

MAYOR PAPER

DIDACTIC ACTIONS TO DEVELOP THE ORAL EXPRESSION ABILITY IN NINTH
GRADE STUDENTS

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Summary

The economic, Social and political context humanity faces today, makes English language proficiency an important element for modern man requirement. This should not only encourage linguistic functional efficiency, but to develop knowledge, habits and basic skills that enable students to communicate in a foreign language, understand oral information and express themselves orally on different topics. In this sense, the present research aims to implement didactic actions to improve the oral expression ability in 9th grade students from Eliseo Reyes Junior High School, by the use of games, teaching aids, dramatizations, work group and duets, and monologues, what motivate them to acquire greater functional linguistic efficiency. Different methods were employed, belonging to the theoretical, empirical, statistical and mathematical level. The thesis is organized in two chapters; in the first, some considerations on the theoretical and methodological underpinnings underlying the learning of English and the development of oral expression ability in English are presented; in the second, the diagnostic results, educational activities aimed at developing this skill and results achieved after application are presented.

RÉSUMÉ:

Le contexte économique, social et politique auquel l'humanité est confrontée aujourd'hui fait de la maîtrise de l'anglais un élément important de l'exigence de l'homme moderne. Cela devrait non seulement encourager l'efficacité fonctionnelle linguistique, mais également développer des connaissances, des habitudes et des compétences de base permettant aux étudiants de communiquer dans une langue étrangère, de comprendre l'information orale et de s'exprimer oralement sur différents sujets. En ce sens, la présente recherche vise à mettre en œuvre des actions didactiques pour améliorer la capacité d'expression orale chez les élèves du lycée Eliseo Reyes, en utilisant des jeux, des aides pédagogiques, des dramatisations, des groupes de travail et des monologues. Eux d'acquérir une plus grande efficacité linguistique fonctionnelle. Différentes méthodes ont été employées, appartenant au niveau théorique, empirique, statistique et mathématique. La thèse est organisée en deux chapitres; dans le premier, quelques considérations sur les fondements théoriques et méthodologiques sous-tendant l'apprentissage de l'anglais et le développement de la capacité d'expression orale en anglais sont présentées; dans la seconde, les résultats diagnostiques, les activités pédagogiques visant à développer cette compétence et les résultats obtenus après l'application sont présentés.

INTRODUCTION

Language, is primarily a means of communication used by people in multiple and varied social contexts to express themselves, interact with others, learn about the world, and meet their individual and collective needs. Successful language learning and language teaching emphasize the goal of functional proficiency.

Language acquisition occurs over time with learners moving through developmental stages and gradually growing in proficiency. Individual learners, however, move through these stages at variable rates.

The teaching of English should contribute not only to functional language proficiency, but also to the ability of constructing and reconstructing new knowledge.

Language instruction should expose students to both language patterns and their infinite number of manifestations so that communicative competence can emerge. The focus of instruction is the purposeful use of language to perform real-life tasks, to share ideas, to get information, and to reinforce the knowledge acquired and the skills developed in other school subjects.

The multilateral and harmonic formation of the students requires that they know, at least, a foreign language as a means of extending their knowledge to the universal culture. English is an international language, it is spoken as an official or semiofficial language in more than 70 countries, it is the language used in the United Nations and internet and many important books are published in English. So; in Cuba, as in most of the schools all over the world, English is studied as a second or as a foreign language.

The focus of the teaching of English in Cuba must be on communicative competence, which is a high-level concept that implies the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons, or between one person and a written or oral text. The English Subject in the National System of Education responds to the political, economical, social and cultural importance of the languages. It helps the students take as a starting point the social phenomenon of language and the relation among thinking –language-culture. English has the aim of developing abilities, knowledge and

habits in a way that the students can communicate in the foreign language, understand oral and written information, speak about different topics, as well as, write brief and simple messages. To teach these goals and to influence on the improvement of habits and skills, the English teacher needs to know the psychological characteristics of the students and the procedures that must be used.

Since the late 1960s many authors have reported this problem; Johnson (1983) said that the problem is the result of the structural approach and this point is confirmed by A. N. Leontiev, who pointed out, long before, that there has been emphasis on forming linguistic habits but not on developing skills.

Attention has been focused on form rather than on psychological factors. It seems there has not been a strong conception about communication and teaching. In fact, the problem of teaching communication is closely related not only to Linguistics, but also to Psychology and Pedagogy. These three sciences lead to an integral approach in the teaching of communication.

As result of the interaction with the class, the oral quiz students have underwent, and the observations done by this researcher, it was possible to determine that students form 9th grade have the following:

Potentialities:

- The students show a great interest to the English subject.
- The students attend every day to the English lesson and they do the homework.
- Some of the students participate in the English lesson frequently

Difficulties:

- Students understanding is very limited.
- Their speech is poor and fragmental so the communication is difficult.
- They are unable to express orally in The English Language.
- They do not have a vast vocabulary to express themselves.

The current Cuban school, immerse in deep changes, have forced the pedagogical sciences to raid in the studies related to the directions of the teaching-learning process and to reach the purpose in which the learning of foreign languages have

a great impact; in Cuba, different investigations have been developed aiming to the searching of methods for teaching and learning that stimulate the cognitive activity, such as: Antich de Leon, R (1986); Acosta, R. (2003); Rodriguez, Geonel (2005); Martinez Luna, Nelson (2012) among others.

Several efforts have been done to develop the oral communication, as the main ability of the teaching-learning process of English in 9th grade, and still today have not been possible to reach suitable results, taking into account such contradictions the following scientific problem is proposed:

Scientific Problem:

How to improve the oral expression ability in the English language in 9th graders at Eliseo Reyes Junior High School?

From the scientific problem the following objective is derived:

Objective:

To evaluate the effectiveness didactic actions, to improve the oral expression ability in the English language in 9th graders, at Eliseo Reyes Junior High School

Scientific Questions:

- What are the theoretical and methodological foundations that support the improvement of oral expression ability in the English language in Junior High School?
- What is the current state of the oral expression ability in the English language in 9th graders at Eliseo Reyes Junior High School?
- What characteristics should the proposal have to improve the oral expression ability in 9th graders at Eliseo Reyes Junior High School?
- What effectiveness would the proposal have in the development of oral expression ability in 9th graders at Eliseo Reyes Junior High School?

Scientific Tasks:

- Theoretical methodological foundation that support the improvement of the oral expression ability in the English language in Junior High School.
- Diagnosis of the current state of the oral expression ability in 9th graders at Eliseo Reyes Junior High School.
- Design of the proposal to improve the oral expression ability in the English language in 9th graders at Eliseo Reyes Junior High School.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposal in the development of oral expression ability in 9th graders at Eliseo Reyes Junior High School

To carry out the research based on the materialist and dialectical different methods, other methods were used

From the Theoretical level:

- Historical and Logical analysis: It was used to deep into the oral expression ability in Cuba especially in Junior High Education.
- Analytical and Synthetical Method: It allows us to analyze the current state of 9th graders in the oral expression ability at Eliseo Reyes Junior High School.

From the empirical level:

- Scientific observation: Some lessons were observed to corroborate the use of didactic actions in the English lessons to develop the oral expression ability.
- Document analysis: to check the official documents from the teaching of English, such as the syllabus, the methodological guide lines, the work book.
- Pedagogical test: It allowed ensuring the reality of the oral expression ability development of 9th graders by a pre experiment.

Population:

For the realization of the mayor paper it was taken as population the 9th grade students from Eliseo Reyes Rodriguez Junior High School from Guayos which is composed by _100 ___ students.

As Sample it was selected in a non-probabilistic and intentional way, composed by the 31 students of group 1 of 9th grade which represents _31 ___per cent of the population. There are eight students with academic and behavior problems. Its intentionality is because this is the group the researcher works with.

Scientific newness:

The Scientific newness of the research is seen in the didactic actions provided, which are characterized by being creative, they place the students close to real life situations, varied in complexity and can be applied in different moments of the learning process. The activities given can be used in other learning context for their adaptability, doability, flexibility, efficiency and enjoyability.

Development

Foreign Language Teaching in Cuba is based on the theory of verbal activity and the essence of the verbal activity theory, is to consider speaking as an activity. The foreign language learning process, the acquisition of verbal actions and operations, go through the stages of: conscious activity, conscious control, automatized activity (practice) and the domain of spontaneous expression

Speaking ability in foreign language subject in the Cuban school:

Curriculum of English is being designed to contribute to reinforce the general curriculum of Junior High School and the formation of the revolutionary and responsible student in an active environment where the habits and the abilities are gradually formed by means of a process that includes not only the study and the practice, but also the creativeness, therefore, the solution of problems and the risks of learning are assumed in the foreign language.

Speaking, listening, reading and writing are integrated as a reflection of the principle which states that the dominion of an ability reinforces the progress in others.

The students must expose themselves to different and varied educative activities that are excellent, significant and authentic, to stimulate them and to challenge them to use the English language in real context.

The progress of the students is evaluated systematically by means of pair works, group works, monologues, in class papers, project works (oral, written or both) and evaluative homework in which they demonstrate their abilities in English by means of the accomplishment of the authentic communicative task with very well defined objectives. They have two partial tests in which they have two written questions and one oral, The Final Project Work is considered a conclusive activity by means of which the students demonstrate the level of dominion reached in the foreign language and the developed abilities of independent work.

Junior High School program in Cuba works, in a harmonic and integral way, the development of the four basic skills of the English language (comprehension, listening, oral expression and written and oral comprehension). This program also

includes the procedures to comprehend narrations and elemental texts which are represented by teachers in oral or written form.

Likewise the main orthographic rules, the basics elements to the formation of words that contribute to comprehend and to express better in the English language are studied and also the development of learning strategies that allow students to learn better is started and it propitiates the knowledge of general elements of Cuban and global culture, especially English speaking countries.

The methodological conception of the subject is the communicative approach composed by the basic principles of the practical-conscious method to the systematization of the contents that contribute to the development of communicative abilities and to the teaching of the English subject through other contents to propitiate the interdisciplinarity.

The term ability has been defined in different ways in the scientific literature, for the psychological and the pedagogical ones; it constitutes the domain of psychic and practical actions that allow a rational regulation of the activity, with the help of habits and knowledge people have prior to school.

The ability is a component of the activity that occupies an important role in the improvement of different student's task. It is considered that the students own abilities when they are able to grasp knowledge and operate with it. The ability has to be constructive; the student has to structure the steps to follow for the pedagogical actions to become in ability. The abilities have to be organized and must have qualities that allow the students to train themselves. Acosta, R. (2003:167).

Petrovsky, A. (1982:188) recognizes ability as: " the domain of a, psychic and practical systems of activities, necessary for the conscious regulation of the activity, of knowledge and habits".

Rosa Antich de león (1986:85) refers to Andrevskara-Levenstern who pointed out that

"ability, in the case of Foreign Language Teaching is the assimilation of the general structure of an action and procedures that can be applied to do similar activities. It means that abilities allow combining and modifying the

content previously assimilated. Abilities and habits are closely related and they must be developed together. Abilities improve with the improvement of habits and habits are developed with the improvement of abilities”

The author of this research assumes this concept of ability, because it is possible to see the component of languages abilities and it also helps in the understanding of the procedures to develop them.

In the Grijalbo Encyclopaedia Dictionary (1998:932) the term ability is defined as: “quality of capability, mastery and disposition to do something, what have been done this way, intrigue, confusion”.

To Mercedes López (2003: 1- 2) the ability:

“... constitutes a complex system of operations necessary for the regulation of the activity (...) it must be guaranteed that the students assimilate the elaboration forms, the mode of acting, the techniques to learn, the reasoning ways, in such a way that with the knowledge they attain the formation and improvement of the abilities”.

G. Neuner (1978:50) pointed out that:

“In a close relation with the facts, knowledge and experiences, new ways of elaboration, learning techniques and intellectual work must be assimilated and abilities and capacities must be formed. Only these make the knowledge useful, extend its field of application and make knowledge acquisition possible and easier”

It is very important to recognize that the improvement of abilities in the students is expressed in the objectives of education and it depends on the conditions created to attain this goal. A.V Usova (1984:35) stated that “ability is analyzed as the possibility and preparation of the subject to do one or another action according to the goals and conditions in which he has to act”

Abilities are acquired and developed by means of the practice in its different stages. Graciela Barraqué (1978:67), stated that the stages are:

-The explanation stage (the students are informed how to proceed for ability acquisition).

-Partial Practice Stage (the students practice the ability, do activities under the teacher's guidance)

-Independent practice of the ability as a whole (the use of the ability and the student's self-control). According to Talízina (1988:34) the process of control is very important in all stages and it must be systematic.

Abilities can be general or specific. The improvement of general abilities conducts to the formation of a theoretical thought (Dividov, 1986), that is to say, that they can operate within theoretical generalization, with concepts, laws, general principles, with the knowledge essence. If only specific abilities are developed, the type of thought that is formed is of the empirical level. On the contrary, the domain of general abilities oriented to the essence, allow the students to think theoretically, to determine the essence, to establish nexus and relations and to apply knowledge to a new situation.

The specific abilities of the English Subject are:

-Reading ability: It is very useful as a way of getting information and enjoying. Once the students have acquired the basic techniques they can continue developing this skill by their own. Reading skill is very easy to acquire and keep because the students only need to recognize the linguistic material and not its production. Besides that, they have the opportunity to look up in the dictionary the meaning of words or read again the part they did not understand well.

The application of writing ability in real life is limited and its practice takes a long time, so, it has an auxiliary or instrumental character, the students must develop abilities of spelling and some others necessary to be able to do grammatical or lexical exercises and checking comprehension.

Listening and speaking abilities: in real life the students do have the opportunity to practice the foreign language. Nevertheless, "the oral activity in class creates a proper atmosphere for the learning process and favors their active participation in the process. This activity helps the students to fix the grammatical patterns, the vocabulary and the pronunciation. It also prepares the students to read phrases and sentences they have already used in oral communication". (Antich de León, R, 1986:60)

All communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are important and they must be worked together, but speaking is the most important because communication is the main goal in Junior High School. Moreover, most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning how to speak.

Speaking is the act of communication between two or more persons in order to interchange messages in the oral way.

D. Byrne (1989:8) specifies that:

“Oral communication is a two way process between speakers and listeners and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding. The four skills are related” “... Both speaker and listener have a position function to perform. In simple terms the speaker has to encode the message he wishes to convey in appropriate language, while the listener (no less actively) has to decode (or interpret) the message”.

D. Byrne (1989:9) also expresses that:

“We have to devote a high proportion of class time to develop oral productive skills. However, understanding, or listening, simply cannot be left to take off itself... poor understanding often results in nervousness which will probably in turn further inhibit to speak”.

Oral communication is an activity involving two or more people. The participants are both listeners and speakers. They have to react to what they hear and make their contributions at high speed. Each participant has to be able to interpret what is said to him/her and reply with the language he/she has at his/her disposal. Besides that, each participant has an intention or a set of intentions. (These are goals they want to achieve in the interaction).

They also express themselves in utterances that are relevant, easily comprehensible to each other, and in an acceptable level of language accuracy. An oral practice activity should be relevant and immediately useful to the learners. The content should reflect the level of communicative competence and performance of the learners and the language sample on which the practice activity is based on, must be short enough, so that learners have little difficulties remembering it, but long enough to provide the necessary context for practicing.

It is important to have a clear understanding of what oral expression in a foreign language is, some authors focus on the transmission and comprehension of the ideas been expressed, but the concept is better seen by the interaction speaker-receiver stand point.

So, the oral expression ability in a foreign language is defined as the ability to transmit and comprehend meaningful messages in a coherent and fluent way in which there is a constant feedback, according to Rod Ellis, 2014:43.

Prior concept is assumed in this mayor paper for its relevance at pointing out different elements that ease up the way a teacher can develop this skill.

During the oral training the class must be centered on the students. The classroom discussion is dominated by a majority of talkative participants, having all a chance to talk and make contributions. Learners are eager to speak, because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it, or because they want to achieve a task objective.

The content should reflect the level of communicative competence and performance of the learners and the language sample on which the practice activity is based must be short enough, so, that learners have little difficulties remembering it, but long enough to provide the necessary context for practicing.

Possible difficulties during the oral training

- Inhibition: speaking activities require some degree of real- time exposure to an audience. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in foreign language in the classroom, worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism or simply shy because of the attention that their speech attracts.
- Nothing to say: even if they are not inhibited, you often hear learners complain that they cannot think of anything to say. They have no motive to express themselves beyond the guilty feeling that they should be speaking.
- Low or uneven: only one participant can talk at a time if he or she is to be heard, and in a large group this means that each one will have only very little talking time. This problem is compounded by the tendency of some learners to dominate while others speak very little or not at all.

- Mother- tongue use: in classes where all, or a number of the learners share the same mother- tongue, they may tend to use it because it is easier, because it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language, and because they feel less “exposed” if they are speaking their mother- tongue.

Suggestions to overcome the difficulties given above

- Use pair and group work. This increases the sheer amount of learners talk, going on in a limited period of time and also lowers the inhibitions of learners who are unwilling to speak in front of the full class. It is true that group work means the teacher cannot supervise all learner speech, so that not all utterances will be corrected, and learners may occasionally slip into their native language. Nevertheless, even taking into consideration occasional mistakes and mother- tongue use, the amount of time remaining for positive, useful oral practice is still likely to be far more than in the full- class set- up.
- Base the activity on easy language. In general, the level of language needed for a discussion should be lower than that used in intensive language- learning activities in the same class. It should be easily recalled and produced by the participants, so that they can speak fluently with the minimum of hesitation. It is a good idea to teach or review essential vocabulary before the activity starts.
- Make a careful choice of topic and task to stimulate interest. On the whole; they clearer the purpose of the interaction is, more motivated participants will be.
- Give some instructions or training in interaction skill. If the task is based on group discussion then, include instructions about participation when introducing it. For example, tell learners to make sure that everyone in the group contributes to the discussion; appoint a chair person to each group who will regulate participation.
- Keep students speaking the target language: you might appoint one of the groups as monitor, who is responsible for reminding participants to use the

target language and perhaps reporting later to the teacher how well the group manages to keep during the activity. Even, if there is no actual penalty attached, the very awareness that someone is monitoring such lapses helps participants to be more careful. However, the best way to keep students speaking the target language is simply to be there yourself as much as possible, reminding them and modelling the language they use and monitoring the activity or echo repeating.

Recommendations for working with the ability:

- First of all, it is very important to make a diagnosis to get a real vision of the problem and the stage in which the problem is.
- To study the subject syllabus deeply and determine exactly the abilities you want to improve taking into account the year and the grade.
- To determine exactly which is going to be the first one, it is not convenient to work with all of them at the same time.

To build up ability it is necessary to take into account three stages:

- Stage of acquisition of the acting: the student is informed how to proceed for ability acquisition.
- Stage of way of acting.
- Practice stage guarantees the ability achievement; it should vary and should be systematically.

Learning how to speak requires much practice in the forms of the new language: the sound, the lexical items, the morphological and syntactical patterns, and the sentence types. At this level of activity, the aim of the teacher is to establish language habits by well- designed practice, so that at a more advanced stage the students can concentrate on what they want to say and not on the mechanical aspects of how to say it acceptably in the foreign language.

Characteristics of a successful speaking ability:

- Learners talk a lot and teachers talk a little. This may seem obvious, but often most of the time is taken up with the teacher talks or pauses.

Even when the teachers are fully aware of the need for oral practice, sometimes what is done in the classroom does not really reflect the teachers' awareness. As

the students get security and develop the oral ability, the ratio between teacher and students in the activity should change gradually, until the teacher speaks 20% of the time and the students 80%.

- Participation even in classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participants, all get a chance to speak and contributions are fairly distributed.
- Motivation is high and learners are eager to speak because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it or because they want to contribute to achieve a task objective.
- Language is on an acceptable level and learners express themselves in utterances that are easily comprehensible to each other and of an acceptable level of language accuracy.

A good pronunciation is important, because it conveys meaning and it makes the speakers comprehensible to their listeners. The elementary level is the time to focus on pronunciation. The greatest attention must be given to pronunciation since the very beginning because when students develop a good pronunciation from the time they start learning the language, every sentence they say throughout the course will help fix the habit. By the other hand, if they develop a faulty pronunciation, correcting it is very difficult and time consuming. Therefore, students must be guided first into the acquisition of the sound system.

In order to fix the correct listening and speaking habits, the students should not begin to work on the written forms of the language until they have acquired the sound system, that is, until they can really perceive the foreign language sounds and understand the meanings they convey- within the limited language contents of the beginning level- and they can reproduce them in such a way that they can be understood.

In English it is particularly important to wait until the students have formed good hearing and speaking habits before they begin to read and write because of the wide difference between skills.

In and of themselves, the practices of learning words and breaking down and analyzing components do not lead to language production nor do they lead to

proficiency. While grammar and vocabulary are essential parts of language, they are only enablers which allow students to communicate. Students learn a second language more easily if they engage in meaningful activities requiring the use of the language and its components. For example, conjugation verbs is useless in itself, but correct verb forms become essential within the context of narrating one's daily activities.

It is equally important to use caution in correcting students' errors. Systematic grammatical correction of errors does not improve the learners' language abilities. On the contrary it may hinder their motivation to use the language by placing emphasis on the form rather than the message. More effective feedback includes rephrasing and expanding on what the students have expressed.

Contrary to popular belief, learning a language is a lengthy and arduous process even for children. Teachers or parents should not expect instant, miraculous results from students who are learning another language. To become proficient in another language, students must progress through various overlapping stages spanning several years:

- Pre- Production/ Comprehension Stage: Students communicate with gestures and actions. They build receptive vocabulary and refine their listening skills. During this phase, called the "silent period," students try to make sense of what they hear, but they do not engage in language production. Even though they do not speak, language acquisition has begun.
- Early Production Stage: Students speak and / or write using yes/no answers, one or two words, lists of words, or short phrases. They continue to expand their receptive vocabulary.
- Speech Emergences Stage: Students' speech production improves in both quantity and quality. Students speak and / or write in longer phrases and complete sentences and they use a wide range of vocabulary.
- Intermediate Fluency Stage: students speak and write in connected and unified paragraphs about most situations.

There are some affective means of helping the students. One way is to see what can be done to increase the intensity of oral practice. In most of our classroom, students sit in rows, facing the teacher, the best way to achieve a better communication is sitting them in U form.

The main aims of oral practice are to practice the pronunciation of all the elements of the sound system in context, to develop linguistic memory and to acquire the forms of the language.

The elements of the sound system are acquired orally in closed relationship with listening. The teacher's attention should be concentrated first on the prosodic elements, because rhythm, intonation and stress facilitate the correct pronunciation of many items such as: obscured vowels, final sounds, etc.

After the melody of an utterance is properly reproduced, attention should be focused on the phonemic elements, that is, on the correct production of those distinctive sounds within the utterance which were not aided by producing the right intonation, rhythm and stress.

Besides, adolescents still retain parts of the power of imitation you can make good use of this in oral practice. Creating a pleasant atmosphere for the drills, encouraging the students for good performance, helping the weaker students and taking advantages of the motivation the students feel at the novelty of being able to express themselves in a foreign language you can help them to acquire a positive attitude towards pronunciation.

The second objective of oral practice is to develop the skill of retaining the utterances; first, immediate retention of short items; later, on longer utterances; and finally, recall of items and utterances after some time has elapsed. This requires the students' effort. The teacher should explain to them how memory can be developed and the important role it plays in learning a foreign language, in order to assure their conscious participation in the drills.

Finally, the last objective of oral practice is to establish habits of using the morphological and syntactical patterns, the lexical items and sentences types of the language, so, that they can eventually speak with some facility.

As with first language acquisition, students follow the same process for language improvement, but they learn a second language at different rates and in different ways. Therefore, a good teacher will include a variety of instructional activities ranging from demonstrations, group and pair work, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, individualized instruction, and other strategies which take into account the variety of experiences of second language learners.

CHAPTER II: DIAGNOSIS OF THE INITIAL STAGE, PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL AND EVALUATION ON ITS EFFECTIVENESS.

In the following chapter the researcher presents the diagnosis of the initial stage using a pedagogical test (interview and pair work), in this chapter the researcher also expose the proposal activities, those are activities that follow the main principles of the communicative approach because it is the methodological conception of the subject in our national system of education and finally the researcher evaluate the effectiveness of its proposal.

- An observation guide was done to observe different lesson in order to check what students know related to the oral expression and the results shows that in most of the cases the students do not play an important role during the English lessons because they always do exercises that lead to answer teacher's questions in class so the students do not have leadership in the lessons and to develop the oral expression ability students need to talk by means of dialogues and monologs that helps them to increase its vocabulary.
- To determine the place given to the oral practice of the English language, a document analysis was done and on it is clearly shown that the oral expression ability in not really taken into account in the workbook and the exercises propose do not develop communicative abilities in the students of ninth grade.

INITIAL STAGE

To know the current stage of the problem it was necessary to make a diagnosis. For this, the sample chosen was formed by 31 students from 9th grade Eliseo Reyes Junior High School.

The task was to characterize speaking ability. The pedagogical test given was based on:

- Pedagogical test (annex 3)
- Pair work (annex 4)

The indicators to know the improvement of oral expression ability in the sample chosen were:

- Fluency, which considers three levels: low level, those students who halt too much while speaking, mid-level, those students who can speak with a relatively use of the language connecting words and phrases and do not hesitate too much, and high level those students who can make a fluent conversation about the given topics without hesitation or halting in such a way that the conversation can be interrupted.
- Coherence, which considers three levels, low level those students who change ideas that are not interrelated among them, mid- level those students that make changes in the ideas but do not totally correspond with the previous one, high level those students who can refer to different ideas on a talk keeping the essence of it.
- Vocabulary, which considers three levels: low level, those students who do not have enough vocabulary to talk about different topics and needs the teacher's help, mid-level, those students who have a good vocabulary but sometimes hesitate and high level, those students who have vocabulary enough to talk about different topics in a fluent way.

Here are the initial results of the diagnosis:

- Fluency:

In the first test (annex 3), 10 students out of 31 low level that is a 32,2%; 16 students were qualified as mid- level that is a 51,6% and 5 students high level this is a 16,1%.

In the second test (annex 4), 18 students out of 31 low level that is a 58%; 9 students were mid-level to show a 29% and 4 students high level to show a 12,9%.

- Coherence:

In the first test (annex 3), 15 out of 31 students low level that is a 48,3%; 11 students were qualified as mid- level that is a 35,5% and 5 students high level this is a 16,1%.

In the second test (annex 4), 18 students out of 31 low level that is a 58%; 8 students were qualified as mid-level 2 to show a 25,8% and 5 students high level to show a 16,1%.

- Vocabulary:

In the first test (annex 3), 14 out of 31 students low level to show a 45,1%, 12 students were qualified as mid-level that is a 38,7% and 5 students high level to show a 16.1%.

In the second test (annex 4), 15 out of 31 students low level that is a 48,3%, 10 mid-level students to show a 32,2% and 6 students were qualified as high level that is a 19,3%.

ACTIONS

The didactic actions propose in this research work are activities that follow the principles of the communicative approach.

The communicative approach is supported on the following principles.

1. Know what you are doing.
2. The whole is more than the sum of the parts.
3. The processes are as important as the forms.
4. To learn it, do it.
5. Mistakes are not always mistakes.

Action: Leontiev, (1981) is defined as a subordinated subject to a representation of the result to reach, goal or objective consciously proposed.

Didactic action: Sensevy, Gerard. (2009) is what people do in institutional places in which a teaching-learning process takes place. Whole action, organically cooperative, produce in general during the course of their lives who allows them the performance and the regulation of its communicative activity.

The author of this mayor paper assumes didactic action as the action makes with sense, guide towards a goal, where the teaching-learning process takes place.

Activity 1

Topic: A Trip around....

Objective: To express orally about a trip the students want to make using the communicative functions given in class.

Moment: Unit 2: Travel time.

Type of lesson: Semi-controlled practice lesson.

Time: 25 minutes

- Procedure: The teacher should ask the students to talk about a place they would like to visit some day in order to answer the following questions.
 1. What country or city would you like to visit?
 2. What language is spoken there?
 3. What is its nationality?
 4. What the capital city of this country?
 5. What are the most important places in this country or city?
- After that the teacher gives the students a card with the following communicative situation:
- Imagine a friend of your is going to visit the country or city you visited. Give him or her all the information you think she or he will need.
- The students are going to work in pairs to answer the communicative situation stated above

Evaluation: High Level: Students who answer correctly all the communicative functions, using the vocabulary studied and have an acceptable pronunciation.

Middle Level: Students who answer correctly most of the communicative functions, using the vocabulary studied and have some problems in pronunciation.

Low Level: Students who answer correctly a few communicative functions, using some vocabulary studied and need the teacher's help.

Activity 2

Topic: Important personalities.

Objective: To express orally functions and notions regarding personal information (age, language, occupation) and describing people (physical appearance and personality traits).

Type of lesson: Semi-controlled practice lesson

Moment: Unit 7: Important personalities

Time: 25 minutes

- The class is going to be divided into teams of six students (5 teams). Each team will bring a picture of a famous person (actor, actress, singer, sport man or sport woman, dancer, painter, president, etc.) and the rest of the teams will guess who is by asking questions:

Team # 1: Silvio Rodriguez

We are talking about a man.

Team # 2: How old is he?

Team # 1: he is 65 years old.

Team # 3: What's her occupation?

Team # 1: he is a singer.

Team # 4: Where is he from?

Team # 1: he is from Cuba.

Team # 5: What does he look- like?

Team # 1: he is old, thin, tall...

- After the students finish the exercise each of them are going to make a monolog in which they will describe his/her favorite actor, sportsman, president, dancer, painter, etc.
- Evaluation: The teacher will evaluate the students orally by means of questions related to the topic study in class.

Activity 3

Topic: "Sentence Building Game".

Objective: To express orally the communicative functions regarding simple present.

Moment: Unit 1: Summer Vacations.

Type of lesson: Free practice lesson.

Time: 30 minutes.

(It is very easy game and it reinforces pronunciation and the use of s or es when talking in 3rd person singular).

- A student says a sentence in simple present with any verb they have studied in class. Then, another student says the sentence his/her partner said and creates a new one. The next student repeats the same procedure. If they forget a sentence they are punished and the game starts again.
- EX.

St A: I watch T.V.

St B: She/he watches T.V., I play football.

St C: She/he watches T.V., She/he plays football and I cook.

St D: She/he watches T.V., She/he plays football, she/he cooks and I walk.

- After the game finished the students will talk about what they do on summer vacation and the teacher will correct the main mistakes providing feedbacks and make the students realize the importance of spending time doing healthy activities.

- Evaluation: By means of questions about the communicative functions study in class related to summer vacations.

Activity 4

Topic: My future

Objective: To express orally communicative functions regarding to future plans.

Moment: Unit 10: All-in- All

Type of lesson: Semi-controlled practice lesson

Time: 25 minutes.

- Procedure: In pairs, the students copy the table and fill it in for your partner by asking him/her questions about future plans.

EX: Where will you be working in ten years´ time?

My life	In 1 years´ time	In 10 years´ time	In 20 years ´time
Study			
Job			
Family			
Housing			

- During the exercise the teacher will walk around the class checking the exercise and helping those students who have some problems to do the exercise.
- After the students finished the exercise, the teacher correct the main mistakes providing feedback.

Evaluation: High Level: Students who answer correctly the communicative functions, using the vocabulary studied and have an acceptable pronunciation.

Middle Level: Students who answer correctly most of the communicative functions, using the vocabulary studied and have some problems in pronunciation.

Low Level: Students who answer correctly a few communicative functions, using some vocabulary studied and need the teacher's help.

Activity 5

Topic: Describing places in my country.

Objective: To express orally about places in your country using the communicative functions study in class.

Moment: Unit 2: Travel time.

Type of lesson: Free practice lesson

Time: 20 Minutes.

- Procedure: The teacher will name a Cuban province beginning with any letter of the alphabet and one student will say the name of the province and will describe an important place of it, then this student will say a letter and other student will do the same (say the name of the province and describe an important place) and so on.
- After finishing the exercise all the students will describe his/her favorite place in Cuba using the communicative functions studied.

Evaluation: High Level: Students who use correctly the communicative functions, the vocabulary studied and have an acceptable pronunciation.

Middle Level: Students who use correctly most of the communicative functions, the vocabulary studied and have some problems in pronunciation.

Low Level: Students who use correctly a few communicative functions, using some vocabulary studied and need the teacher's help.

Activity 6

Topic: Talking about Cuban culture.

Objective: The students should be able to express orally about Cuban culture and history. Describing places.

Moment: Unit 9: A trip around the country.

Type of lesson: Free practice lesson.

Time: 25 Minutes.

- The teacher is going to divided the class in small groups and then each student is going to ask each other about what they know about Cuba related to:
 1. What is the national sport in Cuba?
 2. What is the national music in Cuba?
 3. What is the national drink in Cuba?
 4. What national monuments do you know? Mention 3 of them.
- After that the teacher will write on board the name of some of the most important and beautiful places in Cuba and the students will select what they want and will describe it.
- EX: Varadero, Santiago de Cuba, La Habana, Viñales, Holguín, Trinidad, Santa Clara and Bayamo.
- Conclusions: the teacher concludes the lesson asking questions about Cuban history and culture.

EX: What is the most beautiful beach in Cuba?

What city is called the Flag City? Why?

In what city takes place the Romerías de Mayo Festival?

- Evaluation: High Level: Students who use correctly the communicative functions, the vocabulary studied and have an acceptable pronunciation.

Middle Level: Students who use correctly most of the communicative functions, the vocabulary studied and have some problems in pronunciation.

Low Level: Students who use correctly a few communicative functions, using some vocabulary studied and need the teacher's help.

Activity 7

Topic: What do you in your free time?

Objective: The students should be able to express orally about likes, dislikes and preferences using simple texts.

Moment: Unit 4: Hobbies

Type of lesson: Semi-controlled practice lesson.

Time: 25 minutes.

- The teacher is going to arrange the students so that they are sitting/standing in a circle. Stand in the middle, ask each of the following questions to individual students at random, after they answer it, tell them to repeat the questions to the next student, they should continue the chain so the questions progresses around the class.

1. What do you like to do in your free time?
2. Do you like sports?
3. What kind of sports do you like/dislike?
4. What do you dislike to do?
5. What do you do on weekends?
6. What do you do on Saturday afternoons?

- After that the students are going to work in pairs. They are going to establish a conversation with their partners about the activities they do in their free time and then they will report the information to the rest of the class and to the teacher.

- Evaluation: High Level: students who ask and answer questions about the activities they do in their free time and report activities another person does. Middle level: students who ask and answer questions about activities they do in their free time and report at least an activity another person does: Low level: students who only ask and answer question about the activity they do they do in their free time.

Activity 8

Topic: "What does she/he do?" (Mimic).

Objective: To express orally communicative functions regarding simple present.

Moment: Unit 1: Summer Vacations.

Type of lesson: Semi-controlled practice lesson

Time: 20 minutes

- The group is going to be divided into two teams and they are going to be named with letters, animals, numbers, nationalities, countries, etc., such as: Cuban and Brazilian. A student from the Cuban team goes to the front and performs an action. The rest of the team say: What does she/he do? A student from the Brazilian team raises her/his hand and answers the questions and make a sentence. (They can use simple present time expressions).

E.g.

Cuban team: a girl sings a beautiful song.

Everybody: What does she do?

Brazilian team: St A: She sings/ she sings very well.

Cuban team: a boy dances in front of the class.

Everybody: What does he do?

Brazilian team: St B: He dances/He dances at the party every night.

Cuban team: a girl writes on the blackboard.

Everybody: What does she do?

Brazilian team: St C: She writes/She writes a letter to a friend.

Activity 9

Topic:

Objective: To express orally communicative functions regarding to the environment.

Moment: Unit 8: The environment.

Type of lesson: Semi-controlled practice lesson

Time: 25 minutes

- Procedures: The teacher is going to begin the activity with a brain storming with the phrase environment to remind the students the communicative function they are going to use in the pair work.
- After that the students are going to act out the following dialogue:

A: What´s your favorite animal?

B: My favorite animal is the dolphin.

A: Is it endangered?

B: Yes, it is.

A: What should men do to protect them?

B: They should not put them in captivity.

- Then each students is going to name an animal she/he know is endangered and what people should do to protect its animal.
- Conclusions: the teacher will correct the main mistakes providing feedback and making students realize in the importance to carry animals.
- Evaluation: High Level: Students who use correctly the communicative functions and have an acceptable pronunciation.

Middle Level: Students who use correctly most of the communicative functions and have some problems in pronunciation.

Low Level: Students who use correctly a few communicative functions and need the teacher's help.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE FINAL STAGE

The different planned criteria were taken into consideration to the accomplishment of this work; it was applied exercises that were carried out during the present course. The objective was directed to the improvement of speaking ability in 9th grade.

To corroborate the accomplishment of this work it was decided to apply a final pedagogical test:

- Pedagogical test (annex 5)
- Pair work (annex 6)

In which the following results were:

- Fluency

In the first test (annex 5), 4 students out of 31 low level that is a 12.9%; 14 students were qualified as mid-level that is a 45.1% and 13 students high level this is a 41.9%.

In the second test (annex 6), 3 students out of 31 low level that is a 9.6%; 12 students mid-level to show a 38.7% and 16 students high level to show a 51.6%.

- Coherence:

In the first test (annex 5), 4 out of 31 students low level that is a 12.9%; 10 students were qualified as mid-level that is a 32.2% and 17 students high level this is a 54.8%.

In the second test (annex 6), 5 students out of 31 low level that is a 16.1%; 11 students were qualified as mid-level to show a 35.4% and 15 students high level to show a 48.3%.

- Vocabulary:

In the first test (annex 5), 5 students out of 31 low level to show a 16, 1%, 10 mid-level students that is a 32, 2% and 16 high level students to show a 51, 6%.

In the second test (annex 6), 6 low level students that is a 19,3%, 11 students were qualified as mid-level to show a 35,4% and 14 high level students that is a 45,2%

COMPARISON OF THE INDICATORS FROM THE INITIAL STAGE TO THE FINAL STAGE

- Fluency:

At the initial stage, in the first pedagogical test (annex 3), 5 students out of 31 high level to show a 16.1% and in the final stage, second pedagogical test (annex 5) 13 succeeded what represent a 41.9%.

- Coherence:

At the initial stage, in the first pedagogical test (annex 3), 5 students out of 31 high level to show a 16.1% and in the final stage, second pedagogical test (annex 5), 17 succeeded what represent a 54.8%.

- Vocabulary:

At the initial stage, in the first pedagogical test (annex 3), 5 students out of 31 high level that is a 16,1% and in the final stage, second pedagogical test (annex 5), 16 high level students to show a 51,6%

- Fluency:

At the initial stage, in the first pair work (annex 4), 4 students out of 31 high level to show a 12.9% and in the final stage, second pair work (annex 6), 16 succeeded what represent a 51.6%.

- Coherence:

At the initial stage, in the first pair work (annex 4), 5 students out of 31 high level to show a 16.1% and in the final stage, second pair work (annex 6), 15 succeeded what represent a 48.3%.

- Vocabulary:

At the initial stage, in the first pair work (annex 4), 6 students out of 31 high level to show a 19, 3% and in the final stage, second pair work (annex 6), 14 high level students that is a 45, 2%.

Conclusions

Through the theoretical and methodological systematization of the main trends that support the improvement of the oral expression ability in the English language can be stated that although all the authors refer to it in general terms, just a few take into consideration the environment in which the students interact.

The initial pedagogical test showed that there are many difficulties in the improvement of the oral expression ability in the students selected among them can be mentioned: They are unable to express orally in The English Language. They do not have a vast vocabulary to express themselves. It also permitted to state that the methodological guide lines and the syllabus design do not make a deep explanation of how to work with this ability in the level.

The didactic actions are characterized by being creative; they place the students close to real life situations, varied in complexity and can be applied in different moments of the learning process. The activities given can be used in other learning contexts for their adaptability, doability, flexibility, efficiency and enjoyability.

During the validation process it could be proved the effectiveness of the proposal by analyzing the results obtained in the instruments applied because a bettering in fluency, coherence and vocabulary was attained when students express orally in the English language.

Recommendations

It is recommended the socialization of the paper work in different forums and scientific events.

It is also recommended to make further studies on the topic that may contribute to a better understanding of the problem and lead to the identification of new solutions of it.

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Annex 1

Observation guide:

Objective: To observe different lessons in order to check what the 9th grade students know related to the oral expression.

Questions	Always	Never	sometimes
The workbook is used in oral activities			X
Kind of exercises students do: Answer the teacher's questions.	X		
Dialogs.		X	
Monologs.		X	
The oral activities lead to: Recognize and imitate.			X
Reproduce mistakes.		X	
Produce dialogues.		X	
Produce monologs.		X	
Students do oral exercises oriented in the book			X
Students do oral exercises oriented by the teacher			X

Annex 2

Document Analysis:

There was made an exhaustive analysis of the workbook to determine the place given to the oral practice of the English language.

It is clearly shown that the speaking ability is not highly taken into account in the workbook and the exercises proposed do not develop communicative abilities in the students of ninth grade.

In ninth grade the students should accomplish some topics like the family, future plans, stories, memories and experiences.

Grammar aspects like present, present continuous, past, past continuous and future activities, the use of the verb to be, the article a/an, the use of regular and irregular verbs, comparatives and modal verbs among others.

Communicative functions like giving advice and instructions and the necessary ones to express the topics stated before.

Annex # 3

- Pedagogical test (individual)

Personal information:

- What's your name?
- How old are you?
- How do you feel?
- Where do you live? / What's your address?
- Do you have telephone? / What's its number?
- What's your nationality?
- Where are you from?
- What's your house like?
- What's your favorite room? Describe it.
- What's your mother's / father's / brother's name?
- What's his or her occupation?
- Where does he or she works?

Annex # 4

- Pair work.

E.g. 1)

St A: It is your first day at school and you are new at the neighborhood. Try to make a new friend.

St B: It is the first day at school. You are a 9th grade student and you have many friends. Someone starts a conversation. Try to be polite.

E.g. 2)

St A: You are having snack at a restaurant and you see an old friend that you haven't seen since you were in Primary school. You are very happy to see him or her.

St B: Suddenly, you see of your best friend during the time you were in Secondary school. Start the conversation.

Annex # 5

- Pedagogical test (Individual)

_ Personal information:

E.g.

- What's your full name?
- Do you have a nick name?
- How do you spell your last name?
- Do you have telephone?
- What's your telephone number?
- Where do you live? / What's your address?
- Who do you live with?
- Who is your favorite family member? Describe him or her.
- What's your house like? Describe it.
- Who do you consider your best friend at school? Why?
- What does she or he like?
- What do you like doing in your free time? What do you usually do?
- What did you do last vacation?
- What are your future plans? What are you going to do in a future? What would you like to do?

Annex # 6

- Pair work.

E.g.

St A: You are walking on the street of Santiago de Cuba and you see an old friend that you haven't seen since you were in Secondary school. Ask about his or her life and talk about Santiago de Cuba.

St B: Suddenly, you see one of your best friends during the time you were in Secondary school. Start the conversation about the Heroic City.

E.g.

St A: You are at the museum waiting for a friend. You are bored, start a conversation with the person that is looking at a picture. Give your opinion about the painting and ask about the painter.

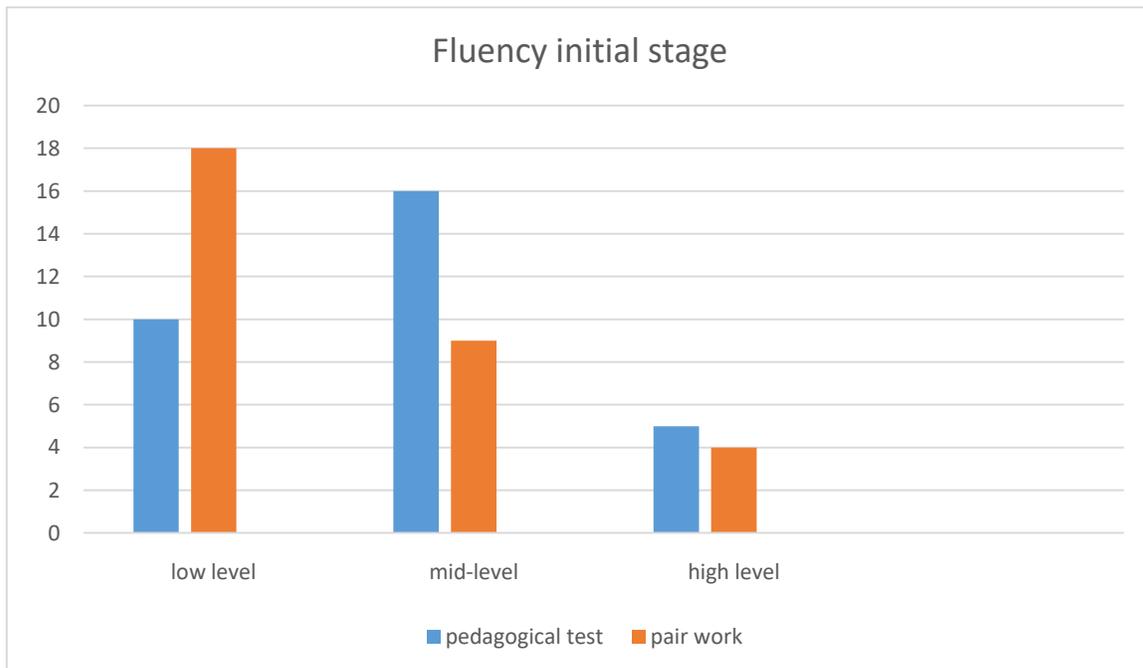
St B: You are looking at a famous painting and someone starts a conversation about the picture and you have a lot of information about the painter. You are very talkative.

Results of the initial stage :(annex 7, 8 and 9)

Annex 7

Fluency.

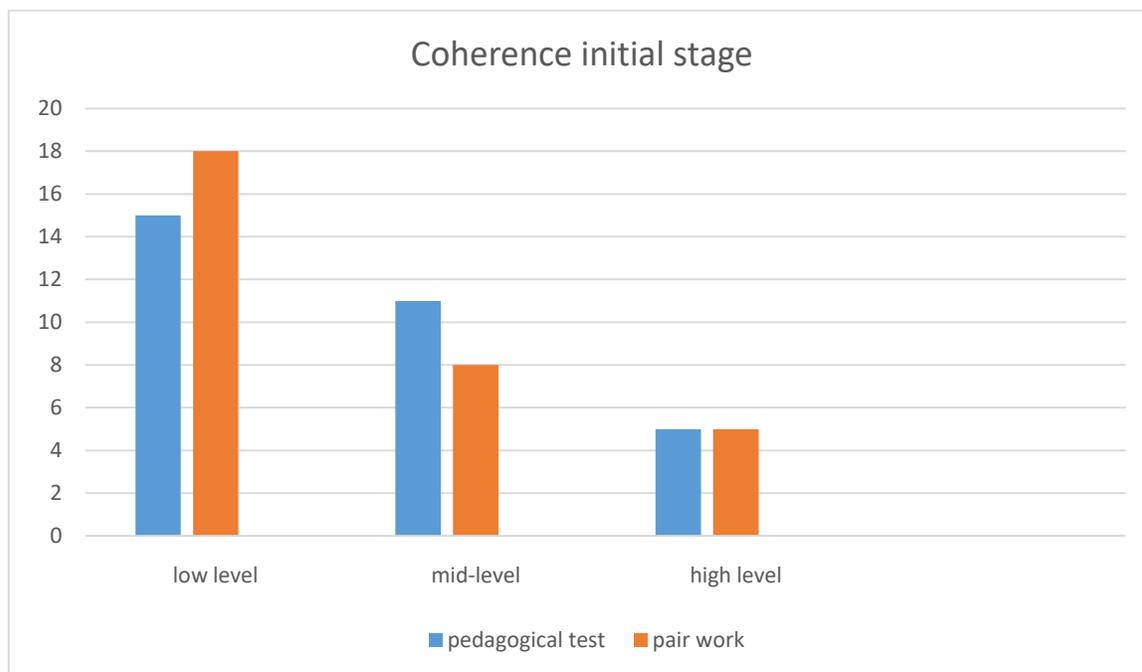
Activity	S	L1	%	L2	%	L3	%
1	31	10	32,2	16	51,6	5	16,1
2	31	18	58	9	29	4	12,9



Annex 8

Coherence.

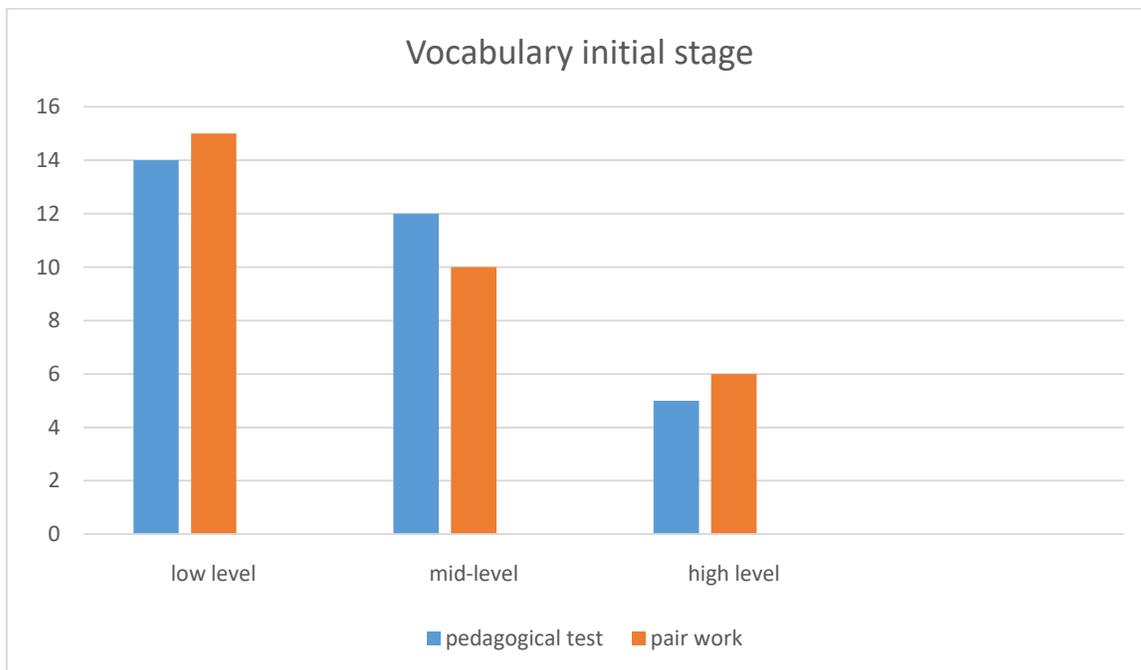
Activity	S	L1	%	L 2	%	L3	%
1	31	15	48,3	11	35,5	5	16,1
2	31	18	58	8	25,8	5	16,1



Annex 9

Vocabulary

Activity	s	L 1	%	L2	%	L3	%
1	31	14	45,1	12	38,7	5	16,1
2	31	15	48,3	10	32,2	6	19,3

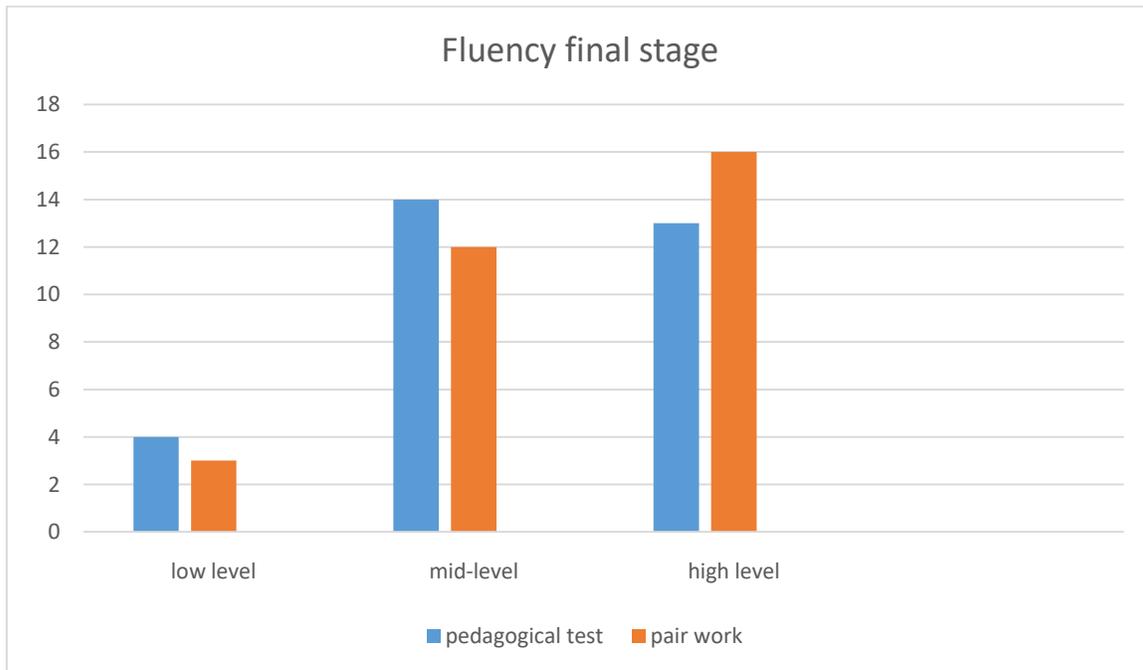


Results of the final stage: (annex10, 11 and 12)

Annex 10

Fluency.

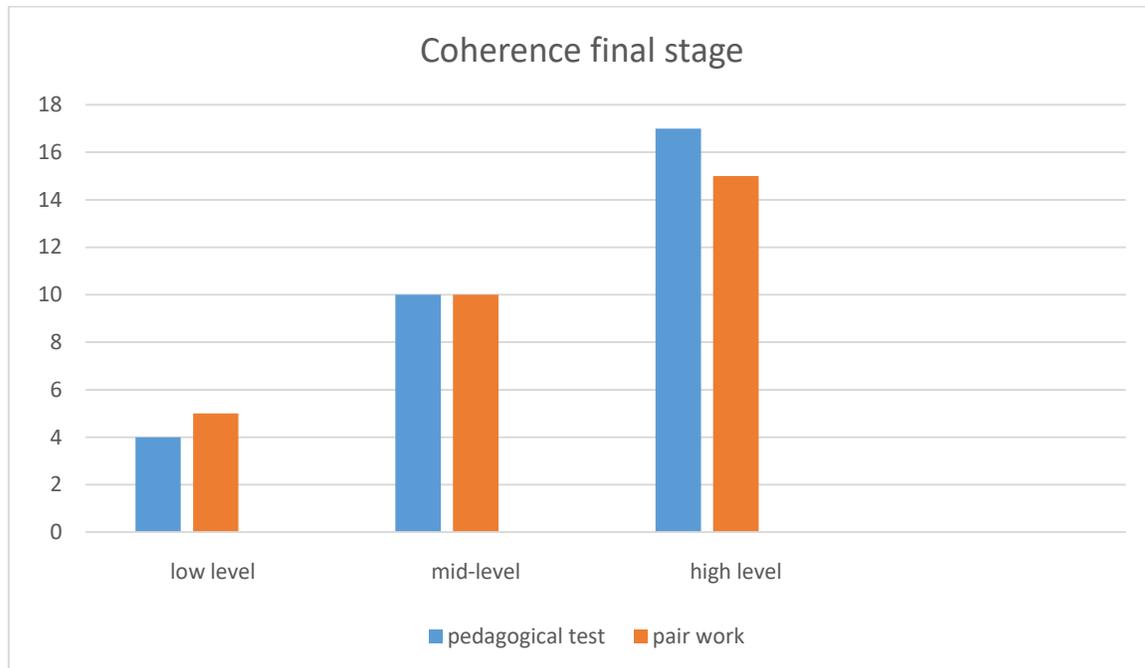
Activity	s	L 1	%	L2	%	L3	%
1	31	4	12.9	14	45.1	13	41.9
2	31	3	9.6	12	38.7	16	51.6



Annex 11

Coherence.

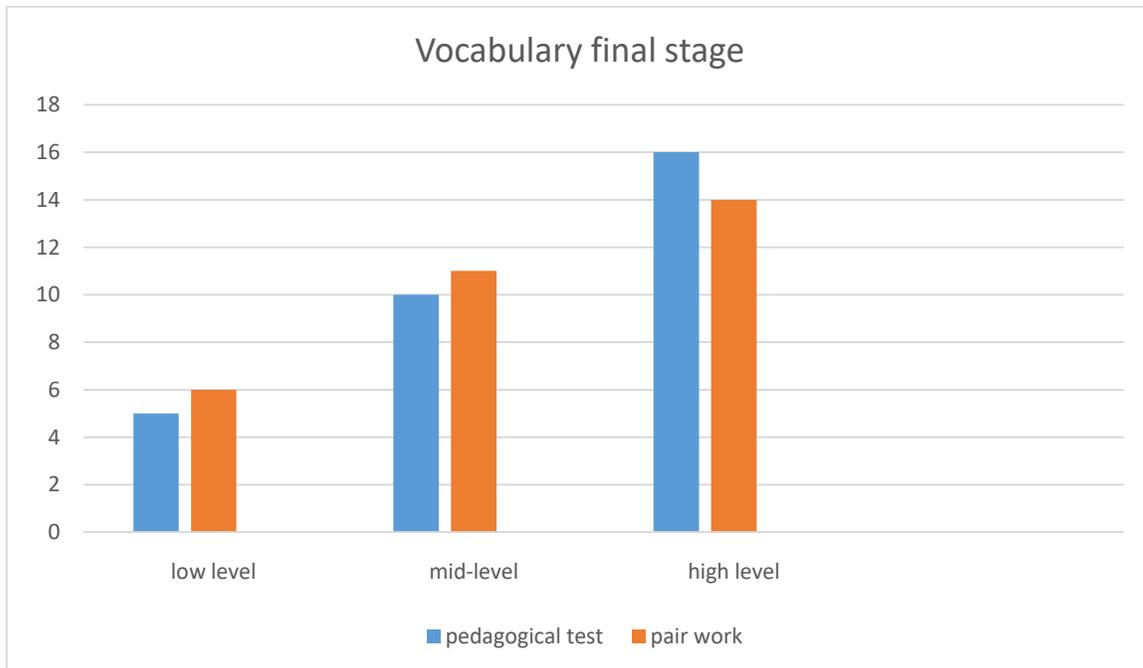
Activity	S	L1	%	L2	%	L3	%
1	31	4	12.9	10	32.2	17	54,8
2	31	5	16.1	10	32.2	15	48.3



Annex 12

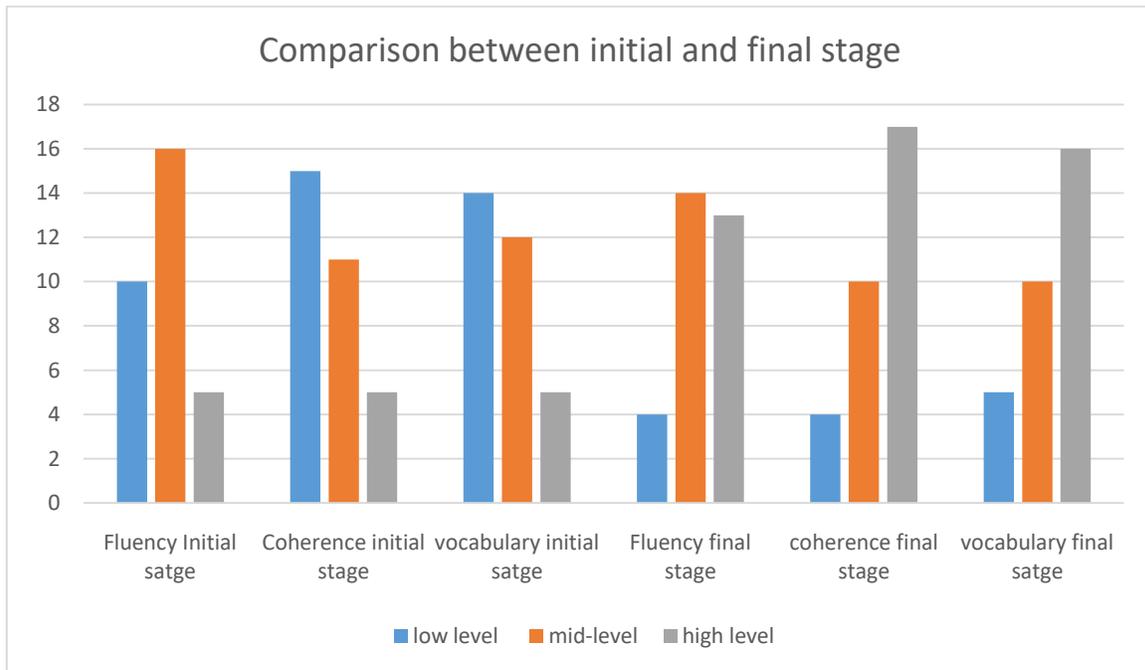
Vocabulary

Activity	s	L 1	%	L2	%	L3	%
1	31	5	16,1	10	32,2	16	51,6
2	31	6	19,3	11	35,4	14	45,1



Annex 13

COMPARISON OF THE RESULTS OF THE INITIAL STAGE AND FINAL STAGE



High level students in initial and final stage

