

Running head: CLL AS A REDUCING-ANXIETY APPROACH

APPLYING ANXIETY-REDUCING STRATEGY THROUGH COOPERATIVE  
LANGUAGE LEARNING AT UNIVERSIDAD DE NARIÑO

By

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Melany Samantha Cobo Jojoa

Submitted to the School of Human Sciences in partial  
Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of B.A in  
English and Spanish Teaching Program  
Linguistics and Languages Department  
Universidad de Nariño

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## CLL AS A REDUCING-ANXIETY APPROACH

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CLL AS A REDUCING-ANXIETY APPROACH

Nota de Aceptación:

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Firma Del Presidente De Jurado

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Firma Del Jurado

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Firma Del Jurado

San Juan de Pasto, Octubre de 2016

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## RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio es aplicar los clubes conversacionales como estrategia los clubes conversacionales para reducir la ansiedad a través del enfoque CLL, favoreciendo la producción oral en estudiantes de primer semestre de lengua castellana e inglés en la Universidad de Nariño, ya que la ansiedad es uno de los factores que puede afectar negativamente la producción oral en la lengua extranjera.

Esta investigación se realiza con el propósito de observar si los clubes conversacionales pueden ser una estrategia viable en la reducción y manejo de la ansiedad en la producción oral, ya que el objetivo es describir los efectos de la implementación de los clubes conversacionales como una estrategia para reducir la ansiedad en la producción oral a través del aprendizaje cooperativo de lenguas en estudiantes principiantes de la Universidad de Nariño, promoviendo la participación de los estudiantes produciendo output o expresando sus ideas en la lengua meta. Adicionalmente, este estudio abarca algunos antecedentes relacionados con el tema que ayudaran notoriamente con el apoyo a esta propuesta.

**Palabras Clave:** Aprendizaje cooperativo de lenguas, ansiedad, habla, estrategia, clubes conversacionales.

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to apply conversational clubs as a strategy to reduce anxiety towards CLL approach, helping oral production in beginner students from the first semester of English and Spanish Teaching Program at Universidad de Nariño, as anxiety is one of the factors that can restrain the student when speaking in a foreign language.

This research was conducted with the aim to describe the effects of the implementation of conversational club as a strategy to reduce anxiety in the oral performance through cooperative language learning in beginner students at Universidad de Nariño, promoting students' participation, producing output or expressing their ideas in the target language. Additionally, this study covers some antecedents related to the concept of anxiety in order to state the basis and support for this proposal.

**Key words:** Cooperative language learning, anxiety, speaking, strategy, conversational club.

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**I. CHAPTER : INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

**Introduction**

When people study a foreign language as English, interaction plays an important role in the development of oral skills. Interaction is represented in a classroom as speaking activities such as presentations, discussions or debates, and the speech. According to that, oral communication can cause in students a negative anxiety because they feel insecure and uncomfortable sharing their thoughts or ideas in public. According to Spielberger (1983, p.15) anxiety can be defined as “A subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system”. In this sense, “Language anxiety is experienced by learners of both foreign and second language. It also poses potential problems because it can interfere with the acquisition, retention and production of the new language” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p.86). Regarding this fact, anxiety can impair students’ proficiency because they feel fear, apprehension, and anguish at the moment of explaining something in front of the rest of students and/or teacher. For instance, when students feel anxiety they have a mental block that alters their interaction and which makes them feel ridiculous or dissatisfied with the language.

For these reasons, this project is intended to apply conversational clubs as a strategy to reduce anxiety through cooperative language learning approach in beginner students from the English and Spanish teaching program at Universidad de Nariño.

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Additionally, this study presents some key concepts that can help readers understand the importance of cooperative language learning approach used in conversational clubs as a strategy to reduce anxiety.

### **Problem statement**

In this globalized world people have the necessity to learn a foreign language in order to find a job, study abroad, or simply as means to communicate with other people, as consequence, there are more and more people studying or learning languages at universities, institutions and academies. However, many of these students experience anxiety while they are in the learning language process, it could be because of the nervousness, fear, mental block, and sickness therefore, “learners who experience these feelings may grapple with negative social behaviors such as inappropriate silence, unwillingness to participate, absenteeism, and withdrawal from the course” (Bailey, Daley, & Onwuegbuzie, 1999; p. 32).

In this same way, it was also mention by Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1990) that many learners are highly anxious when participate in speaking activities. Indeed, it is often suggested that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking aspect in a second language learning situation (p. 420). Hence, conversational club could be a strategy that helps students manage their anxiety levels and, especially, to improve their oral skills.

This paper is aimed at reporting the effects of conversational club as a strategy to reduce anxiety using the principles of Cooperative Language Learning in students from first semester from English and Spanish Teaching program at Universidad de Nariño. Likewise, it is fundamental to take into account that these students are learning English as a Foreign Language at Universidad de Nariño therefore, they only use the target language in classroom not outside the

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class. Hence, the implementation of conversational club could promote more spaces where students can practice their oral skills, and subsequently they can reduce their anxiety.

In addition, these students will be language teachers in the future. Therefore, it is important to give them a tool which allows them to enhance their speaking skills. In fact, they might use this same strategy with their students in their professional practice. According to what has been previously explained this question raises:

What is the effect of conversational clubs as a strategy on the reduction of anxiety in the oral performance of beginner learners at Universidad de Nariño?

### **Objectives**

#### **General**

To describe the effects of the implementation of conversational club as a strategy to reduce anxiety in the oral performance through cooperative language learning in beginner students at Universidad de Nariño.

#### **Specific**

- To evaluate the use of conversational clubs as a communicative strategy
- To apply the principles of cooperative language learning through the strategy with foreign language learners
- To identify the effects of the strategy on the anxiety reduction

#### **Justification**

This paper is going to set forward the importance of applying anxiety-reducing strategy through cooperative language learning (CLL) in order to help students interact in the target

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language in conversational clubs as a strategy to improve their English proficiency and mostly their oral performance. Also, CLL has relevant principles which could help in the application of the anxiety-reducing strategy since it promotes cooperative work in small group teams. This is explained by Johnson (1993)

Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes beneficial to themselves and all other group member. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (p. 4).

Another reason why this paper could contribute with English language teaching and learning practices is because beginner learners from Universidad de Nariño who belong to the English and Spanish Teaching Program could enhance their output through conversational clubs because students have an additional space where they can practice their English while engage in cooperative work.

Also, this study is concerned with working with beginner students who could have advanced; intermediate, pre-intermediate, and basic English proficiency so that mixed-ability level students could benefit from scaffolding and individual accountability. Hence, CLL can help students working together to acquire new vocabulary and understand new grammar structures. This could be analyzed when they use the input and produce output sharing their ideas through conversational club-sessions. In this way, basic and intermediate language students could level their English skills, specially speaking.

In addition, this document might to help students offering them a place where they can speak in the target language, and they will feel more confident when they share their ideas, thoughts, or doubts with their mates or club guide during the club sessions. A case in point was a

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study titled “The Effect of Intervention Strategies on the Oral Performance of Foreign Language Learners at Universidad de Nariño in 2014”, carried out by the research group Lenguaje y Pedagogía of the University of Nariño which revealed that 59.6% out of the students consider that group activities reduce anxious behaviors because learners feel more confident when they interact with their classmates. In his sense, students would also raise awareness when they produce output expressing their ideas and thoughts. This will surely allow students give a better performance through-cooperative help. In relation to learners’ perception of low ability, teachers should make interventions in the classroom environment and practices and create a “sense of community in the classroom”, so that students do not perceive it a competitive, while pair and group work can be incorporated (Kitano, 2001). In that case, it is important to implement conversational club through CLL in order to help learners reduce anxiety levels.

Therefore, it could be the reason whereby students prefer to work in groups.

Finally, Conversational clubs could be a strategy to improve the oral production where students can speak in the foreign language with more confidence and through this reduce anxiety levels.

### **Limitations of the study**

In the development of this study there are some limitations to be considered. These limitations are related to the participants and time management.

The availability of the participants could vary in the development of the conversational clubs according to the university schedule. It means that students must take courses related to their major in the afternoon and also they have to take additional courses needed in their program. These might be the reasons why they could not participate in a conversational club.

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Another limitation could be that the participants do not take seriously the activities performed in the conversational clubs and they just take this as a way to avoid classes or perhaps they attend clubs for the purpose of making friends and not for learning English or enhancing their speaking skills.

One more limitation is about time management because conversational clubs require a specific time to develop activities which are two hours per week. This time could not be enough for students to practice their English skills and session time might be changed.



## **II. CHAPTER : REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

This chapter covers the literature review related to this research. Some authors, books and articles ideas and thoughts will be studied in order to describe the main features of Cooperative Language Learning, Anxiety, strategy, conversational clubs, and oral performance in order to support the main purpose of this study which is applying anxiety-reducing strategies through Cooperative Language Learning.

### **Antecedents on this field**

A relevant example of research evidence that involved this field of study was carried out by López in 2011. The objective of this research was to implement a conversation club in order to investigate the increase level of oral production of English learners basic I - B2 through the development and implementation of workshops.

The appropriate information in this research is the importance where language teaching and learning is framed for instance pronunciation, comprehension in the real context. The researcher promoted spaces where learners could strengthen the language skills, in this case listening and speaking. The researcher also mentioned that conversational clubs will be a way where students could improve the oral skills, they could achieve a good level in target language and acquire more fluency and accuracy in L2.

The conclusion of this research is that learners have a limited amount of vocabulary. Therefore, they have a basic oral production and they present a lot mistakes in accuracy. However, conversational clubs will be considered a good strategy to be implemented in a teaching setting as they provide spaces where learners can interact in a real context.

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Another antecedent related to this field was performed by Subina and Balbuca (2016), in which the main objective was to diagnose the factors that influence the poor performance of listening and speaking skills and the possible creation of a Conversational Club to improve English classes in the third year of general basic education at “Unidad Educativa Eloy Alfaro from Huigra”. This study was focused on implementing conversational clubs as an alternative to prevent students from feeling worried and anxious when they use the target language as students were really concerned about making mistakes, forgetting vocabulary, uttering incorrect grammatical structures or doing a wrong verb conjugation. These aspects grew feelings of insecurity and discomfort and so a limited English performance was perceived. As a conclusion this study pointed out that the teacher and the students were predisposed to participate in a conversation club, trying to improve the oral skills by means of creating a comfortable environment where students feel motivated and confident to express their ideas in the target language.

After analyzing some of the research evidence on this field of study, it is convenient to check and review some key terms, definitions and characteristics that are closely related to this study. The terms found below will allow the readers to understand more this research and the basis for this.

### **Cooperative language learning**

#### **Some essential definitions**

Richards and Rodgers (2001) maintain that “Cooperative Learning is an approach to teaching that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom” (p. 40). On the other hand, they also mentioned that “Cooperative Learning provides a closer context outside school changing the traditional relationship of teacher

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and students” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.40). This definition supports this research as conversational club will be one of the strategies related to Cooperative Learning. It could provide a different context where students can practice their speaking in a cooperative way outside the classroom with the aim of reducing anxiety and improving oral performance. Holt (1993) mentioned that Learning environment:

Supports both interaction and negotiation, combines high interest with lowered learner anxiety and positive encouragement for communicative effort. The environment must be one where efforts at language use are supported and students feel secure enough to venture use of the new language to express ideas. (p.51)

According to the previous idea, it can be said that CLL contributes to the creation of a suitable and satisfactory environment where students feel less anxious and experience more security when they speak in L2.

Likewise, it was also mentioned that “provision of a positive social climate in the classroom is a condition that enables learners to have access to more language and feel they can take more risks in trying to use the second language” (Holt, 1993, p.51).

In the same way, Olsen and Kagan (1992, p.8) pointed out that Cooperative Learning is an organized group learning activity in which each learner is taken into account for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others. Therefore, learning is dependent on the socially structured to exchange information between learners in groups. Hence, using CLL in conversational clubs could contribute promoting cooperation between the participants because they are immersed in a cooperative work improving their English skills and their oral performance.

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In addition, Marr (1997) states that “Cooperative Learning encourages mutual respect and learning among students with varying talents and abilities, languages, racial, and ethnic backgrounds” (p.8). Sudzina (1993) also describes that Cooperative Learning is effective in reducing prejudice among students and in meeting the academic and social needs of students at risk for educational failure.

In this sense, Slavin (1991) defines “Cooperative Learning is the structured, systematic instructional technique in which small groups work together to achieve a common goal” (p.1).

The previous definitions of Cooperative Language Learning support the idea that this approach could contribute to this research as a useful tool to enhance and increase students’ participation and reduce anxiety at the moment of speaking in a conversational group. According to that conversational clubs could be a great strategy inside Cooperative Learning whether to teach or learn a language.

While Cooperative Language learning was clearly defined by some authors in the paragraphs above, there are also some characteristics that are present in this approach.

### **Cooperative Language Learning characteristics:**

According to Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1993, p.2) Cooperative Learning in this context sought to do the following:

- Raise the achievement of all students, including those who are gifted or academically handicapped
- Help the teacher build positive relationships among students
- Give students the experiences they need for healthy social, psychological, and cognitive development

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- Replace the competitive organizational structure of most classrooms and schools with a team-based, high-performance organizational structure

### **Goals for language teaching**

It is viewed as a learner-centered approach to teaching held to offer advantages over teacher-fronted classroom methods. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) in language teaching its goals are:

- Provide opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities.
- Provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal in a variety of curriculum settings.
- Enable focused attention to particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks.
- Provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communication strategies.
- Enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress to create a positive affective classroom climate.

Furthermore, the main premise of CLL is that learners need to develop communicative competence in a language by communicating in social or pedagogical structured situations. Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that “CLL advocates have proposed certain interactive structures that are considered optimal for learning the appropriate rules and practices in conversing in a new language. CLL also seeks to develop learners’ critical thinking skills, which are seen as central to learning of any sort”.

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### **Advantages of Cooperative Language Learning**

McGroarty (1989) offers six learning advantages for ESL students in CLL classrooms:

1. Increased frequency and variety of second language practice through different types of interaction.
2. Possibility for development or use of language in ways that support cognitive development and increased language skills.
3. Opportunities to integrate language with content-based instruction.
4. Opportunities to include a greater variety of curricular materials to stimulate language as well as concept learning.
5. Freedom for teachers to master new professional skills, particularly those emphasizing communication.
6. Opportunities for students to act as resources for each other, thus assuming a more active role in their learning.

### **Cooperative Language Learning Procedures**

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) there are some steps to take into consideration when using CLL into the classroom, they are present as follows:

1. Teacher pair students with one good reader in each pair.
2. Student 1 describes what Student 2 is planning to write. Student 2 listens carefully, inquires with a set of questions, and outlines Student 1's ideas. Student 2 gives the written outline to Student 1.
3. This procedure is reversed and students change the roles.

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4. Students research individually for the material they will need for their compositions but they keep an eye out for material useful to their partner.
5. Students write the first paragraph of each composition together to ensure group work and understanding.
6. Students write their compositions individually.
7. When their compositions are finished. They read each other's compositions, make corrections in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, language usage, and other aspects of writing that the teacher specifies.
8. Students review their compositions alone again.
9. Students then reread each other's compositions and sign their names to indicate that each composition is error-free.

After defining CLL, another key term to define is anxiety and this is found below.

### **Anxiety**

It is defined as a “feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.” (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, and Jacobs, 1983, p.30). According to that, anxiety is the most common feeling; it is characterized by physiological manifestations like sweat, headache, stomachache and fainting. This emotion could appear when the subject is exposed to a dangerous situation. This definition explains what anxiety is and how the body responds when people experience this negative emotion. On the other hand, “anxiety in everyday language refers to an unpleasant emotion or affective state, roughly a synonym or variant of fear, which people want to avoid or get rid of.” (Carver & Scheier, 2006 p.5) in this definition there is a new thing about anxiety for example it is considered as an affective state, therefore, anxiety might cause in the subject frustration and fear

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and according to the previous definition people try to avoid the situations where anxiety could be triggered.

In the same line is necessary to distinguish two forms of Anxiety Trait and State anxiety, the first one Trait anxiety, according to Spielberger et al (1983), refers to “relatively stable individual differences in anxiety-proneness, that is, to differentiate between people in the tendency to perceive stressful situations as dangerous or threatening and to respond to such situations with elevations in the intensity of their state anxiety reactions” that is to say, people who experience trait anxiety are permanently anxious while people who experience state anxiety feel fear or nervous in a specific moment and the sensation disappear when the dangerous situation ends. These terms are relevant for this study because it is necessary to describe what kind of anxiety forms prevail in people who participates in this research.

To illustrate, some of the most import terms related to anxiety in foreign language learning are detailed below.

### **Foreign Language Anxiety**

After defining the general concept about anxiety it is necessary to define a specific kind of anxiety that students will experience during the language learning process. Foreign Language Anxiety according to MacIntyre & Gardner this term is defined as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (1994, p.284). Therefore, it is important to identify why anxiety has a straight relationship with speaking and listening in the language learning process about that, Gardner (1987) mentioned that anxiety has been found to have a negative influence on listening



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comprehension. According to Horwitz (1986, p.6) “Communication in a foreign language requires a great deal of risk-taking, inasmuch as uncertain and unknown linguistic rules prevail”.

In addition, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, p.1710), found that “speaking is the most anxiety-provoking of second language activities”. Moreover, “Students in language classes may engage in negative self-talk, ruminating over a poor performance, which affects their ability to process information in foreign language contexts” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991 p.1710). From this point of view, anxious students have an academic underachievement because these negative feelings create in them a mental block and probably they think that they could not develop the language skills specially speaking. As it was mentioned above the highest levels of anxiety are more common in the communicative context, this means, speaking and listening. Therefore, these previous definitions contribute to this research to identify in what situations, students experience high anxiety levels because these provide the context where anxiety takes place in communicative situations. Furthermore, there are other important factors around anxious students. A case in point is that students always try to avoid the situations where they could be exposure. To support it, Horwitz (1986, p.6) say “Students with high levels of foreign language anxiety often exhibit avoidance behaviors such as missing class and postponing homework”. Thus, some learners try to avoid the situation where they should interact in foreign language but this behavior always is accompanied by the frustration.

Another pertinent key term in this research is oral performance.

### **Oral competence**

Bygates (1991, p.3) defines oral competence as “the ability to form abstract sentences that are produced and adapted to circumstances at the moment of speaking”. O’Maley and Valdez

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(1996, p.3) also say “that oral competence refers to an ability to understand meaning between two or more speakers”. On this sense we can infer that Communication implies interaction with others, and involves speaking and listening. The latter permits language comprehension and helps the oral production.

Interaction using the target language is a very important aspect to consider when developing a class-lesson. Students share opinions, give ideas, and participate. However, improving interaction and development of oral competences will require more effort, practice, and determination. Ur (1996) as cited in Al-Hosni (2014) mentioned that “speaking as the most important skill among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because people who know a language are referred to as speakers of that language” (p.2). This shows that leaning how to use a language orally is a countless characteristic in language learning. In addition, Al-Hosni mentioned that input is very essential for language acquisition and it is not sufficient if it is not followed by interaction and output.

However, students often experience difficulty when they try to speak in a foreign language. According to Al-Hosni (2014) these difficulties enclose: inhibition when students are worried about making mistakes, fear of criticism, shyness, lack of motivation and so no participation. Large classes is also a matter to bear in mind as only one participant can talk at a time while others speak very little or not at all. Some other learners tend to use their mother tongue because it is easier and learners will feel less exposed to any communication attempt.

It is also important to take into consideration what are the factors that produce difficulties since they might probably cause low proficiency and anxiety. Once the concept of speaking is

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defined. It is relevant to understand that the characteristics of speaking are fluency, accuracy and pronunciation explained below:

### **Fluency**

Richards (2006) defines “fluency as the natural language use, which despite limitations in the communicative competence, the speaker engaged in an interaction maintains an understandable and current communication. Lan (1994) citing Crystal (1977), Bryne (1986), and Nation (1991) mentioned that fluency means the capacity to communicate without vacillation and pauses that makes fail comprehensible interaction.

Fluency is an important part of the speech because it refers to the capacity to share and express clear ideas in ease and spontaneity way, this allows the speaker to unfold in a correct form. Thus, to acquire fluency is necessary constantly practicing.

### **Accuracy**

Richards (2006) defines accuracy as the creation of correct examples of language use. In the same way, Bryne (as cited in Lan, 1994) states that “accuracy refers to the use of correct forms where utterances do not contain errors affecting the phonological, syntactic, semantic or discourse features of a language”.

In other words, accuracy refers to the correct use of grammatical structures that include syntax, semantics, and pragmatics they allow to clearly understand the meaning of messages or speeches. It is the ability to combine the words in a correct way in order to share clear ideas and thoughts in a conversation. Therefore, accuracy is an important issue to work on and improve during the implementation of the strategy proposed in this research because the students need to

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have knowledge about the grammatical structures in order to perform good conversations with their mates.

### **Pronunciation**

“There are three areas learners need to know about in the pronunciation of English – apart from speed and volume – which are entirely connected with meaning. They are sounds, stress, pitch and intonation” (Harmer, 2009; p.50). According to Harmer, intonation refers to the rise or fall of the voice when people talk. It also involves the pitch of the voice which is based on the high or low level of the speaking. Thus, pronunciation is a mix of different aspects that are considered in the way that a sentence is spoken. Chafe (1994) mentioned that spoken language is produced by means of intonation units, and that these units are changes in pitch or voice quality. Dalton & Seidlhofer (2001) defined pronunciation as the production and reception of sounds of speech, and it also means acts of speaking depending on the way and contexts in which sounds are produced. For Louma (2003), “pronunciation is the sound of speech that “can refer to many features of the speech stream, such as individual sounds, pitch, volume, speed, pausing, stress and intonation” (p.11). Pronunciation refers to the way in which language sounds This means, pronunciation has a relevant role because it permits that the message be understood since every language has a particular way of articulation,

In essence, fluency, accuracy and pronunciation have the same value in speaking since they permit that message be clear and easy to understand. These facts work together to make communication possible.

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To develop these features of speaking more efficiently to implement some strategies that can help the improvement of these, therefore, is relevant to comprehend the meaning of strategy and its importance.

### **Strategy**

One of the earliest researchers in this field, Rubin (1975, p.43) provided a very broad definition of learning strategies as “the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge”. This definition is essential in this research because conversational clubs could serve as a strategy to enhance participation between students in order to improve their oral skills and also reduce anxiety levels.

In addition, taking into account the concept of strategy in learning a language given by Oxford (1990, p.8) “L2 learning strategies are specific behaviors or thought processes that students use to enhance their own L2 learning”. On this very same sense Wenden (1987, p.7-8) says that “Learning strategies are the various operations that learners use in order to make sense of their learning” in this case, students can identify in which aspects they are working correctly or not, which are their needs, weaknesses, and strengths. For these reasons, conversational club as the strategy of this research can manage students to become aware of their own learning process. On this same way, Cohen (1990) says that “learning strategies are processes consciously selected by learners and which may result in actions taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language” (p.4). Moreover, Oxford (1990) stated that “strategies are particularly important for language learning “because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence” (p.1). The previous definition of strategy supports

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this research since it gives important recognition to the development of communicative competence which involves the active participation of the students.

Finally, Rubin (1975) offers a very complete definition of strategies “by strategies he means the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge”. According to this author some of the strategies and characteristics which seem to be important when creating a strategy are the following:

1. The good language learner may be a good guesser that is, he gathers and stores information in an efficient manner so it can be easily retrieved.
2. He is often willing to appear foolish in order to communicate and get his message across.
3. He will try out his knowledge by making up new sentences, thus bringing his newly acquired competence into use.

### **Conversational clubs**

The following definitions about conversational clubs are very useful in this research because they contain most of the advantages, goals and steps to develop a conversational club in learning a foreign language. Also, these definitions support the idea that cooperation is a central part to achieve goals and improve the oral competence in their participants.

James (2013) states that conversational clubs encourage people to get together for a good conversation. A monitor uses items based upon specific theme where people establish a conversation talking to each other. They can initiate conversation and suggest ideas for future conversation. On this sense the role of conversational clubs is to help establish the group introduce people to each other and enable people to make links and connection.

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The previous definition supports the idea that conversational clubs are a good strategy to encourage people to enhance and practice their oral performance in a cooperative group.

Likewise, these are easily accessible and above all, promote the freedom to participate actively.

Similarly, James (2013) mentioned that conversation clubs are developed in a way that each student contribution is valued; knowledge, existing skills, and experiences enable students to shape the activity. It will be meaningful for the needs to manage clubs carefully ensuring that they will be open and accessible. According to that, members of conversational clubs could feel welcome, confident, and sure to share what they think because their opinions or ideas are valued in the group.

This research is focused on conversational clubs in English as the target language that is the reason why it is convenient to talk about English clubs.

### **English club**

English club is a place for language learning learners use English in a casual setting in different time-scheduled sessions. Practicing your skill in the classroom is important, in an English club students get a chance to practice many different skills principally speaking and listening, in a setting that is more like real life. In the English conversational club students will require to speak more clearly and listen more carefully. The last definition upholds one of the purposes of this research which is that students can practice their oral performance in the target language in real life situations, so they can find in conversational clubs real and comfortable settings to practice and share their ideas.

Likewise, an English conversation club is a great way to make new lasting friendships. It is important to have good English proficiency because your confidence will increase, if the

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members practice. The students will feel more comfortable using English around the classroom; they trust and have fun with. Also, social aspects create a good environment to invite students to talk among them with more confidence and security as a way to reduce anxiety because they could create friendship ties with their bandmates. Therefore, it would be possible to infer that conversation is the kind of speech that happens informally, symmetrically, and for the purposes of establishing and maintaining social connections.

In addition, it is necessary to establish a relationship between CLL, anxiety, and conversational clubs which will be explained below.



### **III. CHAPTER : METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the explanation of the research methodology and the procedures that will be used during the development of this monograph according to the objectives proposed in chapter I. In this part the researchers describe the method, design and techniques that they will use in the research process.

#### **Research paradigm**

The research method used in this study is mainly qualitative. Robert (2001) refers to qualitative research as “a method which describes phenomena in a quotidian environment, providing useful, detailed, and relevant information about people’s actions and feelings, taking evidence about behaviors and attitudes about their social events”. Qualitative research advocates the use of observation to describe characteristics, behaviors, thinking ways about particular social group.

Therefore, this paper is qualitative because it intends to describe the effects of the implementation of conversational clubs as an anxiety- reducing strategy through cooperative language learning. This research method will permit to collect relevant information to valid conversational clubs as a strategy to enhance the oral performance of beginner learners.

#### **Research design**

##### **Action research**

Action research was the term researchers found convenient to use in this study. According to Valcarcel, (2009; p. 7). “It promotes collaboration and encourages “community” among all parties involved in a specific learning situation, leading to resolve that have the potential to

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improve conditions and situations for all members of the community”. Also, it focuses on an issue that affects directly a community and people in the community would work together collaboratively to conduct the research and take the needed actions to find solutions to the problem. Action research is a qualitative methodology which could help to this investigation providing in conversational clubs active roles for their participants.

### **Data Colleting**

#### **Focus Group**

A focus group will be used to collect data because it will permit to collect relevant information and aspects to observe and work during conversational club sessions.

Langford and McDonough, (2005) defined focus group as “a carefully planned discussion, designed to obtain the perception of the group members on a defined area of interest. Typically there are between five or twelve participants, the discussions being guided and facilitated by moderator. The group members are selected on the basis of their individual characteristics as related to the topic of the section.

A key benefit of focus groups is that researchers interact directly whit participants. The interviewer or moderator can explore the responses given to questions or comments and thus discover more about individuals’ perceptions and views. They can prove the accuracy of comments (maybe in response to nonverbal cues, such as verbal gestures or facial expressions) and ask follow-up questions to clarify or qualify given responses.

#### **Focused interview**

According to Bailey (1994) focused interview questions are opened to provide flexibility in terms of the questions asked. These questions may be designed in order to prove forms of

## CLL AS A REDUCING-ANXIETY APPROACH

exploration that seem to be yielding information relevant for the hypothesis or topic being studied. On this way, focused interview is important in this research because it helps the researchers to discover and understand the real feeling that the students have about the language learning process and what they think about the strategy that the researchers purpose in this investigation. This interview will take place through the focus group technique.

### **Field notes**

Field notes are an important issue in this investigation because researchers can observe every single aspect in the development of the conversational club and serve as notes to refresh the memory of the researchers about what has been seen or experienced. These kinds of data gathering are useful instruments in this study to collect relevant and detailed information from a group of students in non-academic spaces, although are instruments which can be used immediately and at the same time because they are appropriate in conversational clubs and easy to use. Furthermore, is relevant to have into account the clear definition about this way of collect information.

According to Given (2008) field notes are essential to any qualitative study since researchers must record in-depth descriptive details of people (including themselves), places, things, and events, as well as write reflections on data, patterns, and the process of research. All these details allow to state qualitative data points into articulated, meaningful, and integrated research findings.

## CLL AS A REDUCING-ANXIETY APPROACH

### Population

The population for this study could be made up by 80 beginner English students in Universidad de Nariño; these students belong to the first semester of English and Spanish Teaching Program.

### Sample

The sample for this study makes reference to the group of students that will participate in the application of the strategy proposes in this research. The population of the students is 80 students, but 16 students were only selected for this research, to choose this sample the researchers will use the following mathematical formula:

$$K = \frac{N}{n} = \frac{80}{16} = 5$$

This formula corresponds to a selection of systematic sampling; through this formula is randomly selected sample where  $k$  refers to the result of the division between ( $N, n$ ) the first  $N$  corresponds to the population number and the second  $N$  refers to the sample number.

$K= 5$ , this means, for each 5 students, researchers select one student to participate in this study.

$N= 80$ , it is the total number of first semester English and Spanish teaching program students.

$N=16$  it corresponds the sample number of first semester English and Spanish teaching program students.

And  $5$  is the result of the division between  $N/n$  which refers the letter  $K$  in the formula.

## CLL AS A REDUCING-ANXIETY APPROACH

### **Procedure**

Conversational clubs will be developed every Friday during a session of two hours, during the entire semester. The project managers will be the researchers of this study. The issues addressed in the conversational clubs will be closely related with the listening and speaking syllabus of the English and Spanish Teaching Program students from first semester at Universidad de Nariño.

In addition, this research will be used an anxiety scale like an instrument to measure the anxiety levels and the strategy effectiveness with the purpose in this research to reduce anxiety.

Thus, it is important to mention that this instrument was used in the research group Lenguaje y Pedagogía of the University of Nariño in the development of the research project titled “The Effect of Intervention Strategies on the Oral Performance of Foreign Language Learners at Universidad de Nariño on 2014. It is worth mentioning that since there was not an Spanish version for the scale available, this instrument was a linguistic adaptation of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) created by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope in 1986 used in the development of the research project mentioned above (See appendix A and B).



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**Budget**  
**Chart 2. Budget**

Quantity	Concept	Unit cost	Total cost
Photocopies	100	200.00	20.000.00
Transport	36	2.800.00	100.800.00
Materials			100.000.00
Unexpected expenses			22.080.00
Total			242.880.00

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8.

**Appendix A. Instrument**

**Cuestionario No.\_\_\_\_**  
**Universidad de Nariño**  
**Departamento de Lingüística e Idiomas**  
**Grupo de Investigación Lenguaje y Pedagogía**

**Applying anxiety-reducing strategies through cooperative language learning at Universidad de Nariño**

**Nombre:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Documento de Identidad:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Edad:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Género: M** \_\_\_\_\_ **F** \_\_\_\_\_

A continuación encontrará una serie de afirmaciones respecto a cómo se siente o qué tipo de situaciones suelen presentarse en su clase de lengua extranjera. Por favor, indique su grado de acuerdo con la afirmación: Muy de acuerdo, de acuerdo, ni en acuerdo ni desacuerdo, en desacuerdo, muy en desacuerdo

1. Nunca me siento muy seguro de mí mism@ cuando hablo en mi clase de lengua extranjera.

- \_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo
- \_\_\_ De acuerdo
- \_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- \_\_\_ En desacuerdo
- \_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

2. No me preocupo por cometer errores en la clase de lengua extranjera.

- \_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo
- \_\_\_ De acuerdo
- \_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- \_\_\_ En desacuerdo
- \_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

3. Tiemblo cuando sé que me van a pedir que hable en la clase de lengua extranjera.

- \_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo
- \_\_\_ De acuerdo
- \_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- \_\_\_ En desacuerdo
- \_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

4. Me asusta cuando no entiendo lo que el/la profesor(a) dice en lengua extranjera.

- \_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo
- \_\_\_ De acuerdo
- \_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- \_\_\_ En desacuerdo

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\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

5. No me molestaría para nada tomar más cursos de lengua extranjera.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

6. Durante la clase de idiomas, me pongo a pensar en cosas que no tienen nada que ver con la materia.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

7. Sigo pensando que los otros estudiantes son mejores en idiomas que yo.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

8. Usualmente me siento a gusto durante los exámenes en mi clase de idioma.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

9. Empiezo a sentir pánico cuando tengo que hablar sin preparación previa en la clase de idiomas.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

10. Me preocupan las consecuencias de reprobarme en mi clase de idioma extranjero

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

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11. No entiendo por qué algunas personas se angustian tanto por las clases de lengua extranjera.

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

12. En la clase de lengua extranjera puedo ponerme tan nervios@ que olvido las cosas que sé.

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

13. Me da vergüenza responder voluntariamente en mi clase de lengua extranjera.

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

14. No me daría nervios hablar con un hablante nativo en lengua extranjera.

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

15. Me molesta cuando no entiendo lo que el profesor o profesora está corrigiendo.

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

16. Incluso si estoy bien preparad@ para mi clase de idiomas me siento ansios@ por la clase

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

17. A menudo no me da ganas de ir a mis clases de idiomas.

- Muy de acuerdo

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De acuerdo

Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Muy en desacuerdo

18. Me siento segur@ de mi mism@ cuando hablo en mi clase de idioma extranjero.

Muy de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Muy en desacuerdo

19. Temo que mi profesor(a) de idiomas esté atento(a) a corregirme cada error que cometa.

Muy de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Muy en desacuerdo

20. Puedo sentir mi corazón latiendo fuerte cuando me van a pedir que participe en mi clase de lengua extranjera

Muy de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Muy en desacuerdo

21. Entre más estudio para un examen para mi clase de idiomas, más me confundo

Muy de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Muy en desacuerdo

22. No me siento presionad@ para prepararme muy bien para mis clases de idiomas.

Muy de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo

Muy en desacuerdo

23. Siempre siento que otros estudiantes hablan mejor la lengua extranjera que yo.

Muy de acuerdo

De acuerdo

Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

En desacuerdo



## CLL AS A REDUCING-ANXIETY APPROACH

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

24. Me siento muy cohibid@ al hablar en la lengua extranjera frente a otros estudiantes.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

25. La clase de lengua extranjera avanza tan rápido que me preocupa atrasarme.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

26. Me siento más tens@ y nervios@ en mi clase de lengua extranjera que en mis otras clases.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

27. Me pongo nervios@ y me confundo cuando estoy hablando en mi clase de lengua extranjera.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

28. Cuando voy rumbo a mi clase de lengua extranjera me siento muy segur@ y relajad@.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

29. Me pongo nervios@ cuando no entiendo cada una de las palabras que dice el/la profesor(a) de idiomas.

\_\_\_ Muy de acuerdo

\_\_\_ De acuerdo

\_\_\_ Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo

\_\_\_ En desacuerdo

\_\_\_ Muy en desacuerdo

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30. Me siento abrumad@ por la cantidad de reglas que hay que aprender para hablar una lengua extranjera.

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

31. Me da miedo de que los otros estudiantes se rían de mi cuando hable en lengua extranjera.

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

32. Probablemente me sentiría cómod@ entre hablantes nativos de la lengua extranjera.

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

33. Me pongo nervios@ cuando el/la profesor(a) de lengua extranjera hace preguntas que no he preparado con anticipación.

- Muy de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni en acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Muy en desacuerdo

Gracias por su participación

**Appendix B: Interview**

**ENTREVISTA FOCALIZADA**

**Universidad de Nariño**

**Applying anxiety-reducing strategies through cooperative language learning at Universidad de Nariño**

Fecha \_\_\_\_\_ Nombre \_\_\_\_\_ Documento \_\_\_\_\_

Edad \_\_\_\_\_ Sexo: F  M

A continuación encontrarás una serie de preguntas que nos ayudarán a obtener información relacionada con tu experiencia como estudiante de Licenciatura en Lengua Castellana e Inglés de la Universidad de Nariño. Esta información nos permitirá comprender tus percepciones sobre el tema a desarrollarse en esta investigación. Se garantiza que la información obtenida será guardada bajo estricta confidencialidad.

**Gracias por su colaboración.**

- 1) ¿Te sientes ansioso al hablar en un idioma extranjero? ¿Por qué?
- 2) ¿Crees que muchas personas se sienten ansiosas cuando están aprendiendo un idioma extranjero?
- 3) ¿Sientes malestar y/o preocupación cuando los profesores de inglés te hacen alguna pregunta?
- 4) ¿Qué estrategia utilizas cuando no puedes contestar una pregunta o interactuar en lengua extranjera?
- 5) ¿Qué actividades o temáticas propondrías para la realización de los club de conversación con el fin de mejorar tus habilidades orales en Inglés?
- 8) ¿Cuáles son las metas que quieres alcanzar con la participación en clubes de conversación?