

The Incidence of Classroom Interaction on the Development of the Speaking Skill in EFL
Settings

Tania Milena Pastás Quenan

Submitted to the faculty of Human sciences in partial fulfillment

Of the requirements for the degree of B.A

In the English and French program

University of Nariño

December, 2014.

The Incidence of Classroom Interaction on the Development of the Speaking Skill in EFL
Settings

Presented By: Tania Milena Pastás Quenan

Advisor: MA. Gabriel Vicente Obando

Submitted to the faculty of Human sciences in partial fulfillment

Of the requirements for the degree of B.A

In the English and French program

University of Nariño

December, 2014.

NOTA DE RESPONSABILIDAD

Las ideas y conceptos expresados en el siguiente trabajo de grado son de responsabilidad del autor.

Artículo 1ro del acuerdo Número 324 de octubre 11 de 1966 emanado por el Honorable Consejo Directivo de la Universidad de Nariño.

NOTA DE ACEPTACION

ASESOR

JURADOS

This Research Paper was possible thanks, first to God for having given me the life and for guiding me in each one of my steps. Second, to my parents: Jose Arturo and Maria Enriqueta for their constant effort and unconditional comprehension during my career. Finally, to my baby

EMMANUEL who is the inspiration of my life.

Thanks a lot

Resumen

En los últimos años, la interacción en el salón de clases ha sido una de las formas importantes con la cual los estudiantes podrían aprender a cómo comunicarse en un idioma extranjero, ya que la manera como los estudiantes aprenden un idioma tiene una directa relación con la manera como la interacción es llevada a cabo dentro del salón de clases. Este documento de investigación presenta ideas acerca de la incidencia de la interacción en el salón de clases para desarrollar la habilidad oral teniendo en cuenta los contextos de inglés como lengua extranjera. Además, este documento de investigación describe ciertas características de los contextos de inglés como lengua extranjera los cuales dificultan el desarrollo de la habilidad oral, lo cual hace posible mencionar algunas soluciones incluyendo tareas y actividades relacionadas a situaciones de la vida real para superar esas dificultades. Adicionalmente, esta investigación muestra algunas estrategias comunicativas que pueden ser usadas por los estudiantes para facilitar el desarrollo de la habilidad oral.

Palabras clave: interacción en el salón de clases, Inglés como lengua extranjera, estrategias comunicativas.

Abstract

In the last years, classroom interaction has been one of the important ways in which students might learn how to communicate in a foreign language since the way how students learn a language has a close relation with the way how interaction is carried out inside the classroom. This research paper presents some ideas about the incidence of classroom interaction to develop the speaking skill taking into account the EFL settings as ours. Besides, this paper describes certain characteristics of EFL contexts that difficult the development of the speaking skill which makes possible to mention some solutions including tasks and activities related to real life situations to overcome them. In addition, this paper shows some communicative strategies that can be used by the students to facilitate the development of the oral skill.

Keywords: classroom Interaction, English Foreign Language (EFL), communicative strategies.

Table of Contents

The Incidence of classroom Interaction on the Development of the Speaking Skill in EFL settings	9
Classroom Interaction.....	11
Aspects of classroom interaction	13
The Speaking Skill.....	16
The Relationship between Classroom Interaction and the Speaking Skill.....	18
Characteristics of an EFL setting	19
Interaction tasks and activities to develop the speaking skill in an EFL setting.....	23
Oral communicative strategies.....	25
Achievement Strategies.....	26
Reduction Strategies.....	27
Conclusions.....	29
References.....	31

The Incidence of Classroom Interaction on the Development of the Speaking Skill in EFL Settings

In the process of learning English as a foreign language, classroom interaction has been considered an important factor in order to experience real communicative situations in which the learner can learn how to express their own views and opinions, moreover, they will develop their oral fluency and accuracy which are essential for the success of foreign language communication. As Tsui (1995) express: “in the language classroom, be it first, second or foreign language, classroom language and interaction are even more important because language is at once the subject of study as well as the medium for learning” (p. 12). Classroom interaction then, is necessary and useful as a strategy to enhance learning because it creates opportunities for the learners to develop their knowledge and their skills. Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode, which has been one of the main skills that students need to develop in order to achieve successful communication. There is thus a vital relationship between interaction and the development of the speaking skill because thanks to it, the human beings are able to exchange thoughts, feelings, or ideas, so, interaction involves a reciprocal action which encourages students to use the 12 language as a mutual understanding device. In some cases learners present a low speaking proficiency level in English because their lack of knowledge of the target language which is related to several factors including the lack of better pedagogical strategies. Consequently, it has been necessary to include different strategies to develop the speaking skill; one of them is classroom interaction, which Wagner (1994), defines as “reciprocal events that require at least two objects and two actions. Interaction occurs when these objects and events naturally influence one another”. Therefore, interaction does not happen only from one side, there must be a mutual influence through giving and receiving messages in order to achieve

communication. Additionally, Tsui (1995), states that oral interaction enables students to be involved in more natural conversation in which they have the opportunity to use a variety of language function and hence to develop their discursive competence, not just linguistic competence. In the current teaching and learning conditions in EFL settings and taking into account the process of interaction in the classroom, it is necessary to develop the speaking skill in communication in an effective way.

Following the previous ideas and considering the teachers' and learners' needs, the purpose of the present study is to show the importance of the role of classroom interaction as a necessary and useful strategy to enhance the speaking skill. All of this to provide L2 teachers and learners with useful information that can help them to improve some aspects in the process of English learning and teaching considering the EFL contexts characteristics.

In order to develop the purpose of this paper; first, it defines classroom interaction, its types and aspects. Second, it defines the speaking skill and its importance in the teaching-learning process; third, it establishes the relationship between classroom interaction and the speaking skill. Besides, it develops some important characteristics of an EFL setting in relation to the incidence of interaction on the speaking skill. Then, it shows some interaction tasks and activities that can be implemented in EFL classrooms. Finally, it describes some important strategies that can be used by the students to enhance their oral communication.

Classroom Interaction

According to Robinson (1997, cited by Tuan and Nhu, 2010) “Interaction is the process of referring to face-to-face action. It can be either verbal channeled through written or spoken words, or non-verbal, channeled through touch, proximity, eye-contact, facial expressions, gesturing etc. p.30” Taking into account the ways in which interaction could be developed, it is focused on: non-verbal and verbal interaction. Non-verbal interaction consists on the behaviors of students like head nodding, hand raising, body gestures, and eye contact. On the other hand, verbal interaction has two ways of interaction; written and oral interaction. Written interaction is a way of interaction in which students write down their ideas, thoughts, feelings interacting with others in written words, texts, etc. In contrast, oral interaction consists on the students’ interaction with others by making comments, speaking in class, asking and answering questions, talking about real life, and taking part in discussions. Rivers (1987) writes “through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even output of their fellow students in discussions, skits, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals. In interaction, students can use all they possess of the language – all they have learned or casually absorbed – in real life exchanges p.4-5”.

Additionally, Arnold (1999) relates interaction to the dynamic interplay between learner and teacher and learner and learner during the learning event. That is they are mutually acting, affecting each other to evoke an experience, a meaning or a relationship. So, classroom interaction involves at least two people, it can happen between the teacher and the student, between the student and the teacher, and between student to student in a collaborative or individual way. Van Lier (1996, cited by LT Tuan & NTK, 2010) suggests that there are two

types of classroom interaction: teacher-learner interaction and learner-learner interaction which give opportunities for negotiation taking into account its particular context.

Teacher-learner interaction: for LT Tuan & NKT (2010), teacher often asks questions to learners and learners answer the questions and vice versa; or the teacher participates in learning activities. Nowadays, in an EFL context such ours, it is essential to consider that students need to create or look for spaces in which they can interact in the target language, teachers generally apply this type of interaction with the whole class, small groups in the class, or individually. In addition, in the traditional classroom the interaction happens in a regular way; because the teacher stands behind a desk, and spends a lot of time doing lectures and given directions while the role of the students are sitting on a desk and take notes about what the teacher is saying or explaining. The focus of interaction in a traditional classroom is to control the topic, determine when the interaction has to start and stop in the classroom (Cazden, 1998; Tsui, 1995 cited by LT Tuan & NTK 2010).

Learner-learner interaction: as stated by LT Tuan & NKT (2010), in this form of interaction, the teachers plays a role as a monitor and learners are the main participants. In this case students can learn from and among themselves because they share responsibility, discuss different understandings, shape the direction of the class and help each other to construct their knowledge. Interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other (Brown, 2007).

As it was shown before, interaction plays a significant role in the process of learning and teaching a language; it allows teachers and learners to develop the oral skill through practice, it means that both teachers and students are the responsible to get an authentic interaction.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to take into account some aspects when interacting in the language classroom, if these aspects are not available in the classroom, then we cannot speak of a successful learning through interaction. In the next section, there is a description about the different aspects present in classroom interaction.

Aspects of Classroom Interaction

In the process of language learning there are some aspects which are relevant in the classroom interaction. Tsui (1995) states six significant aspects which are:

Teacher questions: regularly in most classrooms the major part of interaction is generated by the teacher asking questions, moreover, he/ she is who speaks the most of the class, determines the topic of discussion and decides who talks. Generally there is a pattern of interaction which consists on the teacher question, the student answers and finally the feedback to the response. Hence, questions are an important aspect of classroom talk because they are usually used to check students' comprehension, to see if they have acquired the knowledge imparted, to focus their attention and involve them in the lesson, to move the lesson forward and, for some teachers, to exercise disciplinary control (Tsui, 1995).

Teacher feedback and error treatment: Ellis (1995) sees feedback as “the response to the efforts by the learner to communicate”. He adds, “Feedback can involve functions such correction, acknowledgment and request for clarification”. Additionally, Chaudron (1993) refers to feedback as a “treatment of error” that can be summarized to “any teacher behavior following any error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error”. Feedback is another significant aspect because it helps teachers to make evaluations and give personal comments on

students' performance, so it is important for teachers to take into account the kind of feedback that they provide to their students because it affects their learning process.

Teacher explanation: Tsui (1995) states that there are different ways of defining explanation. Some define it very generally as providing information or communicating content, others make a distinction between explanation of procedures and explanation of concepts, vocabulary and grammatical rules. One of the roles of the teachers is to make knowledge accessible to students, and then it is essential the way how they deal with explanation in relation to the audience.

Modified input and interaction: inside the classroom teachers tend to modify some features of their speech in order to make it more comprehensible to learners; they speak more slowly, use exaggerated intonation, give more importance to key words, use simpler syntax and a more basic set of vocabulary, so, when they do it, not only is modified the input but also interaction.

Turn-allocation and turn-taking behavior: whether students are actively involved in classroom interaction is largely determined by the turn-allocation behavior of the teacher and turn-taking behavior of the students (Tsui, 1995). In EFL contexts as ours, the teacher has been seen as a figure of authority because he/she decides who has the right to speak and when. Most teachers tend to turn students to participate actively in class specially volunteers and smart students because they are sure of getting an answer in order to save time and cover more material. This behavior can affect student's participation; teachers must be aware that they should not allocate turns only a few students but they should try to involve every student, besides, it is important for them to take into consideration their cultural backgrounds remembering that different tasks may require different turn-allocation.

Student talk: an important form of student involvement in classroom learning is through students' participation in classroom interaction. However, a lot of teachers have to face the student's lack of participation because many students do not respond their questions, they do not set out questions, and they do not give ideas or comments about the class or topic. (Bowman cited by Kouicem, 2009).

Nevertheless, it is essential to know the factors which contribute to students' demotivation to speak up in class. One of them is the low English proficiency; most of the time students do not know how to express their answers, thoughts or ideas in English because they are afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at by their partners. Another factor is the students' lack of confidence in their language proficiency, when they are not sure about their English, they prefer to keep silent rather than run the risk of making mistakes. A final factor is the incomprehensible input; many times students find teacher's questions difficult to understand. All of these factors generate anxiety in the students. Then, it is important for teachers to create a relaxing atmosphere where students can feel comfortable and confident to speak in the target language and make mistakes. Angelo (cited by LT Tuan & NTK, 2010) claims that some factors to enhance motivation to learn are to create an active learning environment where the students can organize their knowledge to interact. Taking into account the information above, we can realize the importance of the teacher's role in the interactional process, it is vital students and teachers' participation to manage the class and to profit the learning opportunities to develop the speaking skill.

The Speaking skill

According to Brown (1994), Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. In the process of teaching English as a foreign language, the learners need to be exposed to what are called the foreign language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing with the aim of achieving a high development of abilities of receiving and producing the second language either in oral or written form, i.e. achieving a good management both productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and reading) skills. As far as speaking is concerned, it was given more importance in the communicative approach because oral communication involves speech where learners are expected to interact and face situations verbally with other people. Another element that supports the idea that speaking is important is given by Ur (1996) who declares that of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as “speakers” of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing.

For most people, the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication (Celce-Murcia, 2001). However, it is essential to clarify that, in real life situations the four skills are working together not separately or individually (Mohan, 1986). So, speaking is a basic skill that language learners should master with the other language skills in order to become a well communicator. Even though, the development of this skill is not an easy task, there are many aspects that have to be taken into account in the learning process, the learner must be active and dynamic practicing and exchanging patterns such as: group work, individual work, collaboration, full-class interaction among others which are important in the development of the skill, during the process, learners

must be exposed to a natural environment that enable them to develop their awareness of conversational features and strategies. So, the task for the teacher is to include real communication in the classroom promoting interactive and realistic activities in order to help students increase confidence and motivation, even though despite its importance, teaching speaking has been underestimated and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. Hence, speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific chunks of language such as: grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary, but it also entails when, why and how the language is used. As Littlewood (1981) states: “the goal of foreign language teaching is that of extending the range of communication situation in which the learner can perform with focus and meaning without being hindered by the attention he must pay to linguistic form” (p.32).

Thus, it is important to mention the role of the teachers, because they need to be creative in developing their teaching learning process in order to create a good atmosphere, and make the English class more exiting, furthermore, teachers should provide activities focused on real-life speaking, that means that activities have to be designed to foster better speaking according to the level of the students, rather than having students speak only to focus on a specific language construction. As it was said before, learning to speak or acquiring a foreign language requires more than just knowing its grammatical and semantic rules, students must also have knowledge of how native speakers use the language in context; have knowledge about the cultures that use that language. These are the reasons why activities must involve real life context, and teachers must use the L2 during the whole class, in this way students will get used to use the target language.

As a productive skill, speaking is a very important process that helps to evaluate learners' proficiency in the target language. Further, for learners who are studying English as a second or foreign language, it is very significant to experience real communicative situations where they can express their feelings, opinions, and to develop their oral fluency and accuracy which are very essential for the achievement of second language communication. In conclusion, classroom interaction is necessary and useful as an educational strategy to enhance the skill of speaking. It is transcendental to understand the relationship between interaction and the speaking skill.

The Relationship between classroom interaction and the speaking skill

According to Harmer (2007), Non-native English speakers need to be prepared to speak in different situations, which mean that all the students including public and private schools must be able to speak English in any context or any field. Besides, we as human beings need to interact with other people to share our opinions, believes, knowledge etc. Taking into account the learner's communicative needs, it is vital to stress the importance of classroom interaction based on the belief that the EFL classroom should provide learners with maximum exposure to the target language to enhance their learning and develop the speaking skill. Interaction is significant in the process of teaching and learning, especially it is relevant for teachers in order to develop communication (Brown, 2007). Negotiation of meaning is also important when the students want to express their feelings, and thoughts to be understood (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). When students face problems or find difficulties in the communicative process and they have the opportunity of negotiate possible solutions to them, they learn new language structures, vocabulary, expressions, the language is more comprehensible and they acquire linguistic knowledge and the ability to interact with others which motivate their interest and potential to participate in class.

There are some relevant factors which help to understand the relationship between classroom interaction and the speaking skill; the environment where the learning and teaching process take place; and all activities in the classroom setting involving communication. (Ellis, 1990 cited in Johnson 1995)

Characteristics of an EFL setting

According to the previous information, it is generally established that classroom interaction can facilitate students' language development and communicative competence by providing opportunities to practice the target language. In EFL settings as ours, there are many characteristics which do not allow the full development not only of the speaking skills but all the skills; some of them are: first, the Teacher English proficiency. Some teachers who teach English are not competent in this area, so they may not be confident in speaking English. Besides, a big number of Colombian teachers do not have the opportunity to update their English knowledge, maybe because of time, money or geographical facts that do not allow them to access to the current information or perhaps, it is also due to the fact that some teachers are too traditional and do not like the idea of changing their philosophy of teaching which can affect the teaching and learning as Sanchez & Obando (2008) mention, "Teaching encompasses many aspects that sciences like psychology, sociolinguistics, linguistics and second language acquisition have analyzed and that a real teacher needs to know in order to adapt suitable teaching and assessment practices."

Additionally, Krieger (2005) explains there is lack of intrinsic motivation from part of the students in an EFL setting towards language learning, due to the fact that learners do not use English in their real lives. This situation could reduce the effectiveness of the teaching and

learning process and it can cause EFL learners not to see language as a real need. In addition, Nunan (1993, cited in Celce Murcia 2003) suggests, in EFL classrooms learners are not motivated and getting students to speak is a challenge or speaking is not culturally adequate except when called on.

Besides, Long (cited in Fotos ,1998) states that most of the EFL classrooms focus on traditional approaches of language, where grammar is taught in isolation and learners become unable to use English communicatively. Also, it seems that many English teachers focus on reading and writing almost ignoring speaking and listening skills during the class.

Further, as stated by Sanchez & Obando (1998), class size is the most evident problem in our current context. It affects both, learner opportunities to talk and teacher opportunities to provide feedback. Moreover, the time assigned for the English courses in public institutions is not enough, only one or two hours a week are dedicated to foreign language.

On the other hand, Ur (2000) mentions four main problems in getting students speak in the foreign language in the classroom. The first one is the student's inhibition to participate in class because of the feeling of shyness, fear, stress and anxiety. The second problem is when students do not find how to express themselves, or they keep silent because the class topic is not interesting for them. The next problem to consider is low or uneven participation: this problem is related to groups with large class where students do not have enough time to talk or sometimes the group has someone who dominates the discussion. The last problem is the mother tongue use: some students tend to use their mother tongue outside and even inside the classroom because they feel more comfortable and less exposed to the target language. Students borrow words from

their native language for their lack of the target language vocabulary which might contribute to make classes not engaging enough to awaken learners' motivation.

After mentioning some of the difficulties found in EFL settings to develop interaction in relation to the speaking skill, some possible solutions are proposed.

Based on my short teaching experience and as a language learner and user, what teachers should do first, is make students aware about the English language since it has become a dominant language in the world due to globalization so, students need to learn it to interact and face the real world. Second, teachers must update their knowledge and know that there are a variety of current approaches which have a lot of advantages such as: the learning is interesting and motivating, they seek to teach L2 in relation to the social context in which it is used, they present activities that involve real communication and increase frequency and variety of L2 practice through different types of interaction etc.

Moreover, motivation is an essential factor in the learning process, especially in EFL settings, but it has been a problem or a difficulty for most EFL teachers because their students have low motivation to speak English. First at all, teachers need to understand and appreciate the role and importance of motivation in the learning process. Besides, teachers have to look for ways of motivating students in the classroom, for example: the group work, the implementation of tasks and activities where students have the opportunity of make their own decisions according their likes, the use of realia, stories, song etc. Further, an EFL learner could be motivated towards language learning for different reasons, among them travelling abroad, interacting with tourists or chatting with people from all over the internet so it is important for the teachers to increase student's motivation in order to hence their oral production.

In addition, in EFL contexts where it is usual to find large classes, it is a challenge for teachers to give opportunities to speak and interact with each one of the students. However, it is suggested that teachers display creative thinking to decide which class activities can be appropriated to be done individually, in pairs, groups and for the whole class, so they must know how to organize students for any activity, it involves teachers' autonomy since they must know and make decisions about how to teach and how to act with their knowledge and teaching materials, furthermore, they must self-analyze and self-evaluate their teaching practice to get the desired objectives.

Therefore, Teachers have to ensure that their students develop all the competences in the target language. As a possible solution, teachers have to present topics related to real life situations where learners can be able to communicate in an appropriate way when they have to use the foreign language in a real context. In relation to this, frequent conversations have to be developed in the classes by students into small groups; it makes sense to give language learners an opportunity to talk with other classmates in the target language since interaction helps in the acquisition of the second language.

Furthermore, teachers' lessons in a language course need to be varied containing written, reading, listening and spoken tasks and activities. The teachers need to consider a variety of activities bearing in mind the students' needs, interests and objectives. Activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning; teachers might look for activities that permit capturing the students' attention, develop their creativity and promote the participation and interaction.

Interaction tasks and activities to develop the speaking skill in an EFL setting

Throughout my experience as EFL learner and teacher it is found that speaking is one of the most desirable skills that English learners want to develop, they are enthusiastic to talk and use the language they are learning to communicate their needs and desires. However, taking into account the characteristics above mentioned of an EFL setting, it is not easy to achieve this purpose, in this sense it is important and necessary to take into account some factors that can help students to develop this purpose, they should be involved in meaningful situations that emphasize the interaction between student to student and student to teacher, through the use of English as a communicative tool. Thus, to help students improve their oral production in English; teachers need to implement pedagogical tasks and activities. A task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1989). On the other hand, activities are designed to give learners' opportunities to practice and extend their use of language; they are related to the goals of the course. Some relevant activities proposed by some authors are:

Harmer (2007) proposes some activities such as: a) Information-gap activities where the students participate in groups or individually in order to fill some pieces of missing information. b) Discussions where the students have different arguments in favor or against a proposal to discuss about it, it is developed in debates, comments, predictions etc. c) Games and tasks to develop the different skills in communication related to different topics like expositions, videos and others.

Littlewood (1981) suggests other activities like: a) discovering differences where the students have to find the differences in a picture and speak about them, a variety is to tell the differences for a classmate to draw them b) reconstructing story sequences where each student or group has a picture and has to describe the picture without seeing the others to organize the sequence c) role playing or dramatizations where the students need to act according to a situation or a dialogue that could be already designed or that the students need to create. Besides, it could be assigned as homework to be presented in class.

Rivers and Temperly (1978) recommends other variety of activities like: a) entertaining where the students perform in a concert, a TV show or a radio program b) expressing reactions where the students set their opinions about a TV show, pictures, photographs, exhibitions, videos c) Sharing leisure activities where the students speak about their participation in typical national meals, festivities, celebrations, or pastimes.

Ur (2000) points out different activities such as: a) Brainstorming activities, for example: Guessing games: where the learners guess the object, profession, country using clues for example: the first sound or letter; a piece of mime; strange picture; or a puzzle clue b) Organizing activities for instance: Solving problems where the students find a solution to different problems c) Compound activities, a case in point is: Composing letters where the learners represent or discuss about debates, publicity campaigns, surveys, planning projects.

The activities proposed above are important in order to provide opportunities to develop the speaking skill through the student's communication. According to Kouicem (2010) "Interaction activities prepare learners to use the language outside the classroom. It provides for them the basis and the principles to interact in English in real situations. That is why classroom

talk is worth investigating and understanding” Moreover, the teachers’ speech is reduced when the students are speaking, that is why it is necessary to promote the students to interact. Besides, speaking is significant when it is integrated with other skills. For instance, “speaking can help students to develop their vocabulary and grammar and then improving their writing skill. With speaking, learners can express their personal feeling, opinions or ideas; tell stories; inform or explain; request; converse and discuss, i.e. through speaking, we can display the different functions of language”. (Kouicem, 2010)

Additionally, it is necessary that students know, select and implement appropriate learning strategies that can help them to overcome language difficulties at the time of communicating ideas orally and become more confident and effective speakers.

Oral communicative strategies

One of the objectives of learning a second language is to speak it appropriately and confidently, however, learners find a lot of difficulties in taking part in oral interaction. So, the best way to overcome these problems of communication is through using communicative strategies. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) define communicative strategies as “speakers-oriented; that is they are used by learners to compensate for lack of L2 knowledge or their inability to access the L2 knowledge they have.” These strategies help learners to avoid the failure of the oral communication. Hughes (2002) also defines this term as the ability of the learners to manipulate a conversation and negotiate interaction in an effective way. Such strategies are particularly important where there are problems of expression and communication and the purpose of communication strategies is to deal with communicative problems.

Bygate (1987) classifies two main types of communicative strategies: first, achievement strategies which include: guessing strategies, paraphrase strategies and cooperative strategies. Second, reduction strategies which involve: avoidance strategies.

Achievement strategies

According to Bygate (1987) these kinds of strategies aim to compensate for a problem of expression. The learner anticipates a difficulty in expressing what he or she intended. Learners use such strategies to compensate for language gap by using a substitute; they try to find a way to convey their messages without losing or changing it, in using achievement strategies speakers do not lose or alter the message they want to express. Achievement strategies involve three sub strategies; the first ones are called guessing strategies, the second ones are called paraphrase strategies and the last ones are called cooperative strategies.

Guessing strategies: In this case the speaker believes something is true or probable but, he/she is not sure about it. According to Bygate (1987), speaker probes for a word which he/she does not know or is not sure of it, using the knowledge of the morphology of the language. There are many types of guessing strategies which students can use in order to improve the speaking skill; they are: (a) the speaker can foreignize a mother-tongue word, it means he/she can pronounce such word as though it belonged to the target language, (b) the speaker can borrow a word from his mother tongue, without changing it in any way, the speaker hopes that his/her interlocutor can recognize it and understand the message, (c) another guessing strategy occurs when a speaker provides a literal translation of the mother-tongue word, and (d) a fourth guessing strategy is developed when a student coins a word; the speaker can invent a target-

language word or expression in a creative way considering the basis of the knowledge of the language, the speaker hopes that the interlocutor will get the idea.

Paraphrase strategies: This kind of communication strategies involve looking for an alternative to the word or the expression that the speaker needs in the target language. On the one hand, the speaker can look for some kind of vocabulary using a synonym or a more general word; this is called a lexical substitution strategy, on the other hand; the speaker can explain an idea using more than one word to express the meaning, this is also called circumlocution.

Co-operative Strategies: These are used when the speaker needs help from the other interlocutors to express a message. For instance, in some cases the speaker may ask for the word, by asking for a translation of his mother-tongue word, in other cases, the speaker physically will point to the object that he/she means or by miming, the speaker can say the message by gestures and body movement without the use of words.

Reduction Strategies

Some learners may not be able to use an achievement strategy; so they can adopt a reduction strategy; it means they could not be able to communicate the full message, so they only may manage a partial part of it, sometimes they abandon the real message and go on to something they can manage. Avoidance strategies involve the following sub strategy:

Avoidance Strategies: The learners often use such strategies to avoid several kinds of difficulties they can have in oral communication, they alter the message avoiding phonemic, grammatical or lexical problems. They may want to avoid some particular sound sequence, learners wish to avoid the conditional in English, and others like to avoid words whose gender is unknown or unsure for them. In using this kind of strategies, the learners may sacrifice part of their intended meaning. Finally, students may avoid some difficulties in expressing opinions too,

because of the lack of vocabulary, so, they avoid some of the message content and look for something else to talk about or simply they keep silent.

In short, communicative strategies are a useful tool which helps to promote interaction and help students improve their language development in a supportive and encouraging way.

Conclusions

First of all, the main purpose of this paper was to show how classroom interaction helps to develop the students speaking skill because thanks to it, they can express and interchange their knowledge, feelings and thoughts. When learning a foreign language the most important issue is interaction. Bentley (2007)

There are two ways in which interaction could be developed: non-verbal and verbal interaction, the focus of this research was in verbal interaction which is divided in other two ways: written and oral interaction. In order to develop the speaking skill the attention was concentrated in oral interaction which is a dynamic interplay between teacher and learner and learner and learner.

In this paper it was also possible to explain some aspects of classroom interaction which are necessary to have a successful learning through interaction, but, bearing in mind EFL conditions as ours it is not an easy task accomplish with each one of those aspects since there are many factors which affect as the teaching as the learning process. In this sense, the learning conditions surrounding the student play an important role in the foreign language teaching-learning process. (Schuck, 1997)

In addition, in EFL setting the teacher is the center of interaction, the time he/she spends interacting with the students is in a set of questions where the only way of interaction happens when the teacher asks and the student answers questions. There is not interaction about real contexts, conversations about interesting topics or encouraging students to communicate in the target language. When students face that kind of interaction, the process of language learning may be affected because it could be focused just on grammar explanations and pronunciation of word chunks leaving aside the speaking skill. Moreover in Colombian classrooms the time that a

teacher has to develop an English class is really limited, in some cases one hour or maximum two per week. So, it is important to use the time developing activities and tasks about real life situations where students can get real interaction in which they feel comfortable and interested.

Moreover, Ur (1996) states that in a class teachers need to use a variety of activities according to the students level, choose carefully the topic possibly according to their interest or some in which they have some experience, give anticipated and clear instructions so students know what they have to do, and try to encourage students to use the target language as much as possible. In order to choose the activities and tasks we must bear in mind factors such as students' choices, needs, culture, background, attitudes etc.

Finally, one of the objectives or the main objective of an English language learner is to speak appropriately and confidently. Nevertheless, it is necessary to take into account that speaking is an interactive and complex process of sending and receiving messages through the use of verbal expressions which require a dynamic participation of teacher and students. In this process students find a lot of difficulties when they want to interact with their partners or with the teacher. Thus, they use some communicative strategies to overcome those problems and achieve their goals

In brief, after revising all the available literature about the English teaching and learning process as a foreign language, it can be concluded that classroom interaction is indeed an effective process for enhancing the development of speaking especially in EFL settings where exposure to the L2 may be scarce.

I hope this paper can be useful for English teachers and students to create good environments towards oral skill. This paper could be a reference for teachers and students interested in promoting interaction in the classroom.

References

- Arnold, J. (1999). *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bentley, K. (2007). *STT: student talking time. How can teachers develop learners' communication skills in a secondary school CLIL program?* Retrieved September, 2013, from: <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=2575500>
- Bishop, P. E. (2000). *Classroom interaction*. Valencia Community College, 1-2. Retrieved July, 2013, from: <http://files.myopera.com/tnthaonguyen1/blog/classroom-interact.pdf?1354285825>
- Brown, D.H. (2007). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New York: Pearson Education Inc.
- Brown, D.H. (2004). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. (4th Ed.). New York: Longman.
- Bygate, M. (1987). *Speaking*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Chaudron, C. (1993). *Research teaching and learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1995). *The study of second language acquisition*. New York: oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R., & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analyzing learner language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fotos, S. (1998). Shifting the focus from forms to form in the EFL classroom. *ELT Journal*, 52.4: 301-307.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman.

- Hughes, R. (2002). *Teaching and researching speaking*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Johnson, K.E. (1995). *Understanding communication in second language classroom*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Kouicem, K. (2009). *The Effect of Classroom Interaction on Developing the Learner's speaking Skill*. People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.
- Krieger, D. (2005). *Teaching in ESL versus EFL: Principles and Practices*. English teaching forum, 43(2), 8-16.
- Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lightbown, P.M. & Spada, N. (2001). *How Languages are learned*. Norma (Eds.), New York: Oxford University Press.
- Luu, T., & Nguyen, T. (2010). *Theoretical review on oral interaction in EFL classrooms*. *Studies in literature and language*. Vol. 1, No 4, pp. 29-48.
- Mohan, B. (1986). *Language and content*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rivers, W.M. (1987). *Interactive language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rivers, W. and R. S. Temperley (1978). *A Practical guide to the teaching of English*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sánchez, A. & Obando, G. (2008). *Is Colombia ready for « Bilingualism »?* Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, N.9, 2008, PP. 181-195. Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Colombia.

Schunk, D.H. (1997) *Learning theories: an educational perspective*. New York.

Macmillan Publishing Company.

Tsui, Amy B.M. (1995). *Introducing classroom interaction*. London: Penguin English Applied

Linguistics, Penguin Books Ltd.

Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching-practice and theory*. United Kingdom: Cambridge

University Press.

Ur, P. (2000). *A course in language teaching-practice and theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press.

Wagner, E.D. (1994). In support of a functional definition of interaction. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 8.2: 6-12.