Perspectives of EFL Students´ Difficulties in Speaking: A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

Speaking skill has become a big challenge for EFL students. Learners have confronted several barriers in order to express their opinions and thoughts in English successfully. Oral production should be mastered to establish excellent communication in the society, within a real environment. This descriptive study was applied in a high school in Cuenca city, the instrument was a Likert - scale survey in Google Forms. The results, media, and frequency were analyzed in a program called SPSS. This study determined students face difficulties to speak English because they cannot participate in a dialogue spontaneously. Moreover, they feel nervous so they translate their speech literally. Also, interesting speaking activities have been practiced for the students in class, as making presentations, creating dialogues, and recording audios. Pair-work speaking activities are amicable for the learners, so these help them to enhance this skill, although, there are some classmates who dominate the language, considering less opportunities to improve the language. Finally, students reported there are interruptions in their participation, hence it takes too much time because of large classes. This descriptive study can be useful for EFL teachers who want to help their students to overcome the oral obstacles mentioned in this study.

Keywords: oral production, speaking activities, EFL students, speaking issues.

Resumen

La habilidad de comunicarnos en inglés se ha convertido en un gran desafío para los estudiantes de este idioma como lengua extranjera EFL. Los estudiantes se han enfrentado a varias dificultades para poder expresar sus opiniones y pensamientos en inglés exitosamente. Se debe dominar la producción oral para establecer una excelente comunicación en la sociedad, dentro de un entorno real. Este estudio descriptivo se aplicó en un colegio de la ciudad de Cuenca, el instrumento fue una encuesta con la escala tipo Likert en Google Forms. Los resultados, la media y la frecuencia recolectados se analizaron en un programa llamado SPSS. Este estudio determinó que los estudiantes enfrentan dificultades para hablar Inglés porque no pueden participar en un dialogo de manera espontáneamente. Además, se sienten nerviosos ya que traducen su discurso literalmente. Por lo tanto, se han practicado interesantes actividades orales en clases, como hacer presentaciones orales, crear diálogos y grabar audios. Las actividades orales en grupos son amigables para los estudiantes, ya que les ayuda a mejorar esta habilidad, aunque existen algunos compañeros quienes dominan el idioma y consideran menos oportunidades para mejorar el lenguaje. Finalmente, los estudiantes informaron que existen interrupciones en su participación y toma demasiado tiempo por causa de las clases con muchos estudiantes. Este estudio descriptivo puede ser útil para docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera, que quieran ayudar a sus estudiantes a superar los obstáculos orales mencionados en este estudio.

Palabras claves: producción oral, actividades de comunicación oral, estudiantes de inglés como Lengua Extranjera, problemas para hablar en inglés.

EFL Students' Difficulties in Speaking: A Descriptive Study

Nowadays, English has become the most spoken language throughout the world, giving opportunities to those that use the language in different fields, such as education, technology, medicine, engineering, and others. Communication in English is essential in human life, it should be clear, and fluent, to transfer the correct message (Akhter et al., 2020).

When one of the communication components fails, this can cause different effects in one of the receptors as frustration, and less interest in the dialogue, hence mastering speaking skill is essential in communication. Al Hosni (2014) said, "Speaking is considered the main language skill that students should improve" (p. 22).

Zhang (as cited in Al Hosni, 2014) mentioned EFL learners recognize that oral production is one of the most difficult skills to master because they have to face some barriers to express their ideas, thoughts, and opinions fluently. To speak in more effective ways requires particular attention and constant practice. In addition, Burnkart (as cited in Nazara, 2011) highlighted:

> "Many students consider language fluency to communicate verbally with others is often more important than the ability to read or write. They argue that speaking is the most important skill that needs to be controlled, and they assess learning achievement based on mastery of speaking skills" (p. 29).

Students should be involved in an environment where they can use the language, likewise feeling motivated to produce output in a real conversation. Al Hosni (2014) wrote, "When the input is negotiated and learners produce output in interaction, they selectively "take in" portions of comprehensible input and choose a correct linguistic form to express themselves." (p. 23). Producing the idiom is the most principal fact when people learn a new language (output), but this is not the main aim in Ecuadorian English classes so teachers have to face some barriers in the learning- process.

A study done by Yumniamatillah indicated that the lack of vocabulary knowledge, lack of practicing of the language, and motivation are important factors to difficult speaking English. It refers that for effective communication is not enough to know the correct grammatical structure or practical vocabulary. Most of the time, English teachers focus their curricula in theory; it means grammatical structures and memorize vocabulary, but it is not the best manner to learn a language (Yumniamatillah, 2017).

Within another descriptive study about oral production Dil (2009, as cited in Al Hosni, 2014) analyzed there are two biggest obstacles in the EFL classroom, they are anxiety and unwillingness, and this means students feel fear of being evaluated by their friends and make mistakes. The anxiety and unwillingness are presented in students with poor English because they do not feel comfortable or self-confident to interact in communication with students manage a high English level. Therefore, educators must encourage the students to feel comfortable in the oral production activities, the teachers' role is vital in the teaching-learning process.

According to motivation, Farrell mentioned in his study, it is necessary to provide a comfortable atmosphere, teacher should build confidence in the learners, in addition, the activities and topics are planed regard to students' needs, it will help to create appropriate classes (Farrell & Vos., 2018).

On the other hand, in public and private schools with large classes, teachers find a little difficult to organize a curriculum with speaking activities that can help the students to improve this skill. Bakanibona analyzed the number of students in a classroom, it must be reasonable so they can communicate with each other. Moreover, he wrote it must allow the professor to assess the students' improvement in the speaking components (Bakanibona, 2022).

This descriptive study revealed that the participants have taken part in different speaking activities in class like recording audios, and making oral presentations. Large class

sizes, the insufficiency of the English teaching periods, and the syllabus do not satisfy the

learners' communicative needs in the students' English classes.

Finally, it has been necessary to apply a qualitative descriptive study to report

students' perspectives and described some predominant difficulties that students have to face

up when they speak a target language.

Literature Review

Speaking

Shumin (2002, as cited in Dincer & Yesilyurt, 2017) wrote:

"The speaking skill is much more than uttering words and put the vocabulary into a

sequential order; it necessitates mastering the grammar of the target language, and

linguistic elements of the speaking skill, such as stress, intonation, non-linguistic

elements of communication (e.g., gestures and body language), discourse, and

sociolinguistic competence." (p. 2).

Burns and Joyce (1997, as cited in Torky, 2006) stated, "Speaking is defined as an

interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing

information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, the

participants, and the purposes of speaking" (p. 30).

Students should master important abilities to maintain oral, coherent, and

fluent communication. There are important components in order to keep effective

communication. Putri et al. (2020) mentioned that speaking skill is a productive skill in the

oral mode. Speaking is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just

pronouncing words. There are five components of speaking skill that can be defined as

follows: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Ur (1996, as cited in Al Hosni, 2014) considered speaking as the most important skill

among four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because people who know a

language are referred to as speakers of that language. This indicates that using a language is more important than just knowing about it.

In addition, teachers set up real situations to improve or practice this important skill. Derakhshan et al. (2016) highlighted the linguistic feature requires more than memorized vocabulary and grammatical comprehension. One of the obstacles of learning to speak is the contradiction between class materials and courses, so that most of the teachers do not facilitate situations for real practice in speaking. Besides, the teacher should take into account learners' interests and needs. Learners should take part in oral activities to exchange spontaneously their thought in the second language speaking.

The clue to master a learned language is to practice, so Akhter et al. (2020) reported teachers should implement useful techniques. Moreover, "practice makes a man perfect", this phrase is true, if the students practice the language, they will be able to enhance oral communication, so learning a language is not based in to have basic knowledge of grammatical structures or memorized vocabulary.

Bygate (1998, as cited in Torky, 2006) mentioned, "Speaking skills emphasizes that speaking is a high complex mental activity which differs from other activities because it requires effort of the central nervous system. It includes sub processes and involves distinct areas of planning". (p. 269-270).

Finally, Ambu and Saidi (1997, as cited in Al Hosni, 2014) wrote, "The huge number of students in the classroom, the insufficiency of the English teaching periods, and the syllabus do not satisfy the learners' communicative needs are the main reasons for learners' speaking difficulties." (p. 23). These features are common problems that happen in Ecuadorian schools and the professors have to face these situations every scholar year.

Speaking teaching principles.

Nunan (1999, as cited in Thituyetanh, 2015) wrote professors should plan their classes using situations and activities in order to their students can improve the target language in an effective way, it includes real situations and meaningful contexts rather than grammatical explanation or linguistics analysis.

Firstly, teachers should encourage the students to speak English in their daily life or outside the classroom. This can be useful because students are able to practice the target language in dialogues or conversation that are used in real situations, hence they will be aware of giving opinions and experience according to their daily activities. Thituyetanh (2015) mentioned, "They need to talk and to give their own opinions in English in meaningful contexts, so that they can develop their ability to produce language in real life or to use it as a means to do other jobs." (p. 49).

Secondly, the use of different oral approaches will be useful for professors to strengthen the lack of communication in English. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach that can enhance oral communication and involve students in different real topics to be practiced in class. Savina (1997, as cited in Alamri, 2018) wrote CLT encourages language learners to acquire language knowledge as well as the ability to use the language.

Third, according to teachers' role, Alamri (2018) mentioned professors are able to facilitate, advice, and guide the learners in the classroom. Besides, the teacher is the person who has to motivate the students in order to get active students' participation using the second language. Dincer and Yesilyurt (2017) stated, "Motivation, as a key element of the learning process, is often regarded as a panacea for all undesirable outcomes and behaviors in education." (p. 2). In addition, Yumniamatillah (2017) highlighted motivation benefits the learners to gain self-confidence. Less motivation strength the low self-confidence.

Finally, students' participation is beneficial in class because pupils will have opportunities to use the language. It is important that professors propose trendy topics so learners can express their beliefs and opinions comfortable; it will be beneficial for students because they will be able to get better in speaking skill. Intonation, fluency and pronunciation will enhance too. Specifically, Nazara (2011) mentioned, "To succeed speaking classes, the uses of correct approach, interesting activities, proper equipment, and high motivation are necessary." (p. 32).

Speaking Components.

According to Putri et al. (2020), these are the components of speaking skill that can be defined as follows: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. To be a good speaker, English learners have to master all the components. All the speaking components are indispensable for a correct and understandable communication.

Fluency.

According to Pishkar et al. (2017), cognitive fluency can be defined as the capacity to execute the speech effectively. Kurniati et al. (2015) reported fluency is the ability to speak easily, it can be clearly and concise. In addition, it has a fast speed with some pauses as "ums" or "ers". Skehan (2003 as cited in Pishkar et al., 2017) noted that utterance fluency is a construct with several aspects. They distinguish breakdown fluency, speed fluency, and repair fluency. Breakdown fluency has to do with the ongoing flow of speech and can be measured by counting the number and length of filled and unfilled pauses. Speed fluency has to do with the speed with which speech is delivered and can be measured by calculating speech rate such as number of syllables per second. Repair fluency has to do with how often speakers use false starts, make corrections, or produce repetitions.

Accuracy.

Ellis (2005 as cited in Pishkar, et al., 2017) stated that accuracy can be defined as the ability to avoid errors in performance, possibly reflecting higher levels of control in the language as well as a conservative orientation. Another definition of accuracy according to Ellis (2003, as cited in Torky, 2006), it means how the students produce the language, it can refers to how grammar, vocabulary, discourse, and pragmatic features are produced in a dialogue.

Vocabulary.

Setiyaningsih (2009 as cited in Salawazo et al., 2020) highlighted vocabulary is important, this is all the new words which people are exposed and received incidentally or intentionally. In addition, Salawazo et al. (2020) mentioned vocabulary are the words that people acquired and use them to communicate.

Pronunciation.

Kurniati et al. (2015) highlighted pronunciation is a phonological process, it means the way how the students produce the language clearly. People must know how the words in a specific language are produced when there is an oral production. Pronunciation is fundamental for an understandable communication (p. 6). Stress and intonation belong to this component which will detail below.

Stress.

Yangklang (2013) stated stress is used to describe the point in a word or phrase where pitch changes, vowels are lengthened and volume is increased. It is vitally important in conveying meaning in phrases and sentences. In addition, one major reason why foreign speakers of English have difficulties with pronunciation is due to the lack of stress, and knowledge of the new language being learned. Furthermore, Harmer (2007, as cited in

Yangklang, 2013) highlighted, "A word with more than one syllable is more complex, for

example, the word "export" on the second syllable (expo'rt) it as a verb, but if it is stressed in

the first syllable ('export), it is now a noun" (p. 446).

Intonation.

In regard to intonation Harmer (2007, as cited in Yangklang, 2013) mentioned it plays

a crucial role in spoken discourse, since it signals when speakers have finished the points,

they wish to tell to people, carry on with a turn and indicate an agreement or a disagreement.

An example: The rising-falling intonation pattern is used with a statement, a command, an

exclamation, and a question beginning with wh-words.

Yangklang (2013) highlighted:

"The movement can be upwards (a rise), downward, (a fall), a rise with a fall (a rise

fall), a fall with a rise, (a fall-rise) or flat. Intonation has a definite effect on meaning

and also gives information about the speakers' attitude" (p.446-447).

Comprehension.

Roskos et al. (2015) said "Children develop it through language experiences,

substantive conversation, and oral language instruction." (p. 13). Moreover, Clark and Clark

(1977, as cited in Xu, 2011) wrote:

Comprehension has two common senses. In its narrow sense, it denotes the mental

processes by which listeners take in the sounds uttered by a speaker and use them to

construct an interpretation of what they think the speaker intended to convey. (p. 161).

Methodology

Design

This study is a descriptive research which it will contribute to identify important

difficulties that students face when they are learning L2. According to Aggarwal and

Ranganathan, descriptive study is designed to report variables without consider any causal or hypothesis. Moreover, this research collected quantitative and qualitative data. (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019).

Bhandari (2021) wrote to collect quantitative data, you will often need to use optional definitions that translate abstract concepts (e.g., mood) into observable and quantifiable measures (e.g., self-ratings of feelings and energy levels).

The data was gathered by applying a survey as an instrument, in addition, a descriptive study was used in order to process, present, and analyze important information questions. Indeed, some significant questions were answered. They are: 1. What are students' difficulties to speak in English? 2. What type of activities do students prefer for speaking? 3. What are students' perspectives of pair work? The purpose of this research is to specify the difficulties in EFL that students related to speaking skills.

Participants

Eighty-three students participated in this study. They belong to a public school in Cuenca city. According to the survey, the sample was conformed of 63.3 % men, 29.3 % women, 1.2 % preferred not to say, and 1.2 % others. Participants' average age was 14. All of them are Ecuadorian, their social economic status was middle, and their mother tongue was Spanish.

Moreover, learners had different English levels: 46.9 % intermediate level, 43.2% Basic level, 8.6 beginners' level, and 1.2 % advanced. In relation to access to the internet and devices, it showed they have accessed to the internet at home and in the school, in addition, they use laptops, desktops, and smartphones to surf on the internet to practice English.

Instrument

The survey was taken in Google Forms format. This was in English and Spanish to avoid misunderstandings. Learners completed the survey in the school lab with some computers with internet access.

The instrument included Likert-scale constructs, and demographic information, it was used to describe the important characteristics of the participants such as: gender, age, language, course, and ethnic group. In addition, there were open-ended, multiple-choice questions. The survey had four parts, the first part consisted of 22 questions, which they were about students' attitudes toward speaking skill. The second part had 11 questions, they allowed to register activities to practice English. The third part displayed 7 questions about speaking activities. Finally, the fourth part involved students' perspectives on towards pair work.

Data Analysis

The information was gathered, coded, and entered into an Excel datasheet, after that, this document was exported to the SPSS program for the purpose of getting results in descriptive statistics. Means and frequency were displayed in tables.

Ethical Considerations

Hasan et al. (2021) wrote, "If researchers want their studies to be successful, they must adhere to ethical standards. The ethical standard aids the researcher in completing his or her work in a timely and efficient manner" (p. 03). Firstly, the researcher has followed ethical standards. The requirement was the principal authorization, a letter was sent in order to get the official permission. Second, parents' authorization was requested. A consent letter was sent to them, asking if their children can take part in this study. Finally, the participants were kept anonymous in the survey and the data was confidential.

<center>**Results**</center>

Outcomes are demonstrated in the tables below, the survey has been used to identify students' speaking difficulties, interesting speaking activities which are used by the students in class, and the perspectives of pair-work to improve students' oral production.

According to the first question: **What are students' difficulties in speaking in English?**

Students had to check the items according to the Likert scale that was used to tabulate the outcomes. The scale was great extent (5), a lot (4), some (3), a little bit (2), and none (1). Hence, table 1 summarizes the main outcomes of the first research question.

Table 1.

Difficulties in Speaking.

When you speak, you ...	Mean
Feel confident about the topic.	3.80
Know what to say.	3.00
Respond quickly.	2.84
Look for words to respond correctly.	4.00
Translate what I want to say.	3.68
My pronunciation is clear.	3.22
My speech is free of errors.	3.22
I can interact in a conversation.	2.90
Feel embarrassed of making mistakes.	3.80
I understand what the other person is saying	3.36

Speak without many pauses.	2.98
Speak spontaneously.	2.78
Consider you speak correctly.	2.92
Have a good intonation of questions.	3.26
Have a good intonation of sentences.	3.44
Have a good pronunciation.	3.20
Use word stress.	3.06
Use sentence stress.	3.06
The topics are interesting.	3.76

Outcomes point out that the students have different problems when speaking English, it is an enormous challenge to keep a normal conversation. According to the results; students have mentioned they have problems to look for words to respond correctly (4.00), and say phrases in order to participate in a dialogue (3.74). Moreover, the findings indicated that learners need to feel confident about the topic (3.80), it means, if the students desire to take part in a dialogue, the topic must be interesting (3.76). Furthermore, participants mentioned they translate what they require to express in a dialogue (3.68), making a literary translation, hence learners feel embarrassed for making mistakes in a conversation (3.80).

In regard to open-ended questions; some students expressed problems with grammar, vocabulary, self-confidence, and fluency. One of the participants wrote, *"I feel so nervous because my classmates are listening what I am saying"*. Other students mentioned, *"I do not know verbs which can be useful to express different statements"*. About fluency, a student

responded "*I cannot remember functional word, thus it affects me to speak quickly*". A worried issue mentioned by pupils was, *"When I am speaking, I have to think grammatical structures and the way to pronounce the words that I am going to use, all of these steps are developed in my mind"*. Furthermore, a learner wrote: "*Every single year English teachers teach grammar, but we do not learn how to use these grammatical rules*".

Finally, they mentioned pronunciation. A participant expressed, *"it is necessary to practice pronunciation with Native Americans, in order to improve this skill, thus we do not have opportunities to train, so everybody speaks Spanish, which is our mother tongue."*

The second research question is: **What type of activities do students prefer for speaking?**

Students chose the option according to their point of view, so the options were: *Yes* (4), *I would like* (3), *I don't like it* (2), *No* (1).

Table 2.

Speaking activities.

ITEM	Yes	No	I would like	I don't like it
Created a short speech.	31	7	10	2
Made an oral presentation.	40	3	5	2
Participated in a forum.	28	10	12	0
Commented on a general topic.	29	11	8	2

Created dialogues to practice with peers.	35	10	5	0
Written a dialogue from ideas from the book.	35	6	7	2
Practiced a dialogue about free ideas.	26	10	14	0
Listen to my peers' recordings.	24	15	9	2
Record audios.	43	4	2	1
I have provided feedback to my peers' oral participation.	19	22	8	1
Self-assess my oral participation.	25	14	11	0
Used rubrics to provide feedback.	31	14	4	1

In this table, 40 participants reported they have made oral presentations in class and 43 students have recorded audios. Furthermore, the lowest results in these questions are the students do not like participate in forums, create dialogues using their ideas in group, and self-assess their oral presentation.

In the third question: **What are students' perspectives of pair work?**

Students responded with their personal opinion. These were based in activities which were applied in class to improve the oral communication in groups. Participants selected the

option using these scales: Totally agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and totally

disagree (1). The table 3 shows the results below.

Table 3.

Students' perspectives towards pair work for speaking.

ITEM	MEAN
Pair work is useful to practice speaking.	3.76
Pair work for speaking is difficult because the student who knows more dominates the conversation.	3.28
It is advisable, although some pairs speak slowly.	3.56
It is advisable, although some pairs do not pronounce correctly.	3.26
The pair makes constant interruptions.	2.94
It takes too much time.	3.32
It is good if I work with the pair I choose.	3.30

The highest average in this table is 3.76, it means students consider pair-work enhance

speaking skill in class. Furthermore, if they practice with a classmate that they select, their

performance will be much better (3.30). Nevertheless, learners mentioned there are some

interruptions (2.94) which can interfere in the accurate developed of the speaking activity in

group, and the wasted time will be evident, especially in large classes. Moreover, participants

mentioned issues in pronunciation (3.26), fluency and English levels in each student (3.28) whereas, some students who dominate the language have many opportunities to practice, and other learners are limited in their participation in the oral activities.

According to the open-ended questions, pupils have emphasized they are not able to speak English because of self-confidence. A student mentioned, *"I do not feel self-confident when I speak English"*, someone wrote, *"I feel embarrassed speaking English"*, a participant responded, *"When I speak English I am not sure what I'm saying"*. On the contrary, some students announced to overcome these issues when the speaking activities are carried out with a friend or a peer that can be chosen by them.

Finally, learners referred working in group is interesting and fun because they can provide feedback to each other. A responder said, "*Working in group enables us to get feedback, it will help us to get better at orally communication"*

The results indicate students face different issues at the moment to speak in English. One of the most relevant problems is to speak spontaneously. Following a conversation results difficult for students due to lack of vocabulary, lack of knowledge about grammatical structures or misinterpretation of the information, thus, they feel limited to keep a normal or active dialogue, because they have a little knowledge of grammar rules or basic vocabulary. Although, they have learned grammar and vocabulary in their high school, it is not enough to speak naturally. Moreover, participants mentioned some speaking activities have been developed in their classes which have been friendly to enhance this skill, these are: make oral presentations, record audios, create short dialogues, and use a rubric to provide feedback, participate in forums, and comment on a general topic. Pair work activities are important for the students, so they point out speaking activities in group are essential to strengthen the oral communication.

Discussion

Survey results are compared and contrasted according to previous studies in this section. Certainly, speaking skill is fundamental in the English learning process because students should master the speaking components. Putri et al. (2020) stated a brief understanding of grammatical structures, a little bit of vocabulary, and linguistic features knowledge must not be memorized to get a spontaneous conversation. According to Torky (2006) and his study exposed, that an interactive communication has to produce, receive and process information, students should master to process these in their minds quickly.

Learners also reported that each scholar year, they learn grammar, nevertheless, they cannot use it in a real context, it means, it has not helped them to take part in a conversation. This is aligned with Akhter et al. (2020) who mentioned learning a language is not just focused in memorized vocabulary and basic knowledge of grammatical structures, the students should be aware of using the target language in order to set up oral communication into a real context. Moreover, they needed to look for words and phrases in their minds to keep the interaction in a conversation. It is similar with Yumniamatillah (2017) who emphasized that lack of vocabulary knowledge, the attention of audience, environment, spelling, lack of practice, and lack of motivation are factors that complicate students to speak in English.

According to speaking activities, students expressed they have been involved in different speaking activities. One of the most common for them are to make oral presentations in class, and record audios. This study confirms the responders have been familiarized with these activities and teachers have organized their curricula with some speaking moments. This is aligned with Akhter et al. (2020) who wrote that providing opportunities to practice speaking is advantageous, "that practice makes a man perfect."

Finally, based on the results, a great majority of students agreed working with peers to strengthen the oral communication in English. Although, some learners reported there are few interruptions at the moment to develop the activity in pairs. Likely, students faced some barriers when they try to use the L2. This is aligned with Dincer and Yesilyurt (2017) who mentioned speaking language is not enough ordering words. It is necessary to master linguistic and non-linguistic elements, speaking components, and sociolinguistic competence, in order to establish an efficient communication using a target language.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, speaking skill is considered a challenge by EFL students, thus learners require time, practice, and dedication. Different issues in speaking have been displayed in this study. First, when students take part in conversation, they cannot respond spontaneously because they do not know what to say. They feel nervous speaking in English because they do not find correct words for responding, in addition, they reported that have to organize their ideas and structures in their minds. It is important to emphasize grammatical structures are not enough to build an appropriate oral communication, it is necessary, students master linguistic and non-linguistic elements, speaking components and sociolinguistic competence to overcome the speaking difficulties.

According to speaking activities, students mentioned interesting activities as: making oral presentations in class, recording videos, also they have written dialogues with ideas from their English book and have participated in dialogues with a partner. Nevertheless, they mentioned, their speaking difficulties are because they have learned in their classes just a part of this speaking process in order to set up a dialogue, it means, teachers have organized their curricula focused just in grammatical structures, communicated they have not had opportunities to improve, specially pronunciation, there are not set up moments or spaces to

practice with native speakers or implement programs into the curricula which can strengthen this barrier.

Finally, pair-work speaking activities are acceptable for the students, but they reported these activities take too much time because they belong to large classes, it means there are 45 students in the classroom, thus some interruptions are faced due to misunderstanding, pronunciation or fluency with their peer, all of these difficulties contribute to waste a lot of time in these activities.

Limitations

This study had some drawbacks which are important to mention. Firstly, there was no seriousness or responsibility enough for this survey by few students. Some of them did not respond important questions and the information reported by them was not real, for this reason, the fictitious data and the participants who emitted fake information were eliminated in the Excel report. The instrument was applied to 83 students, but 50 responses were registered because of the problem mentioned. Second, although, the survey was developed in the Computer lab of the institution, it did not have enough computers for the students who took the survey, so they were divided into 2 groups. Third, several computers did not have internet connection, therefore, the survey was postponed in some occasions. Finally, students had a constant accompaniment at the moment to solve the survey, in order to get effective responses.

Recommendations

A recommendation for this kind of studies is the use of different instruments and techniques to gather data, for instance, rubrics or observation technique. Further research in oral production would be beneficial to carry out micro speaking projects which can contribute and support students. Finally, it is essential to provide positive feedback, so it will contribute

that the learners reflect in their mistakes, which will be beneficial in the students' oral

production; all of these recommendations can support to overcome the oral issues mentioned

in this study

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Appendix 1

Perspectives about Speaking in English

Survey

Available upon request.

Appendix 2

Letter

Available upon request.

Appendix 3

Autorización para encuesta

Available upon request.