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Peer-Assessment of Oral Presentations to Improve Speaking Fluency

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to improve participants' speaking fluency through peer-assessment using PowerPoint presentations. Nineteen undergraduate students were selected to participate in this study. They studied at a public university in a rural area of Manabí in Ecuador. This was an action research in nature. Quantitative instruments were applied to collect data. Instruments included the application of rubrics, pre-tests, posttests, and surveys. The findings showed that there was an increase of 2.3 on the test average. In the analysis of the rubric by categories, posttests outperformed pretests data in categories. In conclusion, the research showed that peer-assessment of oral presentations had an important impact on EFL adult students. This study contributes to the English teaching field and it is a reference for future studies to enhance the speaking skill.

Keywords: peer assessment, oral presentation, fluency, power point, higher education

Resumen

El propósito de esta investigación fue mejorar la habilidad de hablar a través de coevaluación entre compañeros usando presentaciones de PowerPoint. Se seleccionó una muestra de 19 estudiantes para realizar este estudio pasando por diferentes etapas del proceso. Los estudiantes pertenecían a una universidad pública de un pequeño cantón de la provincia de Manabí. El estudio incluyó investigación de acción con instrumentos cuantitativos. El estudio consistió en la aplicación de rúbricas, un pre and post test y encuestas. El procesamiento de información se realizó en Excel. Los resultados muestran que hubo un aumento de 2,3 en promedio. En el análisis de la rúbrica por categorías, los resultados de las publicaciones superaron los datos previos a la encuesta en categorías como habilidad oral, presentaciones de PowerPoint y evaluación entre compañeros. En conclusión, la investigación mostró que la evaluación por pares de las presentaciones orales tuvo un resultado eficiente para los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. Este estudio contribuye al campo de la enseñanza del inglés y es una referencia para futuros estudios para mejorar la habilidad de hablar.

Palabras claves: evaluación entre pares, presentaciones orales, fluidez, Power Point, educación superior

Peer-Assessment of Oral Presentations to Improve Fluency

For many years, the teaching of English has been included in the curriculum of Ecuador (Ortega & Fernández, 2017). In 1992, the Ministry of Education of Ecuador and the British Council signed an agreement in order to get better results in this field. After, the Ministry of Education announced that English became an essential subject for secondary schools (British Council, 2015). Besides, it was necessary to implement a new curriculum aligned with the adjustments of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR; Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

These adjustments included standardized international accreditation for both teachers and students' performances. Teachers' training in foreign countries was a prior policy targeted to that purpose. For instance, the *Go teacher program*, which had different destinations for Ecuadorian teachers such as the USA and some Caribbean Islands including Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, and Trinidad and Tobago (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). This was tied up to improve Ecuadorian EFL teachers' practices changing the typical teacher-centered classes to more student-centered ones for them to be more active and motivated participants in their classes (Emaliama, 2017).

Despite the fact that the government has had international support with different programs, the report from the English Proficiency Index (Education First, 2019) showed that Ecuador had a low-level of English competency which places it in the last place among nineteen Latin American countries. The improvement of the productive skills, emphasized on speaking, has had a slow pace until today (Ortega & Fernández, 2017). Students begin and end with almost the same level of English. One of the most common struggles is the poor students' spoken communication ability including pronunciation, lack of vocabulary, and fluency (Hadijah, 2014).

This situation is evident in most of the secondary and tertiary institutions around Ecuador, but it is worse in the rural areas where according to the geographical background there are some difficulties related to parents' education, incomes, class strength, and lack of services such as computer equipment and internet (Ponmozhi & Thenmozhi, 2017). Another affecting factor is the limited learners' exposure to the target language, consequently, they could evidence problems in speaking, pronunciation, and communication overall.

This study was carried out at a public university in Bolívar, a town located in the north-central countryside of Manabí province. According to the institution statistics, the university was composed of a principal, a vice principal, 3,480 students, and about 100 teachers. The English area staff included one coordinator, two office assistants, and 13 teachers. All teachers are assigned six courses at different levels. The courses receive between 15 and 25 students from eight different schools: Computer Sciences, Agricultural Engineering, Agro-industrial Engineering, Tourism and Hotel Management, Veterinary Medicine, Private Business Management, Public Administration, and Environmental Engineering.

As a requirement, students have to complete eight (8) English levels because the Ecuadorian regulations of higher education require students to meet a B1 level prior to their graduation (Consejo de Educación Superior, 2013). Despite the fact that all the students finish their courses, not everyone reaches the expected results, especially in oral production. Results from English tests highlighted lower scores in the speaking part than in the scores of other language skills.

In Ecuador, previous studies had focused on speaking; for instance, Neira (2020), Yépez (2019), and Zambrano (2019) explored the impact of peer-feedback to students' created videos to improve their oral skills, obtaining significant results in the

improvement after the intervention. A similar study was carried out by Dután (2020), who investigated the effectiveness of peer-feedback facilitated by WhatsApp to develop students' accuracy in speaking. Despite that there are some studies focused on improving speaking through peer-work, there is not specific studies focused on peer-assessment through oral presentations using PowerPoint to improve the students' oral fluency.

This study aimed at the development of EFL speaking skills by peer-assessment through PowerPoint presentations. The teaching-learning method of this research implied the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and was essential to look for related studies on speaking, peer-feedback, and students' views on their use. On the other hand, today, the use of technological devices is immersed in the educational field to support teachers' practices. This study integrated PowerPoint as a basic technological tool to assist students' oral production and generate peer-assessment situations within the classroom (Fauzi & Hanifah, 2020). This program comes in the Microsoft office package, it is free and suitable with almost all devices. It has become the commonest presentation tool for teachers and students worldwide (Masoud et al., 2012).

Literature Review

This section displays a theoretical framework in which concepts and theories related to speaking, peer-assessment and PowerPoint to assist oral presentations were covered.

Speaking

Boonkit (2010) said that speaking is a very important macro skill that would have to be improved as a successful means of communication in first and second language

learning settings. In the area of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), the fact of how to increase the ability to speak and make students gain self-confidence most of the time tends to be a real challenge among instructors.

Zaremba (2006) indicated that whereas reading and listening are considered the two receptive skills when learning a new language, writing and speaking are the two productive ones that foster efficiency when exchanging communication in real interaction. As an important fact, it is said that among the four macro language skills, speaking seems to be the most critical one for communication. Molina and Briesmaster (2017) also stated that speaking might be one of the most challenging skills to improve, it is often the main objective of each language student as well for communicating effectively in real contexts.

In his study, Hughes (2013) specified three levels and fields of research on speech and conversation. The first is organization and behavior, which includes discourse analysis; the second is the structure, which includes grammar and vocabulary; and the third is sound, which implies pronunciation.

About these three components, Hughes (2013) showed that discourse analysis studies are interested in how speakers interact and how the conversation is organized (coherence) over long periods of language (fluency). Also, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) established in its band descriptors that fluency and consistency refer to the ability to speak with regular continuity and speed, as well as to connect and sequence ideas to produce a consistent speech (2016).

Regarding sounds and pronunciation, Brown (2000) stated they are crucial for obtaining complete communicative competence. Along the same lines, Nunan (2003) pointed out that with the dissemination of communicative approaches, the teaching of pronunciation focuses not only on differences in individual sounds but also the

importance of stress, rhythm, and intonation. In addition to this, Byrne (1984) asserted that the leading purpose in the teaching of any spoken language is verbal eloquence, meaning that the student can communicate in an understandable, rational, and accurate style.

The ability to speak is an instrumental and essential part of communication. The communicative method prevails in the teaching-learning process to achieve those requirements (Yraola, 1989). Kasumi (2015) mentioned that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a method that focuses on involving students in communication so that they can develop their communicative competence. The principles of CLT include classroom activities in which students can use communication strategies and negotiate meaning (Richards, 2006). Similarly, Jabeen (2014) mentioned that "the teaching of communicative language is strongly associated with activities such as group work, couple work, open dialogues, role play, etc." (p. 68). For this reason, communicative competence is often the primary purpose of learning a language.

Students Issues

According to Nunan (2003), it is challenging to improve oral functioning for most students since talking is totally different from writing or reading, simply for the reason that this occurs in real-time. Most of the time, at the moment of speaking another person expects to speak as well, so it cannot be edited or checked what is being said. Taking into account what was mentioned before, we realize that oral language deals with a few features that make oral presentations a real challenge. Characteristics such as group work, redundancy, reduced forms, functioning variables, idiomatic language, delivery rate, emphasis, pace, intonation, and interaction are diverse attributes that must be taken into consideration when a learner attempts to make a statement in the target language. He also mentioned that the speaking skill is also intensified by vital fundamentals,

which are pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. Educators and students should be aware of all the above aspects during the teaching and learning process so that students can communicate adequately in a real situation (Brown, 2000).

Tsiplakides (2009) mentioned that even though anxiety about speaking in a target language is a common phenomenon in teaching English as a foreign language, teachers do not always identify anxious students, and often attribute their lack of will to participate in the tasks of speaking. Factors such as lack of motivation or poor performance is what makes oral communication difficult for learners.

Peer-Assessment

Huisman et al. (2018) stated that peer-assessment is seen as a part of academic learning. Ahea et al. (2016) and Yu and Lee (2016) detailed that it has a great contribution to education since it produces a social and collective atmosphere to learn from colleagues. As Vygotsky (1978) indicated in this regard, when an apprentice presents free communication just like real life, he benefits from it.

The social constructivism theory emphasizes learning through group work and pair work, as well as comments from teachers and students. Vygotsky (1978 as cited in Woolfolk, 2016) stated that students' cognitive development is stimulated by interactions with people who have better skills or know more, such as peers, parents, or teachers. Vygotsky also mentioned that educational tools, which could include computers, the internet, and mobile devices in the current era, have an essential role in cognitive development.

Assessment has an essential role in learning. This evidences students' achievement and measures the quality of their academic performance. Lately, literature

pointed out peer-assessment as an alternative kind of evaluation to strengthen the teaching and learning process (De Greza et al., 2015). According to Adil (2017), peer-assessment is a process in which learners are assessors and assesses by evaluating and rating one another using instruments (such as rubrics, checklists, among others) with specific criteria. Peer-evaluation promotes decision-making, interaction, reflection, and makes students more critical due to the fact that they have to supply feedback.

Peer-assessment of oral presentations engage students into active participation while they are developing skills of oral communication. Authors have mentioned some advantages of peer-evaluation. First, it exposes students to real and authentic communication situations. Second, students gain experience and improve themselves by judging their classmates' performance. Third, it fosters higher critical thinking skills as well as metacognitive learning (Adil, 2017; Grant-Smith et al., 2016; Joo, 2016). On the contrary, recent evidence has also indicated peer assessment has some pitfalls. For example, To and Carless (2015), in their study noticed that teachers are reluctant about the use of peer-evaluation by stating students are unable to make object judgements on their mates' work. Another issue to consider is the lack of confidence of some students, they do not feel comfortable enough grading and criticizing their peers' performance (Adil, 2017). Likewise, learners cannot judge their peers' errors and mistakes in depth due to their lack of sufficient knowledge (Adil, 2017).

PowerPoint and Slide presentation

A wide variety of technological equipment are important instruments used in the learning process. Nowadays, there are other devices that allow students to participate and engage in language learning. One example is PowerPoint (PPT) to make oral presentations which is suitable for students with internet difficulties. To use PowerPoint

no internet is needed, so students can practice and improve their speaking skills (YanJu et al., 2017)

Microsoft PowerPoint is defined as a program to make presentations using a collection of slides that can be used in oral expositions. They can include text, pictures, sound, videos, hyperlinks, graphs and diagrams, and other resources (Eastern Institute of Technology, 2015). One of the advantages of using PPT in oral presentations is that learners can use the L2 to interact with others. Likewise, students engage in cooperative tasks to reflect, negotiate, criticize, and make decisions (Brooks & Wilson, 2015).

On the other hand, if PowerPoint is not implemented correctly, it cannot have the desired effects on learning. The most common problem is that presenters just read their slides presentation with a lot of text which can be also monotonous for the audience. Similarly, another notable difficulty is that students' lack of fluency to give good oral presentations can make them feel frustrated and unmotivated. This situation can also affect students' confidence and anxiety. Another issue to consider is time, preparing and giving oral presentations and peer-feedback can be time consuming for both teachers and students (Brooks & Wilson, 2015).

The inability of students to speak with the fluency they want is usually presented as an indisposition and lack of confidence when they express their ideas (Pandian et al, 2011). There is a large number of students who have no experience of speaking a new language, so they tend not to produce their way of thinking but to repeat words. In that sense, the use of PowerPoint slides allows students not only to involve technology in their learning process, but most importantly they have the chance to produce oral presentations and then to reflect on theirs and their peers' performance critically and analytically (Thomas, 2006).

Due to the difficulties that the participants of the present study had with their speaking fluency and after reviewing recent literature which pointed out the benefits of peer-assessment on oral presentations using PowerPoint, this research attempted to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent can students' speaking fluency be improved through peer-assessment using PowerPoint presentations?
2. What are students' perspectives towards this innovation?

Innovation

This study portrayed the effects of using PowerPoint presentations to improve speaking fluency through peer-assessment. The innovation lasted 6 weeks with 36 periods of class in total (6 hours per week). Participants were 19 university students from a rural area in Manabí, Ecuador.

During the intervention, the required materials were only cell phones, computers, and projectors to make students' presentations. The first sessions involved instruction on the use of PowerPoint to create presentations. In the same way, participants were taught how to give effective oral presentations including aspects of planning, researching, organizing information, and creating slides with key details. Extra guidelines on how to manage time and body language were also introduced. Another important concept explained was peer-assessment. Participants were also trained on how to use rubrics step-by-step to assess their peers' presentation.

Students had different guided-practices in which they had to plan and structure a brief presentation, practice in pairs, and then record themselves by using their cellphones. Once they finished, students interchanged the material and observed their classmates' performance to assess them by using a rubric (see Appendix 1)

and provide some feedback to improve their work. The final project was a presentation for a community group and authorities on how to produce energy doing physical activities while working.

Methodology

This is an action research. Herr and Anderson (2015), defined action research as a cycle of actions that the members of a group or society have taken, are taking or wish to take to solve a specific challenging situation. This action research included quantitative and qualitative instruments to answer the research questions. The information was collected at the beginning, during, and at the end of the innovation for a cycle of six weeks.

Participants

Nineteen (19) students of 6th level of a public university located in Bolivar, Manabí, were the subjects of study. This group of students belonged to the majors of Environmental Engineering, Agro-Industrial Engineering and Veterinary Medicine. Their ages ranged from 20 – 29 years old. Their English level was A2, according to a diagnostic test at the beginning. Limitations in speaking were a common factor in the majority of them. That was why the researcher decided to implement the study in that class.

It is important to mention that most of them come from rural areas of different provinces such as Manabí, Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas, and Esmeraldas. The researcher applied an initial exploratory survey which found that students had an average of 2.45 hours of practice of English outside the class per day or less. They alleged that they talked to their teachers, friends and relatives or sang songs. Another part of the population mentioned that they did not have any practice because they did

not have time to do it. Finally, another part of the group reported that they had some practice with any kind of technological support, such as applications downloaded on their own mobile devices. As an interesting fact, some students explained that they did not use technology because it was addictive, others mentioned the lack of resources, and it was even mentioned that there was no necessity to practice English outside classes. A large range of students agreed that teachers should use technology in the classroom. They considered technology made learning more interesting and entertaining.

Instruments

This action research included quantitative instruments such as rubrics, pre and posttests, pre and posts surveys. Data collected answered two research questions related to improvement in speaking and to know students' perspectives to the components of this innovation.

Pretests and posttests.

To answer the first research question, the pretests and posttest provided statistics information to know if PowerPoint presentations improved students' speaking. Both pretests and posttests consisted of an oral presentation. The first participants' oral exposition, before the treatment began, served as pretests. Similarly, at the end of the intervention students made a final presentation which was considered as a posttest.

Rubrics.

Oral presentations were graded using rubrics. It included components such as fluency (speaking spontaneously and without many pauses), vocabulary (technical vocabulary), and accuracy (grammatically correct ideas, phrases, or chunks). They were administered at the beginning and end of the intervention respectively. The rubric was

created by the researcher but it was checked and cross referenced by two other English teachers (see Appendix 1). The instrument to answer question 1 is the pre and posttest.

Pre-survey and post-surveys.

Pre-surveys and post-surveys were applied in order to get the information about students' perspectives and how they varied through the innovation. The survey contained three sections. The first section contained four questions aimed at obtaining students' demographic information. The second section consists of twenty statements about participants' outlooks when speaking English. This section included five different scales from Totally Disagree to Totally Agree. The entries were taken from the literature review concerning speaking problems. Finally, the last segment was focused on classroom activities related to speaking, specifically, and peer-assessment. It also had five scales: *never, sometimes, frequently, usually, always.*

These instruments provided data to answer research questions 2 about students' perspectives towards the innovation. The surveys were piloted with a different group to improve the instrument. It was validated by two experts of the university.

Data Analysis

Data from the pretests and posttests were registered and processed in an Excel database. This program ran descriptive statistics, such as minimum, maximum, mean. These insights were compared and contrasted to determine the variation of results. All these data were processed to obtain the results and verify if the peer feedback using PowerPoint had a positive effect in speaking. After the results were gathered, the data was presented in statistical tables and graphs, establishing percentages for analysis and interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

In order to carry out this study, the authorities of the institution granted their approval. Similarly, the students were notified about the goals of the research and its processes. They were guaranteed that all the information taken from this study was totally confidential and for academic purposes. The instruments were authenticated by professionals and piloted other classes to raise trustworthiness. The instruments involved a heading describing the purpose of the research and emphasizing that their participation was voluntary.
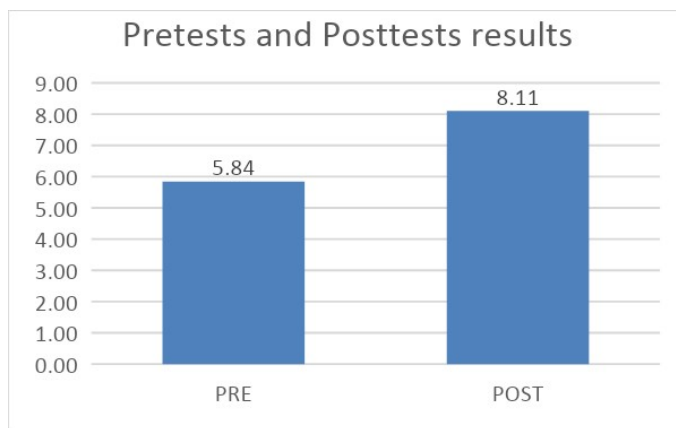
Results

This section describes the outcomes of the innovation. It is structured according to the study questions. Pertinent tables and graphs were added to interpret the results.

Participants' Improvement

To measure participants' progress throughout the innovation results from the rubrics applied to the first and final presentations were pondered. The following figure represents the overall mean scores of both the pretests and posttest.

Figure 1. Pretests and Posttests results

Figure 1 pinpoints the overall mean scores of the pretest and posttest. Referring to pretest results, the highest grade was 9 and the lowest 3. The overall average students got was 5,8 during the first test. Nevertheless, in the posttests overall score had an important change in the grades, displaying 10 as the highest one and the lowest 6. The overall average was 8,1 showing that there was an improvement of 2,3 points which represents a 23% of progress. This process had a considerable effect size (Cohens' $d =$ 1.53) which means this innovation helped participants to improve their speaking fluency using peer-assessment on oral presentations.

Table 1.

Result from pre and posttest

	N	MIN	MAX	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cohen's *d*
PRE	19	3.00	9.00	5.842	1,708	1.534411.
POST	19	6.00	10.00	8.105	1,196	
N	19					

Participants' Perspectives

To answer questions 2 about students' perspectives, a pre-survey and post-survey were administered. Results from each category are displayed in this section. The following figures and tables summarize the most relevant changes at the end of the intervention:

Figure2. Results of pre and post survey Frequency of Practice

	PRE	POST
1. How many hours a week do you practice English outside classes?		
None	0	0
Less than one hour	12	2
2 – 4 hours	6	10
More than 5 hours.	1	7
2. Do you speak English for any reason?		
Yes. With who and why	11	15
No. Explain why	8	4
3. Do you use technology to learn English?		
Yes. Which	16	18
No. Explain why	3	1
Is it important for you that the teacher uses technology in the classroom?		
Yes	16	19
No	1	0
Neutral.	2	0

The first group of research questions, which involves 1-4, was focused on participant's English practice. Table 2 shows changes in these components of the survey. This means that the innovation had a positive impact on the students' attitude about practicing English outside the class. Before the innovation, they practiced English a little (less than an hour) outside the class, results at the end of the treatment showed they increased the time used for practicing English (more than two hours per week). When they started being part of the process, they realized by themselves that it was fundamental to begin practicing in order to learn and improve. They expressed that they improved their dialogues and speaking skill. Also, they figured out the importance of technology in learning. They started using technology in and outside the class, for

instance, they used the internet to look up words in order to complete their tasks or other applications that helped them to improve their English level.

Table 3.

Results of pre and post survey: Feeling when Speaking English

When you speak in English, you …	*Pre*	*Post*
Feel confused for not knowing what to say.	4.00	1.79
Feel afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation, grammar.	3.84	1.53
Translate everything you want to say.	3.89	1.68
Can't continue the conversation because of lack of vocabulary.	3.47	1.53
Speak with not many pauses.	4.05	1.68

Referring to table 3, the outcomes denote that there was a significant improvement in all those elements from the first part of the rubric. Out of all the elements that the rubric assessed for speaking, the one that progressed the most was "*feel afraid of making mistake*s", and the lowest was for "*feel confused for not knowing what to say*". There was a change in students' viewpoints from their feelings when they speak which were negative (*totally agree=5*) at the beginning to positive at the end (*totally disagree=1*).

There was a low mean for the items that involved the aspects of planning and recording the presentation in the pre-test. Outcomes improved in the post-survey as indicated in table 4

Table 4.

Results of pre and post survey: Planning and Recording the dialogue

Planning and recording the dialogue	*Pre*	*Post*
Created dialogues to practice with peers.	1.68	4.00
Write a dialogue from ideas from the book.	1.53	4.05
Write a dialogue about a conversation related to your field.	2.05	4.05

Practice a dialogue about general ideas.	1.79	4.00
Practice a dialogue related to their specific areas.	1.53	3.84

Table 4 highlights that students' perspectives were negative at the beginning (totally disagree=1), but the post-survey showed a change on participants' outlooks (totally agree=5). They agreed planning and recording dialogues are meaningful and important.

Pair assessment was the last section of the rubric. Participants' viewpoints about it is shown in table 5. Results revealed that at the end of the intervention students changed their perspectives finding peer-feedback on oral presentations very useful to practice and improve speaking due to the fact that it fosters interaction when practicing. Likewise, they agreed students can have positive changes, to exemplify, students who were failing or having struggles with speaking could overcome them through their peers' feedback. However, they felt peer-assessment has some disadvantages because some partners are too rough to give scores to students because they can have a better English level. Other drawbacks were related to pronunciation, intonation, and voice tone.

Table 5.

Results of pre and post survey: Pair Assessment

Peer-assessment	*Pre*	*Post*
Pair-assessment is useful to practice speaking.	1.58	3.84
Pair-assessment is effective because the student can have positive changes.	1.74	3.89
It is not advisable because some pairs have better English levels.	1.47	4.37
It is not advisable because some pairs speak slowly and do not pronounce correctly.	1.53	3.95
There was interaction during the presentation.	1.32	4.21

Discussion

Peer-work and peer-assessment are fundamental in learning contributing to students' interaction in real situations and the development of social and critical thinking skills (Huisman et al., 2018; Yu & Lee, 2016). Results obtained in this research determined that peer-assessment to oral presentations helped participants to improve speaking, specifically in fluency and accuracy. This insight is aligned to what Adil (2017) and Grant-Smith et al. (2016) found in their studies. Using peer-evaluation engaged students into active participation and interaction developing their oral skills significantly. Peer-assessment exposes students to real communication scenarios and makes them to reflect, judge critically, and give comments about their classmates' performances.

Besides, the use of PowerPoint to assist oral expositions, contributed to students' improvement. YanJu et. al (2017) confirmed this claim by stating that students could practice and improve speaking through oral presentations using PowerPoint. In the same vein, Brook and Wilson (2015) affirmed oral presentation using this program can

involve students in cooperative tasks in order to reflect, negotiate, criticize and give comments or feedback of peers' performance. Another important issue to consider is the fact that PowerPoint was suitable for this group of students that faced internet and/or connectivity problems due to their geographical location (YanJu et. al, 2017).

Despite good results, participants reported difficulties related to peer-feedback, specifically, mentioning that more proficiency classmates could be too rough to give scores to students with low English level. Similarly, they mentioned having struggles with pronunciation and their fellows' voice tone. Similar difficulties were reported by Brook and Wilson in their study (2015).

In the same way, outcomes demonstrated that students changed their perspectives throughout this treatment. At the beginning of the process, it was noticeable that the majority of them felt uncertain and lacked self confidence, however at the end of the innovation their perspectives turned into positive. This corroborates Vygotsky's approach (1962) based on social constructivism emphasizing on social interaction of the learner in the place he learns along with critical thinking. Fear and lack of confidence to speak and express ideas were the main participants' worries (Pandian et. al, 2011). However, at the end of the innovation, the idea of working with a peer and the use of PowerPoint to facilitate presentations decreased participants' fear and lack of confidence (Thomas, 2006).

Conclusion

Alternative ways of assessment are required to strengthen students' learning process. In that sense, literature and the results of this study have proven that peer-assessment of oral presentations using PowerPoint was effective to improve student's fluency in oral communication. This innovation affected learners' oral skills positively and promoted a better atmosphere for students to interact, reflect, make decisions,

provide feedback, and learn from others. The selection of PowerPoint as a basic ICT component made this intervention suitable for these participants in rural areas who have connectivity difficulties. In addition, this innovation served as a means for students to change their perspectives about speaking by decreasing their anxiety, fear and promoting motivation to achieve their learning goals.

Limitations

In spite of students' progress, this innovation had some limitations. For instance, a larger sample is required to assure better results, reduce bias and any margin of error. Another difficulty was students' geographical location, this limited their access to use better applications, programs, and websites to empower English learning. Finally, the duration of the implementation was not sufficient. It only lasted six (6) weeks (36 hours in total).

Recommendations

After applying this innovation, it is recommended to have a larger sample of participants. More students can be included to participate in the project. Moreover, for further research it is suggested to expand the time of the intervention, at least six months to get better results. Another thing to consider is the idea of adding interviews to know in detail students' perspectives. Future research should be focused on peer-assessment to improve other language skills, also it can be considered a special study to explore the impact of peer-work on pronunciation and vocabulary.

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Appendix 1

Rubric

Available upon request.

Appendix 2

Survey
Student's Demographic Information

Available upon request.

Appendix 3

Design from Your Goals

Available upon request.