

DEVELOPING ORAL SKILLS THROUGH THINKING ROUTINES

**DEVELOPING ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN SIXTH GRADERS THROUGH
THINKING ROUTINES**

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UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

B. A. SPANISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO OBTAIN THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN SPANISH AND
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Abstract

This research study was conducted to examine how the implementation of interactive thinking routines influences the development of the oral skills English of a group of sixth graders at Rafael Bernal Jiménez School. The study aimed at developing oral abilities due to the difficulties students evidenced in English language production skills during the observation stage. The project was taken under the qualitative paradigm of action-research type, and followed foundations on Communicative Language Teaching, Cooperative learning, Language Learning Strategies; and Task Based Learning. The implementation of the proposal included three pedagogical units based on the topics and learning objectives of the school's English program for sixth grade. Four instruments were utilized for data collection: Audio recordings, field notes, interviews, and artifacts. After a process of data analysis, the findings revealed that employing thinking routines in speaking activities impacted and influenced students' oral skills positively to the extent of producing complete and comprehensible fragments of discourse; using learning routines to improve oral skills; enhancing oral production in authentic activities; adopting a cooperative attitude to help classmates, and improving written skills as a result of communicative tasks.

Key words: Oral skills; Thinking routines; Cooperative learning; Language Learning Strategies; Oral production.

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2. Descripción
<p>Trabajo de grado que se propone desarrollar las habilidades de producción oral en estudiantes del grado 601 de la Institución Educativa Distrital Rafael Bernal Jiménez. El presente trabajo corresponde a una investigación acción de tipo cualitativo que surge a partir de la observación de las dificultades de los estudiantes para expresarse oralmente en la lengua inglesa y la falta de oportunidades para promover el uso oral del inglés en el aula. Por tal motivo, se decide llevar a cabo esta investigación con la intención de explorar la influencia de rutinas de pensamiento (Ritchhart, et al., 2006) en la expresión oral de los estudiantes, con base en el Aprendizaje</p>

comunicativo (Brown, 2000) y Aprendizaje por tareas. Los resultados demuestran la producción de fragmentos discursivos completos y comprensibles en inglés por parte de los participantes por medio de la utilización de rutinas de pensamiento en actividades de comunicación oral.

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4. Contenidos

El presente trabajo de grado se compone de seis capítulos para dar cuenta del proceso de investigación llevado a cabo durante la práctica docente en la Institución. En el primer capítulo, se presenta la caracterización de la población, el contexto, y el proceso diagnóstico realizados durante la etapa de observación del proyecto. Seguidos por la delimitación, descripción y justificación del problema, así como la pregunta de investigación y los objetivos correspondientes. En el segundo capítulo se presentan las bases teóricas que sustentan la investigación. En un primer momento se exponen los constructos teóricos que enmarcan el proyecto, y en segundo lugar, el estado del arte con base en investigaciones previas que han sido realizadas en el mismo campo de conocimiento a nivel nacional e internacional. El tercer capítulo comprende el diseño metodológico de la investigación: tipo de estudio, procedimientos para el manejo de la información, unidad y categorías de análisis, instrumentos de recolección de datos, y consideraciones éticas. El capítulo cuatro da cuenta de la percepción de enseñanza y aprendizaje del lenguaje, la propuesta de intervención, el proceso de implementación, cronograma de actividades e importancia de los resultados. En el quinto capítulo se presentan los procedimientos para el manejo y análisis de la información, los datos recopilados, y la discusión de los resultados encontrados con base en las categorías de análisis. Finalmente, se despliegan las conclusiones considerando los objetivos de investigación, implicaciones pedagógicas, limitaciones y recomendaciones para futuras investigaciones.

5. Metodología

El presente estudio investigativo fue elaborado bajo los principios de la investigación-acción y la investigación cualitativa. La primera etapa de la investigación consistió en la caracterización y diagnóstico de la población con el fin de identificar rasgos y dificultades en los participantes durante la clase de inglés.

En un segundo momento, se ejecutó una propuesta de intervención pedagógica posterior a su respectivo diseño metodológico e instruccional. Durante esta etapa se elaboraron y aplicaron diferentes instrumentos de recolección de datos (notas de campo, entrevistas y grabaciones de audio) con el fin de obtener la información necesaria sobre la implementación del proyecto. La tercera etapa, comprendió el respectivo análisis de los datos en dos categorías de análisis con sus respectivas subcategorías, con base en el modelo de Freeman (1998). Este proceso permitió realizar la discusión de los resultados y presentar las conclusiones de la investigación, así como implicaciones, limitaciones y sugerencias del estudio.

6. Conclusiones

Después de un riguroso proceso de análisis de datos, los resultados más significativos de la investigación mostraron que las habilidades de expresión oral en inglés pueden ser desarrollados a través del uso de rutinas de pensamiento por dos razones principalmente. Primero, éstas impactan positivamente la producción oral de los estudiantes ayudándolos a construir un habla más completa y promoviendo el uso de estrategias de aprendizaje para mejorar sus producciones; segundo, las rutinas de pensamiento ejercen influencia sobre la motivación y actitud de los estudiantes en relación con diferentes tareas de expresión oral al trabajar cooperativamente, reflejando resultados positivos no sólo en oralidad sino también en producción escrita.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the study

This is an action research project carried out within a group of sixth graders at Rafael Bernal Jiménez School, a Colombian mixed official institution settled in Bogotá. The students showed difficulties in their Oral production skills, therefore, the research aimed encouraging students to improve such skills by using Thinking Routines under a Communicative Approach. This chapter of the project presents the following sections: Characterization, diagnosis, rationale of the study, and problem statement.

1.2 Characterization

This section describes the context in which this action research project was developed. It allows the reader to know about the population observed and its environment. In order to do so, the following information is presented: Local context in which Rafael Bernal Jiménez School is settled, institutional context, and characteristics of the group.

1.2.1 Context

1.2.1.1 Local Context

The school Rafael Bernal Jiménez IED is located in Barrios Unidos, a northern central area in Bogotá. It is an official mixed school and it belongs to *Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá*. The institution is located in a central and important zone in the city of easy access. It is surrounded by some of the main avenues of the city, such as Av. NQS, Av Calle 80, and Av Cra 68. It is easy to find many commercial stores and manufacturing companies in the area.

1.2.1.2 Institutional Context

The institution was founded on March 20th 1979 and nowadays it has three branches: A, B, and C. Branch A is for secondary education; B offers basic education in primary and pre-school; and C is for kindergarten. For branch A, the institution counts on a three-floor building, in which high school groups and fifth grade take class. Inside it, there are more than thirty rooms: approximately twenty-five classrooms, an English immersion classroom, sciences laboratory, physics laboratory, and technology room. Some of those rooms are specifically designated for each area and each floor has 4 bathrooms. Additionally, this branch counts on a front yard, a backyard, a sports court, an auditorium, a parking lot area, a guard shed, and a food store.

The institution's PEI is called "Formación con trascendencia humana para el Liderazgo en Ciencia y Tecnología". It aims at educating competent people, able to manage a life project through humanistic thought and technological knowledge, for transforming society. The school expects to be recognized in 2019 at a district level because of its pedagogical and administrative use of ICT's, as a tool of motivation and innovation with a humanistic perspective, to reach educative excellence. The school implements the "40 x 40 curriculum" policy, coming from Secretaría de Educación Distrital and they strengthen basic education in MITI (mathematics, engineering and, Information and Communication Technologies) and CEA (economic and administrative sciences).

1.2.1.3 Participants

The population for this research project during the observation phase was fifth grade. They moved on to sixth grade after that. It was a group of thirty-five students; twenty-four of them were from Bogotá, and the rest of them came from other places of the country. These

students lived in different parts of the city. The most common neighborhoods were Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, Suba, and 12 de Octubre.

It was possible to identify this group's interest in the English class; they participated actively and showed a good disposition. According to a survey conducted with this group (see appendix A: Characterization survey), 75 % of them (twenty-four answers out of thirty-two) qualified their like towards the class with "5", being 5 "very much," and 1 "not really".

There was a good social climate in this group. It was possible to see respect among everyone, because of the way they treated each other and the language they used among themselves. The hard issue was behavior, for instance, when the students were not focused on activities, or they were not paying attention to class. Some of them, sometimes many, were usually talking about things out of context and playing during activity time or during the teacher's explanations. Moreover, there were usually three students who liked being out of their seats when they were supposed to be working on class duties. The receptivity of this group was not the best. They were open to listen and receive instructions when they were concentrated, but the teacher had to call their attention several times to be respectful and pay attention to what she was saying.

These students communicated among themselves using Spanish most of the times. In the same survey previously mentioned, the students were asked how much they used English to talk in class, to which seven of them answered that they used it once in a while; fifteen sometimes; and only five responded they used it frequently. During class, the English input they received was mainly vocabulary. For instance, repeating what the teacher asked them to in repetition activities, or when they had to write on their notebooks words from the board. Also, when the teacher employed some commands for classroom management.

1.3 Diagnoses

The fifth graders were observed more than six times in the English class during two hour-long sessions each. In one of the sessions the students were assigned a speaking activity to evaluate their level of proficiency in oral skills. Besides, the students answered a diagnostic test which offered the possibility to know their level in the other three skills: Listening, reading, and writing. The test was designed and based on “Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés” emitted by Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2006), according to what fifth grade students were supposed to do. Afterwards, an evaluation rubric based on the same source was created to assess the diagnostic test.

The speaking activity administered consisted in a short conversation in pairs, answering and asking simple questions about personal information such as, name, age, nationality, and who they lived with. Before starting the exercise, a written example was provided on the board with the structure of questions and answers they had to use. The pronunciation of the examples was given as well. It is necessary to clarify that during the activity the board was wiped off. Moreover, they were given approximately fifteen minutes to practice before being evaluated. The idea of the activity was to keep the short conversation going by asking and answering the four aspects already mentioned, assuming that students in fifth grade are supposed to deal with dialogues of this kind according to Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2006).

The results of this examination were that no students could keep the conversation going satisfactorily. Only two couples, out of twenty-eight students attending that day completed the four parts of the conversation. (See appendix B, Field notes 4). They hesitated a lot and lasted a good while to go on to the next point, even though they were helped with the first word of each sentence to guide them. These students were graded with “3” according to the evaluation rubric

designed for the tests. (See Appendix C, Evaluation rubric). Concerning the rest of the students, they struggled a lot with the conversation. They often hesitated on what to say and, in order to produce their speech, they needed constant repetition. It must be mentioned that pronunciation and grammar were not taken into consideration for this examination but progress and achievement of the activity. In general, this activity was unsuccessful. It demonstrated that students were not used to speaking too much in the second language; no production of full sentences or questions was evidenced.

Another skill evaluated was listening. This part of the exam consisted on answering eight multiple choice type questions (see Appendix D, Diagnostic Test), based on a reading done by the student-teacher researcher about the description of a movie character. (see Appendix E, Text for listening exercise). The reading was done twice with two minutes of permission after each reading to give the students the opportunity to finish writing down or check their answers. The results of this exercise were positive. Twenty-seven students presented this test, and twenty of them (74 %) had five or more right answers. Seven of them answered all the eight answers correctly. This was the highest number of students with the same number of right answers (26%). Six students had seven correct answers (22%); three had six right answers (11%); and four had five (15%). Only seven students had four or less right answers. These results evidenced that it is not hard for them to identify, on a description listened, aspects such as, characteristics, names, clothing, and colors. Despite the good results, seven students evidenced difficulties.

Concerning the reading skill, the activity was about matching three pictures with three descriptions by using a line. Each picture was a known character from a movie and each description was a short paragraph of every character (see Appendix D, Diagnostic Test). The results of this exercise showed 96 % of the students having all the three pictures matched

properly with the respective description. Only one student had two correct answers and it was because he matched the same description twice, though the other two were right. This activity was not difficult for students. In this case they had the advantage of written descriptions, thus having a visual linguistic support. They all comprehended and associated perfectly the short descriptions with the corresponding pictures, except for one student.

The last skill evaluated was written production. The activity consisted on narrating and describing what students observed in a sequence of six images, representing the logical order of a daily routine. The idea with this exercise was to produce short descriptions and narrations by using complete phrases and sentences. In addition, they should connect them with simple linking words of addition and sequence. An evaluation rubric for this exercise was also designed to assess their production (See Appendix C, Evaluation rubric). To inspire and help the students' written production, they were given a list of words related to the images.

The results of this exercise were not satisfactory. Only two students out of twenty-seven were capable of giving complete phrases and sentences. They made some mistakes, but they used a few connectors of sequence and addition. These students were graded with a "4" in accordance to the evaluation chart. Seven of them (26 % of the population) got a "3" given that their sentences were incomplete and they only used the connector "and." A couple of them used "after" although misspelled. 44 % of the population (12 students) was graded with "2", being this the most common result in this activity. This students' production was limited; they wrote incomplete sentences often missing many linguistic elements, and with no use of linking words. The rest of them, six students, had "1" because there was not sentence production, and therefore, no use of linking words. What they wrote was limited to vocabulary and taken from the list of words given. The test showed that this population had big difficulties in their written production.

They were good at using vocabulary and verbs but in isolation, with no contextual use within a sentence.

In conclusion, the main difficulties of group 502 at Rafael Bernal Jiménez School were oral and written production skills. The English level these students evidenced was neither high enough to keep a short conversation about personal information, nor to produce complete sentences when writing short pieces of discourse to describe a person or narrate an event. As observations and now the diagnostic test showed, the use of English of these students when writing or speaking was through isolated words.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

The area of knowledge of speaking skills improvement in English has been currently explored by researchers in countries such as Colombia, Argentina, the United Arab Emirates, and Spain, among others. Some of the most common topics addressed in the studies presented below are: Thinking routines to encourage students produce longer discourse, communicative strategies to enhance oral skills, Task-based learning to structure interaction in communicative situations and role plays, and thinking skills to promote their oral and written production.

Casamassima and Insua (2015) considered oral discourse improvement through thinking routines. These teachers describe a compilation of communicative strategies that allow students to structure their oral discourse meaningfully with the objective to help them improve their oral abilities. The results given by this research are students' production of more organized oral discourse and the achievement of confidence when speaking. Moreover, students' fluency and accuracy were impacted positively by the confidence they reached. Additionally, the routines worked as a support to guide their discourse in order to not go through the conversations illogically.

Communicative skills are also worked by Guevara and Ordoñez (2012), with the goal of teaching a second language through the use of authentic communicative performances with preschool students. Considering important the complete development of the first language before teaching a second one, the authors assure positive results with the implementation of authentic performances. They led to considerable improvement of oral skills, represented mainly in the exchange of information through questions and answers, following instructions, interpreting songs, and talking about stories” (Guevara and Ordoñez, 2012, p. 21). Moreover, as the students’ interests and ideas were taken into account to plan the performances, they enjoyed the classes and felt motivated to use English and participate actively.

The use of communicative and interactive tasks to improve students’ speaking skills is the topic developed by Gutiérrez (2005). This project aims at developing the oral skills of ninth grade students of an official school in Bogotá. The author applied Task-based learning and established a process of four stages to enhance speaking on students: Exposure, interaction, feedback, and final oral production. The findings of the project show that students left fear by interacting in a collaborative environment. They also got confidence in oral production and improved their speaking.

Pair work tasks have been also considered to improve oral skills by Ahmad (2006), in a fifth grade of a government primary school for girls in the United Arab Emirates.

Communicative principles are the foundation of the tasks given that the author considers that peer work promotes interaction in communicative contexts and, as she affirms, “this situation allows students to use the target language in a natural context” (Ahmad, 2006, p. 19). Also, she sustains that a result of the exposure in communicative situations had allowed students to use

English outside the classroom. Nonetheless, a negative issue is using incorrect forms within the pair tasks.

Sarmiento (2010) shows the impacts of the strategy used to develop students' critical thinking to enhance both oral and written production skills, in third grade of an official Colombian school of Bogotá. Conceptions such as Critical thinking, Bloom's taxonomy, and Visual literacy are important to frame and guide the project. Findings demonstrated that the use of an images program impacted positively and helped the students' linguistic productions. Moreover, a balance was evident between students' mental processes when reading images and communicating what they understood, being the image seen as a tool to facilitate communicative processes.

1.5 Problem Statement

1.5.1 Description of the problem

Students of group 502 at Rafael Bernal Jiménez School showed difficulties in the second language productive abilities. Such complications on oral skills made their foreign language learning process hard. According to observations, there was a low use of English during classes and the activities or tasks did not encourage them to use it.

Regarding oral communication, English was used in a couple of cases during classes, namely when the teacher led repetition activities, and when she asked them questions about vocabulary to check their learning. In essence, there was no meaningful use of English by the students, either oral production different from repetition of vocabulary, or short phrases in some cases, but never to communicate among themselves. The materials used in the classroom seen during observations for English teaching were the teacher's drawings on the board, some printed word search activities and some pictures that the teacher used to show them for asking questions

and making them repeat. However, these activities were never used to promote or encourage their oral production. These were students who had problems even introducing themselves. However, they had a good amount of vocabulary and linguistic knowledge concerning clothes, numbers, seasons, and climate (see Appendix F, Field notes 3). Nonetheless, according to Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2006), students in that grade were supposed to hold short conversations when developing an activity in class, chat about routines and actions, make descriptions of people and objects, and answer questions about likes and preferences.

1.5.2 Justification

A research project on oral production skills improvement in fifth grade at Rafael Bernal Jiménez School was necessary given the difficulties these students demonstrated in their English language oral production. According to Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2006), students did not have the appropriate English level in speaking to be on fifth grade. Hence, it was pertinent to enhance their performance on these abilities in order to reach the basic one (A2.1) proficiency level in which they were expected to be.

The development of this research project was expected to contribute expanding the advances and current knowledge in English language teaching, and more specifically, in the use of communicative strategies to improve speaking skills in English as a foreign language in the Colombian context. Moreover, it was also expected to help the students improve their use of English according to their knowledge and what there were supposed to do in the English class. Therefore, they were expected to be able to use their knowledge of the second language not only in classroom, but outside class as well.

1.5.3 Research question(s) and objective(s)

The development of this research project was guided by the following question:

How does the implementation of interactive thinking routines influence on the development of the oral skills in English of a group of sixth graders at Rafael Bernal Jiménez School?

General objective:

To examine how the implementation of interactive thinking routines influence on the development of the oral skills in English of a group of sixth graders at Rafael Bernal Jiménez School.

Specific objectives:

1. To identify the impact of using thinking routines on students' performance during class.
2. To describe the influence of implementing thinking routines in speaking tasks for students' engagement and attitude.
3. To evaluate the pertinence of the proposal for the development of students' oral skills.

1.6 Conclusion

After observing and administering a diagnostic test to the fifth grade students of Rafael Bernal Jiménez School, it was possible to identify some difficulties in their English language skills. A research study was conducted to examine how these students could improve their oral production skills through the use of interactive thinking routines, as a communicative strategy for speaking activities. In this way, students were to reach a higher level of oral production in the conversational abilities they were supposed to have as sixth graders. It should be noted that the students moved on to sixth grade during the implementation stage of the research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework & Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Some concepts have been taken into account for the establishment of this research project. As it is related to the development of oral abilities through the use of interactive thinking routines as a communicative strategy for speaking activities, five important concepts will be explained below to frame the area of knowledge in which the project is focused. Additionally, previous research conducted on the same subject will be presented as well to show the current advances on the topic.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Oral skills

The spoken language as Nunan (2001) states “consists of short, often fragmentary utterances, in a range of pronunciations” (p. 26). One of the oral communication skills established by Brown, which should be taught, is the conversational discourse. He considers that successful language acquisition is demonstrated when someone is able to accomplish pragmatic goals through interactive discourse with other speakers of the language (Brown, 2000, p. 267). The same author affirms that students often have difficulties because of the interactive nature itself. As he says, “Conversations are collaborative as participants engage in a process of negotiation of meaning” though the problem is what to say, how and when (2000, p. 269). Brown identifies six types of oral production that students are expected to achieve in class. If it is important to consider all of them for teaching a second language, the aims of this research project correspond to dialogue style speaking. A dialogue requires two or more participants, and can be divided into interpersonal or interactional and, transactional as specified by Brown (2000, p. 251): “those exchanges that promote social relationships (interpersonal), and those for which

the purpose is to convey propositional or factual information (transactional).” Besides, it is important to mention that listening abilities cannot be forgotten; oral and listening skills are needed to achieve the goal of a conversation: “In conversational settings, of course, further interaction takes place immediately after the listening stage as the hearer becomes speaker in a response of some kind” (Brown, 2000, p. 250).

A final consideration is that if a successful performance on the learners’ productive skills (speaking and writing) wants to be achieved, the inclusion of the receptive skills (listening and reading) is required. To develop writing abilities, reading needs to be included, to improve oral skills, listening has to be considered. Therefore, according to Reis, an integration of the four skills is necessary to reach “the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, to use language according to the parameters imposed by the speech community in which they are inserted” (2008, p. 2).

2.2.2 Thinking routines

“These “thinking routines” are simple patterns or structures, used over and over again, that support and scaffold specific thinking moves or actions” (Ritchhart, Palmer, Church, & Tishman, 2006, p. 1). The authors citing Ritchhart (2002) state that the function of the thinking routines is to provide the students with a structure that they can use individually or cooperatively for different objectives such as exploring, conversing, and managing their thinking in class. They affirm as well that, quoting Perkins, the focus of the thinking routines is the foundation of “structures that weave thinking into the fabric of the classroom and help to make the thinking of everyone in the classroom more visible and apparent” (Ritchhart, et al., 2006, p. 4). In reference to Lee (1997), Ritchhart, et al.(2006) pointed out that these kinds of routines are useful in classrooms because they serve as a tool to include thinking language, and moreover, time and

chance for students' thinking. Ritchhart, et al. (2006) classify the thinking routines into four types: Housekeeping, management, learning, and discourse routines. The last two will be fundamental for the development of the current research project. The learning routines, as the authors emphasize, guide the students' thinking and learning while they are engaged in content. "Learning routines give a structure to students' activities and provide the tools for engaging with content" (Ritchhart, et al., 2006, p. 6). Additionally, the authors mention that discourse routines "structure the discussion and sharing of students' learning, orchestrating the many types of conversations that occur among teachers and students" (2006, p. 6).

2.2.3 Communicative learning

Canale and Swain (1980) offer other than a definition, a rapprochement of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):

"A communicative (or functional/notional) approach is organized on the basis of communicative functions (e.g. apologizing, describing, inviting, promising) that a given learner or group of learners need to know and emphasizes the way in which particular grammatical forms may be used to express these functions appropriately" (p. 2).

Brown (2000) states that it is hard to provide a definition of CLT. However, he offers six characteristics that describe CLT: 1. focus on all of the components of communicative competence, 2. techniques are designed to engage learners for meaningful purposes, 3. "fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques" (p. 43), 4. Students have to use language productively and receptively, which will equip them for contexts outside the classroom, 5. "students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process, through an understanding of their own style of learning and through the

development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning” (p. 43), 6. The teacher is a facilitator that encourages and guides pupils to form meaning by genuine interaction.

2.2.4 Cooperative and collaborative learning

Some of the concepts implied within CLT are cooperative and collaborative learning. Brown (2000) states that in cooperative learning “as students work together in pairs and groups, they share information and come to each other’s aid” (p. 47). Thus, learners are expected to become a team to be able to successfully achieve learning goals by working together (Brown, 2000, p. 47). Moreover, the same author expresses that “varied cultural expectations, learning styles, personality differences, and overreliance on the first language” are challenges included in this assumption of learning (p. 47). Furthermore, quoting Oxford (1997), Brown explains that in contrast to collaborative learning, cooperative learning is “more structured, more prescriptive to teachers about classroom techniques, more directive to students about how to work together in groups” (2000, p. 47). Nonetheless, in collaborative learning learners engage with more capable classmates, teachers or advanced peers, to get some assistance and guidance (Brown, 2000, p. 47). Therefore, cooperative learning includes working collaboratively to enrich the learning process.

2.2.5 Learning strategies

Learning strategies are useful tools for students to improve their language skills and enhance their language learning process, as Oxford (1990) states: “learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning” (p. 1). Moreover, the author explains that such strategies are important because “they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence” and, when used appropriately, they “result in improved proficiency and grater self-confidence” (1990, p. 1). Hence, learning strategies do

not only support the learning process, they stimulate involvement, proficiency, and confidence. Oxford (1990) also expands the aforementioned definition by saying that when a learner applies a learning strategy, learning is: “easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations” (p. 8). Additionally, the author assumes communicative competence as the main goal of using learning strategies: “Development of communicative competences requires realistic interaction among learners, using meaningful and contextualized language. Learning strategies help learners participate actively in authentic communication.” (Oxford, 1990, p. 8) Therefore, learning strategies promote authenticity and at the same time, guide the way to communicative competence.

2.3 Literature Review

Some of the most common topics addressed in the researches presented below are: Communicative strategies to enhance oral skills, thinking routines to encourage students produce longer discourses, Task-based learning to structure interaction in communicative situations and role plays, and thinking skills to promote students’ oral and written production. The issue of oral production in English language teaching in school classrooms has been explored in diverse countries such as, Colombia, Argentina, the United Arab Emirates and Spain, producing knowledge concerning how to improve and enhance the students’ oral skills, through a variety of methods, strategies, and approaches.

Oral discourse improvement through thinking is the topic considered by Casamassima and Insua (2015). These teachers describe a compilation of communicative strategies that allow students to structure their oral discourse meaningfully with the objective to help them improve their oral abilities. The strategies, or techniques as they will be called later in the article, were

implemented with adult students and school students, and these consisted on thinking routines. The authors consider that this kind of routines “explicitly support mental processing by fostering it” (Casamassima and Insua, 2015, p. 22). Concerned on how to help students to produce longer pieces of discourse, these teachers affirm that students find it very difficult to sustain conversations. Five different techniques are used throughout their research, three of their own development. As a result, the students produced more organized oral discourse and they gained confidence when speaking. Moreover, Casamassima and Insua (2015) emphasize that “the teachers agreed that the techniques were practical, to the point, and easy to teach and use” (p. 29). The students’ fluency and accuracy were impacted positively by the confidence they reached, and the routines implemented as a support to guide their discourse and not go through the conversations arbitrarily.

The communicative skills are also worked by Guevara and Ordoñez (2012), with the goal of teaching a second language through the use of authentic communicative performances with preschool students. These authors consider important the complete development of the first language before the teaching of a second one. In this way the students can use the knowledge and experiences to learn a new language. Nonetheless, they accept to be consultants in a Bilingual Colombian school of a medium size city, to help improve the English level of kindergarten students. They evaluated the impact of the curriculum, which was designed with authentic communicative performances, taking into account first and target languages. The performances created were mostly role-plays and they were authentic because they involved the students’ ideas and interests about different professions, “especially those related to their parents’ professions. Children portrayed people working at hospitals, shops, hotels, and restaurants” (Guevara and Ordoñez, 2012, p. 17). The authors also affirm with positive results that “The implementation of

authentic performances led to considerable improvement of oral skills, represented mainly in the exchange of information through questions and answers, following instructions, interpreting songs, and talking about stories” (2012, p. 21). Moreover, as the students’ interests and ideas were taken into account to plan the performances, they enjoyed the classes and felt motivated to use English and participate actively.

The use of communicative and interactive tasks to improve students’ speaking skills is the topic developed by Gutiérrez (2005). Her research project aims at developing the oral skills of ninth grade students of an official school in Bogotá, given their lack of practice regarding this aspect. With interaction as a principle, she applies three kinds of tasks: Talking about interests - music in this case - narrating a story with the students’ own photographs, exchange of information through open questions from a conversation presented. The author applied Task-based learning, and established a process of four stages to enhance speaking on students: exposure, interaction, feedback, and final oral production. The findings of the project show that the students left fear by interacting in a collaborative environment. They also got confidence in oral production and improved their speaking. Furthermore, the author confirms that: “By developing interactive and communicative tasks, the students of ninth grade of Britalia could develop speaking skills, which let them interact in different situations using the foreign language in a fruitful form” (Gutiérrez, 2005, p. 89).

In addition, pair work tasks have been also considered to improve oral skills by Ahmad (2006). The objective of that research project was to study how pair work strategies can enhance oral communication in the language classroom. The population was fifth grade of a government primary school for girls in the United Arab Emirates, although the research was carried out with four of them. Communicative principles are the foundation of the tasks given that the author

considers that peer work promotes interaction in communicative contexts and, as she affirms, “this situation allows students to use the target language in a natural context” (Ahmad, 2006, p. 19). After interviewing the four students, the researcher found these kinds of tasks effective for foreign language teaching in a meaningful way. Also, she sustains that a result of the exposure in communicative situations had allowed students to use the language learned during pair work outside the classroom. Nonetheless, a recognized disadvantage is the negative impact of using incorrect forms within the pair tasks.

An additional research proves that both oral and written production skills are possible to improve through guided reading of images. Sarmiento (2010) on her research project shows the impacts of the strategy used to develop students’ critical thinking to enhance their both communicative skills, in third grade of an official Colombian school of Bogotá. Conceptions such as Critical thinking, Bloom’s taxonomy, and Visual literacy are important to frame and guide the project. It was necessary the establishment of four teaching units with the corresponding activities for the research. Findings demonstrated that the use of an images program impacted positively and helped the students’ linguistic productions. The program achieved the role of motivating students to find meaning by exploring the images, and also of activating critical thinking skills by construction of meaning. Moreover, the author mentions that “third grader’s productions revealed that images encouraged them to communicate, learn and practice English” (Sarmiento, 2010, p. 82). A balance was evident between the mental processes done by students when reading the images and the moment of communicating to their classmates what they understood. Also, Sarmiento emphasizes that “the trained visual readers discovered in the image a tool that facilitates the process of oral and written communication” (2010, p. 82).

2.4 Conclusion

The improvement of oral and speaking skills has been explored by each of the previous studies and researches. From these, the use of thinking routines will be adopted for this research project given the necessity of interaction and communication of the population. All the mentioned studies have achieved positive results using a variety of tools and strategies, but none of them considered using thinking routines as a way to get the students involved or engaged and make them participate according to their own interests, experiences, and ideas in an authentic way. Therefore, thinking routines were adopted as a strategy, not only to obtain an outcome but also as the tool to work on oral production development.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter shows the methodological component of the project. It includes the type of study in which it is framed, the procedures of data management, methodology of data analysis, the overall category mapping, the corresponding justification and descriptions of the data collection instruments, and finally, some ethical considerations.

3.2 Type of study

This project took the form of action research. The student teacher researcher interacted within the context and the population. This was done firstly by observing the group to characterize it and identify a difficulty. Then, by the execution of a pedagogical intervention to help solve the identified difficulty. An explanation of action research is provided by Kalmbach and Carr (2010): “*Action research* is most simply defined as a “practitioner-based” form of research. In other words, it is done by teachers in their own classrooms with the goal of improving pedagogy and student learning” (p. 13).

3.3 Data management procedures

Throughout the research project the objectives were: to identify and limit the problem, gather the information, review the related literature and theories, research plan development, plan implementation, and data collection and analysis based on the qualitative research paradigm. During the first stages, the qualitative research paradigm guided the researcher in designing the study and deciding the type of information to be collected. This also influenced the later stages of data collection and analysis. As Mertler (2010) states, “In *traditional qualitative* research studies, data analysis typically begins during data collection, continues

throughout the remainder of the process of collecting data, and it is completed following data collection” (2010, p. 43).

3.3.1 Data analysis methodology

4. The first phase, the observation phase, took place during two-hour long English classes in which field notes were taken to characterize the population and to identify the problems of the students in the class. A survey was administered to this group to identify social, cognitive, linguistic, and cultural aspects of the pupils. The results were tabulated and analyzed to complement the characterization. Then, by means of a diagnostic test designed by the student-teacher researcher and answered by the students, it was possible to get to know their difficulties in the foreign language. This was done by evaluating the four linguistic skills: Reading, listening, writing, and speaking. The results showed a low level regarding oral and written production skills. In the second phase, planning, these difficulties were taken as a reference to search and comprehend the state of art and theoretical bases of those impediments. The improvement of oral skills was the topic chosen to develop this action research project, setting then the research question: How does the implementation of interactive thinking routines influence on the development of the oral skills in English of a group of sixth graders at Rafael Bernal Jimenéz School? It also led to the corresponding objectives: To implement the use of thinking routines to communicate during speaking activities in the English class, to identify the impact of using thinking routines on students’ performance during class, to describe the pertinence of implementing thinking routines in speaking tasks for students’ engagement and

attitude, and to evaluate the contribution of the proposal for the development of students' oral skills.

A methodology was established as well to guide the project under the paradigm of qualitative research and action research, to plan the data collection procedures, and to organize the analysis unit and categories. The third phase was implementation, in which further pedagogical interventions took place in the same institution, considering a vision for language learning and teaching and a timetable planning. During this phase the data were collected using data collection instruments such as, field notes and recorded audio as observation instruments, interviews, and artifacts. Finally, one more phase was required to analyze and reflect upon the gathered data using a triangulation technique and an analysis strategy. However, the last two phases will be explained in detail later in the following chapter.

3.4 Categories

3.4.1 Overall category mapping

To reach the objective of this project, some data collection instruments were required to gather the necessary information for the development of the research. Following the theoretical foundations of this project, the data were collected under the categories shown below:

Table 2: *Analysis unit and categories*

Category	Subcategory	Instrument
Oral production improvement through thinking routines	Production of complete pieces of discourse	Field notes, Audio recording, interviews, artifacts.
	Use of learning strategies to enhance speaking skills	Field notes, audio recordings, interviews, artifacts.
Students' motivation and attitude during speaking	Motivation and engagement to speak in authentic activities	Field notes, audio recordings, interviews, artifacts.

activities	Cooperative work while developing speaking skills	Field notes, audio recordings, interviews, artifacts.
	Motivation to enhance written skills during speaking tasks	Field notes, audio recordings, interviews, artifacts.

3.4.2 Descriptions and justifications

3.4.2.1 *Field notes*

Field notes correspond to the technique of note making or taking during observation of what happens in the classroom as a student-teacher researcher, the live action. Kalmbach & Carr consider that “To *observe* as a student teacher-researcher is to *critically and deliberately watch* as a participant in the classroom. The act of observing recognizes that “live action” provides powerful insights for teacher researchers” (2010, p. 77).

3.4.2.2 *Recorded audio*

According to Kalmbach & Carr (2010), Digital audio is classified within the data-collection tools for observation. Therefore, this technique allows the recording of students’ oral production during interaction and communication.

3.4.2.3 *Artifacts*

One of the forms of assessing and proving the students’ performance in communicative tasks is collecting a physical document. Kalmbach & Carr declare that: “An *artifact* is any kind of physical documentation that sheds additional light on your research question and topic” (2010, p. 78). Some of the artifacts that were collected are: workshops, worksheets, charts, and tables.

3.4.2.4 Interviews

Kalmbach & Carr (2010) affirm that an interview is not necessarily oral or verbal. Two of its types are: Survey and informal interview, both of them considered interview data. Moreover, such as they state, “interview data takes on the voice of the person being interviewed” (2010, p. 78).

3.5 Ethical considerations

Guidelines for gaining permissions presented by Kalmbach and Carr (2010, p. 97), demonstrate that written permission must be gained if the research project is going to be made public, if it will have an audience larger than the professor and peers, or/and if there will be a presentation. Therefore, it was appropriate to ask the students and their parents for permission to be included in the study by means of a consent form (see appendix G: Consent form), which was handed to the scholars explaining the project. It included the researcher introduction, the topic of the project, the objectives of the project, type of data to be collected, reason why the data were necessary, how the project would be published, confidentiality of the information, absence of any risk, and a slot to sign acknowledging having read the form and authorizing the researcher for the mentioned purposes.

3.6 Conclusion

The type of study that framed this project was Action Research. The data management procedure was settled in four phases: Observation, planning, implementation, and analysis. Qualitative research is the paradigm that guided the methodology for data collection and analysis. Oral skills, thinking routines and learning strategies were the major categories of analysis following the theoretical framework. As a final point, the instruments to gather data

were: Field notes, audio recordings, artifacts and surveys, besides a consent form due to ethical reasons.

Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

4.1 Introduction

For the pedagogical intervention and implementation of this project it was necessary to establish the approach and method that framed and guided the vision of language and learning. These are Communicative Language Teaching and Interactive Learning. Both visions correspond broadly to the objectives of the project and the learning requirements of the target population. Moreover, an instructional design was needed in order to elucidate considerations for lesson planning and the implementation phase. A timetable is presented as well to relate the phases of the interventions, process, time, and resources. Lastly, the significance of the results is explained.

4.2 Visions of language and learning

4.2.1 Vision of language (Language Teaching Approach)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the vision of language considered for the phase of pedagogical intervention and implementation of this research project. This approach was chosen given the lack of communicative tasks or activities and social interaction for language learning during ESL classes, and most of all, for the absence of encouragement and engagement for students' oral production and conversations. These missing elements coincide with some of the features of CLT listed by Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) and presented by Brown: "language learning is learning to communicate," "Effective communication is sought," "Attempts to communicate are encouraged from the very beginning," "Students are expected to

interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in their writing” (2000, p. 45).

4.2.2 Vision of learning

Brown (2000) affirms that one of the concepts allied to CLT is Interactive Learning. He declares as well that: “At the heart of current theories of communicative competence is the essential interactive nature of communication” (p. 48). For accurate communication, the interaction or negotiation between the interlocutors is necessary, a speaker’s production and a listener’s reception. Brown presents some characteristics of how an interactive class should be. Some of them include: “doing significant amounts of pair and group work, receiving authentic language input in real-world contexts, practicing oral communication through the give and take and spontaneity of actual conversations,” among others (2000, p. 48). Furthermore, some of the activities for language learning planned for this research are considered by Richards & Rodgers (1999) as social interaction activities quoting Littlewood (1981): “Social interaction activities include conversation and discussion sessions, dialogues and role plays, simulations, skits, improvisations, and debates” (1999, p. 76).

4.3 Instructional design: Lesson planning

The lesson planning was done bearing in mind the Task Based Learning method. Nunan (2001) gives a common characteristic of three different definitions of TBL: Tasks involving communicative language use in which the meaning is more important than linguistic structure. He as well considers a communicative task as “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form” (2001, p. 10). To accomplish the aims of this project, it was necessary that the designed tasks and activities engaged students

in using the language in real communicative situations, where they could express critical views guided by thinking routines.

The lessons for each unit were planned following first, the English subject school's program for sixth grade: Learning goals and contents, and second, the specific objectives of the research project. It is also worth mentioning that the population was in sixth grade at the moment of the implementation of the project, and not in fifth grade as they were during the first stage of the research.

4.4 Implementation

This proposal was planned and implemented as a three-unit sequence (see Table 2: Timetable), where each one had a different topic according to the contents in the English language program for sixth grade, as previously mentioned. The steps and procedure for each unit were similar, beginning with the introduction of the topic, followed by development of the topic, and finally an oral production activity on the topic using a thinking routine.

The students needed a good amount of input and knowledge on the topic to be able to produce language. As such, routines were used in the production activities of each unit. This reflected the main objective of the research which was to examine how the implementation of interactive thinking routines influenced on the development of English oral skills in a group of sixth graders at Rafael Bernal Jiménez School. Each unit was hence carried out working on the receptive skills first, and then productive skills.

The first Unit covered four lessons for four corresponding sessions. However, the lessons were redesigned because time was taken away due to cultural activities in the school during two of the sessions. The learning goal in this unit was to talk about jobs and describe the corresponding role for each occupation. For that reason, the students learned the occupations,

actions related to each one of them, and work places. Throughout this unit, the students progressed little by little, from the isolated learning of professions names, action verbs, and vocabulary, to a successful production of job descriptions. Some of the activities applied were matching exercise, word searches, crosswords, puzzles, guessing games, board games, exercises to fill in the blanks, writing contests, among others. After working on this topic with the students, a speaking task was applied in order to implement a first thinking routine. The task consisted on a production activity in which the students demonstrated their learning by using a thinking routine in a pair speaking exercise. Before that, the teacher-researcher explained and exemplified the routine: *Say what, say why, say other things to try*, by using images and information about the occupations, so that the students could use it as a communicative strategy for the activity. The intention was to answer the question: What is his/her occupation?, in order to provide the following information: First, name of the occupation (say what), second, a reason why that is the occupation using for instance the role description (say why), and lastly, any additional information like the work place or whatever they wanted to say about the occupation (say other things to try). Once the explanation finished, the teacher gave the students twenty minutes to do the activity. What they did first was to decide on and draw a profession on a piece of colored paper. Next, similarly to the explanation and examples, they answered the question for their drawings in groups of four people. Finally, they were given permission to write down their answers below each drawing. With the application of this first unit, it was possible for the teacher-researcher to implement the first thinking routine and collect audio recordings, artifacts, and surveys.

The next unit in the proposal involved *actions in progress* as the topic. Four sessions were needed to prepare the students to talk about actions in progress using themes such as sports,

clothes, and the weather. Regarding sports, the learners were expected to identify and say the sports people were playing on the videos and images and, describe the clothes they were wearing. Besides that, they should establish relations between activities people were doing and the clothes people were wearing according to the weather. Some of the activities developed were presentation of images to incite students' inquiry, copies to do reading of the text with images, drawings on reading comprehension, charts to fill out with information from texts, a crossword, a chart to classify types of clothes depending on the weather, prompts to guide communicative activities, a video about action verbs, worksheets to relate actions and verbs, filling-in the gap exercises, speaking exercises using thinking routines, among others. In contrast to the other two units, two sets of data were collected because thinking routines were applied twice during two different speaking activities. Likewise unit one, after working on the corresponding content for the unit, the speaking tasks were done with the aim of implementing a new thinking routine and evaluating its impact, pertinence, and contribution. For the first speaking activity the students received a table to be filled out in groups of four people with information from the readings. After reading them all, and working on all of the short texts, the teacher explained the speaking exercise using information from one of the readings in the text, based on one of the thinking routines: *Who, Where, What, and Why, you can have a try*, so that the students could provide their partners information about the readings to complete the chart. Each member of the group chose a reading to share its corresponding information among the group. Then students had to find information such as the name of the person in the reading, where the person was, the activity he/she was doing, the clothes the person was wearing, and the weather, according to the thinking routine. The implementation of this activity provided the following data: Field notes with the transcription of students' speech, artifacts, and an informal interview. For the second speaking

activity the same thinking routine was used. The students had to make a drawing making explicit a type of weather, a person doing a specific action, and the clothes that person was wearing.

They shared their drawings in groups, presenting the situations they drew by using the thinking routine to each other: *Who, Where, What and Why*. Similarly to the previous speaking exercise, it allowed the students to give information such as who was in the drawing, where that person was, what he/she was doing, and a reason why that person was doing that activity. With this second activity it was possible to gather audio recordings of students' speech, artifacts, and a survey.

The third unit in the implementation of the research proposal was *Months and celebrations*. It consisted on the main festivities for each month in Colombia. The learning goal for this unit was to talk about monthly celebrations and the way the students commemorated special dates. The unit was intended to work on the months of the year and review the seasons in English, being celebrations the main topic. The students practiced the topic based on the corresponding celebrations for each month and talked about what they did on some of those festivities. Some of the activities included image presentations, vocabulary recognition, readings, drawings of the calendar and seasons, word searches, games, and others. After the students had worked enough on the topic, a new speaking activity was applied using the same thinking routine as in the first unit. Before the students did the activity, like in previous units, the teacher-researcher explained how to use the thinking routine: *Say what, say why, say other things to try*, as a strategy to guide the speaking exercise to share in couples what they do for Mother's Day. The routine allowed the students to answer a question, give a reason, and add something else. The teacher used some images to explain and exemplify the routine, stimulate their answers, and encourage them within the routine. The question was: *What do you do to celebrate Mother's Day?* After that, the students chose a celebration and made a poster drawing what they do to

celebrate it. They also used the dictionary to look up the words they needed to talk about the celebration. They were told they could write their answers on the notebook next to the drawing. Moreover, they were provided with some useful words to complement their answers. For this task, they were given twenty-five minutes. When they finished, they shared their work in couples. The carrying out of this unit allowed the teacher-researcher to collect data such as field notes, artifacts, and interviews.

4.5 Timetable

Table 2:

Timetable

Unit	Steps and Procedure	Time	Resources
Unit 1	Occupations	4 sessions / 8 hours	Worksheets, copies, images, TV, laptop, lesson plans, board, markers, games, color pencils, scissors, glue
	Input and introduction of the topic		
	Development of the topic		
	Presentation and implementation of thinking routines		
Unit 2	Actions in progress with sports, clothes, and the weather	4 sessions / 8 hours	Worksheets, copies, images, flashcards, lesson plans, board, markers, games, color pencils, scissors, glue
	Input and introduction of the topic		
	Development of the topic		
	Speaking activity using thinking routines		
Unit 3	Months and celebrations	4 sessions / 8 hours	Worksheets, copies, images, TV, laptop, lesson plans, board, markers, games, color pencils, scissors, glue
	Input and introduction of the topic		
	Development of the topic		
	Speaking activity using thinking routines		

4.6 Significance of the results

The results obtained with the implementation of this proposal provided key information on a different way of improving sixth graders' oral communicative skills in a Colombian official school. The results went from the oral production of isolated words to longer fragments of

discourse in English. As a product, a more meaningful speech was observed from the students during class tasks. This study contributes with the results of an innovative perspective on the improvement of English foreign language teaching mediated by using thinking routines. Moreover, it allows understanding how positive and accurate the routines are for such purpose and the suitability of further research on the topic.

Furthermore, the beneficiaries of this research were firstly the students since this project aimed at helping them improve their English language skills. Second, the teachers and institutions, because they could know the results of using thinking routines in the classroom so they could decide whether to adopt them as a strategy for English teaching. Third, researchers of the education field, due to the valuable results and information they might find in this research. Last but not least, the preservice teacher-researcher as well, because of the chance to make part of a real learning context and the plenty of opportunities to construct knowledge in the education field.

In addition, the impacts of the research were reflected mainly on the academic, social, pedagogical and scientific fields. On the academic field, the students developed their use of English. On the social field, they got closer to be prepared for a society that requires being competitive in the use of the English language nowadays. On the pedagogical field, the head teacher and the preservice-teacher understood more about the suitability of using thinking routines as new strategies or techniques for English language teaching. Lastly, the research impacted the scientific field as well by providing key knowledge for the development of future studies in which researchers might look for the background of thinking routines implementation to improve language skills.

4.7 Conclusion

The vision of language adopted in this research is the CLT approach, given the lack of communicative and interactive activities in the classroom for foreign language teaching. The vision of learning is Interactive Learning, a concept closely related to CLT which aims at the interaction between interlocutors for language education. Task Based Learning is the method selected for lesson planning, due to the social constructivist principles and the opportunities it provides to learn and work on topics by using language communicatively. The implementation design included three pedagogical units based on the contents and learning objectives of the school's English program for sixth grade, with at least twelve interventions needed and the corresponding resources. The significance of the results was reflected on a new perspective for students' oral communicative skills development. Moreover, the beneficiaries were not just the students but the institution, the preservice teacher researcher, future researchers of the field, as well as English language teachers.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the processes followed to organize and analyze the data. First, the process of organization of the data is explained by considering a triangulation method useful for both. Secondly, the collected data are shown in a chart classifying the information as follows: Data set number, date of collection, action implemented, and the type of data collected. Afterwards, the approach and procedure for data analysis are presented. Subsequently, the data are displayed illustrating the categories that emerged from the data analysis, followed by the corresponding discussion of the findings.

5.2 Organization of the data

In order to attain a data triangulation process along the data analysis and interpretation stage of the research, it was necessary to use three kinds of collection instruments throughout the implementation stage: Observation, interviews, and artifacts, as previously mentioned in chapter 3. This type of triangulation allows making sure not only about the credibility of the data, but also to have rich and varied sets of data. According to Kalmbach and Carr, “the process of constructing a rich and varied data set is called *triangulation*, and it is one of the primary ways we make sure our research is trustworthy” (2010, p. 85). Therefore, the data collected during the pedagogical interventions were organized in data sets. Each set corresponded to a pedagogical implementation unit of this proposal. Every time the teacher-researcher completed a unit with the students, the data collected were saved in the way of electronic or digital folders named after each unit. Only the surveys were kept in plastic bags, labeled after each data set. However, the results of the surveys were tabulated and diagramed in a file, and saved in the respective folder.

Consequently, each folder was a data set containing the corresponding information gathered by means of all of the instruments, as shown in the Table 3.

5.3 Collected data

Table 3:

Collected data

DATA SET	DATE OF ACTION	ACTION IMPLEMENTED	DATA COLLECTED
# 1	03/16/2016	Drawing activity: The students drew an occupation on colored paper for the speaking task.	Artifacts: Scanned images with the students' drawings
	03/16/2016	Observation of the speaking activity on the topic of professions using the thinking routine: <i>Say what, say why, say other things to try.</i>	Audio recordings with the students' discourse
	03/16/2016	Interview to the students: The students received a survey on a piece of paper to know what they thought about the speaking task.	Survey answered by the students about the speaking activity
#2	04/06/2016	Observation of the speaking activity on actions in progress using the thinking routine: <i>Who, where, what and why.</i>	Field notes with transcription of the students' discourse
	04/06/2016	Chart fill in: The students filled in a chart out of the information gotten during the speaking task.	Artifacts of the students' charts filled out
	04/06/2016	Informal interview: Questions to the students on the speaking activity once finished.	Field notes with answers of the informal interview
#3	04/27/2016	Drawing activity: Students made a drawing including a type of weather, a person doing a specific action, and the clothes that person is wearing, to use in the speaking task.	Artifacts: photos of the drawings made by the students
	04/27/2016	Speaking activity to present and share their drawings with the aim of working on actions in progress, weather, and clothes, using the thinking routine:	Audio recordings of the students' speech

		<i>Who, where, what and why.</i>	
	04/27/2016	Interview to the students: The students received a survey on a piece of paper to know what they think about the speaking task.	Survey answered by the students about the speaking activity
#4	05/11/2016	Poster making activity: The students drew on a piece of colored paper what they do on Mother's Day.	Artifacts: students' scanned posters
	05/11/2016	Observation of the speaking activity to work on special dates and share in pairs what they do on Mother's using the thinking routine: <i>Say what, say why, say other things to try.</i>	Field notes with transcription of the students' discourse
	05/11/2016	Informal interview: Questions to the students on the speaking activity once finished.	Field notes with answers of the informal interview

5.4 Data Analysis

It was necessary to analyze and interpret the data collected during the interventions to be able to understand the results of the research, as it is to be done in an action research project. Kalmbach and Carr think of the data interpretation process as “a way of making and creating understanding out of the chaos of our practice as teachers” (2010, p. 101). Therefore, analyzing and interpreting the data is a stage in order to make meaning and sense out of the data, as well as leading the researcher to obtain the results of the pedagogical implementation of the proposal. As Freeman (1998) affirms, to analyze the data is to understand and see what is usually seen as normal within the classroom: “The aim is to make the regular appear new, to put a different frame around what is usual and taken for granted in everyday teaching and learning, and thus to perceive and understand it in new ways” (p. 99).

In order to carry out an accurate and appropriate analysis process, the model for data analysis proposed by Freeman (1998) was adopted: *Naming, grouping, finding relationships, and*

data display. Following the four activities of the process in the same order allows the researcher to work with a *Grounded Approach*, (Freeman, 1998). It means, “to ground the analysis in what is in the data” (p. 102), in contrast to the *A priori Approach*, in which “preexisting or a priori categories” (p. 102) are applied to the data. In a grounded analysis the researcher uncovers what may be in the data. In other words, according to the *Grounded Approach*, the analysis was based on what was observed in the data, and the names for the data categories were given according to what was taken out of the information.

The first activity of the analysis process, *naming*, requires labeling the data providing “codes” (p. 99). Before the naming process begins, it was considered necessary to read all the data to get a general and initial idea of what could be found and some possible names to use. Moreover, to support the naming step, a table in Microsoft Excel was utilized by the researcher to register the data observed in four columns as follows: Observation, evidence, instrument, and name. Consequently, the first instrument in the first data set was taken to give names to the facts observed, followed by the second instrument, then the third, and so on until completing all data sets. As something was observed, it was recorded in the table, adding as well the evidence or example, the instrument where the deed was found, and the corresponding name. Working this way, not only organized but also facilitated the process for the teacher-researcher. Most of the names given to the data were *grounded codes* given that they came from the data, according to Freeman (1998). Therefore, the names were taken from the data themselves, created by the researcher according to facts observed. However, some *A priori codes* were used as well, which are codes that, as Freeman (1998) declares, come from outside the data, from the setting, or the research question.

Once the *naming* step was finished, the next step was *grouping*. Colors were used to bring together themes and related patterns to form the groups. Then, all the names with the same color conformed a group and, hence, were closely related one another. Freeman explains that “Grouping involves reassembling the names you are giving to parts of the data by collecting them into categories” (1998, p. 100). Thus, such groups were the first categories arisen, but not the definitive ones. At that moment, it was necessary to carry out the third step of the analysis process. This is, *finding relationships* among the groups: “To strengthen that structure, you need to find relationships in the data, to identify patterns among these categories” (Freeman, 1998, p. 100). If grouping the names is like creating a structure or scaffold on a building, “Finding relationships among groups or categories is like putting cross-braces on the scaffolding, which strengthen it so it will be less likely to twist or shake” (Freeman, 1998, p. 100).

After finding all the relationships possible among the names and groups taken out of data, the main categories and subcategories finally emerged. According to Freeman, the last step is called *data display*. In regards to this, the author states that “The aim is to set out the patterns and relationships you see among the categories. These displays make the interpretation concrete and visible; they allow you to see how the parts connect into a whole” (1998, p. 100). Therefore, a conceptual map was used in order to *display the data*, as it can be seen in the next section, where the categories and subcategories of findings are shown and explained in detail.

5.5 Findings

This research study sought to examine how the implementation of interactive thinking routines influenced on the development of the oral skills in English of a group of sixth graders at Rafael Bernal Jiménez School. The findings of the research are displayed in Figure 1: Categories of findings. It corresponds to the categories and subcategories emerged after the process of data

analysis. The main box in the hierarchy shows the research question. In response to it, two main categories appeared: *Oral production improvement through thinking routines* and *Students' motivation and attitude during speaking activities*.

Regarding the first category of analysis, *Oral production improvement through thinking routines*, it was possible to evidence a production of complete pieces of discourse and the use of learning strategies to enhance speaking skills. Concerning the second category, *Students' motivation and attitude during speaking activities*, students demonstrated to be motivated and engaged in speaking in authentic activities, cooperative work while developing speaking skills, and motivation to enhance written skills during speaking tasks. A discussion for each one of these categories and subcategories is presented below.

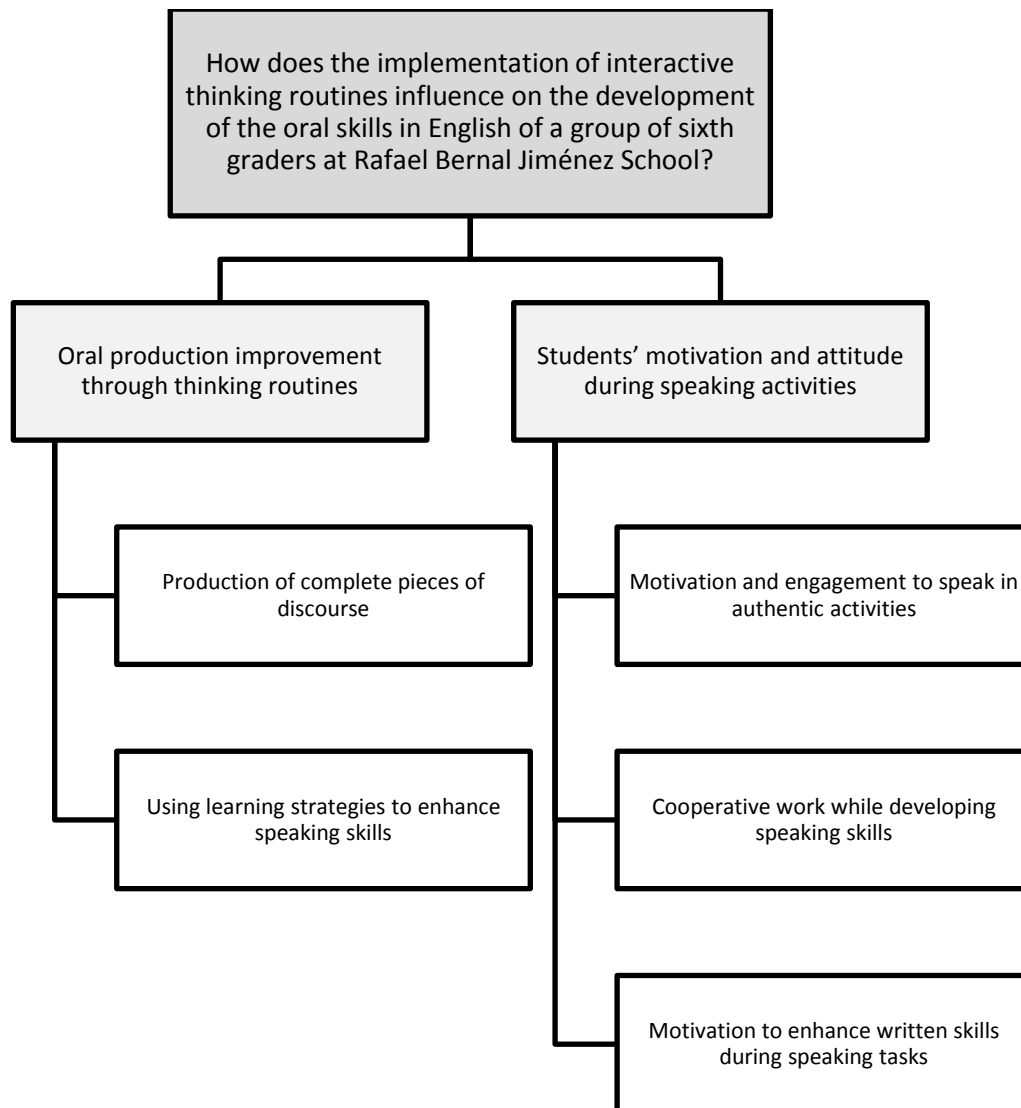


Figure 1. Categories of findings

5.5.1 Category 1: Oral production improvement through thinking routines

This category refers to the improvement evidenced on students' oral production when employing thinking routines in speaking activities. The data analysis showed that such development was mainly achieved in two ways. First, the thinking routines worked as patterns to guide the students' speech, producing complete pieces of discourse. Second, implementing thinking routines encouraged students to use learning strategies that enhanced their oral skills. After this general description of the category, each subcategory is explained in detail below.

Production of complete pieces of discourse. One of the main aspects observed with the implementation of thinking routines for speaking activities was the production of complete pieces of discourse by the students. In this case, complete is understood as using the entire structure of the routine itself. The two thinking routines implemented worked as patterns to guide the students' answers. In this way, the students were capable of providing a discourse containing three and four chunks in each statement depending on the routine used. Regardless the routine, it was always required to look for a reason to support their statements. The extract below shows the oral production of a student based on a drawing (Figure 2) answering the question “What does he/she do?” using the routine: *Say what, say why, say other things to try*:

S1: “he is a doctor, because she like children and treat patients and works in the hospital”
[Audio recording. Speaking activity on occupations, March 16th, 2016]

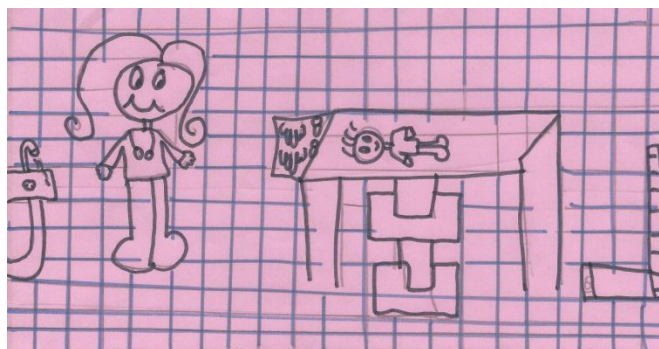


Figure 2. Artifact S1, Speaking activity on occupations, March 16th, 2016

The previous answer was a part of a speaking task carried out in the first unit of the pedagogical implementation. The task consisted on sharing in groups a drawing to show and describe the occupation each student chose. (See section 4.4). Visibly, the student's answer above contained the name of the occupation (say what), a reason why it was the occupation (say why), and additional information about it (say other things to try). The student utilized the routine to provide a complete answer in contrast to isolated production of words. Similarly,

identical results happened in answers given by other students in the same activity. Below, the students' oral production and corresponding drawings (Figures 3) are presented:

S2: "he is teacher because take care babies and work in school"

S3: "he is play soccer because like soccer and the work soccer, otra vez soccer, a, in is stadium"

[Audio recording. Speaking activity on occupations, March 16th, 2016]

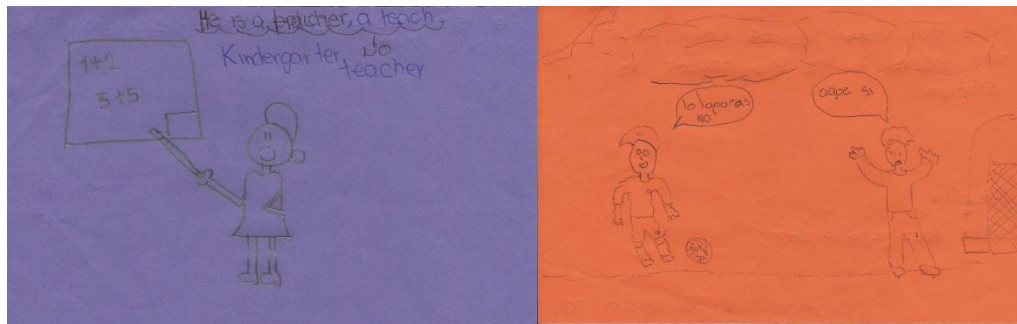


Figure 3. Artifacts S2 (left) and S3 (right), Speaking activity on occupations, March 16th, 2016

Consequently, the thinking routine guided and encouraged the students to produce complete, meaningful, and comprehensible answers. In the first question of a survey administered to the group after the speaking activity (see Appendix H: Survey No. 1), the students were asked to qualify to what extent the activity helped them and guided them to speak better in English. Out of thirty-three answers registered (see Figure 4), twenty-one of them gave a positive answer regarding the thinking routine (quite, very much, regular), in contrast to twelve of them who answered negatively (not much, not at all). This means more than half of the group reflected that the thinking routine positively guided their speech.

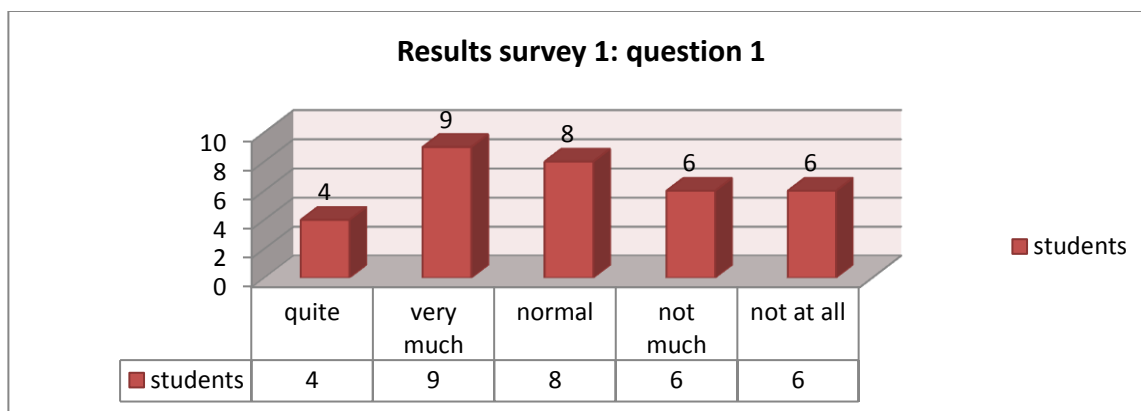


Figure 4. Results survey No. 1: Speaking activity on occupations, question 1, March 16th, 2016

Similar results occurred with the second thinking routine implemented: *Who, where, what and why, you can have a try*. The routine was a part of the second speaking task of the second unit of implementation (see section 4.4). The following are some of the answers provided by students when presenting their drawings among the group:

S4: “Maria is stretching. She is in the park because she... love the gymnastics”;

S8: “she is Astrid, eh... she is, she love painting, eh she where in the... in the house, eh... why eh... because she is love painting”;

S10: “Juan is at... the park,... he is playing soccer, because he like sports”;

[Audio recording. Second speaking activity on actions in progress, April 27th, 2016]

For this activity, the students provided all the information they were asked regarding their illustrations: Who was in the image; where this person was; what the person was doing; and a reason why that person was doing such action. Subsequently, the thinking routine worked again as a guide the students followed to produce their answers. Moreover, the routine encouraged the students to provide a complete piece of discourse, meaningful and comprehensible instead of isolated phrases and words. A second survey was administered to the population but now regarding this activity and the second thinking routine. Again, the students were asked to qualify to what extent the activity helped them and guided them to speak better in English. The results

were similar compared to the first survey: Twenty-one students out of thirty-five said the thinking routine helped them guide their speech. Figure 5 shows the result for the previous answer.

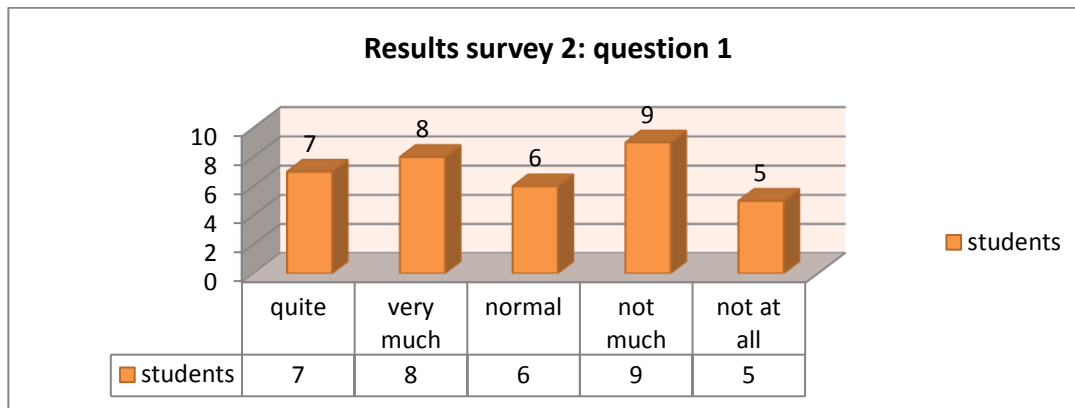


Figure 5. Results survey No. 2: Second speaking activity on actions in progress, question 1, April 27th, 2016

In addition, the routines not only worked as patterns that guided learners toward structuring their discourse, they also stimulated their thinking to produce oral language. In order to produce a successful answer, the students went through a cognitive process involving certain thinking actions. To analyze this, the following excerpt is presented, as well as the corresponding artifacts (Figure 6):

S2: “Sebas in the corral... is riding the horse because they love a house... a horse”;

S3: “Britany is the court the volleyball she is playing volleyball because she likes playing”;

[Audio recording. Second speaking activity on actions in progress, April 27th, 2016]



Figure 6. Artifacts S2 (left) and S3 (right), Second speaking activity on action in progress, April 27th, 2016

These were just some examples where it can be seen how the students' thinking was encouraged in various ways. First, describing the illustration when saying who was in it, where, and what the person was doing. Second, the student provided a reason which gives account of critical thinking. Third, the reflection needed to provide a reason. Fourth, the answer itself is a production, a creation.

As mentioned in chapter two, (Ritchhart, et al., 2006) these kinds of routines are useful in classrooms because they serve as a tool to include thinking language, and moreover, time and chance for students' thinking. The same authors confirm that "The epistemic moves that constitute thinking routines involve students in critical thinking, creative elaboration, and reflection" (p.19). This without going deeper into previous cognitive steps unconsciously carried out by the students such as remembering previous information on the topic, understanding and analyzing the examples provided, applying the pattern to create a short oral production, among others. Therefore, the production of complete pieces of discourse gives account of cognitive processes implied and encouraged by using thinking routines during communicative tasks, where speaking was developed as a product of thinking.

It is worth mentioning that some grammatical mistakes were seen in their productions, as well as pauses during their speech and pronunciation difficulties. Regarding problems in grammar, some students were actually aware of some mistakes and corrected them (as it is explained in detail in the next subcategory). Concerning pronunciation, Spanish phonemes were characteristic in their speech. Brown (2000) assures that the native language influences the target language, both facilitating and interfering (it is explained in the next subcategory how it

facilitated students' oral production). In regards to breaks or pauses in speech, only few students were able to speak fluently in contrast to some others. Most of them broke down the speech when answering orally. Such pauses were actually positive given that they used that time to think and seek for information, (as it is explained in the next subcategory as well).

However, these aspects do not take away the success of the students' answers. Brown (2000), in one of the six principles of communicative language teaching states that "fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques" (p. 43). Therefore, although such aspects are important and complement communication, they are seen at a second level of importance due to the fact that communicative functions of the activities in this research, where meaning and information sharing were first. According to Richards & Rodgers "The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse" (1999, p. 71).

In reality, the students' answers were comprehensible, meaningful, and thus, successful despite some grammatical mistakes, pronunciation difficulties, and speech brakes. Clearly, the support thinking routines offered to students allowed them to share information and produce well organized answers composed of three or more discursive chunks. This agrees with findings of a similar study by Casamassima & Insua (2015) in which thinking routines were used as well to answer questions in larger speaking tasks in class, "teachers found that students produced more organized oral discourse and seemed more confident when facing a speaking challenge" (p. 28). To summarize, the implementation of thinking routines during speaking tasks influenced on the students' oral skills by guiding and encouraging them. In this way, the students were able to produce complete pieces of discourse after going through a thinking process.

Using learning strategies to enhance speaking skills. The implementation of thinking routines encouraged the students to use learning strategies during speaking activities. As a result, their oral production was enhanced and, in turn, their speaking skills. This was achieved in various ways: Linking the class content learning with oral productions, switching to the mother tongue to fill linguistic gaps in the second language, awareness and correction of some mistakes, and breaks in the speech to obtain support from material.

To begin with, students were encouraged to link or associate the content learned in classes, when using thinking routines in the speaking tasks. As it was specified in the implementation section in chapter 4, the speaking activities including thinking routines were executed at the end of each unit. This was done with the intention of allowing the students to learn the most of each topic and receive a good amount of input to be able to produce language, either in speaking or in writing. Fundamentally, the thinking routines encouraged the students to put that previous knowledge into practice during the communication tasks. The following passage is an example:

S6: “she is a nurse because... she treats patients... and works in the hospital”,
[Audio recording. Speaking activity on occupations, March 16th, 2016]

In this case, the thinking routine used for the activity was *say what, say why, say other things to try*. The student’s oral production corresponds to the presentation of a drawing when working on *Occupations*. In the answer above, the student linked the content already learned from previous classes to enhance the answer to the question: What does he/she do? According to Oxford (1990), this is a language learning strategy: *Overviewing and linking with already known material*. It is a metacognitive strategy for centering learning and is explained by the author as follows: “Involves previewing the basic principles and or material (including new vocabulary)

for an upcoming language activity, and linking this with what the learners already know” (p. 152).

A survey administered to the group when the activity finished, showed that it was easy for most of the students to link the content learned in previous classes (see Appendix H: Survey No. 1). They were asked to qualify how easy it was to come up with the information they needed for the activity. 33 were registered for this question and the results were as follows: Very easy: 6, easy: 9, normal: 8, difficult: 6, very difficult: 4. (Results survey No. 1: Speaking activity on occupations, question 2, March 16th, 2016). Indeed, the students were encouraged to associate what they learnt throughout the unit with the thinking routine for the speaking task.

For the speaking activity where the transcript above presented was taken from, the students were shown how to ask for information about occupations utilizing the thinking routine to guide their answers. Both things here were new for them: The question and the routine. During the spoken task, the students made use of their learning, linking their knowledge on the topic of occupations to the questions and routine. As it can be seen in the extract above, S6’s answer to the question provided not only the name of the profession, but also the role or description, and the work place. The last three elements were a part of the first pedagogical unit topic. Therefore, the students had work on the topic for a couple weeks before the task with thinking routines. In general, the speaking activity had no big difficulty for the learners. Most of them were capable of producing similar answers regarding content.

Secondly, the students sometimes needed to switch to the mother tongue to fill linguistic gaps. Thus, when lack of knowledge in the foreign language appeared, the students switched to their main language in order to enhance their answers in speaking tasks. As an example, one of the tasks in the second unit of the research implementation consisted of asking and giving

information in groups about a reading to fill out a chart. The thinking routine used in the activity to guide the students' production was: *Who, where, what, and why, you can have a try*. The following passages correspond to students' answers throughout the exercise:

“S3: entonces ehh... el nombre, Biork, de Alaska (looks at the board) walking now the coat and gloves why cold (looking at the paper all the time). S2: why no, es because. S3: because cold”

[Field notes 8. First speaking activity on actions in progress, April 6th, 2016]

Indeed, the students switched to Spanish to be able to continue with the dialog as they lacked some expressions in English: *entonces, el nombre, de, no, es*. No translation is observed in the excerpt above. Instead, they used their mother tongue to supply the words they did not know. Effectively, an informal interview carried out after the activity evidenced that they lacked some of the linguistic knowledge in English required for the task. The following is the answer provided by a student when they were asked for opinions on the activity:

S14: “es que profe el problema es que hay muchas palabras que uno no sabe”

[Informal interview 1. First speaking activity on actions in progress, April 6th, 2016]

According to the S14's opinion, there are many words in English students still do not have. As a consequence, some of them preferred switching to Spanish in order to continue their discourse as they did not know some of the words in English they were looking up.

Correspondingly, in the light of theory, *Switching to the mother tongue* is a compensation learning strategy to overcome limitations in speaking and writing (Oxford 1990). It is explained by the author as follows: “This strategy, sometimes technically called “code switching,” is used for speaking and involves using the mother tongue for an expression without translating it” (p. 94). Hence, it was found that the learners naturally made use of this strategy to keep their discourse going without being told to use Spanish if by chance was needed.

A third aspect that encouraged the students to enhance their speaking skills was their awareness and afterward correction of some mistakes. When utilizing the thinking routines in speaking tasks, it was observed that some students made some linguistic errors. Thus, the students corrected such mistakes as soon as they identified them. In order to analyze this, the following extracts are presented:

“S7: what you do mother’s, do you do on Mother’s Day? (Self-correction) S8: I buy flower, because... loves flowers, and her favorite flower is rose”

[Field notes 13. Speaking activity on months and celebrations, May 11th, 2016]

S3: “he is play soccer because like soccer and the work soccer, otra vez soccer, a, in is stadium”,

[Audio recording. Speaking activity on occupations, March 16th, 2016]

Taking the first example, it is evident that S7 realized about a missing word when speaking. Immediately, the student stopped the statement and corrected the question adding the missing “do.” In regards to the second example, S3 noticed two facts. First, that the word “soccer” was used many times. Second, that the word needed was not “soccer” but “stadium.” Therefore, the learner stopped midstream and self-corrected the fault. Evidently, this corresponds to one of the metacognitive learning strategies presented by Oxford (1990): *Self-monitoring*. In words of the author: “This strategy does not center as much on using the language as it does on students’ conscious decision to monitor – that is, notice and correct – their own errors in any of the language skills” (p. 161). Coming back to the two pieces of discourse above presented, both students noticed the errors and corrected them straight away. Moreover, this corresponds with the reflective functions the thinking routines permit, as pointed out in the previous subcategory.

An interesting action is worthy of mention here. The students interrupted the speech to modify their answer. According to Oxford (1990) this is something that should not happen too often otherwise, the students may become obsessed with correcting every mistake thus, killing

communication. Nonetheless, the most important fact here is that the scholars were aware of some errors and capable of correcting them at once. In this way, they unconsciously applied a learning strategy when using a thinking routine in a speaking task, enhancing therefore their oral production.

An additional feature in the students' discourse was observed throughout the implementation of thinking routines for communicative activities: Need of breaks in speech to obtain support from material. The learners sometimes required to stop midway in the discourse in order to find and seek for the information they wanted to use when speaking. This is visible in the two examples given below:

S7: “she is at tennis court, mmm... she is play the tennis, mm.... Because is fun”;

S9: “she,... she in the park,... she is play basketball, because... ¿cómo era? love,... love... ah, basketball”

[Audio recording. Second speaking activity on actions in progress, April 27th, 2016]



Figure 7. Artifacts S7 (left) and S9 (right), Second speaking activity on actions in progress, April 27th, 2016

The activity consisted on sharing their drawings in groups mediated by the thinking routine: *Who, where, what, and why, you can have a try*. This was one of the speaking tasks of the second unit, where *sports* were the theme used to work on the *actions in progress* topic. The two extracts show the pauses along the students' speech in the task. During those breaks S7 and S9 were looking at the board and their drawings on the notebook (Figure 7). As they felt stuck

when speaking, they used the last two sources to get information and continue their oral production.

A similar situation happened in a different speaking activity, where the students used two sources: The board with a written example of the thinking routine and a copy containing readings and images. This task was also a part of the second unit of implementation and the same routine was used: *Who, where, what, and why, you can have a try*. This is the passage:

“S1: Cesar... (looks at the board, then at the copy) Cap Verde, in Cape Verde riding and sweet suit... because (looks at the sheet again) because cloudy. S2: “the second, who, I’m Paolo, Italy (looking at the paper) and climbing a mountain, I’m wearing sweater, jeans, hiking boots... (looks at the board and then the sheet) ...because is spring”

[Field notes 8. First speaking activity on actions in progress, April 6th, 2016]

In the previous two activities, the students may have been *avoiding communication partially*, as it is explained by Oxford (1990), to overcome the limitations encountered when difficulties were anticipated. Nonetheless, this is better explained in the light of *Using resources for receiving and sending messages*. It is a cognitive learning strategy that seeks for both understanding incoming messages, and producing outgoing messages by using either printed or non-printed resources. Effectively, they used as a guide the written example of the thinking routine on the board to think of what to say next. Moreover, they looked at their notebooks to find the words needed according to their drawings to be able to continue speaking, as well as using the copy to seek for the information they were asked.

On the other hand, if necessary, breaks took fluency away from their speech, they were useful to enhance their spoken answers. As stated in the previous subcategory, fluency is not the main principle but a complementary aspect of oral production in communicative activities (Brown, 2000). Moreover, they were in the watch for accurate information. Consequently, the

thinking routines encouraged learners to enhance their discourse when using the given materials to seek for information.

In summary, throughout the execution of the study, the thinking routines confirmed the positive influence on students' oral skills by encouraging them to use learning strategies in communicative activities. Some of the strategies the teacher-researcher observed were: Overviewing and linking with already known material, Switching to the mother tongue, Self-monitoring, and Using resources for receiving and sending messages. As a result, the students enhanced their oral production during speaking tasks.

5.5.2 Category 2: Students' motivation and attitude during speaking activities

This category discusses the influence that thinking routines had on students' motivation and attitude during speaking tasks. This was reflected in three ways. First, the thinking routines allowed bringing authenticity into the oral production activities making the students feel motivated and engaged to speak. Second, the routines encouraged the students to adopt a cooperative attitude during communicative tasks developing speaking skills. Third, the thinking routines motivated students to enhance written skills as a result of communicative tasks. After making this general description of the category, its findings are explained in detail below.

Motivation and engagement to speak in authentic activities. The thinking routines allowed bringing authenticity into the oral production activities making the students feel motivated and engaged to speak. Such authenticity was observed on the one hand, with students' real-life situations involved in speaking tasks, and on the other hand, with students' drawings representing such situations.

To start off, the thinking routines enabled the students to bring their cultural habits and family context conforming thereby meaningful and authentic activities. At the end of the unit *months and celebrations*, a communicative task was applied using the routine *say what, say why, say other things to try*, in order to answer to the question: What do you do on Mother's Day? The students' answers included particular information about what they do to celebrate the special date with their mothers:

“S9: what do you do on Mother's day? S10: “I buy fruit salad... because I like see... enjoy, and I love her S10: what do you do on mother's day? S9: I, the buy, a scarf blue, to my mother, (looks at the drawing and reads) because she like scarf, she deserve it”
[Field notes 13. Speaking activity on months and celebrations, May 11th, 2016]

In the previous conversation, the students shared what they do on Mother's Day including likes, habits, and feelings within their discourse. Hence, the activity related the topic of the pedagogical unit with the students' personal life and traditions. This coincides with what Brown declares as one of the guidelines of authentic and meaningful language for children: “Language needs to be firmly *context embedded*. Story lines, familiar situations, and characters, real-life conversations, meaningful purposes in using language – these will establish a context within which language can be received and sent” (2000, p. 90). The answers provided by S9 and S10 were contextualized, incorporating therefore authenticity to their speech. As a result, the students were motivated to speak and share information particular to their habits.

This can be seen as well on the students' opinions regarding the activity. In an informal interview carried out with the entire group at once, the students were asked to give opinions on how easy or difficult it was for them to come up with the answers they needed for the activity. Some of the opinions are presented in the next transcript:

“S6: Fue fácil porque uno sabe lo que hace para el día de la madre. S11: Además uno sabe qué le gusta a la mamá”

[Informal interview 2, Speaking activity on months and celebrations, May 11th, 2016]

The students' voice showed that they easily came up with information for the task because they know what they do on Mother's Day and their mothers' likes. Hence, the students' found motivation by means of an authentic and contextualized activity.

In addition, drawings were both the practice and the materials that reflected as well the authenticity that motivated the students to speak. In multiple lessons the learners were asked to make a drawing with the aim of using it for a speaking task. In this way, the drawing was usually a visual representation of what they produced orally. Figure 8 shows the drawings S9 and S10 used for the communicative activity shown below:



Figure 8. Artifacts S9 and S10, Speaking activity on months and celebrations, May 11th, 2016.

Since the observation stage of this research study, the students showed interests in drawing in class. It was a part of their learning style. (See chapter 1). Along the pedagogical intervention stage of the study, the teacher-researcher considered drawing for the lessons as well. Moreover, in the informal interview carried out after the speaking activity on *months and celebrations*, the students expressed their interest on drawing. When they were asked for aspects

they liked the most of the activity, drawings were one of the most common answers. (See Appendix I: Field notes 13)

Richards (2006) affirms that “classroom activities should as far as possible mirror the real world and use real world or “authentic” sources as the basis for classroom learning” (p. 20). In the case of the activities in which thinking routines were implemented, drawings were contextualized in the students’ family environment. Additionally, these handmade creations were an interesting practice for them. These were the sources that reflected their real world in the communicative activities carried out in the classroom. Consequently, their illustrations motivated and engaged the learners to speak showing authentic communication.

This can be contrasted with some of the students’ opinions in the informal interview carried out after the activity. When they were asked about aspects they liked the most regarding the activity, drawings were one of the most common answers.

Furthermore, the communicative activities using thinking routines were equally motivational when the students decided their own topic for the drawings and oral production. Mother’s day was the topic assigned for one of the speaking tasks in the *Months and celebrations* unit. However, a few students expressed the teacher-researcher their willingness to choose a different celebration for the activity. As an example, the next transcript is presented, as well as the corresponding drawing in Figure 9:

S6: “I dress up because is Halloween and I like candies”

[Field notes 13. Speaking activity on months and celebrations, May 11th, 2016]



Figure 9. Artifacts S6, Speaking activity on months and celebrations, May 11th, 2016.

This example shows that S6 was more engaged in discussing Halloween than Mother's Day. Both, drawing and answer were based on the theme S6 chose for the speaking task in groups. In reference to Brown, the student found the activity motivating when he was given the chance to choose the desired topic: "Learner-centered, cooperative teaching is intrinsically motivating, therefore, give students opportunities to make choices in activities, topics, discussions, etc" (p. 82). The learning and teaching principles adopted in the research allowed S6 to pick his own theme for the communicative activity. As a result, the drawing based on the freedom of chosen topic was meaningful and authentic, thus, motivating for the student in the speaking task.

Concluding this subcategory, this is how speaking activities mediated by thinking routines influenced the students' oral production. The thinking routines allowed students to incorporate authenticity in their productions, involving contextualized discourse and drawings as representations that mirrored their real world. Therefore, they felt motivated and engaged to speak.

Cooperative work while developing speaking skills. The thinking routines encouraged the students to adopt a cooperative attitude during communicative tasks thus developing speaking skills. The students showed a sense of cooperation and collaboration to help their group

mates when difficulties on language production arose. This was evident for instance, when the students helped classmates to correct errors and when they provided support to develop ideas.

One of the ways in which cooperative work was demonstrated is when students helped classmates correct linguistic errors during speaking activities. The students often made linguistic mistakes throughout the communicative tasks included in the implementation of the research. Some learners, as explained in the first category of results, were aware of some type of errors and also capable of correcting them. This awareness and correction emerged as well toward classmates. In order to analyze this situation, the next extract is displayed:

“S3: entonces ehh... el nombre, Biork, the Alaska (looks at the board) walking now the coat and gloves why cold (looking at the paper all the time). S2: why no, es because. S3: because cold”.

[Field notes 8. First speaking activity on actions in progress, April 6th, 2016]

The previous example makes a part of a communicative task in which the students were sharing information from reading with the goal of filling in a chart. It can be seen in the presented dialogue that S2 realized of a misused word employed by S3. Once S3 finished speaking, S2 told them to use “because” instead of “why.” S2 knew the right use of the words, identifying the needed word. S3 accepted the aid S2 provided and continued the discourse. In Richards’ words, “They need to feel comfortable both correcting each other and being corrected by each other” (1999, p. 106). Indeed, the aid offered by S2 was helpful for S3 to correct the mistake and improve the answer.

In regards to cooperative work, Brown states that “as students work together in pairs and groups, they share information and come to each other’s aid. They are a “team” whose players must work together in order to achieve goals successfully” (2000, p. 47). In comparison to the extract presented above, one of the students offered aid to the other when it was needed. This

happened during a group task using thinking routines to share information and complete the table. This is just an example of the situations observed all through the implementation of the research study, in which the students adopted a cooperative attitude to help each other in the use of language.

A second cooperative habit observed was the fact of providing support to classmates for development of ideas when using thinking routines in communicative tasks. The students not only demonstrated helping each other when errors appeared. They also proved it when they had difficulties constructing ideas to produce oral discourse. This fact is illustrated in the extract below:

“S7: she is the tennis court, mmm... she is play the tennis, mm.... S6: ¿Por qué le gusta jugar? T: because... S6: because, tiene q decir así, porque.”

[Audio recording. Second speaking activity on actions in progress, April 27th, 2016]

It corresponds to the dialogue produced by two of the students during a communicative task to share information about their drawings. The thinking routine used was: *Who, where, what, and why, you can have a try*. It can be seen that S7 was able to present some data using the routine as guide: The person on the drawing, the place, and the action. However, S7 struggled to provide the missing part: A reason and any additional information. At that point S6 supported S7. First, by asking a question to help S6 identify the following part of the answer and second, providing a word that could be used to continue speaking. Richards (1999) considers that students “are expected to interact with each other and suggest alternatives to each other” (p, 106). As a matter of fact, in the previous dialogue the support S6 provided intended to help S7 develop the idea sought to present the drawing orally. That occurred given that the S7 experienced difficulties.

Taking the students' opinion into account, they demonstrated that working cooperatively was helpful and useful. On the survey administered to the learners after the second speaking activity on *actions in progress*, they were asked to qualify how useful they thought working in group was. Out of thirty-three answers registered these were the results: Very useful: 6, useful: 8, normal: 9, not very useful: 7, useless: 3. In general, the students who found working cooperatively helpful were more in contrast to the ones who thought they did not find any help working in groups.

In regards to this situation, Brown declares that “in collaborative learning the learners engage with more capable classmates, teachers or advanced peers, to get some assistance and guidance” (2000, p. 47). Throughout the pedagogical implementation of the research, many students demonstrated having problems with the use of English. Their proficiency level was not the expected one and still not enough for the complexity of some tasks. Nonetheless, students with a higher proficiency level and better understanding of the tasks supported the ones experiencing difficulties. This was possible due to the cooperative work enabled in the communicative activities where the thinking routines were implemented.

Motivation to enhance written skills during speaking tasks. The implementation of the thinking routines during cooperative work motivated the students to enhance their language production skills. Even though the aim of the research had been toward oral skills, the implementation of thinking routines in communicative tasks showed enhancement of written skills as well. As oral skills improvement was explained in the first category, this subcategory focuses on explaining the improvement on written skills. Figure 10 presented below is an example of this:

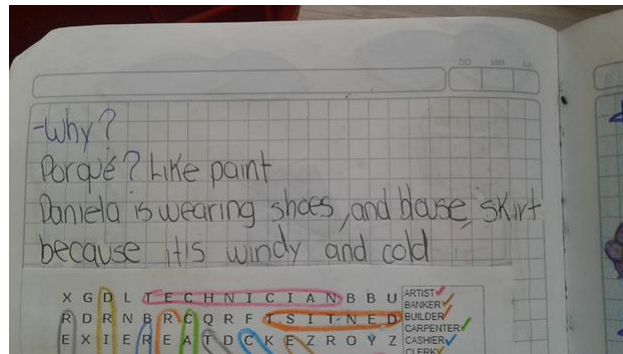


Figure 10. Artifact S6, Second speaking activity on actions in progress, April 27th, 2016

This artifact corresponds to a photo of one of the learners' notebook. For some communicative tasks the students were told to write down on their notebooks their classmates' answers when sharing information. As it can be seen in Figure 10, S6 wrote down the answer provided by one of the students within the same group. Thereby, as a consequence of working on oral skills, the pupils developed their written production too. According to Reis, an integration of the four skills is necessary to reach "the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, to use language according to the parameters imposed by the speech community in which they are inserted" (2008, p. 2). In reality, the four skills were taken into consideration for most of the activities developed throughout the implementation of this research.

Communicative and cooperative tasks like the ones from which Figure 10 were taken, included all the four skills as follows: Reading of given material for the students to understand, find, and seek for information, listening of answers provided by other students, writing of answers and information provided by classmates to complete certain assignments, and speaking, when producing oral discourse. Another example of a similar activity is shown in figure 11, where students filled in a chart after reading a copy.

Complete the chart with the information from the text: A Journey around the Cultures

Name	Nationality	Activity they are doing	Clothes they are wearing	Weather
I'm Cesar	Colombian	I'm riding my horse	I'm wearing an orange sweater and a hat	Sunny but today it's cloudy and rainy
I'm Paolo	Italy	I'm climbing a mountain	I'm wearing a sweater, pants and my hiking boots	It's spring March, April, May
I'm Ben	USA	I'm walking now	I'm wearing a long coat, shoes and winter scarf	It is very cool here.
I'm Pedro	Mexican			
I'm Diego	Argentinian			

Figure 11. Artifact S2. First speaking activity on actions in progress, April 6th, 2016

It can be observed in the previous picture the type of information S2 registered in the chart. The students were communicating among themselves information taken from a text by using the thinking routine: *Who, where, what, and why, you can have a try*. At the same time they were discussing and providing answers, they were writing down those answers. Brown, with regards to writing activities states that “Some classroom writing aims to the genuine communication of messages to an audience in need of those messages” (2000, p. 346). Effectively, one of the assignments for the activity was filling in the chart with information that was provided orally by the learners of the group after reading the copy, thus writing what they heard. Again, it can be seen how the students were motivated to enhance written skills by means of working cooperatively through the use of thinking routines mainly intended for speaking tasks.

It is worth mentioning that the students showed motivation to write using thinking routines even when working separately. Some of the lessons implemented contained tasks to be developed individually in order to practice content or input provided. As an example, in one of the lessons of second unit of implementation about *actions in progress*, the students were told to

bring a series of tools and materials such as magazines, cardboard, color pencils, in order to make a poster. The figure below shows some of the posters created by the students.



Figure 12. Artifacts, posters creation task on actions in progress, April 26th, 2016

Besides making the posters, the assignment included describing their images/drawings utilizing the thinking routine: *Who, where, what, and why, you can have a try*. As it can be seen, the students provided successful and complete sentences. Ritchhart et al., stated that thinking routines are also useful when working individually, “these provide the structures through which students collectively as well as individually initiate, explore, discuss, document, and manage their thinking in classrooms” (2002, p. 1). Therefore, although the students had no allocated peer interaction during the activity, their writings contained what they were asked for. The thinking routine motivated their writing thus enhancing written skills as well.

Summarizing this subcategory, the implementation of the thinking routines during cooperative work motivated the students to enhance their language production skills, not only in speaking but also in writing. Although the main objective of the research had been to examine the oral skills, the implementation of thinking routines in communicative tasks evidenced improvement of written skills too. This was achieved working both cooperatively and independently.

5.6 Conclusions

This chapter presented the processes followed to organize and analyze the data, as well as a discussion on the results of the research. First, the data were organized in data sets considering a triangulation method. Secondly, a table was used in order to show the data gathered, classifying the information by data set number, date of collection, action implemented, and type of data collected. Moreover, Freeman's Grounded approach and procedure for data analysis were used to carry out the data analysis. Afterwards, the data were displayed illustrating the categories that emerged from the analysis process. The findings evidenced that thinking routines impacted students' oral production and influenced their motivation and attitude in speaking tasks.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This action research study was guided by the question: How does the implementation of interactive thinking routines influence on the development of the oral skills in English of a group of sixth graders at Rafael Bernal Jiménez School. After carrying out a process of analysis, the most valuable results of the research showed that oral skills can be developed through the use of thinking routines for two reasons. First, they impact positively students' oral production helping them construct a more complete speech; and second, the thinking routines influence their motivation and attitude in speaking tasks.

It can be concluded that implementing thinking routines in English speaking activities for sixth graders led to the improvement of oral production skills. The thinking routines impacted students' speech positively by working as patterns to guide them through producing meaningful, complete, and comprehensible discourse, despite some grammatical mistakes, pronunciation difficulties, and speech breaks that may arise. Additionally, implementing the routines also impacted students' performance in class encouraging them to use learning strategies to enhance their oral skills.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that thinking routines influenced students' motivation and attitude during speaking tasks reflecting positive results on speaking and writing skills as well. Thinking routines allowed bringing authenticity into the oral production activities making students feel motivated and engaged to speak. In addition, these routines encouraged students to adopt a cooperative attitude during communicative tasks, thus developing speaking

skills. Lastly, thinking routines motivated students to enhance also written skills as a result of communicative tasks.

In contrast to the English proficiency level the students had before the implementation of the project, they showed improvement of their speaking and writing skills. Moreover, the students had the chance to learn and improve such skills working interactively and cooperatively, something that did not happen during the observation stage of the research. They were in fifth grade when a diagnostic test was administered based on CEFR standards presented in Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2006). As shown in the diagnostic section, they showed to have difficulties mainly in their productive skills. Their use of English did not go beyond sole repetition and production of isolated words and vocabulary both when writing and speaking. The students moved on to sixth grade when the implementation stage of the research was carried out. Throughout the pedagogical interventions, learners evidenced development on both abilities. They were able to produce meaningful, comprehensible, and complete chunks of language during communicative tasks. Although the research aimed for orals skills development, the written skills were also developed, as a result of implementing thinking routines during communicative tasks.

Pedagogical Implications

The results obtained with this study can contribute to the improvement and development of English communicative competences in schools where the language is studied as a foreign language. Teachers and researchers can find here an innovative way to promote English language learning considering that thinking plays an essential role to guide students through the production of language. In this way, thinking routines can work as a strategy that encourages and

motivates learners to speak and write in the target language but especially to learn it. It is important to mention that thinking routines should be included in communicative visions of teaching and learning in order to allow students to work cooperatively and exploit the most out of the learning opportunities they are offered. Additionally, the activities and tasks planned must be authentic, given that students' thinking is mediated by their cognition of the world, their social context, and real-life experiences. It is worthy to highlight as well that including language receptive skills is a must if a successful performance wants to be done on language production skills by using thinking routines. Therefore, giving students the chance to work on the four of them will lead through a rich language learning process.

Limitations

It must be mentioned that some limitations were encountered throughout the implementation of the proposal. One of the limitations was the lack of communicative and cooperative opportunities for students' learning in class. Learners were not used to working in groups before putting into practice this pedagogical proposal. Therefore, the development of communicative tasks was harder than expected. Another constraint was the lack of ICT available for lessons, understanding that technology offers plenty of chances to carry out interesting and involving activities for students. The few times technology could be brought to class, the students showed more disposition, motivation, and engagement. One more limitation was the low encouragement to use English in class that the head teacher provided. As shown in the characterization section, the students used English in class mainly when receiving vocabulary input, when the teacher asked them to repeat words or when writing down vocabulary from the board. Hence, getting the students to speak in English during the pedagogical interventions was a

complex task as no production of language was promoted from before. An additional restriction faced was that not all of the students of the group were given permission to participate in the research thus making the collection of data when implementing tasks in groups harder. A last limitation experienced was the interference of extra-curricular projects carried out at the institution. Such activities interfered in many of the lessons planned for the pedagogical implementation of the research. Hence, valuable class time had to be given away delaying and restricting some of the lessons.

Further Research

The research provided valuable information on how to develop students' language production skills through thinking routines and communicative tasks. However, only two thinking routines were implemented out of the large amount that currently exists. Twelve in total are the ones proposed by Ritchhart, et al. (2006) and Casamassima & Insua (2015). Each thinking routine can be used in class not only for improving speaking goals but differently, depending on learning situations and needs. If teacher-researchers want to find out more about the topic, one recommendation is to consult not only the previous sources but also *Visible Thinking*, project by Harvard Graduate School of Education. It offers plenty of thinking routines, ideas, strategies, activities, and more, on how to encourage students' thinking processes in language classrooms. Furthermore, if teachers want to adopt these routines in the future in English language teaching, it is essential to bear in mind that performance improves with course of time. As these strategies are routines, they are supposed to be used over and over. Positive results were achieved utilizing each routine only a few times throughout the implementation of

this research. Therefore, bigger goals and even better results could be reached if thinking routines are used more often and teachers include them as a part of the classroom.

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Appendix A: Characterization Survey

ENCUESTA DE CARACTERIZACIÓN GRADO QUINTO

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La presente encuesta pretende recolectar información de los estudiantes del grado 502 del colegio Rafael Bernal Jiménez, la cual será utilizada por el docente en formación Juan David Cortés, de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, para la caracterización de la población escolar, pues es información vital para la construcción del proyecto de investigación en el aula.

1. Género: M__ F__
2. Edad:
3. Lugar de nacimiento:
4. Barrio residencia:
5. ¿Con quién vives actualmente?:
6. Numero de hermanos-as:
7. Número de personas en el hogar que trabajan:
8. ¿Quién es tu acudiente?:
9. Nivel educativo del padre:
10. Ocupación padre:
11. Nivel educativo de la madre:
12. Ocupación madre:
13. ¿Qué cantidad de libros crees que hay en el hogar?: ____
14. ¿Cuántos libros lees por cuenta propia al año?: ____
15. ¿Tiempo aproximado de lectura que dedicas por cuenta propia al día?
0 __ 15 min__ 30 min __ 1h__ 2h__ más ____
16. ¿A cuáles de las siguientes actividades participas fuera del colegio?
Música __ deportes __ danza __ teatro __ artes __
Otro __ ¿Cuál? _____

17. ¿Qué haces en tu tiempo libre? leer __ escribir __ ver TV __
Oír música __ jugar __ internet __ ir al parque __ dibujar __
Tocar música __ practicar deporte __ otro _____
18. ¿Quién te ayuda a hacer la tarea de Inglés?:
Mamá __ Papá __ hermano(a) __ Tío(a) __ Solo __ otro _____
19. De 1 a 5 (1 es nada y 5 es bastante) ¿qué tanto te gusta la clase de inglés? ____
20. ¿Qué actividad prefieres para aprender inglés?
Canción __ imágenes __ repetición oral __ memorizar __ charla __
Juego __ video __ otro __ ¿cuál? _____
21. Cuando no conoces una palabra en inglés, acudes a:
Diccionario __ pariente __ internet __ amigo(a) __ profesor(a) __
22. ¿Qué tan seguido ves películas o televisión en inglés?
Nunca __ rara vez __ a veces __ frecuentemente __ muy seguido __
23. ¿Qué tan seguido escuchas música en inglés?
Nunca __ rara vez __ a veces __ frecuentemente __ muy seguido __
24. ¿Qué tan seguido lees cuentos o historias en inglés?
Nunca __ rara vez __ a veces __ frecuentemente __ muy seguido __
25. ¿Haces uso del Inglés en/con:
Clase __ casa __ amigos __ familiares __
26. ¿Qué tanto haces uso del inglés para comunicarte en clase?
Nunca __ rara vez __ a veces __ frecuentemente __ muy seguido __
27. ¿Qué tan seguido escribes en inglés por cuenta propia?
Nunca __ rara vez __ a veces __ frecuentemente __ muy seguido __

Appendix B: Field Notes 4

FIELD NOTES No 4

SCHOOL:	Rafael Bernal Jiménez	GRADE: 502
STUDENT-TEACHER:	Juan David Cortes Restrepo	DATE: October 1 st 2015
TUTOR:	Mélaney Rodríguez Cáceres	MENTOR-TEACHER: Emilsen Ariza

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)	INTERPRETATION (Categorization)	OBSERVATIONS AND PROPOSAL
<p>Class begins some minutes late because the teacher is absent. She is sick.</p> <p>Pray</p> <p>Content review</p> <p>Example of oral introduction, for diagnosis of research project.</p> <p>Practice activity</p> <p>Presentations in pairs</p>	<p>I tell the students to start the pray as usual before every class. With good attitude they all pray together. The pray in English that teacher taught them. While a look for some material that teacher left for today's class, I tell them to study and review the content about clothing and seasons, but some of them are distracted and rather talking about their participation in the musical activities they have today. As the material was not found I lead the content review activity, and help them out studying the vocabulary they have on their notebooks</p> <p>I write on the board 4 sentences and questions they can use to review how to introduce themselves, and how to hold a short conversation about personal information and questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "What is your name? My name is/ I am _____" - "How old are you? I am ___ years old" - "Where are you from? I am from _____" - "Where do you live? I live in _____" <p>I introduce myself using these structures, for them to get an example of how to do it.</p> <p>They have to practice in pairs the information of how to introduce to someone.</p> <p>After around 15 minutes practicing, I erase the board and I start asking by couples to introduce to each other. More than half of the students were evaluated and they are struggling with this topic. Most of them get stuck in the second and third part, and often ask me how to say some words they don't know how to say in English. Anyone of the S kept the conversation satisfactory.</p>	<p>Most of them know the pray very well, because they have been repeating with the teacher the whole year.</p> <p>Seems that they are more interested in the musical participation than in English class.</p> <p>It is difficult for them to hold a short conversation about personal information, even using the structure given in class, because is not usual for them to have conversations using English. When they use English in class is when teacher leads repetition activities.</p>	<p>Receptivity Repetition</p> <p>Interests</p> <p>Linguistic Learning needs</p>	<p>Keep working on their communicative skills and oral production.</p>

<p>Vocabulary revision to know if they answer to the meaning of clothes, seasons and colors in English.</p> <p>Some students leave to go to their musical activity.</p> <p>Vocabulary list on the board: one S at the time must go to the board and write down a word about clothes.</p> <p>The next activity is a conversation exercise using some chunks written on the board. In pairs, they have to practice the sentences and complete them using the list of words they already did.</p>	<p>I ask the students to answer the meaning of some words I tell them. One student at the time and at random. Me: ¿cómo se dice camisa verde? Chaqueta azul, vestido rosa, sombrero negro, botas café, winter, otoño, primavera, summer, qué es White socks, yellow short pants, purple shirt, red shoes. The S easily answers to the vocabulary. Few of them hesitate before answering.</p> <p>The activity started tidy but then it is a mess because there are many students at the same time standing by the board wanting to write on it. During the activity I tell them a couple times to go to their seats. Meanwhile a student enters in the classroom and tells me to send two students to pick up the "refrigerio"</p> <p>- I dress up with clothes and clothes in season. - In season I like wearing clothes and clothes - What do you dress up with in season? - What do you like wearing in season?</p> <p>I explain them the activity in Spanish and then I give them an example. Then I make them repeat twice each sentence to show them the pronunciation. They repeat very attentive and focused.</p> <p>When they are writing the chunks on their notebooks, the two students return to the classroom with the food, and they start eating and writing at the same time. Some of them stop writing completely to eat</p> <p>The class is about to finish and there is not time for doing the activity, so I tell them to finish writing, put everything away and pick up the garbage.</p>	<p>They feel more confident when they are asked about vocabulary because activities like this are often done by the teacher in class, after or before repetition activities.</p> <p>They look excited about writing on the board something that they know well, but it is hard for them to wait patiently and be under control.</p> <p>They might be repeating with interest because the teacher usually leads them repetition activities, or probably because although it is repetition, they are repeating complete sentences but not lonely words or isolated words, like the teacher makes them repeat. In this way the activity might be something different for them.</p>	<p>Linguistic Study habits</p> <p>Interests Motivation Linguistic Behavior</p> <p>Repetition Linguistic Attention</p>	<p>Include activities in which they can use the vocabulary they already know, to encourage and strengthen their oral production.</p> <p>Make them work more often on writing tasks.</p>
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Appendix C: Evaluation Rubric for diagnostic test in fifth grade

The next chart includes the aspects to take into account to evaluate the diagnostic test designed for fifth grade. This rubric and the test were designed based on standards for fifth grade of the “Basic Standards for Foreign Language Teaching: English” by Colombian Ministry of Education (2006).

level	Listening
1	Does not identify the person described on the lecture, neither the clothes he uses
2	Hardly identifies the aspects of the person described on the lecture and the clothes he uses
3	Identifies at least two of the aspects of the person described on the lecture and at least two of the clothes he uses.
4	Identifies most of the aspects of the person described on the lecture and most of the clothes he uses.
5	Identifies completely the person described on the lecture and the clothes he uses
level	Reading
1	Does not comprehend neither associates any of the short descriptions with the corresponding pictures.
2	Comprehends and associates one out of three short descriptions with the corresponding picture.
3	Comprehends and associates two out of three short descriptions with the corresponding pictures.
4	Comprehends and associates perfectly the short descriptions with the corresponding pictures.
level	Writing
1	There is not production of sentences, only vocabulary or verbs but all separated words. There is no use of connectors
2	Phrases are incomplete, they miss many linguistic elements. There is no use of connectors to link sentences.
3	Incomplete phrases or sentences to describe or narrate a sequence of images and some mistakes. The use of connectors between sentences is very limited.
4	Complete phrases and sentences to describe or narrate but with some mistakes. Use of one or a few connectors of sequence and addition.
5	Complete phrases and sentences describing or narrating a sequence of images. The student demonstrates to know how to link sentences using variety of connectors of sequence and addition.
level	Speaking
1	Is not possible to keep a conversation asking and answering about name, age and nationality. The student needs repetition in everything.
2	Is very difficult to keep the conversation. Often hesitates and needs help of repetition.
3	The student keeps the conversation but regularly hesitates, and takes longer asking and answering. Needs help with the beginnings.
4	The student keeps a conversation with some pauses, asking and answering about name, age, nationality. Does not need any help.
5	Keeps the conversation easily and fluent, asking and answering about name, age, nationality.

Appendix D: Diagnostic Test

PRUEBA DIAGNOSTICO INGLÉS 5to

Name:

1. Listening

Listen to the description of the character and answer a, b, c, or d.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) What is his name?
a. Woody b. Marcus c. Jack d. Harry | 5) He wears:
a. Jeans b. Short pants c. Skirt d. Dress |
| 2) He is:
a. Tall b. Small c. Tiny d. Big | 6) The color of his hat is:
a. Grey b. Red c. Brown d. Yellow |
| 3) He is a:
a. Toy b. Pet c. Dog d. Boy | 7) The color of his boots is:
a. Blue b. Brown c. Purple d. White |
| 4) He lives with:
a. Andy b. Randy c. Mandy d. Sandy | 8) The color of his shirt is:
a. Green b. Black c. Orange d. Yellow |

2. Reading

Read the descriptions and look at the images. Then, use a line to match a description with an image.



He is a big blue monster. He has big hands, big feet and legs, a big head and big teeth. He screams really loud.



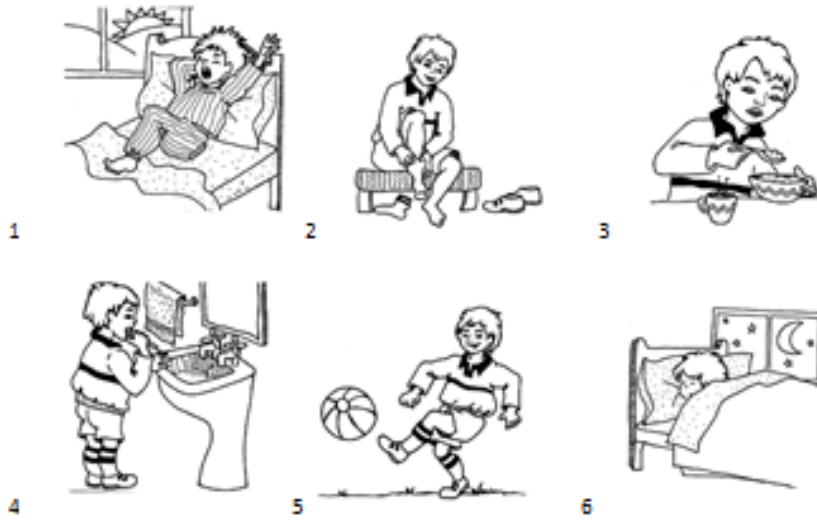
He is small, green and has the form of an egg. He has one eye. He has thin legs and thin arms. He has books on his right hand, and uses a hat.



She is small, has black short hair, and has a long pink t-shirt. She has two big eyes and a beauty smile.

3. Writing

Look at the images and write a short story. Narrate and describe what you see.



Play - brush teeth - football - wake up - sleep - ball -
dress up - coffee - get dress - breakfast - sleep - bed -
morning - night - uniform - socks - cereal

Appendix E: Text for listening exercise

The sheriff Woody is one of the characters of the Toy Story Movies. His name is Woody. He is a small sheriff. Like his friends he is a toy that lives with Andy. He has a particular appearance. He wears jeans, a brown hat, brown boots, and a yellow shirt.

Figure 8. Text for a listening exercise

Appendix F: Field Notes 3

FIELD NOTES No 3

SCHOOL:	Rafael Bernal Jiménez	GRADE: 502	
STUDENT-TEACHER:	Juan David Cortes Restrepo	DATE: September 24 th 2015	
TUTOR:	Mélaney Rodríguez Cáceres	MENTOR-TEACHER: Emilsen Ariza	

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Meaning)	INTERPRETATION (Categorization)	OBSERVATIONS AND PROPOSAL
The class begins when the teacher gets in the classroom. Arm activity and pray.	T asks them to stand up and leads an arm activity. (They stand up, move their arms as teacher indicates in different directions.) Then, she leads the pray (the students repeat what she says.)	There is receptivity and respect from students towards the teacher and pray. They probably like repetition activities.	Repetition Receptivity	
Explanations before the first activity	She asks them to take out their notebooks and then she shows them the position they must grab the notebook. Teacher: "open your notebook" "van a coger el cuaderno así" (She shows them)			
Drawing a town	T gives instructions and draws on the board the town they have to draw on the notebook. In the meantime, there are students talking. T: "le hacen puntica a la iglesia" (Parra is stand, and some S talk among them) S: "toca afuera, no hay caneca de basura" T: "no estamos hablando estamos trabajando, los veo" S: "no profe, no se hacer iglesias" (tono de broma) "tan feo ese vaquero, parece un ladrón" "dijo me importa un culo" "¿enserio dijo eso el profesor?" T is still drawing but S keep talking	It seems that they lose the attention on the activity when the teacher is not in front of them telling them what to do or talking to them. They don't have clear a sense of respect and silence during the activities.	Attention Disposition	
T calls assistance list	(One of the girls is distracted and talking with a mate) T: "Karen me va tocar cambiarla de puesto, no hace sino hablar". She gets mad to the girl who is still talking.	She gets out of focus because she might be not interested on the activity.	Interests Motivations	Apply different materials for the class work, not only the board with drawings. Materials according to their interests like games, conversations, images and songs, etc. trying to include the use of English because they are drawing but there is no English involved.
Activity inspection	T goes around the tables checking how S are doing with the drawings. T: "mueche a ver yo veo como es que están dibujando ese pueblo pirata" (she is looking at the students notebooks)			
When T is done checking, she leaves the classroom	There are S talking instead of doing the activity. S: "chiqui si se acuerda ayer?" (One of them mentions words concerning homosexuals, and a girl replays: "sabe qué? Usted habla pero no se mira en el espejo" (One boy is running in the classroom	They do whatever they want when teacher is not in class. They don't have self-control or autonomy	Behavior Interests	
		Probably a reaction of the way he feels	Behavior	

Appendix G: Consent form

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

IED Rafael Bernal Jiménez
Respetados padres de familia y/o acudientes:

Como estudiante de Licenciatura en español y Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional de Colombia les informo que actualmente me encuentro realizando un proyecto de investigación durante clases de inglés con grado 601. El proyecto consiste en la implementación de rutinas de pensamiento para contribuir a la mejora de la producción oral en lengua inglesa de los estudiantes. El desarrollo de dicho proyecto requiere de la recolección de cierta información durante las clases; partiendo con una encuesta de caracterización, seguido de unas pruebas para diagnosticar el nivel de inglés, continuado por notas de campo, trabajos en clase, cuestionarios y grabaciones de audio al realizar ciertas actividades de producción oral. Esta información se pretende recolectar puesto que es valiosa para el desarrollo del proyecto. Cabe aclarar que cualquier información tomada será manejada y guardada confidencialmente, de uso exclusivo para el proyecto y, que no hay riesgo alguno para los estudiantes debido a la confidencialidad de la información y a que sus nombres serán conservados anónimamente. Esta investigación se convertirá en tesis de grado y se hará pública al momento de su sustentación, aprobación y publicación por parte de la universidad.

Autorización:

Yo, _____, en carácter de _____ del/de la estudiante _____, he leído la información y ___ doy mi autorización para la recolección de datos y que el/la estudiante sea parte del proyecto investigativo.

Firma: _____ CC: _____ Fecha: _____

Agradezco su atención y colaboración
Juan David Cortés Restrepo

Appendix H: Survey No.1

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL
ENCUESTA INVESTIGACIÓN No. 1 - IED RAFAEL BERNAL JIMENEZ
Actividad de conversación en inglés

1. ¿En qué medida crees que la actividad te ayudó y te guio para hablar mejor en inglés?
 Bastante mucho normal poco nada
2. ¿Cómo te pareció encontrar lo que querías decir en inglés para tu ejemplo?
 Muy fácil fácil regular difícil muy difícil
3. ¿Qué sensaciones te generó la actividad de producción oral en inglés? (marca todas las que creas)
 Seguridad, inseguridad, tranquilidad, nerviosismo, claridad, confusión, motivación,
 desmotivación, interés, desinterés, comodidad, incomodidad
4. ¿Cómo consideras que fue el diálogo con tus compañeros de grupo, es decir, dar y brindar información en inglés?
 Muy bueno Bueno Regular Malo Muy malo
5. ¿Cuál consideras es la utilidad de realizar este tipo de actividades en parejas o grupos?
 Muy útil útil normal no muy útil inútil

Appendix I: Filed notes 13

FIELD NOTES No 13

SCHOOL:	Rafael Bernal Jiménez	GRADE:	601
STUDENT-TEACHER:	Juan David Cortés Restrepo	DATE:	May 11th 2016
TUTOR:	Zulma Buitrago	GROUP-TEACHER:	Emilsen Ariza

ACTIVITY (Description)	TEXTUAL MARKERS (Linguistic and non-linguistic)	ANALYSIS (Categorization)	INTERPRETATION (Meaning)
<p>Explanation of the thinking routine: the teacher explains the use of a thinking routine (say what, say why, say other things to try) as a strategy to guide a speaking exercise about the months and celebrations. The routine allows the students to answer a question, give a reason, and add something else. For that, the teacher uses a picture taken from a magazine and some printed images to stimulate their thinking and answers.</p> <p>Drawing activity: The ss must make a drawing representing what they do for mother's day.</p> <p>Speaking exercise: the students share their work in couples</p>	<p>The students look attentively to the demonstration the teacher is doing. One of the students asks joking: "¿prof: osee que esa de la foto es su mamá?". A few students on the back are not paying attention and looking at one of the student's cellphone. The T tells them to put that cellphone away and listen.</p> <p>Most of the students answered what they saw on the images when the teacher showed them images of a pizza, a chocolate bar, and a jacket.</p> <p>The most part of the ss show concentration on their drawings, one of them is out of his seat. T: "What are you doing?" B: "prof: es que necesito colores" another student is making noise with his pencil hitting the table.</p> <p>B1: "What do you mothers day?" B2: "I give a red rose... for my mother... (looks at her drawing) because she like rose... (looks again) and she happy I give a rose"</p> <p>B2: "What do you do mothers day? B1: "I play with my mom because is fun and she the like" (despite the mistakes the B said it fluently)</p> <p>B3: "what do you do on mothers day?" B4: "Go to have lunch... (looks at the drawing) why you likes pizza... (looks at the board) when she eats candies (read form the board)</p> <p>B4: "What you do on mothers day?" B3: "I play... because I like... play to have childhood" (pauses between phrases and looking the drawing)</p> <p>B5: "I sleep, because I am tired, and, (looks the board) enjoy, enjoy sleeping" (looking the drawing)</p> <p>Note that this student previously asked the teacher how to say candies in English</p> <p>One of the students preferred Halloween for his work, but he previously notified the teacher about it. He also asked the T how to say disfrazarse in English. B6: "I dress up because is Halloween and I like candies" (with a low voice volume and short pauses between phrases, also looking his drawing)</p> <p>B7: "what you do mothers, do you do on mothers day?" (self-correcting) B8: "I buy flower, because... loves flowers, and her favorite flower is rose" (the student looked at the board before saying each phrase, the rest of the time looked at the drawing)</p> <p>B8: "what do you do on mothers day? B7: "Go to</p>	<p>The B likes joking around</p> <p>The Bs are more into the cellphone than the explanation of the activity.</p> <p>Images catch their attention</p> <p>The students like drawing</p> <p>This B can't get focused</p> <p>B2 self-supported to speak using the drawing</p> <p>It seems like B1 said it by heart, confidently</p> <p>B4 shows lack of language in the speech to continue with the last part of the answer. Self-support.</p> <p>The B need some seconds to think better what to say between phrases.</p> <p>She helps herself too, not only with her drawing but also with the example on the board, and asking the teacher for unknown words.</p> <p>The B6 understands the activity so well that is actually capable of applying it to a different theme, and creates a new one. Linguistic motivation to create a different one.</p> <p>B7 realizes of the word missing and self corrects it.</p> <p>B8 uses the model given to help her speech.</p> <p>B7 struggles to find the words needed, and the</p>	<p>This B enjoys making other people laugh</p> <p>They may like better what they're watching on the cellphone</p> <p>Images were attractive probably because chocolates and pizza are things they may like. Thus, their likes were brought to class.</p> <p>The Bs show good results when drawing. They not only like it but they are also used to draw a lot in class. The activity and drawing may not be very interesting for this two Bs.</p> <p>The B understands the activity and uses his thinking skills to support the speech.</p> <p>This B produced his answer with no difficulty due to his cognitive abilities. He not only understood and internalized the exercised but also produced his own with such facility and confidence. Something is not very clear, it can be a lack of words, so he complemented his discourse with what he read on the board.</p> <p>Although the B often pauses, answer s successfully, thinks to speak, showing understanding and good use of language.</p> <p>Simple but good enough answer. Knows how to think over the information and how find the info she needs.</p> <p>This s's thinking skills go higher. Showed understanding and the way he thinks allowed him to go further in the activity, providing a successful and good example. The B might have felt engaged and motivated that he created his own example.</p> <p>Again, thinking skills evident in the oral production, for both students. Cognition allowed one of them to self-correct, and the other one to find what to say and look up for the info needed.</p> <p>the B could not find the right words, and added some</p>

<p>Questions about the activity, an informal interview to know the students opinions.</p>	<p>have lunch, to have lunch, (looking to the drawing) and... (looks at the board) and go, to, (looks at the board again) because and eat pizza"</p> <p>B10: "What do you do on mothers day?" B9: "I, the buy, a scarf blue, to my mother, (looks at the drawing and reads) because she like scarf, she deserve it" The student had previously asked the teacher for some vocabulary.</p> <p>B9: "What do you do on mothers day?" B10: "I buy fruit salad, because I like see enjoy, and I a love her" (she was looking at her paper all the time)</p> <p>The teacher asked the students how was the activity, how did they like the activity. T: "¿Cómo les pareció la actividad?"</p> <p>Some Bs answered at the same time with "fácil", to what some others replied "difícil". One of the B said "téstame chevere por que nos gusta dibujar". The second question the teacher asked in Spanish was if they think the activity helped them speak better in English.</p> <p>More than half of the Bs answered yes at the same time. Then, the T asked them to raise their hand if they think the activity did help them. 22 students raised their hand. When the teacher asked to raise their hand if they think the activity did not help them, only 7 students raised their hand. Some of them did not raise it either for yes or no.</p> <p>The next question was if it was easy or hard to find what they wanted to say: "¿y ¿fue fácil o difícil encontrar lo que ustedes querían decir?"</p> <p>Some of them answered with just a yes and some others with a no, but, one of them said it was easy because one knows what one does for mothers day: "fue fácil porque uno sabe lo que hace para el día de la madre". Another B said that one knows what one's mom likes: "además uno sabe qué le gusta a la mamá". One more students said it was easy because the teacher previously explained to them by using some words they could use: "fue fácil porque el profe nos explicó con las palabras"</p> <p>Next, the teacher asked them to raise their hand if they think the dialogue was good, if they understood their partner and they were understood. 18 Bs raised their hand. Then, the T asked them to raise their hands up if they think the dialogue was bad or they could not communicate very well. To this, 9 Bs raised their hand. Some Bs were not paying attention, therefore, did not answer.</p> <p>The last question was what they liked the most of doing the activity: "¿Qué es lo que más les gusta de la actividad?" One B said: "la pizza y los chocolates" and some students laughed at it. Another B's answer was drawing: "dibujar". One more B said what they liked the most was speaking English because they seldom do it: "hablar en inglés, es que nosotros casi no hablamos". Some other answers were: speak in English as well, the colored papers, drawing, learning how to say: I like and, it's fun.</p> <p>The class finished a couple minutes later.</p>	<p>idea is not very understandable</p> <p>B9 used the sources to get some selfsupport too and promote the answer. The student previously wrote the answer.</p> <p>The B understood the example, found the words needed, and provided a new one. The drawing was a guide for her speech. The B expresses her feeling in the activity.</p> <p>Difficulty level interest likes</p> <p>Help technique Self production</p> <p>L2 knowledge, use of L2 Seek, search, find, think</p> <p>Meaningful likes</p> <p>Understanding /comprehension</p> <p>Communication, interaction, social competence, attention issues, interests</p> <p>likes likes interest learning</p>	<p>known words to complete an answer.</p> <p>The answer the B provided was already written, thus the discourse was not very spontaneous. However, the B was capable of doing the activity, showing comprehension and a good production.</p> <p>The pattern allowed the B to use her cognition and go all through the process to provide a successful speech. The activity was engaging to her that she could even express feelings.</p> <p>Some Bs found the activity easy and some others harder. This is because not all of them have the same skills a level, both linguistic and cognitive.</p> <p>The Bs recognize the activity did help them to speak and use their knowledge in L2 and cognitive skills.</p> <p>It is evident that real life situations that are meaningful to the Bs help out getting them engaged, using their cognition to find the answers they need to produce an oral discourse.</p> <p>When the Bs understand the activity, they are capable of going through the cognitive stages to produce something and provide an outcome. Although some Bs could not develop the activity very well because of different reasons such as: attention and dislikes, the activity was successful for most of them, integrating their likes, linguistic competence and cognition to communicate.</p> <p>It can be inferred that the activity was engaging or attractive to the students given that it included some of their likes (food, colors, drawing), habits (mothers day tradition, drawing), expectations (speaking and learning English), therefore, all of that was useful at the moment of doing the speaking activity.</p>
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Appendix J: Transcript. Speaking activity on *Actions in progress 2*

<p>Activity: Speaking activity 2 on actions in progress</p> <p>Unit: actions in progress – unit 2</p> <p>Date: 04/ 27/16</p>

- S1:** Julio is at the park. He is playing with the ball, because he love play
- S2:** Sebas in the corral is riding the horse because they love a house, a horse
- S3:** Britany is the court de volleyball she is playing volleyball because she likes playing
- S4:** Maria is stretching. She is in the park because she... love the gymnastics
- S5:** Tomas is, Tomas is in the beach surfing because the like surfing
- S6:** Daniela is at the park. She is ... she is paint. Eh, ¿Qué le gusta hacer? Mmm...
Because... she... paint, le gusta pintar
- S7:** She is the tennis court, mmm... she is play the tennis, mm....
- S6:** ¿Por qué le gusta jugar?
- T:** because...
- S6:** because, tiene q decir así, porque
- S8:** she is Astrid, eh... she is, she love painting, eh she where in the... in the house, eh...
why eh... because she is love painting
- S9:** She,... she in the park,... she is play basketball, because... ¿cómo era? love,... love...
ah, basketball
- S10** Juan is at... the park,... he is playing soccer, because he like sports
- S11** She is the tennis court, mmm... she is play the tennis, mm.... Because is fun
-

Appendix K: Lesson plan 3.3

PRE-SERVICE TEACHER'S NAME: Juan CortésI.E.D.: Rafael Bernal JiménezLESSON PLAN No. 3.3DATE: May 10th – 11th 2016**PROFILE**Name of the Lesson: Special datesSubject: Months and celebrationGrade Level: sixth gradeNumber of students: 39Duration: 3 hoursInstructional Settings: whole class, in pairs or in groups depending on the activity

General description of lesson: This lesson is intended to work on the months and review the seasons in English since celebrations as the main topic. The students will practice based on celebrations corresponding to each month and will talk about what they do on some of those festivities.

OBJECTIVES

To associate celebrations of the country with months.

To talk about month celebrations and the way they commemorate special dates.

MATERIALS: Images, copies, letter soups, glue, scissors, markers, board,

PROCEDURE

- Warm up: (10 min, whole group)

Images: The teacher displays a series of images/posters corresponding to some celebrations and important dates for the students to identify, recognize and reflect. Ask the students about what they see, what they know and when we celebrate.

- Pre task: (30 min, whole group and then pairs)

Reading: the students receive a copy that contains short readings about some of our celebrations supported by some images and vocabulary. The copy also contains the seasons and the corresponding months.

Before reading, the teacher guides the recognition of the vocabulary. Then, the students have 15 minutes to read in pairs and reflect according to the questions at the end of the copy. After that, the teacher uses those questions to socialize and verify comprehension.

- tasks: (60 min, single)

Drawing the calendar: the students draw a calendar on their notebooks, drawing for each month the most representative celebration. The teacher guides the activity using the board.

Vocabulary exercise: the students are given a letter soup to find vocabulary corresponding to months and seasons.

Drawing the seasons: The students draw the four seasons on their notebooks and write the corresponding months.

- Post task: (60 min)

Speaking exercise: the teacher explains the use of a thinking routine (*say what, say why, say other things to try*) as a strategy to guide the speaking exercise about the months and celebrations. The routine allows the students to answer a question, give a reason, and add something else.

First, the teacher uses some images to explain and exemplify the routine, stimulate their answers, and encourage them within the routine. The question is: What do you do to celebrate the mother's day? (15 min, whole class)

Second, the students choose a celebration and make a poster drawing what they do to celebrate it. They also use the dictionary to look for the words they need to talk about the celebration. They can write their answers on the notebook next to the drawing. Moreover, they are provided with some useful words to complement their answers. (25 min, individual)

Third, the students share their work in couples, and then the teacher selects some students to present their work. (15 min, pairs)

- Wrap-up (10 min)

Playing tingo, tango, the teacher asks the students about the month celebrations.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment for this lesson is to be done all along the class. The questions after the reading to check students' comprehension, the drawings, the letter soup, the oral production with the thinking routine, and the wrap up.

Appendix L: Artifacts. Students' drawings during speaking tasks

