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**The Enhancement of English Oral Production in an 11th Grade at Centro Formativo de
Antioquia Through the Use of the Storytelling Strategy.**

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Abstract

This study is an action research project carried out with eleventh graders at Centro Formativo de Antioquia; a public institution located in El Centro, Medellín. The aim of this project was to enhance student oral production through the implementation of the storytelling strategy. The data collection method included two questionnaires, one at the beginning and the other one at the end of the implementation, two diagnostic activities, and observations registered in the student-teacher's journal. Data were analyzed using the triangulation/comparison method with all the sources. The results showed that storytelling helps students to improve their speaking skills, that is to say their vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Also, the findings showed that through the use of this tool students feel more motivated to participate in class in English and it also favors group interaction.

Key words: storytelling, oral production, speaking, motivation, interaction, participation, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency.

Degree Requirements

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

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Preface

The requirement for the degree in foreign languages is to carry out an action-research at the end of the program. From the observation in the institution where the project was conducted, a problem must be determined, analyzed and a strategy or methodology that can respond to the problem must be proposed. This action-research was carried out in a female public institution. We will be able to see how the project was developed and the impact it had on my personal and professional growth, since it was a very enriching experience.

Table of Content

Table of Content.....	7
Context	8
Centro Formativo de Antioquia- CEFA.....	8
Statement of the problem.....	10
Theoretical framework.....	13
Oral production.....	13
Storytelling.....	14
Research question.....	15
Objectives.....	15
General objective.....	15
Specific objectives.....	15
Action plan.....	16
Development of actions	17
Data analysis.....	18
Findings and interpretation.....	19
Oral production: lexis, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency	19
Lexis	21
Grammar	21
Pronunciation.....	22
Fluency.....	23
Participation	24
Motivation.....	25
Interaction	26
Conclusion.....	28
Reflections.....	29
References	31

Context

In this section, you will find information about the location of the institution as well as its surroundings, the number of students it serves and its facilities. Later, you will encounter the school mission and vision statement, information about the English department, the English class, the students, and the cooperating teacher.

Centro Formativo de Antioquia- CEFA

This action research project took place at a public female-only school founded in 1935 by Joaquín Vallejo Arbeláez. It is located in El Centro, Medellín. Centro Formativo de Antioquia is next to the streetcar station Pabellón del Agua EPM as well as to a cultural site such as “Pequeño Teatro”. Its spot offers a broad range of transportation options, which allows the school to welcome students from all over the city. By the current year, 2022, the institution serves a total enrollment of 2.250 students, ranging in age from 12 years old to 18 years old.

CEFA receives girls from all strata and socioeconomic levels. The place is very large and has several accommodations, including the following: swimming pool (1), library (1), chapel (1), coliseum (1), classrooms (33), school cafeterias (2), teacher’s lounges (7), auditorium (2), computer room (6), laboratories (4).

CEFA has a total of 90 teachers and 59 groups, because of that the school has two shifts, the morning shift is from 6:15 am to 12:15 pm and is attended by students from sixth, seventh, eighth and eleventh grades. The afternoon shift is from 12:30 pm to 6:30 pm and is attended by girls in ninth and tenth grades. Moreover, CEFA offers specialized education in different fields such as nourishment, computer science, arts, business, oral health, pharmacy, food science and technology, chemical sciences, design, mathematics, and a focus on

English. These specializations seek the students' formation and preparation for the working world and academia. Every classroom at CEFA has a whiteboard, a table and a plastic chair for the teachers and tablet arm desks organized in rows for students. Most of them have windows facing the street or the hall.

With the motto "May your light shine" the Centro Formativo de Antioquia, has as its mission the promotion and formation of its students in the levels of middle school and a technical emphasis on high school, with the intention of preparing them for the basic labor initiation and the entrance to higher education. As for the vision, the school aims to be one of the best educational institutions in the city of Medellin, where students are trained with a civic culture, high academic competitiveness, and visionary sense to explore horizons for basic initiation to work life and entrance to higher education. The institution seeks to promote values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, tolerance, and punctuality.

The English department at CEFA makes part of the "Humanities department" of the school. The department has fourteen teachers and six of whom are English teachers who work in the morning and in the afternoon shift. The English area owns a lounge or a resource center where they keep many books, posters, flashcards, games and recording machines. In addition, the English program follows an annual plan where the contents that are to be taught during all the periods of the year are included, likewise they work with books from the National Ministry of Education such as *way to go* and *English please*.

My research project is being carried out in an eleven-grade group made up of 37 students. Their focus area is on Health (11S6). Their age range is between 15 and 18 years old. The students belong to varied socioeconomic strata level and they come from different neighborhoods located in Medellín such as Manrique, Buenos Aires, Villa Hermosa, and other nearby municipalities such as Bello, Copacabana, Envigado. Most of the students are well behaved, attentive, and receptive. English classes are twice a week, one hour one day

and the other hour on another different day. Some of the girls I talked to, wanted to start studying at a university once they graduated from high school; most of them have inclinations towards medicine or nursing, while others expressed their motivation to learn languages and even become teachers. They aspire to leave the country in order to have better opportunities which can be a positive element when learning the language. As for their performance, most of them are English beginners but there are some girls with a higher proficiency level. They have in common that students show interest and motivation towards the English classes. They participate at the teacher's request and tend to take part in the proposed activities. However, they usually interact in their native language. During the development of a class lesson, they are receptive to learn what is being taught at that moment.

Finally, my classroom cooperating teacher (CT) graduated as a Bachelor of Languages from U.P.B., has been a teacher for thirty years and he has been working at CEFA for twenty-five years. His most important experience as a teacher was when he traveled to the USA and Canada. As for his methodology, it is eclectic and usually uses strategies such as repetition, memorization, and the use of the mother tongue. In his classes there is a lot of code switching from Spanish to English and vice versa due to the level of some of the girls.

Statement of the problem

For a long time, Colombia has been trying to improve its English programs, either by renovating them or by launching new ones, and yet these efforts have been made in vain, according to the results obtained in “the annual EF English Proficiency Index (EPI), released in 2020, Colombia ranks “Very Low” [...] Thus, the country had a regression with respect to previous measurements, if we consider that in the same analysis in 2018 and 2019”. With respect to this problem, it was said that “it is evident that Colombia has serious difficulties,

and this may result in a barrier to the competitiveness of the country as well as its students and professionals. It is a call to correct the course” (Chacón, 2021).

The observations made during some sessions of the eleventh grade English class at the Centro Formativo de Antioquia, allowed me to know the class’s dynamics and its actors. Also, I have been able to identify students' real needs as well as their difficulties, desires and strengths when learning a language.

During the observations, it was noted that the CT prioritizes the use of the native language. It is known that the mother tongue:

Can be used to provide a quick and accurate translation of an English word that might take several minutes and that using English only [...] can lead to some problems because there would be no guarantee that the instructions and explanations are understood correctly. (Khati, 1970, p. 42-51)

However, it is also very important for the students to get to know how the English language is used in context, as well as its structure, its meanings, and the sounds. Besides, the teacher uses memorization strategies, and sometimes he addresses a topic with a lexical approach which leaves aside the enrichment of other linguistic competences. A direct consequence of this is that it reduces the participation of the girls and makes them less spontaneous as they memorize something and then recite it. “The topic of professions is purely lexical, it has no communicative or sociocultural function, the girls are not participating much orally in the class and almost all the interactions are in Spanish” (Journal entry No. 1, March 26t, 2022).

In addition, another aspect identified through the observations was that students tend to have a passive role in terms of the use and participation in the foreign language, for this reason learners lack engagement and do not have the chance to take part or produce in the

target language. “The girls have a passive role. They don't interact much with the language, they don't communicate” (Journal entry No. 1, March 26, 2022).

During a class session 18 girls were randomly selected to answer a brief survey about the English class. The survey aimed to find out what the students thought about the class, what they liked about it, what they would like to change, how motivated they were to learn English and what language skills they would like to work more deeply or to improve. The results showed that some girls were “very motivated” and others “motivated” to learn, and they also stated that they would like to participate more in the classes. Finally, 16 of the 18 girls indicated that they would like to develop their speaking skills further.

Taking into account the needs of the students and the lack of conversational situations in the classroom and considering the analysis I made of the journal entries throughout the weeks and the survey, I decided to work on the students' oral production using the story-telling strategy. In pursuing the goal of involving students directly in their learning processes and improving their level of participation in the English class, learners can develop oral production using real-life elements and thus express themselves in the foreign language.

Language learners can benefit from storytelling because it creates a good learning environment and provides meaningful and comprehensible input, as Rossiter (2002) points out “stories make information more rememberable because they involve us in actions of the characters. In doing so, stories invite active meaning making” (p. 1). Burgos & Valencia (2015) had shown that this strategy “provides students an array of benefits which include authentic and enriched language input which finally end up in an authentic language output” (p. 52). With this in mind, I decided to use storytelling to promote students' oral production.

Theoretical framework

According to the proposal of the present work, aiming to enhance oral production through the implementation of storytelling, there are mainly two key terms: oral production and storytelling. In this respect, we will define the concepts.

Oral production

Oral production, also known as speaking, is a skill that learners acquire progressively and as Bygates (1991) states it, is the ability to produce sentences in different types of situations. In other words, speaking is the capacity to communicate clearly, fluently, coherently, and persuasively, making appropriate use of verbal and non-verbal resources.

Following Macdonough and Shaw (1993), they give four purposes for communicating orally: to express ideas and opinions; to express an intention or desire to do something; to negotiate and/or solve a particular problem; and to establish and maintain social and personal relationships. In other words, students can be immersed in the language that enables them to participate in everyday exchanges.

Another aspect to consider is that the Common European Framework of Reference (2011), states that "in oral production (speaking) activities, the language user produces an oral text or utterance that is received by one or more listeners" (p. 48). Basically, it is a sender-receiver relationship in a given context of communication. In the same line, Bygates (1991) says that "speaking is typically reciprocal: any interlocutors are normally all able to contribute simultaneously to the discourse, and to respond immediately to each other's contributions" (p. 16).

On the other hand, oral production plays a very important role in language proficiency. However, "oral production is the most problematic component for some learners who are uncomfortable with speaking in class" (Alrabadi, 2011, p. 27). For this, it is the teacher's task to find a way to encourage speaking. For students to develop and improve this

skill, they need coaching. Students' speaking problems must be taken seriously by teachers because they can block the learner's speech and, therefore, learning.

Storytelling

Storytelling has long held an important role in history. It is one of the oldest forms of human communication where people have passed down stories from generation to generation. Hsu (2010) defines storytelling as “the use of voice, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and interaction to connect a tale with listeners” (p. 7). Moreover, Guisado (2017) defines storytelling as the art that manages to transmit more than what is achieved to see at first glance, in it, it is about designing a fantastic world, which leads to establishing a connection with the receiver through the story. In other words, storytelling is presented as a story that connects the audience with the storyteller, allowing the message to become a lasting knowledge.

When talking about storytelling, the author Margaret Read Macdonald in *The Storytellers Start-Up Book*, gives a few reasons on *why to tell*. She states that “hearing and telling tales hones our literary and imaginative skills. We improve our ability to listen, speak, imagine, compose phrases, and create stories” (p. 101). Macdonald continues in her book to say that storytelling broadens our awareness of our own as well as other cultures, allows us to understand ourselves better, gives us a sense of belonging to a group and increases our vocabularies.

Other research conducted on the same topic showed that “teachers and students saw storytelling as benefitting vocabulary, cultural awareness, idioms and figurative language, grammar, pronunciation, and rate of speech” (Lichtman, 2019, p. 312).

Craig (1996) expresses that employing storytelling in the classroom “on a regular basis is a sound teaching/learning strategy because it builds on strengths and oral language expertise to help them successfully develop social, intellectual, and linguistic competencies”

(p. 9). In doing so, stories can promote the comprehensive development of children's comprehension, memory, imagination, judgment, and verbal ability.

Using this strategy brings a wider perspective towards the traditional approach when learning a second language. According to Blaine (2004) in storytelling, grammatical accuracy is taught but not in the traditional way through verb conjugations. Language is learned by understanding messages in the target language. It signifies that language is achieved through comprehensible input. It means that students are expected to acquire subconsciously the grammatical structure of the language by being exposed to spoken language input.

Research question

To what extent does storytelling as a strategy contribute to the enhancement of English oral production in an 11th grade at Centro Formativo de Antioquia (CEFA)?

Objectives

General objective

To determine in what way storytelling as a strategy contributes to the enhancement of oral production in 11th grade students at CEFA.

Specific objectives

- To explore how the use of the storytelling strategy contributes to the enhancement of oral production.
- To monitor learners' participation and interaction through storytelling.
- To identify whether storytelling strategy motivates students to use English in class or not.

Action plan

As already indicated, the objective of this research is to implement the storytelling strategy to enhance oral production. In order to achieve this goal, different activities will be suggested. Due to the large number of students in the group, I decided to do a focus group. Although all the students will participate in the proposed tasks, the performance of the focus group will be considered when collecting the data, analyzing the findings and interpreting them.

Unit design

Aiming at enhancing oral production using storytelling, I originally set out to implement a unit throughout a period of 10 class sessions each being one hour long. Firstly, I had to identify the competences, themes and topics that needed to be fulfilled in the course syllabus. After doing so, I picked a few objectives, from *Guia 22* and *Derechos Basicos de Aprendizaje*, that will try to be achieved by the end of the unit implementation. There will be general goals such as “under the theme *the stories in my head*, students will be strengthened grammatically and lexically in order to produce orally” and other specific ones like:

- To consolidate the basic English concepts that students must manage according to the proposed curriculum.
- To promote opportunities where the students can develop their oral production.
- To expand vocabulary as a tool for oral production

Four tales will be used, some will be familiar, such as Little Red Riding Hood and Goldilocks. Others may be imaginary, or stories created by the students. Also, they will work on the same linguistic aspects every class, for instance, simple present, simple past, adjectives, and phrasal verbs.

The girls’ performance will be taken into consideration. In all the classes there will be formative assessment where the students can receive feedback from the teacher to improve

their production. However, in some sessions there will be summative evaluative activities such as a video that the students will submit to the teacher.

Development of actions

Due to time constraints related to the development of this action-research, plus the lower-than expected English proficiency of a few of the students, I had to take extra time in the development of the classes. Because of the limited vocabulary of the students, children's stories were very useful.

In the first and second session of the implementation, the girls were introduced to storytelling. The structure of stories was discussed, as well as its characteristics and the ones that a storyteller needs to have. Following, the students were provided with vocabulary (phrases/words) that are commonly used when telling a tale, in this way they can identify them in the next weeks. Then, the girls worked on Little Red Riding Hood and on the graphic organizer in order to be able to retell it later.

In the next two sessions students worked on Goldilocks. The first activity was to guess the name of the story. Then they completed the graphic organizer with the tale's information. Finally, in groups the girls had to change the ending and make an alternative one, then retell it.

From the fifth to the sixth sessions the girls read The Ugly Duckling. However, the teacher did not give them the printed version this time. In the meantime, the students paid attention to the words they already knew and started filling in the graphic organizer. After the teacher read, they identified the name of the tale and shared with the class the vocabulary they were able to recognize from it. At last, the students wrote the moral of the story and then submitted a video sharing it.

From the 7th to the 8th sessions the group read The Hare and the Tortoise. Due to time constraints, they were only able to read it aloud and participate in it. This story has

many adjectives and phrasal verbs that we had not seen before, so after reading it we decided to focus on their meaning.

Lastly, in the classes number ninth and tenth the girls worked on the pronunciation of the words they had not seen before and then compared the vocabulary they had worked on in the prior narratives and in this new one. Finally, they prepared to retell the The Tortoise and the Hare.

Data analysis

This action research study carried out in a public institution of Medellin with the participation of a focus group from eleven grade. Throughout the implementation I used a journal to record positive and negative changes that the girls experienced as a result of working with the storytelling strategy. This journal keeps a register of each session/week. Similarly, in the first session of the application, a diagnostic activity was carried out. The task consisted of recording student's speech when re-telling a tale (little red riding hood), which allowed us to know their oral level. In the last session, another assignment was developed to sense their changes in terms of speaking. In each, their voices were recorded. On the other hand, in order to notice how motivated, the girls felt with the storytelling strategy, a survey was conducted at the beginning (first week) and at the end of the research (last week).

Once I gathered the data, I decided to consider the steps proposed by Feldman, Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh (2013) to carry out the data analysis. These authors propose an analytic process composed of four stages: 1. reading data, 2. selecting data, 3. presenting data, and 4. interpreting data and drawing conclusions. After having read all the data, I found some important evidence concerning the proposed objectives and that are able to answer the research question. Following the second stage proposed by Feldman et al. (2013), I grouped the most important factors or common patterns that repeat. First, I analyzed the audio recordings of the diagnostic activity of September 7. I began by listening to them several

times and then transcribing them. Later, there were some categories that stood out and that go hand in hand with the topic of oral production which were: lexis or vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary. When I finished analyzing and coding this part, I began to do the same but with the last activity carried out on November 2, which was an audio-recorded exercise too. For the next part of the data collection analysis, I made a comparison between the first survey that the students answered and the last one, in that way I could see student's thoughts towards participation, motivation and interaction. Lastly, I read and coded the journal that I carried throughout the research. Some categories came out such as: oral production, motivation, participation, interaction, difficulties, etc.

For the *presenting* stage of data analysis, I wrote down in a summary sheet the categories that repeated in all the data collection methods. Also, I wrote the proposed objectives as well as the research question of this study with the purpose of focusing on them. To sum up these were the categories found, lexis, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency belong to a higher category which is oral production, then we have participation, motivation and lastly interaction both among students and with English.

Findings and interpretation

The last stage of the data analysis by Feldman and al. is to interpret data and draw conclusions. Four categories stood out. The first one is oral production which contains lexis, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. The second one is participation, next is motivation, and finally interaction. It should be clarified that in order not to mention the names of the participants of the focus group and to guarantee their anonymity, they will be referred to as students 1, 2, 3 ...

Oral production: lexis, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency

Let us begin with the first category, which reflects some of the advantages and

disadvantages of the storytelling strategy. The students' oral production before the implementation was almost null because they had a passive role. It was hard to explore their oral production since it was hidden for a long time. In the first session of the implementation this was a holdback factor, that is why I wrote in the journal “ when I asked them what were the characteristics of the stories and of the people who tell the stories, many of them were blocked, since the questions were open-ended and they didn't know where to start answering and they usually get too complicated with the answers” (Journal week 1).

Also, in the first questionnaire students express difficulties concerning oral production. In the fifth question “¿Qué factores te impiden el participar en estas actividades orales?” (Initial Questionnaire, September 7, 2022). students answered: “me suele avergonzar pronunciar alguna palabra mal” (Initial Questionnaire, student 5, September 7, 2022). or “si participo en las actividades, aunque hay factores como el riesgo de que no sepa pronunciar bien algunas palabras o tener dificultades con los verbos en pasado, presente y futuro, que me impiden de cierta forma participar con mayor seguridad” (Initial Questionnaire, student 6, September 7, 2022). These show that they felt insecure about their oral production even though they would like to participate often.

As an overall view of oral production using storytelling, in the last questionnaire it was asked “Considera que la estrategia de storytelling contribuyó a la mejora de la producción oral (speaking)? Si, no? Porque?” All the students reply that for sure the strategy contributed positively to the enhancement of the oral production since, “se mejora pronunciación y el desarrollo al hablar”. (Last Questionnaire, student 4, November 2, 2022). Also, “porque fue una estrategia muy útil que impulsó al mejoramiento de la parte oral y escrita del idioma, sobre todo en las chicas que de pronto tienen más dificultad con el mismo”. (Last Questionnaire, student 5, November 2, 2022).

Now, certain factors are included when we talk about oral production such as lexis,

grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. Let's see how the strategy influenced these factors

Lexis

In the beginning, because the students did not have a wide lexical repertoire, they tended to block and therefore they used crutches or simply did not participate. Also, it was noted that the use of fairy tales, fables or short stories that were familiar to them in their mother tongue helped them to broaden their English lexicon, moreover, in this type of tales the lexicon is usually repeated, and this favors memorization. In turn, it is easy for them to recycle those words and use them next time. As I wrote in my journal "since the vocabulary was familiar and "easy", it was much simpler for them to retell it and not get stuck on a word". (Journal, week 5, 2022). In one of the activities done in class, "although they were confused at first, they were able to identify words such as mama, yellow, egg, cow, horse, pig, sheep, baby" (Journal, week 3, 2022) since we had worked previously in them.

Students were asked in which of the following aspects they considered that the strategy had influenced positively: knowledge and reinforcement of grammar, in pronunciation, and in the knowledge of new vocabulary, they voted for the third one.

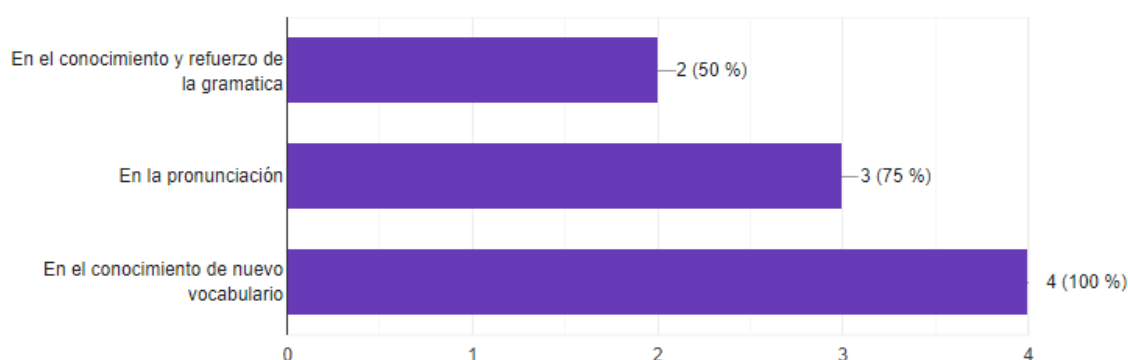


Table 1. (Last Questionnaire, November 2, 2022)

Grammar

Prior to the implementation, the students did not have poor grammar. They knew the correct structure when asking questions or telling a story. Similarly, with the storytelling

strategy, they often first scripted what they were going to retell, so they usually memorized it and there were not many grammatical errors.

If they made a grammatical error such as "little red riding hood... *his* mom no, *her* mom emm send her to..." (Diagnostic Activity, students 1, September 7, 2022) they usually correct themselves. There were other mistakes that did not impede communication or comprehension like: "to you see with" (Last Diagnostic Activity, students 8, November 2, 2022). We could then say that the grammar remained stable during the project's execution. Although no drastic changes were seen, it is safe to say that the students reinforced previous knowledge during the execution of the unit.

Pronunciation

In this category, changes related to the first day and the last day of implementation were evidenced. Some students said that at the end of the application " Conocía más vocabulario del que creía y la pronunciación me resultaba cada vez más fácil". (Last Questionnaire, student 3, November 2, 2022). As mentioned at the beginning of this section, pronunciation often prevented them from producing orally, as they did not feel comfortable. It was evident how they made an effort to practice and improve their pronunciation.

In the first diagnostic activity on September the 7th, student number 9 said "granny what the *base eis* (instead of big eyes) you have *al* (instead of all) the *bitter* (instead of better) to you see with say the *worlf* (instead of wolf). However, on the last diagnostic activity carried out on november the 2nd, the same students performed perfectly and did not pronounce any word incorrectly "the tortoise won the race, and there are places like jungle, tortoise, hare and tree".

Other students did make mistakes; however, they were fewer compared to the first activity. Student 5 on September the 7th said "The wolf open *is* (instead of his) mouth with and granny *jumped* out, *riding* hood never *saw* the wolf *agai*". Compared to the November

2nd task she said: “*characters*: tortoise and other animals. Begging, the hare *asked* the tortoise for a race”. As it is possible to see there is a difference between the first one and the last one. Similarly, if we look at table one, we can see that according to the students the second factor that improved with the implementation was pronunciation.

Fluency

Positive changes were also noted in this final category as the evidence shows. Before the use of the strategy, when the students were about to speak, they usually took a long time to find the right words and in the middle of their speech they would use crutches such as, repeating the word several times before going on to the next word, also saying amm, emm or ehh.

The student 1, although she is very good at English (grammar and pronunciation) sometime she did a lot of pauses like “ One day there was a girl *emmmm* called *emmm* little red riding hood... his mom no, her mom *emm* send her to *emmm* give to her grandmother a cake then *sheeee* walk *emmm* through the forest and then meet a wolf and the wolf *emm* ask her where she was going and *emmm* yeah” (First Diagnostic Activity, students 1, November 2, 2022). However, in the last diagnostic activity she did not hesitate at all.

Other girls got over the continuous hesitation since at the beginning one said, “little red riding hood *ehh* told her that she was going to the grandmother’s house *ehh* the *wolf the wolf* run to grandmother's house and ate grandma”. (First Diagnostic Activity, students 7, September the 7th, 2022). In the last diagnostic activity, she only used one to remember and pronounce correctly “middle. The hare fell asleep and the tortoise took *advang..advantage* of him.(Last Diagnostic Activity, students 7, November the 2nd, 2022).

Also, as I wrote down in my journal, “when the activity is a reading one, they usually pause a lot; however, this oral activity helped them to improve in that sense and the speech, even though it was short, flowed well. (Journal, week 5, 2022)

To sum up, the storytelling strategy had a major impact in students' oral production specifically on factors such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Now we will address other categories like participation, motivation, and interaction.

Participation

The second specific objective of this research seeks to monitor participation. Because of this, the girls in the focus group were asked in the initial survey what factors impeded their participation in class, especially in English. Some responded that "none", however there were other girls who responded that fear, shyness or in the case of student number 4 "sometimes just a little embarrassment of mispronouncing or that they (classmates) do not understand me" (First Diagnostic Activity, students 4, September 7, 2022). As mentioned above, the learning unit was structured in such a way that the same linguistic aspects were worked on during the implementation, and that the stories were already known in their mother tongue and had an easily recognizable vocabulary. This allowed the students to become more familiar with the language, i.e. with its pronunciation, grammar and lexicon. As they became more familiar, the risk of participating in class decreased and they began to feel more capable and enthusiastic about participating orally in class.

For the diagnostic activity many of them were terrified to retell the story so they asked me if they could read. However, some of them decided to take risks and tell it from memory, which I thought was excellent because they really worked on speaking and not on reading. Although they were scared once they were talking or reading, they would loosen up more and I wanted to do it again. Or they would say if it was possible to repeat it with other classmates, so I could identify that they were engaged, motivated, and very participative in the work. (Journal, week 1, 2022).

Although the storytelling strategy was for the whole group of 11, it was noticeable that the focus group was in the lead and therefore they liked to participate more. In one class, students

“had a commitment to bring the graphic organizer ready. Out of 32 girls only 3 brought it complete.” (Journal, week 5, 2022). The three students who handed it were from the focus group, and in another activity, such as sending a video, the focus group sent it on time, the rest sent it late or did not even submit it at all.

Likewise, in the final survey, in order to know the position of the students concerning the participation, they were asked if they thought that the strategy encouraged participation in class, to which they all responded positively "yes".

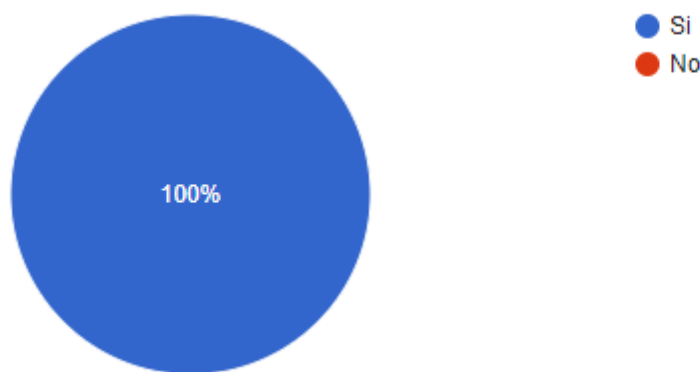


Table 2. (Last Questionnaire, November 2 , 2022)

Motivation

The third specific objective of this research project seeks to identify whether storytelling motivates students to use English in the classroom or not. At the beginning it was difficult to work with them because before the implementation the CT had a different methodology than mine.

I started reading the story and they have a copy, but there are several who set aside the copy and prefer to be on the cell phone. So, I ask them to help me read but they refuse, they say no because they don't know or because their classmates will laugh at them. (Journal, week 1, 2022)

The girls were encouraged to participate in the pre-reading and post-reading activities even when there was no quantitative grade involved. As I wrote in my journal, when students had to give an alternative ending to one of the tales “they really liked it because it was a way to let their imagination run wild and to put the vocabulary they had already acquired into action. There was no hesitation from their side, they all were willing to do it”. (Journal, week 2, 2022) Even when I asked them if they would like to retell the story or tell the ending face to face or on video, they had no problems and were able to adapt. And they gradually lost their fear of speaking in front of the students and the teacher. I think the motivation was reflected in their positive attitude.

In the last question of the final survey, the girls believed that their motivation was not negatively affected by the storytelling strategy; on the contrary, they felt that their motivation was maintained or even improved.

En una escala del 1 al 3 , como influyó el storytelling en tu motivación a la hora de participar en clase?. Siendo uno(no me sentí motivada a participar en ingles), dos (mi nivel de motivación no cambió durante la implementación) y 3 (me sentí más motivada a participar en ingles)

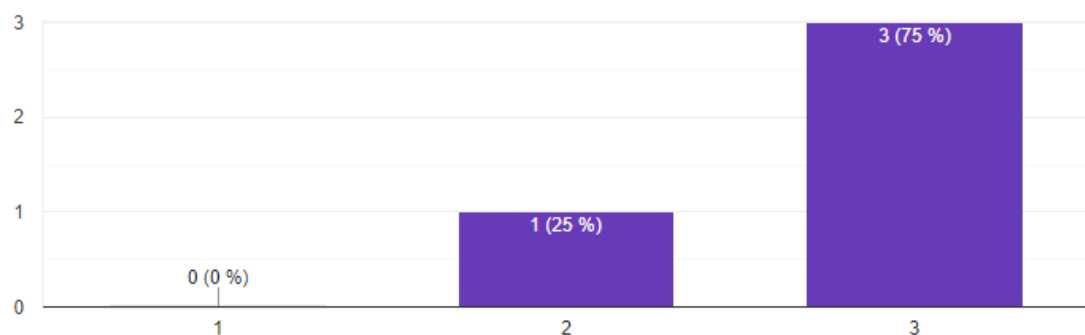


Table 3. (Last Questionnaire, November the 2nd , 2022)

Interaction

Participation refers to cooperation between learners and the exchange between the

person and the language to be learned. Both are about to be addressed. At the beginning, the focus group did not show any problem when it came to working on the oral part among them. However, as time went by, student 1 asked me to change her subgroup because she did not feel comfortable with her group. Although she did not tell me more reasons, I suppose it was because the subgroup she was in had a student who was advancing fast in her oral production. However, out of the entire focus group it only happened once, and the rest of the girls seemed to get along well when working with each other. In the two diagnostic activities, a group composed of three students, even though they were wrong in what they were saying, they were able to encourage and give feedback to each other. Likewise, if one did not say her part correctly the whole group agreed to do it again just to give the other girl a chance to improve this time. I found this very interesting because you could see the mutual interest and fellowship between them.

How nice it is that they help one another to understand and overcome their fears while motivating each other to do better. No one tries to make the other person feel bad just for not pronouncing correctly. I see that they are not interested in showing off but that they understand what it means to work as a team. (Journal, week 5, 2022)

On the other hand, interaction with English also increased. Before the strategy, the girls did not interact much with the language because in the classroom much of the input was in their native language. As the strategy suggested that the 4 skills (listening, speaking, writing, reading) were integrated, the students had direct contact and were now interacting, i.e., they were both receivers and senders of the language.

Conclusion

The above categories' perceptions provide valuable evidence for the results of the action part of this project. They have revealed multiple elements that were useful in drawing essential conclusions, which led to the fulfillment of the research objectives.

The results of this Action Research study showed that the students' oral production had a positive change, that is, it improved. We could see how some linguistic aspects such as lexis, pronunciation, and fluency improved. The girls' vocabulary was expanded and reinforced. They were also able to overcome problems related to pronunciation which, before the implementation, impeded communication, and their fluency skills improved as they were able to utter fluently without the need to cut sentences or make many pauses. On the other hand, the grammatical aspect, although it was worked on, did not have apparently relevant changes because it was the same before and during the implementation.

Furthermore, according to the findings, the implementation of the storytelling strategy in the classroom was effective in terms of participation, motivation, and interaction. Because students' motivation increased, they felt more willing to work and participate in the foreign language. The students in the classroom had neither internet nor computer which made the work difficult since the format for presenting the stories was always very similar and although it could have generated an unfavorable reaction due to repetition, this was not what happened. By working on motivation mainly other factors are also positively affected. Although some students were initially reluctant to participate or interact with each other using English, we did notice a change in this regard. The strategy also shows the possibility of adaptability, in other

words, it is possible to work individually or in groups, which greatly favors collaborative learning.

In general, students went from having a passive-receptive role to an active one, and the teacher acts as a guide, that is, as a conduit for the student and the information, but not as the only generator of learning and knowledge.

Despite the constraints marked mainly by the continuous cancellation of classes and the other school related activities the implementation of this research project had positive results. The students participated actively in the development of the activities; although some disruptive behavior emerged in class, these did not drastically affect the learning environment.

Reflections

I have learned so much this past year. The practice has made me grow in all areas of my life both personally and professionally. This first glimpse into the life of a teacher fills me with excitement for my future, but it is also a challenge. This is because teaching in a Colombian context is not an easy task, there are many things that one as a teacher would like to do but cannot.

One of my future goals is to be able to positively impact the lives of my students. This experience made me realize that in the classroom you teach and learn much more than just a foreign language, other aspects are included such as values, behaviors, attitudes, ways of thinking and seeing the world around us. You want your students to be well-rounded individuals who can make a difference in their community. Especially working with 11th graders who have a big task, to find their place in the world but also to see and explore the options they have. Students should be supported in their journey without putting too much pressure on them as it is easy for them to feel overwhelmed and thus not be able to figure out what they want to do.

This experience also calls on teachers to give their best, to use their abilities and skills in their teaching practice. It is understandable to see teachers tired after 30 years of service, but students need competent teachers. Just as we would like the students to perform at their full potential, it is coherent and necessary for us as teachers to do the same and not be merely preachers but not doers.

For future teachers, I encourage you to continue exploring the storytelling strategy. While this strategy not only contributes to the improvement of oral production, it can also be used to develop other skills such as writing and reading. This tool is very versatile and can be used with a wide range of audiences. Therefore, you just need to be resourceful and creative. You can also use this strategy and other methodologies to work with collaborative learning or authentic material. Technology can also be used. Personally due to my particular context this option was not possible, however it is very helpful to have technological resources at the time of implementation. Keep in mind that the idea is to bring out both the teacher's and the student's potential.

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