

Running head: CLL ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER ORAL PRODUCTION IN LARGE CLASSES

COOPERATIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER ORAL PRODUCTION
IN LARGE CLASSES.

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UNIVERSIDAD DE NARIÑO

SAN JUAN DE PASTO

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“Las ideas y conclusiones aportadas en el trabajo de grado son responsabilidad exclusiva de los autores”.

Artículo 1° del acuerdo N ° 324 de octubre de 1966, emanado del Honorable Consejo Directivo de la Universidad de Nariño

Nota de Aceptación

Presidente del Jurado

Firma del Jurado

Firma del Jurado

San Juan de Pasto, 28 de Octubre 2019

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RESUMEN

Este estudio cuantitativo identifica la influencia de las clases numerosas en la falta de competencia oral de los estudiantes de undécimo grado en la escuela secundaria pública ubicada en el sur de Pasto. Hemos propuesto determinar si la implementación de actividades cooperativas de aprendizaje de idiomas puede fomentar la producción oral de los estudiantes. Basados en las estructuras de Kagan (2009) se implementaran algunas actividades como “carrusel de retroalimentación, mesa redonda, circulo interior y exterior, jigsaw”. Para la recolección de datos se aplicaran dos técnicas : pruebas (pre-test and post-test) y observación. Además, este estudio cubre algunos antecedentes relacionados con actividades cooperativas del aprendizaje de idiomas con el fin de apoyar esta propuesta.

Palabras clave: producción oral, clases numerosas y aprendizaje cooperativo de idiomas.

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study identify the influence of large classes in the lack of oral proficiency in students from eleventh grade in a public high school located in the south of Pasto. We proposed to determine whether the implemantation of cooperative language learning activities can foster oral production of the students. Based on Kagan's structures (2009) some activities such as, carousel feedback, round table, inside and outside circle, and jigsaw will be implemented. For the data collection two techniques will be aplied: test (pre-test and post-test) and observation. Additionally, this study covers some antecedents related to cooperative language learning activities in orden to support this proposal.

Key words: oral production, large classes and cooperative language learning.

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CLL ACTIVITIES TO FORSTER ORAL PRODUCTION

Nowadays, oral production is considered one of the most complex and vital of language skills; consequently, educational systems demand to enhance students' oral proficiency involving interaction and active participation of the students in classes since it became the main focus when teaching and learning English as a foreign language during the last years in Colombia with the implementation of educational policies as Colombia Bilingue (2016).

Unfortunately, the direction of this objective has been constantly affected by the problematic of large classes which are a reality in the Colombian educational system in which a group of thirty to forty students is prevalent, influencing negatively the students' learning process, classroom management, individual feedback and oral production, which is the main concern of this study.

Based on an analysis of teaching practices at a Colombian foreign language class carried out in (2015) it was found that during the current century, there has been a tendency to use communicative approaches to improve oral proficiency and communicative competence in the region. Despite intervening factors such as lack of resources and large classes, one of them is the implementation of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) as a possible solution. According to Slavin (1996, as cited in Blandon & Naranjo, 2013), it is an effective instructional method which involves participation, pair work, responsibility of each student for his/her own learning and for the learning of the rest of the group.

Teachers could implement this method and some activities based on Kagan's Cooperative Learning Structures (2009) such as group work, team building, communication building, and multifunctional skills, in order to not only benefit the learning process and interaction in classes but also to facilitate the teaching process. The implementation of CLL in the large classes can guarantee that all the students can learn effectively while they feel involved in their own learning

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process. Based on experiences as students, large classes hinder interaction and participation because of the limited opportunities to foster them and cooperative activities are considered an important tool for teachers who have to deal with large classes in their daily work.

Research problem

Problem description

The problem of large classes arose from the educational experience because as students, we faced the disadvantages and problems of studying a second language in crowded classes, which made it difficult to have opportunities for interaction; thus, hampering the learning process. In this region, a large class represents one of the biggest challenges in second language teaching and learning because it makes more difficult to enhance communicative competence and there are not enough opportunities for students to participate, (Brown, 2007). In Colombia, large language classes are made up of around 50-60 students and for teachers, classroom management becomes a daunting issue. Teachers have struggled when teaching because this problem affects them directly and indirectly when they try to implement new methodologies.

There are factors which are involved in this problem; the first one is the implementation of educational policies. Colombian education has some failures and a perfect example is the curriculum guidelines for foreign language proposed by the Ministry of Education (2006). In these guidelines, the government demands an inclusive education and high achievement standards in all areas, including foreign language learning, but it provides neither enough resources nor the conditions to guarantee the high proficiency in language skills particularly in speaking and listening. The lack of resources such as teaching materials, classrooms, and even budget have made this condition worse. Another aspect is the lack of teachers' preparation because some language teachers are neither well prepared in English nor in the methodology necessary to teach English according to Cardenas (2001).

The previous circumstances can possibly affect the second language learning process. For example, the development of oral production can vary among students because time is limited so the teacher cannot interact with each student; further, teachers will continue having problems

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with classroom management when generating positive relationships among students. Besides, in a large class, a negative affective environment will be common because of the disruption produced by the lack of discipline, an aspect that may demotivate language learners.

A possible alternative for this problem, the implementation of cooperative language learning activities (Kagan, 2009) is suggested which might positively affect the learning process of students in terms of motivation and most importantly, fostering oral production. If CLL principles are implemented in large classes, students may be more likely to learn and they can feel involved in their own learning process so this aspect can facilitate the creation of an effective environment in classroom and teachers can feel more comfortable when teaching.

Problem delimitations

Conceptual delimitation. The concepts are the following: Large classes, which according to Coleman (1989, as cited in Wang & Zhang, 2011) may be made up of 50-100 students or more per classroom, which could represent an over-crowded class for foreign language teachers. Another concept is cooperative language learning (CLL), which according to Slavin (1996, cited in Blandon and Naranjo, 2013) is an effective instructional method which requires pair group work, the participation and responsibility of each student. And finally, Oral Production that is defined by Hymes (1972) as the capacity to communicate effectively within a particular speech community that wants to accomplish its purposes.

Geographical delimitation. This research will take place in the city of San Juan de Pasto (Nariño), specifically in a public high school named Institución Educativa Municipal Ciudad de Pasto, located in the urban sector in the south of the city.

The population. The participants in this research will be 30 students, 20 women and 10 men from eleven-A grade of this high school, whose age ranges from 15 to 17 years old; on average they come from low and middle socio-economical strata.

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Problem statement

Can the implementation of cooperative language learning activities (CLL) foster oral production in large classes of an English course with students from eleven-A grade in a public high school located in the south of Pasto?

-What are the main problems that a teacher can face when fostering oral production in a foreign language large class through CLL activities?

-What CLL activities can be appropriate to be applied in a foreign language large class?

Objectives

General Objective. To determine whether the implementation of cooperative language learning activities can foster oral production in large classes of an English course with students from eleven-A grade in a public high school located in the south of Pasto.

Specific Objectives.

- To identify the initial level of speaking proficiency of students.
- To implement CLL speaking activities in class with 11th...
- To identify students' level of speaking proficiency after the implementation of CLL speaking activities.
- To explain what CLL activities can be the most appropriate to be applied in a foreign language large class.

Significance of the study

This research is relevant for the following reasons: First of all, comprehending all the assumptions of the theories behind the importance of oral production can help to clarify misunderstandings around it. The aim is to provide information which can help both students and teachers to foster and to enhance the speaking ability in class.

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Second, this research will be useful for educational and pedagogical purposes especially in English as foreign language programs. People from this field such as researchers, teachers and students in the region have been recently presenting some struggles with oral production in large classes. Thus, students require to have high levels of proficiency in communicative skills. The improvement of the oral skills will be transcendent to achieve the goals set by the Colombian government (2006).

Third, it is concerning that despite large classes are common in Colombia, there are still low-information range and researches about it nationwide. A large group in a foreign language class affects the improvement of the communicative skills; and according to Brown (2007), it produces failures in the teaching/learning process; besides, it reduces interaction and speaking in the target language. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to determine whether CLL activities can foster oral production and speaking ability in a large EFL classroom. Based on Kagan's cooperative language structures (2009) this study aims to increase group work, team building, communication building, and multifunctional skills to encourage students and facilitators to speak in the target language and improve their communicative skills.

Ultimately, the implications of this investigation are to understand, describe and explain relevant information about how the main problems that a teacher can face when fostering oral skills, besides, to suggest what CLL activities can be the most appropriate to be applied in the region. Future researches could apply these learning strategies that can be used by teachers and students as well to enhance oral production in large classes.

Limitations of the study

There are some limitations to conduct this research study; for instance, regarding authorizations to conduct the investigation in the institution would represent an obstacle because it could affect the execution of the project. Another problem in terms of logistics is the fact that in

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Colombia, classes in high school may be interrupted by different national strikes, a fact that could be detrimental to the development of our research and data collection. Besides, other limitations could be found in the application of the techniques to collect data because pre and posttests cannot guarantee that the results show accurately the effectiveness or failure of cooperative language activities. Some strategies will be applied to overcome these limitations are:

Preplanning some alternatives for collecting information in case of interruptions or problems that affect the study; for example, asking English teachers for some grades and academic reports etc. which can show the learning and teaching background. Moreover, regarding the implementation of the tests as a technique, it will be important to design clear, specific, and accurate questions or tasks, in order to avoid misunderstandings and to get the information needed.

Theoretical Framework

During this chapter, the theoretical framework will be reviewed, as well as the antecedents and former studies about the research problem. First, the relevance and concepts about oral production in English as a foreign language will be discussed; additionally, some assumptions will be introduced in relation to large classes focusing on their definitions and what they represent in the teaching-learning process. Then, some concepts regarding cooperative language learning based on different authors and experts in this topic will be introduced, which will set the grounds for our research as the possible solution to the aforementioned problem. Besides, some aspects will be described such as definition, objectives, teacher's and learner's roles, activities, advantages, disadvantages, challenges and methodology. Subsequently, some antecedents will be reviewed that can help as references for our research.

Oral production

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Oral production is a relevant component of foreign language learners' development since it is a complex skill which, according to Hymes (1972), is the ability to communicate in an effective way within a specific language community that wants to perform common aims. Likewise, Gordillo (2011) defined oral skill as the ability to express or communicating verbally, based on the linguistic rules which bring together two skills: listening as a passive skill and speaking which is the active skill.

Based on these definitions, it is reasonable to think how important and complex the oral skill is since it combines fluency, coherence, lexical resources, pronunciation, grammatical range and accuracy. The former elements are parameters to be competent when communicating orally. Kaye (2009), in collaboration with the British Council, states some definitions. First, fluency and coherence that refer to how well the learners speak while managing the right speed, and how accurate they are while associating ideas; moreover, speakers need to be able to understand and to express with precision their thoughts avoiding redundancy or excessive wordiness and ambiguity. Then, lexical and grammatical resources which allude to how much vocabulary the learner has, and how well he/she employs it, plus being aware of the rules, functions and social meaning when communicating ideas. Finally, pronunciation which basically is to produce comprehensible speech taking into account the rhythm, intonation, stress and tone.

Nevertheless, all these parameters and skills are considered unlikely to accomplish with our educational conditions; according to Blandon and Naranjo (2013), it is very difficult to achieve the bilingualism goal that the Ministry of Education (2016) has set that students should develop intermediate and advanced levels of English, during the Basic and Middle Education. Educational institutions, within the framework of school autonomy, may be proposed to reach higher levels. It draws a challenge in terms of effectiveness when implementing any strategy.

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This brings up the question of what large classrooms represent and how this factor affects the learning and teaching process.

What are large classes?

Large classrooms represent a big challenge for teachers; some authors have some similar ideas and notions about its definition.

According to Nolasco (1988), the conception of large classes might vary depending on the context or region; for example, in some cases, a large class in the United States is a group around 20 people; meanwhile, an Asian large class would be a group of approximately 40 to 50 students, which is an overcrowded classroom.

In the same way, according to Hayes (1997, as cited in Wang & Zhang, 2011), the concept of a large class would change because it depends on the context and the person's perspective. For instance, in some western schools in which 20 students in a classroom represents a large class.

Colleman (1989, as cited in Wang & Zhang, 2011) affirms that in China, a large class means 50-100 students or more per classroom, which could represent an over-crowded class for foreign teachers. The context and culture have a direct influence over this situation and it can vary because people have different ideas about large classes and different degrees of tolerance of class size. below it would be discussed what implies to teach in these kind of classes

Teaching in large classes

LoCastro (2001, cited in Brown, 2007) states that language classes should be comprised of 12 to 15 students so they can interact and receive enough individual attention. But this is not the current situation in Colombia since there are large language classes with groups from 50 to 60 students. In large classes Brown (2007, p 246) identifies some problems as follows:

- Development of the skills can vary among students.

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- Teacher cannot guarantee individual attention to each student.
- For students, it is more difficult interact and speak.
- Teacher's feedback is more limited.

Due to the fact that it is necessary to consider some intervention and solution to this problem which is impacting negatively the communicative process in students, a possible solution is the implementation of cooperative language learning; a method that focuses on and prevails the student-centred learning.

Cooperative Language Learning

Some authors who have defined cooperative learning are:

Olsen and Kagan (1992 as cited in Meng, 2010, p.702) stated that cooperative language learning is group learning activities organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others.

Also, Slavin (1996, as cited in Blandon & Naranjo, 2013) claims that cooperative language learning is an effective instructional method which requires group work and the participation and responsibility of each student for his/her own learning and for the learning of the rest of the group.

Based on these definitions, it could be said that CLL is a method whose main goal is to make students work collaboratively in small groups in order to guarantee a successful process of learning where each student plays an important role in the group, working hard to achieve shared goals such as good grades, project or task completion, or the knowledge of the second language itself.

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Moreover, according to Johnson and Johnson (1994, cited in Hrönn, 2014), there are five elements that need to be presented in order for Cooperative Learning to be successful are:

Positive interdependence, it occurs when each member of the group understands that what he/she does can affect everyone results; in this element, it is important to take into account that the scores for each member of the group may be averaged besides, groups might be heterogeneous (in terms of ethnicity, achievement or sex) and finally, each member of the group need to have a specific role in the group. Individual accountability, it involves both, group and individual performance, so each person in the group can receive a grade based on his/her achievements along the activity. Social skills, it determines how successful is the interaction among the members of a group. And the final element is structuring structures which refers to the different activities that teachers can implement in order to enhance students' interaction.

positive interdependence, individual accountability, social skills, face-to-face interaction and group processing". Each one of these aspects refers to the mutual support, responsibility, and teamwork.

Furthermore, Olsen and Kagan (1991, cited in Richards and Rogers, 2001) established some similar elements of successful group-based learning, but they include other aspects, which are structuring and structures; those aspects refer to the order in which students must interact.

Using CLL in our classrooms demands a big responsibility for teachers because they do not have to form them only academically but form them as human beings who can serve and communicate in society when they have to face real life outside of the classroom. Consequently, when students work in small teams, they are not only practicing the language but also learning how to lose the fear of speaking in front of the others. This situation is described by Motly (1998, cited in Hrönn, 2014), who found that 85% of the people are afraid of speaking in public more than any other thing, mostly because they do not want to be mocked because of their mistakes.

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Therefore, Gomez and Martinez (2014) said that making small groups of two or three people are going to give the opportunity for timid students to speak and for the most participative to improve their listening skills. In this way, students might be prepared to face real life contexts, for example, getting a job, where usually the requirements are: “the ability to work well with others or good cooperative skills” so we as teachers have the responsibility of preparing our students for real life (Visir, 2014, cited in Hrönn, 2014, p.11), while they are also learning social and moral values and “forming the basis for more complex thinking and understanding” (Frey, Fisher & Everlove 2009, cited in Hrönn, 2014, p.12).

It is reasonable to think that CLL has many advantages which can be applied to deal with the burden of large classes, as classes would be divided into small groups. However, it is important to highlight that CLL is not simply that, this approach has some well-defined objectives, which are meant to promote the reflective and critical reasoning, to enhance the communicative competence through the social interaction. But one of the most important objectives is to reduce competition and to enhance cooperation among learners. Richards and Rogers (2001; pp 243) highlight some specific goals in the CLL; these are:

- To give opportunities for a natural second language acquisition through interaction and group work.
- To generate a methodology so teachers can use in different contexts
- To encourage students to develop learning and communication strategies
- To improve learners' motivation and reduce learners' stress.

Richards and Rogers (2001) established the main roles in cooperative language learning defining the functions of teachers and students; as follows:

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The learner's role in cooperative language learning is to work collaboratively, participating directly and actively in tasks with the other members of the group. It is necessary for learners to learn team work skills and also, they have to be the directors of their own learning; planning, monitoring and evaluating it. Pair grouping is a useful way in which learners can work because it facilitates the alternation of roles such as: tutors, checkers, recorders and information shares.

On the other hand, the teacher's role differs considerably from the role that a teacher normally has in traditional classes. The biggest responsibility of the teacher is to structure in a well-organized plan the learning environment in the classroom, establishing goals, outlining and structuring tasks, setting the physical arrangement of the classroom; Furthermore, the CLL teacher must be a counsellor of group work and facilitator of learning and communication tasks.

According to Collazos and Mendoza (2006), although this method emerged several years ago, it is starting to regain popularity because of the benefits that multiple studies claim that this method has; however, these studies have not revealed clearly how and what elements should be implemented to execute this method in the classroom. For example, it states that it is necessary to make changes in the roles of the teacher and the students, in order to achieve active participation from both. Moreover, authors contrast collaborative learning and cooperative learning. For example, Panitz, T. (1997) established that in collaborative learning, students are responsible for designing the structure of interactions and making decisions about their own learning processes; while in cooperative learning, the teacher is in charge of making students interact and doing everything to achieve the goals of the class. Other authors such as Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, and Roy (1984) state that cooperative learning makes tasks or roles assignation within the group while in collaborative learning intends to create correlations to achieve group cohesion.

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Furthermore, there are some activities and strategies in cooperative language learning that could be the most suitable to address the aforementioned problem which affects the oral production.

Cooperative language learning activities

A vast of authors have done extensive research regarding a variety of strategies, structures, and activities in cooperative language learning, which can be considered to enhance the language learning process; one of them is Kagan (2009), who established some learning structures and activities which would be suitable for fostering oral production and interaction among students. Since Kagan's cooperative learning structures are based on group work, team building, communication building, and multifunctional skills, these can facilitate easily and accurately the learning and teaching in crowded classes.

As a starting point, Team building is one of Kagan's structures, which intends to enhance and to combine mutual support, valuing differences, interaction, and positive climate with the main focus which is communication in classes. An activity that involves the former features is The Round-robin in which students take turns for sharing something, expressing ideas and opinions, or creating stories with his or her teammates. It requires an equal participation and guideless of the facilitator who in this case is the teacher. The steps to follow are simple:

1. Teacher proposes a topic more exactly problems with different solutions or viewpoints in order to be discussed.
2. Students discuss in the respective team before sharing their thoughts one by one.

A second structure to take into account is communication building, which includes vocabulary development, communicative skills, and role-taking ability. Some activities for this structure, according to Kagan (2009), would be Carousel Feedback which is quite similar to peer feedback but in this activity the teams rotate, observe, discuss from project to project to give

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feedback to other teams by written and oral discussion. At the end, the teams receive their corresponding feedback to be reviewed and discussed. It is necessary the help of the teacher for time managing and evidently the responsibility and commitment of each student for the development of the activity which involves everyone.

Another activity to add when implementing the communication building is Simultaneous Round Table. In this activity, the teacher provides a discussion topic, and each student in the group talks about it and takes notes on their own piece of paper. Students then pass their papers, so that each teammate can add to the prior responses gathering the information of each one of the team. At the end it is important to share the final result; moreover, thoughts and opinions about the activity.

Finally, one of the most complex structures proposed by Kagan and Kagan (2009) is the Multifunctional that combines all the structures and oral skills to develop an activity. Furthermore, it involves some functions such as checking for understanding, review, helping, tutoring, and sharing. It is highly recommended to enhance social skills and knowledge building.

A perfect example for this structure is the inside Outside Circle, in which students form and rotate in a concentric circle, so that the inside circle faces out and the outside circle faces in. The teacher gives some time for the students in the inner circle to move one spot until they rotate all the circle. The main objective of this activity is to promote oral production since students will be sharing, quizzing, or problem solving. The level to apply this technique can be flexible, it is not about the product but the process in which the student can take the risk and speak. The teacher or facilitator has to give a topic, to manage the time and to be around the students to clarify doubts and to keep the order. It is important to be specific with the rules to follow, so the students can be more autonomous during the activity.

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Finally, the Jigsaw activity, which requires each student on the team to be a knowledgeable on one topic; then, they will work with members from other teams assigned the corresponding expert. Eventually, students return to their original groups to try to "piece together" a clear idea of the topic in general and students are all assessed on all aspects of the topic at the end. This method is very useful in multilevel class allowing each student to contribute meaningfully to a discussion, something that is more difficult to achieve in large-group discussion. The group task that follows individual peer teaching promotes discussion, problem-solving, and learning.

Teachers normally apply many different strategies or activities to reach students with different abilities and learning styles. Cooperative learning activities could work as a way of solving the lack of interaction as well as fostering the quality oral production. This method could achieve this goal and overcome the possible challenges, at the same time promoting active learning and encouraging learning community in large classes. Although it would be even more effective if teachers were able to combine the former approach and activities with classroom strategies; for example, Brown (2007, p 246) proposed some of them to apply in large classes as follow:

- To make each student feel significant by learning their names and using them
- To design interactive tasks for students, so that they can feel engaged and involved
- To enhance the pair work and group work for them to interact and perform in English.
- To use appropriate feedback, peer-assessment and evaluation.

The pros and cons of the implementation of the CLL as an alternative

Large classes represent a big challenge to develop some activities such as pair work and group work and Nolasco (1988) mentioned some problems found in large classes; some of those

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are lack of discipline, the noise when everybody is talking at the same time, in addition, some students do not use English during the activities and it is really difficult to control the enthusiastic personalities of the students.

In Colombian classrooms, this is a frequent problem and the implementation of methods has been affected by the large number of students in the class. This case is one of the most significant challenges because the requirements of the educative system are high; for that reason, it is important to identify the weaknesses and problems in order that teacher can face them and enhance the learning opportunities.

According to the previous remarks, the implementation of cooperative language learning in large classes seems to be challenging, but the following research articles serve as antecedents to guarantee its effectiveness and its appropriateness when strengthening the oral production in crowded classes. Multiple authors such as Gradone (2016), Servic, Aytin, and Bayram (2012), Castillo (2007), Gomez and Martinez (2015) have supported the idea of teamwork as a way to contribute to students' active learning. For instance:

Gradone (2016) carried out an investigation named "Increasing Student Participation, Interest, and Communication with Cooperative Learning Structures" which examined students' attitudes about Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures in a school in the USA, they implemented some activities such as Rally Coach, Timed Pair Share, and Round; besides, some surveys were used at the beginning of the course to know the students' attitudes and at the end to know students' attitudes about CLL structures and activities. The findings show students' classifications of structures and activities overwhelmingly positive, evidencing how the students' perception about CL activities improved from the initial to final surveys. In conclusion, the author suggests that the results are effective and all children would benefit from the use of cooperative learning.

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Servic, Aytin, and Bayram (2012) conducted a study which focused on identifying teachers' awareness of Cooperative language learning and also on gaining insight into the current use of constructivist methods in foreign language instruction, in Turkey. It was titled *Implementing cooperative learning in the language classroom*. This study involved fourteen English teachers working at a university. Moreover, students participated in interviews in order to ask the teachers their experiences in teaching, encouraging them to give their opinions on cooperative learning. The results of the research made it possible to draw some conclusions. For example, cooperative work on classroom activities are an important element to build students' confidence, as they can share ideas when they are together despite having some disadvantages; for example, the lack of discipline.

It is important to highlight some studies in the region. Castillo (2007), a student from Universidad Nacional de Colombia, published his research named "Improving Eleventh Graders' Oral Production in English Class through Cooperative Learning Strategies". It focused on helping students to express themselves more accurately orally through CLL strategies. The population was students of eleventh grade at Colegio de Bachillerato Patria in Bogotá. The procedure consisted of designing five lesson plans in which CLL and speaking strategies were combined and applied. Each topic was selected according to the students' interests and needs in order to motivate them to participate. Some results about the investigation were: all the students at the end of the implementation showed a different attitude towards group work and the skill of speaking was improved thanks to the appropriate input given by other communicative skills. Students learned many core values during the process; at the beginning, they wanted to work only with their friends, but then they learnt the advantages of sharing responsibilities and assigning roles. As a conclusion, it was noticed that cooperative learning strategies helped students to improve oral production and interaction and identify the possible causes such as first, appropriate input;

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second, not have enough vocabulary; third, the lack attractive and appropriate activities to motivate students; and finally, the deficiency of an environment free from anxiety and pressure

Gomez and Matinez (2014) developed a study “Cooperative learning on the promotion of oral production” in which were involved a group of twenty – three students from first grade at Jorge Eliecer Gaitán School. It was carried out because of the necessity of finding contemporary approaches as cooperative work to help students in the Colombian context, to improve their oral skills. The researchers’ main objective was to analyse the impact of the implementation of a cooperative approach in first graders to promote oral skills. To implement this classroom project, the examiners worked together to keep discipline and to provide guidance since they have not gotten used to working in groups. For starting, teachers did some warm-up activities such as: Games, matching exercises, drawing and role plays; then, the vocabulary and implicit grammar selected for the lesson were presented by modelling and repetition; Finally, learners needed to practice the new material and input into real context. For this, two methods were implemented, which circle the sage and problem-solving tasks. After applying these methods, the researchers concluded that, young learners displayed difficulties when working in groups since they were used to working individually at this primary school. For this reason, they needed teacher involvement to keep the use of the target language in the classroom. Finally, learners should be trained on how to work in groups.

Recommendations for using Cooperative Language Learning in Large Classes effectively

The success of CLL is crucially dependent on the essence and organization of group work. According to Johnson and Johnson (1984), this needs a well-structured curriculum of learning carefully designed, planned, prepared and followed-up. It is required to set recommendations to avoid intervening factors that can affect the implementation of cooperative language learning activities in large classes such as, misunderstandings, discipline, order, noise,

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space, and time management. Jacobs and Loh (2003) intended some strategies to make cooperative work more effective.

1. To avoid misunderstandings, space, and time management

Preparation is required so the facilitator can explain the goals for the group work, including both the academic and the social skills objectives. However, to set clear objectives and instructions, and assessment aspects so students can understand them easily. Moreover, the facilitator needs to previously determine the group conformation and to assign roles to group members and to switch roles regularly promoting positive group interdependence as well as individual accountability in which the student can be important part into the group. (Heller and Hollabaugh, 1992).

2. lack of order in classes, discipline, and noise.

These are the most common concerns in large classes, but Brame and Biel (2015). intended that, through monitoring group work, these frequent problems can be dismissed. The facilitator needs to observe regularly group interactions and process. If there are problems, intervene to help students move forward on the task and work together effectively. Moreover, the facilitator needs to listen reflectively and to provide constructive feedback to the students.

Since in large classes, there are more voices participating in the assignment which means more noise in the class; it seems impossible to keep them quiet but that is not the idea. The teacher should tolerate some high level in the voices if it means they are participating actively. In this sense, the teacher must ensure that students share ideas, plan their opinions, explain, discuss, ask questions, and review their work but when the teacher is not able to focus on the whole class Jacobs and Loh (2003) gave some ideas in order to help; for instance, students should be seated in small groups, and be closer to each one of the members so that they do not need to yell or

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speak up if they want to communicate. Further, this responsibility of monitoring starts to be taken by the students too and not only by the teacher, enhancing autonomous learning.

The former studies demonstrate how the teacher can help the students not only to improve their language skills but also the social ones, providing them the opportunity to work with people that they have not worked with before and learning how to share responsibilities in the group.

Through this research paper, Cooperative Language learning represents an alternative for developing communication skills, which involves a really important aspect: group work. The teacher plays a secondary role in the learning process because it depends mostly on the students' active interaction and participation in order for students to put into practice English and their social abilities through interaction. However, Large classes are remarkably common in the Colombian educational system, representing a challenge for teachers and students. All these theories and studies have a significant influence on this study. Most importantly, to define the main concepts that are a crucial part of the research in order to know the advantages and the improvements in the learner's learning process with the implementation of cooperative language activities in large classes as well as it also enhances noticeably the learners' social skills, preparing them to face real-life settings.

Methodology

Research paradigm and approach

The research paradigm to carry out the investigation will be positivism and quantitative analysis, which according to Blanco, Coello, and Reyes (2012), it tries to explain and predict events from cause-effect but also it seeks to discover knowledge. In this case, the researcher looks for neutrality and objectivity. This type of paradigm will be used to verify and prove some aspects of how large classes affect oral production and once the data is gathered to analyze it

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correctly. Besides, this paradigm is adequate to carry out the study to get a better notion of the population and the events involved in the problem research using research techniques.

Research method

In the experimental method, the researcher must have one or more independent variables (or experimental group), which he/she can manipulate in order to observe and compare what happens in the independent variables (or group of control). In the latter group, the treatment will not be applied. The main characteristics of this method are: first, the manipulation must be carried out rigorously avoiding the influence of strange variables in the results; second, the control group will allow identifying any kind of strange variables; finally, the groups must be selected randomly (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 36). this method has been chosen because it allows having a better notion of the possible benefits of CLL activities to foster oral production in the experimental group, contrasting the results and process with the control group in which will not be implemented the CLL activities.

Research techniques

The techniques for data collection will be the observation, the interview, and the questionnaires.

The first technique is tests, pre-test and posttest (see appendix 2), to measure the effectiveness of the approach in a large class implementing a quantitative direction. Sunday and Van (2015) described them as measurement of the information acknowledged during the investigation as an outcome of comparing the previous knowledge of the experimental and the control groups in a pre-test and after the research practice in a post-test; indeed, the tests will be a significant point when analyzing the effect of cooperative language activities in the communicative skills in the pupils.

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Another technique will be observation to support the gathering of data (see appendix 4) which according to DeWALT and DeWALT (2002, cited in Barbara & Kawulich, 2005) is established as the process that gives the possibility to researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural contexts; but also, observation, specifically participant observation can help to collect data about processes and cultures. This technique will help to identify and analyze what are the conditions in the large classroom.

Population, sample and setting

For the development of this investigation it would be necessary the participation of some students; the population, the sample and the setting are shown below.

Population. To carry out this research, two groups of eleven grade from the “Institución Educativa municipal Ciudad de Pasto” will be chosen in which there are 3000 students approximately on age ranging from 10 to 19 years old. On average, they come from low and middle socio-economical strata.

Sample. From that population, two groups will be chosen with 30 students each one, women and men from Eleven-A, which is the control group and Eleven-B, which is the experimental group; They belong to a public high school named “Institución Educativa Municipal Ciudad de Pasto”. They are ranging from 15 to 19 years old; on average they come from low and middle socio-economical strata.

Setting. This research will take place the city of San Juan de Pasto (Nariño) specifically in a public high school named “Institución Educativa Municipal Ciudad de Pasto”, located in the urban sector in the south of the city.

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Procedure and treatment

In this part of the study, the steps to follow during this research will be shown besides the description of the treatment, materials, and activities. As follows:

Procedure. First of all, to ask for the respective authorization to carry out the investigation to the institution mentioned before; then, an interview will be scheduled with the principal, managers and EFL teachers to inform them what our project is about, the objectives, purpose and how the study will be developed in the institution; next, the institution will be visited in order to do a previous observation of the conditions, the locations, the educative methodology and the population; after that, a pre-test will be applied to assess oral production in the experimental and control groups; then, the techniques and activities will be implemented to the experimental group in order to collect the data and to be able to reach the objectives; the data will be collected with constant observation, moreover, as a complementary process, some personal interviews will be done with teachers and students; afterwards, once treatment is applied and the data is collected, a post-test will be administered in order to identify whether CLL activities in large classes improved students' speaking ability or not in comparison to the control group. Ultimately, it is important to thank the students, teachers and people involved and participants during this study research; the final results and conclusions will be presented to the principal of the institution as a way of reciprocity and gratitude for the support.

Treatment. In order to improve the oral production in large classes, some cooperative learning activities will be fulfilled based on Kagan's structures (2009), such as, group work, team building, communication building, and multifunctional skills. Likewise, teacher and student's roles will be clarified below.

As a starting point, in the experimental and control groups, a pre-test would be applied so that the students' knowledge and communicative skills can be identified. Therefore, a rubric (see

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appendix 1) has been designed considering the standards established by the education ministry (2016) to measure students' knowledge.

The collected data will allow to be aware of the communicative weaknesses students might have; subsequently, to recognize which CLL activities will work best for them. In order to assess the oral activities, a rubric, based on the standards of Colombian government (2016) as part of its program "Colombia Bilingue", will be designed.

Since the Colombian Ministry of education (2016) proposed some basic communicative competences to teach English such as, participation, interaction, accurate pronunciation, and the use of a functional language; It is significant the implementation of cooperative language activities as a means to accomplish them. As part of the treatment, the use of lesson plans (see appendix 3) will be suggested, which include at least one activity so that the oral production can be present in the learning process. The use of the following activities is recommended:

Carousel Feedback

Students are divided into groups of 4-5 people, each group is supposed to discuss and write down their answers about the teacher's question. Then, the teacher must ask the students to move clockwise and occupy the following group. When students are located in that place, they must read what their partners have written and provide some feedback about it; they must do the same with the other groups until they get back to the same place they were at the beginning of the activity. Finally, each group returns to their initial place and review their partner's feedback by providing simple comments about the topic. Along this task the teacher is responsible of moderating the activity, taking notes and providing feedback.

This activity might take around 45 minutes, in which students are supposed to work in teams, to explore and to discuss ideas, besides to provide feedback which does not imply giving complex ideas but giving their remarks on how they could improve their answer. According to

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the curriculum proposed by the ministry of education (2016), the task topic could be to discuss some alternatives about environment, saving the planet, goals and dreams.

Round table

Students form groups of 4-5 people, then, the teacher presents them a problem or an assignment. The facilitator (teacher) has to give students some time to think and discuss about their answer. Once students can reach an agreement, they might be ready to reply. The teacher asks them to write down a response per group on a sheet of paper that will turn clockwise around the different groups. Eventually, students might hand out the sheet of paper to the teacher who is going to share all the answers with whole class, finally, he/she provides some concluding comments.

This activity might take around 30 minutes, in which students are expected to put into practice social skills, communication skills, knowledge building, learning process, info processing and thinking skills. Students might integrate the former skills in order to achieve a common goal which is setting an agreement through active communication. According to the curriculum proposed by the ministry of education (2016), the task topic could be to discuss some alternatives about mass media and globalization.

Inside-Outside Circle

The class is divided into two groups, the inside and the outside circle. The inside circle stands facing outward while the outside circle must be around them facing inward (students must be facing each other). Once the new classroom layout has been set, the teacher has to put a question on the board, then, he/she must give students some time to think about the answer. After that, teacher asks students in the inside circle to share their answer with the person in front of them, teacher might say “pass”, in that moment, people in the outside circle will have the chance of sharing their answers (each student will have 30 seconds to answer). When both learners have

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answered the question, the teacher must ask the outside circle to move one step on the left or right in order to discuss the same question with a new partner.

This activity might take 30 minutes, in which it will be encouraged community building among students while incorporating movement and interaction. According to the curriculum proposed by the ministry of education (2016), the task topic could be describing ambitions, dreams, hopes and interests.

Jigsaw

The class will be divided into 5-6-person jigsaw groups, moreover, the teacher is in charge of splitting the lesson or the assigned topic into 5-6 segments, this activity allows students become experts in the given segment. Each group has the responsibility of understanding it and leaning it. When they become experts about the piece of information they receive, each member of the group will receive a number from 1 to 6. Then, teacher asks students to join into new groups, all the people with the number 1 will form a group, all the people with the number 2 will form another group, and so on. When learners join into the new groups, all the members of the group have to share the information they have just learnt in the expert group, in order to share ideas, remarks and the given information so all the members of the group can have a whole idea of the lesson.

This activity might take around 60 minutes, in which students are intended to contribute meaningfully to a discussion, moreover, to participate problem-solving, and learning.

According to the curriculum proposed by the ministry of education (2016), the task topic could be health, peace, technology or sustainability.

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Once all the activities have been already applied in the experimental group for around two months, it is expected to show positive results and favorable student's reaction towards oral production and cooperative work. Since the methodology of this research project is quantitative; it is important to obtain measurable results through a post test that can support and validate the aforementioned objective. All these activities must be guided by the teacher and reinforced with the commitment of each student with the process who are aware of their own learning process.

Validation of the study

For the validation of the study some aspects such as pilot study, validity, and reliability will be involved.

1. Pilot study

Based on Van Teijlingen & Hundley, (2002) "The term 'pilot studies' refers to mini versions of a full-scale study (also called 'feasibility' studies), as well as the specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule. Pilot studies are a crucial element of a good study design."

The objective of executing a pilot study is to have an idea of how much time is going to be needed, and how well structured the techniques and activities are; It will allow preventing difficulties that can affect the investigation. For example, in the pilot group will be applied the activities, surveys, and interviews in order to verify if the activities are well structured for students, Additionally, to see if the number of questions is appropriate, taking into account the time students will spend answering and if the students find them difficult, the activities and questions will be changed or redesigned.

The pilot study group will be composed by a group of 16 students in which a lesson plan will be performed including cooperative language activities such as; the jigsaw activity, the round robin, carousel feedback etc. all of them under teachers' instructions.

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Once they have finished them, the surveys and interviews will be applied in order to assess and to analyze the results obtained after the activities. Meanwhile, the observation and analysis of the data and information will be carried on during the whole process.

2. Validity

Validity is defined as the tool which “determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are” Joppe M. (2000, cited in Golafshani, 2003. p.599). Based on that definition, the goal is to provide validity to the research in order to make it valuable to subsequent investigations about our topic. So, the techniques and activities will be applied in order to collect the data and to be able to reach our objectives; the data will be collected with constant observation, besides, to obtain the results about the effectiveness of the implementation of cooperative language learning activities in large classes, some tests have been designed, these have been planned based on the standards of the common European framework of Reference for languages.

3. Reliability

According to Joppe M, (2000 cited in Golafshani, 2003. p.598) says that reliability is seen as “The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable”.

Based on this definition, to make this research reliable it is necessary to have two different but homogenous groups of students (a control group and an in-action group) which have a similar quantity of students, ages, gender, social status, behavior in the classroom and level of academic efficiency in order to apply cooperative language learning activities in the in-action group while in our control group any activity will not be applied. At the end of the process, some interviews

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will be carried out in both groups to find out how effective is the use of these activities in large classrooms.

4. Ethical issues

During this research study there are several aspects about ethical issues to take into account as the following:

1. Copyright

This research has been made respecting copyright because it follows the directions, rules about citation, references and giving credits to previous works that were taken as antecedents and theoretical support to develop our study research; all kind of plagiarism will be avoided.

2. Permission

The respective authorization to the educative institution will be asked to the principal in charge, who shows us his support and license to carry our investigation in the high school. The project will be presented previously moreover, a letter asking for the authorization so in that way to avoid some future setbacks.

3. Voluntary

The people, who will be involved in this investigation, will collaborate voluntary; they will not be forced or obligated neither to answer the questions nor to participate in the research. They will have the chance and whole freedom to participate or to refuse to do so.

4. Anonymity

The data, information, results and names of the participants will be in complete confidence respecting the anonymity of the participants. They would not be exposed in any way.

5. Avoiding personal damage

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Another commitment with the participants is to guarantee that they would not be exposed to physical and physiological damages, this is investigation is avoiding all kind of personal damage and it is always protecting the integrity of the participants (teachers/students).

6. Reciprocity

Once the study research is finished, this will be presented to the educative institution including the final results and conclusions. This project will be delivered to the principal of the Institution as a way of reciprocity and gratitude for their support.

7. Thanking participants

As a way of gratitude, a letter expressing our thankfulness will be given to the principal, teachers and students for their kindness, availability and for opening the doors of their institution.

8. Permission to cite the textual phrases of the participants

In case of needing to cite the textual phrases of the participants an authorization will be asked for to the person to do so; but always giving confidence to the person who asks for confidentiality.

III. Administrative aspects

For the development of this project it is important to take into account some factors such as the chronogram and the budget required to accomplish the main objectives.

Chronogram

The chronogram for the realization of the project's design and its execution is established to take place during the first semester of the next year 2019. After receiving feedback of the assessor, it is set to continue the investigation and research designing the research techniques and methodology among April and May so once we have clear the theoretical part we can be able to

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apply the pre-tests to students during the second semester of 2019; moreover, the techniques and cooperative language learning activities will be applied during the same period of time. At the end of the school year a post test will be carried out to gather the final thoughts about the procedure.

Budget

In terms of money and resources needed for its realization, it is not that expensive but it requires some little investment in transportation, copies, and some didactic resources such as markets, colors and printed materials etc.

Aspect	Price
Transportation	\$ 50.000
Didactic resources	\$ 15.000
Copies and printed materials	\$ 30.000
Total	\$95.000

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Appendix

4.1 Appendix 1: Rubric

Oral Production rubric (COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK)				
	Low performance (1.0-2.9) Level: Below A1	Basic Performance (3.0-3.9) Level: A2-B1	High Performance (4.0-4.5) Level: B2 C1	Superior Performance (4.6-5.0) Level: C2
Knowledge and preparation of the topic	No preparation and lack of understanding	Communicates with difficulty, evidence some lack of preparation	Communicates and evidences management of the topic	Communicates with confidence and evidences management of the topic. The communication is natural
Defense of points of view	No support the ideas, lack of opinions.	Support the ideas but it is not clear, it is confusing.	The arguments are well supported with opinions and ideas	Support the ideas and provide opinions with coherence and cohesion.
Use of English (Pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency)	No use of grammar rules Pronounce incorrectly Poor vocabulary Not natural	Make some minimal mistakes. Some pronunciation mistakes Use vocabulary related to the topic Express his/her ideas clearly	Use correctly grammar and vocabulary. Express himself clearly Pronounce words correctly.	Use complex grammar structures. Use the right stress, pitch and intonation when speaking. Use the appropriate vocabulary for the topic Sounds natural

4.2 Appendix 2: Pretest and Post test

Evaluating speaking

According to the British Council in its article Evaluating Speaking, what a speaker needs to communicate in an effective way is “to pronounce individual sounds clearly, understand the functions of language, and follow the conventions of turn-taking”. It is important to consider that not every aspect can be evaluated formally. For example, pronunciation, grammar, appropriate use of vocabulary, coherence and cohesion can be measured and there exist different options to do it. For example, with discussions, presentations, role-plays, interviews, re-telling a story and so on.

Pre-test

As a technique to identify the initial level of speaking proficiency of students. An interview will be carried out (experimental and control groups). Considering the information mentioned before and the parameters established by the common European framework and Colombia Bilingüe program, some possible questions taken from the book “English Please 3” are going to be set below with the aim of determining the oral production of the eleventh graders.

1. Past Experience

Tell me about a holiday you had? When was it?

Where did you go to? How did you go there?

Who did you go with?

What did you do there? Did you enjoy it?

2. Future Plans

Tell me about your plans for the future

CLL ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER ORAL PRODUCTION IN LARGE CLASSES.

Post-Test

To identify students' level of speaking proficiency after the implementation of CLL speaking activities, a debate will be held in the classroom with the students from both groups (experimental and control groups).

Debate: Should be allowed the use of cellphones in classes?

1. Students should have done some previous research about advantages and disadvantages of the use of the cellphone in classes.
2. Split the class in two teams, one half in favor and the other half against. Teacher is the monitor of the debate, so he/she decides the groups. (homogenous groups)
3. Monitor should set the scene, rules (Respect, no shouting) and manage timing of the debate.
4. All the students must participate, taking turns, explaining their positions. (One person per group at a time)
5. Teacher must take notes to assess students' performance.
6. Provide feedback and listen to final conclusions from some students.

4.3 Appendix 3: Lesson Plan Sample

CLL ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER ORAL PRODUCTION IN LARGE CLASSES.

Lesson Plan

Teacher:

Grade: 11th

Duration: 60 Minutes

Subject: Opinions: For and against

Class Profile: The lesson is designed for students from eleventh grade from public high school in Pasto. Besides, the goals are oriented to be able of expressing opinions about different issues that they might face or see in the context in the region (Colombia).

Skills: Speaking and vocabulary

Time: 60 minutes

Goal: The purpose of the lesson is that students learn how to express their opinions and positions about some controversial topics enhancing critical thinking and oral production.

Objectives:

- Express points of view
- Students are able to express agreement or disagreement
- Student are able to use vocabulary in real situations

Content: Social Values

Activities

Warm up activity

In the previous class students were asked to do some research about social values. In today's class as warm-up activity will carry out a speed dating to do a brainstorming in which they will have the opportunity to share information about which is the most important value in society and why; and the teacher will guide the activity, once it is done. Students and teacher will share some conclusions and opinions.

Practice:

Before of starting production, it is important for teacher to provide feedback and present the vocabulary to express opinions (agreement and disagreement). Students will give some examples using some expressions.

CLL ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER ORAL PRODUCTION IN LARGE CLASSES.

Production:

The jigsaw activity will be used in class.

- The class will be divided into 5- or 6-person **jigsaw** groups.
- Split the lesson into 5-6 sections; give each student to learn one segment of a reading about social values.
- Give students time to read their segment at least twice and become familiar with it.
- Form temporary “expert groups” by having one student from each jigsaw group join other students assigned to the same segment.
- Bring the students back into their jigsaw groups. Ask each student to present her or his segment to the group

Assessment

To assess the student’s production, teacher must follow the former rubric (see appendix 1) to assess speaking skill. Moreover, it is important to take into account the participation and Teamwork.

4.4 Appendix 4: Observation Class Format

Institution:

Course:

Topic/Lesson	CLL activity	Reactions
	The round-robin	Teachers’ Students’
	Carousel Feedback	Teachers’ Students’

CLL ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER ORAL PRODUCTION IN LARGE CLASSES.

	Inside outside circle	Teachers' Students'
	Jigsaw Activity	Teachers' Students'