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Autor

Santiago Tamayo Galvis

Universidad de Antioquia

Escuela de Idiomas

Medellín, Colombia

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Implementing Activities Following the PPP Stages in a 10<sup>th</sup> Grade EFL Class to Foster Speaking Skill.

Santiago Tamayo Galvis

Universidad de Antioquia

Research and Practicum Advisor

Carlos Danilo Restrepo Mendez

Magister in Foreign Languages Teaching and Learning

Thesis Advisor

Diana Milena Calderón Vargas

Magister in Foreign Languages Teaching and Learning

El Carmen de Viboral

June, 2020

### **Abstract**

This action research project aimed at exploring how the implementation of activities following the PPP stages can foster 10th graders speaking skill. To do this, students were exposed to speaking activities such as question charts, pronouncing tongue twisters, and class presentations that promoted oral participation while interacting and communicating with others using the target language. The data was gathered collecting students' artifacts, class recordings, a focus group, and teacher's journals. Analysis of data evidenced that learners were engaged when participating in speaking activities. Moreover, students' self-confidence was found as an issue that helped them to improve their pronunciation. Besides, data showed that implementing tongue twisters in an English class helps students to improve their pronunciation.

*Key words:* Presenting, Practicing and Producing (PPP), Speaking skill, Self-confidence, Tongue twisters.

### **Degree Requirement**

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, Antioquia, Colombia.

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### **Preface**

Learning English for me has been a challenge due to the fact that I had not studied it before being admitted to this major, and a complete questioning process where I asked myself why I was learning English for. When I began the Foreign Language Teaching degree, I liked the fact that Project-Based was one of the teaching methodologies, but at the same time a very demanding process where most of the teachers asked me to improve my speaking skill. This made me realize that English was about knowing the world and to interact and communicate with others accurately. Keeping in mind the idea of improving this skill during the whole exhausting learning process, I reached the practicum process thinking about the importance of fostering speaking through different activities as a possibility to be implemented in the second stage of my action research. Indeed, some emerging situations at the school where I conducted this research project allowed me to interpret my teaching context and to consider the importance of implementing actions to foster speaking in this place. Thus, I decided to address this issue employing some activities through the Presenting, Practicing, and Producing (PPP) stages to foster students' speaking skill.

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### Description of the Context

I.E Escuela Normal Superior de María (I.E.E.N.S.M) is a public urban institution located in downtown Rionegro, East of Antioquia, Colombia. This is a K-11 catholic, coeducational institution whose mission is to prepare new certified teachers that supply the necessities of the region in terms of education. The secretary of the school informed that the principal site, the one chosen for this study, has 854 students. The building is equipped with 22 classrooms, a computers' lab, a restaurant for food-insecure students, a cafeteria, and some religious canvas representing Virgin Mary. The study was carried out in a classroom furnished with 36 chairs, a whiteboard, a smart board and a T.V. The classroom is normally organized in the traditional layout composed of 6 lines and separated by a meter of distance. There are also some lamps and windows that provide the students with enough light.

In terms of school's documentation, the *Manual de convivencia* states not only school rules, but also students' duties and rights. In accordance with its philosophical foundations, mission and vision, the establishment works under the light of a holistic perspective of human's life, and emphasizes on the importance of training preschool and elementary school teachers that act as agents of change either in rural, public or marginalized contexts (Institución Educativa Escuela Normal Superior de María, 2016). Apart from offering elementary and secondary education, the school offers extra and professional teaching programs for the students who want to become teachers. The English program performs under the principles of the Colombian linguistic policies (as it is the case of "Guía 22") for teaching and learning, and the CEFR.

For this study, the observations were carried out in a 10th grade, composed of 24 women and 11 men whose ages ranged from 14 to 18 years old. Most of the students of this



course lived in Rionegro and were placed in middle-low and middle-high social classes, admitting that there was a minority living in different municipalities across the region such as Marinilla, La Ceja, and El Carmen de Viboral. Besides, 9 students out of 35 lived in rural areas. Concerning English, students considered that it was important for their future professional development as well as to have better opportunities of getting a job (Informal conversation, February, 2020). After seven observations, I found that students needed more exposure to the target language since Spanish was the language used in class. Additionally, the participants expressed that they would like to improve their listening and speaking skills (Questionnaire #1, March, 2020).

Regarding the cooperating teacher (CT), at the moment of the study she was twenty-six years old and had obtained a bachelor's degree as an English-French teacher two years before at a private university in Rionegro. She had taught in the school for 2 years. At the moment, she is teaching 3 hours a week to each 10th and 3 more hours to 11th graders (there are four 10th and 11th grades in the school: 10°A,B,C&D, 11° A,B,C&D). The teacher expressed that she had 4 years of teaching experience. During the English classes, it was noticeable that she tried to implement different activities and strategies that aimed at appealing the students, working under the lights of a grammar-oriented methodology as well as the communicative approach, which is the one proposed by the school.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to Crystal (2012), people who learn English are provided with different skills that allow them to secure a job, to travel, to receive better education, and better opportunities later in life. Moreover, learning English at schools obeys to the necessity of being more competent bilingual citizens in order to respond to the different dynamics

and situations in which the foreign language plays a fundamental role, especially when communicating and interacting in middle of a globalized world. Notwithstanding, I noticed that the participants with whom this study was carried out had difficulties when learning English, especially with the speaking skill because some of them did not know how to make proper use of vocabulary when answering to English questions. This issue was perceived during the observations carried out in the context of this study, where there was not exposure to the the foreign language, and the proposed activities did not ask the students to use it since, according to the Cooperating Teacher (CT), activities such as completing copies, filling the blanks and writing a text helps the teacher to control students' behaviors and to pay closer attention to them (Informal conversation, March 10th, 2020).

In addition to the aforementioned, students' speaking participation in class was limited because they did not know how to pronounce in English. I noticed this situation during the first class intervention where I asked the participants some questions related to vocabulary. Some of the students' reactions were "No, yo no sé eso como se dice" while being shy, while just a few of them asked "¿Cómo se dice en inglés...?" before replying to my request. (Teacher's journal, March 9th, 2020). Thus, some of the reasons why students may not be able to speak in English are presented in Urrutia and Vega (2010) who found that 10th grade students were not able to communicate orally because they do not know how to pronounce. Additionally, the authors affirm that students' oral participation is also affected due to a lack of linguistic patterns such as lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and lack of self- confidence, which is an issue linked to personality. Additionally, Linares (2018), and Urrutia and Vega (2010) argue that English teachers should propose innovative strategies that expose students to English, and that also allow them to interact and use the target language inside the classroom.

Following this idea, after observing students' reaction to the activities during class interventions that I conducted, I suggested the implementation of the Presenting, Practicing and Producing (PPP) approach as a possible manner of promoting speaking interactions in the classroom. The PPP approach aims at exposing students to the target language from three different stages where the teacher presents the input to the students, then, verifies the comprehension of the input, and at the end, the teacher asks for the output where students use all the input to present a product (Tomlinson, 2011). In this manner, I intend to explore how the implementation of activities through the PPP stages can foster students' speaking in a public school.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This action research project was developed based on stages of Presenting, Practicing, and Producing (PPP), which is a teaching approach based on the behaviorist theory. In this section, definitions of the speaking process, and self-confidence in speaking are provided. Besides, I explain and detail how the Presenting, Practicing, and Producing (PPP) teaching approach can influence speaking practices while giving learners opportunities to build knowledge as a group.

### **The Process of Speaking**

Nunan (1989) defines speaking as a communicative skill divided in two different types of interaction: monologues and dialogues. The author exposes that a monologue is a component of the transactional function in which conversations and meaning exchange do not take place, since the speaker "offers and transmits information without interacting with others" (p. 27). Additionally, the researcher claims that dialogues refer to the interactional function where the speakers build meaning while "exchanging information based on

beliefs, experiences and knowledge” (p. 27). Moreover, the author affirms that teaching speaking in the classroom is a process that provides the learner with the ability to carry out a conversation in the target language. Nevertheless, the definitions of the speaking process vary not only according to the perspective of the author, but also regarding the terms that are used to describe it. In this study, this theoretical background was addressed from Torcky (2006) who proposes the interactive speaking process from three main components that take place in the speaking skill: The linguistic, discourse, and pragmatic competence.

Firstly, Torcky (2006) states that the linguistic competence is the component where the learner should be exposed to the language notions in order to develop two different skills. In the first skill, the author argues that having an appropriate rate of vocabulary, and including grammatical rules accurately provides learners not only with knowledge of the language, but also with the capacity of interacting orally in any situation while showing language proficiency. Furthermore, this author claims that in order to make use of the language, the speaker should put into practice the previous knowledge by using intelligible pronunciation since it helps to avoid misunderstanding when communicating with others. In fact, James (2010) emphasizes on the importance of having teachers that promote pronunciation instruction, since it aims at achieving intelligible pronunciation. Besides, it encourages the learners to improve their oral production, and to build pronunciation awareness and practice. Following this sense, the teacher works as a pronunciation coach that helps learners to have a better understanding of the foreign language and to improve their ability to communicate easily and effectively.

Secondly, Torcky (2006) states that the discourse competence is where the learners create their own speech. In this moment of the process, the learner structures a discourse

coherently and cohesively including all the elements of the linguistic competence stage. Thus, creating a coherent discourse and using the target language appropriately enables the learner to interact and to maintain a conversation. In fact, Byrne (1986) affirms that after processing the input of the target language, the learner needs to be exposed to a transmitted message and understand it in order to provide a successful oral answer, in other words, the producing phase.

The last component of the speaking process is the pragmatic competence. In this phase, the speaker needs to be able to adapt the speech and the register to the context in which the communication is taking place. In this moment of the process, Torcky (2006) claims that the speaker should be able to interact instantly and without hesitation, since he considers that speaking is a “communication process where responses are unplanned and spontaneous” (p. 35). However, Thomson (2015) and Nunan (1989) argue that speaking is a skill that happens all the time. Thus, students who have rudimentary grammatical ability, limited vocabulary knowledge, and poor pronunciation should not be limited to speak only in the producing stage. As a matter of fact, the authors affirm that speaking exposure should be included along the whole process since asking the learners to use the foreign language constantly helps them to be familiar with the language and to sound more natural.

### **Self-Confidence in Speaking**

Gürler (2015) argues that lack of self-confidence affects learners’ interaction when using the foreign language. Additionally, the author states that speaking interactions are normally altered because of the absence of self-confidence, since it is “a state of not being sure of doing something, and being shy while doing it” (p.15). As a matter of fact, Nunan (1991) states that the lack of confidence in communication happens because there is no

distinction between knowing various grammatical rules and being able to use them effectively and appropriately when communicating. As a possible solution to improve students' self-confidence, Urrutia and Vega (2010) state that providing the participants with vocabulary and activities allowed them to interact as a group while communicating in English. With these actions, the authors found that exposing students to the target language while providing them with appropriate input and tools made them feel more comfortable when speaking and interacting in English with their classmates. Additionally, Hanton, Mellalieu and Hall (2003) argue that self-confidence increases after promoting speaking interaction between students, since they feel more relaxed and comfortable while talking to their classmates than when talking to the teacher.

### **Presenting, Practicing, Producing (PPP) Approach**

Presenting, Practicing and Producing is a teaching approach based on the behaviorist theory in which "learning a language is just like learning any other skill" (Maftoon and Sarem, 2015, p.31). These three stages operate under the framework of the cognitive approach, where the learner is provided with linguistic tools that serve to gradually move away from the teacher's support towards more automatic production and understanding of the language. In addition to this, Yusuf (2015) exposes the PPP as a common approach to communicative language teaching that works through the progression of three stages as presented below.

**Presenting.** Presenting is the first stage that involves the introduction of the new language feature or linguistic pattern using real life situations. In this phase, Baker and Westrup (2003) present elicitation as a useful way to involve students, since it helps teachers to find out how much the students know or remember from the previous lesson.

Furthermore, Scrivener (1994) states three main steps to apply elicitation. Firstly, teachers should convey a clear idea to the students in which they can include pictures, gestures or questions. Secondly, supply the students with the appropriate language, information, and ideas to be used in their intervention. Finally, the authors claim that giving feedback needs to be included in all the PPP stages, since it helps the student not only to correct their utterances quickly, but to become a more proficient language user.

**Practicing.** The practice stage involves students applying the knowledge acquired in the presenting stage by means of various controlled activities. Yusuf (2015) affirms that students' interaction will facilitate their learning to internalize the presented content in the easiest way. This can be done through Cooperative work, as it is stated by Cottrell (2013) and Doff (1988), since students can have more chance to practice speaking, to have better concentration on the task, and especially to make learners feel secure, especially those who are usually shy of speaking during the class. Cooperative work also allows students to help each other, and to share ideas or knowledge in a discussion activity.

**Producing.** In the production stage, the learner has become a "user" of the language instead of a "student" of the language (Yusuf, 2015, p. 23). In this stage, Baker and Westrup (2003) assert that language learners "concentrate upon using recently learnt grammar, functional language and vocabulary with fluency when they speak" (p.90). Additionally, Yusuf (2015) claims that feedback in this stage should be given after students' performance without interrupting them since it will generate a safe, comfortable and positive environment in which students will speak fluently without paying attention to any hesitation or error. Following this sense, the author argues that by this way, students who are "shy of speaking will be more encouraged or confident to express their ideas in front of the class" (2015, p. 24). Thus, by generating safe and positive learning

environments, students could have better interactions among them while learning, due to the fact that they can elaborate short and comprehensible messages that will allow them to speak more fluently and confidently.

In accordance with Yusuf (2015) the PPP approach aims for students' best performance in practicing speaking. The author points out that by applying this approach, students will not only be able to "respond or collect their ideas, but also to help the weak students providing them with new vocabulary, phrases, among other linguistic aspects" (p. 21). Additionally, in the PPP approach the teacher's role is to facilitate the inclusion of a realistic situations or activities where the students realize they need to apply what they learnt. The teacher also works as a guide, although correction does not need to be totally involved unless students directly ask the teacher to do so.

### **Research Question**

How can the implementation of activities following the PPP stages foster the speaking skill in an EFL class?

### **Objectives**

#### **General Objective**

To explore how students' speaking skills are fostered after implementing activities following the PPP stages.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- To design and adapt activities following the PPP stages to promote students speaking participation.
- To explore how the implementation of the activities promote students' class interactions while using the target language.



- ❑ To evaluate students' speaking performance after implementing activities through the PPP stages.

### **Action Plan**

This action plan consists of nine weeks of implementing teaching and research strategies to gather information on the specific issue under investigation. I proposed to have three main activities for this action research project, carried out under the frame of the PPP approach. This approach offered me the opportunity to divide the class in three main stages where I initially provided the learners with the input (presenting), then they practiced and used the language notions in some proposed activities (practicing), and finally I proposed different productive tasks in which students put into practice what they learnt in the previous stages (production). In this last stage, I firstly asked the students to create question charts in order to promote speaking participation while asking for information using the target language. In this activity students elaborated a conversation while asking and answering questions. Secondly, the students would elaborate oral presentations to expose a specific issue in English. Thirdly, at the end of the process, I would collect a students' reflection in which they would portray their thoughts and feelings of the process. As the teacher, I would guide students' work in class. That is to say, I provided learners with samples, feedback and help when necessary. Additionally, I monitored learners' process and the manner they use English to communicate in class.

The information from the aforementioned activities was gathered by means of students' artifacts, class recordings, a focus group, and my journal where I kept a detailed record of the development of the classes and issues that might be relevant for my action research project.

### **Development of Actions**

At the beginning, this action plan was expected to take nine to ten weeks, but due to the worldwide pandemic caused by COVID-19, it had to be developed in seven weeks. This research process intended to improve the speaking skill in students and address the lack of self-confidence observed in the setting by implementing actions that took place in three different stages following the Presenting, Practicing, and Producing (PPP) approach as proposed in Yusuf (2015).

To start with, during the first week the participants were informed about the whole process and signed the consent forms that enabled them to participate in the study. Furthermore, during this week the students were exposed to the first unit content, and I chose a focus group where students participated in different interview sessions apart from the class. Some of the participants were selected based on their good performance in the artifacts they sent previously, but there were some other that were selected due to their difficulties when speaking. The first action that took place during this week was the implementation of the three stages of the PPP approach to teach the future tense. I introduced the topic and after implementing some topic comprehension activities, I noticed that most of the students had understood the topic. Thus, I asked them to create a question chart to ask their classmates about their future using will. In these sessions, the data collected were students' audio recordings and teacher journals.

Due to the changes that had to be done to the project, it was necessary to apply the study through a remote methodology. Thus, the second and third week of classes, took place a unit review in which the students practiced and presented an artifact based on simple future forms. Each simple future unit had three stages to be completed, presenting input, Practicing, and producing an artifact based on the language notion presented. In this

opportunity students created question charts to ask their classmates about their future. After obtaining the information, the participants elaborated short presentations to report what their classmates said about their future. The purpose was to expose the participants to content that guided them through the process of improving their oral production. In this step, journal entries and students' artifacts (Question charts) were the data collection instruments applied.

The fourth and fifth weeks had as main objective to present and differentiate the use of can, could, and may as modal verbs. During these weeks, students were exposed to real life situations content in which they guessed which modal verb should be employed and why. By doing so, students were exposed to different online games and platforms in which they practiced and asked questions related to the topic. During these sessions, students created presentations in which they mentioned the activities a person could do in a specific city. At the same time, students were asked to record videos presenting what they could do at school before quarantine, and what they could do at home during quarantine. Both activities were carried out in the target language. After doing so, the artifacts collected in class were a class recording, students' videos and a journal entry. This information allowed me not only to explore students' performance, but also their reactions while being totally exposed to the foreign language.

Concerning the sixth and seventh weeks, the participants learned how to introduce themselves in English and how to ask for personal information. During these sessions, the participants designed and performed a role play in which they simulated a conversation using English to ask and answer questions. During the elaboration of the dialogues, students received constant feedback to improve their productions. After creating their dialogues, I listened to the students' presentations and made the proper corrections.

Afterwards, they performed their dialogue and received the corresponding feedback. The main purpose in this phase was to promote collaborative work and to use English as the means to have a real life conversation.

During the eighth week, students elaborated a reflection about their impressions concerning the impact that the activities proposed in class had in their English proficiency. Besides, a focus group between the educator and the students was proposed in order to express their reactions and feelings during this inquiry project. Finally, all the information collected was analyzed and triangulated in order to report the impact of the project in the course.

### **Data Analysis**

To develop this stage of the research process, I firstly collected teacher's journals, class recordings and students' artifacts. Then, I divided the collected data in specific folders. All this data was analyzed using Word and Excel software. After having all the data in the software, I assigned codes that were connected to my theoretical framework. After doing so, I decided to implement Thematic Analysis methodology proposed by Clarke and Braun (2012) since it fits with my research interests. According to these scholars, thematic analysis (TA) is a flexible and popular method of qualitative data analysis that helps the researcher to organize, describe, detail and understand common themes, topics, and patterns of meaning that emerge frequently in the data.

At the beginning of the data analysis process, I analyzed the teacher's journals in which I assigned different codes to the sections I considered relevant for my study and that were connected to the theory. In terms of students' artifacts, I firstly analyzed some audio recordings created after class. Then, I analyzed some video recordings students sent me.

Finally, I analyzed class recordings in which I observed students' oral participation in class. All the data was analyzed and assessed based on students' speaking performance while pronouncing, elaborating a speech, and making proper use of the language notion previously taught.

After having all the data, I renamed some codes, then I linked the ones that were similar, and I grouped them into the corresponding categories. Considering that there were many codes, and very general categories, I was suggested to use a mind map to organize and clarify all the information. Thus, I followed the recommendation and it helped me not only to establish connections among the codes and the categories, but also to interpret them according to the theory. The triangulation of all the data allowed me to provide an answer to my research question.

### **Findings and Interpretations**

In this section, I intend to report the findings and interpretations of the information I gathered and analyzed through the development of this action research project, which aimed at fostering speaking skills by following the Presenting, Practicing and Producing (PPP) approach. After analyzing the data, some preliminary categories were created. The resulting findings and interpretations were discussed in two main categories: activities that fostered speaking, and Encouraging students to participate in speaking activities.

#### **Fostering Speaking Through Class Activities**

This category exposes the different advances that students obtained after the implementation of the activities. Besides, some issues that altered the speaking process of the students are presented.

**Tongue twisters to improve pronunciation.** After implementing tongue twisters as a warm up activity, it was possible to observe that even if it was a challenge for the students, it was also an activity that encouraged them to improve their pronunciation. Regarding this issue, data showed that while students pronounced the tongue twister, they also felt motivated after doing it correctly, generating students' reactions such as "¡Uy niño! Ahora sí estoy pronunciando melo. Así sí aprendo rápido"; "Profe traiga más de eso a ver si aprendemos a pronunciar" (Teacher's Journal, May 14, 2020). The implementation of tongue twisters relates to the first phase of the speaking process proposed by Torkey (2006), in which students were not only exposed to the foreign language, but also to pronunciation instruction, since in this case the teacher worked as a pronunciation coach who exposed the students to the sounds of the tongue twisters, as illustrates the following excerpt.

Min 2:20: Juli: "...Can you can a can as a canner... uhmm uy pa jmm...  
Teacher: "...relax Juli, again again, pay attention: can you can a can as a canner can can a can? ... (Silence)  
2'34": Can you can a can as a canner can can a can?  
Teacher: Very good Juli! Excellent job.  
(Class recording May 14, 2020, Minutes 2:20 to 2:36)

In addition to the aforementioned, Danijela (2009) argues that tongue twister is a very effective pronunciation exercise due to the fact that it contains sound repetitions, own stress, rhythm and intonation of natural speech. Consequently, implementing tongue twisters as a warm up game not only showed that students improved their pronunciation, but also felt motivated to participate using the target language as exemplified in the previous data.

**Question charts to promote speaking interactions.** After implementing a strategy that I named Question Charts (QC), it was observed that students interacted and participated actively while designing, asking, and answering questions related to the topic

of the class. As a matter of fact, when students worked in groups organized by themselves, speaking interactions improved since they took the risk to practice English. Despite the mistakes they made while speaking, they repeated sentences and used the corresponding language notions to express themselves as was observed in one class.

“...I asked the students to create a survey in which they interviewed different classmates asking them about their lives in 5 years using will for questions and answers. It was completely different the way students interacted in this session, since even if some of them made some mistakes, they realized they were transmitting a message effectively, and that it was possible to complete the activity speaking in English”. (Teacher’s journal, May 4, 2020)

Regarding the above, the implementation of QC promoted the use of the foreign speaking between students, since it compiles the three main components of the speaking process proposed by Torky (2006). Firstly, it includes the linguistic component in which the students were exposed to the language notions and corresponding vocabulary. Then, the participants moved to the discourse competence, where they created their questions using the learnt language, and finally they used the target language to interact with their classmates (see [Appendix A](#))

From the analysis of the previous excerpt it was evidenced that English speaking interactions required students’ self-confidence in order to establish and maintain oral conversations. Hanton, Mellalieu and Hall (2003) argue that self-confidence increases after promoting speaking interaction between students, since they feel more relaxed while talking to their classmates, than when talking to the teacher. This was seen in the class recordings where students were speaking freely and comfortably, having as a result the completion of their QCs ([Appendix A](#)).

**Oral presentations to promote speaking performance.** After analyzing the gathered data, it was observed that when students adequately internalize the content

presented in the presenting and practicing stages of PPP, they are able to elaborate and to perform in presentations while being fluent and showing language proficiency knowledge. The evidence of positive students' performance in oral presentations is illustrated in the following excerpt:

Teacher: ... I'm listening to you... Pueden empezar por donde quieran... can, cannot...  
Juanita: Aja... eee bueno. You can go to the Sky Dubai this is in the mall of Emirates, and you can have a desert Safari.  
You can... stay in the Burj Al Abaj, and you can have a beautiful view from the top.  
Paula: You can find many Jewels, and other things you can buy.  
Te: Thank you very much.  
Paula: You're welcome  
(Class recording, May 14th, 2020)

Despite the fact that some students had a good speaking performance in the oral presentations, it was also possible to identify that students memorized sentences and the pronunciation of the words when the language notion was not internalized, nor practiced adequately, instead of performing orally. Actually, it was evidenced that students who memorized their presentations could not react to immediate questions, or emerging conversations as shown in the following excerpt:

(...) Woman Student 1: Okey, in Medellin I can I... ¡Ay! Espere yo me acuerdo... In Medellín I can I go to the zoo.  
Teacher: Good. What else? Juli, what can I do in Medellin?  
Man Student 3: Nooo, pero es que nos deben mostrar... Tantas tareas que hemos hecho, a nosotros se nos olvidó.  
Teacher: Uhhh... Here you are.  
Teacher: So Mafe said, we can go to the Zoo. We can visit the Zoo. What else can I do Jaider?  
Man Student 3: Noooo, yo no sé...  
(Class recording May 14, 2020, Minutes 7':14" to 9':42")

Torky (2006) claims that speaking is a “communication process where responses are unplanned and spontaneous” (p. 35). However, students focused on the process of memorization had difficulties in their speaking performance. According to Arias (2003) and



Oxford (1990) memorization helps the learners to acquire and storage vocabulary in the Long Term Memory through two different processes such as assimilation and association. The data shows that the lack of language notion internalization that did not permit students to articulate new coherent idea, not even to answer spontaneous questions that emerged during and after the presentation as well as to continue with speeches.

**Proposing video recordings to foster the speaking skill.** Taking into account that video recordings are monologues that represent the transactional function, it was found that students could not transmit a message effectively, since they focused more on pronunciation, instead of conveying a message. Thus, despite the fact that students did not have to interact with others, their message transmission was affected due to their pronunciation. As an illustration, it was observed that the lack of pronunciation instruction affected students' speech during the video as it is the case of a student who wrote a text ([Appendix B](#)) using his own phonetics alphabet to know the pronunciation of each word. The evidence of students' difficulties while performing in the video can be observed in the following excerpt.

After grading and analyzing student's performance in the video, it was observed that he took some time trying to pronounce his text correctly. In addition to this, it was evidenced that he did not know how to pronounce some words, and he had to check his phonetic text to pronounce it appropriately. (Teacher's journal, May 4th, 2020)

Based on what showed the data, the difficulties portrayed by the students in the video can be classified as the characteristics of lower proficiency L2 learners, defined by Thomson (2015) as learners who have only rudimentary grammatical ability, limited vocabulary knowledge, and poor pronunciation. In order to address these issues, it is necessary to help the learners improve their fluency by providing them with vocabulary, language notions and intelligible pronunciation as suggested by Torkey (2006). In addition

to this, considering that speaking is the skill that helps the learner to interact with others, students should also be exposed to “pronunciation instruction” (James, 2010, p.4), in order to have a better performance while speaking, since having a bad pronunciation may disturb their speaking interactions.

### **Encouraging Students to Participate in Speaking Activities**

After analyzing the data, the results unveiled that the teacher plays a fundamental role when encouraging students to participate orally in class. Moreover, having a positive attitude and providing students with supporting comments increased their willingness to participate in the speaking activities, and at the same time it generated a positive learning environment. The evidence was found in the following class recording conversation.

3'30": ...María (tries again) “Can you can a can as a canner can can ... ¡No!  
No soy capaz.

Teacher: ¡Uyyy!... Te faltó el último can, ¡Vamos , Vamos! Otra vez...  
COME ON!

María: 3'39” Can you can a can as a canner can can a can?

Teacher: Good! Excellent. Muy bien... ¡eso es todo! Eso es un trabalenguas  
en inglés

(5 more students decided to try to pronounce the tongue twister).

(Class recording May 14, 2020, Minutes 3':11” to 3':42”)

When teaching in a large class, it is common to find students who reject participating in speaking activities mainly because they of the lack of pronunciation. This last idea is supported by Urrutia and Vega (2010) who exposed that lack of self-confidence is one of the reasons why students do not participate in speaking activities, especially when they do not know how to pronounce. However, the data revealed that students’ participation strongly depends on how the type of language the teacher employed to motivate the student. Referring to the above excerpt, once I obtained a positive reaction from the

student, other classmates felt encouraged to participate, since they trusted me to help them to accomplish the activity.

Furthermore, considering that speaking is a productive skill, Yusuf (2015) claims that teacher's feedback should be given after students' performance without interrupting them since it will generate a safe, comfortable and positive environment in which students will speak fluently and confidently without paying attention to any hesitation or error. Thus, as shown in the next excerpt, the teacher waited for students to finish their speaking activities to give feedback, which helped in pronunciation and in motivating students to keep participating: "Teacher: ¡Uyyyyy!... Te faltó el último can, ¡Vamos , Vamos! Otra vez... COME ON!" (Class recording May 14, 2020, Minutes 3':11" to 3':42"). Finally, it is possible to conclude that students' self-confidence does not only depend on their personality, but also on having a teacher who works as a guide and who becomes someone students can trust even when they feel they are not doing well.

### **Conclusions**

This action research project aimed at exploring how the implementation of activities using the PPP stages can foster 10th graders speaking skill. Firstly, this action research project offers some evidence on how students' speaking skill improved after implementing the activities following the PPP stages. Additionally, students' self-confidence while speaking improved after providing them with positive feedback.

Furthermore, after conducting this action research project for one semester, the implementation of tongue twisters was found to be very positive on students' pronunciation, because it helped the learners to start correcting themselves when speaking English in class. In addition to this, question charts helped encourage students to use the

foreign language to ask and answer questions. Besides, generating a positive class environment allowed students to gain self-confidence while using the target language in class. With this, students' participation and interaction increased, as well as they felt motivated to learn English. The implementation of these activities should also have some implications for the teaching field in which some teaching methodologies or strategies should be implemented in order to ask for students' active participation in their learning process.

Lastly, learning and teaching virtually due to the COVID-19 was found as a limitation along this research process, since it impeded the teacher to observe students interactions in the classroom, and prevented the students to communicate, to share and to build knowledge together while interacting in class. Finally, bearing in mind the limitations, and the findings I consider that further research could be done in the field of "pronunciation instruction" (James, 2010), since along this action research project it was evidenced that some issues related to it emerged, and may play a considerable role in the speaking process.

### **Reflection**

I have had the opportunity of being an English teacher for 3 years. At the beginning of this practicum process, I was afraid of teaching in a public school, mainly because when you realize the different realities and conditions teachers face at schools, you feel unmotivated. Actually, I wondered, should I be an English teacher? Who wants to learn English in a public school? After having the opportunity of interacting with the class in which I carried out my practicum, I felt motivated because of students' reactions when I was in the classroom. Their attitude provided me with energy, new ideas, and emotions to

keep going along this process doing the best of me. One day, after having what I call “the best class I have ever taught” due to the impact it had in some students, I started questioning myself again, but there is a question that still remains in my head, are teachers at school because they like to teach, or just because the government gives them opportunities that make them feel comfortable? This question came up to my head after creating, designing and implementing different activities that made students feel motivated in a class they did not enjoy before. I consider that teaching in such a context requires a positive attitude and interest from the teachers so that we can promote changes and inspire learners to become future teachers and also to become aware of their learning process.

One of the feelings that I had during this action research stage was the fact that we focused more on the research component of the practicum than on the teaching one. This feeling made me question myself when I was in the middle of the practicum because I really wanted to have the practicum to improve my teaching skills and to come up with more ideas about materials and activities to implement in classes. However, the research part conditioned the teaching process and it became rather a research experience instead of a teaching experience.

Regarding the research process, I am very thankful with the university since I feel I improved my research skills thanks to the whole and hard process I lived in the practicum. However, I believe that action research should not be imposed on pre-service teachers, since it limits our role at the classroom level. Although I consider this a matter of leading teachers to have research practices inside the classroom and perhaps spreading the idea that teachers do not conduct other types of research. If I am honest, I do not want to repeat an action research study, even if it gave an amazing experience with my students, I think this

was enough, and I would better like to focus on teaching and help my students, than just be focused on research.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Question charts:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1v3uYXvCNOJy0C1LbbqCVWQt\\_p59Q3TI7?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1v3uYXvCNOJy0C1LbbqCVWQt_p59Q3TI7?usp=sharing)

### Appendix B

Student's video transcription:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1P0Zdx8q4EyVxcjuoqdG7Ghx2VI149bU\\_?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1P0Zdx8q4EyVxcjuoqdG7Ghx2VI149bU_?usp=sharing)