1. Información General

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<td>Strengthening Oral Production in English of Students with Basic Level by means of Project-Based Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Autor(es)</strong></td>
<td>Johan Sebastián Hernández Muñoz – Víctor Hugo Arturo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asesor</strong></td>
<td>Sandra Marina Palencia González</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unidad Patrocinante</strong></td>
<td>Universidad Libre. Seccional Bogotá</td>
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2. Descripción

In Colombia, there are lots of problems related to the foreign language learning which affect the process of many people who try to learn English in Colombia. Some of those problems are that teachers focus on grammar and comprehension abilities rather than productive skills which indicate that the oral production is not a priority during the development of an English class in Colombia. Moreover, lack of oral production was evidenced throughout the first class by means of a diagnostic test in which students were supposed to talk about their last or favorite vacations. Students demonstrated the correct use of the grammatical structure of some tenses such as the simple present or the simple past in grammar exercises proposed to practice, nonetheless, there was no type of oral production at the moment of expressing the same ideas and using the same verbal tenses about real-life situations or spontaneous speech, which led to tongue-tied situations among most of them. Thus, the present project seeks to illustrate the effectiveness of PBL, a pedagogical approach that focuses on developing students’ strengths and knowledge by means of projects. This approach, beyond providing both teachers and students an opportunity to elaborate real-life and risk-free situations in order to build knowledge within real contexts, also provides students tools to enhance their autonomy and cooperation skills, elements that are essential at the moment of strengthening oral production in a foreign language.

3. Fuentes


INTRODUCTION.

The lack of oral production in English in Colombia is not a newfound, regardless of English being a foreign language, the development of oral interactions in English among students should be a must in English classes. This project’s main objective is to strengthen oral production of students with a basic level in English by means of PBL, not only because this approach has shown remarkable results in other similar situations but also because it is considered to be an effective method to increase students’ reliability in themselves.

JUSTIFICATION.

The language-teaching process has focused only on the comprehension abilities and the grammatical structure of the language. It is well-known that language development is one of the most important pillars in the whole individual and collective learning process.
Hence, this project was made to present the advantages of an alternative approach: PBL that could improve both students’ oral performance and teachers’ active role in class which could lead to a more effective learning rather the traditional language-teaching process that is developed in Colombia.

Lack of oral production is one of the most common problems in English learners in Colombia. It was evidenced in the teaching practice in the Extension courses at Universidad Libre where student's difficulties in terms of oral production were identified. Throughout the first class by means of a diagnostic test in which students were supposed to talk about their last or favorite vacations. Students demonstrated the correct use of the grammatical structure of some tenses such as the simple present or the simple past in grammar exercises proposed to practice, nonetheless, there was no type of oral production at the moment of expressing the same ideas.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE.

To strengthen oral production in English as a foreign language of students with basic level of the Extension courses at Universidad Libre through the implementation of PBL.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To analyze and determine the initial students' level in terms of oral production in English as a foreign language based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR henceforth).
- To enhance students' oral production in English as a foreign language by means of the implementation of PBL.
- To assess the impact of PBL in students’ oral production in English as a foreign language.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section concerns the theories that support this research proposal. They were considered relevant because each one of them supports the development of this project. To start with PBL is presented since it was the strategy chosen to strengthen oral production in the students selected as the sample population of this project. Next, there is information about the importance of communication skills and oral production in terms of language, as communication is the ultimate purpose of any language and it is often replaced by other language aspects such as grammar. To conclude, the Common European Framework of Reference is included as it is the primary reference to determine
the level of competence of a language student from all over the world. This framework also determines the levels according to the competence of the student and the skills that must be developed to generate a competent person in terms of oral production.

5. Metodología

Regarding the research paradigm, the present research is considered a qualitative research that is defined as "the broadest sense to research that produce descriptive data-people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior".

Action-Research was taken as the research methodology because, through it, it was intended to conduct an action from the data analysis and therefore provide a possible solution to the problem that was identified at the beginning of the research.

Taking into account the type of research methodology that was used in this project, it was important to determine the most suitable technique to analyze the collected data. That being said, thematic analysis provided a useful method of analysis especially in qualitative research since it does not only capture word-based data, but also the intricacies within a textual data set.

The pedagogical proposal used in this research study is aimed at strengthening oral production in students with a level A1 (CEFRL). In this regard, a series of interventions based on PBL were implemented throughout the first semester of 2019. Such interventions were divided into six classes of two hours each, every one designed with a specific topic in mind. This implementation was carried out as a response to the issues that were witnessed in the diagnosis test in which oral production difficulties were perceived in students.

6. Conclusiones

Among the most important conclusions found, it was witnessed that PBL turns out to be an effective learning approach in students with an A1 level as it fosters students' creativity, interaction, cooperative learning and their sociolinguistic competence. In this regard, PBL not only enhanced oral production but also other factors that are intrinsic to it.

The second conclusion was that PBL created environments where students engaged and were able to express their ideas, this means that PBL created risk-free environments for students to interact and improve their speaking skill.
The third conclusion was that PBL not only strengthened students’ oral production, but also enhanced students’ autonomy. This was witnessed within the development of the pedagogical proposal, as students carried out the projects by themselves and the teacher’s interventions were minimal.

The last conclusion that emerged after the implementation and analysis of the pedagogical proposal was that PBL strategies did not have a major impact on students’ grammatical range and accuracy. This might be due because of the lack of time for implementing more and more nourished projects or because PBL is a teaching method that focuses more in productive skills rather than perceptive skills, and, therefore, grammatical range and accuracy should be taught by means of a different method.

**Elaborado por:** Johan Sebastián Hernández Muñoz – Víctor Hugo Arturo

**Revisado por:** Sandra Marina Palencia González

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