

**CONTENT- BASED INSTRUCTION AND AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF CHAMPAGNAT TEACHERS' SPEAKING SKILL**

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**RESEARCH INTRODUCTION**

**SAN JUAN DE PASTO**

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### **Introduction**

In the first half of the twentieth century, language teaching was heavily influenced by structuralism, where grammar and vocabulary were viewed as the building blocks of language.

However, from the 1960s onwards, new approaches emerged as a reaction to these limited methods which neglected meaning. Structuralism, although still utilized nowadays, gave way to newer and more innovative approaches. In this new era, the term COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE was coined; as learners became more active, teachers became more passive. The aim has been “meaningful learning” which involves the development of social skills, interaction, and strategic competence.

The Content-Based Instruction (CBI) approach is considered an important representative of communicative approaches. CBI promotes both academic skills development and language proficiency by learning a language through content teaching.

Even though CBI can be applied in all four skills, it has been argued that this best serves the development of speaking if an international examination is to be taken. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to verify this statement.

## **1. The research problem**

This chapter will address the problem in a concise, analytical way. It includes the problem description, delimitation, and evaluation. Furthermore, a set of objectives has been established as well as the significance of this study.

### **1.1 Problem description**

Studies conducted by the British Council (2015) in the period between 2010 and 2011 have stated that “three out of four English teachers were not at B2 and 14 percent had not reached A1” (Howlett, K., page 16); this implicates a low level of competence and therefore there might be an inadequacy in how the language is being used.

Furthermore, and according to the above information, the fact remains that only a few teachers are willing to take international examinations such as: MICHIGAN, TOEFL, IELTS, CAMBRIDGE EXAMS among others; hypothetically denoting two claims: First, A fear of the examination process itself and second a passive attitude towards their capabilities, or a lack of knowledge when it comes to taking worldwide exams. Nevertheless, due to the inadequate range of pronunciation and slow speech pace, the student-teacher interaction does not occur as often as it should. In some cases, the proficiency level of the teacher is lower than the students.

Hypothetically speaking, we might be able to say that there are numerous factors which have influenced the statements listed above:

- a. It could be said that one of the main reasons for this low level of performance comes down to inadequate training.
- b. Another possible factor could be how curriculums are more concentrated on the following areas: grammar, phonetics, and linguistics, rather than the pragmatic context.

- c. It could also be speculated that the English program offered at Pasto universities, is limited in its scope and does not allow the students to be involved in more speaking activities.
- d. Furthermore, it is foreseen that if this situation continues, not only might the proficiency level of the teachers be the same as before, but also it could be transferred to the learners' ability to reach a desired level in their second language. In contrast, if the instructor's speaking ability is of a sufficient level, the students will benefit significantly.

In this particular case, a communicative approach could be proposed, in which there are two aspects: First, speaking skills should be reinforced, and second, teachers should be encouraged to sit international examinations.

## **1.2 Problem Analysis**

The problem states that the speaking level of teachers from CHAMPAGÑAT High School should be improved for two main reasons: First, in order to take an international certification which will qualify them with a B2 proficiency level in speaking; and second to benefit students, who are the receivers of the knowledge.

## **1.3 Delimitation of the study**

**1.3.1 Conceptual. Content-Based Instruction.** “Refers to an approach to second/foreign language teaching in which teaching is organized around content or information rather than around forms, functions, situations or skills” (Chamot and O'Malley cited by Hernandez, 2005).



**Evaluation:** “Feedback system which assesses the progress of the change and supply information to those who are controlling the process about how the learning is coming along, so that changes in the teaching can be made for the purpose of improving the learning” (Stevens, 2002).

**Common European Framework (CEFR):** It is a framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. It was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency (Council of Europe, 2014).

**Proficiency:** “The ability to handle with confidence, accuracy, clarity and precision a large number of communicative tasks; to participate in most informal and some formal exchanges on a variety of concrete and familiar topics; to narrate and describe in all major tenses, by providing a full account with good control of aspect; to handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events within a routine communicative task; and to be readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives (Vermont Department of Education, 2013)

**Speaking:** “It is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving”(Burns & Joyce, 1997).

**1.3.2 Geographical.** This research will be conducted at Champagnat High School in the city of Pasto. The school embraces students from a high social status, and has been in the educational field in Colombia since 1889. The instruction in English begins in kinder garden until the eleventh grade and the average number or given hours per week oscillates between 6 and 10. The head of the school emphasizes on the significance of the English not only for the students, but for the teachers as well. The curriculum includes international examination such as STARTERS, MOVERS and FLYERS (elementary school), and KET, PET, IELTS (freshman, Junior, and Senior).

At the moment, the school has signed an agreement with Cambridge University which certifies the institution to prepare and enter candidates for Cambridge English Exams. Currently, every year students are being prepared in order to sit international examinations at the institution.

**1.3.3 Population Delimitation.** The study will be applied to a number of eighteen teachers (6 men, 12 women) who have already obtained a speaking proficiency level of B1 according to the European Framework. Most of them have graduated from Nariño University, and some have taken further studies in English, either in Colombia or abroad. Some are in charge of kinder garden students and some of superior grades. The teacher's average age is 35; they also belong to social status rated as 4.

The estimated time for the research is 7 months which implies that by the end of this project, teachers will have reinforced and rose their speaking to a B2 level.

**1.3.4 Problem statement.** ¿What effect does the Content-Based Instruction have on the proficiency level in speaking of Champañat teachers according to the European framework in comparison to the Audiolingual method?

## **1.4 Objective of the study**

**1.4.1 General objective.** To compare the effectiveness of the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) approach and the Audiolingual method (ALM) in the development of the teacher's speaking skill.

### **1.4.2 Specific objectives.**

- a. To identify the teacher's competence level in speaking through a standardized placement test.
- b. To evaluate the teacher's speaking level by means of a final international standardized examination called IELTS.
- c. To identify the CBI teacher's competence level in speaking.
- d. To identify the CBI teacher's competence level in speaking.

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

This is a practical research, which is based on a specific theory, tries to solve a deficiency in speaking that has been taking place in the classroom and in the teachers' day to day use of the language. As a consequence, student's performance could be diminished.

The method reinforces the competence level in speaking and as a result brings a higher degree of performance in international exams. Subsequently, if the teachers want to be competent in an international context related to speaking, they must acquire the minimum standard needed.

The whole process involves an integration of good grammatical awareness, fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary with communicative interaction. As result, a high level of performance in speaking will be attained not only within the classroom but in a broader context.

At this juncture, even though teachers do have a more advanced level in comparison to other institutions, no former studies involving teachers of CHAMPAGÑAT high school, have been conducted. Therefore, the study will allow implementing changes in the current process and achieving the goals desired by both parties. Having stated that, the present study is not only relevant, but also pertinent and objective. Such elements guarantee the validity of the results which will be obtained.

### **1.6 Limitation of the study**

There are some factors which constitutes some of main drawbacks of this research; one of the them could be the time frame is obviously insufficient to reach the stated goal since the process only amounts to a hundred and twenty (120) hours in a period of seven (7) months. A minimum of a hundred and sixty hours (160) is desired under the European Framework regulations. On the other hand, the process will be applied to human beings, who tend to change behavior under conditions of observation. Another limitation could be the multiple activities teachers are assigned on weekly basis by the institution and their attendance might be affected.

In order to overcome these limitations, the activities must be designed to highly motivate the participants; the process becomes more effective and faster as they express willingness to learn.

In the meantime, the management of the school will be asked for permission, indicating the benefits that the study could bring to the whole staff and the students.

## 2. Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the literature related to the research problem. At the beginning, there is an explanation on why a communicative approach has been chosen. Then, in order to access to the essence of this study, Content-Based Instruction will be described, followed by its components, such as design, types of learning and teaching activities, learner's role, teacher's role, materials, procedure as well as a brief description on the speaking skill as it is this the goal of the research. Additionally, a brief explanation related to the Audiolingualism has been included since the method is to be implemented to the control group. By the end of this chapter, some previous related studies have been cited.

### 2.1 Communicative language teaching

Before the emergence of CLT, *Situational Language Teaching* was at the forefront of teaching English as a foreign language. This method involved the teaching of English by practicing structures in meaningful situation based activities. By the end of the 1960s, however, this approach was in decline. According to *Howatt (1984)* this was due to the fact that, "there was no future in continuing to pursue the chimera of predicting language<sup>1</sup> on the basis of situational events."

A method that focused on communicative proficiency was needed, rather than the traditional emphasis on structures. In this environment, CLT was born. A factor in the growth of CLT was the desire in Europe to develop methods of language teaching which concentrated more on communicative skills. An important figure in this development in the early 1970s was the British linguist D A Williams. In a groundbreaking document in 1972 he proposed a novel way of language teaching in which communicative methods were at the core of the learning process. In

subsequent years this method was adopted, embraced, and accepted as the primary way of teaching English as a foreign language.

The main features of this approach are: Meaning is paramount, Effective communication is sought, Drilling is periphery, Pronunciation is very important, The method is flexible, Accepts any device that will facilitate learning, The use of the student's native language is not forbidden, Teachers help the students in any way that motivates them to learn, Fluency rather than accuracy is the primary objective, Interaction in groups and pairs is encouraged, The method is learner-centered rather than teacher-centered. The following paragraphs offer further information on the Content-Based Instruction approach.

## **2.2 Content based instruction**

The approach to be followed by this investigation is the Content Based Instruction. There are two principles underlying the method:

Successful learning occurs when the focused is the information itself instead of the language.

- Regarding learners, the central priority is the academic content. The process of learning and teaching as quickly as possible is the central priority.

The focus of teaching lies on “how meaning and information are communicated and constructed through texts and discourse” (Richards and Rodgers, 2003). It measures the ability to produce coherent and cohesive discourses and texts in a given context.

The CBI presents activities to learners where all four language skills are involved. Within the classroom, a simultaneous process happens where students must listen, write notes, respond orally, and read information related to the theme or topic provided. Grammar becomes a

component and the teacher may implement other linguistic focuses in order to fulfill the course needs.

As a consequence, when a specific goal is set, learning becomes easier. The key component is the ability of the teacher to communicate in a comprehensible manner where the students engage freely. The teaching mechanism includes “simplification, explicitness, regularization, well-formedness and redundancy” (cited by the author from Stryker and Leaver, 1993).

Since this is a formal education setting, according to Richards and Rogers (2003), learners learn best when the material is presented within a meaningful context rather than when the focus is the language as a set of grammatical rules. By providing information which is considered relevant, the motivation level increases promoting effective learning (Brinton et al. 1989 cited by Richards and Rodgers).

In addition, CBI integrates the previous knowledge that a student may have on a certain topic, with the new concepts “students are not blank slates” (Richards and Rodgers, 2003).

**2.2.1 Design.** In the CBI the language learning objectives are achieved when the content course objectives have been attained as well.

For this research, and in order to lead to its proper development, the exception to the previous statement will be considered: the theme-based instructional model where the language learning objectives lead the topics selection. Although, the four language skills may be covered, one single-skill objectives may also be included.

According to the above mentioned, the aimed skill will be the speaking; In order to deviate the learners attention from the learning process itself and directed toward the communication meaning, many activities can be implemented such as Role-plays, drama, simulations, games



activities and structured communication exercises. These activities will actively involve the students to the point where the oral skills become natural and the level of confidence arises. In this instance, a positive attitude leads to a greater performance.

In addition, some classroom adjustments can be done. For example: distributing the chairs in a circle, organizing small talk groups, and encouraging students to express their own personal needs. Furthermore, Students must become the focus of the communication and not the teacher.

This is possible when learners are given the necessary material which will help them to organize ideas and express them in a natural environment (Oxford, 1990, p. 76-78).

Having stated the previous information, the following objectives have been set:

- a. Linguistic goals: This goal will enhance the current English language skills. Furthermore, this concept has been analyzed in the definition given in *The Essentials of Language Teaching* (2014), in which the linguistic goal has to do with the proper use of the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language. It is related to the words and how they are connected within a phrases and sentences.
- b. Strategic goals: Acquire strategies and learn language which could be useful in future events. Harmer, in *The Practice of English Language* (2007), claims that “if learners of a second language want to speak it fluently, they need to pronounce the phonemes correctly, which implies a proper use of intonation that goes hand in hand with discourse”. Moreover, second language learners will have to attain the skill if they want to be able to speak in different circumstances and contexts. Learners must incorporate a wide range of conversational skills as well as a series of strategies. The speakers are required to survive by exchanging ideas, opinions and feelings. There are some strategies within a conversation:

- **Structures and conversational rules:** Cited by Harmer (2007), Zoltan Dorneyei and Sarah Thurell (1994) have added new speech categories. They are as follows:
  - a. Help to establish the communication process: how are you?, that`s a nice dog! At last some sunshine!
  - b. Other categories involve interruption: sorry to interrupt but...
  - c. Another introduces a deviation in the conversation: oh by the way..
  - d. There another category which brings the conversation to an end: it`s been nice talking to you, well, I don´t want to keep you from your work.
- **Survival strategies:** Students need to have the ability to incorporate strategies in interactional situations. For instance, face to face conversation. They should also have a number of strategies at hand to formulate questions if the information has not been understood. One of them involves avoiding long pauses and hesitation. It is paramount that the students acquire the ability to paraphrase in these situations, and utilize all the feasible phrases.
- **Real Speech:** Students must experience spontaneous conversations inside and outside the classroom. By doing this, they will be exposed to a variety of scenarios where questions, negative and positive answers and statements, will give them the opportunity to dramatically increase their attainment. However, this scenario should be authentic with the aim of analyzing the new knowledge and later on, being able to transfer the concept learned into a real life situation.
- **Cultural:** To be able to understand the culture of the countries where English is spoken. A deeper understanding is studied by Oxford (1990), where is stated that the ideal context to practice speaking is the community where the language is spoken natively.

Subsequently, this allows an interactive, personal and rapid communication. What is more, when learners are within the new cultural context, they have no choice but to try to communicate and to understand the second language. Non-verbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions, as well as tone of voice and intonation are of great use to support the interaction. However, if traveling is not possible, there are other ways to practice:

- a. Through interaction with native speakers in the learners' hometown. By doing this, the language learning process will be enhanced.
- b. A natural mode to encourage the student to utilize the second language will be within an adequate classroom atmosphere.

**2.2.2 Types of learning and teaching activities.** According to Richards and Rogers, the activities to be implemented must contribute with the instructional focus. To serve this research, the following categories are to be expanded and utilized:

- a. Language skills improvement: Hymes (1971), who is cited by Bastidas (2002), implies that in order to teach English as a foreign language, there are twelve principles which have been formulated based on a general research conducted in a classroom. These principles are present in all environments associated with language acquisition:
  - Automaticity
  - Significant learning
  - Reward in advance
  - Intrinsic Motivation
  - Strategic Investment
  - The language ego
  - Self-confidence
  - Risk taking
  - Connection between language and culture

- The influence of native language
  - Exchange of language
  - Communicative Competence
- b. .Vocabulary building. This strategy is more student-led than others. The teacher assumes a more passive approach. The learners in this task are encouraged to speak freely whilst the teacher observes and acts as an informational resource.

This approach can be implemented in whole class discussions or in smaller groups. These conversations can be derived from previous reading passages or a single statement. Class debates are most effective if the topics are of interest to the student. The success of this activity depends on the ability of the teacher to create the right atmosphere.

The teacher should research the topic that is being debated. Vocabulary related to the topic of conversation should be relayed to the students beforehand.

As stated above, the bonus is on the students to speak. It is vitally important that all the learners have an opportunity to speak, therefore the teacher should act as an arbiter, allocating enough time for everyone to participate. The teacher should observe, taking notes on mistakes that are being made. Feedback on mistakes should be given after the exercise.

- c. Discourse organization: The authors Lynn Quitman and Jerrold Nudelman (1975) claim that knowing the basic principles of good speech-making is the best way to communicate effectively. A good speaker needs to talk loudly enough in order to avoid being bored in front of an audience. Showing confidence is also important to keep people interested in you. Having mentioned that, speaking is not only pronouncing words, it is also a process which involves posture, gestures, clarity of speech and more.

First of all, It is necessary to take a deep breath to relax the vocal cords and to talk clearly enough to be heard by an imaginary person placed as far as needed. These techniques contribute

with the message to be clear enough when it is listened. It is also recommended to vary the pace of speaking. Speaking too fast turns any speech into an avalanche of ideas without any interest. Making pauses between thoughts is the key component to attract the listener's attention. As a result, any person can manage to become an effective speaker by following these recommendations.

All of the features mentioned above provide an effective way to interact with others. It is very important to use them as much as possible. Attracting the listeners' attentions is as paramount as keeping them motivated and eager to listen. A good speech is reached when the message is understood by the audience. The best communication is attained by using an adequate method which retains the attention of the audience.

- d. Communicative interaction: Since interaction is one of the variables evaluated in the international examinations, dialogue strategies must be taught, As stated by some authors, dialogues have been one of the tools utilized to teach a second language from early times and has survived until today.

Bastidas, (2002) studies in depth the dialogue itself: "a dialogue is a conversation, usually short, between two or more persons". A conversation is shaped by some intrinsic features: It is not merely the exchange of isolated words without meaning; it is also the way to express emotions, feelings, and organized ideas. A proper intonation, rhythm, and pronunciation are some characteristic of a good communicative activity. Furthermore, the dialogue takes place in a social-cultural context, giving even more meaning to what is being expressed.

The goal is to reach a communicative competence. Where there is complete awareness of the sender, the receiver, the topic of the conversation and the context. In addition, a proper use of channels, codes are utilized in the process.

A good dialogue must be short; with no more than 5 statements and responses. And the brief conversation does not mean that it lacks essence; on the contrary, it allows the student to memorize and internalize the information.

Another feature is the balance. What it means is that the participant in the conversation must not dominate. Instead, they must create an environment of mutual participation.

An appealing content, a natural speech as well as a proper format in the dialogue process will be profitable for the speakers. The dialogues include real life events to provide communicative purpose it could be formal or informal as well as relevant information according to students' needs depend on their age, sex, culture, work, likes, and so on. Moreover, it is good to add information about a foreign culture so it enhances their motivation to learn a new culture. In addition, a dialogue must be developed with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion in a natural way.

Bastidas (2002) also indicates some suggestions for preparing to teach a dialogue; the appropriate dialogue is selected to be utilized in a specific teaching situation and taking into consideration the students' age, proficiency level, learning goals, and interests. It is important to arrange the time in which the procedure will be implemented. Furthermore, the dialogue must be recorded with a natural sound, at a normal speed, and with two people interacting. It needs to be supported with visual materials, so that students can understand and practice the new conversation.

In addition, it is required to prepare exercises and activities related to the objectives, as well as, the analysis of the drills. If a specific textbook is not followed, then the dialogue could be display in a wall chart with the purpose of saving time.

In summary, the teacher must prepare a lesson plan which includes goals, materials, time, methodology, and the assessment process: This allows running the class smoothly.

**2.2.3 Learners role.** As it has been stated by the author, learners have to be actively involved in the learning process of CBI, which in turn means to be psychologically and cognitively prepared. Students must be able to handle frustration, pressure, anxiety as well as being fully committed, willingness to be in charge of their own learning, cooperation through interaction, and being aware of the quantity of information. Some factors which could affect the efficiency in speaking (more precise pronunciation) are explained by Avery and Ehrlich (1992):

There are two opposing views on how to teach English pronunciation: One view establishes that it is possible to eradicate traces of a foreign language throughout the use of drills. Another position states that after certain age, the teaching of pronunciation is futile due to logical natural reasons.

Both views can be doubted by considering the psychological side of the learner as well as the context. The purpose is to demonstrate that sound system acquisition is affected by socio-cultural, biological, personality and linguistic factors. Whereas practice in pronunciation may not make perfect, ignoring it may be disastrous.

**a. Biological factors**

Brunner states the critical period hypothesis: an adult who acquires a second language will always have a foreign accent while a child almost always attains a native-like pronunciation. Even though this may be true, some adults have achieved a near-native pronunciation. Because the learning process varies from individual to individual, ESL teachers have the responsibility to teach pronunciation to adult learners and it can be very profitable.

**b. Socio-cultural factors**

Due to the accuracy in pronunciation by adult learners, some researches have established the socio-cultural factor as very influential. When learners strongly identified with the second language culture, it is more likeable to ‘sound’ like the members of that culture. Conversely, in order to preserve their own identity, they may want to maintain some traces of their mother tongue. When the accent is viewed as positive, it is the learners’ decision not to dispel it as part of their own personality.

In some cases, the need of the student is not just to “sound” like a native speaker does; the aim is to make them more comprehensible and achieve an efficient communication.

**c. Personality factors**

If learners are out-going, open minded, confident, as well as willing to take risks, the acquisition of the second language will be much more efficient. The students under this type of personality are more likely to interact with native speakers more often. On the opposite, if the main features of their personality are inhibition, introversion, and low self-esteem, this will delay their language development.

“Within a classroom, both personalities are together. It is the responsibility of the teacher not to create a threatening atmosphere. The students’ participation must be encouraged without any kind of pressure, as this can be paralyzing” (Avery y Ehrlich, 1992).

**2.2.4 Teachers role.** “Instructors must be more than just good language teachers. They must be knowledgeable in the subject matter and able to elicit that knowledge from their students” (cited by Richards and Rodgers from Stryker and Leaver, 1993)



Teachers are responsible for the process of planning, selecting and presenting the material to the class; analyzing student's needs, and creating a friendly learning atmosphere. Some of the following skills are identified by Stryker and Leaver (1993) as essential to be adapted by CBI instructors, and of course, they will be utilized in this research:

a. "Developing and maintaining high levels of student esteem" (Stryker and Leaver, 1993).

Regarding this aspect, Hymes(1971) cited by Bastidas (20002), presents the following activity list, which illustrates the interaction between management and method and could provide a safe ground to the students. Respect must be present in all the sessions. By doing so, learners will be challenged and not discouraged:

- Presentations in context
- Encourage risk taking
- Build self-confidence in the student
- Intrinsic motivation and development
- Promoting communicative learning
- Encourage students to process the right side of their brain
- Promoting tolerance
- Help students to use their intuition
- Encourage students to learn from their mistakes.

Once the courses have been carefully structured within a pedagogical framework, teachers and administrators can become the evaluators of the learning process. Instructors must be flexible to adapt to changes if frustration is detected.

In general, Self-esteem is closely related to the student's cultural context, the country's location, the institution where they study, their socio-economical background, their educational level and the purpose for learning a new language.

- b. "Using group work and team building techniques" (Stryker and Leaver,1993). For this matter, Curran (1961) in the *Language learning method in the community*, explains: "Learning is stimulated through a feeling of belonging and the desire of sharing with everyone"

It is important that the students are fully involved in the learning process by being able to utilize the second language in a responsible manner, as well as having the ability to reflect on it, and finally to manage a conversation. In order to fulfill these requirements, the students must be exposed to constant interaction with the teacher and their peers with the purpose of creating an environment which inspires a sense of belonging. From the beginning, students must elaborate their own conversations and present them during the interaction process between the teacher and the students.

The alumnae must be accountable for their performance therefore they can reflect on what has been successful and on what needs to be improved. Furthermore, the learner is the main component within an academic community thanks to the interaction between their teacher and their colleagues. There must be a feeling of mutual trust which will promote a safer environment for the students to speak. Nevertheless, the teacher possesses the knowledge, and he must be willing to transfer and share it. In addition, the teacher must have an adequate command of the language, display the minimum skills required, and demonstrate an exceptionally good quality that will improve the pupils' progress and it will compensate for deficiencies. All of the skills above must be accompanied by a high degree of patience.

According to Richard and Rodgers (1986), the relationship between the teacher and the student must be akin to the one that exists between the counselor and its patient.

On the contrary, size could be a drawback for teamwork. It has been observed that overcrowding seriously affects the learners' ability to improve their conversational skills. It is desirable to have a group of no more than 10 pupils or nor less than 5. This will enable interaction. This is an excellent method to encourage spontaneous learning from one another in a real context, according to their specific needs. In this activity, the students will get to know each other which in turn breeds confidence and for that reason allowing longer conversations.

According to Bastidas (1993), "Mistakes are not explicitly corrected due to the fact that the aim is neither to overpraise nor to over criticize. When the student asks for a sentence or phrase to be repeated, the tutor should do so, in a calm, friendly, and soft manner. However, self-correction by the students should be encouraged at all times".

- c. "Defining the background knowledge and language skills required for student success"(Stryker and Leaver,1993). When the student enrolls in a language program, a diagnostic test must be taken in order to evaluate their degree of knowledge.

To apply a valid, objective diagnostic test, the International Examinations have been introduced as a way to assess a candidate's language skills under these standards. Teachers use a variety of strategies to improve the students' speaking level and Cambridge ESOL exams are objective tools to test the student's communicative skills, social conventions, discussion management, seeking and giving information, expressing disagreement, making suggestions and recommendations.

Objectivity is a must when the speaking proficiency level is being assessed. The assessment is applied at the beginning in order to establish the initial speaking level of the student; it is also applied at the end of the process to measure if the desire goal has been achieved.

To guarantee the principles of reliability and trust of the variables which are being measured, this research will refer to The Common European Framework (CEF). To have a deeper understanding, these are its underlying principles:

The origin of The Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEF) dates back to the 1990s. It is the result of over 40 years of work in modern languages. All of this hard dedication, led to the design of a series of “detailed syllabus specifications” at different language learning levels. The first draft was published in 1995, and years later a revised version in 2001.

In addition, CEF provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guideline, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. “It describes in a comprehensive way what learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively” (Council of Europe 2001: I).

In other words, the CEF seeks to standardize the discourse on language learning. It is the unification of examination bodies, teachers, learners, materials, writers, and syllabus designers in order to serve as a reference for all language skills. It is a way to raise awareness and to ease the cooperation between the various levels of the education sector within Europe.

The CEF consists of two main aspects, close related to each other: first, the “Common Reference Levels” and second, a “detailed description of an action-oriented view” of the language learning/teaching process.

It is a positive approach of what learners can do at certain levels. It starts with the basic level (A1, A2), followed by an independent level (B1, B2) and finally a proficiency level (C1, C2).

The assessment is applied to the listening, speaking, writing and reading skills. The criteria for the evaluation of the speaking skills analyses accuracy, fluency, range of vocabulary, interaction and coherence. Other specific areas covered are linguistic, socio-linguistic, strategic and pragmatic competence.

The highly significance of the MERC has been spread in an appealing manner. A paramount organization named ALTE, whose members<sup>1</sup> (Cambridge ESOL) are well-recognized for their academic achievements, have adopted the six reference levels to their examinations. Subsequently, they are influencing the way in which course levels are indicated. In general, the levels have been implemented as a way to conduct a language assessment scale within the European countries, (Now it has expanded to the world).

It has been directly influential on the language teaching as well as the learning and assessment process. In reference to teaching, the framework does not prescribe a particular methodology to be followed. On the contrary, it is neutral and encourages teachers to embrace their own practice:

Promote methods of modern language teaching which will strengthen independence of thought, judgment and action, combined with social skills and responsibility. (Council of Europe 2001: 4)

What is to be accomplished is the development of the language use, language learning, linguistic, socio-linguistic, and intercultural competence among others. (Heyworth, pág. 124)

**2.2.5 Materials.** Richards and Rodgers (2003) recommend the identification of a “rich variety of materials” which in turn must be authentic, and related to the content course. The use of

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<sup>1</sup> (Cambridge ESOL, the Goethe Institute, the Alliance Francaise and other national bodies)

newspapers, magazine articles and many more as a way to submerge students to the real world and not be limited to text books only: “text-books are contrary to the very concept of CBI – and good language teaching in general” (cited by Richards and Rodgers from Stryker and Leaver, 1993).

**2.2.6 Procedure.** An appropriate course is tailored to each individual student according to their needs; conducted through workshops, dialogues, reading out loud, work groups, question and answer drills among other. In addition, the teacher is responsible for the formulation of a pedagogical technic which will be implemented in the classroom. It is at this juncture, where the teacher becomes the focal point of learning. All the efforts must be channeled towards obtaining the desired goal accompanied by a high level of motivation. (Brown, H D., 2002).

In the early stages of language learning, instructors and students may want to keep in mind the goal of communicative efficiency: That learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message (due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary); to avoid offending communication partners (due to socially inappropriate style); and to use strategies for recognizing and managing communication breakdowns. (Capital Resource Center, 2004).

Having mentioned the above information, the final purpose is to accomplish the speaking skill, which will be defined below.

### **2.3 The speaking skill**

Communicative competence is “the ability to use the language correctly and appropriately to accomplish communication goals; what it is not is using the language as a native speaker” (NCLRC, 2014).

Therefore, the focus of this research is to lead candidates to meet the criteria of evaluation as the final exam assessment includes the linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic elements:

In the linguistic element, the aim is to provide candidates with a wide range of vocabulary, simple and complex structures which will allow them to express their opinions not only through experiences but also in a more abstract way. The sociolinguistic competence refers to a conscious process within a specific context where language is utilized depending on the topic and on the people who is communicating. The persons take into consideration the attitude expressed by other speakers, the environment, and how they must address the conversation.

The discourse element is a more complex process where longer speeches take place and as a whole, they must be coherent. Finally, the strategic element is the art of not allowing the conversation to stop due to faulty pronunciation, lack of vocabulary, and misunderstandings among others.

For the purpose of this research, the Audiolingualism method is to be applied to the control group in order to compare and analyse the performance of the target group. Below, there is a description of the method from the point of view of two authors who accurately provide a definition and how it must be understood.

## **2.4 Audio-lingual method (oral expression)**

Richards and Rogers (2014) recapped how this approach has its roots in the USA during World War II, when there was a pressing need to train key personnel quickly and effectively in foreign language skills. The results of the Army Specialized Training Program are generally regarded to have been very successful, with the caveat that the learners were in small groups and were highly motivated, which undoubtedly contributed to the success of the method..

The Audiolingualism was theoretically underpinned by structural linguistics, a movement in linguistics that focused on the phonemic, morphological and syntactic systems underlying the grammar of a given language, rather than according to traditional categories of Latin grammar. As such, it was held that learning a language involved mastering the building blocks of the language and learning the rules by which these basic elements are combined from the level of sound to the level of sentence. The Audiolingual method was also based on the behaviourist theory of learning, which held that language, like other aspects of human activity, is a form of behaviour.

In the behaviourist view, language is elicited by a stimulus and that stimulus then triggers a response. The response in turn then produces some kind of reinforcement, which, if positive, encourages the repetition of the response in the future or, if negative, its suppression. When transposed to the classroom, this gives us the classic pattern drill-Model: She went to the cinema yesterday. Stimulus; Theatre. Response: She went to the theatre yesterday. Reinforcement: Good! In its purest form Audiolingualism aims to promote mechanical habit-formation through repetition of basic patterns. Accurate manipulation of structure leads to eventual fluency. Spoken language comes before written language. Dialogues and drill are central to the approach. Accurate pronunciation and control of structure are paramount.



In teaching, according to Bastidas (2002), oral expression is one of the most relevant skills which should be engaged by utilizing an accurate pronunciation, grammar fluency, vocabulary and the ability to answer in a fast and confident way.

Furthermore, Bastidas claims that memorization of dialogues or example sentences, and imitation, constitute an effective manner in order to acquire a precise pronunciation, practice accent, rhythm and intonation as well. In addition, grammar structures, vocabulary, and accurate pronunciation may emerge through dialogue.

Finally, Speaking based activities must be applied as excessive as possible during the learning process, becoming an essential part of the lesson or unit. It is considered as a process which involves interaction among learners within the classroom. It is effective if the teacher not only promotes motivation but also is able to develop an active participation from students by recognizing their abilities and their communication skills.

### 3. The research method

The information contained in this chapter explains the research paradigm, the type of research to be followed, as well as the techniques utilized to gather all the data. Additionally, other factors are considered such as population, procedure, validation criteria, data analysis, and ethical issues.

#### 3.1 Research design

**3.1.1 Research paradigm.** For the design of this research, the quantitative framework will be adopted which provides guidance in all stages; beginning with the support of the general ideas behind the inquiry, the detail collection of the data and the analysis of the procedures. According to Goyes-Moreno (2002) is a “hypothetical-deductive logical paradigm” which intends to establish the hypothesis as true.

- a. Objective:** The quantitative approach intends to generalize the results as valid criteria. The paradigm contributes to the researcher with the guidelines which serve as a leading path and interprets in a naturalistic manner how something was done.
- b. Features:** The main feature of the quantitative paradigm is that it refers to a logical approach where objectivity is present in all stages and in all the elements involved. Furthermore, this method is conducted through experimentation with randomized and non-randomized assignment of subjects. The Paradigm also includes the utilization of questionnaires or structured interviews with the purpose of generalizing from a population sample.
- c. Significance:** The research would not be possible if the study could not be addressed towards a certain direction and topic, in this case, the quantitative approach. Being able to

obtain results through statistics, specific data, and objective analysis, brings as a consequence a reliable, trustable study.

**3.1.2 Research type.** In a more specific way, a quasi-experimental type is the guiding line applied.

**Definition:** the quasi-experimental design is used in which attitudes are assessed both before and after an experimental treatment. There are two groups called, experimental and of control. The experimental treatment is applied to the first group .When the final results are attained; comparisons are made in order to measure and analyze, the cause-effect relationships among the variables.

**Objective:** The research seeks to develop true statements, which can serve to explain the situation that is of concern. Being objective is an essential aspect of competent inquiry as well as the standards of validity and reliability.

**Features:** Among the main characteristics, quasi-experiments utilize nonrandomized designs. However, there is control on how to select and schedule measures, how groups are compared and how treatment must be schedule. In the quasi-experiment type, the observed effects must have alternative explanations which might not be seen in advance. Furthermore, the researcher must utilize logic design in order to decide which of these explanations are particular to the context being studied.

**Significance:** The reason why this design has been chosen is that the teachers which are to be selected must have obtained a B1 level (CEF). Therefore, it is a nonrandom process; there is a condition which rules the subject's assignment. In addition, variables such as the extra school activities as well school curriculum may become a stumbling rock during the process. The results

are handled under the European Framework standards, which guarantee, even more, the objectivity of this research.

**3.1.3 Research techniques.** In order to gather all the information, this research will apply the questionnaire technique. Furthermore, as a way to establish the initial English level of the teachers, the valid instrument will be an international placement test to both groups. At the end of the whole process, the same test will be held as a way to measure the results.

The questionnaire consists of a series of clear questions which allow the researcher to obtain direct information of the variables to be studied. When the questions are carefully designed, they provide relevant feedback of the experimental process such as the adequacy of the resources, adequacy of the teacher, attitudes, and conclusions, among others. What is more important about this technique is that data is quantifiable (Teacher's Guide, 2002).

The effectiveness depends on how clear and precise the questions are since accuracy guarantees easy comprehension. There must be a logical format and the ideas must be well connected in order to soften the process.

For this research, questionnaires are of great assistance since they grant broad and rich data which can be measured, analyzed, and conclusions drawn.

In reference to international examinations: "Cambridge English Language Assessment exams are known and recognized by schools, universities, private, and public sector all over the English-speaking world. They provide an international certificate showing the level have attained in English" (British Council, 2014).

This research has chosen the examinations under the CEF<sup>2</sup> standards since they constitute an effective instrument which objectively contributes to the assessment of the current and final English level of the teachers. The knowledge of this data allows the design of a customized Content-Based Instruction lesson plan in order to attain the results planned.

**3.1.4 Population, sample, and setting.** Below, three aspects will be expanded: the description of the context where the study will be held, the population, and the sample group to whom the techniques will be applied.

**3.1.4.1 Population.** The population of this study corresponds to teachers of Instituto Champagnat who work in pre, elementary and high school. The total number of English teachers is eighteen, mostly women, who must yearly rotate in every grade. Teachers, who have been assigned to pre-school, could remain there for up to three years. As a consequence, their speaking proficiency level tends to slowly decrease. However, the minimum level required is of B1 according to the CEFR.

Most of the teachers have graduated from Nariño University, and some have taken further studies in English, either in Colombia or abroad. Furthermore, the last international examination taken dates back to 2014, where most of them achieved a B1 level. At this juncture, neither of them has taken any other global certification.

The majority of teachers belong to the social status classified as 3 (Estrato 3), and all of them are head of household. Their fixed school schedule starts at 7:00am until 2:30pm., and mandatory meetings once afternoon per week as well as five Saturdays per year. Starting the

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<sup>2</sup> Common European Framework

month of July, the Champagnat students will be trained for the international exams such as KET, PET since they are required by the institution to sit these tests in November.

**3.1.4.2 Sample.** Since the number of English teachers is relatively low, the sample chosen will be the total population: Twelve (12) women and six (6) men. By doing this selection, the study guarantees reliability and validity.

**3.1.4.3 Setting.** The research will be held at *Champagnat Institute* in Pasto city, founded in Pasto in 1893 by the Marist Brothers. It is a private and catholic institution, approved by the National Board of Education which provides full time formal education to men and women in all levels, pre, elementary and high school.

The school serves the community by implementing an educational pedagogy of love for the family, Virgin Mary and Jesus. Champagnat students are integral with identity, values and attitudes. Furthermore, the goal for 2017 is for the school to be recognized for its leadership, religious values, and professionalism. In addition, the school leading path leads towards the great care for the environment and the cultural development of the students.

**3.1.5 Research procedure.** The research aims to discover which model copes best with the speaking criteria established by the CEFR and the need of Champagnat teachers to raise their speaking skill in at least one level. The steps of the process are as follows:

- To request permission from the principal of the school to conduct the research.
- To socialize the project with the teachers of Champagnat.
- To set the dates of the placement test, course development and final exam.

- To apply the placement test according to the European Framework.
- To analyze statistically the results.
- To assign the subjects to both groups: Control and Experimental. The control group will be chosen from Brighton institution who meet the same characteristics as the experimental group
- To conduct the Content-Based Instruction to the experimental group.
- To apply the final international exam to both groups.
- To analyze the results obtained.
- To write a statistical report
- To draw conclusions based on results.

### **3.1.6 The treatment.**

**3.1.6.1 Questionnaire.** Before a speaking diagnostic evaluation is taken, candidates will be asked to complete a questionnaire. By doing this, data regarding their reasons, expectations, and prior knowledge of international exams will be collected and analyzed. The results obtained enable the research to establish the attitude of the candidates towards international examinations, and to discover what motivates them to sit English proficiency exams.

**3.1.6.2 Placement test.** An initial exam will be applied in order to accurately assess the teachers spoken proficiency level. This will follow the guidelines established by the COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK. The criterion for the evaluation of speaking is divided into five main branches.

The exam which is to be implemented must be highly reliable and the standards must be rigorously adhered to. The success of the research would depend on honest and objective evaluations. Therefore, in order to guarantee the above stated an IELTS speaking test will be used.

The exam consists of three parts which approximately lasts 11-14 minutes. The exam is as follows:

Part 1: 4-5 minutes. Involves questions on some personal and familiar topics; for example, home, family, work, studies, among others.

Part 2: 3-4 minutes. The candidate is given a card which asks them to talk about a particular topic and which includes points that they can cover in their talks. One minute preparation time is given, and candidates must speak continuously for two minutes.

Part 3: 4-5 minutes. The candidate is asked further questions which are related to part 2. These questions give more opportunity to discuss more abstract issues and ideas.

**3.1.6.3 *Statistical analysis of the results.*** Once the results have been obtained, they will be evaluated according to the criteria of the CEFR and by competent staff who are well-versed in international examinations and presented in a statistical format. The outcome will be statistically analyzed and summarized in a systematic format which will allow to draw initial conclusions.

**3.1.6.4 *Within the classroom.*** The Common European Framework (CEFR) states that the goals of learning a language should be divided in three main components:

- A. “ To deal with a business of everyday life in another country “
- B. “ To exchange information and ideas with people who speak a different language”





- 5 minutes. Candidates are given four short titles and subtitles of newspaper articles. They are asked the general meaning of each one of them.
- 5 Minutes. New vocabulary is highlighted and what they believed the meaning is through context.
- 5. Minutes. More lexis will be extracted through a brainstorming activity.
- 5. Minutes An audio will be played containing the four articles in order to familiarized pronunciation.
- 10 Minutes Denotation and connotation of idiomatic expressions use
- 20 Minutes After, a longer reading with comprehension questions will be given in order to internalize the new information.
- 10 Minutes. In order for a cognitive process to take place, Ss will be asked to write a short passage about their preferred mean of transportation. This will allow the student to connect and personalized the new lexis and chunks of vocabulary by the comparison of previous knowledge and the newly acquired.
- 20. Minutes According to Paul Nation's method, the group will be divided into three listeners and three speakers. The speakers for 4 minutes speak about the new topic. Then each speaker moves to the next speaker's chair, and repeats exactly what he /she said before but now for 3 minutes and more fluency is expected. This process continues for the following set of 2 minutes. Now the listeners become speakers, when their roles are reversed. This activity enhances fluency. The new vocabulary is now memorized.
- 15. Minutes. An IELTS question regarding the topic is assigned to a pair of Ss, who must respond accurately.
- 5. Minutes. A quiz will be given for the following class.

As a conclusion, the presentation of the content is comprehensible to second language learners. In the process, learners use language and tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty. Furthermore, it is relevant to their everyday life and exam preparation.

One of the drawbacks of the model might rely on the fact that students could revert to their mother tongue if the target language is deemed too difficult. However, in higher levels, this seems not be a problem.

**3.1.6.6 Implementation of the audiolingualism to the control group.** The same as the CBI, the topics chosen will be based on every day routines which involves not only social but academic settings. Each single theme must engage learners in the process. Equal number of sessions will be given, in this case 72 sessions.

LESSON PLAN 1/72: OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

VOCABULARY: MAKING A COMPLAIN

TEACHING TIME: 2 HOURS

- 5. Minutes. Show a video of a classic British sitcom called “faulty towers”. Students are asked to observe the intonation, rhythm, and stress of a typical British accent.
- 4 Minutes. Students are asked to take roles; one would be the complainer and the other would be the hotel manager.
- 25-30 Minutes. The listening from the video will be cut in chunks of time; this enables micro-listening for things such as weak forms, strange vocabulary, the emphasis on some phonetic sound such as “schwa”, and on weak forms of auxiliary verbs.

- 10 Minutes. The problems are highlighted, and problem vocabulary is repetitively and intensively practiced along with the teacher. Then students are to memorize and perform their dialogue.
- 20. Students in turn will partner with another student in order to reinforce the chunks of vocabulary obtained.

As a conclusion, it is foreseen that after a short period of time, the student's attention might wane since repetition breeds boredom. However, the continuous drilling will improve pronunciation which is an important evaluation point in international evaluations.

**3.1.6.7 Final international exam to both groups.** When the whole training process finishes, the sixteen candidates must sit a real international examination. Provisional results will be released online within two weeks' time-frame. The results show the official level and grades which will play a vital part in the research since it might unveil the effectiveness of each approach-method.

**3.1.6.8 Analysis of the results obtained.** A relevant part involves systematically exploring, summarizing, and presenting analyses of the data generated by the candidates' performance. Then, a final statistical report will be presented and compared to the initial report withdrawn from the placement test.

### **3.1.7 Validation criteria.**

**3.1.7.1 Pilot study.** The pilot study aims to discover any shortcomings which could alter the outcome of this research. In more precise form, the pilot study will assess the approach to be materialized within the classroom, and what is more, if these exercises fulfill the standards of the European Common Framework.

The procedure requires selecting a small group of teachers, to whom the method is applied, and figure the effect of the process. It might be necessary to implement new strategies, instill changes, or perhaps adjust the time of instruction.

Since the diagnostic and final test are based on international standards, the certainty and objectivity of these exams are not been questioned.

In order to verify whether this research is feasible or not, a pilot study has been already applied to an experimental and control small groups. The process was conducted for about 6 month time, and the results are drawn as follows:

After having implemented the CBI approach and the AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD, and having compared and analyzed both of the statistical reports, it could be stated that the less effective would be the AUDIOLINGUAL due to the following reasons:

- There could be a noticeable difficulty of transferring learnt patterns to real communication.
- Candidates are not likely to memorize what has been taught.
- Explicit grammar explanations are not given.
- Understanding of the language could be beyond the scope of the learners due to the strict use of L2.

- The method prioritizes accuracy over fluency. This could hinder candidates' ability to sustain longer periods of speech. The minimum required by the Common European Framework is two (2) minutes (IELTS exam for example).
- One of the methods glaring weakness is the over reliance on the Teacher as a central figure. This undermines the student's confidence and their interactional skills by limiting their ability to initiate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication independently.
- A two-hour class becomes tedious for both, students and teachers.
- If taught as one component of the CEFR criteria in training sessions, the AUDIOLINGUAL method has still an important role to play in the preparation of speaking due to its focus on pronunciation and accuracy
- Since this research tries to discover whether this method suits the purposes of the CEFR speaking test or not, it is concluded that the method meets only one of the five criteria. Its scope is too narrow, which deprives the student's possibility of the acquisition of a higher score in the exam.

Therefore, the most suitable approach is the CONTENT BASED since one of the core principles of the CBI is that it prepares Learners for academic studies as well as for survival in an English environment. This definitely complies with the CERF descriptors.

Within the CBI, the Sheltered model seems to be more appropriate for the aim of this research. This model entails the presentation of content in a way which is comprehensible to second language learners and in the process use language and tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty. The beauty of CBI lies in its flexibility, for there are not specific techniques, or lesson procedures, the implementation of a variety of materials and resources.

What is relevant is that the CBI's flexibility will allow teachers to cover all five (5) of the CEFR Speaking criteria (RANGE, Accuracy, Fluency, Interaction, and Coherence). Furthermore, it will prompt self-discovery among students since more than one skill can be applied. The approach also is likely to enable teachers not to be too rigid, and to target deficiencies in one of the criteria.

As a final conclusion, the CBI approach will create a climate where students effectively will acquire a higher level in speaking. It is projected that at least an increase of one level can be accomplished along with discipline, consistency, determination, and commitment.

**3.1.7.2 Validation criteria.** For the research validity, the quantitative criteria must be met; this means it must be valid, reliable, and general; the previous standards constitute the mechanism to obtain the desired goal.

For this research, validity means that all the instruments applied must measure the characteristic which intends to measure. In depth, the variables evidence-content, evidence-criteria, and evidence-theory must be closely related.

The reliability in this research leans on two instruments, whose design, guarantees coherent results, and objectively assesses what it is intended to be evaluated. The instrument must reflect an accurate knowledge of the content, measure a theoretical method, and be consistent to the aim of this study.

In reference to the criterion of generalization, the outcome of this study will be applicable to all the population who participates. Nevertheless, the subjects chosen are not at random and all the population will join in the process.

**3.1.7.3 Ethical issues.** Due to the nature of this study, where the speaking activities are directed to teachers who are well-recognized in the region, a high degree of respect, appreciation and positive feedback must be addressed at all times. The management of the institution as well as the subjects will be asked for their authorization to perform the proceedings whenever it is necessary.

Confidentiality will be the key component of this research in order to dignify the participants; the privacy policy allows the study to share the data obtained only with those directly involved and with no other entity or person. Nevertheless the final data will be only socialized with the group of Champagnat School.

In general, the study is conducted to and by human beings whose welfare overrides any desire for information which.

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# **Anexos**

**Anexo A. Speaking survey**

**SPEAKING SURVEY**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

“Efficiency in speaking also includes facial expressions, as well as intonation; these two factors help to facilitate a warmer and friendlier way of communication, which in turn generates an enthusiasm that is attractive to people”(W.S. Fowler, 1980).

The aim of this survey is to identify the reasons that could influence the speaking proficiency level of each candidate.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**CHECK THE LETTER WHICH APPLIES**

**1. How much do you know about international examinations**

- a. Sufficient                      b. Lack of knowledge                      c. Not interested**

**1. Have you taken any international speaking exam before?**

- a. Yes                                      b. No**

**Which one?** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Highest band you have attained in speaking**

- a. A2                      b.B1                      c. B2                      d. C1                      e. C2**

**3. In the last three years, your proficiency level in speaking has:**

- a .Increased                      b. decreased                      c. remained the same**

**4. How do you feel when confronted with international exams**

- a. Confident                      b. Anxious                      c. Neutral**

**5. What kind of training in order to improve your English level have you had?**

- a.Self-taught                      b. Regular courses                      c. Online**

6. Has the school curriculum been an impediment for your English speaking improvement

- a. Yes
- b. No

How \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Would you consider that your undergraduate studies at the University contribute to the development of your speaking skills in an international context?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Why \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Are you interested in taking an international exam?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Which one? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. How much time are you likely to spend in order to improve your speaking skills?

- a. From 8 to 16 hours a month
- b. From 16 to 24 hours a month

More? How many? \_\_\_\_\_

**Anexo B. Example of a diagnostic exam**

**Test 5 Speaking Parts 1 and 2**

**Part 1** 2 minutes (3 minutes for groups of three)

First of all, we'd like to know something about you.

- How often do you read newspapers or magazines? (Which do you like most?)
- Do you enjoy travelling long distances? Why?/Why not?
- Which country would you most like to visit? Why?
- What do you most like doing on the Internet? Why?
- What is your favourite computer game? (How often do you play it?)

**Part 2** 4 minutes (6 minutes for groups of three)

**Interlocutor** In this part of the test, I'm going to give each of you two photographs. I'd like you to talk about your photographs on your own for about a minute, and also to answer a question about your partner's photographs.

(Candidate A), it's your turn first. Here are your photographs on page C15. They show **people singing in different places**.

I'd like you to compare the photographs, and say **why the people are singing in these different places**.

All right?

**Candidate A** .....

**Interlocutor** Thank you.

(Candidate B), **Which of these singers would you prefer to listen to?**

**Candidate B** .....

**Interlocutor** Thank you.

Now, (Candidate B), here are your photographs on page C16. They show **people looking at works of art**.

I'd like you to compare the photographs, and say **what you think the people find interesting about the two different kinds of art**.

All right?

**Candidate B** .....

**Interlocutor** Thank you.

(Candidate A), **Which of these kinds of art would you rather look at?**

**Candidate A** .....

**Interlocutor** Thank you.

**Test 5 Speaking Parts 3 and 4**

**Part 3** 4 minutes (5 minutes for groups of five)

**Interlocutor** Now, I'd like you to talk about something together for about two minutes. (3 minutes for groups of three)

**I'd like you to imagine that a local college is organising courses to encourage people to take up new hobbies. Here are some of the courses they are offering and a question for you to discuss.**

First you have some time to look at the task.

Show candidates the diagram on page C17. Allow 15 seconds.

Now, talk to each other about **why people might find each course interesting.**

Allow two minutes (three minutes for groups of three).

**Interlocutor:** Thank you. Now you have a minute to decide **which course people might find most interesting.**

Allow one minute for pairs or groups of three.

Thank you.

---

**Part 4** 4 minutes (6 minutes for groups of three)

**Interlocutor** Select any of the following questions, as appropriate.

- Why do you think people have hobbies?
- Which hobby would you like to take up? Why?
- Which are the most popular hobbies in your country? Why do you think that it is the case?
- Why do you think some people like to collect items?
- Some people say that nowadays we don't have enough time for hobbies. What do you think?
- Do you think today's young people have different hobbies from those of older generations? Why?/Why not?

Select any of the following prompts, as appropriate.

- **What do you think?**
- **Do you agree?**
- **And you?**

Thank you. That is the end of the test.



**Anexo C. Speaking guide common european framework**

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
C2	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turntaking, referencing, allusion making, etc.	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.
C1	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
B2+					
B2	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he/she searches for patterns and expressions. There are few noticeably long pauses.	Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some 'jumpiness' in a long contribution.

B1+					
B1	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.
A2+					
A2	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements. Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.
A1	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire.	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like 'and' or 'then'.



## Anexo D. Example of a final speaking exam

**Test 3**

Speaking

### Speaking Part 1

The examiner will ask you some questions about yourself, your home, work or studies and familiar topics.

*Let's talk about your studies (or your job).  
Are you studying or do you have a job?*

*Where are you studying?  
How many hours do you spend there in a week?  
Tell me something about the place where you study.  
What are your favourite subjects?*

OR

*What is your job?  
How long have you been doing that job?  
Which part of your job do you enjoy the most? Why?  
Tell me about the place where you work.*

The examiner will then ask you some questions about one or two other topics, for example:

*Now let's talk about your free time.  
Do you spend a lot of time with your friends?  
Do you go out much in the evening?  
How much television do you watch?  
Do you do any sports?*

### Speaking Part 2

The examiner will give you a topic on a card like the one on the right and ask you to talk about it for one to two minutes. Before you talk you'll have one minute to think about what you're going to say. The examiner will give you some paper and a pencil so you can make notes if you want to.

**Describe a journey you remember well.**  
You should say:  
how you travelled  
where you went  
what happened  
and explain why the journey was memorable for you.

The examiner may ask one or two more questions when you have finished, for example:

*Do you enjoy travelling?  
Are you good at remembering things that happened a long time ago?*

### Speaking Part 3

The examiner will ask some more general questions which follow on from the topic in Part 2.

*Do you think too many people are dependent on cars as a means of transport?  
Why do people prefer to travel by car? Is there a way of changing this attitude?  
How could public transport systems be improved?  
How can the amount of air travel be reduced throughout the world?  
How will people travel in the future, do you think?*