time with my sister and my mother. I played a lot. I stayed up too long thinking about what could happen and I did some other work that I had pending. (Voice recording individual reflection, May 10th, 2020)

The excerpts above show how the students presented ideas which have an order and a clear purpose to transmit the message; although there are some grammatical mistakes, these do not interfere with the understanding of the general idea. Thus, situated practice appeared as a tool to help students to easily produce oral meaning from what they already know (prior knowledge),

using complete ideas. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2000), learners use the immersion in experience and the available discourses, including those from their varied life worlds, to create meaning and produce language, in this study, oral language production.

Overt Instruction

Data showed that with the explicit intervention and explanation of someone else, in this case the teacher, students acquired vocabulary in English about healthy lifestyle improving their repertoire at the moment of speaking. Besides, that teacher's intervention favored and reinforced some features of students' pronunciation.

Students acquired vocabulary in English about healthy lifestyle. Data from this research suggested that from activities that developed different modes of receiving and producing meaning proposed by the teacher, most of the students enriched their repertoire with meaningful vocabulary that helped them to express their insights about the topics seen in class. At the beginning, when they talked about something, the vocabulary that they used was very limited to a little set of words:

Sofia: what affects a healthy lifestyle is the bullying

Joaquín: the video trade of a sr obese que terminó in a hospital

(Voice recording class discussion, April 13th, 2020)

At the end of the project, students were able to talk using more words, thus enriching their vocabulary and speech:

Silvana: constantly wash my hands, wear gloves and masks, avoid going out to concurred

places, avoid having physical contact with people and use antibacterial gel. (Voice

recording individual reflection, May 10th, 2020)

Julio: eat less junk food and doing more exercise also eating fruits, vegetables and

healthy food. (Voice recording individual reflection, May 30th, 2020)

Isabel: Yo siento que a mí sí me ayudó a mejorar el habla y aprender palabras nuevas más

que todo porque en sí habían palabras desconocidas que sí o sí nos iban a ayudar porque

las íbamos a seguir viendo.[1] (Focus group, May 13th, 2020).

These excerpts reflect how the active interaction of the teacher aided students in the

learning process: I have noticed when I intervene with the activities to introduce and reinforce

students' vocabulary, they acquire more and more words and they start using them at the time of

speaking (Student-teacher journal, March 16th, 2020). As the New London Group (1996) states,

an active participation of the teacher scaffolds students' learning activities helping them to gain

explicit information. In this study, students developed a broader repertoire of vocabulary that

was useful to develop their ideas about their and other's healthy practices.

Students reinforced some features of pronunciation by means of correction. Data

from this study suggested that at the beginning of the study, some students mispronounced some

words that at certain point of their oral production interfered with the transmission of the

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[1] I feel that it helped me improve speech and learn new words because there were unknown words that will help us since we were going to keep seeing them. (Own translation)

message. The most recurrent words were eat, eating, try, health, healthy, junk, food and vegetables.They pronounced these words as they read in Spanish.This is evident in the following excerpts of an individual reflection:

Joaquín: sometimes try not eat (...)[2] and avoid(...) healthy

Felipe: it is easy because I live in the rural area near (...) fruit and vegetables. (Voice recording individual reflection, February 12th, 2020)

However, when the teacher interfered to correct students' repetitive difficulties of pronunciation at different moments, most of the students showed improvement on the manner of speaking, correcting the pronunciation of the specific words:

Joaquín: I would stop eating so much junk food, exercising more and do more productive things for myself and my health.

Isabel: eat less junk food and doing more exercise also eating fruits, vegetables and healthy food. (Voice recording individual reflection, April 13th, 2020)

Sofía: en la última clase (...) usted nos decía unas palabras que nosotros decíamos mal y nos corregía y ya nosotros las íbamos practicando hasta decirlas bien [3](Focus group, May 13th, 2020)

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[2] (...) indistinguishable audio
[3] in the last class (...) you used to say some words that we said wrong and correct us and we were practicing them until we said them right

As illustrated above, students reinforced those difficulties with the pronunciation through the explicit correction that the teacher made after each students' oral performance activity: when the students receive individual feedback about the mispronouncing words and when I correct them for the whole class, they start to notice those patterns of pronunciation (Student-teacher journal, March 20th, 2020). The students' self correction played an active role as well: when they recorded themselves, they noticed some words that were mispronounced and they corrected them. Then, the learners developed a conscious understanding and different tools with which they could successfully learn (Luke and Woods, 2009)

Critical Framing

Data from this study revealed that while students were analyzing and producing meaning by their interpretations of the information provided in class, they were able to speak using complete sentences.

Students were able to use complete sentences while critically analyzing their context. At the beginning of the study with the first oral activity that the students performed, some problems with the construction of complete sentences were evident. The sentences did not have a subject, a specific verb and/or a complement to construct the whole idea:

Pedro: of one person with obesity

Camilo: a men fat

Ester: not eat healthy, not exercises, not sleep (Voice recording individual reflection, February 12th, 2020)

In contrast, in the last two oral production activities, students used sentences that were complete with the subject, the verb and the complement while they were critically analyzing their relation with a healthy lifestyle:

Camilo: In fact, I consume a lot but not every day, sometimes I try to stop consuming so much because I know it is harmful to my health but I feel anxious to eat and I eat. (Voice recording class discussion, April 13th, 2020)

Sofía: To avoid the effects of the coronavirus, we should wash our hands with soap as often as possible, we should not touch our faces as much, we should be at home and not go out for any reason . (Voice recording individual reflection, May 10th, 2020)

Such progression could be attributed to the constant interaction with different texts such as images, videos and written papers in which they could analyze both the form and the meaning: the structure of the sentences, the message and the purpose of each text. As Boche (2014) states, students play an active role as creators of meaning which, in this study, allowed them to create oral texts from their interpretation and understanding of healthy issues reinforcing grammatical features.

Transformed Practice

Data of this study revealed how the students could communicate their reflective ideas through a mode of communication called advertisement.

Students' use advertisements as a means to communicate their ideas. Although this finding does not evidence how students reinforced oral production ability due to time constraints, it is important to discuss how students were able to use an advertisement, whose message promoted unhealthy ideas, and deconstruct it to encourage healthy conceptions:

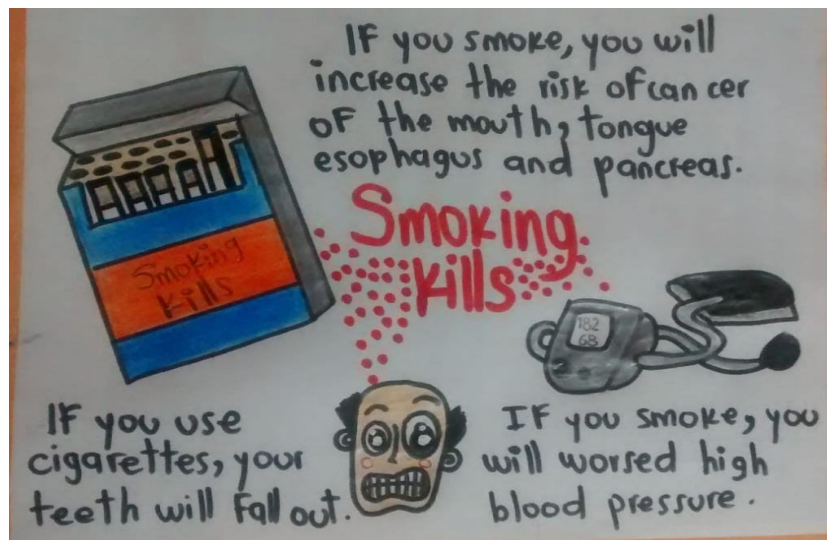Figure 2. Isabel's advertisement (student's artifact, May 18th, 2020)

Figure 3. Sofia's advertisement (Student's artifact, May 18th, 2020)

The pieces of evidence above show how the students took a text (the original advertisement), deconstructed its message and created a new one promoting healthy ideas for the consumers of candies and cigarettes. In this stage, learners were able to integrate and remake diverse discourses in their realities (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013). Although there are some grammatical mistakes, the message is powerful for the readers. Figure 1 was an advertisement created with online resources, but figure 2 was created on a piece of paper because of the lack of technological resources. Then, a message can be transmitted by using different modes of communication and the resources available for the senders of the message.

Conclusions and Implications

This research project had the purpose of analyzing how the Multiliteracies Approach may reinforce ninth-grade students' oral production. From the data analysis, I could conclude that

working with the four stages of the approach with many different modes of communication could help students in my particular EFL classroom to express complete ideas about their healthy lifestyle by using their prior knowledge, acquire vocabulary in English about healthy lifestyle, reinforce some features of pronunciation by means of correction, use complete sentences while critically analyzing their context, and use advertisements as a means to communicate their ideas.

This action research encompassed some implications for the teacher's practice in a similar context. A first implication is that teachers should work from students' experiences and prior knowledge. When students have the opportunity to exchange their thoughts from their backgrounds, the process to orally produce becomes easier and more comfortable. In this vein, teachers should find ways to connect the English content with students' lives. Another implication is that teachers should incorporate gradually the type of mode of communication from the easiest to the more complex. In this way, students will acquire tools and skills that will help them with their oral performance that each mode of communication requires. It is not the same that a student starts to speak with a debate that requires many and different elements than with a short presentation talking about him/herself.

This project provides rationale on the Multiliteracies Approach and a better understanding of its effects on students' oral production in an EFL classroom. It also contributes to expanding the information about the oral production since Multiliteracies Approach is more directly connected with written production. Nevertheless, further research needs to be conducted

to explore the impact of this approach on another type of audience such as children to corroborate its effects exploring other types of modes of communication as well.

Reflection

This time of teaching practicum and research has been meaningful to understand many conceptions about the teaching and research process. None of them is a "piece of cake", there were many teaching challenges that I had to face while I was doing research. Those challenges are not mentioned in books; we have to experience it to understand it. Thanks to those experiences, I continue with my idea to be a teacher and contribute to this society in which the role of education is still underrated.

In terms of research, I could reinforce my aptitudes as a researcher because although the research focus that we had in the university was significant, at the moment to do my own research, I noticed some gaps that interfered with the development of the research. Fortunately, at the end of it, I felt more confident doing research and developing research abilities that I gathered under pressure. I consider that action research is a great option to face, reinforce or discover solutions that contribute to education problems; however, it is important to have the possibility to decide if you can continue with the implementation of the project since it can appear another solution that better suits the reality of the problem. For instance in my case, I thought about another type of solution while I was implementing this project; however, I had to

continue with the one I proposed until the end. I would like to continue exploring more in the world of research and its different facets.

Concerning my teaching experience, it was a roller coaster of feelings. I went from happiness to sadness, from satisfaction to displeasure due to many reasons that are not under our control and some others that I could manage. Teaching is not an easy job and even less in a public context where challenges are commonplace. For instance, the appearance of Covid-19 that put public education in trouble (remote teaching, students' school and personal problems, among others). Having to go from worrying about classes and the research project to worrying about these school challenges and adding the physical and mental well-being of my students and my own was a very complex situation. If I was only in charge of one group, how could it have been for teachers who teach various groups? No one is prepared for this type of situation. However, with the resources that were available, the whole community could continue working under this unexpected situation. From every little positive or negative situation that I experienced, I learned a lot and that prepared me to continue working on this world of teachings and learnings.

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