Strengthening Oral Production in English of Students with Basic Level by means of Project-Based Learning

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APPROVED:
Introduction

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.

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. This objective was carried out following an action-research methodology and the results were therefore analysed using a qualitative method, those methodologies were chosen because oral production covers several factors that can not be analyzed using quantitative methods, such as interactions, sociolinguistics competences and cooperative learning. The proposal was done via six micro-projects and a final macro-project with students with basic level of the extension courses at Universidad Libre. Among the most relevant conclusions, it was witnessed that students did strengthened their oral production and were more willing to interact in English with their classmates at the end of the intervention. Nonetheless, even though PBL increased their oral production, it did not have a major impact on their grammatical accuracy.

The project consists of three chapters, the first one describes all the information regarding the problem, including the objectives, the background and the theoretical framework; the second one
explains the methodology used during the analysis of the collected data, and, finally, the third one describes the most important findings of the intervention.
1. Research Problem

The first chapter of this research report is aimed at describing the problem under research, the research inquiry, the objectives to be accomplished, the reasons why this research project was carried out, the background to the research, and the theories which support this research project.

1.1 Description of the Research Problem

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 these problems include the fact that students of the first cycle of schooling do not have language teachers in their schools. In addition, the rest of cycles have a very limited number of hours of English instruction (Cruz, 2012). This situation makes it difficult for students to have the opportunity of knowing about different cultures and the communication process and interaction with other people in a foreign language. The learning English as a foreign language has become a major priority for the educational system and the society itself. This is due to the globalization process which is spreading all over the world and the necessity of communication that people have in order to develop themselves actively in the global society we live in. This research project was carried out during the teaching practice in the Extension courses at Universidad Libre. The extension courses give a new foreign language learning alternative to both young people and adults. Also, the center of foreign languages of Universidad Libre meet the quality standards required by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, through resolution 10-1611 of June 1st, 2018. The Extension courses receive students aged between 7 and 16 who have not completed their high school and people over 16 who have already completed their high school.

By means of the different experiences observed in the teaching practice in the Extension courses at Universidad Libre, student's difficulties in terms of oral production were witnessed from the very first class. Although students already had previous knowledge of some grammatical structures of
English and that the topics seen during class were not new for them, students were not able to express their ideas and emotions, they could not maintain a fluent conversation neither they could defend their points of view and support them with solid arguments.

Furthermore, it is relevant to mention that one of the most common situations evidenced through the different instruments used to collect data is that speaking is commonly left behind during English classes at schools since most of the teachers focus on grammar and comprehension abilities which indicate that the oral production is not a priority during during the development of an English class in Colombia as mentioned by Ríos (2013). This problem was seen through a survey in which students were supposed to answer some questions about their regular use of English in their academic and non-academic contexts (see Appendix A). In this survey, students stated weaknesses such as lack of opportunities to express orally as well as lack of interaction among themselves or with their teachers in both their schools and at the extension courses.

Moreover, lack of oral production was evidenced throughout the first class by means of a diagnostic test (see Appendix B) 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. It is relevant to mention that one of the students’ needs is to communicate orally in a real situation given that in everyday life, oral communication occupies 80% of the time of human activity and, that percentage is divided as follows: 45% in listening, 30% talking, 16% reading and just 9% writing as it is mentioned by Ríos (2013). Of this total time people devote 45% to listening, 30% to talking, 16% to reading and only 9% to writing, as it is mentioned by Ríos (2013).
For instance, when students were asked about their last vacation, some of them showed that they were not able to construct sentences correctly, which made it quite difficult to understand their utterances, significant lack of fluency, and could barely give an answer to the question as seen in the following extracts:

*My favorite vacations were in Villavicencio eh... in the 2 - no - 2 thousand fifty um... eh... I went to the park “Los fundadores” in the city center um... with my family um.... [prolonged pause] eh...*

*Teacher: - What did you do there?*

*[prolonged pause] [laughter] I went eh... to swim and my mom eh... eh...*

*Teacher: - And where did you stay?*

*[prolonged pause] [laughter] um.... my family went the - at the very cool restaurant in the “la reliquia” eh... [barrio no se como se dice] no um... [prolonged pause] the food is delicious [laughter] em... and... I... ya. (Student #3, Diagnostic test, May 18th, 2019)*

In other cases, some students answered the questions with proper fluency and a proper use of grammar tenses. Nevertheless, lack of vocabulary or shyness make oral production difficult in students who are learning English as a foreign language as it is stated by Mohammadian (2013). Consequently, the intervention was too short as evidenced in the following excerpt:

*On my last vacation I went to Medellin um... with my mother, my father, my sister my aunt and my grandmother. um... we went to visit to my uncle and his family. um... we went to the pool we went to eat bandeja paisa um... we bought a lot of things and we meet my uncle’s wife family (Student#1, Diagnostic test, May 18th, 2019).*

In other cases, when some students were asked the same question, any type of answer was given, even though the question was repeated several times and some examples were given, as is seen in the following excerpt:
Teacher: Where did you go on your last vacation?

[prolonged pause]

Teacher: For examples on my last vacation I went to Cali and I ate some very delicious food.

[prolonged pause] (Student#4, Diagnostic test, may 18)

1.2. Research Question

How may Project Based Learning (PBL henceforth) strengthen oral production in English as a foreign language of students with basic level of the Extension courses at Universidad Libre?

1.3. Objectives

This section presents the goals (general and specific) to be achieved through the development of this research project. In other words, what is expected to be accomplished once this study is completed.

1.3.1. 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.

1.3.2. 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.

1.4. Justification

First of all, this project was made as a requirement to opt for the bachelor’s degree in Basic Education with emphasis on Humanities and Languages. Moreover, the project is aimed at strengthening oral production by means of PBL, an approach which could be advantageous to
enhance oral production which despite being a primary ability for EFL students, it is commonly left behind as we could evidence throughout our school experience.

Additionally, in terms of pedagogy, there is a variety of approaches which encourage students to participate actively in class. Nevertheless, 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. Also, PBL is an approach that encourages both the relationship between teacher-student and student-student generating mutual tolerance and creativity.

Taking into account the significance of language for the society, it is essential to bear in mind that language teaching ought to be focused on the communication process of each student. In Colombia, one of the problems English teachers have is that they are focused on English as an important content in the curriculum instead of as a means of communication (Roldán, 2016). This problem generates non-critical individuals who find difficulties when interacting in daily life situations. In addition, there are many students who have some knowledge in terms of grammar and writing skills, but when interacting in terms of oral production, there is a barrier that preclude students to share, create and produce an effective communication.

Finally, the present project was carried out due to the results obtained in the national and international tests such as the Test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the Saber Pro test and other tests designed by each institution as indicated by Jabba (2013). Since those tests attempt to measure the proficiency level in english, they revealed several flaws in the process of teaching and learning foreign languages in
our country. That is why the present project is aimed at strengthening the current quality of most students’ oral production because in most cases, teachers do not provide students appropriate practice times to internalize the acquired knowledge through meaningful communicative situations in class-time (Ríos, 2013).

1.5. Research Background

This section includes what has been previously done at a theoretical and practical level in relation to the subject matter of this research study. The following background was considered relevant because it includes research projects, articles, books and other works that provide further information to sustain the present project. Thus, this information has been organized as follows: local background which involves projects done in Bogota, national background which contains information about research reports done in the rest of Colombia, and international background which has information about projects and articles done abroad.

1.5.1. Local Research Reports

Oral production is one of the most difficult abilities to develop in EFL students since, in most of the cases, it is the teacher who makes oral interventions in English while students only follow instructions without making any type of oral production in the class as it is stated by Al Hosni (2014). A study, Sauro (2001) has indicated that oral language development has largely been neglected in the classroom, and most of the time, spoken language is used by teachers more than by students in the classroom. Therefore, while students can understand grammatical structures of the target language, they might find problems and failures at the moment of using them in terms of oral production. The following monograph was developed with the aim of encouraging a meaningful learning of French through PBL. The monograph Les Projets de Classe, une stratégie pour développer des savoir-faire dans le contexte scolaire (Rodríguez, 2005) shows a strategy implemented in a group of 32 seventh-grade students from Emmanuel D’alzon School based on
the PBL. This strategy had as a purpose to allow students to communicate in a spontaneous way and at the same time improving their communicative capacities in familiar and ordinary situations. Based on this, PBL was implemented to develop students’ oral production. Throughout five projects related to students’ necessities and interests, such as their hobbies, it was witnessed an improvement on students such as the construction of a variety of oral-production abilities which led to a more meaningful learning of the topics students saw during the lessons.

This monograph is relevant for the present research project as it shows that PBL motivates and helps students improve and develop their speaking skills. By means of projects, students had the required time to express themselves as well as making use of their classmates’ help to improve their oral production and become more self-aware for future communicative gatherings.

Another paper that was taken as a reference was Estrategia de interacción para el desarrollo de la producción oral en inglés de los estudiantes del curso 602 de la I.E.D Nydia Quintero de Turbay written by Norato and Ramos (2016). In this project the impact of an interaction-based strategy was studied. A group of 36 (17 girls and 19 boys) sixth-grade students from the public school Nydia Quintero de Turbay, located in Florencia neighborhood, were supposed to participate in different communicative situations based on dialogues that were designed to provide opportunities in which students could interact orally, during the development of the dialogs and the use of the target language (English) was a must. Among the main conclusions found in this project, it was evidenced that when students interact in real contexts, it is easier for them to express their ideas orally. The dialogues also contributed to develop autonomy in students which led to a significant progress in their oral production from the moment they took the diagnostic test until the end of the research project. Likewise, it was found that group activities expand cooperation and support among students in order to avoid pronunciation mistakes or tongue-tied situations.
The previous project provided several characteristic elements of PBL such as cooperation among students and autonomy development. Moreover, there are some similarities with the population of the present project in terms of age, low levels of oral production and the common problems at the time of functioning comfortably in the target language, obstacles that EFL students may experience in countries where English is a foreign language. Furthermore, PBL provided students a stress-free environment in which they could develop oral production in a comfortable way and without the tension that oral activities such as oral presentations usually cause.

1.5.2. National Research Reports

At the national context, the development of oral production in EFL students is a matter of concern, as it was seen in the article *Tareas auténticas para promover la producción oral en aprendices de inglés como lengua extranjera* by Ramirez and Artunduaga (2018). The previous project conducted a proposal to develop the oral production in a tenth-grade group of students from a public-school in the south of Colombia. During the development of this project, students stated the usefulness of oral production, yet, they also stated that despite they understood what the teacher was saying in English, in most cases, they had great difficulties interacting with him due to lack of vocabulary, pronunciation or just because they were scared of talking in front of the whole class. The main objective of this project was to improve oral production through activities in which students had to interact and use the language in order to achieve a common goal. This problem was settled through the implementation of assignments in which students were supposed to interact in daily-life contexts such as sports championships and the organization or the graduation party for the eleventh-grade students. Furthermore, the studied population stated the lack of spaces to practice and interact in English. Among the results obtained, it was demonstrated that students are more willing to talk when they are involved in real-life context situations.
The previous project contributed with important elements to the development of the present project as it established the importance of communication as a key element when learning a new language. Additionally, this project showed students’ progress in terms of oral production when they interact and motivate each other in order to achieve a common goal, as it is stated in the article: “In that sense, by being actively involved in the teaching-learning process, students become committed decision-makers in terms of content as well as careful evaluators of their own performance (Ramirez and Artunduaga, 2018, p.65). Such interaction combined with PBL could lead to important interaction among students and therefore to a meaningful learning.

The model in which classes are developed is also a prime factor at the time of strengthening interaction and developing oral production in EFL classes. The moments to develop oral production are limited to simply follow conversations which hardly generate a real exchange of information and furthermore, they barely adapt to the students’ context. In the article *Authentic Oral Interaction in the EFL Class: What It Means, What It Does Not* (Herazo, 2010), the lack of tools for students to use in order to develop their speaking skill in public schools in Monteria, Colombia, is evidenced. The main objective of this project was to prove that some kind of interactions that occur in the classroom are not authentic. Therefore, the results of authentic-interactions among students were evaluated. Such interaction consists of generating authentic conversations between students and the teacher in order to improve spontaneity at the time of talking. This procedure is aimed at developing the language automation, in other words, face students to real-context communicative situations such as conversations that we usually have in our mother tongue. Among the main results obtained, a significant progress was noted when students do not play a passive role during the class, but they lively participate on it. Besides, when the activities proposed correspond to students’ interests and necessities, an important increase in the oral production is seen.
The importance of the previous article for this project lies in the motivation that an active role in class can generate in students. Strengthening oral production in EFL students is, in most of the cases, a challenge for teachers as it is necessary to generate a confident environment for students in order to make them function naturally. Such motivation can only be generated when students themselves express their interests and necessities. PBL could be a fundamental tool as the projects must be related to students’ context and therefore to their affinities.

1.5.3. International Research Reports

At the international context, the article Project-Based Learning: a critical pedagogy for the twenty-first century (Maida, 2011) is aimed at explaining the impact of PBL as well as its importance in order to ease the process of learning and production of knowledge on the part of students themselves. In this article, the importance of PBL is shown, not only in the school context, but also in other contexts such as the workplace and the society itself, as a tool to strengthen students’ potential in terms of personal development, creativity and social transformation.

This article was considered relevant for the present project because it demonstrated how PBL, not only eases the learning process and motivates students, but also develops other important characteristics for their personal and social development. Moreover, PBL allows to develop good manners and respect among students, both essential characteristics for the construction of a new society taking into account the context and the situation that Colombia is currently living.

Finally, at the international context as well, Hadi (2016) presents an article called Theories in Developing Oral Communication for Specific Learner Group, where she describes how some oral-communication ability theories can be applied in the learning process of foreign languages. This project was carried out in a trilingual school called Indonesian Senior High School in Indonesia where students are supposed to learn two foreign languages besides their mother tongue. The foreign languages were English and Arabic, thus, through a government regularization, students
had to use these two languages both inside and outside the classroom. The main objective of the project was to determine which theories are the most effective in order to improve oral communication in bilingual students. This strategy was in accordance with specific motivations of each student such as getting better job opportunities, receiving economical rewards, and improving their social status. Additionally, the improvement of English would help them pass a national exam which is necessary to get into national and international colleges. As a conclusion, students increased the use of the target language both at school and in their daily life to troubleshoot everyday problems. Nevertheless, learning was not meaningful as the use of language was not in real communicative situations, which led to vocabulary, structure and pronunciation problems. Some oral-development theories such as PBL can reduce these problems in EFL students.

This article was considered relevant because oral-production activities in the target language are the basis for developing interaction and effective communication in the learning process of a foreign language, in this particular case, English. Using this background, we will be able to identify the possible problems that could take place during the activities as well as several instruments to motivate the oral production among students.

1.6. 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.

1.6.1. Project-Based Learning

PBL is commonly defined as a model that organizes learning around projects. Nevertheless, there is a lack of a universally accepted theory of PBL. According to Thomas (2000), projects are complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems that involve students in design, problem-solving, decision making or investigative activities. This kind of activities allow students to work autonomously over relatively extended periods of time and come to an end with realistic, context-based products. PBL is an approach in which students are supposed to obtain deeper, meaningful knowledge of the subjects they are studying as a result of being exposed to real-world problems, challenges and issues. Furthermore, PBL is aimed at developing confidence and autonomy as students move through both group-based and independent work.

Additionally, PBL seeks to foster students’ abilities for learning via problems to solve or artifacts to create. It is also important to mention that PBL is intended to develop students’ cooperative learning as it is easier for learners to build notions within social interaction environments. As it is expressed by Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006) “The best learning results from a particular kind of social interaction: when teachers, students and community members work together in a situated activity to construct shared understanding.”

Moreover, PBL enhances many skills that are usually pursued by employers such as team-working spirit, the ability to get along with others, take the initiative and solve real-world problems. Not only does PBL develop group cohesiveness, but it also provides connections to life outside of the classroom as most of the projects are usually carried out outside of the classroom.

Also, it is important to consider the relation between the student’s reality and all the activities done in class. An effective understanding happens when learners elaborate meanings based on their
experiences and interactions with their community and their world. PBL helps each student in the process of knowledge construction which requires an interaction with the world and at the same time an exploration of their own experiences.

Although PBL is sometimes called Problem-based learning, it is important to address the differences between these two learning approaches. In spite of the similarities between these two strategies, the most marked differences according to Mills and Treagust (2003) are:

- Project tasks are closer to professional reality and therefore take a longer period of time than problem-based learning problems (which may extend over only a single session, a week or a few weeks).
- Project work is more directed to the application of knowledge, whereas problem-based learning is more directed to the acquisition of knowledge.
- Management of time and resources by the students as well as task and role differentiation is very important in PBL.
- Self-direction is stronger in project work, compared with problem-based learning, since the learning process is less directed by the problem (p. 8-9).

The learning process has been a matter of discussion throughout history as several learning methods and approaches have been implemented, hence a variety of results have been found. However, PBL was taken as the principal instrument for this project to guide students to relate the different learned topics within their real context as projects encourage students to express all their ideas in an original way, as proposed by Thomas (2000):

...there is some evidence that PBL, in comparison to other instructional methods, has value for enhancing the quality of students' learning in subject matter areas, leading to the tentative claim that learning higher-level cognitive skills via PBL is associated with increased capability on the part of students for applying those learnings in novel, problem solving contexts (p. 35).
Features of PBL

To capture the singularity of PBL, Thomas (2000) proposes a set of criteria that projects must have in order to be considered an instance of PBL.

PBL projects are a central part of the curriculum. This means that in PBL, students are taught the central concepts of the discipline through the project.

PBL projects drive students to encounter and struggle with central concepts of the discipline via questions or problems. Projects in PBL can be introduced with a “driving question” or an ill-defined problem. In both cases, a PBL project requires important intellectual purposes to build long life learning in students.

Projects implicate students in a constructive investigation. This criterion means that PBL projects must involve students in the construction of new knowledge, if not, it is considered simply as an exercise.

Projects are carried out by students to some significant degree. As PBL projects are aimed to develop students’ autonomy, these projects are not teacher-led but, in the main, are carried out by students mostly during unsupervised time.

Projects are authentic, not school-like. All the topics, the tasks, the roles that students play, the context and other characteristics within the realization of the projects must be authentic as PBL projects incorporate real-life challenges which lead to authentic problem-solving.

Making a relation among old and new ideas, learners will be motivated to participate in activities done in class; discussing, and giving opinions about how to solve difficulties and problems around them; avoiding memorizing all the superficial learning transmitted in some cases by teachers and the different tools present in the school such as books and computers. As Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006) describe:
“Deep understanding occurs when a learner actively constructs meaning based on his or her experiences and interaction in the world, and that only superficial learning occurs when learners passively take in information transmitted from a teacher, a computer or a book” (p.318).

**Steps for implementing a PBL project**

With a view to implementing a PBL project, there are several factors to take into account. Planning and organization are a necessity when developing a project, as well as considering the required tools and time frames to support the engagement of the students within the project. Time frame is especially important to provide each student the time to participate, interpret, collaborate and design the project.

According to Lam (2011), it is possible to get the most advantage of PBL if both teachers and students follow a ten-step process:

Step 1: Agreement on a theme for the project by students and teacher. Throughout this step, students and teacher reach a consensus on a theme for the project according to the necessities of the class. It is important to develop in students a sense of ownership towards the project.

Step 2: Both students and teacher decide the final outcome of the project. In this step, it is determined whether students are going to work on a written project, a debate, a brochure, an oral presentation, etc. The audience of the project is also chosen.

Step 3: Structure of the project by students and teacher. In this step, students consider their responsibilities, roles, the groups they are working in, the timing for gathering and sharing, as well as the deadline for the project completion.

Step 4: Preparation of information gathering lead by the teacher. During this step, the teacher provides students with instructional activities according to students’ ability levels and taking into account the demands associated to the type of project it is being carried out.
Step 5: Information gathering by students. After the previous steps, students are supposed to start the appropriate information search using, when possible, relevant content resources which have being previously provided by the teacher.

Step 6: Preparation of compiling and analyzing data lead by teacher. In this step, the teacher should help students with strategies to analyze and synthesize the relevant data according to the project necessities. This instruction depends on the type of information and how it is going to be used within the project.

Step 7: Information compiling and analyzing by students. Students work in groups and discuss whether keep or discard some information depending on how critical it is for the completion of their projects.

Step 8: Preparation for the language demands lead by the teacher. Throughout this step the teacher designs improvement activities for the presentation of students’ projects. These activities should be focused on the required skills for the type of project that is being carried out, e.g., oral activities for oral presentations; written revision for written projects, etc.

Step 9: Final product presentation by students. Students present the final outcome of their projects, according to the criteria agreed in the second step.

Step 10: Project evaluation by students. Last, but not least, students reflect on the knowledge mastered and the topics acquired throughout the whole process of the project. Students are also invited to provide recommendations to other groups. The teacher must provide a meaningful feedback on students’ language and content learning.

**Students’ role in PBL**

As it has already been said, PBL intrinsically motivates students, namely, projects are aimed at developing a sense of autonomy and active participation among students, as they have a considerable number of alternatives for developing their own ideas as well as a sense of leadership.
PBL is considered to be learner centered, therefore, students play a crucial role throughout the process of implementing a PBL project, as described by Thomas (2000), “Students have considerable choice of topics, as well as the nature and extent of the content of the project. They are intrinsically motivated as they shape their projects to fit their own interests and abilities”.

Additionally, students must learn how to be more self-reliant as teachers only have a brief interaction within the classroom and during the development of the projects, hence, students learn to seek help from their classmates and they also develop ways to figure out things for themselves instead of being teacher-dependents.

*Teachers’ role in PBL*

In a PBL classroom, the teacher acts as a facilitator and mentor, providing feedback and help only when it is extremely appropriate. Teachers are also supposed to provide resources and advice students as they elaborate their projects. The teacher functions as a “guide on the side” instead of a “sage on the stage”.

However, in PBL the teacher is still in charge of the class because it is the authority and assumes all the responsibility of the curriculum, instruction and assessment. Even though students are in charge of their own process and are able to manage their time as they prefer, it is the teacher’s responsibility to come up with the proper tools and methodology of authentic assessment as well as tie the project to the contents that are being studied.

*Constructivism*

PBL also constitutes an occasion for students to develop knowledge on their own, which is the core of the constructivist theory. In the course of developing the projects, students profit from their experiences and background knowledge and use them to solve the problems that emerge throughout the project and, thus, create new knowledge. According to Ültanır (2012), constructivism states that individuals create or construct their own new understandings or knowledge through the
interaction of what they already believe. Not only does PBL generate situations in which students can use their previous understandings, but also involves an active process of learning in which students can construct new meaning. Furthermore, in the constructivist theory, the teacher represents a guide, and encourage learners to make their own ideas, opinions and conclusions. In PBL, the teacher is a mentor as well, as students carry out the projects by their own.

**Learning by doing**

It is well known that practical experience represents an important factor at the moment of learning a foreign language. Learning by doing is a principle that PBL fosters since it considers that knowledge is the result of learning directly from one’s own actions instead of watching others perform. As it is stated by Reese (2011), the learning-by-doing principle has been advocated widely and in many forms, including learn-by-doing, trial-and-error learning or discovery versus instruction, practical experience versus book learning, the practice-theory-practice dialectic, and “proof upon practice”. In PBL, projects are aimed at making students produce, in other words, PBL promotes doing.

**Cooperation and Collaboration**

One of the cornerstones of PBL is the enhancing of cooperation and collaboration among students. Collaboration is especially important in EFL classes as the learning process of a language requires interaction and, hence, collaborative work becomes essential. Alongside interaction, cooperation and collaboration have meaningful advantages at the moment of building riskless environments for students to practice language. As it is stated by Bruner and O'Connor (2016), it has been argued that collaboration can be useful in defraying risk. This means that cooperation and collaboration have a determinant role in students’ ability to practice the language and decrease self-consciousness.

1.6.2. Oral production in English as a foreign language.
When speaking about the language, we must understand it as a way of understanding what we are doing in the world. In the learning language process, communication must be the purpose, so, it is necessary to consider the appropriate use of the language as the right way to interact with other members of the society. The correct use of some elements of the language is understood as an important element in the communicative process, therefore it is important to take into account that people are communicating all the time, with their families, in their schools, their jobs and all the different activities that each one of them usually do in their daily routines. As defined by Worth (2004), communication is a vital part of our daily routines. We sit in the school and listen to teachers. We read books and magazines. We talk to friends, watch television and communicate over internet.

Furthermore, the communicative competence demands to handle the language in a right way and at the same time to contextualize it in a specific community. Consequently, the oral production turns out as relevant as reading and writing skills because there must be a grammatical competence, but a linguistic competence must be demonstrated at the moment of learning a language and communicating with others. Furthermore, the CEFR shows the acts of communication with one or more speakers as the backbone of the language. Consequently, speakers ought to carry out communicative tasks to improve this process, putting in practice strategies to create a successful communication.

In fact, oral skill is perhaps the most important skill that each student has to develop because it is an instrument that helps each person to create an assertive communication in different contexts. Likewise, students who are interested in developing their oral production skill have the opportunity of improving their interaction with the world, creating an environment in which they will be able to express their own ideas and thoughts. Taking into account this, it is important to have a clear
definition of oral skill, it is better said by Herrera and González (2017), oral skill as the capacity of expressing oneself verbally for communicating, based on the linguistic rules of a language.

Oral skill is divided into four aspects that are important in this research: fluency and coherence; lexical resources; grammatical range and accuracy; and pronunciation. Those aspects are defined by the Institutional English Language Testing System IELTS (2007) as follows:

**Fluency and coherence**: This aspect allude to the ability of speaking with a level of continuation in order to be coherent and to connecte speech. The key indicators of fluency are speech rate and speech continuity. Also, this aspect refers to have clear ideas in a discussion and coherence at the moment of argumenting.

**Lexical Resource**: This aspect refers to the range of vocabulary the person can use to express ideas, attitudes and opinions. The key indicators are the variety of words used, the words that a person can use to have an communicative interaction

**Grammatical range and accuracy**: This criterion refers the correct and appropriate use of the grammatica. The principal indicators of grammatical range are the difficulty of the spoken sentences, the correct use of subordinate clauses and sentence structures.

**Pronunciation**: This aspect refers to the ability to produce a clear and understandable speech. The key indicators are focus in the amount of effort to produce caused to the listener and the unintelligible speech produced by the participant.

**Teacher's role in oral production**

Teacher's role in oral production is a vital part in the learning process of each student because oral skill is as difficult as listening, writing and reading. Therefore, it is too difficult that students acquire this skill on their own. So the most important thing to know is how teachers may help students in developing oral production in English as a foreign language.
Firstly, it is essential that the teacher focuses not only on the different aspects of oral production (fluency and coherence; lexical resources; grammatical range and accuracy; and pronunciation), but also in all the needs and requirements that students have to communicate in different environments, situations and circumstances. Having said that, it is crucial that the teacher has an important role in social and affective aspects of the student in order to understand how his/her learning process is.

Secondly, teachers have to be active in class in order to motivate their students’ participation in the several topics they address in class. Also, teachers have to design activities in which students interact with the rest of the class with the intention of stimulating them to express orally their desires and needs. Teachers can provide instruments to their students for the purpose of helping student’s oral production. As explained by Goh, Goh, and Burns (2012), the role of the teacher, therefore, is to structure student’s learning experiences so as to support their speaking development, in and outside the classroom. Teachers can do that by designing interesting and appropriate instruments.

Steps for the teachers to make oral production easier

Teachers have to be aware that the development of oral production is a process that needs to be handled in a correct way. According to Jorda (2002), there are some steps to make speaking easier, those steps are:

1. Teachers have to avoid forcing students to talk, let students begin to speak when they are ready. After students are prepared to speak give them a chance to do it. Let students have time to process what they want to say it is too difficult for them to speak in front of others.
2. Teachers have to risk with speaking activities. If teachers focus in speaking activities students can have more opportunities to produce their ideas and give their opinions orally.
3. Do not push students to have a perfect pronunciation and a near native grammar. Leave those kind of activities for other moments.

4. After any pre-communicative exercises needed to prepare learners, be sure to focus on real communication tasks, not excuses for language practice. Prepare real communication tasks for students and avoid doing activities just to practice the language.

5. Expect students to be successful. Sometimes teacher’s expectations are influential, positively or negatively on students.

6. Listen to students carefully, teachers should focus on different aspects of students at the moment they are speaking, for example, their emotions and attitudes. Teachers should avoid to be focused only on the correct use of grammar and in the proper use of the language.

**Student’s role in oral production**

As teachers’ role, students’ role in oral production is essential to create an environment in which they have several motivations at the moment of expressing themselves in a communicative situation. Each student has to improve their oral production taking advantage of the different materials given by the teacher. The student should be responsible for their own speaking development by identifying all the requirements of spoken language. Additionally, students have to find strategies to improve their mistakes in order to help and facilitate their speech in front of their classmates. Interaction is very important in this part of the process given that oral production is developed easier when people interact with others, creating and participating in conversations, debates and communicative situations. As mentioned by Goh, Goh, and Burns (2012), speech production is an individual endeavor, every learner’s development of second language speaking can be greatly facilitated through working collaboratively with his or her peers.

All this process has to be guided by the teacher who is the principal help for students. Through the different strategies used by the teacher, students will be induced to help in the learning process
of others. As commented by Goh et al (2012), teachers should, therefore, encourage learners to support one another’s speaking development, not just as communication’s partners in a speaking task, but also as learning partners who share their learning plans and goals. So, each student will be encouraged to speak in the foreign language by participating and interacting orally with all the class. In view of this, students will share their purposes by explaining why these targets are important for them.

**Communicative competence**

Alongside oral production, it is important to outline the relevance of the communicative competence in the learning process of a language. There have been several definitions of communicative competence throughout history, its introduction to the linguistic world is generally associated with Noam Chomsky. Nowadays, communicative competence is described by Bagarić and Djigunović (2007) as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting – that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors.

Communicative competence represents a determinant factor at the moment of strengthening oral production, as the essence of both oral production and the communicative competence is more interpersonal rather than intrapersonal, which means that both work together to improve students’ ability to interact among them.

**Communication strategies**

The main purpose of learning a foreign language is to be able to use it in an effective way to communicate with others, thus, communication becomes the core of learning a foreign language. For this reason, to improve oral production, using communication strategies is a must for both learners and teachers. The importance of communication strategies lies in the idea that they help learners to overcome gaps (these gaps can be a word, a structure, an idiom, etc.) when connecting
ideas in the foreign language. Furthermore, according to Ya-Ni (2007), communication strategies are important in negotiating meaning where either linguistic structures or sociolinguistic rules are not shared between a second language learner and a speaker of the target language. This means that communication strategies are completely necessary to strengthen oral production in learners of a foreign language.

1.6.3. Oral production following the Common European Framework of Reference

The CEFR provides a justification concerning the domain that a person must have of a foreign language to be able to communicate and at the same time act in an effective way using the L2. Likewise, it delimits the general skills that every person must have to be able to communicate ideas in a foreign language. In the same way, it defines the common levels of domain of the L2, based on the different aspects which include comprehension, expression, interaction and mediation. The levels mentioned include a global scale in which the capacities are defined according to the individual performances.

The CEFR provides clearly different ways in which students can know what is the knowledge they have to develop in order to create an assertive communication according to their needs. Moreover, it gives information about the context, this is vital in the learning process because it is very important to have details of how the language is taken in a determined background. Additionally, it gives several tools to the different members who are responsible for the education, such as teachers, course designers, etc. It provides teachers the instruments that help to contemplate if the teaching practice is appropriate for the student's needs.

According to the CEFR, the A1 level is the lowest level of the generative use of the language, in other words, the point in which beginners start interacting in a simple way, answering questions about themselves, about the place where they live and describing people around them. Moreover, it indicates some domains in which students are involved according to their respective contexts, in
this case, they would be implicated in the public domain. According to Council of Europe. Council for Cultural Co-operation. Education Committee. Modern Languages Division. (2001), public domain refers to everything connected to ordinary social interaction (business and administrative bodies, public services, cultural and leisure activities of a public nature, relations with the media, etc.). This domain also takes into account the familiar and social interaction of students. The CEFR presents subdivisions concerning the communicative skills that a person must be able to develop in the level A1. Thus, it is relevant to this project to take into account the features of spoken interactions framed in the A1 level, according to Council of Europe et al (2001) the next chart shows features related to the oral production that each student must develop in the level A1:

| A1 | Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics. |

With this reference, it can be evidenced the characteristics that a student in the A1 level must be able to develop orally, these characteristics are the first steps that help students to have an effective communicative interaction in his/her context.

One of the most important aspects in this project is to encourage students to interact with each other and express their own ideas. Each interaction will help students enhance their oral production. Thus, promoting interaction and productive activities have an important role in the understanding of a determinate topic. As proposed by the Council of Europe et al (2001) productive activities have an important function in many academic and professional fields (oral presentations, written studies and reports).
To develop successful communication process, it is important to have into consideration that two or more people participate in a determinate interaction exchanging different knowledge and ideas in which all of them speak and listen to each other mutually by interpreting messages and at the same time elaborating possible answers as mentioned by the Council of Europe et al (2001). The listener is generally already forecasting the remainder of the speaker’s message and preparing a response. Learning to interact thus involves, more than learning, receiving and producing utterances.

**Activities and oral strategies in the A1 level**

According to CEFR, in A1 level, the speaker is able to produce different expressions orally which are perceived by one or more listeners. Considering the oral skill, the speaker must be able to express ideas with simple phrases about people and places; also, the speaker must be able to describe himself or herself, speak about his/her profession, his/her location and read a short lecture. Besides the speaker will be able to ask questions related to his/her personal life.

Some of the activities which are proposed by the CEFR are:

- To give information about entertainment and acting a role.
- To produce speeches in public meetings, sport comments or sermons.

It crucial to determine in what area or range of oral production activities the learner will be required to engage because each act of communication is taken by the language user in accordance with his/her needs. According with the Council of Europe et al (2001) the main intention is to exchange information about likes and dislikes, family, friends and comparing different opinions with others. Consequently, each of them will be engage in a communicative situation as producers and receivers producing simple phrases about people and places.

**Sociolinguistic competence.** It is important to take into consideration that oral skill depends of the social context in which each person is involved. According to the CEFR, the sociolinguistic
competence affects the language communications between representatives of different cultures, so it is important to take into account several strategies to involve classes and social groups in a communicative situation.

**Student’s role in CEFR.** Students have to demonstrate an attitude in which each of them take a place in different communicative events, based on the CEFR, students have to put their competences into action using the necessary strategies in order to satisfy their needs of communication.
2. Research Methodology

This second chapter is aimed at describing the methodology used during the development of this project, in other words, the approach and the type of study done, the description of participants under study as well as all the techniques and instruments used to collect relevant data to develop this research.

2.1. Qualitative and action research

Regarding the research paradigm, the present research is considered a qualitative research since according to Silverman (2016) qualitative research is defined as "the broadest sense to research that produce descriptive data-people’s own written or spoken words and observable behavior". Nonetheless, the present research project also presents some characteristics of the quantitative research, which according to Aliaga and Gunderson (2000), has to do with "explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)". In spite of that, the present research project is considered to be framed in the qualitative research as the process of data collection was conducted in a way in which participants interacted and co-produced data. Afterwards, the collected data was especially analysed using a qualitative method.

In addition, this action-research project is not only aimed at describing the problems related to oral production, but also at creating a strategy which could improve those flaws, and thus, originating a possible solution to the students’ difficulties. Based on the interaction that students have, they can experience a successful development of their knowledge. Nevertheless, these interactions must be guided by the teacher to frame them within an effective evaluation process. This idea was explored by Craig (2009) who stated that effective evaluation of a program, situation, or condition- which is in essence based in systematic analysis- can be facilitated through action research.
**Action-Research**

The necessity of solving the several problems that can occur in a classroom starts with the requirement of identifying them, in particular, those which could have a possible solution. But the intention is not only to visualize those problems. Lewin (cited in Parra, 2009), main precursor of the Action-Research, put this method into practice to identify the social problems that surround us. Additionally, he wanted to provide a solution to those problems based on his research. Lewin’s primal interest was improving the studied situation while he was researching it, taking the necessary instruments and data to analyze it and consequently to provide a possible solution to the problem. As stated by Parra (2009), “this supposes the necessity of perform, actively intervene in the community, test different solutions, observe and analyze results”. In this perspective, Action-Research is taken because, through it, it is 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. In order to do so, there are a few steps to make this research effective. These steps are indicated as the outline of the Action-Research. As it is signaled by Parra (2009), the Action-Research process is constituted by three stages or moments: planning, observation and implementation. In the evaluation of the results, it is mandatory to follow these stages in order to obtain significant results to the research project.

**Classroom action-research**

There are several approaches to action research that investigators can follow according to their objectives and students’ necessities. Classroom action research is an approach that normally uses qualitative methods of data collection, always with the intention of improving the practices done in class. In accordance with Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2013), the emphasis is ‘practical’, that is, on the interpretations teachers and students are making and acting on in the situation. Taking into account that the core of action research is to seek a solution of the problems that emerge within
the classroom, this approach allows both teachers and students to interpret the strengths and weaknesses of a pedagogical methodology and find the proper way of overcoming those problems.

**Action-Research stages**

It is necessary to implement the following steps in order to make this research effective:

Purpose or research problem identification: in this stage, a validation of the research problem is made, this can be done through the use of some instruments to collect data such as interviews or field notes. The difficulties identified must be of interest for both the researcher and the population under research, as it is stated by Altrichter, Posch, Somekh and Feldman (2005): “Then, through conversations, interviews and other methods of collecting evidence, and through analysis of the information gained, the situation is clarified” (p.7).

Data collection: in this stage, researchers use several instruments to collect data. In action research, there are no unique instruments. Nevertheless, according to Sutton and Austin (2015), in this kind of research, the most common instruments are: audio recordings, interviews, surveys, and field notes.

Problem analysis: in this stage, the teacher or researcher identifies the variables of the problem, its relationship with other possible problems and determines some strategies which could help as a possible solution to it.

**Action research cycles**

As the action research process is focused on people, and, notably, people’s actions are unpredictable and do not follow a straight path, the practice is generally shown as non-linear process. According to McNiff (2010), the processes can be shown as a spiral of cycles, where one issue forms the basis of another and, as one question is addressed, the answer to it generates new questions. The general process of carrying out action research is usually introduced as a four-stage procedure, which constitutes the cycles that structure the process. At the same time, action research
requires a list of steps which need to be followed in order to ensure the efficiency of the investigation. According to Mertler (2009) those steps are:

   Step 1: identifying and limiting the topic. In this step, teachers chose what to study, taking into account that the final outcome of the project is always to make things better.

   Step 2: Gathering information. After the first step, the researcher needs to gather information, this process can be as simple as talking with other teachers or conducting surveys to understand better the context in which the research is taking place.

   Step 3: Reviewing the related literature. During this step, teachers look for any type of information related to the topic selected for investigation.

   Step 4: Developing a research plan. In this step, a research question is stated and different hypothesis is developed from it.

   Step 5: Implementing the plan and collecting data. The next step is the determination of the kind of data and how to collect it. Among the most common instruments to collect data, there are field notes, interviews, surveys and records.

   Step 6: Analyzing the data. In traditional qualitative research, the data analysis is done during and after the data collection.

   Step 7: Developing an action plan. After analysing and interpreting the data, an action plan is implemented in order to give a solution to the original problem.

   Step 8: Share and communicate the results. After developing the action plan, the results from the study are shared to all the participants.
2.2. Participants and sample

This research project was carried out in the extension courses at Universidad Libre. This courses have the purpose of encouraging and strengthening theoretical and practical knowledge related to foreign languages. These courses have become the perfect space to provide students of the Bachelor degree in Humanities and Languages with opportunities to accomplish their pedagogical practice. Besides, the extension courses were also created to provide people an opportunity to study English or French without spending much money.

In these courses, students are classified taking into account their English level and their age. In 2017, 150 students applied for these courses and the main criteria to select them was age. They had to be between 12 and 60 years old. The present project was carried out with 16 students, 4 men and 12 women of the Extension courses at Universidad Libre. Students were high school students between 12 and 17 years old and none of them had worked before. All of them study in public schools and they belong to three social strata according to the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) meaning that they are users with minor resources, which are beneficiaries of subsidies in the public domiciliary services.

Students’ necessities vary depending on their age. In general terms, students from 12 to 15 years old are studying English as a way of amplifying the knowledge acquired in their schools. On the other hand, the older ones are studying English because they are aware of the its importance for their future, for instance, university studies. Overall, it is necessary for students to study English as it will allow them to get better opportunities for their university studies.

The extension courses at Universidad Libre are intended to offer students from Universidad Libre a place to complement their pedagogical practice, as well, the courses are aimed at offering people affordable, high-quality English or French classes. The institution requires teachers to be well prepared in order to satisfy students’ expectations.
**Sampling method**

In general, samples are classified as: probability and non-probability samples. In order to ensure generalizability of the study results, probability sample is the most common technique in sampling methodology, specially. The probability sample is defined by Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, and Nigam (2013) as a method in which each individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected in the study. Additionally, probability sampling, which always use a random process, can be further classified.

The simple random sampling in which every participant has an equal chance of being selected for the study; the systematic random sampling in which only the first individual is chosen randomly and the successive individuals are chosen periodically; the stratified random sampling in which data is divided into different categories taking into account common characteristics such as age, sex, race, etc. and then, a random sample is chosen from each group; the cluster sampling in which the population is divided into clusters and then, all the individuals in the clusters are chosen for the sample; the multiphase sampling in which the population is divided into groups, groups are chosen randomly and then individuals from the groups are chosen randomly as well; the multistage sampling which is a complex form of cluster sampling, but there are embedded levels within the groups.

For the present project, simple random was chosen as the sampling method, in which according to Acharya et Al (2013) “Data is chosen using random number table or computer generated list of random numbers. It can also be done by lottery method, using currency notes, etc.” Taking into account that in this method a sampling frame is required, the 16 participants were enumerated in ascending order, then, randomly, ten of the participants were selected as the sample of the population to be studied.
2.3. Techniques and Instruments to collect data

The instruments used to collect the data that served as the main source for analysis were student teachers’ field notes, a students’ surveys, and students’ recordings.

Field notes: this instrument refers to notes taken by researchers in the research process. The notes were taken during the observation of the phenomena being analyzed. According to Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) "field notes are an essential grounding and resource for writing broader, more coherent accounts of others' lives and concerns" (p.112). In this particular case, field notes (see Appendix C) were used to register observations and concrete information about students’ oral production during class time.

Surveys: it is an important instrument which is based on the collection of data achieved by asking individuals questions either in person, on paper, online or by phone. According to Sutton and Austin (2015), surveys allow the researcher to maintain and comment upon impressions, environmental contexts, behaviors, and nonverbal cues that may not be adequately captured through the audio-recording

The objective of the survey students responded (see Appendix A) was to identify the frequency in which students did oral production exercises in their academic and non-academic contexts. Thus, through the survey, it was possible to determine that, in most of their schools, English teachers focus mainly on grammar and vocabulary. For this research project, a close survey format was used to identify the aforementioned problem.

Recordings: Research records are types of records or materials that document a research activity. Patton (2002) states: “a good hammer is essential to fine carpentry, a good tape recorder is indispensable to fine fieldwork" (p.380). For the purpose of this research, some activities were recorded and transcribed (see Appendix D) with the intention of identifying students’ difficulties when using English as a foreign language orally.
2.4. Data Analysis

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.

Along the lines of Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2011), thematic analysis is perceived as one the most commonly used methods in research because it “… moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data” (p. 10).

The length of data is another important issue to have in mind when analyzing data. This data can vary from being a simple word-response of a question to complex statements. Having said that, transcribed data from interviews was usually used by researchers, therefore, transcriptions may range from 10 up to 40 pages or more depending on the number of participants of the project. As Guest et al (2011) state: “textual data generated from in-depth interviews and focus groups -which are often transcribed verbatim from audio recordings- and, to a lesser degree participant observation notes” (p. 11). The analysis of such quantity of data could be very difficult using other types of analysis, thus, thematic analysis is presented as an efficient method to analyse this kind of data.

Since thematic analysis refers to themes, this notion must be considered closely. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), the specific patterns -explicit or implicit- found in the data were called themes. Specific criteria needed to be stipulated concerning what can and cannot be coded within such themes. This type of analysis was chosen because it engages the most useful techniques from several theoretical and methodological fields such as grounded theory, positivism, interpretivist,
and phenomenology summarized into one analysis method. Moreover, this analysis method fits in with the type of collected data throughout the project, along with the number of participants.

**Survey.**

Students were asked simple questions about learning features in English in their schools and social life. Results of this survey were tabulated and coded in a chart in order to identify different relevant factors in the oral production in a foreign language in the different student’s background, all important extracts of this survey have been collated and posteriorly code (see appendix E). Afterwards, a more extensive analysis was carried out from these codes to synthesize information and from this process one category emerged: interaction through oral production.

**Field notes**

As well as the survey, all important extracts of the field notes have been collated. Subsequently results were tabulated and coded in a chart (see Appendix F) to group most predominant problems and factors in the oral production of the students in English. After been transcripted, coded and analyzed as Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed, the information was reduced to the following categories: cooperative learning and sociolinguistic competence. After transcripted, coded and analyzed the information as propouses Braun and Clarke (2006). The information was reduced to larger categories (cooperative learning, sociolinguistic competence).

**Voice recordings**

Recordings were introduced as an effective tool in order to collect and identify relevant factors in the oral production of the students such as, mistakes, pronunciation, interaction with others, fluency and coherence. All the data collected helped this research to determine the relevant aspects in students’ oral production in English. As well as the previous instruments, all the information was transcripted, coded and analyzed (see Appendix G). After this process was carried out, a second category emerged: grammatical range and accuracy.
As a conclusion, the analysis of the collected data must be done using a qualitative method since oral production, not only refers to grammatically correct utterances, but it also involves other factors that are not measurable, such as sociolinguistic elements, interaction and collaboration among students.

2.5. Pedagogical Proposal

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.

As PBL was chosen as the learning approach to strengthen students' oral production, each intervention was framed under the features and stages of PBL and consequently, the result of the interventions was always a micro-project in which students were required to produce any type of oral performance. The final result of the six interventions was present in a macro-project in which students produced orally different aspects they learnt in all the micro-projects.

**Pedagogical Objectives of the Intervention**

To encourage students collaborative group-work and support their classmates towards reaching a common goal.

To engage students in class, encouraging their participation in the process of planning and development of the class.

To enhance communicative skills, not only in terms of oral production, but also the relationship among students.
To promote students’ autonomy and self-government as they will be in charge of their own process.

To stimulate students creativity in the development of each project and generate a risk-free environment for students who are shy.

**Macro-Project**

**Name:** The Academy Awards

**Description:** the final outcome of the present pedagogical intervention was a project in which the whole class was engaged. The project combined the communicative tasks developed throughout the six mini-projects, as well as the oral objectives established for each micro-project.

The project was framed within an academy award ceremony set, in which each student played a different role. Depending on their role, students had to use a specific oral topic developed during the mini-projects. With the development of this project, students were expected to produce oral interactions regarding a movie.

**Driving question:** How to describe all the features of a movie?

**Objectives**

**General objective:** To improve students’ oral production.

**Specific objectives:**

- To strengthen students’ ability to maintain a fluent conversation.
- To reinforce students’ confidence when expressing their ideas orally.
- To boost students’ use of proper grammatical structures.

**Oral aspects to strengthen:**

As strengthening oral production is the core of this project, aspects such as fluency, the ability to be understood, pronunciation and interaction among teacher and students were chosen to increase students’ creativity and originality at the moment of discussing and expressing their
opinions about a certain topic of the everyday life, such as a photo, a film, a person or an experience. Those aspects were enhanced throughout six-micro projects (see Table 1).

**Procedure:**

According to Lam (2011), there are ten steps to follow at the moment of implementing a PBL project.

1. According to the students’ interests, both teacher and students reached a consensus on the theme of the project.
2. The final outcome of the project was defined, teachers suggested an oral presentation and students agreed.
3. Students defined the groups and their responsibilities as well as the deadline of the presentation. The materials needed were also determined.
4. Given the type of project, teacher provided students speaking activities (the six micro-projects) to prepare for the final outcome of the project.
5. With the help of the micro-projects, students were able to gather the necessary information for the final project.
6. After finishing the six mini-projects, teacher helped students synthesize and analyze the collected information. In this step, the most relevant information was chosen according to the project necessities.
7. Student worked on their own to define the most important information and the roles each one of them were going to have during the development of the project.
8. The needed language demands got prepared with the teacher’s help. As the final outcome of the project was an oral presentation, oral activities to increase students’ speaking skill were carried out.
9. Students presented the project on the date agreed in the second step and taking into account the criteria and the use of the gathered information.

10. In the final step, the project was evaluated by students themselves and also by the visiting group. Weaknesses and strengths were identified and the teacher provided a meaningful feedback according to the development of the project.
3. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

This section of the project is aimed at showing the analysis done to the collected data. The analysis includes a brief definition of the emerging themes, the exemplification and interpretation of the data. Likewise, this section includes the conclusions we reached from the analysis.

3.1. Analysis and Discussion of Results

The following are the results of the initial survey students answered, the field notes and the voice recordings. The main objective of the students’ survey was to identify students’ oral production opportunities in their academic and non-academic contexts. It was composed of ten closed questions related to the way students practice and learn English orally. The survey was carried out with sixteen students aged between twelve and seventeen years of the extension courses at Universidad Libre and it was given to students the second class after the extension courses started. For the sake of comprehension, the survey was designed in Spanish.

In Colombia, English is a foreign language, a fact that does not contribute to enhance their learning. In fact, when students were asked about the language used in their english classes, 50% manifested that their English classes are completely taught in the target language, on the other hand, the remaining 50% manifested that their classes are not completely taught in English. This demonstrates that the use of the target language in Colombian education is not sufficient, for to be efficient in another language it is necessary to develop all the skills in students, including the listening skill which is essential to develop oral production.

The tools used in class are as important as the use of the target language to encourage students to express their ideas orally, as certain materials are focused on improving production skills. Effectively, when students were asked to select the most used tools in their English classes, 34% manifested that the English book is the most common tool used by their English teachers, followed
by a twenty-seven percent who said that the video beam is the most common one, then, twenty-four percent of them manifested that their English teachers use mostly audio tools, and finally, only ten and five percent manifested that the most common tools in their English classes are flashcards and magazines, respectively. This shows that most English teachers prefer to use tools that are focused on developing comprehension skills such as listening (audios) and reading (books). Not only does this represents that students do not have the opportunity to express themselves orally, but also that the tools used in class are not centered in developing production skills.

In order to enhance oral production in class, promoting interaction is a key factor as it helps to generate familiarity within the classrooms. Indeed, when students were asked about the encouragement of interaction during their English classes, it was evident that ninety-four percent said that their teachers do promote interaction among students in class, only one of them said that his/her teacher does not promote interaction in class. This means that, in most of the cases, English teachers attempt to foster interaction in the target language among students. Nevertheless, those interactions might not be meaningful when promoting authentic oral production in EFL students. This may be due to the wrong use of tools or because of the incorrect choice of activities to promote interaction among the students.

When students were asked whether or not they have opportunities to practice English orally in non-academic contexts, 56% manifested that they were able to have conversations in English with another person outside of their school context. Forty-four percent of them do not have the opportunity to practice English outside school though. This demonstrates that a big majority of students in Colombia are only able to practice conversational English within the school as they do not have an English-speaking relatives or friends to practice with. For that reason, it is completely necessary to take advantage of the English classes to practice the language orally. However, as it is seen in the rest of the questions, oral production is not fostered in the classroom.
The development of all the skills is essential at the moment of teaching a foreign language. Regrettably, production skills such as speaking and writing are more difficult to develop, a fact that contributes to English teachers’ leaning towards the comprehension skills. In fact, when students were asked about the most developed skill in their English class, writing and grammar were selected by twenty-six percent of students, followed by reading which was chosen by twenty-three percent of the students. Listening and speaking were the least developed skills in their English classes, with fourteen and eleven percent of students choosing them, respectively. These results emphasize that in Colombia, English teachers focused mainly on comprehension skills and grammar, sidestepping oral production in their classes.

Oral presentations are a key element for creating a comfortable environment for students to express their ideas orally. When students were asked whether or not oral presentations are made in their English class, 50% manifested that presentations are made while the other half said they are not. This shows that pressure-free environments such as ideas socializations are not promoted by all the English teachers. Consequently, students do not have the opportunity to express their ideas orally.

Oral presentations are also indispensable to engage students among them. As well as the tools, the kind of activities promoted during the class is crucial to develop students’ oral production. Some kind of activities such as debates are an excellent way to enhance oral production as students have the chance to express their thoughts, ideas, and opinions orally. Unfortunately, these kinds of activities are not promoted in English classes, actually, when students were asked about the most common activity they do in their English class, forty-one percent manifested that their English teacher worked predominantly with an English book, thirty-two percent of them chose writing exercises and twenty-three percent of them said that their teachers worked principally with listening exercises. Only four percent of the students said that discussions are made in their English classes.
These results gave a further prove that oral production is not being developed within English classes in Colombia, as discussions are considered to be an excellent way of fostering it.

In order to improve oral production in English, it is necessary to practice orally regularly. As some students barely get the chance to practice in non-academic contexts, practicing orally in the English classes is essential to enhance their learning and language development. However, when students were asked about the number of hours they practice English orally, thirty-eight percent said they practice English orally between four and six hours a week, thirty-one percent said they practice orally at least more than two hours a week and the remaining thirty-one percent said they practice English orally less than an hour a week. These results indicate that despite a large portion of the respondents practice English orally between four and six hours a week, there are still many students who only practice two hours or less time a week, which means there is not enough time to develop an effective oral production. Furthermore, those kind of practices might not be worthwhile or significant, as the interaction within the English class is minimum.

Teachers’ corrections are an important element at the moment of encouraging students to express their ideas orally, since focusing on correcting grammar mistakes only could be counterproductive. However, this type of correction is very common in English classes, in fact, when students were asked about the type of corrections made in their English class, forty-five percent stated that their English teachers’ corrections are geared towards pronunciation, thirty-five percent stated that the correction is geared towards the grammatical structure, ten percent stated that the corrections are geared towards spelling and the remaining ten percent stated that the corrections are geared towards the proper way to write. This demonstrates that pronunciation, spelling and writing are important elements for English teachers at the moment of correcting students, nonetheless, a significant part of the teachers still focus on grammar corrections, which are not really useful when trying to engage students in oral production activities.
Students’ confidence is also determining at the moment of developing oral production within class, letting students express their own ideas, interests and arguments help them to be more self-reliant and, therefore, increase their oral production. When students were asked to select the activities in which they feel more comfortable and effective, forty-two percent of them chose writing exercises, twenty-one percent chose exercises from the book, twenty-one percent chose exchanging ideas in groups and sixteen percent chose presentations. These results evince that more than half do not feel comfortable at the moment of using English to express and share ideas with their classmates, which means that pressure-free environments are not build at their schools and therefore, they rather do writing and grammar exercises instead of interacting with others orally.

After analysing the data collected by means of the instruments designed, four themes emerged: interaction through oral production, cooperative learning, sociolinguistic competence, and grammatical range and accuracy. Each one was further analyzed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed pedagogical intervention.

**Interaction through oral production**

Interaction, according to Gass and Mackey (2007) refers to the conversations in which learners participate. Interaction in EFL classes is crucial for the learning process because it is in the context of interactions that learners receive information about the correctness and incorrectness of their utterances, as is stated by Gass and Mackey (2007). Furthermore, in the learning process of a foreign language, it is essential to engage all the processes that take place within the class, according to Mackey (2007) interaction connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways.

As this research explored the basis of PBL, interaction among students is a key factor at the moment of developing and socializing the projects since it helps students to first, develop language
in real contexts and also enhance oral production in the classroom. In the classroom, interaction among teachers and students can create learning opportunities, which motivate the students’ interests and potential to communicate with others, as stated by Yu (2008). In the present project, students needed to develop different micro-projects which were designed to boost interaction among students and teachers in order to create an environment in which students talk and participate in class. The data gathered shows the positive effects that PBL had on students’ ability to interact effectively among them as it is shown in the following excerpt:

* In groups students make the presentation of their movie, and other students made some questions related to the chosen movie

*(Field note #1, March 23rd, 2019)*.

As it can be observed, interaction among students increased during the development of the activity, as students from other groups were interested in the presentations that were taking place and made questions about it, which allowed their classmates to speak more about the movie.

In another activity, students were involved in a common situation in which they had to tell an anecdote to the rest of the class. The rest of their classmates, could participate making questions, socializing ideas and giving opinions. This socialization is illustrated as follows:

**Student 2:** Hello.

**Student 1:** Hi, what is your name?

**Student 2:** My name is Laura.

**Student 1:** eh ... Tell us your story

**Student 2:** Ok, em... when I was a child - I was Eh... playing with my friends and we were playing policemen and thieves and ah... in this moment a girl hate me sooo, she put her feet - her feet, and she made me fall. eh... when I realized eh... there was a big stone and it cut my knee. sooo, for me it was horrible and then eh ... the kids start to scream and they call to the teacher. She come and -
the teacher called to my parents and they take me to the hospital. There am... the doctor sewed my knee and I was in house for a month.

**Student 1:** How do you feel now?

**Student 2:** eh... I feel good now. With ah... with stitches but good. it doesn't have hurt.

(Micro-project #4, Radio GaGa, April 4th, 2019)

Students demonstrated a positive attitude towards making and answering questions among them. Moreover, they were willing to cooperate with their classmates work and to interact with them, as they made several questions to their classmates about their presentations and also about the reasons why they decided to choose that anecdote and its effects on their present lives.

Interaction was not only witnessed among students from other groups, but also among students within a group. In the following excerpt, this type of interaction is shown:

**Student 1:** Welcome everybody to de Duban show [laughter] Today we have an invitation about the movie of this [inaudible speaking] century yes [laughter]. We must to speak about the inside out. (Micro-Project #2, Academy Awards, April 4th, 2019).

As it was observed, student 1 made a request to the group, invited them to interact with him and at the same time demonstrated a positive attitude in front of the class. Moreover, this interaction made it easier for the rest of the group to participate in the activity and explain their ideas to the rest of the class. Also, Interaction was not only witnessed among students from other groups but also among students within a group.

The importance of interaction was not only seen throughout the pedagogical intervention but also students manifested it in the survey. In the following excerpt, students demonstrated that they do not feel comfortable when exchanging ideas with their classmates as they do not get the opportunity to do it frequently in their classes.

**Question 11:** ¿En cuál de los ejercicios en clase de inglés se siente más cómodo y efectivo?
Intercambio de ideas en grupos: 21% Haciendo exposiciones: 16%

Question 8: Su profesor de inglés trabaja principalmente con: debates: 4%, escritos: 32%

Question 2: Durante la clase de inglés ¿su profesor fomenta la interacción en inglés entre los estudiantes?

Sí: 94% No: 6% (Students’ Survey, February 9th, 2019)

In the previous excerpt, it was evidenced that students do not feel comfortable at the moment of interacting with their classmates, furthermore, they demonstrated that in their schools teachers focus mainly on writing. It shows that more than half of the students do not feel comfortable at the moment of using English to express and share ideas with their classmates and also that in spite of promoting the interaction in class, teachers work more in writing than in oral production.

Another important aspect of interaction among students is that it creates a friendly environment for students to express their ideas in a familiar way, as well as encouraging them to interact in a standard way, just as they do with their native language. This is shown in the following excerpt:

Student 1: you will get broke... your company will get broke... [laughter][teacher’s intervention] [laughter] eh... another is, in your future will be you will be pour poor and you will be live under a bridge [laughter][teacher’s intervention].

Student 2: will I have a good job? [laughter]

Student 1: [inaudible speaking] eh...yeah you’ll have it but I but I but you will get broke [laughter] (Micro-Project #3, The fortune teller, March 16th, 2019)

The previous excerpt shows a short conversation between two students in which it is evidenced effective interaction and mutual intelligibility. Furthermore, students showed interest on what the others were saying, which is an important component for a successful interaction. Likewise, students made a friendly and funny conversation, which proves that interaction helps to create amiable environments for students.
Cooperative learning

The second theme that was identified through the analysis was Cooperative learning. As defined by Lie (2002), it is a student-centered and instructor-facilitated instructional strategy in which a small group of students is responsible for its own learning and the learning of all group members. It takes place when students work together to accomplish shared learning goals. Each student can then achieve his or her learning goal if, and only if, the other group members achieve theirs (Johnson, Johnson, and Stanne (2000)).

Following the principles of PBL, projects must be carried out by students themselves, in order to ensure cooperation among them, and therefore, a more meaningful learning. Learning in cooperative environments, such as groups and whole-class activities help students to reduce stress and shyness, especially in EFL classrooms. As stated by Lie (2002), group learning goals stimulate motivation to learn within team members, encourage other members to learn, and motivate members to help each other learn. The data collected showed how PBL had positive results at the moment of helping and practicing with each other as is shown in the following excerpt:

Additionally, they seemed comfortable at the moment of presenting their favorite movies, they were laughing and having a good time. Within the groups we could see cooperation, for instance, when one of the members did not remember something, another person of the group helped his/her classmate.

(Field note #1, March 23rd, 2019).

The previous excerpt shows how students were disposed to help each other in moments of necessity, either for the sake of the group or just because they wanted to cooperate with the correct development of the project. It was also witnessed that students with higher knowledge of vocabulary tended to help, not only members of their group, but also members of other groups.
During this activity, it was witnessed that PBL enhances cooperative learning, not only within the groups, but also among the rest of the classroom.

**Student 14:** everyone cle - ans the house? [student’s intervention: can you repeat please?]

everyone cle - ans the home? [student’s intervention: cleans]

**Student 15:** I always clean my house, nobody helps me. [laughter] (Micro-project #6: Discussion on Dissatisfactions, May 5th, 2019)

In the previous excerpt shows more detailed the way students helped each other when facing other difficulties such as pronunciation problems. Besides, students felt more comfortable when a classmate corrected them than when the teacher did it.

Cooperative learning also means that other groups achieve their goals when other groups do it as well, hence, when students from another group are having troubles, students from other groups try to help them in order to help with the normal development of the activity, as is seen in the following excerpt:

*Within the groups we can see cooperation, for instance when one of the members does remember something another person of the group helps his classmate* (Field note #1, March 23rd, 2019).

In the previous excerpt, students were involved in activities where they had to work and share their ideas with their partners. In these activities, they were focused on their classmates opinions, but also on how to help them if someone had problems at the moment of describing a movie. In the excerpt, it was possible to see how a student from a different group interact with another when they had difficulties at the moment of preparing a description. This demonstrates that PBL increased cooperation among students, regardless of their belonging to the group that is having problems.

**Sociolinguistic competence**

The third theme that was identified was the sociolinguistic competence, which according to Muniandy, Nair, Shanmugam, Ahmad, and Noor (2010) is the knowledge and understanding of the
sociocultural rules of language and of discourse. This requires awareness of the social context in which the language is used, such as the rules of participation, the information, and the roles of interaction within a conversation.

In order to have an effective communication, there are several components to have in mind. Sociolinguistic competence is an intrinsic aspect when learning a foreign language, as it helps learners to realize their communicative intentions in an efficient way. According to Bagarić and Djigunović (2007), sociolinguistic knowledge is a key factor to generate pragmatic knowledge of a language, as it provides the abilities for creating and interpreting discourse. In PBL, creating and interpreting language utterances is very important to carry out the projects.

Sociolinguistic competence is essential to deal with the social dimension of language use, still, it is very difficult to develop it in contexts where English is a foreign language. The data collected shows the positive impact that PBL had on the development of students’ sociolinguistic competence.

The following excerpt illustrates how the context in which students are involved generates more interest and, therefore, more ideas to express.

_Student 1:_ The teachers don't have en... don’t mustn't - mustn't have - no. I think that the teachers ah... must to teach when they have more than 40 years- because they, they, they teach experience. 
But you don’t [laughter]

[student’s intervention: Teachers pay enough because - their job give a little money. The salary is not enough ] (Micro-project #6, Discussion on Dissatisfactions, May 5th, 2019)

In the previous excerpt, students show that they are interested in many situations related to their context. Also, they found a chance to express their ideas about a real situation in their schools. It is also evidenced in the excerpt that learners were more willing to express their ideas when they were talking about contextual issues.
Sociolinguistic competence also includes the mode in which students use language depending on the context, as PBL builds up friendly and risk-free environments for students, they also express their ideas informally, as it is illustrated in the following excerpt:

**Student 1:** *in the right - in the left we have a man acting - maybe is maybe ah… oh damn!* (Micro-Project #1: Photo Contest, March 16th, 2019).

The previous excerpt shows an example of students expressions in their context. These expressions are important at the moment of express their ideas in English, as they help them to calm in stressful situations, such as oral presentations. In addition, in spite of having grammar problems and lack of vocabulary, they tried to use different expressions which are used in their context, for instance, the student used an expletive to express anger.

Informal register and expressions are also part of a proper sociolinguistic competence, as students need to identify when to use a formal or an informal register. When addressing the teacher, students used formal register, on the other hand, when addressing their classmates, they changed the register to make it more friendly and sociable, as it observed in the following excerpt:

**Student 1:** *well we can-we can receive calls-calls us call us tell your your experiences please ah...well here ah... (laughter) we hear a call well- who are you ? who are you man?* (Micro-Project #5: Radio GaGa, April 4th, 2019).

The excerpt above represents the way students used different sociolinguistic features specifically related to language use. Students also showed how the use of familiar expressions, such as addressing to a classmate in an informal way, helped to create a friendly environment in which they could developed orally easier

In the next excerpt, it was evidenced that students tried to uses own expressions in the second language.
**Finally, we notice the correct use of the vocabulary given during the class and additional expressions that they looked for by themselves.** (Field note #1, March 23rd, 2019).

The previous excerpt shows that each student tried to use their own expressions at the moment to participate in a oral activity. It helped to the project to know that students tried to make a relation between expressions they was using spanish and use the same expressions in english.

**Grammatical range and accuracy**

As defined by the Council of Europe, Council for Cultural Co-operation, Education Committee, and Modern Languages Division (2001), grammatical competence is the ability to understand and express meaning by producing and recognising well-formed phrases and sentences in accordance with these principles. Grammatical range and accuracy is one of the most common problems for EFL students, especially in the first levels as stated by Puengpipattrakul (2009). In speaking, grammatical accuracy is essential to ensure students’ intended meaning and avoid communicative misunderstanding.

As the present research objective is to strengthen oral production in students, grammar range and accuracy is an important factor as the correct use of grammatical structures helps others understand what a person is saying. Although PBL is not focused on developing grammar in students, it is one of the aspects that determines whether the oral skill is improving or not. Students were expected to practice and use properly the grammar structures taught during the course throughout the development of the micro-projects.

In spite of students’ more frequent interventions in the projects proposed by PBL, various grammar mistakes were present throughout all the pedagogical intervention, as is shown in the following excerpt:
Student 2: first eh... I put in [incomprehensible] eh... then eh... I - I - I sleep before time eh....

I woke because [ay bueno] I woke and scream because my mother I need my mother scream to mom mom! [laughter] and I cried. [laughter] (Micro-Project #5, Radio Gaga, April 4th, 2019).

The previous excerpt shows that despite PBL had a positive impact on students’ grammatical accuracy, as the student used the simple past tense in some moments, there were still various problems related to the grammatical range, especially at the moment of making long and complex sentences.

Problems related to grammatical accuracy were not only witnessed during the socialization of the projects but also throughout the development of other moments of the class, for instance, at the moment of explaining the instructions of the projects, as is exemplified as follows:

Another student has many problems related to pronunciation, conjugation of the verbs in past and also, she does not understand teacher indications (Field note #1, March 23rd, 2019).

The preceding excerpt shows the difficulties for some students at the moment of following the teacher’s indications and also at the moment of identifying the proper verbal tense to use in class. This means that during the development of the projects, students still require the assistance of the teachers to completely understand the topic and creation of the projects.

A correct grammatical range and accuracy also helps the rest of the students to understand their classmates’ ideas and interventions, in order to facilitate the interaction among them. However, recurrent grammatical mistakes made it difficult in some cases to encourage interaction, as it is seen as follows:

Hello eh... one day my grandfather went to the clinical to join a few exam and the doctors told him that - that he was an observation and he was a surgery after three days he is in coma and a few after days eh... he died (Micro-project #5, Radio GaGa, April 4th, 2019).
The previous excerpt shows that despite the fact that PBL increased students’ oral production, several problems related to the grammar accuracy were still perceived. It was also evidenced that regardless students were able to express their ideas and thoughts orally, it was not totally correct in terms of grammar. Thus, it was difficult for the rest of the class to understand the oral intervention.

Grammatical accuracy assists students’ conversations as well, as it is necessary to make complete and correct utterances for the other student to continue the conversation in an accurate way, when there are grammatical mistakes, the conversation does not follow a proper structure, as is illustrated as follows:

**Student 1:** oh... do you live near of the forest fear?

**Student 2:** yes

**Student 1:** ok- so ah... do you saw the men of - the same - do you see the man? the man black?

**Student 2:** yes - because the story... (Micro-Project #5: Radio GaGa, April 4th, 2019)

The previous excerpt shows that students’ problems regarding the grammatical range did not allow them to create complex utterances which assist the development of conversations. Similarly, the previous excerpt shows a student’s conversation in which there are some grammar mistakes, specifically related to the use of the proper verbal tense. the corrective

### 3.2. Conclusions

The present research paper set out to strengthen oral production in EFL students. In order to achieve this goal, the following question was formulated: How may PBL strengthen oral production in english of students with an A1 level of the Extension courses at Libre University?. PBL was chosen as the learning approach to strengthen oral production among students because of the way it fosters students’ abilities to develop a project in a specific situation by themselves, including interaction, autonomy, cooperative learning, among others, which leads them to use
English both among them and with their teachers in a more frequent way. The approach was implemented throughout six interventions and a final project.

The main findings from this research indicated that PBL had a positive effect in several aspects that are inherent to the oral production, such as interaction, cooperative learning and sociolinguistic competence. Furthermore, students showed an improvement in specific aspects of their oral production that were witnessed as weaknesses in the diagnostic test. These aspects include fluency, the ability to make oneself understood, the correct use of vocabulary and grammar structures, the reduction of lengthy pauses and the ability to answer questions. The pedagogical intervention based on PBL reflected a continuous enhancement in those aspects as is shown by the voice recordings.

Nevertheless, PBL strategies did not have a major impact on students’ grammatical range and accuracy since at the end of the pedagogical intervention students still made various grammatical mistakes and were not able to make complex sentences. In spite of the interactive approach of the projects, grammar is an important criterion to do effective oral productions.

This may mean that PBL is a learning approach which works effectively at the moment of strengthening oral production in EFL students as projects are made to engage students and create environments where students are able to express their ideas, regardless of grammatical matters.

The previous claims bring forth other issues related to the efficacy of PBL, yet this research project is concerned only on the issues related to the research question, which is how to strengthen oral production in students with an A1 level of the Extension courses at Universidad Libre. Regarding this matter, 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, all required aspects to produce effective speech. Nonetheless, PBL does not have a significant impact on improving students’ grammar, which is also an important criterion of the oral
production. Finally, this study highlighted that PBL, not only strengthened students’ oral production, but also enhanced students’ autonomy, as projects were practically carried out by them.

As it was seen in the surveys, most of the students manifested that their teachers used different tools which focused mainly on writing and listening. Consequently, students did not have opportunity to express their opinions and ideas orally in their schools. It was also evidenced in the diagnostic test that they were nervous and confused and in spite of having knowledge related to vocabulary and grammar, it was very difficult to them to express personal ideas and tackle the topics in the diagnostic test.

Interestingly, through the micro-projects, students were willing to work on their own and being autonomous, they were prepared to participate, cooperate and interact in all the activities with their classmates and teachers. In addition, in spite of having grammar problems, students demonstrated self-confidence at the moment of participating orally in all the situations presented in each mini-project, being creative, and overcoming the problems witnessed during the diagnostic test such as fluency and pronunciation. They also were feeling comfortable at the moment of expressing their ideas in front of the class and to other classmates. Also, interaction was an important aspect that helped students learn from their classmates, they demonstrated that they were comfortable talking and discussing about the different topics presented in the micro-projects and at the same time it contributed to the successful development of the activities. This may mean that students can interact and learn better with others if teachers use PBL as a class methodology, helping students to adapt in an optimal way to the different topics presented and developed, not only in an English class, but also in other subjects.

Finally, this study highlighted that students showed interest in all the micro-projects, participating, interacting and giving their opinions. However, this finding does support that PBL
did not contribute to the improvement of grammar, which is an important aspect in the acquiring of the language.

Also, PBL was implemented during the development of this research project to improve oral production in students, but there were interesting aspects that help to make and active environment in which students found how to interact and learn from others, allowing them to be more interested in all the topics studied in class. Therefore, as well as the acquisition of the language, PBL methodology could help students to be interested in others fields of knowledge and open opportunities to interact and share ideas and opinions in a large variety of subjects as biology, math, philosophy etc.

This conclusion opens the doors to new questions concerning the effectiveness of PBL in other areas of the language. Among them, for illustrative purposes: Is PBL an effective learning approach to strengthen written production? or May PBL strengthen oral production in students of higher levels, inter alia?. Furthermore, after analysing the results, and confirming that PBL did strengthen oral production in students, but did not have a significant impact on students’ grammar accuracy, it begs the question: What effects would have PBL if it were implemented during more time? since the pedagogical intervention for this project was only implemented during a semester.
References


Appendix A. Students’ Survey

Universidad Libre
Cursos de Extensión

Nombre: [Nombre]

Objetivo: Identificar la frecuencia con la que los estudiantes del curso de extensión de la Universidad Libre utilizan la producción oral del inglés como lengua extranjera durante su jornada académica y en su contexto.

Por favor responda con una x las siguientes preguntas:

1. En sus clases de inglés en el colegio: ¿el profesor dicta el 100% de la clase en inglés?
   Sí: [ ] No: [X]

2. Durante la clase la clase de inglés: ¿su profesor fomenta la interacción en inglés entre los estudiantes?
   Sí: [X] No: [ ]

3. Seleccione las herramientas que su profesor de inglés usa durante la clase en su colegio:
   Audio [ ] Libro [X] Video-beam [ ] Flashcards [ ] Revistas [ ] Cuentos [ ]

4. Aparte de la clase de inglés ¿tiene la oportunidad de tener conversaciones en inglés con otra persona?
   Sí: [ ] No: [X]

5. Seleccione la habilidad o aspecto de la lengua que según usted es la que más se desarrolla en la clase de inglés de su colegio:
   Lectura [X] Escucha [ ] Habla [ ] Escritura [ ] Gramática [ ] Vocabulario [ ]

6. ¿Realizan exposiciones con frecuencia en la clase de inglés?
   Sí: [ ] No: [X]

7. Su profesor de Inglés trabaja principalmente con:
   El libro [X] debates [ ] escritos [ ] ejercicios de escucha [ ]

8. ¿Cuántas veces a la semana practica el ejercicio en forma oral en Inglés?
   Menos de 1 [ ] Más de dos [X] Entre 4 y 6 [ ]

9. Las correcciones de su profesor de Inglés son dirigidas principalmente a:
   La forma de escribir [X] La ortografía [ ] La pronunciación [ ] La estructura gramatical [ ]

10. ¿En cuál de los ejercicios en clase de Inglés se siente más cómodo y efectivo?
    Ejercicios de escritura [X] Haciendo exposiciones [ ] Intercambio de ideas en grupos [X]
    Ejercicios en el libro de Inglés [ ]
Appendix B. Diagnostic Test

Students were asked the following triggering question: What did you do on your last vacation? Students had 5 minutes to prepare their answer and make any question related to vocabulary.

Depending on the students’ response, other questions such as the following were asked in order to expand their intervention:
- Did you travel?
- Where did you go?
- What did you do there?
- How long did you stay there?
- Where did you stay?
- How much money did you spend?
- Did you enjoy it?
- Who did you go with?

Student 1: My last holidays are g...I went to pereira at November thirt thirty of November I stay here mmm one month with my fath my father live that and then I go I went to visit them visit her visit him [prolonged pause] what more I’m coming to Bogota in an festiv where is the twenty five of December I returned back 1...i... back [prolonged pause] no... I... I... well I coming [laugh] after that we my family my mother my step father my sister and my baby brother go went to Barbosa. Barbosa y a part of departament of the departaments of the Santander departaments yes? Ah... we have a fi[ incompressible] we have a house of my uncles... of my [prolonged pause] we have a house there in Barbosa. Happen that in this field near of this field live my grand fathers of part of my father the mother of my father the mother of my father then a went to visit the house of my...my [laughter] of my grans father mother and then visit my grandfathers father yes? Do you understand me? [teacher intervention] obviously. Then we have th... until six of mmm ah... January ¿enero cierto? January ah... then we back ah... in a few days after that I stated my eleven grade. (Diagnostic test, May 18th, 2019)
Appendix C. Field notes

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<tr>
<th>NAME OF THE OBSERVER</th>
<th>Victor Hugo Arturo Villarraga</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLACE</td>
<td>Colegio Universidad Libre - Room number 503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>1:15 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY</td>
<td>Bogotá D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>Oral production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIPTION**

It is 1:10 pm, there are 16 students in the classroom. They make circles and greet teachers. Some of them are using their cellphones and others take out their books and notebooks. The class starts with the feedback of a homework from the previous class.

**RELEVANT EXPERIENCES**

The teacher introduces the topic of the class and all the students understand. One of the students start making the first correction with good pronunciation. Also, she gives the right answer. As the teacher makes a review of the present perfect tense, most of the students give the right answer to a question made by the teacher. Another student takes part in the second question related to the homework, also, another student tries to give the answer to a question but she makes a mistake, she does not know the difference between the present perfect tense and the simple present tense, also, she has pronunciation problems. One of the students continues giving examples of the homework but he has difficulties to pronounce some verbs in past. Another student has many problems related to pronunciation, conjugation of the verbs in past and also, she does not understand teacher indications. Jessica continues with good pronunciation but with problems of fluency, however, she uses the past perfect tense and the present perfect tense very well.

The teacher explains how to express likes and dislikes. He starts his explanations asking to the students what they like and what they do not. One of the students says she does not like KPOP, another says she does not like vegetables and another says she does not like math. Then, teacher gives to the students the instructions to make a question, all students make a question to their classmates and at the same time, students give answers according to the class topic and the instructions given by the teacher.

Then, the teacher asks the students about their favorite movies genres. After, the teacher says to the students that the next activity is to make a micro-project related to movies. In this micro-project students have to make groups of three and four people and prepare a detailed description of a movie they like, they have to describe characters, the plot and soundtrack, also, the teacher provides to the students useful expressions and words to make the micro-project.

Students look for the necessary information about the movie and also they select the important things for their mini-project. Then, teacher makes an example of the project, describing all the characteristics of a movie and expressing their opinion about it, in order to make the students understand all about the topic. In groups students make the presentation of their movie, and other students make some questions related to the chosen movie.

In this micro-project we can evidence that students have a good attitude at the moment of working and share ideas with their partners, however, some of them have fluency problems especially at the moment of answering questions. Additionally, they seem comfortable at the moment of presenting their favorite movies, they are laughing and having a good time. Within the groups we can see cooperation, for instance when one of the members does remember something another person of the group helps his classmate. Nevertheless, students make long
pauses that makes difficult to understand what they say. Finally, we notice the correct use of the vocabulary given during the class and additional expressions that they looked for by themselves.
Appendix D. Sample of Transcription.

Micro-Project #1: Photo Contest

**Student 1:** Good afternoon class [laughter] well I have this picture and this picture is in the field of the university, yes? In the middle of the picture we have ah... some boys with umbrellas they are listening the speaking, in the top right hand - yes? we have an statu and some trees - trees very tall. emm... ba ba ba... on the right we have students umm... they are smiling maybe they are listening the speaking ah... on the bottom eh... on the background - on the foreground we have emm... more students they are listening anyone girl has an umbrella - she is listening. In the right - in the left we have a man acting - maybe is maybe ah... oh damn! oh... well is acting [laughter] more more more left we have more students they are smiling, amm... at the background we have the university - windows - more trees and a man sleeping in the field. well that is the picture.

**Student 2:** Eh... hello I am going describe this pictuar eh... in the middle is of the statu of sir. eh... at the - at the top is a white color - in the background eh... is the other black colors eh... in the left eh... is a pair of students in the right is the other pair of students eh... the group of students is eh... eh... this students is eh... speaking eh... this students is eh... walking to the university eh... eh... [laughter] this students eh... also is walking eh... in the middle is a flower eh... y ya.

**Student 3:** umm... hello, I describe eh... image or pictur in the eh... park - in the bottom left is a boy playing to the trumpet and the girls on the [prolonged pause] background is taking a break. emm... in the park. emm... the girl on the left is a boring eh... the - the boys on the right is playing to the instruments [prolonged pause] and that’s all.

Appendix E. Coding of the survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data extract</th>
<th>Coded for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¿En cuál de los ejercicios en clase de inglés se siente más cómodo y efectivo? Intercambio de ideas en grupos: 4,21%</td>
<td>More than half of the students do not feel comfortable at the moment of using English to express and share ideas with their classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su profesor de inglés trabaja principalmente con: debates: 1,4%, escritos: 7,32%</td>
<td>In spite of promoting the interaction in class, teachers work more in writing than in oral production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En su clase de inglés ¿ su profesor fomenta la interacción en inglés entre los estudiantes. Si: 15,94% No: 1,6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data extract</td>
<td>Code for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· One of the students says she does not like KPOP, another says she does</td>
<td>· Students feel comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not like vegetables and another says she does not like math.</td>
<td>talking about their likes</td>
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<tr>
<td>· All students make a question to their classmates and at the same time,</td>
<td>and dislikes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students give answers according to the class topic</td>
<td>· Students have knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· In this mini project we can evidence that students have a good attitude</td>
<td>about the topic because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the moment of working and share ideas with their partners.</td>
<td>it is part of their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Within the groups we can see cooperation, for instance when one of the</td>
<td>routine and background.</td>
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<tr>
<td>members does remember something another person of the group helps his</td>
<td>· Students fell self-confidence</td>
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<td>classmate.</td>
<td>at the moment to share</td>
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<td></td>
<td>opinions from a topic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>they know.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· Student likes to work and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>cooperate in groups if</td>
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<td>they are talking about</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>something introduce in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>their context.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Appendix G. Coding of the voice recordings.
Hello I am going describe this picture eh... in the middle is of the statue of sir. Eh... at the - at the top is a white
· hello, I describe eh... image or pictur in the eh... park - in the bottom left is a boy playing to the trumpet and the girls on the [prolonged pause] background is taking a break.
· Riley Anderson is a protagonist of the film inside out eh... she is tenanger eh... who love I hookie mmm [inaudible speaking] she lost eh... live happy in minnesota to taken in california when eh.. especial mmm...[incompressible] games in her life. Eh... Happiness. she is [incompressible] ah...She is that Riley feel happy and lost.
· One day a woman valentines pass leads baby in the door and disappeared eh...valentines decide ir los angeles in his [incompressible] of finding a mother He discovered a home for him a and his new [incompressible]Maggie. Good afternoon class [laughter] well I have this picture and this picture is in the field of the university. yes? In the middle of the picture we have ah... some boys with umbrellas they are listening the speaking.
· It is difficult to the students to have accuracy at the moment to link ideas.
· In spite of having pronunciation problems students feel comfortable at the moment of sharing ideas. Also, in spite of their level, they use correctly some complex structures.
· The students feel confident at the moment of talking but at the same time, in some cases, they show problems in the use of some grammar structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data extract</th>
<th>Coded for</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hello I am going describe this picture eh... in the middle is of the statue</td>
<td>· It is difficult to the students to have accuracy at the moment to link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of sir. Eh... at the - at the top is a white</td>
<td>ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· hello, I describe eh... image or pictur in the eh... park - in the bottom</td>
<td>· In spite of having pronunciation problems students feel comfortable at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>left is a boy playing to the trumpet and the girls on the [prolonged pause]</td>
<td>the moment of sharing ideas. Also, in spite of their level, they use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>background is taking a break.</td>
<td>correctly some complex structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Riley Anderson is a protagonist of the film inside out eh... she is tenanger</td>
<td>· The students feel confident at the moment of talking but at the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who love I hookie mmm [inaudible speaking] she lost eh... live happy in</td>
<td>time, in some cases, they show problems in the use of some grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minnesota to taken in california when eh.. especial mmm...[incompressible]</td>
<td>structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>games in her life. Eh... Happiness. she is [incompressible] ah...She is that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley feel happy and lost.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>· One day a woman valentines pass leads baby in the door and disappeared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eh... valentines decide ir los angeles in his [incompressible] of finding a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother He discovered a home for him a and his new [incompressible] Maggie.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good afternoon class [laughter] well I have this picture and this picture</td>
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<tr>
<td>is in the field of the university. yes? In the middle of the picture we have</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ah... some boys with umbrellas they are listening the speaking.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.** Pedagogical Intervention. Procedure of the six micro-projects carried out during the intervention (Designed by authors).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME AND DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ORAL TOPIC TO STRENGTHEN</th>
<th>PROCEDURE – LAM (2011)</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
**OF THE MICRO-PROJECT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Photo contest</th>
<th>To create an environment in which students will be able to practice orally their personal interests.</th>
<th>Discussing the following elements on a photography:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Driving question: How to describe the features of a photo or image? | Oral Objectives  
- To improve the fluency when speaking about a well-known topic.  
- To improve the ability to be understood when expressing well-known ideas.  
- To make a correct use of the vocabulary necessary at the moment of expressing ideas.  
- To reduce lengthy pauses during the speech. | 1. Given the name of the Project, students and teacher reached a consensus on the theme of the photos. (5 min.) |
| Description: With the development of this micro-project students were expected to produce an oral description of a picture taken by them. By this, students were able to express their ideas not only in terms of language but also their personal interests. This micro-project nurtured the macro-project for there is a scene on the movie in which the actors were supposed to describe a masterpiece of art. | - Location of the picture  
- Natural elements  
- People actions  
- People feelings  
- Personal opinion  
- Reasons for taking the photo. | 2. Students and teacher discussed on the final outcome of the Project. Teachers suggested students to upload their photos to an Instagram account which all the students had Access to. (5 min.) |
<p>|  |  | 3. Students and teacher determined the structure of the Project. In this step, students made groups and each group considered their responsibilities, teacher set timing for the exposition of their photos. (10 min.) |
|  |  | 4. Teacher provided students the common expressions used when describing photos by means of an example. (10 min.) |
|  |  | 5. Students went to a part of the university (according to the selected theme of the photos) to take their photos. (20 min.) |
|  |  | 6. Teacher helped students to prepare their presentation of the photo the teachers provided them useful expressions and words. (10 min.) |
|  |  | 7. Students uploaded their photos to the Instagram account (or the selected social network) with a caption and the name of the photo. (5 min.). |
|  |  | 8. In this step, teacher showed students a video in which a photographer is explaining one of his photos, in order to prepare students for the final product. (5 min.) |
|  |  | 9. Each group made the exposition of their photo, other students were able to make questions or demanded further information. (20 min.) |
|  |  | 10. Students were invited to make recommendations to other groups as well as the teacher provided a meaningful feedback. At the end, each student was given a piece of paper to vote for their favorite photo according to the name provided in the caption. (20 min.) |
|  |  | In the development of this Project, the use of TICS is essential to engage students within the Project. The usage of social networks is also a material that thrills students and encourage them to participate. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF THE MICRO-PROJECT</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ORAL TOPIC TO STRENGTHEN</th>
<th>PROCEDURE – LAM (2011)</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong> Academy Awards</td>
<td>To create an environment in which students will be able to give a critic of a movie by presenting their points of view. <strong>Oral objectives</strong> - To improve the fluency when speaking about a well-known topic. -To improve the ability to be understood when expressing well-known ideas. -To make a correct use of the vocabulary necessary at the moment of expressing ideas. -To reduce lengthy pauses during the speech. -To improve the ability to answer questions in an authentic way.</td>
<td>1. Discussing the following elements on a movie: -Plot -Characters -soundtrack -Genre 2. Suggesting why their partners should watch the movie by giving their points of view. 3. Enquiring their classmates about movies.</td>
<td>1. Given the name of the Project, students and teacher reached a consensus on the objectives of the project. (5 min.) 2. Students and teacher discussed on the final outcome of the Project. Teachers showed students the characteristics of a movie. (5 min.) 3. Students and teacher determined the structure of the Project. In this step, students made groups and each group considered their responsibilities, teacher set timing for the exposition of their movies. (10 min.) 4. Teacher provided students the common expressions used when describing the plot, characters, soundtrack and genre of movies. (10 min.) 5. Students gathered in their respective groups, choose the movie they are going to present. (20 min.) 6. Teacher helped students to prepare their presentation of the movie. the teachers provided them useful expressions and words. (10 min.) 7. Students looked for the necessary information about the movie and select the relevant things for their presentation. (5 min.) 8. In this step, teachers made an example of the project, describing all the characteristics of a movie and expressing their opinion about it, in order to prepare students for the final product. (5 min.) 9. Each group made the exposition of their movie, other students were able to make questions or demanded further information. (20 min.) 10. Students were invited to make recommendations to other groups as well as the teacher provided a meaningful feedback. At the end, according to the description of the other groups, students selected the movie which in their consideration, deserved the academy award. (20 min.)</td>
<td>In the development of this Project, the use of TICS is essential to engage students within the Project. The usage of the video beam to show the trailers of the movies during their presentations is also a material that thrill students and encourage them to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF THE MICRO-PROJECT</td>
<td>OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>ORAL TOPIC TO STRENGTHEN</td>
<td>PROCEDURE – LAM (2011)</td>
<td>RESOURCES</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Name:** The fortune teller<br>**Driving question:** How to make predictions and questions about the future? <br>**Description:** With the development of this micro-project, students made a roleplay in which one took the role of a fortune teller and the other of a person interested in his/her future in an American carnival. With this, students are expected to make predictions of their classmates’ lives orally. Furthermore, students are also expected to make questions about their future. This micro-project nurtured the macro-project as it provided students an example of the cultural approach needed for the set of the movie. | To create an environment framed in the American culture in which students will be able to give their opinion about the future. <br>**Oral objectives:** -To improve the fluency when speaking about a well-known topic.  
- To improve the ability to be understood when expressing well-known ideas.  
- To make a correct use of the vocabulary necessary at the moment of expressing ideas.  
- To reduce lengthy pauses during the speech.  
- To improve the ability to answer questions in an authentic way. | 1. Discussing how to talk and make predictions about the future. This was done using the future simple tense.  
2. Enquiring their classmates about his/her future. | 1. Given the name of the Project, students and teacher reached a consensus on the theme of the predictions. (5 min.)  
2. Students and teacher discussed on the final outcome of the Project. Teachers showed students the app needed to get the information required to make the predictions. (5 min.)  
3. Students and teacher determined the structure of the Project. In this step, students made groups and each group decided the roles, teacher set timing for the exposition of the roleplay. (10 min.)  
4. Teacher explained to students the usage of the future simple tense and provided common expressions and characteristics of the American carnivals. (10 min.)  
5. Students gathered in their respective groups, depending on the role, students will go throughout the university to gather information or will stay in the classroom preparing some questions about their future. (20 min.)  
6. Teacher helped students to prepare their roleplays. The teachers provided them useful expressions and words. (10 min.)  
7. Students looked for any further information about the prediction. (5 min.)  
8. In this step, teachers made an example of the roleplay, make predictions about the future, in order to prepare students for the final product. (5 min.)  
9. Each group present their roleplay, other students were able to make questions or demanded further information. (20 min.)  
10. Students were invited to make recommendations to other groups as well as the teacher provided a meaningful feedback. (20 min.) | In the development of this Project, the use of TICS is essential to engage students within the Project. The usage of the apps to get the information to make the predictions is also a material that thrill students and allows them to be in spaces different to the classroom. Also, the cultural context is important to develop the cultural awareness in the students. |
**NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF THE MICRO-PROJECT**

**Name:** Comic books fair  
**Driving question:** How to talk about and compare the characteristics of a person?  
**Description:** With the development of this micro-project, students were expected to talk and compare the abilities of different superheroes. Besides, they were supposed to create and show a comic to their classmates. For this mini-project, students were given two classes since the creation of a comic book takes more time. This micro-project provided meaningful information which was necessary for the development of the macro-project, as there was a scene in which actors had to compare different performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ORAL TOPIC TO STRENGTHEN</th>
<th>PROCEDURE – LAM (2011)</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To provide students a proper environment to make comparisons between two people, things or ideas.  
Oral objectives  
- To improve the fluency when speaking about a well-known topic.  
- To improve the ability to be understood when expressing well-known ideas.  
- To make a correct use of the vocabulary necessary at the moment of expressing ideas.  
- To reduce lengthy pauses during the speech.  
- To improve the ability to answer questions in an authentic way. | 1. Discussing the following characteristics of a person or object:  
- physical appearance  
- size, height, weight  
- personality  
- usefulness  
2. Describe how those characteristics are different or similar to other. | 1. Given the name of the Project, students and teacher reached a consensus on their favorite superheroes. (5 min.)  
2. Students and teacher discussed on the final outcome of the Project. Teachers showed students an example of a comic book. (5 min.)  
3. Students and teacher determined the structure of the Project. In this step, students made groups and each group decided their responsibilities, teacher set timing for the exposition of the comic books. (10 min.)  
4. Teacher provided students useful vocabulary when describing a person, as well as how to compare those characteristics with others. (10 min.)  
5. Students gathered in their respective groups, each student was given a symbol of a superhero, then, they had to look for information about the superheroes’ characteristics. (20 min.)  
6. Teacher helped students during the development of the comic book, providing them useful expressions and words. (10 min.)  
7. Students looked for any further information about the superheroes. (5 min.)  
8. In this step, teachers made an example of how to compare two superheroes, in order to prepare students for the final product. (5 min.)  
9. Each group presented their comic book, other students were able to make questions or demanded further information. (20 min.)  
10. Students were invited to make recommendations to other groups as well as the teacher provided a meaningful feedback. At the end, students also voted for the best comic book. The winner was published in the Instagram account of the class. (20 min.) | In the development of this project, the use of different tools is essential to engage students within the project. Also, also the use of these kind of materials induce students to create their own things and expand their imagination. |

In the development of this project, the use of different tools is essential to engage students within the project. Also, also the use of these kind of materials induce students to create their own things and expand their imagination.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>PROCEDURE – LAM (2011)</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong>: Radio GaGa</td>
<td>To create an environment in which students are able to talk and describe past experiences, while other students comment on those experiences. <strong>Oral objectives</strong> -To improve the fluency when speaking about a well-known topic. -To improve the ability to be understood when expressing well-known ideas. -To make a correct use of the vocabulary necessary at the moment of expressing ideas. -To reduce lengthy pauses during the speech. -To improve the ability to answer questions in an authentic way.</td>
<td>1. Discussing past experiences and their effects in the present. 2. Giving suggestions about problems related to relationships.</td>
<td>1. Given the name of the project, students and teachers reached a consensus on the topic of the experiences. (5 min) 2. Students and teachers discussed on the final outcome of the project. Teachers told students to make the radio emission through a whatsapp group call. (5 min) 3. Students and teachers determined the structure of the project. In this step, students were given the roles that each one of them was going to have during the radio emission. Teachers set timing for the radio emission and the participation of each one of them. 4. Teacher explained to the students the usage of the appropriate verbal tenses when talking about past experiences, as well as useful expressions. (10 min) 5. The whole group gathered and they set their responsibilities within the radio emission. They started to plan their interventions for the emission. (20 min) 6. Teachers helped students while they were planning their interventions, providing them expressions and solving any question. (10 min) 7. Students connected to the whatsapp group called and got ready for the emission. (5 min) 8. In this step, teachers showed a movie scene with a similar thematic. Also, they described their favorite love scene on a movie. (5 min) 9. Students made the radio emission, all the students were able to make comments during it. (20 min) 10. Students were invited to make recommendations to other students as well as the teacher provided a meaningful feedback. (20 min)</td>
<td>In the development of this Project, the use of TICS is essential to engage students within the Project. The usage of social networks is also a material that thrills students and encourage them to participate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Name and Description of the Micro-Project

**Name:** Discussion on dissatisfactions  
**Driving question:** How to complain about things that are considered unsatisfactory.  
**Description:** With the development of this mini-project, students were supposed to express dissatisfaction about their schools, their teachers, their neighborhoods and other places or people from their daily lives. Likewise, students had to express what were the characteristics they considered unsatisfactory or if they were satisfied with them. This micro-project nourished the macro-project since they had to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction about the project itself.

### Objectives

To create a discussion in which students were able to express their opinion about the unsatisfactory things they encounter in their daily lives.  
**Oral objectives**:  
- To improve the fluency when speaking about a well-known topic.  
- To make a correct use of the vocabulary necessary at the moment of expressing ideas.  
- To reduce lengthy pauses during the speech.  
- To improve the ability to answer questions in an authentic way.

### Oral Topic to Strengthen

1. Discussing the qualities and defects of different places or people.  
2. Expressing their satisfaction level about places or people of everyday life.  
3. Enquiring their classmates about the satisfaction level of a specific place or person.

### Procedure – LAM (2011)

1. Given the name of the Project, students and teacher reached a consensus on the theme of the discussion. (5 min.)  
2. Students and teacher discussed on the final outcome of the Project. Teachers told students to (5 min.)  
3. Students and teacher determined the structure of the Project. In this step, students made groups and each group considered their responsibilities, teacher set timing for the intervention of each student. (10 min.)  
4. Teacher provided students the common expressions used when complaining about something by means of an example. (10 min.)  
5. Students split into two groups, each group was given a role in the discussion. (5 min.)  
6. Teacher helped students to prepare their interventions. The teachers provided them useful expressions and words. (25 min.)  
7. Students practiced their interventions. (5 min.)  
8. In this step, teacher showed students a video of a discussion, in order to prepare students for the final product. (5 min.)  
9. The discussion started, each student had the opportunity to make at least one intervention while the other students were able to make questions or demanded further information. (20 min.)  
10. Students were invited to make recommendations to other groups as well as the teacher provided a meaningful feedback. At the end, both teachers and students reached a consensus on the most common unsatisfactory things of the everyday life. (20 min.)

### Resources

In the development of this project, encouraging students to talk about real life things is important since, according to PBL, projects need to be as realistic as possible.