

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES USED IN THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO IMPROVE
THE SPEAKING SKILLS AT THE LANGUAGE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
NARIÑO

by

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Resumen

Este estudio comparativo intenta identificar cuáles son las actividades orales usadas en el método comunicativo donde el estudiante produce nuevas expresiones, oraciones, frases, textos ideas que sacan provecho al uso de sus conocimientos del idioma, las actividades donde el estudiante logra decir lo que quiere expresar, y fáciles de usar, de acuerdo a la percepción de los profesores y estudiantes de los distintos niveles del Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad de Nariño. Este estudio incluye un análisis de información recolectada a través de encuestas que fueron respondidas por las personas objeto del estudio, y al final se dan una sugerencias de tal forma que se puedan utilizar en la creación, o el desarrollo de un plan de estudios.

Abstract

This comparative study tries to identify which oral activities used in the communicative approach in the learning process help the students produce new expressions, sentences, phrases, texts or ideas. Activities in the communicative approach should provide the students opportunities to say what they want to express, should be useful, easy to use or to implement, and should facilitate the communication process that is developed in the foreign language classrooms in the Language Center at the University of Nariño. This study includes an analysis of data collected through surveys that were answered by the sample participating in the research process this surveys were tabulated and some conclusion and suggestions were provided to be taken into account in the development of a curriculum.

Introduction

In the following paragraphs, the introduction of the study is developed considering the relation among The Communicative Approach, the Ministry of Education requirements, the Fahmi Nurhakim work, and the Language Center of the University of Nariño.

One of the most important aspects in the Communicative Language Teaching Approach is the communicative competence, the ability of speaking and how it is carried in a conversation in a foreign or second language (Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, 1987).

As part of the communicative competence, The Ministry of Education in covenant with the British Counsel in its bilingualism program and the Curricular Regulations formulated a series of requirements. The Program expressed the inclusion of the *creativity*, as a contribution to foreign language learning process, the search for *effectiveness* to draw any linguistic obstacle with the purpose to achieve the communication, and the *practicality*, a reflection of the procedures in the learning process.

Regarding these three conditions, This paper aims to find through a study, activities that because of their *practicality*, suitability and application, help teachers and students to develop the speaking skill in the English classes at the Language Center; also, this paper is concerned with how *creative* these activities are in terms of stimuli in the ways of expression. Finally, the effectiveness, the

interaction, that these activities promote in the development of speaking skill in the classroom in order to become communicatively competent in a foreign language.

Different skills are involved in the communicative competence. Skills as the management of interaction, skills in the negotiation of meaning, conversational listening skills, the use of appropriate conversational fillers, etc; (McCarthy and Carter, 1997).

The development of the interaction skills through the communicative approach was tested in 2009. Fahmi Nurhakim in his work "*Teaching Speaking by using Communicative Approach*", concluded that:

"using communicative approach contributes to improving the students speaking skills, make English lesson lively, helps the students' feedback and makes the speaking practice more effective (Nurhakim, 2009).

Eight activities that Fahmi Nurhakim tested in his work and two more activities which have made part of the communicative language teaching review literature are put into consideration for the analysis and development of this work.

To develop these interaction skills, it is important that learners have contact with the foreign language, in order to increase the attention and courage to deal with typical oral interactions. Therefore, conversation practice assumes a great value and challenge in the learning experiences.

This conversation practice is applied in The Language Center of the University of Nariño. This Institute has as its mission to promote the learning of foreign language through a communicative methodology, and the development of basic abilities to be communicatively competent in other language.

CHAPTER I

The Research Problem

This first chapter is presented in order to provide readers with all the relevant information regarding the problem description, the objectives, and the research question.

Problem Description

Along the learning process, teachers and students are always questioning what might help them to teach or learn a foreign language in a better way.

The experience is a tool to assist the learning process that might provide those answers, those clues and gadgets to walk a better way in the foreign language learning process.

When the Teachers carry out a speaking activity in the classroom, they might look for activities that permit capturing the students' attention, and motivate a desire for self-expression (creativity), activities that promote participation (effectiveness), to find for an appropriate and accurate activity for the level of the group that is being managed (practicality) and foster the work on the activity.

This work aims at examining, in terms of creativity, effectiveness and practicality, ten speaking activities that teachers use in classroom to check how they have improved the speaking skill

in the language Center at the University of Nariño to enhance communicative competence.

Objectives

General Objective

To identify, the most widely used classroom speaking activities used at the Language Center of the University of Nariño in order to improve the speaking skills, taking into account the experience of teachers and students.

Specific Objective

To design a list of speaking activities that are common or related throughout the communicative approach according to Nurhakim's work list and the literature review.

To apply a survey where the activities listed are evaluated by teachers and students into the categories of: practicality, creativity and effectiveness.

To classify the information obtained from the surveys according to practicality, effectiveness and creativity of the speaking activities according to the students and teachers perceptions at the Language Center.

To contrast the results of creativity, effectiveness and practicality of the speaking activities in the Language Center according to the information collected from students and teachers.

To rank the speaking activities according to its creative, effective and practical use from students and teachers information collected in the Language Center.

Research Question

What are the classroom activities teachers in the Language Center of the University of Nariño use to improve the speaking skills, based on the Communicative Approach?

Justification

The research is developed at The Language Center of the University of Nariño, because is an institute that has become a pioneer in the region, providing the opportunity to learn a foreign language. The Language Center is a place where people can develop cultural advances, international relationships, international exchanges and achieve the foreign language requirements, from the Ministry of Education.

This work may have as an outcome a partial knowledge of the practice of the teachers in the Language Center and the perceptions of the students concerning the use of activities in order to develop communicative competence.

The results of this research may show a pattern in the use of some activities, helping the trace of a common path of useful actions that may develop good results in the acquisition of speaking skills by means of the application of the approach.

This perception will be based on the stimuli in the ways of expression, interaction promotion, and the suitability or application of ten (10) speaking activities, that students and teachers have experimented along the learning process.

Glossary

Brainstorming: Process for generating ideas and solutions through intensive and freewheeling group discussion. Every participant is encouraged to think aloud and suggest as many ideas as possible, no matter seemingly how outlandish or bizarre.

Creativity: the oral activities that elicit the use of new expressions, sentences, phrases, texts or ideas that profit the use of the knowledge of the language.

Effectiveness: the activities where you can say what you want to and make you achieve the result expected

Games: Something done for amusement or diversion to introduce, develop or to reinforce a subject.

Information gaps: In Information Gap activities, each student has information that the other student(s) don't have. The objective is for students to ask questions to find out what they can from the other(s).

Interviews: a conversation between two people and one of them will be the subject of the report, or the published report itself

Language exchanges: Translations

Learning by teaching: Students prepare and teach lessons, or parts of lessons.

Pairwork: Pair work is learners working together in pairs to develop a subject.

Practicality (Suitability): usefulness, easiness to use or to put in practice.

Role play: Simulation exercise where the participants act out specified roles in a dramatization of an event or situation. The purpose of role playing is to achieve better understanding of a situation and use the language by experiencing a realistic simulation.

Surveys: A gathering of a sample of data or opinions considered to be representative about certain subject

Opinion-sharing activities: Activities where students compare values, opinions, beliefs, a ranking task in which students list qualities in order of importance which they might consider.

CHAPTER II**Literature review**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the reader the different components of this research: the location, the Communicative Approach, the work of Fahmi Nurhakim and the aspects in which ten (10) activities are going to be evaluated.

The language Center of the University of Nariño

The norm that created this Institute, where different languages could be taught to improve the quality of education, was the resolution No12 issued by in October 24, 1961. Currently the Institute follows the next objectives:

Vision

The language Center as a unit of the University of Nariño is an academic entity that will provide spaces for research in new pedagogical advances and methodological aspects of language teaching and training to provide students the knowledge of other languages to be communicatively competent in a specific foreign language.

Mission

The language Center promotes the learning of foreign languages based on communicative methodology to develop the language skills to be communicatively competent in other languages.

The Communicative Approach

The Communicative Approach is the name given to an approach in the mid-eighties for the diverse ways of foreign and second language teaching.

This approach also has influenced or gave birth to new methods like a cycle in the methodological theory of foreign language teaching. The Communicative Approach focuses in teaching languages for a communicative proficiency rather than on simple mastery of structures, this perspective is also known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Richards, J. C. and Rodgers 1987).

The CLT background is found in the 1960's when British linguists were working in the situational language teaching, where the teaching was performed by practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities, but the situations and the language exceeded the scope of the method. Later, the European needs in market and its deep interest to strength the regional education increased the concern in this field and the teaching language methods got a priority (Richards, J. C. and Rodgers 1987).

The search of the methods begun in the 1970's. and the experts reached a proposal, a unit/credit system. Wilkins' work (1972) was associated to the development of this course and was one of the first in using the term "communicative approach". His work also provides

the notional-functional concept. Wilkins later revised and expanded his 1972 document into a book called *Notional Syllabuses* (Wilkins 1976) which was the basis for the European Council syllabus design in the early stages. (Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, 1987)

This British innovation, focus on alternative conceptions of a syllabus, but since the mid- 1970s the scope of Communicative Language Teaching has expanded. British proponents observed it as an approach and not as a method that aims to:

“(a) Make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. (Richards, J. C. and Rodgers 1987 page 65)”

Not only British concerned about innovation of the teaching language methods. The American Hymes published in 1971 a paper on communicative competences. In His paper he suggested a line of research never made where language teaching was concerned with real people in real situations, such as classroom, and with different levels of competences (Roberts, J. T. 2004,pp.1-37).

A related analysis of communicative competence is mentioned by Canale and Swain (1980), in which its four dimensions of communicative competence are identified as: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. (Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, 1987)

All These features are closely related to the weak version of the Communicative Approach. The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching (Richards, J. C. and Rodgers 1987 p 66).

In 1983, Savignon related the Montaigne experience of learning Latin without book, grammar or rules, giving birth to "the Experience Approach" or "learning by doing"

Another proposal focus on communicative and contextual factors in language use in CLT has an antecedent in the work of the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski and the linguist John Firth (1957). They remark that language needed to be studied in the broader sociocultural context of its use, which included participants, their behavior and beliefs and the objects of linguistic discussion (Richards, J.C. y T.S. Rodgers 1998: 72).

The learner-centered and experience-base CLT method, look for the organization of Communicative Language Teaching around, where tasks and procedures are suggested by means to select and interlace appropriate experiences into a coherent curriculum, stretching across the years of school English study and found in the learners' particular needs as possessing interests, styles, and goals, what

should be reflected in the design of methods of instruction (Richards, J.C. y T.S. Rodgers 1987).

Historically, CLT has also been seen as a response to the audiolingual method (ALM), and as an extension or development of the notional-functional syllabus.

Finnochiaro and Brumfit (1983:91-93) compiled this list of CLT features way back in 1983 in Europe as a means of comparing it to the Audiolingual Method developed in America as follows:

"(1) CLT: Meaning is paramount.

ALM: Attends to structure and form more than meaning.

(2) CLT: Dialogues, if used, center around communicative functions and are not normally memorized.

ALM: Demands more memorization of structure-based dialogs.

(3) CLT: Contextualization is a basic premise.

ALM: Language items are not necessarily contextualized.

(4) CLT: Language learning is learning to communicate.

ALM: Language Learning is learning structures, sounds or words.

(5) CLT: Effective communication is sought.

ALM: Mastery or "overlearning" is sought.

(6) CLT: Drilling may occur, but peripherally.

ALM: Drilling is a central technique.

(7) CLT: Comprehensible pronunciation is sought.

ALM: Native-speaker-like pronunciation is sought.

(8) CLT: Any device which helps the learners is accepted - varying according to their age, interest, etc.

ALM: Grammatical explanation is avoided.

(9) CLT: Attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning.

ALM: Communicative activities only come after a long process of rigid drills and exercises.

(10) CLT: Judicious use of native language is accepted where feasible.

ALM: The use of the students' native language is forbidden.

(11) CLT: Translation may be used where students need or benefit from it.

ALM: Translation is forbidden at early levels.

(12) CLT: Reading and writing can start from the first day, if desired.

ALM: Reading and writing are deferred until speech is mastered.

- (13) CLT: The target linguistic system will be learned best through the process of struggling to communicate.

ALM: The target linguistic system will be learned through the overt teaching of the patterns of the system.

- (14) CLT: Communicative competence is the desired goal.

ALM: Linguistic competence is the desired goal.

- (15) CLT: Linguistic variation is a central concept in materials and methods.

ALM: Varieties of language are recognized but not emphasized.

- (16) CLT: Sequencing is determined by any consideration of content function, or meaning which maintains interest.

ALM: The sequence of units is determined solely on principles of linguistic complexity.

- (17) CLT: Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language.

ALM: The teacher controls the learners and prevents them from doing anything that conflicts with the theory.

- (18) CLT: Language is created by the individual often through trial and error.
- ALM: "Language is habit" so error must be prevented at all costs.
- (19) CLT: Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.
- ALM: Accuracy, in terms of formal correctness, is a primary goal.
- (20) CLT: Students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in their writings.
- ALM: Students are expected to interact with the language system, embodied in machines or controlled materials.
- (21) CLT: The teacher cannot know exactly what language the students will use.
- ALM: The teacher is expected to specify the language that students are to use.
- (22) CLT: Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated by the language.

ALM: Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in the structure of the language.”

As a conclusion, the communicative approach is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning. When learners are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used, and this will allow them to learn to use the language.

(<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/knowledge-wiki/approach>)

After a brief glimpse of the Communicative approach it is necessary to review some speaking activities that are involved in the methodological trends of the CLT. These activities are mentioned in the thesis Teaching Speaking by using Communicative Approach (Nurhakim, F. 2009), the activities are:

1. Role play

It is a simulation exercise where the participants act out specified roles in a dramatization of an event or situation. The purpose of role playing is to achieve better understanding of a situation and use the language by experiencing a realistic simulation.

2. Interviews

It is a conversation between two people and one of them will be the subject of the report, or the published report itself.

3. Information gaps

In Information Gap activities, each student has information that the other student(s) don't have. The objective is for students to ask questions to find out what they can from the other(s).

4. Games

These are activities are done for amusement or fun to introduce or develop a subject.

5. Language exchanges

These are translations, activities that understand the meaning of a text in one language, to produce a meaningful text equivalent in another language.

6. Surveys

There are gathering of a sample of data or opinions considered to be representative about certain subject.

7. Pairwork

Pair work is learners working together in pairs to develop a task or exercise.

8. Learning by teaching

Students prepare and teach lessons, or parts of lessons. Learning by teaching should not be confused with presentations or lectures by students, as students not only convey certain content, but also choose their own methods and didactic approaches in teaching classmates that subject.

(<http://www.scribd.com/doc/15190009/Skripsi-Teaching-Speaking-by-Using-Communicative-Approach>)

Besides, there are two other oral activities considered important through the analysis, because, they promote oral interactions in the classroom:

Brainstorming:

It is a group creativity technique designed to generate a large number of ideas for the solution of a problem. In 1953 the method was popularized by Alex Faickney Osborn in a book called Applied Imagination. Osborn proposed that groups could double their creative output with brainstorming (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brainstorming>).

Opinion sharing activities:

These are activities in which students compare values, opinions, beliefs. It is a ranking task in which students list qualities in order of importance which they might consider (Jack C. Richards, 2001).

Once the activities were presented to the reader, it is necessary to know the importance of the categories in which they will be scored to obtain the rank of each of the activities mentioned above as follows.

Creativity

Before the CLT approach the standard structural theories of language were incapable of accounting for the fundamental characteristics of language - creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences (Richards, J.C. y T.S. Rodgers 1987).

In this research and through the survey, a search for creativity in the oral activities that elicit to students to use new expressions, sentences, phrases, texts or ideas that profit the use of the knowledge of the language is sought.

It is possible to find creativity in a variety of activities:

"After all, much of the language we use in the real world is motivated by a desire for self-expression, as opposed to simply conveying information or "getting things done". Communicating subjective ideas, personal impressions, and imagined situations are creative activities, psychologically fulfilling and basic in much human language use. We are not talking here of creative language in a "literary" sense, but of verbal responses which are personal and imaginative in nature..." (B.J. Baddock 1987).

Creativity has been related with the creative thinking or behavior and problem solving and according to the most extensive research in this field the abilities involved in the creative thinking and problem solving were defined as: "sensitive to problems, fluency (the ability to produce a large number of ideas), flexibility, (the ability to produce a variety of ideas or use a variety of approaches) originality (the ability to produce ideas that are off the beaten

track), elaboration (the ability to fill in the details), and redefinition (the ability to define or perceive in a way different from the usual, established, or intended way, etc.) (Torrance 1977 page 16).

Torrance quotes that if we want pupils to think creatively we must learn to reward creative behavior not only through grades but through the kinds of behaviors we encourage and by the way we respond to the curiosity of students respecting the unusual questions, the unusual ideas and solutions, showing that their ideas have value, giving credit for self-initiated learning and providing chances for learning thinking and discovering (Torrance, 1977. p 25).

Judit Fehér Pilgrims described the importance of creativity in the language classroom as:

"A creative act: where thoughts are transformed into language that can be heard or seen. We are capable of producing sentences and even long texts that we have never heard or seen before..." (Pilgrims, J. 2007).

Creative work in the language classroom can lead to genuine communication and co-operation, enriching classroom work, preparing learners for using the language outside the classroom, developing part of self strategies and strengthening personal growth in the development of culture and society.

Learners who are encouraged to think creatively and independently become:

- more interested in discovering things for themselves
- more open to new ideas
- devoted to work with others to explore ideas
- Willing to work beyond lesson time when pursuing an idea or vision (Pilgrims, 2007).

As a result, their rate of learning, levels of achievement and self-esteem increase. When pupils are thinking and behaving creatively in the classroom, it is likely to see them: questioning and challenging, making connections and seeing relationships, visualize what might be, exploring ideas, keeping options open, reflecting critically on ideas (Pilgrims, 2007).

Pilgrims summaries in her article four (4) main moments when a creative activity is being developed.

1. When planning activities:

Take into account build creative objectives, adapt activities so that they offer more potential for creativity, make use of culture. Also assure for freedom to explore ideas, and challenge.

2. When introducing activities:

Take into give pupils a clear goal that is challenging yet achievable. Also give them opportunities to choose ways of working and shaping the direction of work. Capture pupils' interest and fire their imagination through sounds, smells, visits of places or creative people, ect... and set constraints (for example limit time and/or resources). This makes an activity more approachable and can encourage pupils to improvise and experiment.

3. When teaching:

Actively encourage pupils to question, make connections, envisage what might be and explore ideas. Promote and reward imagination and originality, state open-ended questions to help pupils see things from different perspectives.

Establish an atmosphere in which they feel safe to say things, take risks and respond creatively. Also create conditions for quiet reflection and concentration encouraging pupils to work imaginatively.

Make unexpected events. When appropriate, put aside your lesson plan, but never lose sight of your overall learning objectives. Always provide prompts and support as needed and model creative thinking and behavior.

4. When reviewing consider to:

Help pupils to develop criteria that they can use to judge their own work, in particular its originality and value. Stop regularly for open discussion of the problems pupils are facing and how they can solve them. Encourage pupils to share ideas with others and to talk about their progress so pupils appreciate the different qualities in others' work and to value ways of working that are different from their own Help pupils to give and receive constructive feedback.

(<http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/key-stages-1-and2/learning-across-the-curriculum/creativity/whatiscreativity/index.aspx>) (Pilgrims, 2007).

The Colombian ministry of education promotes the competences in languages, but beyond the linguistic goal, the development of creativity and reasoning logically through learning a foreign language is seen as a great contribution to form new knowledge that will influence the relationship among the different competences where the pupils pass across ethics, social, and cultural subjects that contribute in the possibility to comprehend and interpret their reality. (Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés 2006 p 12)

Nowadays we can find in textbooks a numerous quantity of assignments, projects, experimentation. Procedures which promote creative thinking but even the daily questioning by teachers can be done with this purpose and in this matter the point is to provide opportunities for creative thinking.

Effectiveness

Nowadays, how to communicate effectively in a Foreign Language becomes very important as it is reading and writing in the foreign language. This study search for the oral activities where the students achieve the expression of what they want to say and make them achieve the result communicatively expected.

Ogili (2001), described communication as a process of transmitting and receiving symbolic cues, both verbal and non-verbal that can also be oral or written or formal and informal, interpersonal and public communication.

Communication is also a concept referred to a human process of sharing meaning, ideas, thoughts, experiences, information or opinion from person to person (Ezeja, 2005).

Effective communication according to Ezeja joins a complete model, which include physical and verbal factors. For Ezeja, Objects, acts, ideas, situation or experiences are the source to construct a

message. The message involves three principal factors; verbal, physical and vocal stimuli; these stimuli make the message functions as a unit (Ezeja, 2005).

For effective communication, some of the essential interaction skills needed by speakers are to dialogue, comment, disagree or agree with another speaker's statement; also should recognize when to speak or listen to someone else, moreover should distinguish when to interrupt to include an opinion or make a question, and finally use appropriate paralinguistic features like whispering, breathiness, huskiness and nasality (Counihan, 1998).

Wenden and Rubin (1987: 109) state that learners who emphasize the importance of using the language, often use communication strategies to express effectively. Besides, O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 43) assert that communication strategies are particularly 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. For this reason, communication strategies, which involve both listening and speaking, can contribute greatly to foreign language learners' effective competence (Zhang Ya-ni, 2007).

Communication strategies so, have turned into a crucial topic for all foreign language learners and teachers in terms of effectiveness.

Considerable research has been done on communication strategies, for example, Bialystok (1990), who comprehensively analyzes communication strategies for second language use; and Dornyei (1995 cited in Brown, 2000), who outlines an explicit classification of communication strategies. According to Bialystok,

“the familiar ease and fluency with which we sail from one idea to the next in our first language is constantly shattered by some gap in our knowledge of a second language” (Bialystok, 1990: 1).

The forms of these gaps can be a word, a structure, a phrase, a tense marker or an idiom. The attempts to overcome these gaps are described as communication strategies.

In a related study the conclusion pointed out that learners with limited language proficiency, compensate the ineffective use of interaction strategies with appropriate cooperative behavior and peer support (Lam & Wong, 2000 p 245).

Cooperative Language Learning seeks to foster cooperation among learners through structured interaction activities. Promoters of Cooperative Learning define Cooperative Learning as:

“Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperation situations, individuals seek outcomes beneficial to themselves and all other group members”. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:195).

Research on successful cooperative learning behavior skills vary from students knowing and trusting each other, accepting and supporting

one another and resolving conflicts constructively (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1990), taking turns, providing encouragement and active listening (Putnam, 1993), giving positive feedback and asking for other people's opinions (Rice, 1994).

Lourdunathan & Menon(1996),state also the importance of an adequate peer support, warning that the lack of this support might make learners not have the confidence and motivation to use such interaction strategies effectively.

Among the characteristics of effective teaching and learning, there are some important understandings that apply more particularly to language learning. In the work of Rod Ellis and about the concept of intercultural communicative language teaching (2003), he describes an effective language learning task as one that:

"requires the students to focus primarily on meaning, has some kind of gap that the students can close by communicating, requires the students to construct their own productive language (language output) rather than only to manipulate language that the teacher provides (language input), has a clearly defined outcome (other than producing "correct" language)"(Rod Ellis, 2003).

Ellis advice Language teachers to construct tasks that reflect real-life communication as closely as possible and that establish a genuine need for communication. For example, teachers can ask their students to seek or provide the information needed to complete a task successfully. If an activity involves a student asking to be told

something that they already know, the activity is not a communicative one - and the students are not likely to find it rewarding.

Ellis has also identified ten principles of effective language teaching:

"Principle 1: Instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence

Principle 2: Instruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning

Principle 3: Instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form

Principle 4: Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge

Principle 5: Instruction needs to take into account the learner's 'built-in syllabus'

Principle 6: Successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input

Principle 7: Successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output

Principle 8: The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency

Principle 9: Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners

Principle 10: In assessing learners' L2 proficiency it is important to examine free as well as controlled production" (Ellis, 2005).

Ellis says that the teacher's main focus in language learning classes should always be on pragmatic meaning in the context of authentic interactions, he emphasizes that students also need opportunities to focus on the language form they are using. These opportunities may arise in the course of negotiating with other speakers to repair breakdowns in communication developing strategic competence.

Effective teachers induce and question students in ways that encourage them to reflect actively on their own thinking and learning processes. At the same time, the teachers reflect on their own practice, seeking evidence about the impact of their teaching and adjusting their practice accordingly (Newton et al. 2009, p.59)

Practicality

Practicality is defined as being likely to be effective and applicable to a real situation; being able to be put to use based on practice or action rather than theory or hypothesis (Cobuild dictionary).

Language teachers can regard themselves as practical people and not as theorists but theory is implicit in the practice of language teaching. It reveals itself in the planning of the course of study, in the routines of the classroom, in value judgments about language teaching, and in the decisions that language teacher has to make day by day.

A languages teacher can express his theoretical conviction through classroom activities as much as (or, indeed, better, than) through the opinions and discussions in professional meetings (Stern, 2003).

Language teachers however may not deny their interest in theory, they can't teach a language without knowing how to teach the language, even if it is only implicit in value judgments, decisions, and actions, or in the organization patterns within which operates (Stern, 2003).

In the practical study of languages, 1899, forth principles for the development of teaching methodologically were included:

- "1. Careful selection of what is to be taught
2. Imposing limits on what is to be taught
3. Arranging what is to be taught in terms of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing
4. Grading materials from simple to complex."

(Richards, J.C, Rodgers T.S. 2001)

In this research, it is expected to find how practical are the classroom speaking activities, based on the experience of the teachers and students from the application of those theories of language use and learning of a foreign language, to find the likely activities to be suitable or applicable in the purpose of developing oral skills.

To conclude, this literature review helps to linked, the concepts of creativity, effectiveness and practicality, to the purpose of developing a communicative competence; also associated to the Communicative Approach activities and the place where the study is developed.

The intention of this study is to identify the improvement of the speaking skills to become communicative competent, by means of the creativity, effectiveness and practicality of the speaking

activities of the Communicative Approach, that teachers and learners use at the Language Center.

CHAPTER III

The Research Method

In this chapter, readers are provided with all the information related to the research method such as population, setting, sample, instruments, and the analysis applied to the data collected.

Population, Setting and Sample

Population

60 Students, who have practical background of classroom speaking activities, and 14 English teachers from the Language Center, are the target population in this research.

Setting

This research is carried out at the Languages Center of the University of Nariño.

Sample

Students randomly chosen from the first to the sixth English levels and 14 English teachers

Instruments

In this research, the data will be collected through two structured surveys, one for 14 teachers, and another one for 60 students from the language center of the University of Nariño. The subjects who answered the surveys have previous knowledge in the description of the activities.

The survey provides a list of CLT speaking activities used in the classroom; they will score in the list activities that promote creative answers, effective communication and their practicality.

Each of the topics to identify has to be graded being 1 the lowest score and 5 the highest score taking into account the following concepts:

Creativity: the oral activities that elicit the use of new expressions, sentences, phrases, texts or ideas that profit the use of the knowledge of the language.

Effectiveness: the oral activities where the students achieve the expression of what they want to say and make them achieve the result communicatively expected.

Practicality (Suitable): useful, easy to use or to put in practice suiting the plans well.

Additionally, a question of the range of use was made to contrast the answers in terms of use of the activities by the teachers and students.

Also, to answer the survey, teachers and students were provided with definitions of each activity.

Data Analysis

The analysis process will be developed based on quantitative and qualitative strategies.

Quantitative analysis:

The survey requires a scoring that goes from 1 to 5, being 1 the lowest score and 5 the highest score. Teachers and students are expected to score the speaking activities listed in the survey according their likeness from each activity.

Qualitative analysis:

The work appeals to the experience and perception of teachers and students from the speaking activities and search for those that foster speaking skill in the foreign language in the classroom.

Each activity is put into consideration under the perception of issues like practicality, where the teachers and students score the activity according to their awareness of the application of these activities, and easiness of the activities when practiced; and Also if the activities show creativity by means of the stimulation of new responses; and finally, the effectiveness in these activities, that is observed in relation to the help they provide both teachers and students to develop fluent communication.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The results obtained through the application of the instruments are presented with corresponding graphs and followed by a contrast between answers of students and teachers as well as a triangulation between those results, the criteria analyzed in the second chapter and some remarkable outcomes from surveys.

The results obtained from 14 teachers and 60 students who answered the survey, were considered as the 100% percent. It means that 60 students and 14 teachers constituted the total sample.

Activities that promote creativity according to students.

According to the students, *learning by teaching*, *language exchange* and *interviews* were graded as the most creative activities with a 33.3%. *Opinion sharing activities*, *pairwork* and *role-play* weren't grade as the most creative, but they have a percentage of 35%. The rest of the activities graded as the most creative go from 16.7% to 30 (see graph N°1).

Activities that promote Effectiveness according to students.

According to the students, the most effective activity was *games* with a 38.3%, but some activities that weren't graded as the most effective, have a high percentage; we can remark *interviews* with a

45%, followed by *brainstorming* with 41%. The rest of the activities graded as the most effective go from 18.3% to 28.3% (see graph N°2).

Practical activities according to students.

According to the students, *Opinion sharing activities* are graded as the most practical, with a 41.7%, followed by *pairwork* with a 40%. Here, there is not a significant difference so we can consider both as the most practical for the students. *Interviews* were not graded as the most practical but, they had a percentage of 40%, The rest of the activities graded as the most practical went from 26.7% to 36,7%. (see graph N°3).

Activities that promote creativity according to teachers.

Pairwork had the highest percentage as the most creative activities for teachers with a 42.9%, followed by *opinion sharing activities* and *role play* with 35.7%, the same activities were taken into account for the students as creative , but they weren't chosen as the most creative activities (See graph N°4).

Activities that promote Effectiveness according to teachers.

The teachers answered that the most effective for them were *information gaps*, *role-play* and *pairwork* with a 42.9% each of them, in contrast to the students' answers. It is possible to see that

there are no similar perceptions, both teachers and students graded different activities as the most effective ones (see graph N°5).

Practical activities according to teachers.

In this section we found that for teachers, *pairwork*, *interviews* and *role-play* were the most practical with 50%, in this category the students and teachers agreed in *pairwork* as the most practical.

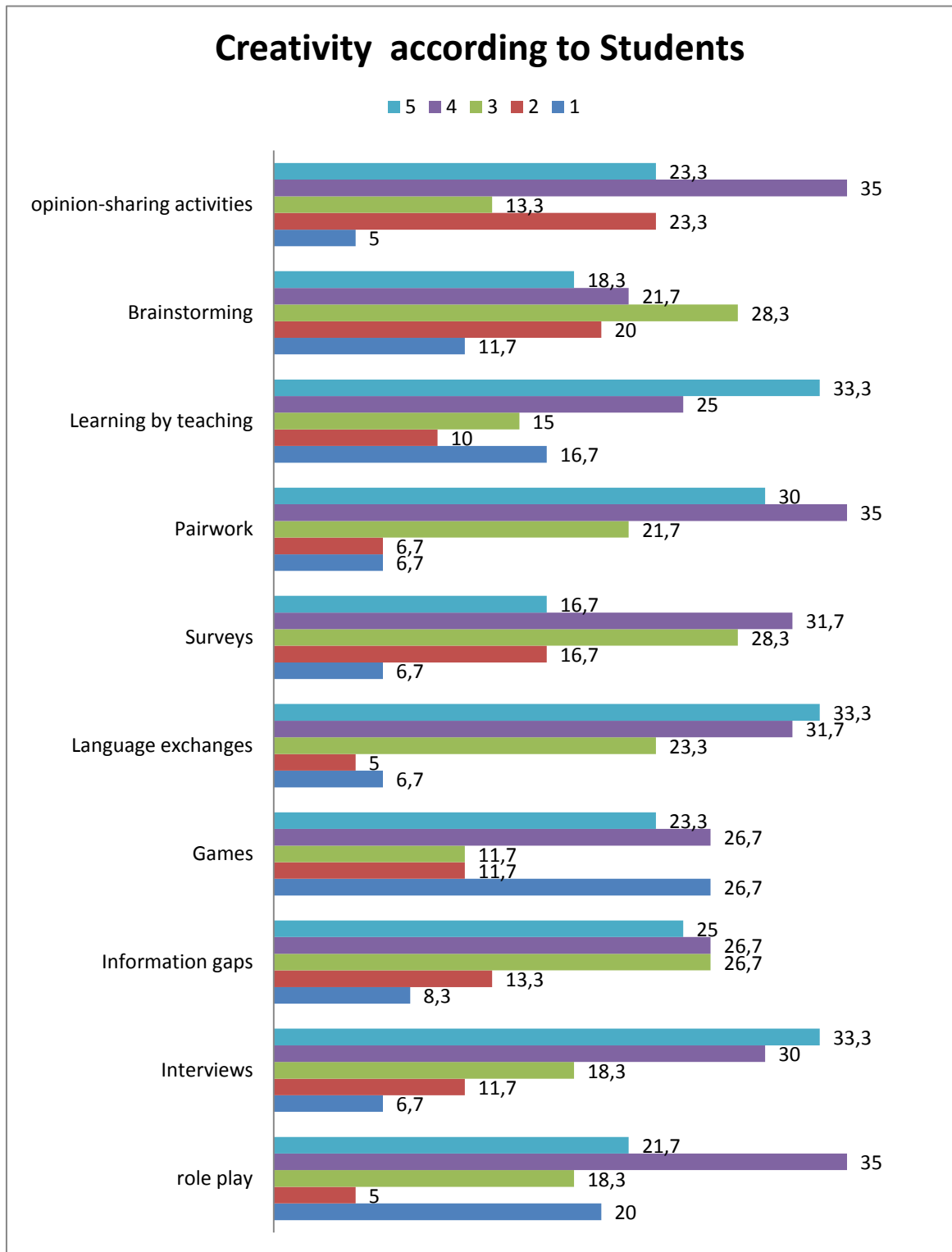
The most complete activity observed through the analysis of data from teachers shows that *pairwork* was considered important in all three categories (see graph N°6)

Frequency

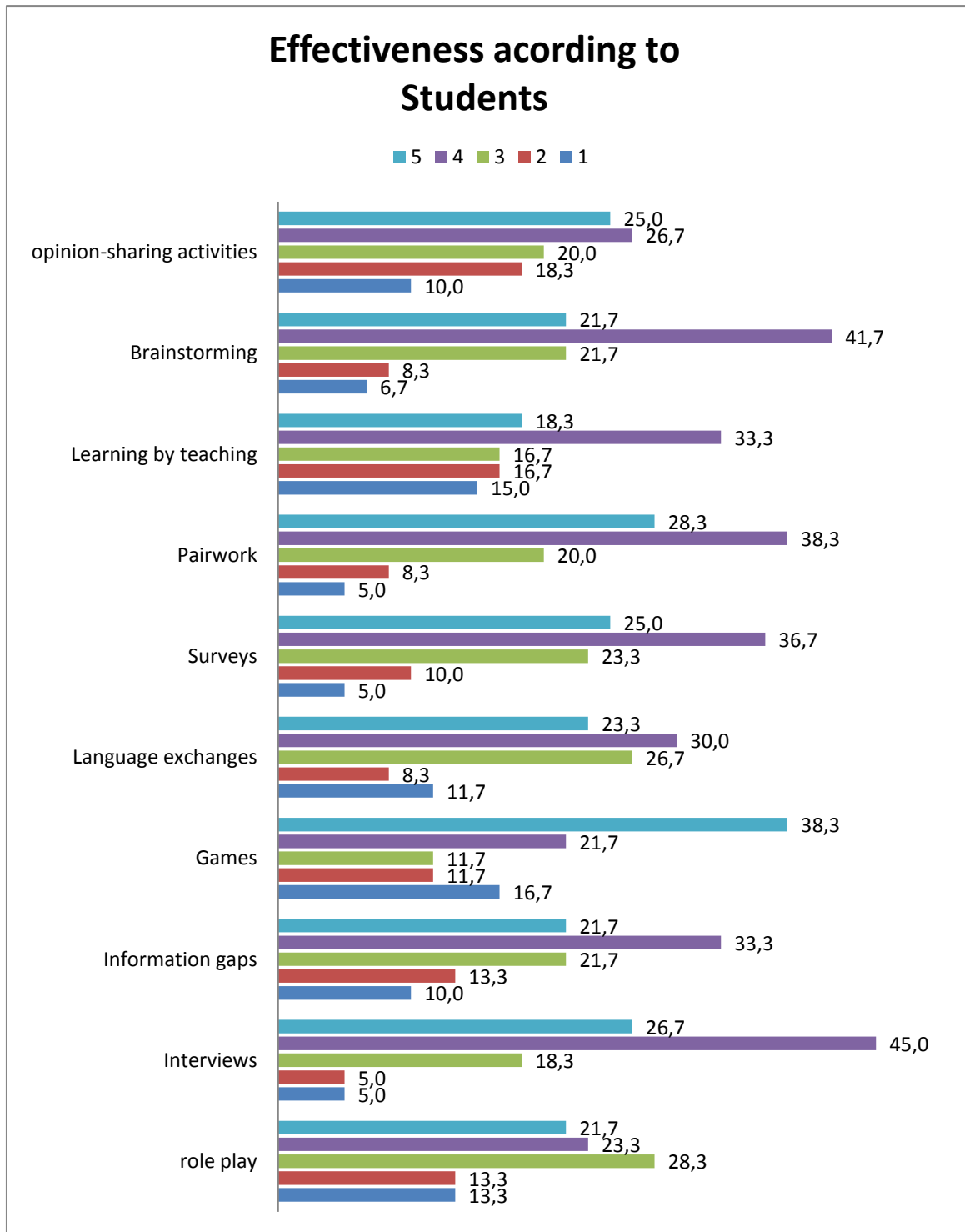
This graphics of frequency show students' perception and teachers' application of the different activities mentioned before.

The students perceive *pairwork* as one of the activities used more frequently for communicative purposes by the teachers, and in the graph it is possible to see that teachers consider *pairwork* as an activity commonly used to improve the oral skills in the communicative approach (see graph N°7 and 8).

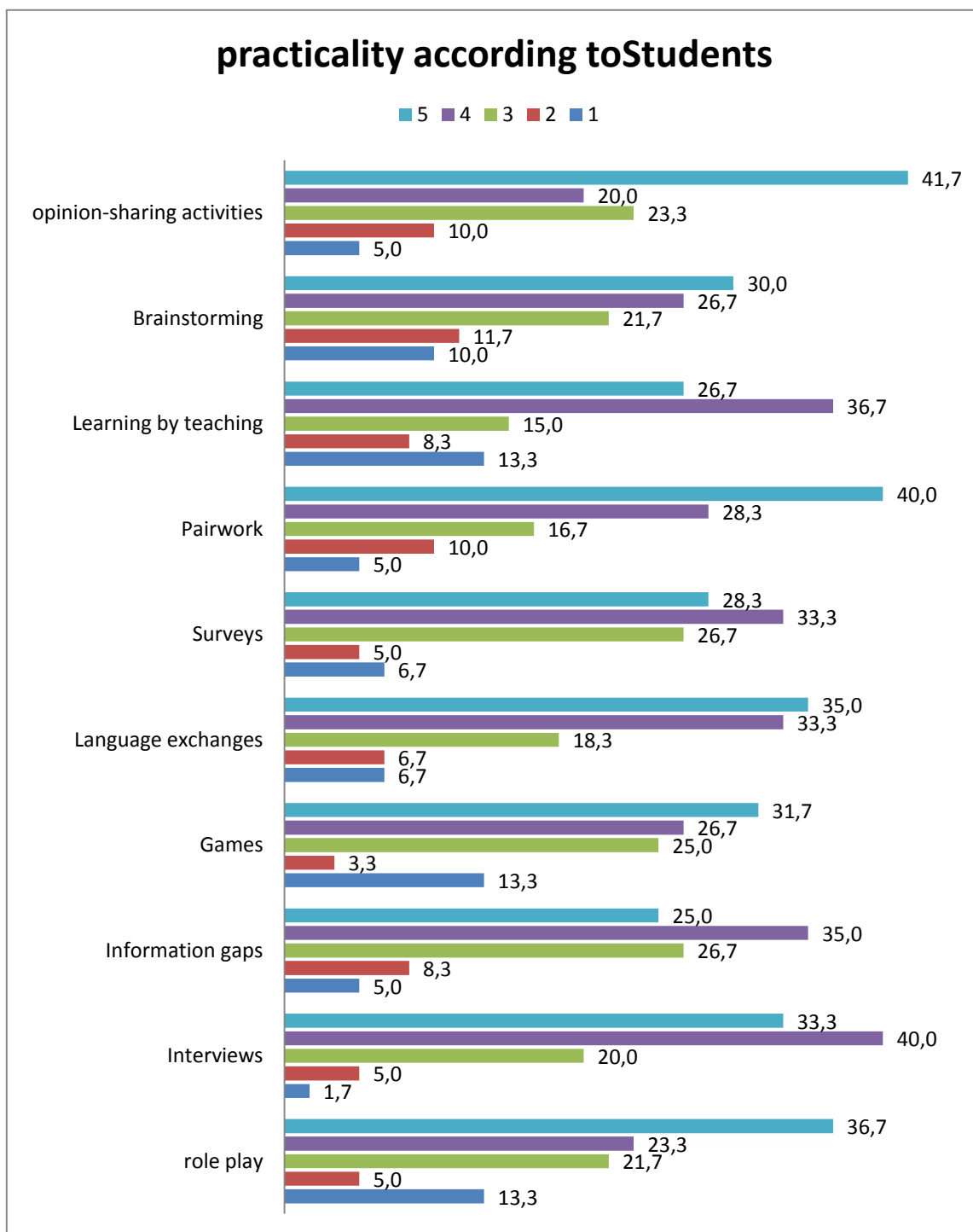
Graph N° 1



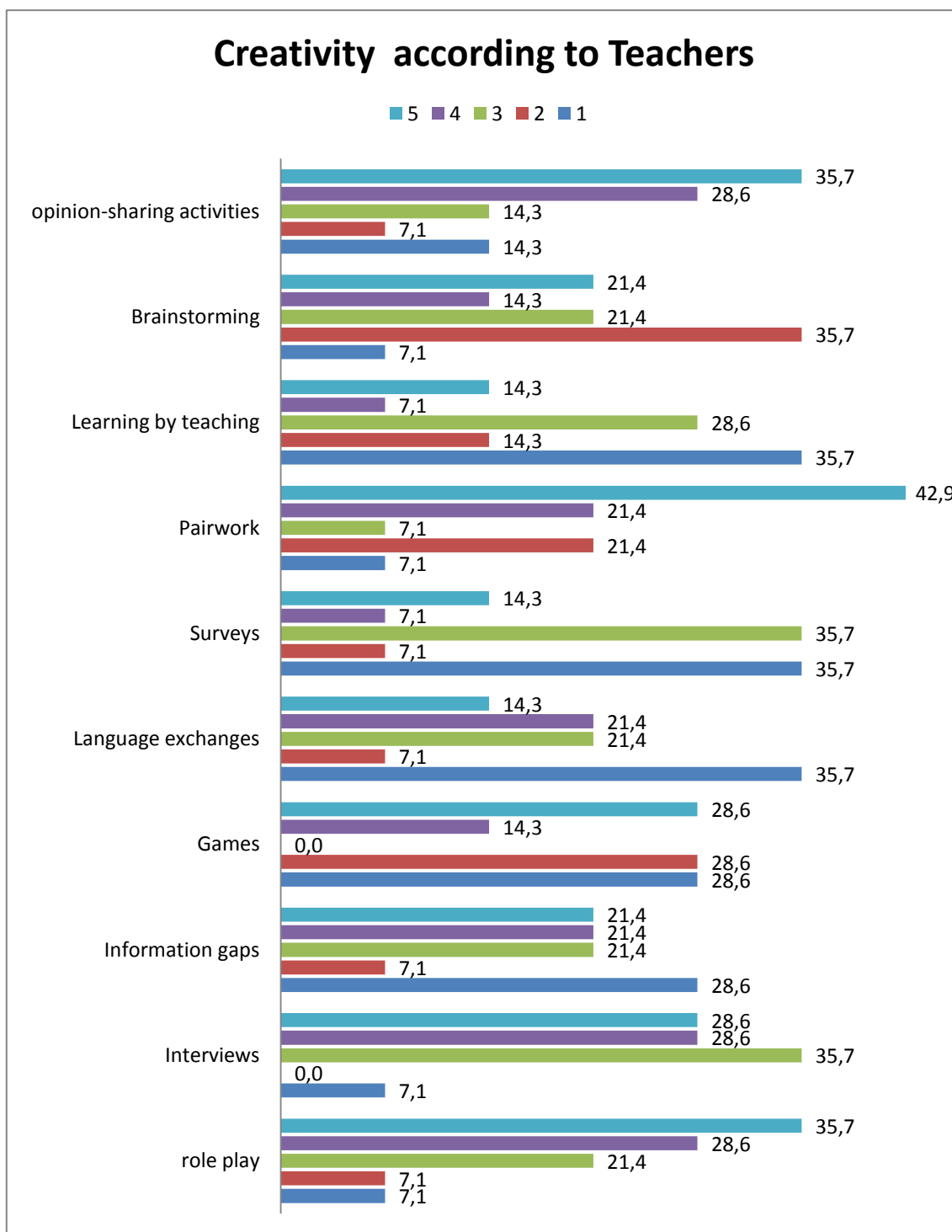
Graph N° 2



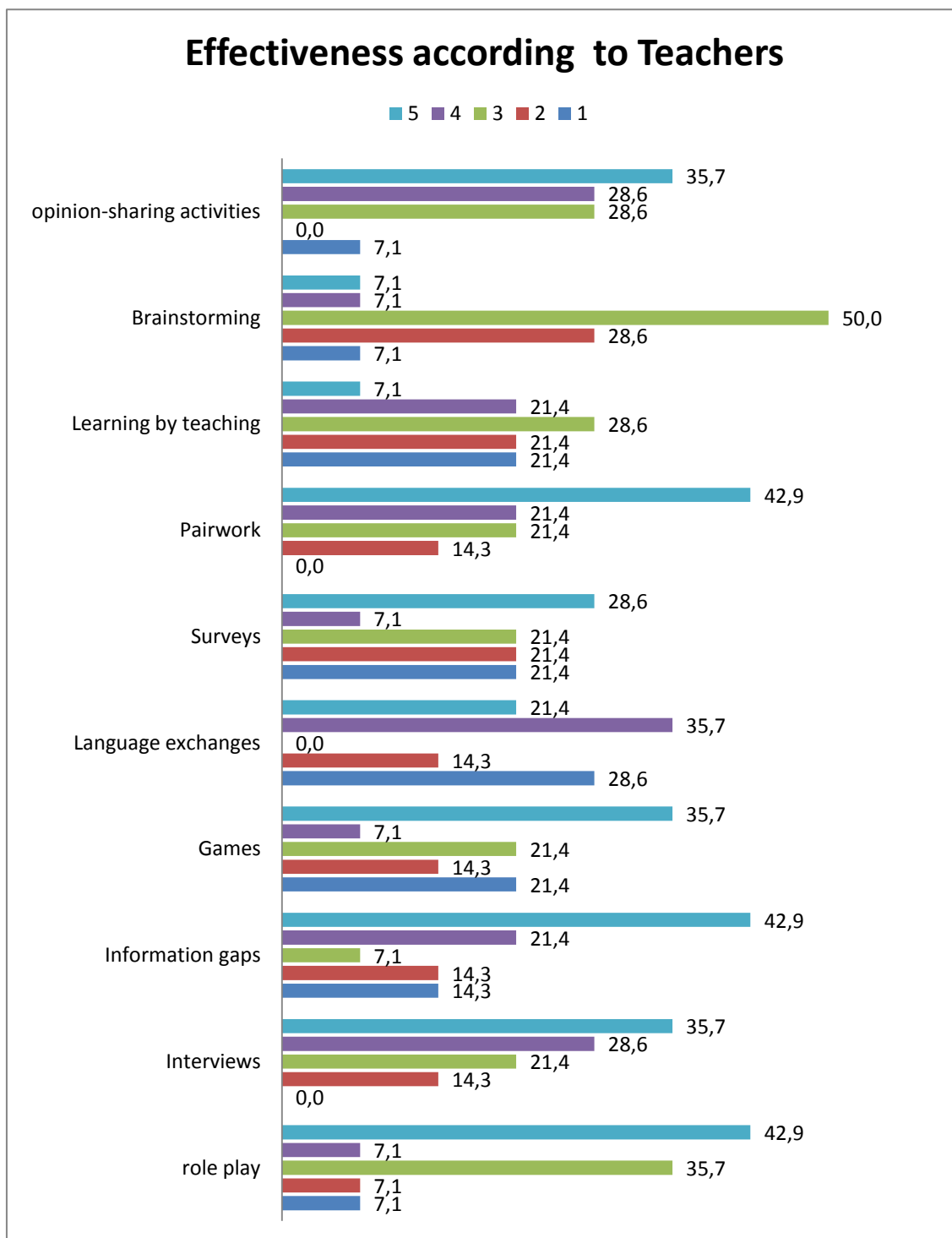
Graph N° 3



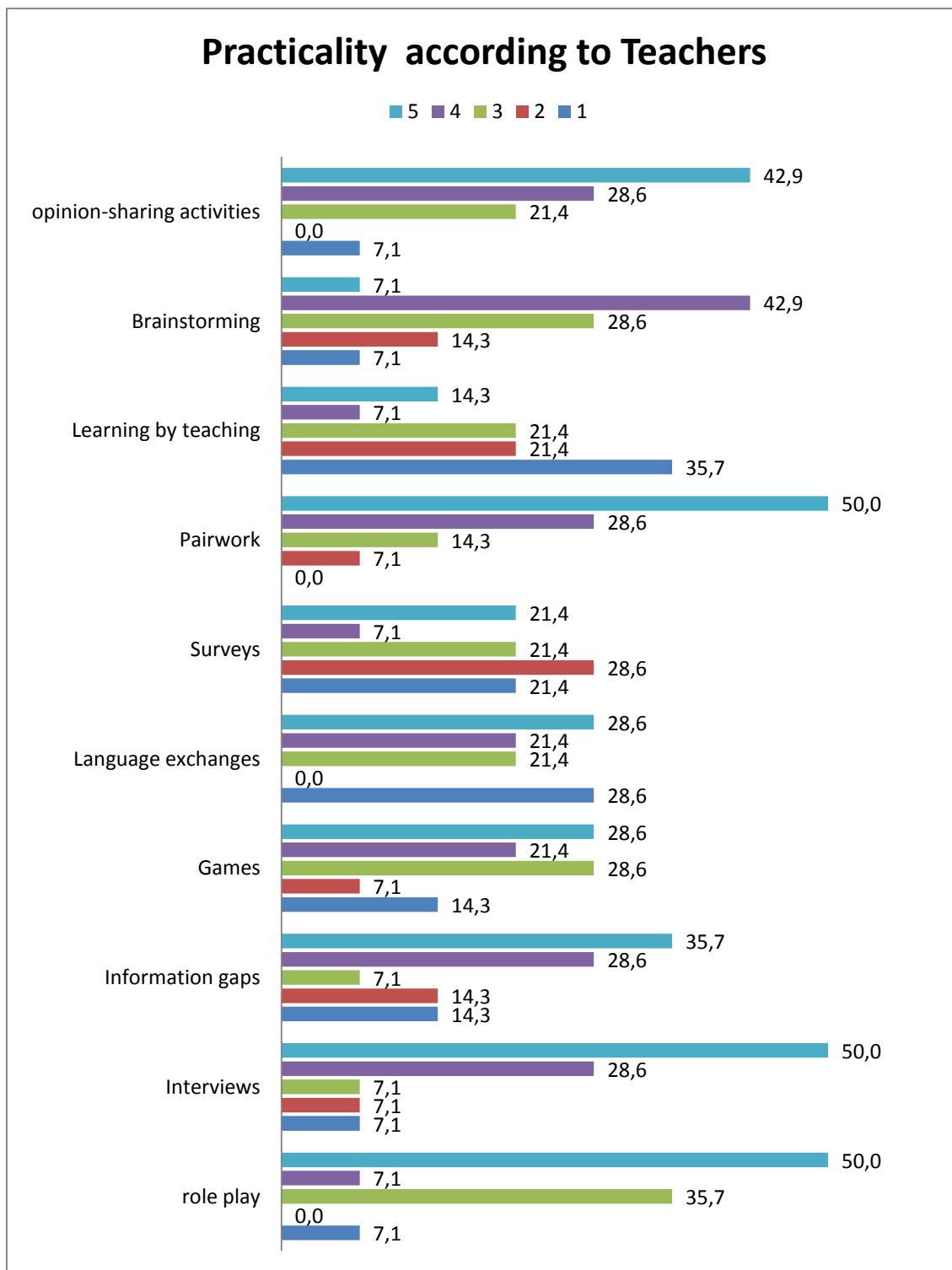
Graph N° 4



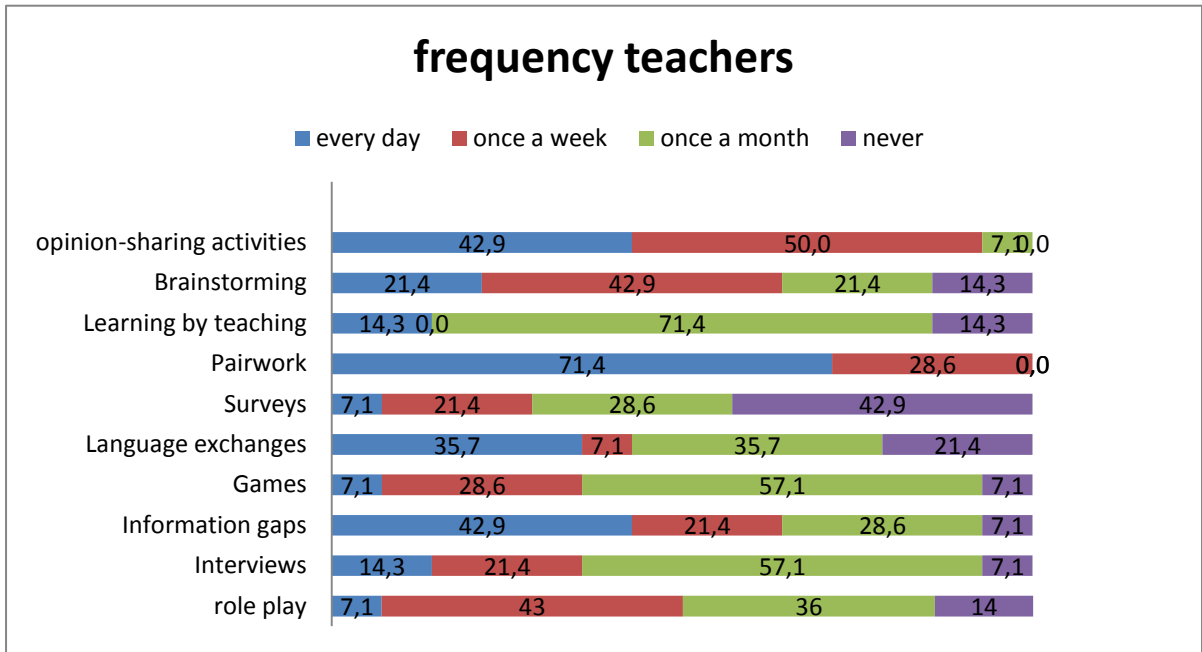
Graph N° 5



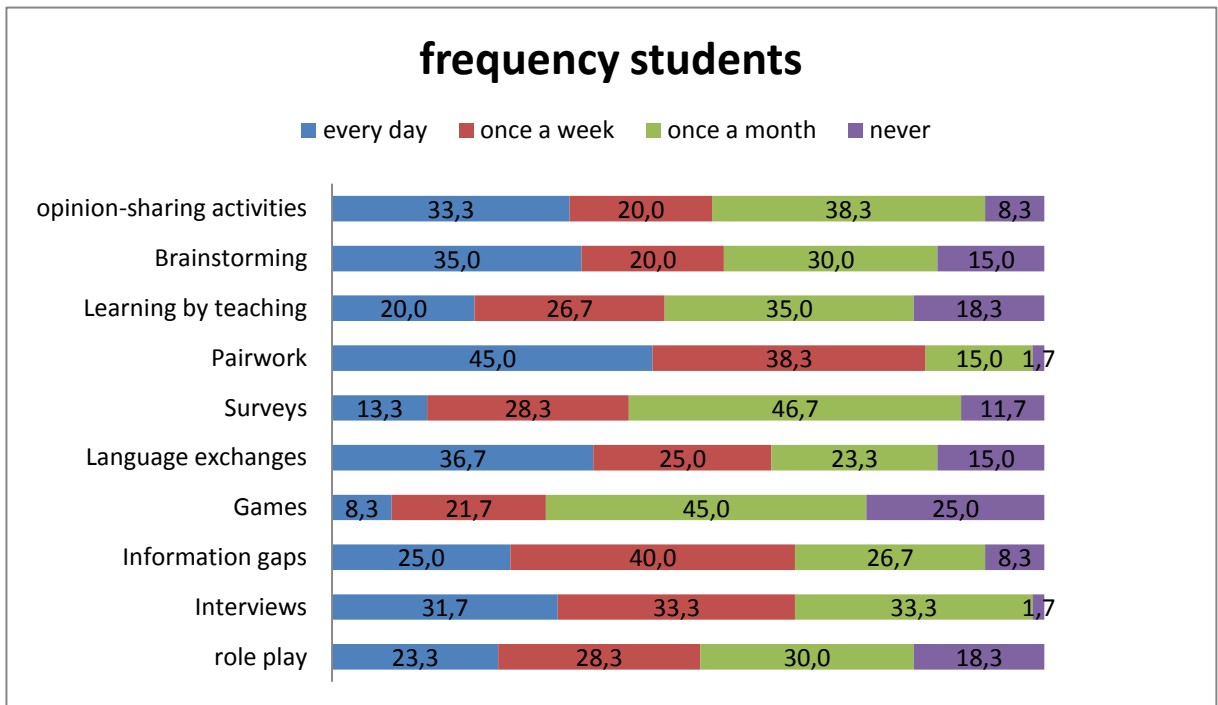
Graph N° 6



Graph N° 7



Graph N° 8



Conclusions and Suggestions

According to the objectives and after the analysis of the scoring provided to the activities, this paragraphs show the ranking and the contrast of the results as well as the suggestions.

Conclusions

The activities scoring shows, that students and teachers divide the importance of the activities in the development of the speaking skill in a close difference, providing most of them a good significance in the learning process. Besides, the remarkable findings are related in the following paragraphs (see graph 9).

The scorings provided for Teachers show a common agreement toward *pairwork* and *role-play* but students' scorings positioned five activities (*opinion-sharing activities, language exchanges, games, interviews* and *pairwork*) with a close difference among them, which shows a beneficial attitude to perform different actions in order to improve the speaking skill. (see graph 10)

The results permit conclude that *pairwork* is the activity that obtained the highest average from both students and teachers scores. This activity is considered the best activity to promote creative responses, foster effective communication and offers a high degree of practicality. (see graph 9)

The activity that follows *pairwork* is role play, due to the high scoring obtained from Teachers. But this preference differs from the perception of Students whom positioned this activity at lower levels. According their scoring, role play is an activity that encourage self expression (creativity) and promote interaction (effectiveness) only in a 22% in each one of the categories. The suitability and appliance (practicality) was scored with a 32% of favorability. (see graphs 9,10,11,12 & 13).

The scores for *role play* permit to conclude that does not represent a significant one in the purpose to develop an oral interaction and elicit self expression from students. Learners give to *learning by teaching, games, interviews* and *language exchanges* higher averages.

Interviews, toward *role play*, was positioned after pair work. *Interviews* obtained from practicality according to teachers, and creativity according to students the highest scores with a 50% and 33% respectively. (see graphs 9, 12 & 13)

Opinion-sharing activities, occupied the next highest average. The practical aspect scored both teachers and students with a 42,5 %, offers a beneficial attitude toward the application of this activity, although is not perceived regularly by students (see graph 9,13& 14).

Games. Students positioned *this activity* as one that obtain a high importance among their oral interaction activities perception of the effectiveness, occupying the same importance as the interviews, but teachers keep this activity as not much valuable. Teachers positioned *information gaps*, *pairwork* and *role play* as high effective activities for speaking development. (see graph 9 & 12)

Suggestions

It could be suggested that in terms of creativity, the *role play* activities were restated for teachers to obtain better results on the motivation of the students and continue showing this activity as an effective one to achieve oral skills.

The use of role play makes the speaking and learning activity more enjoyable and interesting. Students with difficulty in conversation are liberated, but the problem that the students faced mostly in role play are lack of confidence and lack of vocabulary.

Gillian Porte Ladousse (1987), suggests some Tips on successful classroom role-play. The role of the teacher should be as a facilitator of new language that students may need. Also as a spectator offering comments and advice at the end, as well as a participant, get involved and take part in the role-play.

Besides the teacher role, the activity should be brought to real life situations keeping it relevant or amusing by the use of props. Finally Use your imagination and have fun.

The implementation of time sets for activities where the students prepare lessons (*learning by teaching*) where their creativity might be put in practice could be a trigger for new expressions of language. The interest of the students for this kind of activities as well as *interviews* and *language exchanges* should be use.

Games are activities that teachers do not consider so remarkable at effective communication but these were activities measured by students as a positive opportunity to produce oral interaction since they promote and facilitate ludic. These activities should be promoted to take advantage from the attitude of the learners toward this kind of activities.

The language Center might consider obtain support from expertise personnel to develop strategies that help students and teachers promote this kind of activities.

The communicative competence involves socio-linguistic components, the functional use, of the language learned. These components might be integrated by the use of communication strategies

(effectiveness) and the desire of self expression (creativity) (curricular regulations, 2006).

The Language Center might enhance the *Creativity* and *Effectiveness* by implementing events where the students may use the activities under teachers support to develop these aspects.

This could provide a challenging opportunity to explore new ideas, motivate learners to use the language in a real situation and look for accurate interaction.

Opinion-sharing activities show a favorable use in terms of practicality for both students' and teachers' perception; despite this agreement, its range of use is not perceived by students who do not become aware of it. According to this finding, it could be suggested that these activities should be carried out more often.

The Curricular Regulations beckon for the use new technologies; and the use of the networks might help to develop activities where students may be directed to participate by oral recordings of their opinions.

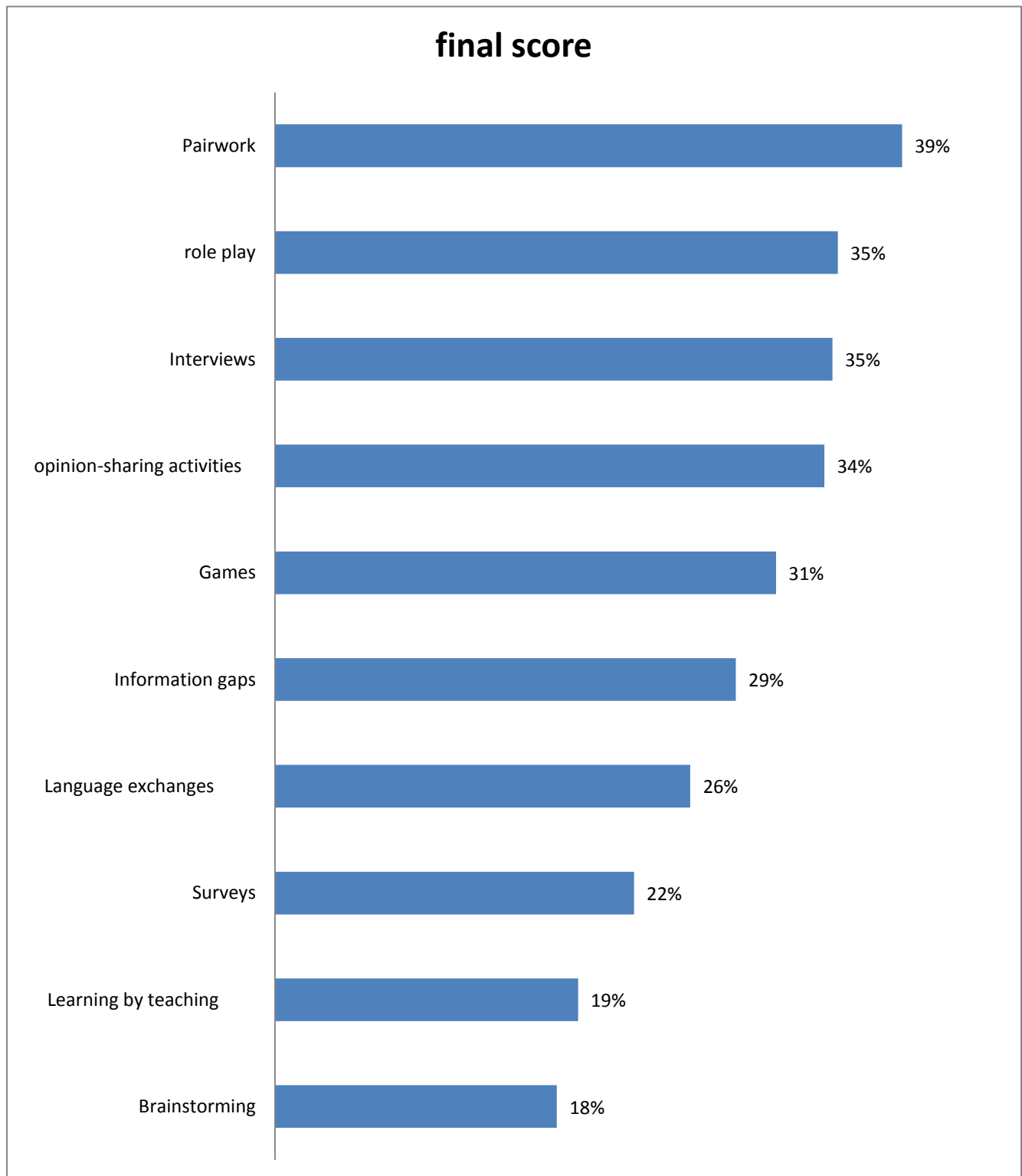
The Curricular Regulations request an active reflection (practicality) of the learning process and require from teachers attitudes and abilities like observation, introspection and an opened mind toward the change of attitudes and believes of the teaching and

learning practices and the disposition to interchange ideas with colleagues (curricular regulations, 2006).

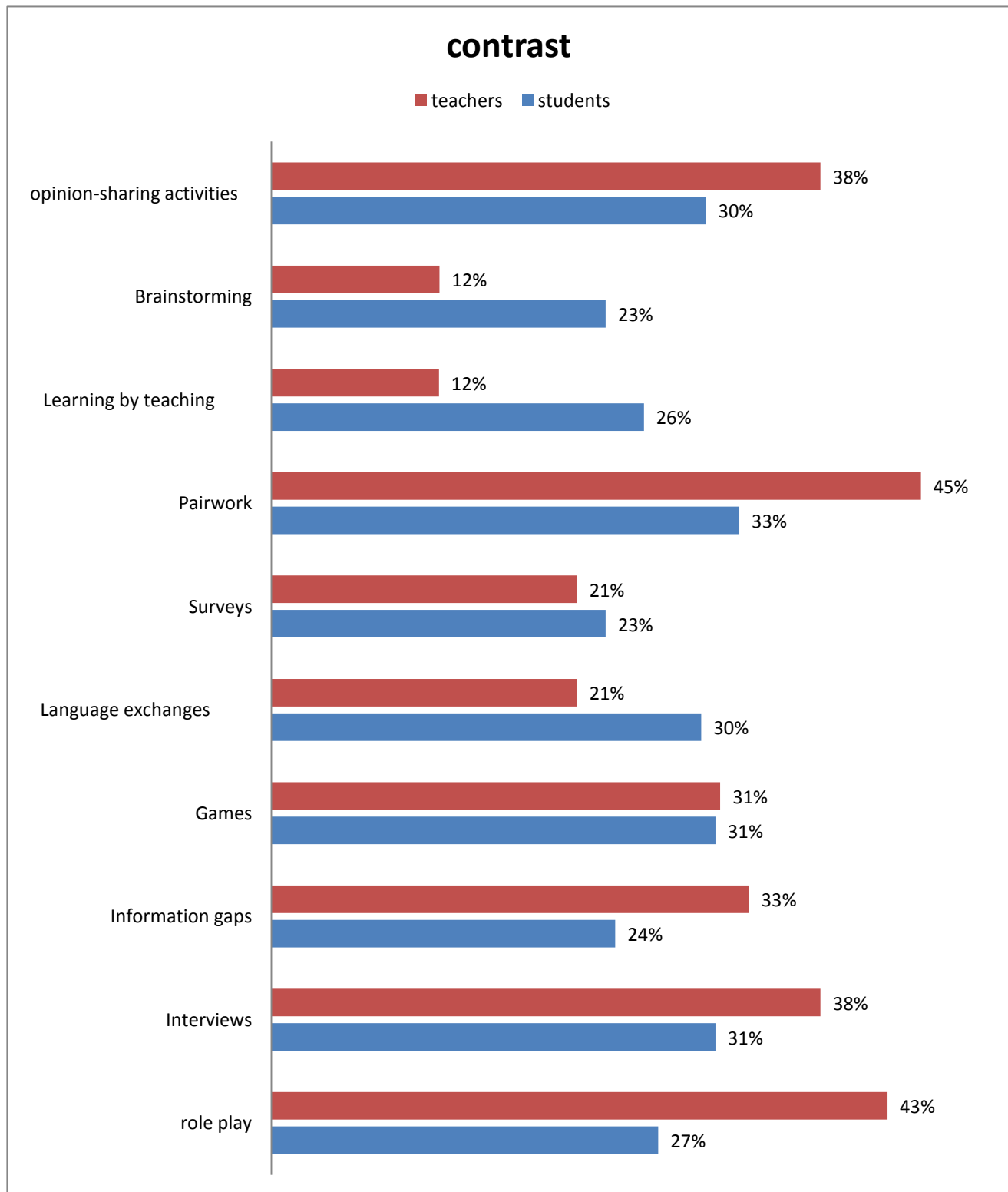
The Creation of a network among teachers where the significant as well as poor experience of the activities used, surly will contribute to the practicality, given teachers an oportune information of the benefits and disadvantage of the appliance of the activities before putting them into practice. Besides, to evaluate the different activities performed across the levels should be considered through a forum.

A further research of the suitability (practicality) of the activities, might specify the level in which could be better applied to obtain better results in the improvement of speaking skills.

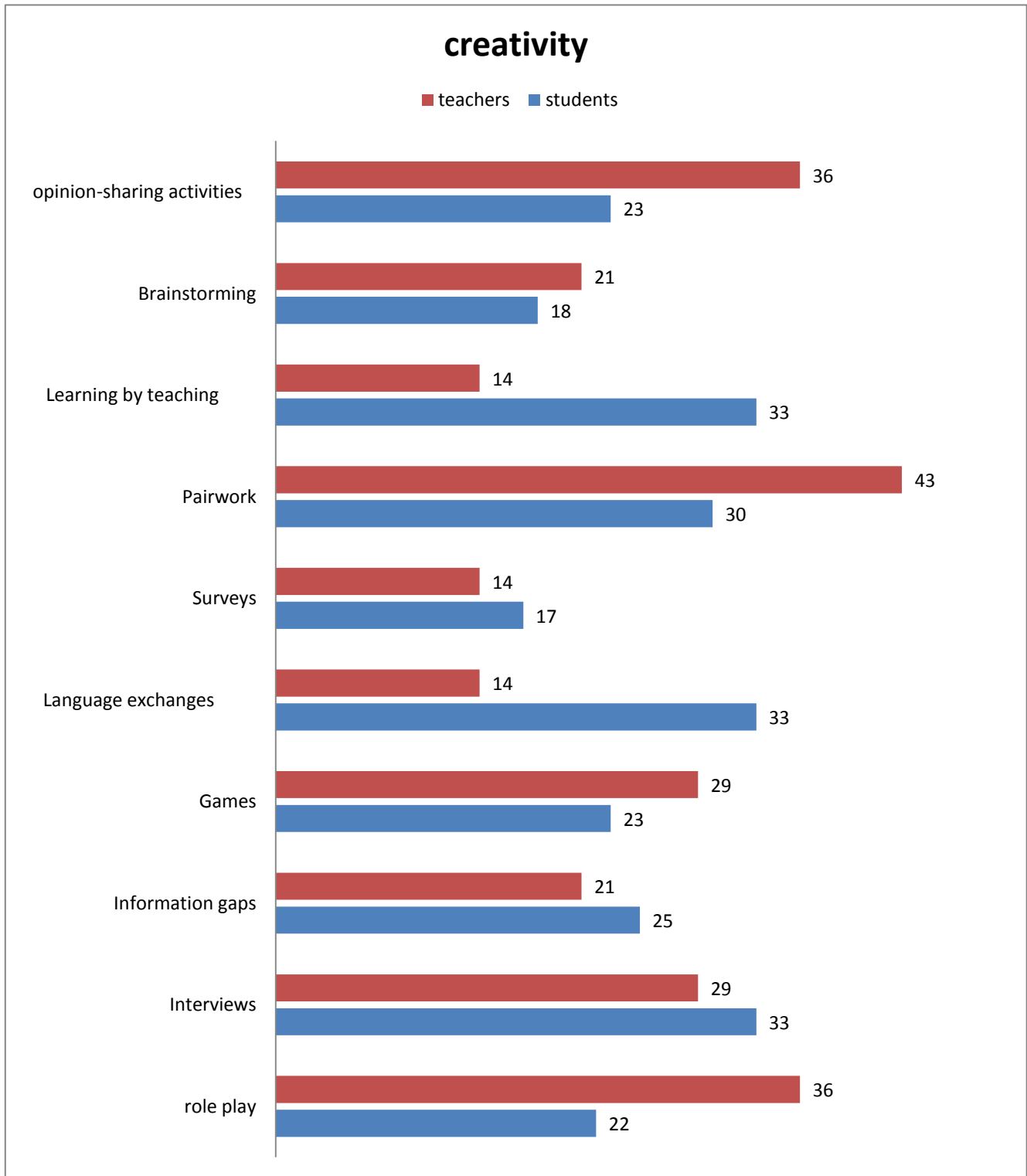
Graph 9



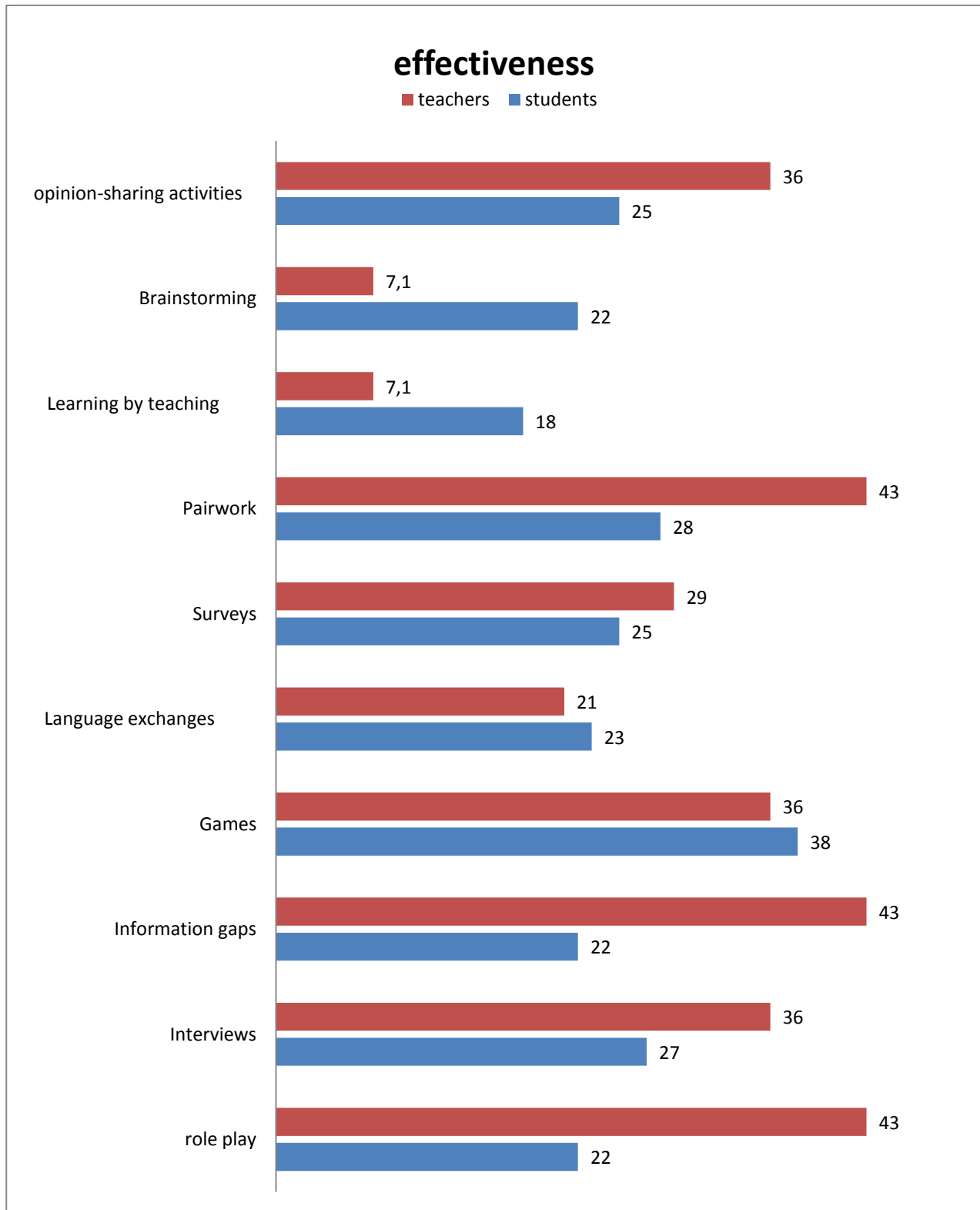
Graph 10



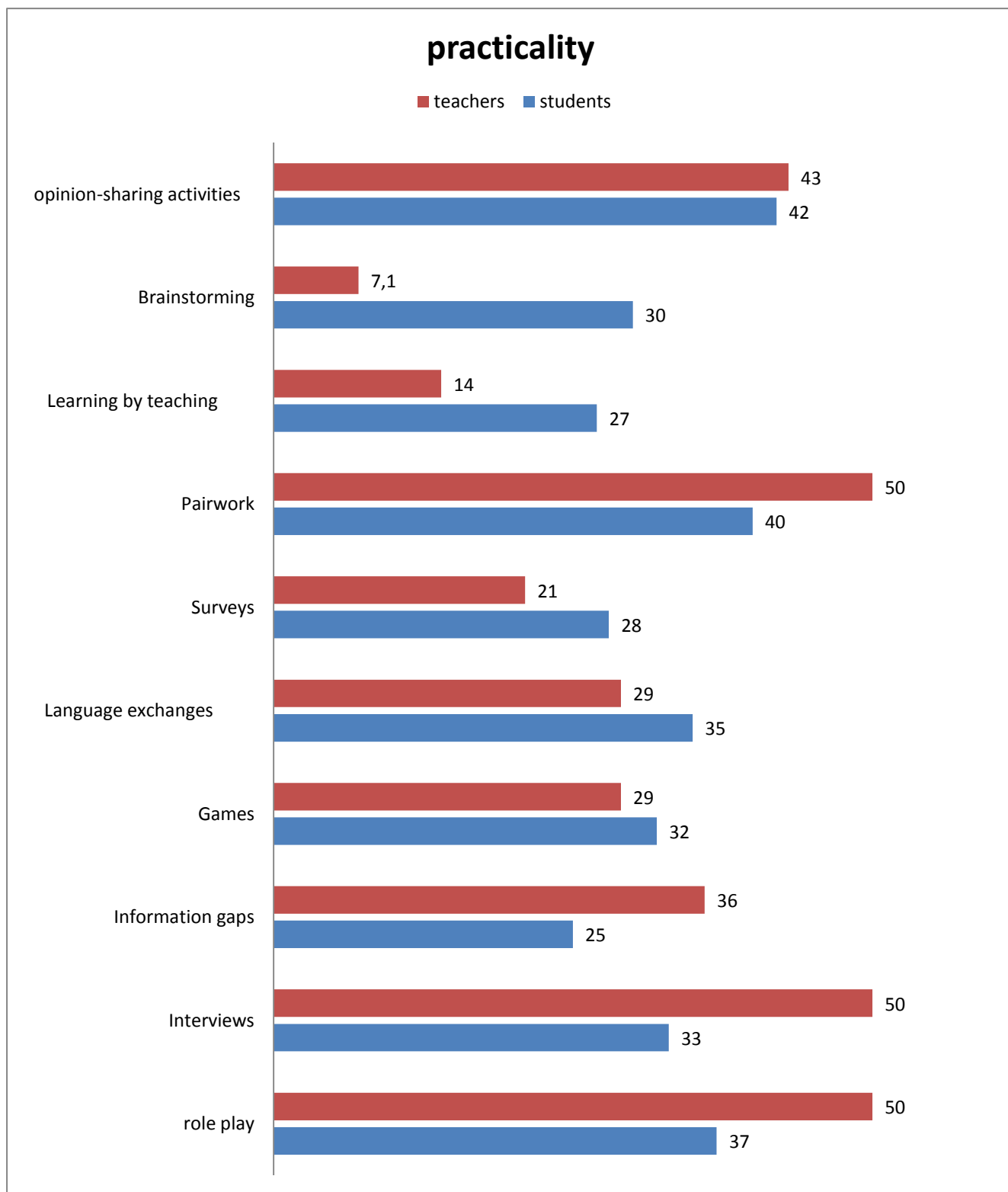
Graph 11



Graph 12



Graph 13



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Appendix Survey for Teachers

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO
LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT,
CREATIVE, EFFECTIVE AND PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

This survey is completely anonymous and the answers obtained through it will be used only for research purposes.

To answer properly the next survey you may need to know the following definitions

Definitions / Definiciones

1. Role play

Simulation exercise where the participants act out specified roles in a dramatization of an event or situation. The purpose of role playing is to achieve better understanding of a situation and use the language by experiencing a realistic simulation.

Ejercicio de simulación donde los participantes actúan sobre bases especificadas en una dramatización de un acontecimiento o situación. El propósito de juegos de rol es lograr una mejor comprensión de una situación al experimentar una simulación realista.

2. Interviews

A conversation between two people and one of them will be the subject of the report, or the published report itself.

Una conversación entre dos personas y una de ellas será objeto de las preguntas que servirán para el reporte de la información recibida.

3. Information gaps

In Information Gap activities, each student has information that the other student(s) don't have. The objective is for students to ask questions to find out what they can from the other(s).

Actividad en donde cada estudiante tiene información que el otro estudiante no tiene. El objetivo es que los estudiantes realicen preguntas para completar la información faltante.

4. Games

Something done for amusement or diversion to introduce or develop a subject.
Algo divertido ó entretenido para introducir o desarrollar un tema.

5. Language exchanges

Translations /Traducciones

6. Surveys

A gathering of a sample of data or opinions considered to be representative about certain a subject.

Recolección de una muestra de información u opinión considerada representativa de un tema determinado.

7. Pairwork

Pair work is learners working together in pairs to develop a subject.

En l trabajo en parejas los alumnos trabajan juntos para desarrollar un tema.

8. Learning by teaching

Students prepare and teach lessons, or parts of lessons. Learning by teaching should not be confused with presentations or lectures by students, as students not only convey certain content, but also choose their own methods and didactic approaches in teaching classmates that subject.

Permite a los estudiantes preparar y enseñar las lecciones, o partes de las lecciones. Aprender a través de la enseñanza no debe ser confundido con presentaciones o conferencias a cargo de los estudiantes, los estudiantes no sólo transmiten un determinado contenido, sino también eligen su propia manera de enseñar.

9. Brainstorming

Process for generating ideas and solutions through intensive and freewheeling group discussion. Every participant is encouraged to think aloud and suggest as many ideas as possible, no matter seemingly how outlandish or bizarre

Proceso para la generación de ideas y soluciones a través de la discusión en grupo. Cada participante se anima a pensar en voz alta y sugerir tantas ideas como sea posible, no importa si aparentemente sea extravagante o extraño.

10. opinion-sharing activities:

Activities where students compare values, opinions, beliefs, a ranking task in which students list qualities in order of importance which they might consider.

Actividades dónde los estudiantes comparan los valores, las opiniones, las creencias, clasificación jerárquica en que los estudiantes listan cualidades en el orden de importancia que ellos podrían considerar .

Survey for Teachers this survey tries to find out if the speaking activities presented before have improved the speaking skill in the Language Center in the University of Nariño according teachers' experience and students' perception of the creativity, effectiveness and practicality that these activities might promote and their range of use.

1. How often you put in practice these activities

	Every day	Once a week	Once a month	Never
1. Role play				
2. Interviews				
3. Information gaps				
4. Games				
5. Language exchanges				
6. Surveys				
7. Pairwork				
8. Learning by teaching				
9. brainstorming				
10. opinion-sharing activities				

2. from 1 to 5, being 1 the lowest score and 5 the highest score, grade the activities taking into account:

Creativity: the oral activities that elicit the Students to use new expressions, sentences, phrases, texts or ideas that profit the use of knowledge of the language.

- 1) Role play ()
- 2) Interviews ()
- 3) Information gaps ()
- 4) Games ()
- 5) Language exchanges ()
- 6) Surveys ()
- 7) Pairwork ()
- 8) Learning by teaching ()
- 9) Brainstorm ()
- 10) opinion-sharing activities ()

Effectiveness: the oral activities where the students achieve the expression of what they want to say and make them achieve the result communicatively expected.

- 1) Role play ()
- 2) Interviews ()
- 3) Information gaps ()
- 4) Games ()
- 5) Language exchanges ()
- 6) Surveys ()
- 7) Pairwork ()
- 8) Learning by teaching ()
- 9) Brainstorm ()
- 10) opinion-sharing activities ()

Practicality (Suitability): usefulness, easiness to use or to put in practice suiting your plans well.

- 1) Role play ()
- 2) Interviews ()
- 3) Information gaps ()
- 4) Games ()
- 5) Language exchanges ()
- 6) Surveys ()
- 7) Pairwork ()
- 8) Learning by teaching ()
- 9) Brainstorm ()
- 10) opinion-sharing activities ()

Appendix A Survey for students

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO
LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT,
CREATIVE, EFFECTIVE AND PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

This survey is completely anonymous and the answers obtained through it will be used only for research purposes.

To answer properly the next survey you may need to know the following definitions/ Para resolver la siguiente encuesta usted puede necesitar conocer las siguientes definiciones:

Definitions / Definiciones

1. Role play

Simulation exercise where the participants act out specified roles in a dramatization of an event or situation. The purpose of role playing is to achieve better understanding of a situation and use the language by experiencing a realistic simulation.

Ejercicio de simulación donde los participantes actúan sobre bases especificadas en una dramatización de un acontecimiento o situación. El propósito de juegos de rol es lograr una mejor comprensión de una situación al experimentar una simulación realista.

2. Interviews

A conversation between two people and one of them will be the subject of the report, or the published report itself.

Una conversación entre dos personas y una de ellas será objeto de las preguntas que servirán para el reporte de la información recibida.

3. Information gaps

In Information Gap activities, each student has information that the other student(s) don't have. The objective is for students to ask questions to find out what they can from the other(s).

Actividad en donde cada estudiante tiene información que el otro estudiante no tiene. El objetivo es que los estudiantes realicen preguntas para completar la información faltante.

4. Games

Something done for amusement or diversion to introduce or develop a subject.
Algo divertido ó entretenido para introducir o desarrollar un tema.

5. Language exchanges

Translations/ Traducciones

6. Surveys

A gathering of a sample of data or opinions considered to be representative about certain a subject.

Recolección de una muestra de información u opinión considerada representativa de un tema determinado.

7. Pairwork

Pair work is learners working together in pairs to develop a subject.

En el trabajo en parejas los alumnos trabajan juntos para desarrollar un tema.

8. Learning by teaching

Students prepare and teach lessons, or parts of lessons. Learning by teaching should not be confused with presentations or lectures by students, as students not only convey certain content, but also choose their own methods and didactic approaches in teaching classmates that subject.

Permite a los estudiantes preparar y enseñar las lecciones, o partes de las lecciones. Aprender a través de la enseñanza no debe ser confundido con presentaciones o conferencias a cargo de los estudiantes, los estudiantes no sólo transmiten un determinado contenido, sino también eligen su propia manera de enseñar.

9. Brainstorming

Process for generating ideas and solutions through intensive and freewheeling group discussion. Every participant is encouraged to think aloud and suggest as many ideas as possible, no matter seemingly how outlandish or bizarre.

Proceso para la generación de ideas y soluciones a través de la discusión en grupo. Cada participante se anima a pensar en voz alta y sugerir tantas ideas como sea posible, no importa si aparentemente sea extravagante o extraño.

10. opinion-sharing activities:

Activities where students compare values, opinions, beliefs, a ranking task in which students list qualities in order of importance which they might consider.

Actividades donde los estudiantes comparan los valores, las opiniones, las creencias, clasificación jerárquica en que los estudiantes listan cualidades en el orden de importancia que ellos podrían considerar .

Survey for students

this survey tries to find out if the speaking activities presented before have improved the speaking skill in the Language Center in the University of Nariño according teachers' experience and students' perception of the creativity, effectiveness and practicality that these activities might promote and their range of use.

/Esta encuesta trata de medir si las actividades orales presentadas en este trabajo han mejorado la habilidad oral en el Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad de Nariño de acuerdo a la experiencia de los profesores y la percepción de los estudiantes en cuanto a la creatividad, efectividad y practicidad que puedan promover estas actividades y su rango de uso.

**1. How often you put in practice these activities/
Con que frecuencia pone en práctica estas actividades**

	Every day	Once a week	Once a month	Never
1) Role play				
2) Interviews				
3) Information gaps				
4) Games				
5) Language exchanges				
6) Surveys				
7) Pairwork				
8) Learning by teaching				
9) brainstorming				
10) opinion-sharing activities				

2. From 1 to 5, being 1 the lowest score and 5 the highest score, grade the activities taking into account:

- **Califique de 1 a 5 las actividades listadas a continuación, siendo 1 la menor calificación y 5 la mayor, teniendo en cuenta el concepto de creatividad, efectividad y practicidad.**

Creativity: the oral activities that elicit to you to use new expressions, sentences, phrases, texts or ideas that profit the use of your knowledge of the language.

Creatividad: las actividades orales que lo animan a usted a producir nuevas expresiones, oraciones, frases, textos ó ideas que dan provecho al uso de sus conocimientos del idioma.

- 1) Role play ()
- 2) Interviews ()
- 3) Information gaps ()
- 4) Games ()
- 5) Language exchanges ()
- 6) Surveys ()
- 7) Pairwork ()
- 8) Learning by teaching ()
- 9) Brainstorm ()
- 10) opinion-sharing activities ()

Effectiveness: the activities where you can say what you want to and make you achieve the result expected

Efectividad: las actividades donde usted logra decir lo que quiere expresar y alcanza los resultados esperados comunicativamente.

- 1) Role play ()
- 2) Interviews ()
- 3) Information gaps ()
- 4) Games ()
- 5) Language exchanges ()
- 6) Surveys ()
- 7) Pairwork ()
- 8) Learning by teaching ()
- 9) Brainstorm ()
- 10) opinion-sharing activities ()

Practicality (Suitability): usefulness, easiness to use or to put in practice.

Practicidad (Conveniente): útil, fácil de usar ó de poner en práctica.

- 1) Role play ()
- 2) Interviews ()
- 3) Information gaps ()
- 4) Games ()
- 5) Language exchanges ()
- 6) Surveys ()
- 7) Pairwork ()
- 8) Learning by teaching ()
- 9) Brainstorm ()
- 10) opinion-sharing activities ()