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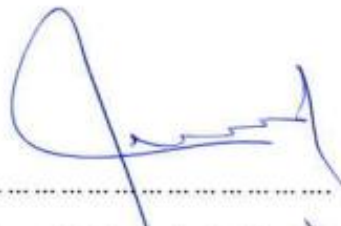


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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my father Pablito, my mother Rosita, my brother Jhon, my sister Menaye and my daughter Zendaya; they have been my emotional support and my motivation during my learning process at this prestigious university. They have helped me fulfill my dreams, have guided me to make good decisions, and have always supported me.

This work is for the people I love the most in this world: my parents, my siblings, and my daughter.

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ABSTRACT

This research project aimed to determine the effectiveness of self-directed learning strategies to improve students speaking skills in the English language in virtual classes. This research was carried out with senior students and English teachers at “Sagrado Corazón de Jesús” high school, Tulcán, Carchi province, from 2021-2022. The direct beneficiaries of this research were students and teachers from the high school since they are going to be directly delivered with the booklet developed in this project, whereas indirect beneficiaries are every person that has access to it. The data collection was carried out through interviews directed to get opinions and points of view from teachers and surveys applied to the students searching for their experiences and preferences; these were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Finally, a booklet with self-directed learning activities was designed to develop students’ oral production and promote their capacity to be responsible for their own learning, practice by themselves, and take control of the activities they do to learn without needing someone to push them.

Keywords: oral production, self-directed learning, foreign language, strategies.

RESUMEN

El presente proyecto de investigación se desarrolló con el propósito de determinar la efectividad de las estrategias de aprendizaje autodirigido para mejorar las habilidades orales de los estudiantes en el Idioma Inglés en clases. Esta investigación se llevó a cabo con los estudiantes de Segundo de Bachillerato y los docentes de inglés de la Unidad Educativa “Sagrado Corazón de Jesús”, de la ciudad de Tulcán, provincia del Carchi, en el ciclo escolar 2021-2022. Los beneficiarios directos de esta investigación fueron los estudiantes y docentes de la institución ya que a ellos se les entregará directamente el cuadernillo de actividades, mientras que los beneficiarios indirectos son todas las personas que tienen acceso a este proyecto. La recolección de datos se realizó a través de entrevistas dirigidas a obtener las opiniones y puntos de vista de los docentes, y encuestas aplicadas a los estudiantes buscando sus experiencias y preferencias, mismas que fueron analizadas cuantitativa y cualitativamente. Finalmente, se diseñó un cuadernillo con actividades de aprendizaje autodirigido enfocado a desarrollar la producción oral de los estudiantes y promover su capacidad de ser responsables de su propio aprendizaje, de practicar por ellos mismas, y de tomar control de las actividades que realizan para aprender sin necesidad de que alguien los presione.

Palabras clave: producción oral, aprendizaje autodirigido, idioma extranjero, estrategias.

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INTRODUCTION

Motivation

The motivation for studying self-directed learning strategies to improve students speaking skills in virtual classes is due to speaking being an essential skill in the learning process as a foreign language because the use of English as a second language for communicative purposes has been increasing in recent years. Most schools and high schools in Ecuador have developed the English teaching process without good results due to using different strategies that do not let students learn significantly. Due to that, its study is necessary to improve this skill and get success teaching the foreign language.

Problem description

In virtual classes, speaking skills cannot be developed in the best way because teachers have not prepared for this change. This is not contacting with students, so it does not allow them to practice the foreign language. To solve this problem, teachers must implement self-directed learning strategies to have an alternative to help students to develop their English-speaking skills.

The problem in this research is that virtual classes have a lot of risks in the learning process around the world because it is different to learn face to face as virtual. The problem studied in this research is the soft speaking skills level in virtual classes. It was identified in senior students at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school in Tulcán. Students were forced to continue their studies in virtual modalities without having previous experience with them. However, it had some benefits, like new technological tools, but it also had prejudices because students only do the homework that teachers sent and do not have space to practice their speaking skills.

Carchi is a province of Ecuador that provides students with the teaching of English in the learning process since they are in school until they go to university. The pandemic forced the country to implement virtual classes, but acquiring a foreign language was not so productive. In this way, the problem was identified in virtual classes because students cannot practice freely, they have less time to do this, and there was not enough guidance. Nowadays, the lack of oral production in classes has significant consequences for the students' speaking skills; it is necessary to acquire self-directed learning strategies to improve this skill.

This research problem has established some questions: Why is it more difficult for students to learn in virtual classes? How can self-directed learning strategies contribute to improving speaking skills?

Justification

Over the years, students have grown accustomed to following their teachers or doing what they say they should do. For this reason, it is important to implement strategies so that students are the protagonists of their learning and learn by themselves. In this way, self-directed learning strategies are of great value as they allow each person to take control of their learning. In addition, it helps to optimize the educational experience by focusing effort on useful information. There is no considerable evidence of self-directed learning activities carried out by students, so they do not learn or improve their oral skills in virtual classes. Therefore, it is important to highlight that strategies are resources that can be used with a specific intention and, therefore, must be aligned with the learning purposes and the skills to be developed.

In the same way, oral production is a challenging skill, and it is also difficult to practice in class because of the time. It takes both students and teachers effort and time to do it in class, for students, sometimes feel less confident when doing it in front of the teacher or the class, and for the teachers, it takes them lots of time to give feedback to each student and pay attention to specific errors. In this way, it is easier for everyone to have students do it on their own, self-assess, and be able to improve those mistakes so that they are only polished in class.

Another important aspect that this research involved was the autonomy of students and how they start learning in an independent way. As mentioned before, students used to do just what teachers said, and this led to them always waiting for instructions instead of taking the initiative, searching by themselves, or even proposing activities for the class. It means that this method is not just for students to practice or study by themselves, but also for them to come up with ideas for the class, to talk about their learning experiences, and to share what work for them in case it can work for someone else.

Impacts

This research had three different impacts in its study that are technological, social, and academic. The first is a technological impact because, in virtual classes, teachers need to apply various technological tools with positive benefits to teach in a better way. On the other hand, using a new booklet about self-directed learning strategies to improve students speaking skills. The second impact is social because this investigation project benefited senior students at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school and teachers by providing strategies to be sociable, interact among them about their knowledge and ideas, and speak complete phrases and sentences, and exchange feelings. Also, students would be able to talk to foreign people. The final impact was academic because through this project, teachers and students can use new strategies from self-directed learning. The teachers can improve English oral production with their students in their classrooms and get positive outcomes.

This research had some difficulties like time and modality. The time to develop this project was difficult because it was challenging to collect the data and analyze it. On the other hand, the modality was a big problem because virtual education has some limits, like the contact with the sample. It was challenging to vitally information and documents to work.

Objectives

General objective

- Determine the effectiveness of self-directed learning strategies to improve students speaking skills in virtual classes at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school in Tulcán.

Specific objectives

- Stablish the theoretical concepts to improve speaking skills.
- Identify the strategies used by teachers to improve the speaking skill of students.
- Propose a booklet about self-directed learning strategies to improve students speaking skills.

The objective of developing this research project was to determine the effectiveness of self-directed learning strategies to improve students speaking skills in virtual classes at Sagrado Corazón De Jesus High School in Tulcán. To achieve this main objective, it was necessary to determine the theoretical concepts to improve the students' speaking skills, modify the strategies used by teachers to improve their teaching practice, and propose a booklet about self-directed learning strategies to improve students 'speaking skills.

Structure of the research project

The content of this research project has four chapters. This project starts with the introduction, which explains the research motivation, description of the problem, justification, impacts, objectives, and problems. The first chapter is about the theoretical framework with information about self-directed strategies. The second chapter is about the methodology used to gather information. The third chapter is about the results and the discussion. And chapter number four gives all the information regarding the proposal and the activities it includes.

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the bibliography and resources for studying self-directed learning strategies to develop English speaking skills for senior students from Sagrado Corazón de Jesus in Tulcán. Also, it details how English-speaking skills will be improved using different strategies adapted from the Self-directed Learning approach and contains meanings of some themes related to this research study.

1.1. History of Sagrado Corazón de Jesús High School

According to (Toapanta, 2015), this educational institution, known as Bethlemitas Tulcán due to the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, was founded by Encarnación Rosal in coordination with her nun community with the objective of integral forming female students. This idea was developed by president García Moreno's significant projects to improve the country's situation with the public education around religion to facilitate access. According to Ecuador's history, one of the most important acts was the liberal revolution in 1874 because it promoted free and lay education and woman's inclusion in education. Sagrado Corazón de Jesus started to work on the 14th of August 1886 to educate with values, science, art, and domestic activities. Nowadays, this institution is on Olmedo and Colon Street in the Sucre neighborhood. It has 59 teachers who teach with passion, responsibility, and quality. There are 1302 male and female students who want to learn different aspects like spiritually, academically, humanity, and culturally (pp. 18-34).

1.2. What is a strategy?

According to (Rico, 2020), a strategy is a process or resource used to promote significant knowledge, and its correct application defines the successful language learners on a variety of different kinds of tasks. And the ability to choose the best strategy for completing the task. The learners need to be active strategy users to appropriately apply strategies to the task at hand. They lacked certain necessary higher-order processes, what are often called metacognitive strategies or self-regulatory skills, which would enable them to assess the task and bring to bear the necessary strategies for its completion (pp. 190-1).

Strategy is the set of steps in a process to get the students' attention and promote significant knowledge. "A strategy is the group of resources used in the learning process to acquire in a meaningful way a new knowledge" (O'Neil, 2014). It means that the correct application help students to learn in a better way.

There are different strategies to apply in the teaching and learning process. It is important to consider the elements that are fundamental to the decision-making process in the education learning area and reflect on self-management, social management, self-awareness, and self-management skills.

- The learning activities and strategies have been organized under the basic elements of an inquiry process.
- Tuning in strategies provides the opportunity to explore their current knowledge, attitudes, and values. On the other hand, working independently or in a collaborative way, students can use graphic organizers to record the information and share it with the class. Teachers should be able to use evidence gathered from students' responses with the objective of planning a special program to provide for the needs of all students.
- Finding out strategies helps students identify gaps in their knowledge and understanding of concepts and work collaboratively to gather information through self-directed investigation. Through that, students will be able to use the information gathered to generate and communicate ideas.
- Sorting out strategies encourage students to analyze, organize, review, sort, compare information to consolidate their knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes, and values. Summarizing key information and clarifying relationships or associations between information and ideas will assist students in drawing conclusions and applying their understandings.
- Reflecting strategies allow students to identify the mistakes and consider changes in their understandings, skills, attitudes, and values.

1.2.1. Teaching and learning strategies

Teaching and learning strategies are used to involve students in their own learning, and road safety content is included in each focus area. The interest in teaching and learning strategies in the second language highlights ways in which teachers and learners can be collaboratively engaged in developing practical approaches to learning because they are viewed as sharing the task of facilitating learning by finding how learners can learn more effectively. According to (Rubin, 2013), it is crucial a better understand and manage their learning strategies, in which learners can expect to gain insights into their approach to learning, learn to choose appropriate methods for a task and learning purpose, to learn to use these strategies in a classroom, self-study, or job situation, to learn to use strategies specific to reading, listening, and conversation, to be able to define strategies for improving memory for language learning, with the purpose to learn how to transfer knowledge from one language to another, to learn to use resources wisely and to be able to arrangement more effectively with errors.

Learning involves acquiring and modifying knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The learning theories are of historical importance. Although these theories differ, each view learning as a process of forming associations between stimuli and responses. Responses to stimuli are strengthened when followed by satisfying consequences. Pavlov experimentally demonstrated how incentives could be conditioned to elicit responses by being paired with other stimulants.

1.2.2. Learning strategies

Learning strategies are the specific procedures that learners use with individual learning tasks; it can be in the classroom or in their free time, such as preparing a written summary about a complex topic learned in class or reading a book chapter, or watching an English movie in which the learner can choose different ways of completing tasks. Using a correct learning strategy can improve success with the learning task. An essential aspect of teaching is to promote learners' awareness and control of effective learning strategies and discourage the use of ineffective ones.

Learning strategies have a lot of features that we need to learn to apply in a better way. "They are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations." (Oxford & Ehrman, 2010) It means that if students want to learn in an essay way, they should apply some learning strategies (p. 9).

According to (Rico, 2020), there are identifying six general learning strategies that are effective for different purposes. These strategies are:

1. The memory strategies help students to lay up and retrieve exciting information.
2. The cognitive strategies enable learners to comprehend and produce a new language.
3. The compensation strategies allow learners to communicate with others despite deficiencies in their language knowledge.
4. The metacognitive strategies enable learners to monitor their learning thanks to organizing, planning, and evaluating.
5. The affective strategies help learners overpower their emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values.
6. Finally, the social strategies help learners to interact with other people.

According to (Kalati, 2016), learner strategy focuses on studying how learners use strategies and the differences between the methods used by successful and unsuccessful learners. It was possible through observing the ways in which learners perform completely different language learning tasks and also writing about how they solve particular language learning problems. One study realized by (Nisbet & Shucksmith, 2017) concluded that the

differences between learners with high and low scores on a reading proficiency test were: High scorers obtained to keep the meaning of the passage in mind, guess meanings of unknown words from context and read in broad phrases, skip unessential words, and; low scorers tended to read word by word or in short phrases, lose the essence of sentences as soon as they decoded them, rarely skip words, and turn to the glossary when they encountered new words.

1.2.3. Teaching strategies

A teaching strategy is a system of actions for teaching a lesson that involves proposing the goal, structuring desired learner behavior, using appropriate instructions, and outlining planned tactics necessary to implement the strategy. These teaching strategies will support teachers at every career stage. Each teacher should adopt the Teaching Strategies to different learning goals and needs and respond to different school contexts. Beginning teachers can use reliable instructional practices confidently, while experienced teachers can add to their understanding and suggest new ways to use them in the classroom.

Teachers that are highly familiar with the teaching strategies are benefited from this resource through practice, reflection, shared observation, and feedback. They have a variety of strategies for cultivating collaborative learning, leading classroom discussions, improving lectures, and teaching large classes. They might consider that active learning can lead to positive learning outcomes. Instructors can reserve the Technology-Enhanced Active Learning classroom to support this type of student-centered teaching and learning. They can also consider team-based learning and digital learning approaches. Through practical lectures, discussions, group work, and more, instructors can invite their students to engage in the learning process. There are some teaching strategies to have into a count:

- **Active learning**

Active learning has engaging activities that invite students to participate in education, including developing conceptual awareness, applying knowledge through experience, and transferring skills across contexts.

- **Effective class discussions**

Class discussions can be utilized in virtual classes because their variety allows teachers to fit particular strategies to class needs. This flexibility stems largely from grounding in Vygotsky's social learning theory, which emphasizes knowledge and conceptual gain through peer-to-peer dialogue.

- **Case-based learning**

Case-based learning is an established approach used by students to apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios, promoting higher levels of cognition. In this kind of learning classroom, students work in groups involving one or more characters. The cases present problems for which students devise solutions under the instructor's guidance.

- **Digital learning**

Digital resources are powerful learning tools that are indispensable in education. They are used to support student learning processes and practice the new knowledge through digital programs. In this way, the students can get a collaborative and social element of learning that positively impact the learning process.

- **Effective lecturing**

Lecture classes usually have slide presentations. Teachers can consider different approaches to a great lecture which need to introduce active and participatory components with higher orders of thinking and learning during class.

- **Team-based learning**

Team-based learning is a pedagogical strategy that involves student knowledge through individual and group collaboration. The objective of this kind of learning is to follow personal answers. Students join teams and work through problems, discussing when they have incorrect thoughts. This process helps to motivate students to learn by themselves and from others and show a variety of thought processes to solve a problem.

- **Flipped classroom**

The typically material in a flipped classroom is delivered outside of class through media like video lectures or digital modules. It is focused on developing knowledge through active learning strategies such as discussion or group activities. Change the classroom groups are used to improve students' conceptual grasp of content and to improve diversity and inclusivity.

- **Large classes**

Large classes offer a variety of student diversity and expectations. Each student is from a different world; therefore, it is essential to apply personal strategies such as creating smaller groups where peers can create group material for deeper conceptual understanding and pause to think critically about ideas.

- **Group work**

Collaborative learning is a powerful strategy to apply in the classroom. Group work helps students discover and address misconceptions in knowledge with the objective of improving their public reasoning and team-based skills and accessible instructors to help students pursue higher-order thinking.

1.2.4. Self-directed learning strategies

According to (Boyer, Edmondson, & Artis, 2013), self-directed learning strategies are the set of steps to design a process to get the purpose of learning with personal motivation but guided by the teacher. Students decide what and how they will know. It can be individual or group learning because the learning process is done by association with teachers, tutors, and peers. All community has an impact on the learning process. Each teacher's amount of control over learning changes, as well as the amount of freedom to evaluate learning needs, decide on the content of one's learning, and use and implement learning strategies to unravel one's learning issues (Costa & Kallick, 2003). Learners have the degree of control as well as the abilities and skills they need to display to be adequate.

1.3. Self-directed learning

According to (Conner, Carter, Dieffenderfer, & Brockett, 2009), self-directed learning is a process in which students decide to take the initiative according to their learning needs with or without the help of others. This process starts with formulating their learning goals and identifying resources for learning. Then, they choose and implement appropriate learning strategies. Finally, they evaluate their learning outcomes. (p. 18).

On the other hand, the definition by (Boyer, Edmondson, & Artis, 2013) establishes that learners should take responsibility for their own learning. Students should be able to identify their goals for learning. Also, they should be able to identify and use appropriate resources to assist them in acquiring the necessary knowledge; these resources can be books or online resources. During the learning process, it is indispensable that students reflect on their learning and evaluate if they must improve their learning goals. They should persist with learning and overcome obstacles until their goals have been reached. During this process, the educator is helping to create a need for learning, facilitating, and encouraging the learner.

Self-directed learning aims to create individual freedom, responsibility, and personal views. It means that it implies that education should empower a student to become a free, mature, and authentic self. In this process, individuals take the individual initiative or with help from others to diagnose their learning needs, choose and implement appropriate learning strategies, formulate goals, identify human and material resources, and evaluate learning outcomes (Maggi, 2004).

1.3.1. Models for self-directed learning

There are some models for self-directed learning to find ways to create a better understanding of this kind of learning and how to foster it in educational environments. In the next section, some of the most influential models of self-directed learning.

- **Long’s self-directed learning instructional model**

Long’s instructional model focuses on younger students and on the interaction between pedagogical control and psychological control. “Pedagogical control refers to the degree to which students have the freedom to determine learning goals, seek resources and set the mode of evaluation, while psychological control focuses on the willingness of students to maintain active control of the learning process” (Long, 1989). These two control forms are equal, or when psychological control exceeds pedagogical control, the situation can be defined as a self-directed learning condition.

- **Candy’s self-directed learning model**

This model was proposed by Candy in 1991 with two interacting dimensions of self-directed learning. According to (Ogbuanya, Chukwueto, & Mbagwu, 2021), there are two dimensions; one dimension is controlled in an institutional setting. The educator has total control over how to present content, what is to be studied, and what is expected from the students. This model represents a state in which the student has total control over the learning experience. The second dimension is student control in situations outside the formal institutional setting. According to (Ogbuanya, Chukwueto, & Mbagwu, 2021), this model refers to this as an autodidact. The student decides what is to be learned, how learning activities would occur when learning would take place, where learning activities would be conducted, and how learning outcomes would be evaluated. The continuum of the autodidactic domain represents the student’s assistance in making decisions about the learning experience, if any.

- **Brockett and Hiemstra’s Personal Responsibility Orientation Model**

The personal responsibility orientation model for self-directed learning describes two dimensions; the first is individual responsibility in the teaching-learning process, and the second is a personal responsibility for one’s own thoughts and actions. According to (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2018), self-directed learning is viewed as a process in which a student assumes primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating the learning process. The second dimension refers to a goal that focuses on “a learner’s desire or preference for assuming responsibility for learning.” (p. 29). People have control over their responses even if they do not control the actual circumstances. Also, emphasize that individuals do not learn in isolation and that the social aspects of learning are also essential.

1.4. English as a foreign language

Despite the large number of languages that exist, English occupies a significant place in today's world as it is the third most widely spoken language. This language was forged and expanded in different stages since ancient times, thus, in the modern world, the English language was standardized and became significant in London, undertook a gradual evolution, and began to gain ground. At the beginning of modern times, English became relevant in the British Isles and later spread throughout the world (Verspoor, de Bot, & van Rein, 2011). Currently, English is considered a global language, as it is used internationally not only by a large number of native speakers but also by a large number of people who learn this language as a second language or as a foreign language.

Additionally, powerful countries such as the USA and Great Britain have English as their official language, and in a globalized world where powerful countries are the dominant ones in the commercial and cultural market, it has become vital to learn this language and be able to use it in everyday circumstances. Therein lies the importance of learning the English language as a second or foreign language.

1.4.1. English as a foreign language in Ecuador

English corresponds to a universally used language in different countries of the world, not only as a mother tongue but also as a foreign language. In most countries it is taught as a second language because it is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. In Ecuador, the importance of teaching this language is recognized, so policies were established for its correct teaching.

One of the most relevant was the one carried out through the updating of the Curriculum Reform, which carried out transformations in the structure of curricula in all subjects and began with the project "It's time to teach English". With this, an attempt was made to improve the system of teaching English as a foreign language, and aspects of methodology and teaching skills were taken into account. Additionally, it was possible for English to enter the formal curriculum with a workload of 5 hours from the eighth year of basic education. An important step taken was to evaluate teachers through the international TOEFL exam, which measures skills and competencies in the English language. Subsequently, the Higher Education Council established that university students must reach a B2 level, upper intermediate, according to the Common European Framework in order to graduate (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

The efforts of the National Government have been extended for several years and have tried to promote a new structure in the teaching of the English language; however, they have not had continuity or follow-up. The latest changes implemented are relatively new, so no control evaluations have been carried out to allow a vision of the results. However, helping teachers to train and improve their language skills is a great step forward and can be useful in improving the English teaching process.

1.5. Speaking skills

Learning a foreign language is challenging, and if you want to learn adequately, it is necessary to develop four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills are not produced correctly due to a set of factors such as the number of students per classroom, lack of learning resources, and excessive use of grammar approaches which cause some students to lack motivation in English learning.

Speaking skills allow us to communicate with others effectively. They provide us the ability to exchange information verbally and in a way that the listener can understand, but learners have many problems, especially with speaking skills, because when they try to express some idea, they pronounce insulated words and confusing sentences, making their production poor and meaningless. Since speaking is required in academic and professional performances, so the lack of oral production skills becomes a severe disadvantage compared to private school students.

Students practice different particular language patterns every time they speak. “The oral skill goes beyond it. It is possible to say that this process encourages a bidirectional procedure, which implies speaking as well as listening” (Razmi, Pourali, & Nozad, 2014). It means that just the speaking skill does not work alone; it is necessary to develop other abilities to complement the learning.

1.5.1. Meaning

Meaningful Learning occurs after applying some tools in which the new information is related to previous knowledge. So, Joseph Novak elaborated a new technique he named “Concept Mapping or Concept Maps.” where students represent their knowledge like a hierarchical concept structure and prepositions whereby the learners relate new information to ideas that the learners already know (Vallori, 2014).

1.5.2. Oral production

Oral production is a linguistic ability that allows the speaker to express himself or establish interaction with people, facilitating the communication process in any context. This ability is developed throughout our lives in terms of our mother tongue with different stimuli and imitation, while for a foreign language it begins by having contact with it and applying the tools to develop it.

Regarding the foreign language, oral production is one of the skills with the highest degree of difficulty, it has aspects such as the use of gestural expressions, fluency, immediacy and the negotiation of meanings with the interlocutor that makes the competence communication develops during the speech act in a truthful and assertive manner. The oral production process is linked to criteria based on discourse management and the use of foreign language learning strategies, stating that the speaker shows knowledge of the language and reveals his cognitive abilities to make adequate use of

English as soon as possible. to concepts, vocabulary, pronunciation, meanings, structures, etc (Villalobos, 2012). Therefore, this process must be guided in a dynamic and constant way, in a way that allows the sender and the receiver to exchange roles and transmit messages in a concise, clear, pertinent and adequate way, characteristics that are essential for the development of receptive and productive skills such as listening and speaking.

1.5.3. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the proper vocalization of a great variety of vowels and letter sounds in English Language. It is the most challenging part of a student acquiring a foreign language. It means that a person must be prepared in the grammatical or syntactic field and phonological area, which means the correct pronunciation. “Correct pronunciation forms the basis for better communication” (Swarna & Kumar, 2020). It also might refer that the learner is prepared to recognize a word or phrase that must be used and pronounced in situations.

The importance of the correct pronunciation in English comes from the need of the learners to express themselves effectively and comprehensively; based on that, (Swarna & Kumar, 2020) affirms that: “A wrong pronunciation or wrong word stress and tone can render the meaning of the thought to be communicated” (p. 669). It refers to the primary goal of language pronunciation, which is the correct expression of ideas to express something specifically in the manner we want. The receptor can understand and comprehend the concept perfectly.

1.5.4. Fluency

Fluency is the ability that teachers have to secure that the classes develop without any problem. In other words, the teacher must create an ideal learning environment. “Good classroom management is the art of dealing with problems positively and looking for solutions together so that everyone is involved and willing to find a remedy.” (Graham, 2014). All students are motivated to learn if there are clear expectations, the tasks and activities have value, and the learning environment promotes intrinsic motivation.

Classroom management is the process of guaranteeing that classroom lessons run smoothly without problems behavior from students compromising the delivery of instruction. “The educational process must again provide the opportunity for students to make choices and live with the consequences of these choices. Teaching is not simply telling people what to believe and do.” (Graham, 2014). Classroom management is essential in fluency development because it supports the appropriate use of curriculum, developing best teaching strategies.

1.5.5. Accuracy

According to (Kidd, Donnelly, & Christiansen, 2018), accuracy is the process where speakers obtain the ability to process a target language. This term is used to refer to first native language acquisition. It is possible to refer to the second language acquisition or a foreign language acquisition ability. Different theories about language acquisition; behaviorism, universal grammar, Krashen's monitor, conversion theory, and others.

It refers to how a person learns to speak, understand, and communicate a language. A clear example of language acquisition is when a child acquires the mother tongue through the context, it will happen through repetition, listening, and natural interaction. On the other hand, knowing the difference between language acquisition and language learning is essential.

Language learning has a different meaning; it refers to how an individual learns a new language consciously. (Lee, 2010) defines that "language learning results from direct instruction in language rules." Also, this process includes grammar, intonation, phonology, and morphology study of the target language. Finally, Learning English as a foreign language is part of the language learning process because it needs to follow the rules; also, an instructor gives feedback on the errors made by learners.

1.5.6. Communication

The meaning of language by Neoenglish (2010) is "human, symbolic, arbitrary, systematic, dynamic and the primary speech is uniquely human" (p.1). Language is the central tool that permits us to communicate all our ideas, thoughts, feelings, and experiences. According to (Ashour, 2014), people communicate situations using words, which is called verbal communication. Also, she states that we share feelings, ideas, and experiences through spoken language using body language, hand movement, eye contact, gestures, facial expressions, and speaking.

However, we can also communicate by writing messages and symbols. Martinih explained that communication is an activity of conveying or exchanging meaningful information. It could happen between two or a group of people. Also, some communication functions include revealing, persuading, informing, selling, buying, advising, teaching, accepting, affirming, motivating, etc. But it is crucial to know the difference between communication and language. His explanation says, "language gives the way of communicating, but communication permits to transfer of messages or thoughts from one agent to another." Finally, language and communication are essential to people's comprehension and acting correctly.

1.5. Virtual classes

Virtual classes were used hundreds of years ago by distance education students, but due to the pandemic, this modality is used by most students around the world. This situation has made all teachers research other tools and techniques to implement in this new modality to be adequate in the teaching and learning process.

The term virtual classes can be used to describe a variety of online learning environments. “These range from asynchronous systems such as interactive learning spaces established in virtual worlds and synchronous systems where participants can engage in live virtual meetings and communicate using multimedia services such as streaming video and audio” (Gregory & Masters, 2010). There are different ways to promote the teacher-student and student-student in virtual classes.

1.5.1. Online learning

Online learning allows to mix of time, space, and materials to promote the learning process with the flexibility of access from anywhere and usually anytime, but the learning must use sound instructional design principles adequate support must be provided.

According to (Singh & Thurman, 2019), online learning is the use of the Internet to access learning materials; interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; obtain support during the learning process, obtain knowledge, build personal meaning, and grow from the learning experience (p. 7).

1.5.2. Online teaching

Teaching online is a complex task because teachers must plan the syllabus, assemble the exercises and quizzes, weighing the criteria for grades. “The same instructional strategy you’ve learned for a live classroom, setting the goals of the course, describing specific objectives, defining the required tasks, creating relevant assignments, applies online”. (Taylor & Francis Group, 2019). It means that it is useful to apply the strategies in the same way, but the individual needs to integrate all students into the learning process.

According to (Falloon, 2012) studies, there are common presentations for online classrooms such as a shared whiteboard space, voice-over IP, video streaming, file and desktop sharing, text-based chat, polling, and feedback capabilities. On the other hand, there are some fundamental differences in how some of these services operate in comparison to face-to-face modality. The main difference is that platforms allow archiving of content and recording of meetings for later review. When you teach face to face, students cannot do a class review.

1.5.3. Class organization

One of the valuable developments in language teaching methodology in recent years has been the organization of students in the classroom. The profit lies in the interaction between students and the sense of purpose in using language. Concept maps can play a crucial role in motivating students, contextualizing the language they are using by giving them a reference, and helping to control the discipline in the activity during the class.

1.5.4. Participation

Class participation is a means of encouraging dialogue. Two problems with this merit serious consideration: first, can you and will you evaluate participation fairly, and second, does a mark promote the kind of active engagement you are seeking. Students often pay more attention to how you mark them than to the course content, so if you are marking class participation in your head or as a subjective impression of who contributes, they will resent it and even suspect you of favoritism. Consequently, to celebrate class participation, you must have an explicit rubric and clear written records of who did what in each class. In other words, you will be spending a significant amount of class time noting who is talking and assigning marks to it.

The second point is: what kind of classroom atmosphere do you want to promote? Do you want an engaged community of learners who are not afraid to contribute and who are thinking about the course material and what is interesting about it? It is difficult to achieve this when students feel coerced into something that they are not comfortable doing. They may be distracted by the pressure and the tension and become less engaged with the material. And, of course, the uncomfortable students will not participate anyway and therefore be penalized to no effect.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research approach

According to the information analysis, this research is a mix of qualitative and quantitative research. It is qualitative because it collected data through teachers' interviews to determine the self-learning strategies used by teachers to develop the students' speaking skills and the main benefits. It is quantitative due to the data collected from the surveys applied to senior students from Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school to get factual information about the strategies they use in their daily routine.

2.2. Type of research

This project is applied research because it was focused on teaching and learning a foreign language in high school. To address this project at "Sagrado Corazón de Jesús", in 2021-2022 elective year from September to Junio. The main objective was to determine self-learning strategies to improve students speaking skills in virtual classes.

This is also a descriptive and analytic investigation because the studied sample included 96 senior students from this college. It is described because the chief stage of the research is to analyze some self-directed learning strategies to improve the students' speaking skills. It is analytic because, after the first stage, the purpose is to design a poll to identify if students have self-directed learning strategies to know the methods and approaches used by teachers that apply with students. Also, this is applied research because the main objective is to determine self-learning strategies to improve students speaking skills in virtual classes at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school in Tulcán.

This research is a documentary because it is essential to use documents and previous information to understand the topic and context. Also, it is field research because it is developed in a real context and involves a real problem from students' needs. Finally, respecting the study area, this research is a scientific-social investigation because it tries to understand how self-learning strategies help the speaking skill.

2.3. Method, techniques, and instrument.

2.3.1. Method

This research project used deductive and inductive methods based on a mixed approach.

- **Deductive**

This research project was deductive in how approached the theory on which the problem of this project is based. The deductive method was defined as how the hypothesis or research questions can be augmented or refuted (Creswel and Plano, 2007). According to Gabriel (2013), a deductive approach usually begins with a hypothesis, the emphasis is generally on causality (p. 2). Finally, it was essential to create categories and connections about the self-directed learning strategies to analyze the information in qualitative data analysis.

- **Inductive**

This research project had an inductive method that approached developing new knowledge and data from the studied phenomenon or problem. In this way, “the inductive researcher is someone who works from the bottom-up, using the participants’ views to build broader themes and generate a theory interconnecting the themes” (Soiferman, 2010, p. 3). Similarly, Gabriel (2013) postulates that “an inductive approach is concerned with the generation of new theory from the data” (p. 2). Also, the inductive method is helpful in qualitative data analysis because the researcher needs to find a pattern or common theme among the collected information for a successful data analysis.

2.3.2. Techniques and Instruments

- **Interview**

The technique used in this research work was the interview, and the instrument was a structured interview applied to two English teachers because there are two courses for senior students, and each group has a different teacher used to collect qualitative information. As Ryan, Coughlan, & Cronin (2009) affirms: “The one-to-one interview is a commonly used data collection method in health and social research” (p. 309). Furthermore, “interviews vary in type and structure depending on their philosophical orientation” (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 309).

- **Survey**

The second technique was the survey, and the instrument was a questionnaire with nine closed questions to ninety-six senior students at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús High School to collect quantitative information due to there are two courses for senior students, and each

group has almost forty students. According to Ponto (2015), the survey is “the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions” (p.168).

2.4. Research questions

- Why do students not want to learn in virtual classes?
- How can self-directed learning strategies contribute to improving speaking skills?

2.5. Population and sample

The present Research was carried out at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school, located in Tulcán city, Carchi province.

Senior students from this high school took part in this process. There are two senior-level courses, of which there are 47 and 49 students, which gives a total of 96 students aged between 14 to 18 years. In the same way, two English teachers from the high school were interviewed about their perception of autonomously learning, and how they consider self-directed learning.

2.6. Procedure

The data collection was carried out in two parts, the first with the teachers and the second with the students. On the one hand, each teacher was directly interviewed orally in order to hear their opinions and interact personally. On the other hand, the process with the students was general, since due to a crisis in the country, they were sent a link in which they had to complete the pertinent information. In this way, with the teachers it was possible to make a direct approach and establish broad talks, while with the students it was a short and concise process.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

In the section below are detailed results from the data collection instruments. It was divided into two sections: the analysis of surveys applied to students regarding the way they like to learn and the activities they do for that, and the analysis of the interviews applied to teachers regarding their perception of the English class, their techniques in the class, and their point of view about implementing new strategies in the class.

3.1.1. Analysis of the interviews applied to teachers

Question 1. How do you feel teaching English speaking through virtual classes?

Teacher 1: I feel frustrated because the students don't give importance to the language, they don't like to learn, and they ignore the classes.

Teacher 2: I felt well because it was a new experience, and I could learn the profitability of the technology.

Analysis: Teaching virtually has been a challenge for every teacher, and all of them live it differently. Both teachers have different opinions. One of the teachers could not handle it, maybe because she did not find the tools to do that. On the other hand, the second teacher saw that as a way of learning something new, which means that he was able to find different tools to teach.

Question 2. Do you think students spend time learning English autonomously?

Teacher 1: I don't believe it. They only try to learn when they have the purpose of traveling to another country.

Teacher 2: I don't think so because they don't have the necessity to use this language in real situations.

Analysis: It is not something usual to see students practicing on their own or just because they want, and it is confirmed by the teachers. Both of them mentioned that they do not consider the fact of students learning by themselves because they do not feel willing to practice unless they need it for a specific situation.

Question 3. Have you ever heard about self-directed learning strategies? For example: To identify their learning needs and take responsibility for their learning, setting personal goals.

Teacher 1: Yes, I have. And I think that it is something very interesting and those strategies can be fruitful for students if they also do their part.

Teacher 2: Yes, of course. It is remarkable when students become aware of the need to learn the language for themselves because they want to travel abroad or learn more through the language.

Analysis: Both teachers have heard about self-directed learning strategies and are aware of how useful they can be because these strategies can help students to acquire the language in a personalized way, so they will internalize the language, and it is something they will learn for life, not just for the moment.

Question 4. Which of the strategies mentioned above do you prefer using in your virtual classes to help students improve their speaking skills?

Teacher 1: I think that all strategies mentioned are essential for developing in virtual classes to help students speaking skills because if they take responsibility for their learning, they are going to try to learn autonomously.

Teacher 2: I think setting personal goals can be something meaningful for students' learning.

Analysis: All learning strategies are important when teaching English. In this case, teachers consider self-directed learning strategies are important and useful for teaching in virtual classes because they can help students to be aware of their responsibility when learning, so they will have the tools to practice by themselves with or without teachers' guidance.

Question 5. Do you think it is necessary to incorporate self-directed learning strategies to help students improve their oral production?

Teacher 1: Yes, I think that is necessary. We need to incorporate new strategies to get the students' attention and try to improve their oral production.

Teacher 2: Of course, because when the students feel controlled, they can progress better.

Analysis: It is necessary to incorporate as many strategies as possible for students to find their way of learning. For this topic, teachers agree that self-directed learning strategies can be used to develop students' oral production because they can provide them with different activities, so they have the opportunity to improve their speaking level.

Question 6. Would you like to get a guide regarding self-directed learning strategies for the development of students speaking skills?

Teacher 1: Yes, I would like to get a guide regarding self-directed learning strategies for the development of students speaking skills to get active students engaged in the learning process in a meaningful way.

Teacher 2: It would be good because I could help students develop the ability to speak about different real topics.

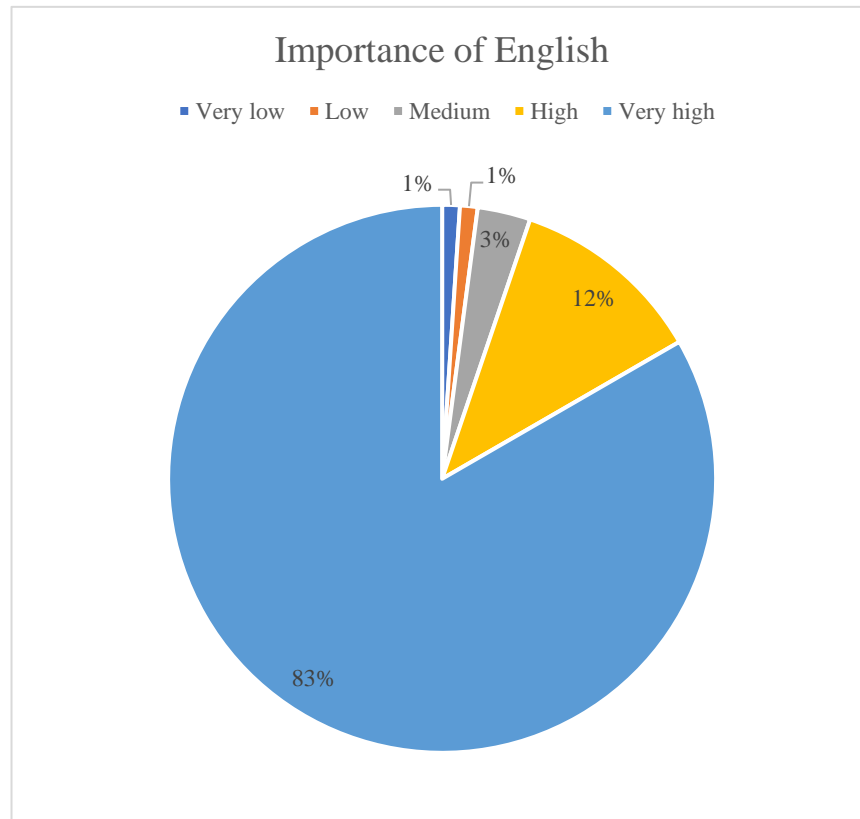
Analysis: It is considered useful to get a guide with self-directed learning strategies that facilitate the performance of students in oral production so that teachers have more tools that allow them to help students to practice in different ways with the purpose of building knowledge that remains in their brains.

3.1.2. Analysis of the surveys applied to students

- **Question 1. Do you consider that the English language is important today?**

Figure 1.

Importance of English

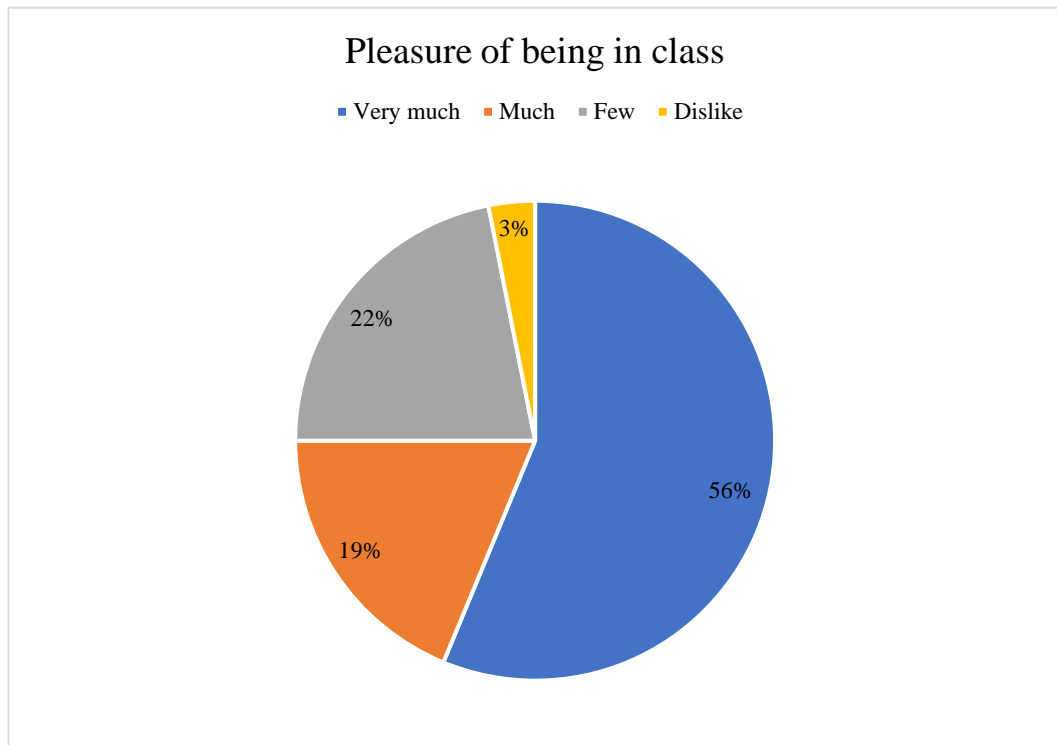


The above pie chart shows the level of importance that English learning has for students. On the one hand, most students consider that it is crucial to learn English since they know how useful learning a second language is. On the other hand, it is just a small percentage of students who thinks that it is not important, which can be caused because of their preferences.

- **Question 2. Do you like attending your English classes virtually?**

Figure 2.

Pleasure of being in class

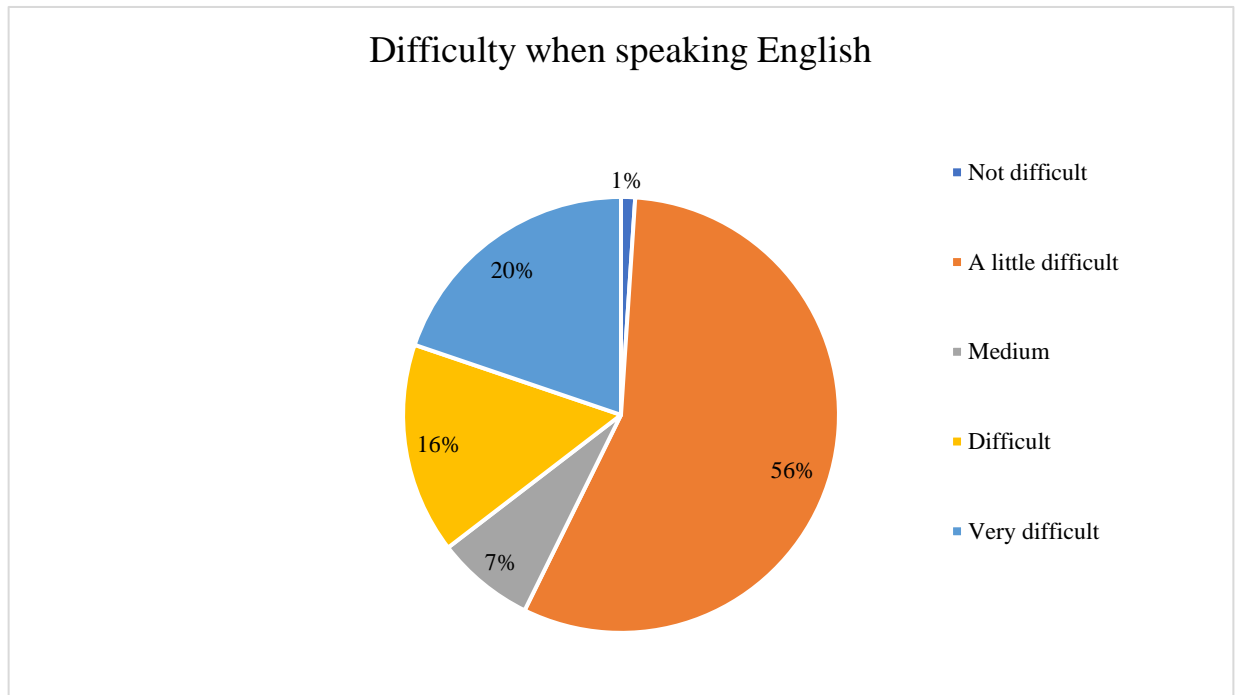


The above pie chart shows how pleasant students feel when being in the English class. More than half of the students like a lot to be in the class, and nearly a fifth like it; this is due to how engaged they feel with the class and how much they enjoy what they do or learn. However, nearly a third of them almost dislike being in class, and a small percentage dislike it at all, which can be related to how much they like the language or the activities carried out in the class.

- **Question 3 How difficult do you consider speaking English in and out of the class for you?**

Figure 3.

Difficulty when speaking English

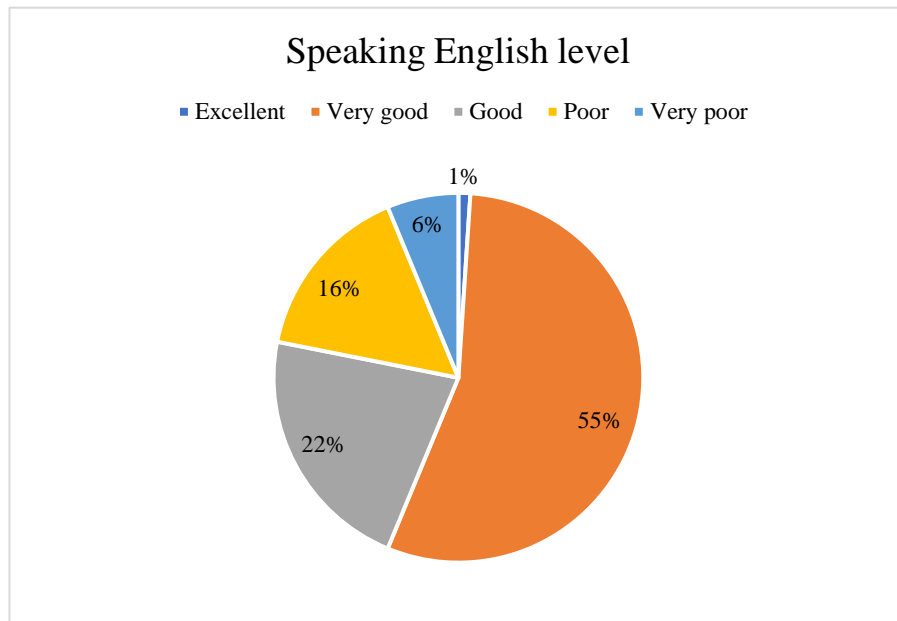


The pie chart above shows how difficult it is for students to speak English. More than half of the students consider that it is just a little difficult for them, and a small percentage see it as moderately difficult, which can be a reason for how much they like to practice, or how easy it is for them. In contrast, nearly a fifth describe it as very difficult, which means that it is challenging for these students to use the second language in a spoken way.

- **Question 4. What is your level of English speaking?**

Figure 4.

Speaking English level

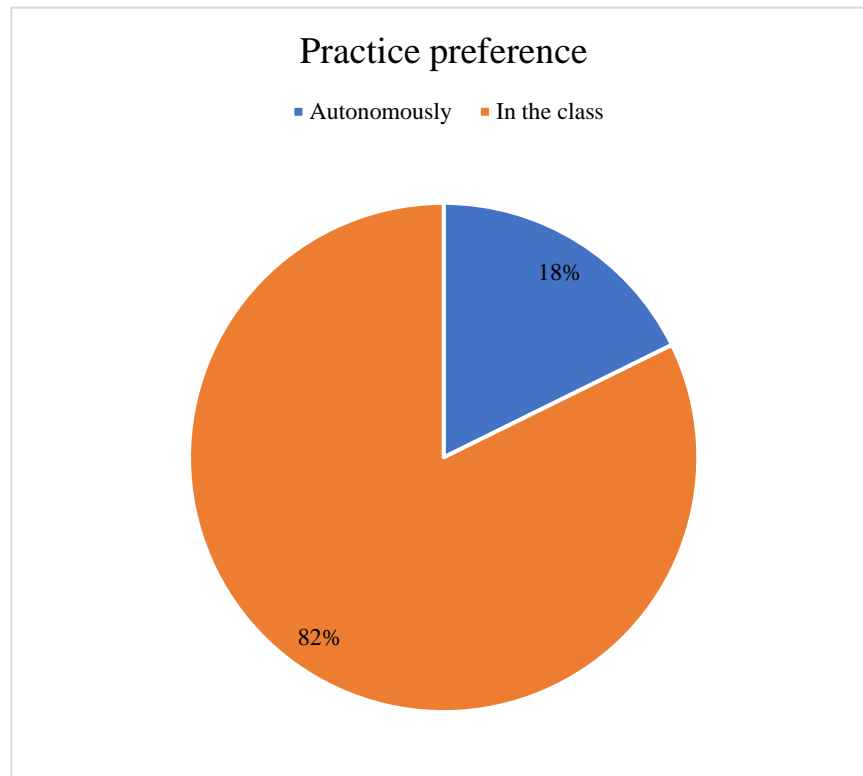


The pie chart above shows the speaking English level that students have. More than half of the students consider that they have a very good level of speaking, which demonstrates how confident they are. Also, nearly a fifth think that their level is good, which means that they do not have a problem with it. However, a small percentage of students see their speaking level as very poor; this can be because of how easy or difficult it is for them to be understood when speaking.

- **Question 5. Do you prefer to practice autonomously or in class?**

Figure 5.

Practice preference

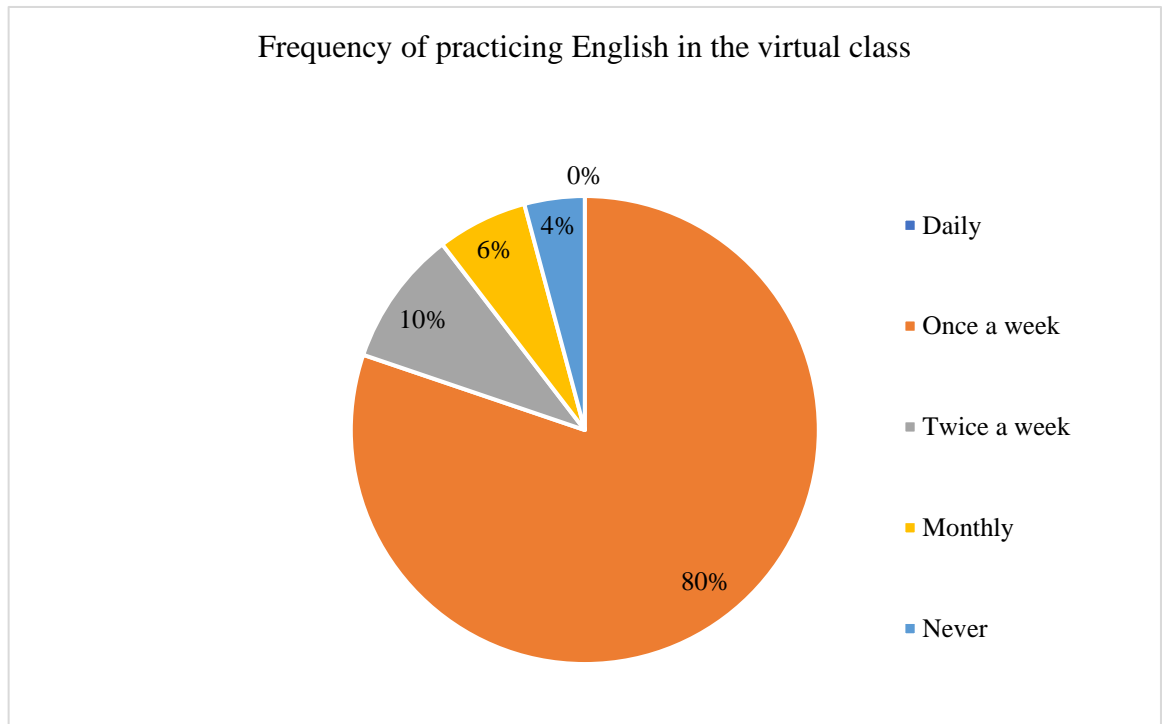


The pie chart above shows the modality that students prefer for practicing English. More than three-quarters of students prefer to do this in class, which can be connected to having a guide in the class and being in the target language environment. Nevertheless, a percentage of students prefer to practice autonomously; this can be because of their learning style, so they learn better on their own.

- **Question 6. How often do you practice speaking with your classmates in a virtual class?**

Figure 6.

Frequency of practicing English in the virtual class

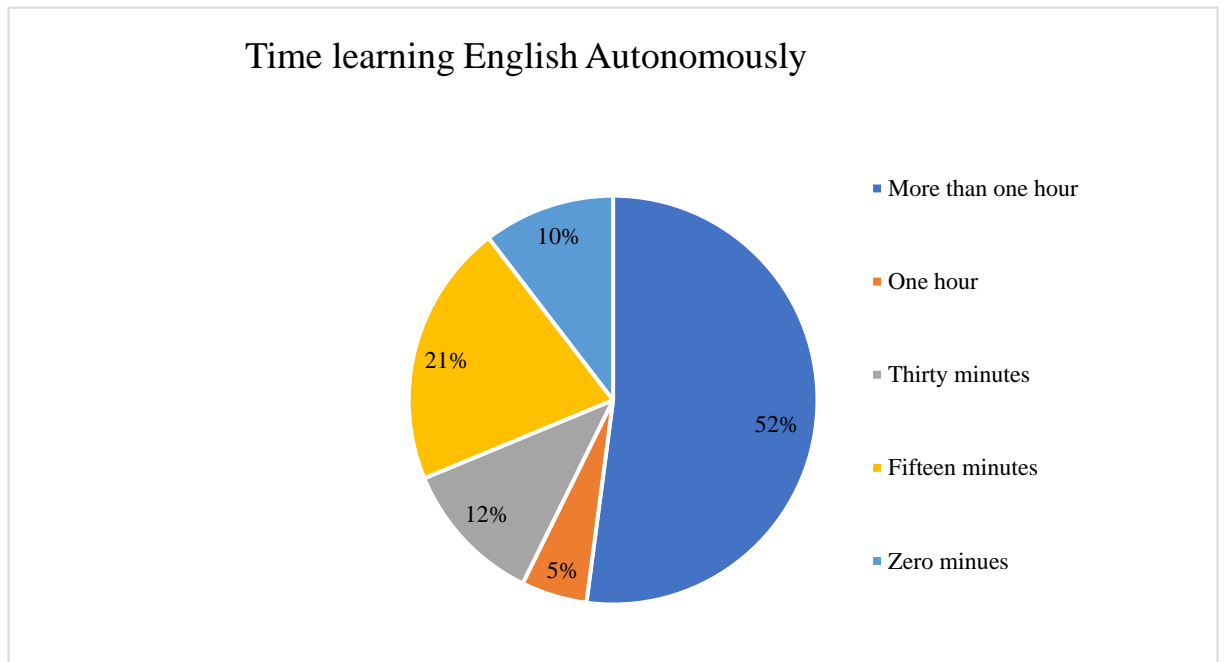


The pie chart above shows how often students practice English in the virtual class. More than three-quarters of the students said that they practice just once a week. Some others mentioned daily and monthly. This can be connected to how much they like to participate, how willing they are to share their opinions in class, and how many speaking activities are planned for every class.

- **Question 7. How much time do you spend learning English autonomously?**

Figure 7.

Time learning English autonomously

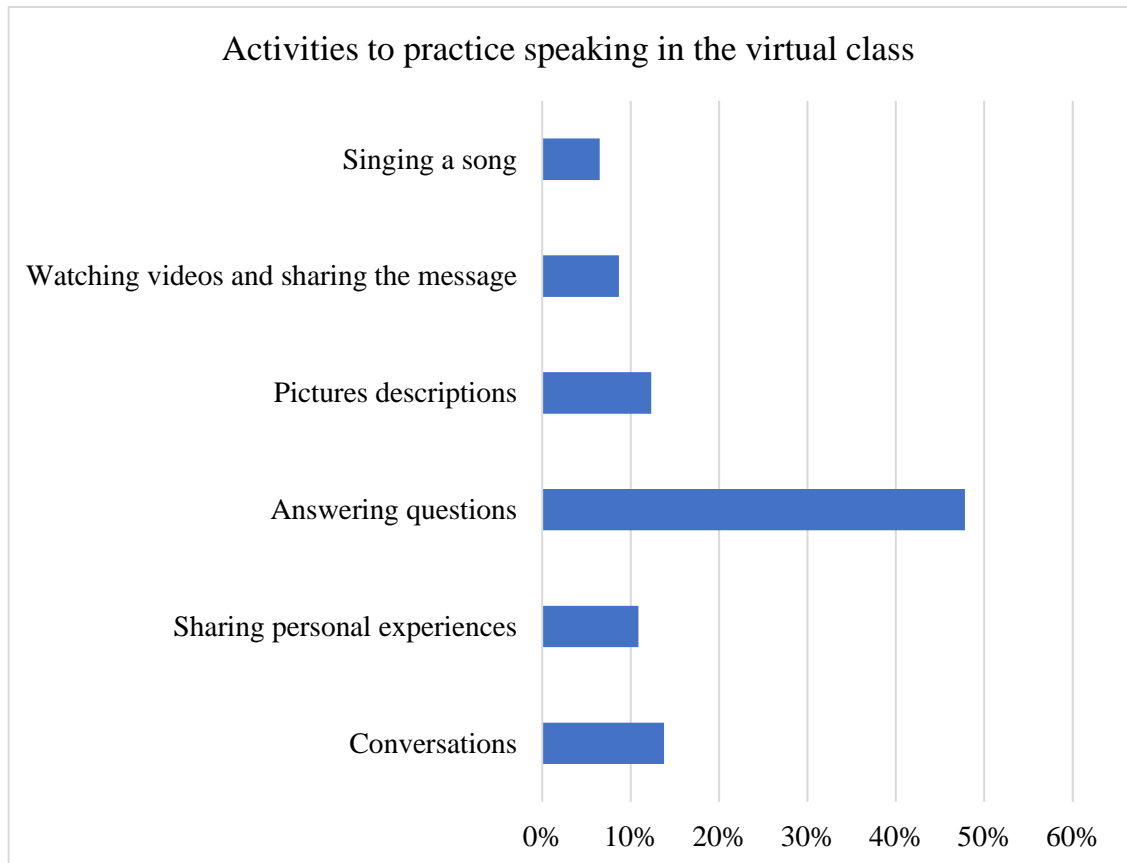


The pie chart above shows how much time students take to practice English on their own. More than half of the students said that they spend more than one-hour practicing; this is because they enjoy the activities they do, the language, and because of their desire to learn. The rest of the students take less or no time to do it, and there can be two reasons: they do not enjoy the language, or they have not found the appropriate activities to practice.

- **Question 8. Which of the following activities do you prefer to practice speaking in the virtual class?**

Figure 8.

Activities to practice English in the virtual class

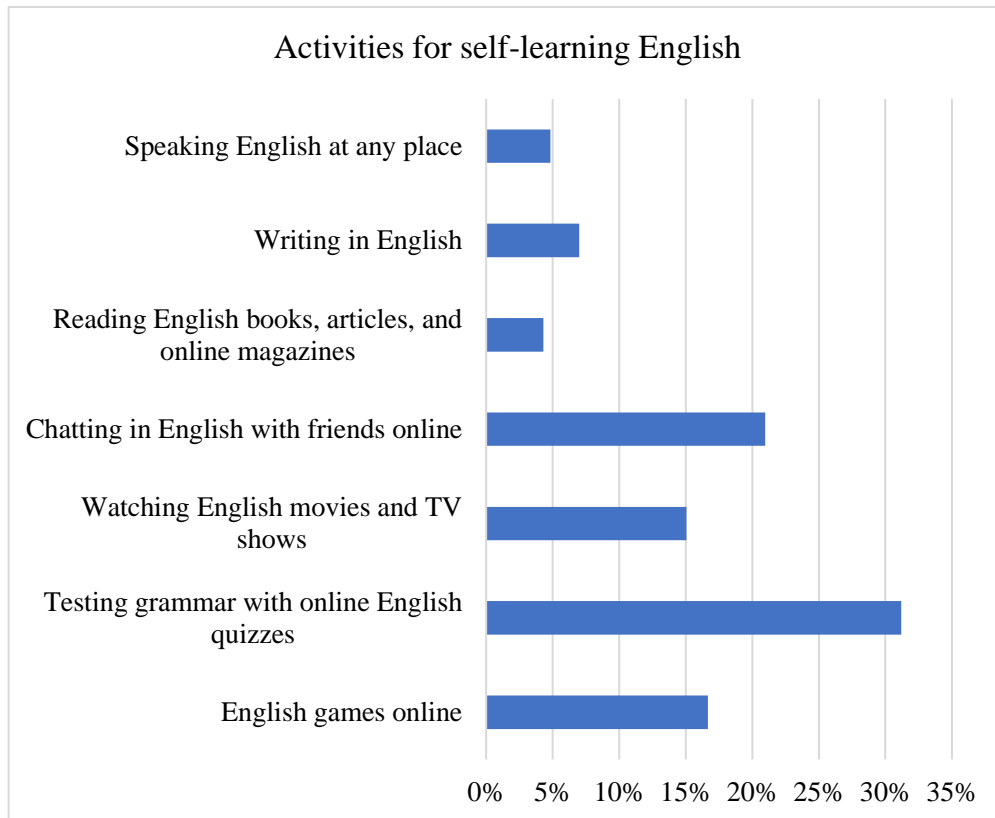


The pie chart above shows the activities with which students practice in the virtual class. Nearly half of the students mentioned that answering questions is the activity they do the most, which is because it takes less time and allows the teacher to make all students take a turn to talk. A small percentage mentioned that activities like conversations or personal sharing experiences are also present in class frequently. They also do other activities, but not so often.

- **Question 9. Which of the following activities do you prefer for self-learning English?**

Figure 9.

Activities for self-learning English



The pie chart above shows the activities with which students practice autonomously. Nearly a third of students practice their English by solving online quizzes. A fifth of students chat online in English with their friends as a way to practice. More than 15 % play English games to practice. The 15 % watch TV series or movies, and that helps them to practice. They also mentioned speaking English at any place, writing in English, and reading English writings as ways to practice. All the students prefer different activities, so they do what is better for them.

3.2. Discussion

From the information above, it is evident that there is a different perception of autonomously learning in the class. Teachers think that students do not take their time outside of the class to practice English, whereas most students mentioned that they take almost an hour to do it, and the rest of them take at least fifteen minutes, so nearly all of them practice English on their own using different resources and activities, both alone or with their classmates, as well as at home and in class. Likewise, students consider that the English language is very important, so they realize how necessary it is to study it, practice it, and learn to use it correctly.

Students also mention that they would rather practice English in class than autonomously, but this does not mean that self-directed learning strategies cannot be applied in the class; it just means that students need a guide, and they would like it to be their teacher. It is easy for students to start being aware of their learning if someone teaches or explains how to carry out this process, and that is the job of the teacher (Boyer, Edmondson, & Artis, 2013). In this way, self-directed learning strategies can be implemented in the class, because as teachers said, these can be valuable for students to be responsible for their learning process, and the more tools they have, the easier it will be for them to learn in their way.

In the same way, self-directed learning activities are a viable resource for improving oral production since teachers consider that they need to incorporate new strategies to get the students' attention and push them to learn by themselves. This is also shown on students because they mentioned they spend a considerable amount of time learning by themselves, so they just need to be led by the teacher. In the same way, (Kalati, 2016) states that each student has their own way of learning, and they can find theirs easier when the teacher is focused on helping them to do that.

CHAPTER IV: PROPOSAL

This chapter presents the research proposal about the improvement of oral production using activities focused on self-directed learning strategies to develop speaking skills in senior students at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school. The activities in the booklet are designed based on the criteria and theoretical foundation to enhance oral production in senior students in this institution.

4.1. Introduction

Communication is the principal tool to exchange ideas, explain events, and have information about their interests. Speaking is a way of communicating with others. After analyzing the data collection of this research, it is evident that this skill is one of the most difficult skills to learn; therefore, it is essential to develop this skill with new strategies, especially for senior students at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, not only to reach the required standards but to exchange ideas or get information by speaking. Although students express that speaking is difficult, teachers need to be creative to motivate them to support and improve their oral production weaknesses.

4.2. Name of the proposal

Learn on your own!

4.3. Justification and importance

English oral production is necessary, and it has a lot of importance in our society. Speaking is the ability in which students make the most significant effort and in which they feel more nervous than others. However, it is also a very necessary skill to communicate and interact in class. Motivating students to develop this skill in the English language is the key for them to have great communication. In this way, it is important to design a booklet using strategies to enhance students speaking in the classroom based on self-directed learning, which will allow them to interact, feel comfortable and gain more self-confidence in speaking the English Language. It is necessary to motivate students to develop speaking skills in the English language to have great communication. This is important to design a booklet using strategies to enhance students to speak in the classroom and interact. Students feel comfortable and gain more self-confidence in speaking the English Language.

4.4. Objectives

General objective:

- Improve students speaking skills into virtual classes at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school in Tulcán.

Specific objectives:

- Research useful information and activities to develop the booklet based on the Self-directed Learning strategies to develop senior students' speaking skills.
- Design the booklet using information the students need to know according to improve their speaking skills.
- Share the booklet with teachers at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school in Tulcán.

4.5. Location

Sagrado Corazón de Jesús High School is located in the parish of Gonzalez Suarez, Tulcan City, Carchi Province. This high school was founded in 2010.

LEARN ON YOUR OWN!





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How can I help?

- >Helping my community.**
- >Saving the world.**
- >Useful at home**

UNIT 2

Interesting for me.

- >My new vocabulary.**
- >Explaining grammar.**
- >Random topic**


UNIT 3

I'm on TV!

- >Presenting the news.**
- >I really know about it.**
- >Expert teacher**

UNIT 4

Wrapped by books.

- >I'm a reader!**
 - >I'm a researcher!**
 - >I'm in a reading group!**
- 



Introduction

Communication is the principal tool to exchange ideas, explain events, inform news, and have information. Speaking is a way of communication, but after analyzing the data collection of this research, it is evident that this skill is one of the most difficult to learn; therefore, it is essential to develop. This skill needs to be improved in senior students, not only to reach the required standards but because they need to exchange ideas or get information by speaking. Although students express that speaking is difficult, teachers need to be creative to motivate them to support and improve their oral production weaknesses.

Justification

Speaking is the ability in which students make the greatest effort, and in which they feel more nervous than others. However, it is also a very necessary skill to communicate and interact in class. Motivating students to develop this skill in the English language is the key for them to have great communication. In this way, it is important to design a booklet using strategies to enhance students speaking in the classroom based on self-directed learning, which will allow them to interact, feel comfortable and gain more self-confidence to speak the English Language.



Theoretical Foundation

Teaching strategies

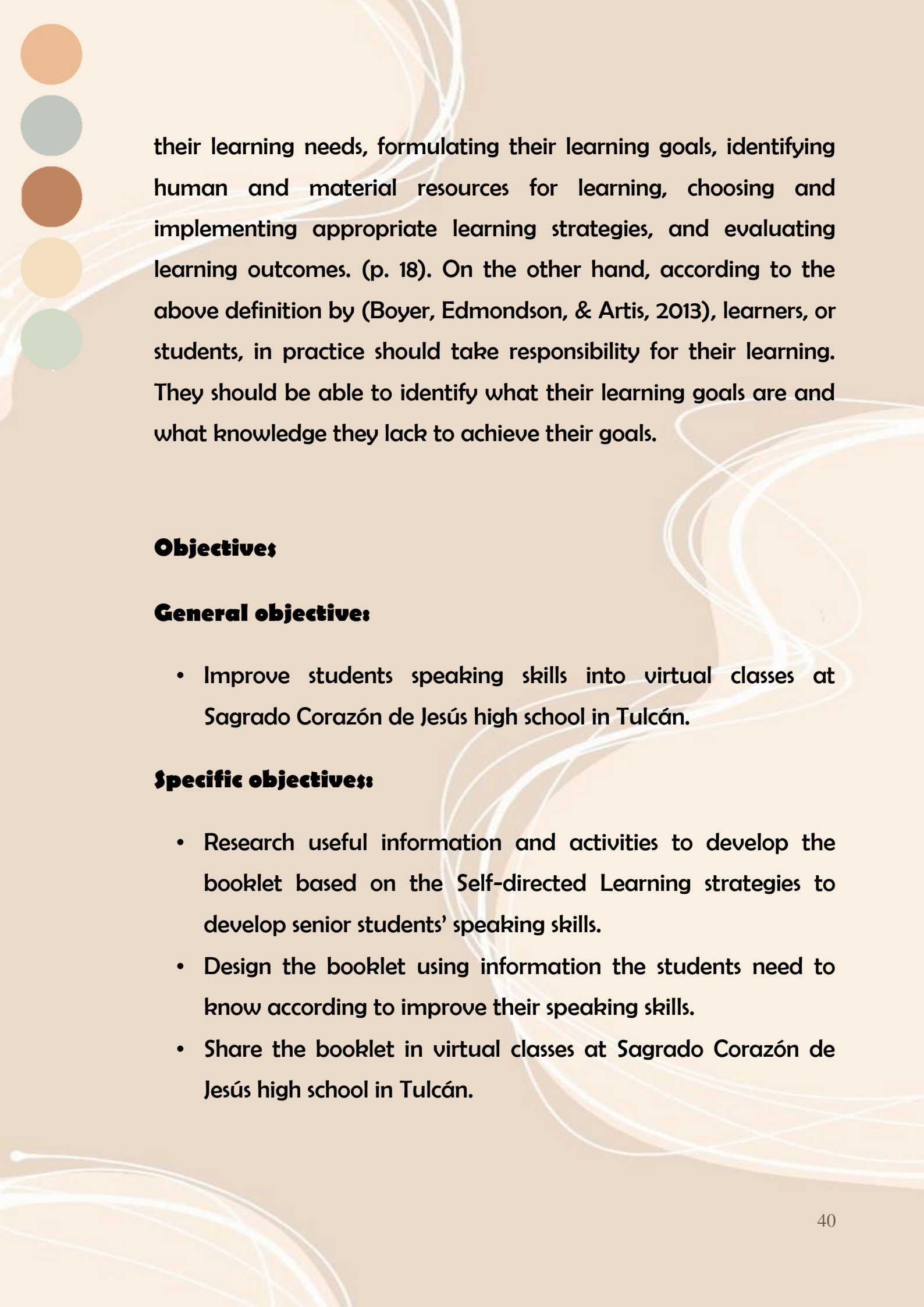
These strategies are the resources used by the teacher to impart knowledge so that meaningful learning occurs in which students are involved in a participatory, active, and cooperative environment. The teacher must choose these strategies according to the topic, as well as the abilities of the students, considering the learning purposes of the content to be developed.

Speaking skills

Speaking skills are defined as the skills which allow us to communicate effectively. They give us the ability to convey information verbally and in a way that the listener can understand. Learners have many problems, especially with speaking skills. When they try to express themselves orally, they only pronounce isolated words and disconnected sentences making their production poor and meaningless. Since speaking is required in academic and professional performances, the lack of oral production skills becomes a serious disadvantage when compared to private school students.

Self-directed learning

According to (Conner, Carter, Dieffenderfer, & Brockett, 2009) self-directed learning describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing



their learning needs, formulating their learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (p. 18). On the other hand, according to the above definition by (Boyer, Edmondson, & Artis, 2013), learners, or students, in practice should take responsibility for their learning. They should be able to identify what their learning goals are and what knowledge they lack to achieve their goals.

Objectives

General objective:

- Improve students speaking skills into virtual classes at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school in Tulcán.

Specific objectives:

- Research useful information and activities to develop the booklet based on the Self-directed Learning strategies to develop senior students' speaking skills.
- Design the booklet using information the students need to know according to improve their speaking skills.
- Share the booklet in virtual classes at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school in Tulcán.

UNIT 1

How can I help?

Unit objective:

Guide students to find solutions to daily problems.

Self-directed learning:

Students need to investigate and analyze situations, as well as propose solutions by themselves.

Contents:

- Helping my community.
- Saving the world.
- Useful at home.

Activity 1.

Name: Helping my community.

Description:

Students will be assigned to look for a problem in their community or neighborhood, they can choose anything that seems important or relevant to them (a lonely old person, a sick pet, excess garbage, absence of recycling, among others). They must analyze what they chose, propose one or some ways to help to solve that, and make a presentation for the class.

Process:

- Teacher asks students to think about a problem where they live.
- Teacher gives some examples, so students have a guide.
- Students take 5 minutes to choose the problem they want to work on.
- Students make research and think about the solutions.
- Students prepare their presentations using posters and images.
- Each student has 2 minutes to present.

Materials:

- Books.
- Posters.
- Images.

Time required:

- 80 minutes.



Activity 2.

Name: Saving the world.

Description:

Students will be assigned to choose a global problem they think is the most urgent (global warming, racism, overpopulation, among others), and people who chose the same problem can join as a group. They must read all the information about it (previous solutions, causes, effects), and propose their solution for it. They must present their ideas didactically to the class.

Process:

- Teacher asks students to think about a global problem.
- Teacher will provide students with the internet so they can research.
- Students who chose the same problem join the end each of them talks about his/her idea.
- Students choose one or two solutions for the problem.
- Students work on the way they will present the solution.
- Each group presents its solution.

Materials:

- Books/internet.
- Scissors.
- Paper.
- Paperboard/cardboard/foami.
- Glue.

Time required:

80 minutes.



Activity 3.

Name: Useful at home.

Description:

Students will be assigned to analyze how things at their homes work, so they can find any problem or issue and help to solve it (leaky faucet, non-recycled garbage, disorganized shelves, un-assigned chores, among others). They will present the issue to the class and propose a solution. Then, they will apply it at home, and talk about the results.

Process:

- Teacher asks students to analyze what's going on in their houses.
- Students will look for something that needs to be solved.
- Students will present the problem and the possible solutions to the class.
- Students will carry on that solution and talk about the results to the class.

Materials:

- Books/internet.
- Flashcards.

Time required:

80 minutes.



UNIT 2

Interesting for me.

Unit objective:

Allow students to choose what they want to learn and do it by themselves.

Self-directed learning:

Students must build their own knowledge through researching the meaning of words and explaining new grammar.

Contents:

- My new vocabulary.
- Explaining grammar.
- Random topic.

Activity 1.

Name: My new vocabulary.

Description:

Students will be assigned to look for three new words they think are complicated. They can use their dictionaries or find them in a reading. They must look for the meaning of the words and understand them so they can explain them to the class. Students will use images to explain the meaning of the words.

Process:

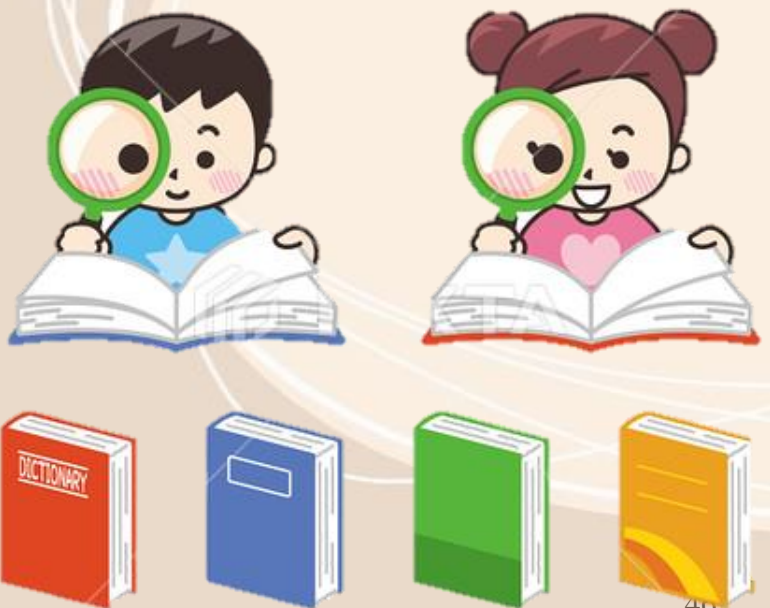
- Teacher asks students to look for three new words.
- Students look for the meaning of the words.
- Students prepare an explanation of the words with images.
- Students present their words in 2 minutes.

Material:

- Books.
- Dictionary.
- Scissors.
- Images.

Time required:

70 minutes.



Activity 2.

Name: Explaining grammar.

Description:

Students will choose the grammar rule they know better (try not to repeat) and prepare a presentation about it. They will have to explain the rule to the class using examples and some theory if necessary.

Process:

- Teacher asks students to choose the grammar rule they know better.
- Students must prepare a presentation.
- Students must use their own words to express the use of the rule in daily life.
- Students must create their own examples.
- Students present their rule in 4 minutes.

Material:

- Books.
- Board.
- Markers.

Time required:

130 minutes.



Activity 3.

Name: Random topic.

Description:

The teacher will put different studied topics (grammar, vocabulary, readings, etc) in papers, and each student must choose one. They will have 5 minutes to remember or read something about the topic, and then explain it in 3 minutes to their classmates. They can use the board or anything they need.

Process:

- Teacher will write all the topics in papers.
- Students must choose a paper.
- Students have 5 minutes to prepare what they want to explain about their topic.
- Students must explain their topic in three minutes.

Materials:

- Books.
- Board.
- Markers.

Time required:

100 minutes.



UNIT 3

I'm on TV!

Unit objective:

Encourage students to speak in public about what they find interesting.

Self-directed learning:

Students have the freedom to choose the topic they want to talk about, and they must get prepared to do that.

Contents:

- Presenting the news.
- I really know about it.
- Expert teacher.

Activity 1.

Name: Presenting the news.

Description:

Students will be assigned to read or watch the news before the class and take notes of the most interesting aspects for them. In class, they must prepare a speech, so they can tell the news to their classmates in an understandable way.

Process:

- Teacher asks students to read or watch the news.
- Students take notes of the news.
- Students get prepared to communicate the new with their own words.
- Each student has 2 minutes to talk.

Material:

- TV/newspaper.

Time required:

80 minutes.



Activity 2.

Name: I really know about it.

Description:

Students will be assigned to work in pairs and prepare a speech imagining they are at a TV show presenting any topic they know a lot (sports, cooking, health, videogames, technology, among others), so they can pretend to be doctors, chefs, singers, or anything they choose. In this case, the teacher will make the welcome as if they were in a show, so students can start talking about their topic.

Process:

- Teacher asks students to join in pairs with someone who has interests in common.
- Teacher asks students to think about a topic they know a lot.
- Teacher can give examples, so students know how to do it.
- Students choose a topic and organize what each student will say.
- Teacher welcomes each pair, and they have 5 minutes to talk.

Materials:

- No materials required.

Time required:

70 minutes.



Activity 3.

Name: Expert teacher.

Description:

Students will think of a very effective way of teaching, either an existing one or something they want to invent. They will explain their method with examples, and give reasons for their choice or creation.

Process:

- Teacher assigns students to think about a very effective way of teaching so they can present it for next class.
- Students can research or create something.
- Students must prepare a presentation with slides, flashcards, images, or what they need.
- Students will have 4 minutes to present the examples and reasons of their method.

Materials:

- Books.
- Board.
- Markers.
- Flashcards/images/cardboard.

Time required:

130 minutes.



UNIT 4

Wrapped by books

Unit objective:

Promote students to read what they prefer and talk about what remains in their minds.

Self-directed learning:

Students have the opportunity to share with the class something meaningful for them from what they have read.

Contents:

- I'm a reader.
- I'm a researcher.
- I'm in a reading group.

Activity 1.

Name: I'm a reader.

Description:

Students will be assigned to read a book they find interesting. They will be divided into groups and must give a monthly comment of the book. They also must find examples of the grammar learned in class, for example, if the teacher is teaching conditionals, they must underline the sentences where they find conditionals. If some areas shorter than others, students can read a second one.

Process:

- Teacher asks students to choose a book.
- Each student read at least 10 pages in the week.
- In class, students are divided into groups of 6.
- Students will share something meaningful or interesting from their reading.
- Teacher will monitor the reading groups.

Materials:

- Books.

Time required:

30 minutes.



Activity 2.

Name: I'm a researcher.

Description:

The teacher will provide a list of topics (racism, buying pets, euthanasia, the influence of social media, beauty standards, and others) on the board and students must choose the one they like the most or that seems more interesting, they must decide their point of view of the topic. Then, they must read about it, look for what some authors say about it, some statistics, evidence, and all the information necessary to support what they say. Finally, students present their topic to the class.

Process:

- Teacher writes a list of topics on the board.
- Students choose the topic that catches their attention.
- Students establish their point of view about the topic.
- Students make research on all the information that supports their point of view.
- Students prepare a presentation with all the required data.
- Students have 5 minutes to present.

Material:

- Books/internet.
- Presentation.

Time required:

200 minutes.



Activity 3.

Name: I'm in a reading group.

Description:

The teacher will bring 6 different books to the class, and students will choose the one they like the most (at least 5 students per book). The teacher will provide an online copy of the book so students can read it at home, and bring discussion questions to the class, which will be answered by the group who chose the same book.

Process:

- Teacher brings six books to the class.
- Students can take a look at the cover and foreword so they can choose one.
- Students will be divided into groups of five.
- Students must read one or two chapters per week.
- Students prepare discussion questions and bring them to the class.
- Students ask and answer all the questions in the reading group.
- Students will have 30 minutes to discuss.

Materials:

- Books/internet.

Time required:

35 minutes.



CONCLUSIONS

- The theoretical research was a valuable step to identifying the importance of applying self-directed learning strategies and knowing the impact, they can have on students' learning process. It is important to remember that valuable information is required for doing quality research; for that reason, it was necessary to read different authors and take the most relevant information.
- Data collection was the most important stage of the research. It is necessary to design the appropriate research methods and techniques according to the information needed. In this way, having quality instruments helped to collect real and valuable data that allowed to development of a quality project.
- Self-directed learning strategies are valuable for the learning process of students. It is necessary to help students to take responsibility for their learning, so teachers need to be a guide for them by proposing different activities that allow students to build their own processes.
- Including new techniques and activities in the class is something valuable when teaching a second language because students feel more attracted to interact, and they have a variety of activities to practice, even so, when it is about encouraging them to build their knowledge by themselves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is important to consider that there are lots of information in different sources; for that reason, it is important to analyze it and choose only what is going to be helpful for the project.
- The number and structure of research techniques depend on the sample of the research, which means that specific instruments must be designed according to the context in which the project is being developed.
- Activities for practicing oral production should vary as much as possible. Students look for different activities on their own because they feel bored with the ones in class, so it is better if teachers have more to choose from.
- To use different techniques in class, it is important to consider the individual needs of the students and their preferences to adapt the activities according to what they are learning, and to give them the freedom to use the language to talk about what they like.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. URKUND Analysis



Document Information

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Analysis address	jmobando.utn@analysis.orkund.com

Sources included in the report

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UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE (

Annex 2. Presentation letter to the institution



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE
FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN, CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA
DECANATO

Oficio 049-D
Ibarra, 26 de enero de 2022

Hermana
Vilma Yépez
RECTORA DE LA UNIDAD EDUCATIVA FISCOMISIONAL "SAGRADO
CORAZÓN DE JESÚS"
Tulcán

De mi consideración:

A nombre de la Facultad de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología, reciba un cordial saludo, a la vez que le auguro el mejor de los éxitos en las funciones que viene desempeñando.

Me dirijo a usted con la finalidad de solicitarle de la manera más comedida, se brinde las facilidades necesarias, a la señorita Jessica Lisbeth Cupuerán Guerrero, estudiante de octavo nivel de la carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, para que obtenga información y aplique encuestas a Estudiantes y entrevistas a Docentes, para el desarrollo del trabajo de grado.

Por su favorable atención, le agradezco.

Atentamente,
CIENCIA Y TÉCNICA AL SERVICIO DEL PUEBLO

Mgs. Raimundo Alonso López Ayala
DECANO FECYT





U.E. FISCOMISIONAL
Sagrado Corazón de Jesús
BETHLEMITAS TULCÁN
RECIBIDO - RECTORADO

FECHA: 23/01/2022



HORA: 11:35

FIRMA:

Annex 3. Interview for teachers.

  <p style="text-align: center;">UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN, CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS- INGLÉS</p>
Self-directed learning strategies to improve students speaking skills in virtual classes at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús High School in Tulcán.
Date: Position: English teacher.
<p>Objective: The present interview has the aim to know the teachers' point of view to determine the self-directed learning strategies to improve students speaking skills into virtual classes at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús high school. The information collected is for academic purposes. It will be anonymous.</p>
<p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How do you feel about teaching English speaking through virtual classes?2. Do you think students spend time learning English autonomously?3. Have you ever heard about self-directed learning strategies? For example: To identify their learning needs and take the responsibility for their own learning, setting personal goals.4. Which of the strategies mentioned above do you prefer using in your virtual classes to help students improve speaking skills?5. Do you think it is necessary to incorporate self-directed learning strategies to help students improve their oral production?6. Would you like to get a guide regarding self-directed learning strategies for the development of students speaking skills? <p style="text-align: center;">Thank you.</p>

Annex 4. Survey for students

 <div style="display: inline-block; text-align: center; margin: 0 20px;"> <p>UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN, CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS- INGLÉS</p> </div> 																																				
<p>Self-directed learning strategies to improve students speaking skills in virtual classes at Sagrado Corazón de Jesús High School in Tulcán.</p>																																				
<p>Date: Survey for senior students at “Sagrado Corazón de Jesús” highschool..</p>																																				
<p>Objective: The present survey has the aim to collect data to determine the self-directed learning strategies that students use into virtual classes. This survey is done for academic purposes. It will be anonymous.</p>																																				
<p>Instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read each question carefully. Answer them according to your knowledge. Be honest with your answers. <p>Questions:</p> <p>1. Where are you from?</p> <p>2. How old are you?</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 40px; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">14</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">15</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">16</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">17 or more</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 20px;"></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>3. Do you consider the English language is important today?</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 40px; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Very low difficult</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Low difficult</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Medium difficult</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">High difficult</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Very difficult</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 20px;"></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>4. Do you like attending your English classes virtually?</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 40px; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Very much</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Much</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Few</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Dislike</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 20px;"></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>5. Do you consider that speaking English in and out of class is difficult for you? On a scale of 1 (not difficult) to 5 (very difficult).</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 40px; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Not difficult</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">A little difficult</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Medium</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Difficult</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Very difficult</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 20px;"></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	14	15	16	17 or more					Very low difficult	Low difficult	Medium difficult	High difficult	Very difficult						Very much	Much	Few	Dislike					Not difficult	A little difficult	Medium	Difficult	Very difficult					
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Very much	Much	Few	Dislike																																	
Not difficult	A little difficult	Medium	Difficult	Very difficult																																

6. What is your level of English speaking?

Excellent	
Very good	
Good	
Poor	
Very poor	

7. Do you prefer to practice autonomously or in the class?

Autonomously	
In the class	

8. How often do you practice speaking with your classmates in a virtual class?

Daily	
Once a week	
Twice a week	
Monthly	
Never	

9. How much time do you spend learning English autonomously?

More than one hour	
One hour	
30 minutes	
15 minutes	
No practice	

10. Which of the following activities do you prefer to practice your speaking skills in virtual class? (Choose 2)

Conversations	
Sharing personal experiences	
Answers questions	
Pictures descriptions	
Watch videos	
Listen to music	

11. What activities do you use to self-learning English? Choose 3 you use the most.

Quizzes online	
Games online	
Memorize words	
Descriptions	
Interpretations	
Watch movies	
Listen to music	
Monitor your own learning process	
Understand your own approach	
Cultivate intrinsic motivation	

Thank you.

Annex 5. Evidence of data collection



Image 1: interview to teacher

Annex 6. Evidence of data collection

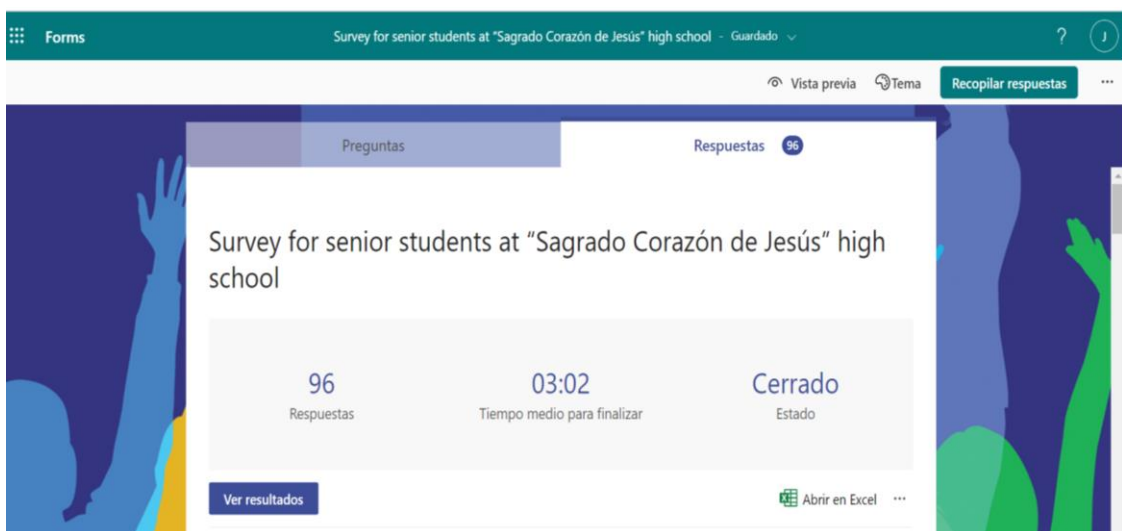


Image 2: survey to students

Annex 6. Speaking rubric to teachers.

CATEGORIES	EXCELLENT 2	GOOD 1.5	BAD 1	POOR 0.5	POINTS
PRONUNCIATION	Clear and comprehensible speech.	Acceptable with a little incomprehensible speech.	Not very acceptable and frequent incomprehensible speech.	Not acceptable and incomprehensible speech.	
CONTENT	All content is relevant. Clear and complete message related to the topic.	Most content is relevant. Well delivered message.	Most content is irrelevant not related to the topic. The message is hard to understand.	Content is totally irrelevant, not related to the topic.	
FLUENCY	Language flows smoothly during the speech. Natural pattern of speech.	Some hesitation during the speech. Occasional pauses.	Frequent hesitation during the speech. Frequent pauses.	Hesitation is shown in the whole speech. Does not flow.	
GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY	Use the best vocabulary for the audience. Defines words that might be new to most of the audience.	Use vocabulary appropriate for the audience. Includes 1-2 words that might be new to most of the audience but does not define them.	Uses vocabulary appropriate for the audience. Does not include any vocabulary that might be new to the audience. Uses few basic grammatical forms with frequent errors.	Uses several words or phrases (5 or more) that are inappropriate and not understood by the audience. Uses basic grammatical structures with many errors.	
CREATIVITY	Very creative. Use of accurate words to clarify or convey meaning.	Creative. Use of suitable words to clarify or convey meaning.	Moderately creative. Use of few suitable words to clarify or convey meaning.	Not creative. Use of unsuitable words to clarify or convey meaning.	
				Total	