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Teaching Speaking in a Motivating Way

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Research Proposal

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1. Abstract

This research proposal investigated 4th grade students from Colegio San Andrés in Maipú, Santiago during my final practicum. The problem I had to face was that I did not know strategies to motivate forty students of ten years old to speak English in English lessons. For this purpose, I used two kinds of sources to realize which my problem was: lesson plans and oral presentation rubrics. That is why, this research proposal will be a huge support for teachers who want to persuade their students to speak English and avoid using their native language. Especially, focusing the lessons as students-center ones and giving several instances to enhance interaction.

Key Words: Speaking, young learners, motivation, large classes, proficiency, teaching.

2. Acknowledgements

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3. Introduction

One of the main concerns of teachers is to motivate their students to participate in their lessons. In an EFL context – English as a Foreign Language- it is a bigger challenge, especially dealing with students who have not had English lessons in English before and who think English will not help them in their daily life or future at all.

To teach a group of teenagers or adults to speak in English, can be easy because they know the benefits of it. However, a group of children changes everything. As they have short attention span, it is difficult to catch their attention all the time, particularly when teaching something they are not interested in. They do not have the maturity to separate work and friendship, so they complain when working with different classmates and do not take advantage of it. They use to take every comment very emotionally and feel embarrassed when making mistakes because the rest can laugh at them. Finally, they do not have clear goals in life taking into consideration they have just started building their identity.

This research proposal is designed for 4th graders in order to find out different strategies and methods to motivate them to speak without fears so they can take advantage and enjoy English lessons even if it is not their favorite subject but, for future opportunities.

The first part of this research proposal provides readers a context to the problem stated in- depth. The second part, offers a theoretical framework which conveys experts' different points of view and tips to deal with the topic. The third part, gives data collection to use when applying this research proposal and possible results. Finally, the last part shows the conclusions at the end of this proposal which are related to my

weaknesses and strengths that I could identify in order to modify my teaching strategies and methodology to improve my teaching skills.

4. Context

The sample students are from Colegio San Andrés, a subsidized school located in Maipú. My class is a 4th grade, children about ten years old- 25 girls and 15 boys-¹. The teacher's goals for students are very simple and the main idea is that at the end of the year, students can produce oral English through dialogues which is very difficult taking into account that the lessons are in Spanish.

As they are forty students and their seating arrangement is in rows, it is difficult to make them participate or to make them work collaboratively. Most of them are afraid or ashamed of speaking in English. Moreover, the teachers have been changing every single year. Therefore, there is no previous established routine and the classes have been discontinued.

The teacher overuses the textbook and workbook as the only source to work with and the classes seem to be taught without a previously designed lesson plan.

Unfortunately, there is no technological resource or any material available to support the lessons. However, I am able to do whatever I consider necessary to reach the goals I expect to achieve with the children.

Considering that they do not produce in the foreign language at all, I started from the beginning, very basic with the alphabet, teaching vocabulary about the unit and establishing a short routine before starting every lesson.

At first, most of the time students felt uncomfortable and always complained because now their English lessons are taught in English. That is why, in my lessons I try to motivate them to produce and accept English.

¹ See appendix.

Nonetheless, they are getting motivated with the new way. Flashcards, songs, storytelling, short activities that include the four skills have made some students change their minds a little bit.

5. Rationale

I am focusing on this because I want to foster student's personal development and their future as professionals. This will also be useful in order to communicate inside the classroom.

On the one hand, the first class is the most important one because teachers get to know with their students and it is the first contact, the first impression. After that, teachers are conscious about student's interests, needs, motivations and expectations in order to make the lessons meaningful. Thus, when students are not motivated they will not speak and rapport will never be established between the teacher and the students.

On the other hand, it is hard for me as a novice teacher to motivate forty students in order to make them communicate in English. Moreover, when it is about ten year old children and I have never worked with primary students before.

That is why my purpose is to explore different instances to make students feel comfortable in the classroom in order to help them speak in English without fear.

6. Problem Statement

6.1 The Question

How can I motivate forty students from 4th grade in a beginner proficiency level to speak in English?

6.2 Hypothesis

After having thought in my problem the following hypothesis came up: Even though students have been learning English since kindergarten, they have not achieved higher communicative skills, specifically speaking.

Consequently, possible answers to this problem are based on the following:

- By giving students a word in context will facilitate they comprehension of the word's meaning.
- Collaborative work enhances students' motivation to participate as the student sees his classmates doing it. Moreover, collaborative work encourages discussion and interaction.
- Teachers should work based on short and long term goals considering learning as a process.
- Teachers need to guide students and avoid be the dominant participant in the class in order to let students apply what they learn.
- Teachers need to focus their lessons on topics of students' interests.
- Open questions are useful to let students speak without limits. (Avoiding questions that only have yes/no answers).

7. Objectives

7.1 General objective

The general objective of this research proposal is to design a plan (with short and long term goals) with different strategies to motivate students to take risks and speak in English considering their youth and the importance of this tool for their future.

7.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this research proposal are to create a comfortable classroom environment, generate authentic motivation and to design engaging activities according to students' age, needs and interests.

8. Theoretical Framework

There is a general idea that English lessons cannot be taught in English because students will not understand anything as they cannot speak in the target language. It is very sad to hear that a group of students spent eight years having English lessons and their English level is zero. Besides, it is an assumption that it is difficult to teach a foreign language, especially to a big number of students. But how can a teacher make his students learn English with English lessons in Spanish? Obviously, the answer is negative.

However, most of the time teachers do not invest time and efforts to change this situation. That is why; the following concepts described by different authors will help learning different strategies to find solutions to the problem stated. The idea here is to transmit why it is important to speak English in English lessons, learn about the main components of speaking, how to teach beginning proficiency levels, techniques to work with large classes, learn about children and their psychological characteristics and tips to teach speaking.

8.1 Speaking

It is important for teachers to encourage students to speak in their lessons, especially in English where it becomes more difficult to communicate and establish rapport- “a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships” (Tannen, Deborah 175) – because it is necessary to speak in order to get to know each other and find out different ways of making a lesson motivating and interesting.

Speaking can be used for different purposes. Richards manifests that the purpose may be to make social contact with people, engage in discussion with someone, seek or express opinions, describe things, complain about people's behavior, clarify information or entertain people with anecdotes and jokes among others. What is more, he establishes that "each of these different purposes for speaking implies knowledge of the rules that account for how spoken language reflects the context or situation in which speech occurs, the participants involved and their specific roles and relationships and the kind of activity the speakers are involved in" (211). The main idea is to establish a clear purpose why using the foreign language.

Nonetheless, there are some obstacles to consider that are not related to cognitive skills, but with affective factors which are more difficult to manage inside the classroom. For instance, because of the "language ego that informs people that 'you are what you speak', learners are reluctant to be judged by hearers" (Brown 269). In other words, we must be careful when dealing with frustration as part of children development because children are very sensitive in terms of criticism, making mistakes and others' opinion.

Furthermore, it is of great importance to think about other components of speaking, essential for the process of communicating ideas.

8.1 a. Vocabulary

It is significant for students' future that teachers encourage them to speak in English in English lessons. That is the reason why, teachers need to know what kind of vocabulary must be incorporated and how to teach it, especially when teaching children

at a beginner proficiency level. Otherwise, students will finish school without any knowledge of English after several years taking English lessons. Above all, we need vocabulary in order to communicate. So, what needs to be taught in an EFL context?

According to Penny Ur, vocabulary can be defined as “words we teach in the foreign language” (60). However, we have to consider that in an EFL context people use to translate word by word when trying to understand the foreign language. For that reason, Ur explains that “a useful convention is to cover all such cases by talking about vocabulary ‘items’ rather than ‘words’” (60).

Therefore, students must be taught that in English the language turns different than in Spanish and a phrase of three words can express just one idea. Idioms – understood as “fixed combinations of words whose meaning is often difficult to guess from the meaning of each individual word” (O’Dell and McCarthy *English Idioms* 6)-and collocations – understood as “a combination of two or more words which frequently occur together (...) such as blond hair which cannot be yellow hair because *yellow* collocates with flowers or paint” (O’Dell and McCarthy *English Collocations* 6). – are also an important aspect to consider because they are built according to previous established rules. Consequently, we cannot let students translate in our lessons or at least not the whole class. Besides, Ur offers different ways of presenting the meaning of new items in the classroom:

- To provide a context: Ur suggests to read a “story or sentence in which the item occurs” (63). On the one hand, examples and associations can be found. On the other hand, students will learn to come up with their own examples.
- To use synonyms and antonyms: Teachers need to find out different ways in which they can explain meaning without translating into Spanish. Thus, to

describe with other words or to talk about the opposite of the item will help to build more vocabulary and to go beyond translation (63).

- Demonstration: Penny Ur explains that demonstrating through acting and mime will be helpful when illustrating meaning. Also pictures and objects are an extra aid. (63).
- Using definitions: “A concise definition as in a dictionary; often a superordinate with qualifications: for example, a cat is an animal which...” (Ur 63) is useful to motivate students to learn items while speaking about detailed descriptions of appearance, qualities and so on.

In addition, the author remarks that “vocabulary is often colloquial; in English you might, for example, say *guy* when in writing you would use *man*, or *kid* or *child*” (Ur, 106). In other words, as teachers we should include informal language which represents reality. In daily life we are exposed to informal speech, spontaneous speakers. So, when we hear daily conversations of native speakers, we can identify interesting features such as short chunks, idioms, collocations and different ways of pronouncing an item according to the speaker’s accent and non grammatical structures that are part of the foreign language.

As translating is a controversial issue when teaching EFL students, the writer’s personal feeling is that translation should be allowed just “if the teacher speaks the mother tongue of the learners (...) is often a quick and convenient way to convey meaning, particularly if the concept is one that it is difficult to explain in the target language” (Ur 338). That is to say, when students finally cannot get the idea of the item, we should use the students’ mother tongue in order to get results easily.

8.1b Interaction

Interaction is described by Douglas Brown as “the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other” (165). Nonetheless, interaction use to take place when the teacher asks, the student answers and the teacher gives feedback. On the contrary, in her studies, Penny Ur considers that there are alternative patterns of classroom interaction: “the initiative does not always have to be in the hands of the teacher and interaction may be between students or between a student and the material” (227). To put it in another way, when the teacher dominates the lesson through his talk, students will not have instances to put into practice what they learn.

Consequently, Brown argues that the role of teacher as a facilitator which means to make learning easier for students is the best way of helping students. Here the role of the teacher requires that you step away from the managerial or directive role and allow students with guidance and gentle prodding to find their own pathways to success (166).

As a result, different seating arrangements must be included in each class. In that way, the teacher and the students will have plenty of space to work inside the classroom. The teacher can walk around monitoring while students have the sufficient liberty to move and arrange the seats in the way they feel more comfortable. Obviously, the chosen seating arrangement will depend on the classroom’s size and the activity that will be done.

Moreover, Ur proposes group work as the best way of enhancing speaking. Through group work students will interact making decisions, providing information and finding out ways to solve a problem while the teacher walks around listening and

intervening just when needed (228). Jim Scrivener establishes that classroom interaction can be in small groups, pairs or as a whole class. Besides, collaborative work let students think by themselves and teach each other new things. What is more, every “group (class) has characters and moods” (83) so, teachers must take advantage of the ideas, ways of seeing and reactions of their group to encourage speaking. What becomes interesting because the group responds differently to each subject and its teacher.

“The success of group work depends to some extent on the surrounding social climate, and on how habituated the class is to using it; and also, of course, on the selection of an interesting and stimulating task whose performance is well within the ability of the group”(Ur 232).

8.2 Large classes

Teaching large classes is particularly challenging and as Scrivener says “‘large’ is relative; it depends on what you are used to” (331) but anyhow it has several problems to deal with.

In first place, forty students in one classroom is a really common pattern in Chilean reality. Undoubtedly that fact carries out many obstacles as the ones Scrivener mentions on his book: “The teacher and students can’t move easily, the seating arrangement seems to prevent a number of activities, there is limited eye contact from teacher to students and limited or no eye contact among students, teachers can’t give equally attention to all students and interaction tends to be restricted to those closest to the front” (332) among other things.

In the case of motivating forty students to speak in English when they have never done it before sounds even more difficult. Especially, taking into consideration students' different abilities and strategies to learn.

For that purpose, the author gives some tips to follow in order to give possible answers to this problem:

- Push the seats up against the wall.
- Get half the students to turn around and face the students behind them.
- Let them sit or stand on the desks.
- Go outside on the grass.
- Don't worry about the noise.
- Ask other teachers what they do.
- Take the risk that getting them to move will be OK.
- Ask the students what they think about these ideas.
- Divide the large group into smaller 'classes' within the class.

Noticeably, not all of these suggestions can work out in every class. But they need to be considered depending on the context. Besides, working outside the classroom gives a fresh atmosphere to the lesson, as students do not use to work in other places. Obviously, if the school does not allow working outside, you will have to think in other options.

Other things we have to bear in mind are time consuming when arranging seats and complaints about the classmates students have to work with. Perhaps, the first couple of times doing this will take more time to have results as it was my case with fourth graders. But at the end, students will get used to it and every class will be less and less

time consuming. It will be like a children's routine to arrange seats and share with different classmates. This will also enhance tolerance and group work.

8.3 Proficiency Levels

Teachers generally focus on proficiency levels when planning a lesson using expressions such as “beginning”, “intermediate” or “advanced”. But, where can teachers find and learn how to label students into proficiency different categories?

There is a standard set of guidelines by which teachers are guided to label their students into the different levels. Yet, there is a test which is an oral interview that determines the level of proficiency of each test-taker; it is called the FSI Oral Interview that “is a carefully designed set of structured tasks that elicit pronunciation, fluency and integrative ability, sociolinguistic and cultural knowledge, grammar and vocabulary”(Brown 97) ².

Although this may be true, most of the time students do not have opportunities to take this kind of tests, so as an informal process, teachers establish categories of the target language proficiency by themselves as a general guideline to work with.

For the same reason, teaching beginning levels which means “students at this level have very little or no prior knowledge of the target language” (Brown 98) will become a big challenge for the teacher because at the beginning it is difficult to make students retain new items, express themselves and work without other limitation related that appears because of their age. Simultaneously, it is hard to make students move forward and achieve big goals in a short term, but understanding learning as a process it will be

² See appendix.

necessary to establish short but also long term goals. Therefore, teachers' role is very serious and need to be constant. That is one of the reasons why this forty young learners at a beginner proficiency level cannot move forward: the teachers are changed every single year. Though, there is no process and continuity.

In fact, Brown mentions that "beginning students are highly dependent on the teacher for models of language and so, a teacher-centered or teacher-fronted classroom is appropriate for some of your classroom time" (99). In this case, the first lessons cannot be designed as student centered –the focus is on student's participation- ones the whole lesson because there are certain patterns that need to be learned in order to make students familiarize with the lesson routine and rules. That is to say, at times student-centered and at times teacher-centered. Hopefully in a week or two, depending on the amount of lessons and hours per week, teachers can encourage students participate little by little when they feel ready to do it, delegating them roles such as making the routine at the beginning of the lesson and being the group leader to answer and summarize the groups' point of view of a situation, a homework, among other responsibilities.

In terms of teacher talk, the input is crucial. Eye contact and well articulated language needs to be carefully putted into practice. Slow your speech if necessary and use simple vocabulary and structures to be better understood (Brown 99).

8.4 Young Learners

This research proposal is focused on children. That is the reasons why we must reflect on certain characteristics that young learners have in common that are useful when designing a lesson plan or an activity.

First of all, childhood is modern term used to talk about a period when a person is a child –an age span ranging from birth to adolescence-.

Jim Scrivener comments in his book *Learning Teaching* some characteristics that young learners have in common to take into account: Children are noisy, they want to learn new things, they like to experiment, they are curious, they easily get excited, they want to have fun, they love attention, they cannot concentrate very long and it is hard to calm them down (321). Furthermore, he adds that children “want to *use* language, not to study it in its own right (...) children may not see the point of English. But they do see the point of interesting tasks, games and activities” (321).

As well, teachers should take advantage of the characteristics children have in common in favor of English lessons. Especially when trying to make them communicate through speaking. So, students’ noisiness should be used to make them communicate and use the language they should be able to learn.

Jeremy Harmer argues that “young children, especially those up to nine or ten, learn differently from older children, adolescents and adults in the following ways:

- They respond to meaning even if they do not understand individual words.
- They often learn indirectly rather than directly- this means that they can take in information from all sides, learning from everything around them rather than only focusing on the precise topic they are being taught.
- Their understanding comes not just from explanation, but also from what they see and hear and crucially, have a chance to touch and interact with.
- They find abstract concepts such as grammar rules difficult to grasp.
- They generally display an enthusiasm for learning and a curiosity about the world around them.

- They have a need for individual attention and approval from the teacher.
- They are keen to talk about themselves and respond well to learning that uses themselves as their own lives as main topics in the classroom.
- They have a limited attention span, unless activities are extremely engaging, they can get easily bored, losing interest after ten minutes or so” (82).

Considering what was mentioned above, children cannot be taught as any student.

Every student has different characteristics according to his age, culture and background, among other things. What is more, in the same group there are several kinds of interests, needs and expectations for a lesson. Nonetheless, there are factors in common that will help us at the beginning regarding the things mentioned before – age, culture-

Likewise, Diane Papalia recognizes a selective attention capacity on children in which they only concentrate on the things they consider relevant because have connection with their needs and the things they want (367)³. So, again we must emphasize on the first class when getting to know each other will have an important fact for the whole term.

For this purpose, it also needs to be considered the awareness of children about their self-esteem in every activity. At the age of ten, children are building their identity and they care about what others think of their personality and personal appearance. Then, any comment will affect their feelings. Papalia advocates that self-esteem in children is about nothing and all at the same time (309)⁴.

Consequently, at this age everything is black or white, good or bad, there is not something in the middle. The author adds that “(...) a high level of self-esteem will

³ Translated by Francisca Ferro from the book *Psicología Del Desarrollo: De la Infancia a la Adolescencia*

⁴ Translated by Francisca Ferro from the book *Psicología Del Desarrollo: De la Infancia a la Adolescencia*.

motivate the child to perform in a good way” (309). Additionally, teachers must be careful with affective factors that surround students behavior in their process of learning, students become very emotional at this age because of several reasons regarding to personal appearance, friendship, identity building and self-esteem as Brown mentions, children are “more fragile than adults (...) their egos are still being shaped, and therefore the slightest nuances of communication can be negatively interpreted. Teachers need to help them to overcome such potential barriers to learning by helping your students to laugh with each other at various mistakes that they all make, being patient and supportive to build self-esteem (...) and eliciting as much oral presentation as possible from students, especially the quieter ones to give them plenty of opportunities for trying things out” (88).

We will also have to contemplate the third stage of Erik Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development -1950-. Here, Erik Emerson states that the child will confront conflicting feelings and will develop as part of the personality building a crisis between initiative and guilt (308) in which the child make plans and activities but will feel remorse and those suffering pangs of conscience can make him regret of his projects. In other words, teachers have to be careful when dealing with students ‘fears. Frustration is part of children’s’ daily life so, when choosing a task it will have to take into account that not only has to be interesting, but comfortable to deal with. Moreover, when giving feedback, teachers need to use the proper words to avoid hurting feelings.

Equally important is the role of prize and punishment. In the classroom most of the time, children are punished for bad behavior. However, sometimes teachers complain that the most punished the child is, the worst he behaves.

As an assumption, teachers and parents use to practice punishment as a way to demonstrate they have control over the children. Nonetheless, at times children demonstrate the contrary. As they are tired of being punished, they will not change the way they behave because nothing stimulates them to change their minds.

Diane Papalia in her book talks about punishment and reinforcement suggesting that “children learn more when their good behavior is been reinforced” (321). Indeed, the child will feel stimulated to behave in a good way in another opportunity. The author also explains that there are two kinds of reinforcements: *internal* – a smile, a hug, or a privilege – and *external* – candies, money, toys, golden stars – (321)⁵.

Evidently, to try to make children participate, teachers need to make big efforts to avoid any sort of punishment inside the classroom. Considering children will not care about it as part of their age. It will need to have in mind different reinforcements when someone makes a good action or performs well in the lesson. So, the student will think: “I’m good, I can do this” and not the contrary such as “I give up or I suck”.

Finally, attention span makes a huge difference between a children and an adult. For the same reason, a variety of activities in short periods have to be done in one lesson.

8.5 Motivation

Motivation is used to describe the reason why a person, in this case a student does something. Furthermore, Penny Ur explains that “motivation is what encourages or makes a learner be willing to invest his/her effort in learning and in participating in the

⁵ Translated by Francisca Ferro from the book *Psicología Del Desarrollo: De la Infancia a la Adolescencia*.

activities or assignments. As well, motivation is what makes teaching more pleasant, easier and more productive (2009). But why is it that important in an EFL classroom?

In general, children get bored in the classroom. Especially when dealing with English lessons because they do not understand. As a result, Ur recommends “they need to be motivated by the teacher or the materials in order to learn effectively” (288).

A motivated learner is defined as “someone who is willing or even eager to invest effort in learning activities and to progress” (Ur 274). That is why, the teacher have to create a special environment and interesting activities to engage students which will depend on students’ age, culture and background among other things.

Certainly, the classroom atmosphere affects students’ predisposition to the subject matters. The teachers’ attitude, the sitting arrangement and the different strategies to enhance motivation are the protagonists of the process of learning.

To motivate students to speak and communicate in the foreign language, an extra effort has to be put into practice. As students do not understand the new language, we must consider different approaches to figure out what are the student’s needs and interests according to their age.

Michael Rost became conscious of an interesting fact that most EFL classroom do not have: “there just isn’t enough English input in the environment, there probably aren’t enough opportunities for interaction with English speakers, there usually aren’t enough strong role models promoting the learning of English, and there may not be widespread enough social acceptance for the idea of becoming proficient in English” (pr.2). That is the reason why, motivation should take an active role in a speaking lesson, teachers should speak in English all the time and in the case there is a helper or a practitioner, he or her would also interact with the teacher in English so students get use

to hear the foreign language in a daily routine and will consider the teacher as their role model in a positive way. In the case the teacher knows a native speaker of the foreign language it will be useful and really motivating to ask that person to visit the school and participate in the class, so students will make an effort to try to communicate and speak aspiring to be understood.

On the one hand, teachers must take as an assumption that students have different backgrounds and needs. Even those students who attend the same school.

Nonetheless, the age is a significant factor that ten year old children have in common as a useful starting point to work with. Also, it must be an assumption that English is not necessary and will never be the subject that most matters to all children which was the case of the 4th graders.

On the other hand, it is imperative to establish connections between the subject matters and other subjects the students have or to link the foreign language with student's interests or as Michael Rost says, to students' passions in order to make a lesson meaningful. That involves "a person's central goals in life, the things the learner cares about most, the things that move him or her emotionally. I *don't* mean that a learner needs to become passionate about learning English in order to succeed rather, the learner needs to find a way to connect English learning to his or her real passion in life"(pr.4).

Considering the principle of Skinner's operant conditioning paradigm, "Human beings are universally driven to act, or "behave," by the anticipation of some sort of reward – tangible or intangible, short term or long term – that will ensue as a result of the behavior" (Brown 58) we can identify that there are two kinds of motivation that will enhance people to reach their goals:

- Extrinsic motivation: “is that which derives from the influence of some kind of external incentive, as distinct from the wish to learn for its own sake or interest in tasks” (Ur 277).
- Intrinsic motivations: “the generalized desire to invest effort in the learning for its own sake” (Ur 80).

Although, Penny Ur recommends that “prizes and similar rewards can help, but more effective on the whole are elements that contribute towards intrinsic motivation: interest in doing the activity itself. (...) Such elements are most likely to be effective if they are based on an appeal to the senses or activate the children in speech or movement” (288). Ergo, it is crucial to get to know your students . In that way, your classes will be oriented to what students expect in your lessons. But “for real-time classroom learning a more significant factor is whether the task in hand is seen as interesting” (Ur 280).

Moreover, Brown considers that “classroom techniques have a much greater chance for success if they are self-rewarding in the perception of the learner. The learners perform the task because it is fun, interesting, useful, or challenging...” (59) For that reason, the first class will be essential for the rest of the lessons when wanting to motivate students.

In the case of young learners, it is proved that children who grow up in bilingual households use to speak both languages like native speakers. So, the same can happened inside the classroom. Obviously, we must consider that it is rather difficult when teaching English as a foreign language two or three hours per week. In that way, the results will be in long terms but anyhow with discipline will become a habit and will worth the efforts. Scrivener maintains that “ a stronger reason for teaching English to

younger learners may simply be that starting early will give them many more years at school in which to develop and improve their language skills” (321).

In that way, with few hours it is necessary to work against the time encouraging children to speak which is an essential tool to communicate. In the case intrinsic motivation does not provide results. We must consider that children are unique and authentic individuals so; take into account extrinsic motivation will be another useful option. “(...) some kind of external incentive, as distinct from the wish to learn for its own sake or interest in tasks” (Ur 277) it is also an interest way of teaching young learners. As there is no much time to teach and learn English, it is significant to appeal to some kind of prize in order to get students motivated. However, Ur remarks the importance of noting that ‘success’ does not mean to ‘get the answers right’, though, at times must be.

Additionally, to encourage student’s participation and to enhance student’s willing to speak in class it has to be previously established the idea of making mistakes. Frustration is part of children’s daily lives. There are many instances in which students do not want to participate because of their fears. As teachers, we must teach that mistakes are part of the natural process of learning. Unfortunately, competition sometimes encourages participation, but students get the wrong message: to make a mistake is to be a loser. Nonetheless, Bandura argues that “children learn important social behaviors from observing others” (Bjorklund and 50) they are what they live so it is important to encourage group work and once they see a classmate participate, the rest is going to be willing to do it too.

Clearly, learners, especially young are building self-confidence -“a person’s belief in his or her ability to accomplish a task” (Brown 62) - and their inexperience can

make them feel frustrated. Consequently, the kind of motivation that will be used will depend of the child's personality. The relevant factor is that motivation must encourage risk-taking – “to take calculated risks in attempting to use language” (Brown 63) – and try to make children understand that we learn by making mistakes, so we do not have to be afraid of being corrected and we do not have to make fun of the brave one who tries because the majority will not even try to take risks.

As a final point, Penny Ur maintains that “the teacher's most important function here is simply to make sure that learners are aware of their own success: the message can be conveyed by a nod, a tick, even significant lack of response” (278).

8.6 Teaching speaking

Given that children have characteristics in common that can be used to work with and we have understood what the speaking process involved, another question comes up: How to teach speaking?

On the one hand, undeniably is the fact that “children are centered on the here and now, on the functional purposes of language” (Brown 88). Thus, it is not necessary to explain linguistic concepts in order to make them speak because children do not have big notions on what is spoken correctly or not. To this end, Brown has some ideas to put in practice in the classroom:

- Don't explain *grammar* using terms like “present progressive”.
- Rules stated in abstract terms (“To make a statement into a question, you add a *do* or *does*”).

- Certain more difficult concepts or patterns require more repetition than adults need.

On the other hand, what makes a difference between children and adults is their attention span. In view of that children focus on the here and now, “activities should be designed to capture their immediate interest, lessons need a *variety* of activities to keep interest and attention alive and teachers need to be *animated*, lively and enthusiastic about the subject matter. Consider the classroom a stage on which you are the lead actor, your energy will be infectious. A sense of humor will go a long way to keep children laughing and learning (...) Since children’s humor is quite different from adults, remember to put yourself in their shoes” (Brown 88).

According to students’ age there are diverse ways of teaching speaking. Still, even though we are concentrating on speaking, children have different ways of learning that must be contemplated that are related to multiple intelligences which means, every student has his own way of learning and remembering something. Some are more visual while others can be more kinesthetic. For that reason, in a speaking lesson, a variety of elements should be incorporated to cover all different ways of learning.

Additionally, Penny Ur suggests three main sources of interest for children in the classroom:

- Pictures: The author establishes that “the most obvious type of visual material for children is the picture (...) and it is a dominant channel of input” (289). In other words, pictures are useful to motivate students to understand an item enhancing them to speak. The most colorful the picture is, the more enthusiasm you get from students to participate. You build vocabulary by using pictures too.

- Stories: “Young children love having stories told to them (...) and stories are pure language” (Ur 289). Stories amplify student’s vocabulary and as they use their imagination, they enjoy hearing and participating adding details. In a story there is no time for frustration, mainly because all children have the chance to participate and as they can imagine many things there won’t be a wrong answer.
- Games: The author suggests that “to call something a game when our goal is in fact serious learning may harm the learning” (Ur 289). In other words, as teachers and in order to call students’ attention we use to call ‘games’ the activities we make, but sometimes students get the wrong message and start misbehaving and not taking the responsibility for their learning. So, we must be careful when trying to motivate children because they can take it as a non-serious process.

In his book *Learning Teaching*, Jim Scrivener (2011) writes some suggestions to consider when organizing speaking lessons:

- Topic and cues: The author suggests that we as teachers or the learners would bring a topic as well as a cue to the class that will help to inspire conversation (211). The same that Jeremy Harmer calls *Task-based Learning* which is formed by a belief that “instead of a language structure or function to be learnt, students are presented with a task they have to perform or a problem they have to solve” (71)
- Structuring talk: Scrivener maintains that as teacher “your main role will be to make sure that all learners get a chance to participate, trying to prevent it getting boring, occasionally adding to the discussion itself in order to keep interesting. It

is likely that you will generally want to reduce your own participation level; The more you talk, the less space there is for learning to say something” (212).

- Avoiding the talk-talk loop: it is recommended that when is no response from the learners, you do not have to say something else because again you will not have response and will add something else (Scrivener 212).
- Open questions: “A key technique is to use ‘open questions’ rather than ‘closed questions’” (Scrivener 211) – that required no more than yes or no as an answer. In that way, students will provide extra information and will speak at length. Obviously, the results will depend on the purpose of the activity and the context.

In the case of the use of student’s native language when trying to teach something that cannot be understood by students, Douglas Brown recommends that “in foreign language situation it becomes an option. It is important not to let your classes go to excess in the use of the students’ native language. The rule of thumb here is usually to restrict classroom language to English unless some distinct advantage is gained by the use of their native language, and then only for brief stretches of time” (99).

Whereas, Penny Ur recommends as it was mentioned before that “is often a quick and convenient way to convey meaning, particularly if the concept is one that it is difficult to explain in the target language” (338). So both authors agree on the brief use of the target language only when necessary so students do not get used to speak in their mother tongue to avoid making efforts when trying to understand something.

9. Methodology

Based on two weeks of observation at the beginning of my final practicum I could realize that English lessons were taught in Spanish using only isolated items in English. There was no context to teach and the lessons did not have any connection to students' reality and interests. Besides, the first test of the first unit after winter holidays was with instructions in Spanish and students just had to answer multiple choice. So nothing enhances students to produce English.

For those reasons, it was a problem for me in first place to make the whole lesson in English without complaints and to enhance students to find the positive aspects of speaking in English. Accordingly, to realize my weakness the first week teaching I used some instruments to check whether students learnt or not.

9.1 Instruments

In order to develop this research proposal I used two sources to realize that students were not progressing in my lessons, though I was not motivating them. First, my lesson plans that changed before teaching the first lesson, after teaching the first lesson and the one that follows the first lesson that were useful to compare the way I planned before and after meeting the children. Then, oral presentations in which some of the students were not able to participate as they did not feel comfortable doing it and others just made it because they did not want to get a red mark, but without enthusiasm. Finally, in the case of putting this research into practice I will add surveys to compare and know students' opinion about English lessons before and after having lessons with

me and checklists to see the amount of times students decide to participate, the ones who never participate, just to check the level of enthusiasm for participating.

9.2 Action Plan

If I had to put this research proposal into practice I would apply three different sources to compare results: lesson plans, surveys and oral presentations.

First, the idea is to compare the lesson plans objectives at the beginning of each unit and check how the lessons change along the course. Evidently, at the beginning the lesson will be more teacher- centered in terms of knowing the rules, the routine, and ways to evaluate. The teacher will be the one who asks more frequently, who gives feedback and instructions among other things. However, we will see results when the lesson changes into a student-centered one in which the students will be active participants. They will know the rules inside the classroom, they will know the routine so, they can make it, as they will improve their vocabulary, they will interact more, they will be able to give opinions in terms of evaluations and negotiate with the teacher about it. They can ask questions to the teacher, among other things that will demonstrate they have improved their performance and decided to take risks to speak in English which will shape the lesson plans according to their progress.

Then, surveys will be useful to check students' motivation and their relationship with English. So, in the first lesson, in the middle of the term and at the end of the term I will make a survey to compare results in terms of students' 'enthusiasm before and after having lessons with me in order to see my own progress as a teacher in terms of motivating my students.

To check the speaking of English in every lesson I will make students work in groups with different tasks and discuss important issues that concern them. For that purpose I will use checklists to register when students take risks and decide to speak in English, but as a main source of making sure students are able to speak I will make them prepare oral presentations in order to hear each student's opinion, and check their performance along the term.

As a final point, according to the authors' statements we can see that it is vital to mix methodologies, activities and strategies that will help us develop a meaningful lesson, to make connections between English and other subjects and have in mind that English is not a barrier but a tool for students' life in personal or professional terms.

10. Conclusions

To sum up, doing this research proposal I realized my weaknesses and strengths as a novice teacher. Moreover, it helped me to assume my disadvantages and work on them instead of blaming my students and the poor sources to work with for the unsuccessful lessons at the beginning.

Furthermore, this research helped me overcome my problem and learn different strategies that can be used according to students' age, interests and needs, even though I have not implemented it.

In the lesson plans I designed for 4th graders I could not add technological sources to work with and I realized that even though they are not essential, make the lesson more entertaining and different. Anyways, I expect to put this proposal into practice in a future with better implements to work with which will be beneficial for the students and for me as teacher.

As a consequence, I can say that materials and interesting tasks are really necessary to enhance students' motivation to speak in English. Nonetheless, teacher's guidance and encouragement are the steps that will help the most every single student. Student-centered class is the new methodology that should be implemented in every school. Since the teacher does not have to demonstrate what he/ she knows through lecturing classes but to demonstrate that is able to guide students to reach their goals and expectations.

As a self-criticism, I consider vital to be very careful when designing a lesson plan. In my case, I was not meticulous in terms of knowing students' expectations or opinions about the subject and the lessons in a deeper way. Perhaps, once I realized I

decided to do it as never is late to try and the lessons started to be more successful since I put effort and time to cover all what students expected and wanted. Nevertheless, I wish next time I teach, I could have more sources and support in order to make more projects with the students.

Finally, we have to be passionate in what we do and put all our efforts to reach the aims we expect and also students expectations because we need to work as a team. Obviously take advantage of our failures too because that will lead us to successful lessons. The thing is, we need to be patient and consider the gold rule I learned through all these years at University: learning is a process.

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Appendix

1. The sample students.



2. Brown, Douglas. Proficiency levels.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
0	Unable to function in the spoken language.
0+	Able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed utterances.
1	Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on similar topics.
1+	Able to initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy limited social demands.
2	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.
2+	Able to satisfy most work requirements with language usage that is often, but not always, acceptable and effective.
3	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.
3+	Often able to use the language to satisfy professional needs in a wide range of sophisticated and demanding tasks.
4	Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all level normally pertinent to professional needs.
4+	Speaking proficiency is superior in all respects, usually equivalent to that of a well-educated, highly articulate native speaker.
5	Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate, well-educated, native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is spoken.