

University Pedagogical Sciences

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Humanities Faculty

DIPLOMA PAPER

Theme: Set of Exercises to Contribute to Improve the Oral Expression in Eleventh Graders from Camilo Cienfuegos Military School.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to:

My parents, for being always there to me.

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Those people who gave the best to contribute to have a better Cuban Educational System.

Introduction

The ever-growing need for good communication skills in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world. Millions of people today want to improve their command of English or to ensure that their children achieve a good command of English. And opportunities to learn English are provided in many different ways such as through formal instruction, travel, study abroad, as well as through the media and the internet. The world-wide demand for English has created an enormous demand for quality language teaching and language teaching materials and resources. Employers from other countries too insist that their employees have good English language skills, a pre-requisite for success and advancement in many fields of employment in today's world, mainly in the fields of education and health in which Cuba is an example. The demand for an appropriate teaching methodology is therefore as strong as ever.

The teaching of English as a foreign language in the intermediate level is very important, because it answers to the political, economic, and social importance of learning foreign languages nowadays. Cuba has cooperation and relation with a lot of countries in many aspects, such as: sports, culture, education, sciences, politics, and some other spheres.

Every language has its own recurring patterns or arrangements which are meaningful to their speaker. That is why, language is considered as a system, and at the same time, it has its own. Words are formed by sounds and they are applied in expressions in order to transmit messages, feelings, emotion, commands, and so on. All, the four abilities, are necessary in language and always go together. The author of this Term Paper is interested in the oral expression as an important linguistic activity for the development of communication in the learning of a foreign language.

Nowadays, the English language is considered the international language because it is spoken in more than 80 countries around the world, and in many others, it is used as a second language. It is considered that approximately 337 million people speak English as first language, while about 350 million people use it as second language. The study of English has become almost obligatory at university level in

everywhere of the world. It is an indispensable requirement for most of the careers and it is used in the study of almost all the academic fields. Some people also speak it as way of enriching their cultural level. Through the centuries, English has evolved until arriving to its current form.

In the beginning of the third millennium the scientific-technological development, the globalization like social phenomenon, and the enormous development of the technologies of the communication have propitiated a different context for the teaching-learning of the English language in the world.

Taking into account the learning of English in eleventh graders at Camilo Cienfuegos Military School, the main objective is the development of the students' oral expression. During the internship period of the authoress there were detected some insufficiencies in relation to this topic; they were:

- Poor development of the students' oral expression.
- Poor mastery of the grammatical structures studied in the grade.

These insufficiencies led to the statement of the following scientific problem: How to improve the oral expression in eleventh graders at Camilo Cienfuegos Military School (CCMS)?

To give solution to this problem, it was considered important to state the following objective: Elaboration of a set of exercises to improve the oral expression through the English lessons in eleventh graders at CCMS.

On the bases of the above objective, the following scientific questions have been stated to direct this research:

1. Which are the historical antecedents that support the development of the oral expression in the teaching-learning process of the English Language?
2. Which are the theoretical conceptions of the development of the oral expression through the English lessons in eleventh graders at CCMS?
3. What is the real situation that exists about the development of the oral expression through the English lessons in eleventh graders at CCMS?
4. What exercises could be elaborated to improve the oral expression through the English lessons in eleventh graders at CCMS?

5. What are the final results after the application of the exercises proposed to improve the oral expression in teaching-learning process?

In relation to these questions, the following scientific tasks were planned:

1. Analysis of the historical antecedents that support the development of the oral expression ability in Teaching Learning Process (TLP) of the English language.
2. Study of the theoretical conceptions of the development of the oral expression in TLP of the English language.
3. Diagnosis of the real situation that exists about the development of the oral expression through the English lessons in eleventh graders at CCMS.
4. Elaboration of a set of exercises to improve the oral expression through the English lessons in eleventh graders at CCMS.
5. Valuation of the application of the proposed set of exercises to improve the oral expression in eleventh graders at CCMS.

Methods of Investigation:

Concerning the methodological system, the methods used for the purpose of this investigation were:

- Theoretical level:
 1. Analysis-Synthesis: it permitted the authoress to obtain the necessary information to create the theoretical body of this research in relation to the development of the oral expression.
 2. Induction-Deduction: by means of it the author was able to make a study of the problem, beginning with cases of particular situations, taking into account its dialectical complementation that permitted an adequate proposal of solution related to the problem of the investigation.
 3. Historic and Logical: It helped the author to make a study of the problem, taking into consideration its antecedents and the way it has been focused.
 4. Documental study: It was applied with the objective of having a point of departure about different criteria from different researchers related to the development of the oral expression.

- Empirical level
 1. Interview: it was applied to professors of eleventh grade with the aim of getting information based on their knowledge about the development of the oral expression.
 2. Inquiry: it was applied in order to get the personal opinions each student had in regard to the development of the oral expression.
 3. Observation: It permitted the author to observe the treatment given to the development of the oral expression in class and the attitude of students toward it.
- Mathematical-statistical level:
 1. Perceptual technique: It was applied with the purpose of processing the data obtained through the instruments applied.

Universe and example:

For the development of this Term Paper there were selected 67 eleventh graders from a universe of 168 that represent 40 % of the universe. One of the two professors (50 %) that work with the grade was interviewed.

Development

The understanding of the processes of second language learning has changed considerably in the last 30 years. Earlier views of language learning focused primarily on the mastery of grammatical competence. Language learning was viewed, according to Jack C. Richards, as *a process of mechanical habit formation*. Good habits are formed by having students produce correct sentences and not through making mistakes. Errors were to be avoided through controlled opportunities for production (either written or spoken). By memorizing dialogs and performing drills, the chances of making mistakes were minimized. Learning was very much seen as under the control of the teacher.

In the 1970s, a reaction to traditional language teaching approaches began and soon spread around the world as older methods such as Audiolingualism and the Grammar method fell out of fashion. The centrality of grammar in language teaching and learning was questioned, since it was argued that language ability involved much more than grammatical competence. While grammatical competence was needed to produce grammatically correct sentences, attention shifted to the knowledge and skills needed to use grammar and other aspects of language appropriately for different communicative purposes such as making requests, giving advice, making suggestions, describing wishes and needs and so on.

What was needed in order to use language communicatively was communicative competence. The authoress of this paper humbly assume their criterion that this was a broader concept than that of grammatical competence and included knowing what to say and how to say it appropriately based on the situation, the participants, and their roles and intentions. Traditional grammatical and vocabulary syllabuses and teaching methods did not include information of this kind. It was assumed that this kind of knowledge would be picked up informally.

According to what was said so far, traditional approaches to language teaching gave priority to grammatical competence as the basis of language proficiency. They were based on the belief that grammar could be learned through direct instruction and through a methodology that made much use of repetitive practice and drilling. It was assumed that language learning meant building up a large repertoire of sentences and grammatical patterns and learning to produce these accurately and quickly in the appropriate situation. Once a basic command of the language was

established through oral drilling and controlled practice, the four skills were introduced, usually in the sequence of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The teaching of English in our country has not been away from all these facts related to the teaching of English as a foreign language; therefore, most of those old teaching methods were also applied in our schools for years. They were present in all the levels where English was taught.

The teaching of English in Cuba starts in third grade in primary education and goes through secondary, high school and higher education. There are also language schools for adults, where they can develop language skills in English among other languages.

The teaching of English during the 80's began the application of the communicative approach with the aim of developing better speakers of English. This approach, that is still being followed, comprises the development of the four linguistic abilities with the final aim of attaining communication. Since then, there has been a goal of developing the oral expression in the students as one of the basic skill to be achieved.

Before the implementation of this approach, there was not a clear example of how to develop the oral expression, and when done, it was not upon the basis of communication. So it was not difficult to find persons who could understand the language and with a wide vocabulary but were not able to speak it. The syllabuses that were applied at the schools did not allow this communication.

Many researches have been carried out since the application of the communicative approach aimed at making proposals for developing the oral expression. However, not in all the cases the matter has been sorted out. What has been done so far is not enough, and there is always a huge need of speaking for proposals who can lead to the solution of the problem, that of developing the oral expression not only fluently but accurately, too.

In Cuba, since the first time the communicative approach was put into practice communication has always been the goal of language teaching, but this goal has not been attained, since few learners ever achieve *full* proficiency. Most of *them* *learn how to form grammatically* correct sentences but are unable to perform simple communicative functions. *Since* the *late 1960s* many authors have reported this

problem; Johnson (1983) says the problem is the result of the structural approach and this point is confirmed by A. N. Leontief (1982), who points out that there has been *emphasis* on forming *linguistic habits* but not on developing skills.

In relation to this approach, it must be said that it is the one that is being applied at the military school Camilo Cienfuegos. The syllabuses are made on the basis of the development of communication. However, the results of the diagnoses revealed that something has failed in its implementation specifically that related to the oral expression. Several researches have been carried out with the intension of sorting out this situation. Most of them had been directed to study the development of the other linguistic skills. However, the authoress could not find any of them which has been aimed at the development of the oral expression in eleventh grade. Therefore, this is the intension pursued with this term paper.

Going back to the general topic of communication, the authoress would like to highlight the fact that it is derived from the content of thinking which, in turn, comes from reality (reflected in man's consciousness). The main function of language is communication, which involves the other functions such as informative, expressive, influential, and exchange of thought.

The Cuban society has the important task or mission of forming a man whose preparation puts him at the level of the contemporaneous world he is living in, which turns him into a cultured man who can understand his contextual problems, in his origin and development. He should take part in the different processes the country is passing through, and to do it with solid arguments and being able to assume an attitude directed to reach the ideals of the motherland.

To reach to what has been stated about before, it is needed the learning of languages, which includes the development of linguistic and communicative abilities which will allow him to make a proper use of the language in different situations and communicative contexts he could be involved.

At Senior High Schools, the subject English Language helps to the scientific formation of the world in students, when taking, as starting point, language as a social phenomenon, the didactical relation among thought-language-culture and it has as an aim the development of the learner's cognitive-communicative

competence. It contributes to the functional linguistic efficiency; it also develops the ability of building and rebuilding new pieces of knowledge.

In the international aspect, there have been a lot of authors that have investigated this theme; two of them are William Littlehood (1986), Jack Richards (1995) which investigate the theme of the communicative abilities and the communicative approach.

Those authors have remarked the principal difficulties that affect the Teaching Learning Process in the subject English Language, showing the importance of enriching Didactics, which develops the students' general and integral development at the time of improving the communication using the foreign language among them.

Related to the development of habits and skills, Rosa Antich 1987 states that the mastery of the language is as important as its functioning at the time of speaking, and for learning a foreign language learners have to assimilate its linguistic components (phonological, grammatical, and lexical aspects) as to develop the habits and skills of speaking, writing, reading, and comprehending what they had read or listened.

For fixing all those oral contents, it is necessary to drill them too. That's why at the time of teaching languages it should be beard in mind that even when phonetics, grammar, and lexicon do not constitute objectives by themselves, since the speech can not be materialized without its linguistic components, they are the means for assimilating it, and for that motive students have to drill the language materials in language activities. It is necessary to clear up that *language activities* are those drills arming of taxing form in the language, that is, the mechanisms to organize or reproduce the phonological, lexical and grammatical systems, so as to guarantee their use in speech. They may be mechanical or meaningful.

The first thing we have to take into account at the time of doing the exercises is that students have to be conscious of the objectives of drilling an specific content and the objective of each exercise they do. With the objective of having each student hearing well in our classroom, the professor and the students have to speak aloud and articulate all sounds clearly. In order to obtain higher students' participation, after the first stages had passed, it is good that they rectify the mistakes by

Comentario [YAH1]: Historical background

themselves, and the whole group may help each of them with corrections. If they do not perceive mistakes, the corrections should be done by the professor. The teacher has to create a communicative environment during the realization of the exercises, and for doing so, he should prevent the student from feeling that he talks because the teacher wants so; the teacher should be sure that his students know the learning value the activities they realize have.

In opposition to written language, the oral expression bears its own features which make it different from the former, and its teaching demands close attachment to those features for reasons of natural communication. These features can be synthesized as follows:

- incomplete and sometimes ungrammatical utterances;
- false starts and repetitions;
- simple syntax;
- unsubordinated phrases;
- interactive expressions like *well*, *oh*, *uhuh*;
- general vocabulary;
- less packed information.

Teaching the spoken language should then regard the above features so as to achieve profitable results in the communicative competence of this form of expression. Teachers need to know how to select and design appropriate and authentic language learning materials and activities in accordance with the objectives in mind, the age group of the learners, their interest level and language ability. Thus, teachers should select the texts (conversations and prose passages), functions and language structures in such a way that they reinforce and broaden mastery of speaking as it actually occurs. In addition, it is the authoress' opinion that teachers should encourage learners through the use of materials and activities that bring the students' world into the classroom. Topics that bring the students' world into the classroom will make learning more meaningful and this guarantees long-term retention and subsequent language progress, which is perhaps the most vital factor of all the efforts done in helping to keep the interest in language learning alive.

Teachers should, therefore, provide the students with activities for free expression and not only for language practice, the stage at which language learning often and unfortunately stops. In this way, the oral expression could be developed.

According to the meaning of oral expression given by Iliana Dominguez (2007) in her book *Communication and Text*: *"Oral expression is the most used human way for representing the knowledge, ideas or feelings by words and gestures. It is also used for our social relations with other people and for having them to comprehend us."* The authoress agrees with the given concept, because she considers that it defines what oral expression is in a very simple way, but without losing its essence.

If one wants to develop the oral expression of the students, it should be taken into account that the development of language skills requires constant practice; that's why we encourage activities that should be frequent and varied, setting clearly intended for the student know what is expected from him.

The learning of oral expression can be achieved through several options including:

- Those that have a short duration
- Micro learning activities.
- Totalizing activities.

They are longer and more complex exercises intentionally prepared to develop the various processes of oral expression. They use variety of resources and techniques and develop even when articulated with written or audiovisual communication; the emphasis is on the oral expression.

In both cases we need to follow a path to guide the work and which might include the following steps:

- Determination of purposes. It is what will be achieved at the end of exercises. The goals should be expressed clearly so that students involved in the work
- Formulations of indications. It is also important that students know precisely the tasks to be performed (key search words or phrases, identify the intent of the sender, etc.)
- Exposure of the material. It consists in presenting the reason leading to oral participation or the text that students will understand. It may be a reading, a

speech of a conference, etc. The material should give opportunity to appreciate the elements of the context and non-verbal resources that give meaning to the text (looks, gestures, sudden movements, among others.)

- Implementation of the task. Students develop separate procedures for the oral expression provided in the exercises.
- Reflecting on the activity. Students and teachers discuss the undertaken process, the difficulties they faced, the achievements and how to improve them (metacognition). If it is an activity to understand oral texts, you can make a further submission of the material to see if the tasks performed have helped to develop the procedures provided for listening.

When we speak about oral expression, we have to take into account that it takes place in the oral communication. As it is said in the book *Teaching Oral English*, by Donne Byrne (1984), oral communication is a bilateral process between speaker and listener that involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of listening.

Speaking relates intimately to the other language skills, but it is most closely connected with listening. This connection between listening and speaking reveals itself in their character as parts of oral communication in which both of them -the receptive skill of listening and the productive skill of speaking- take part. In this process, both listener and speaker play different roles and, thus, while one is working on the encoding of the message, the other is decoding the meanings embodied in the language forms produced by the speaker 'and aided by non-verbal means such as facial expressions and gestures.

When we speak about oral expression we should think of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, and we cannot see them far from each other. According what Penny Ur (1997) says in his book "*A Course in Foreign Language Teaching. Theory and Practice*" the first can be defined as the different words foreign language students learn. Even though an item of it sometimes is more than a single word for instance *coffee shop* and *super market*, those are made of more than one word and express a single idea and there are also multi-word idioms where the meaning of the phrase cannot be understood from the analysis made word by word. For that reason it is better to talk about vocabulary items instead of words

When a person speaks, he/she produces sounds, organizes his/her words grammatically and lexically, and also appropriately to the context and the situation in which he/she is communicating their purposes. Making a person understood in a new language involves several different linguistic factors simultaneously. When something is said:

- it has to be formulated according to the grammatical rules of the language.
- it has to make sense, with the right choice of vocabulary, idiom and syntactic alternatives.
- it has to be correct to the situation, bearing in mind such stuffs as who you are speaking to and where.
- it has to be accord with the conventional expression of the particular purpose you have in mind, e.g., apologizing, complaining, etc.
- it has to fit in satisfactorily with what has gone on before.
- it has to be pronounced reasonably well.

All these aspects are embraced within the communicative competence. If any of them is impaired or wrongly used, then an utterance may well become unintelligible or mean something other than we intended. Teaching should therefore take account of all these factors (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, style, function, and discourse) in their independence and integration so as to develop the learners' communicative ability. Here, the teacher's overall aim is to achieve a certain degree of accuracy and fluency (in understanding and producing the language). So, he has to pay due attention to pronunciation along with everything else. In this sense, however, it was observed that at the school object of investigation more attention is paid to pronunciation than to the other aspects of the language.

From all these aspects, the authoress gives great importance to the grammatical aspect, without disregarding the other elements. Taking into account the objectives of the syllabus at CCMS and what is done in class, it is her opinion that the linguistic level is considerably neglected. Therefore, the focus of what is proposed in this paper is directed to reinforce the grammatical aspect (alongside with the other levels) as an important aspect to take into account when dealing with the development of oral expression. She is conscious of the fact that while talking

about oral expression we should not separate the components of the linguistic level. Nevertheless, she considers pertinent to deal with it at the time of talking about this form of the language.

It is not reasonable to refer to *grammatical aspect* without analyzing the etymology of the word *grammar*.

The authoress studied different definitions and adhered to the one given on *The Trainer's Notes, TKT Essentials, Module 1*, from the TKT Course (Teaching Knowledge Test) which defines grammar as: *A set of rules which describes the structures and patterns of language when it is spoken or written meaningfully*. To her opinion, this definition states the essence of what grammar is in a very simple and clear way.

Grammar is sometimes defined as 'the way words are put together to make correct sentences'. This is, as it can be seen presently, an over-simplification, but it is a good starting-point (and an easy way to explain the term to young learners). Thus in English "*I am a teacher*" is grammatical, "*I a teacher*", and "*I are a teacher*" are not.

A specific instance of grammar is usually called a 'structure'. Examples of structures would be the past tense, noun plurals, the comparison of adjectives, and so on. Not all languages, of course, have the same structures: the English verb has 'aspects' (such as the progressive: *she is going* for example) which many other languages do not.

Grammar does not only affect how units of language are combined in order to 'look right'; it also affects their meaning. The teaching of grammatical meaning tends, unfortunately, to be neglected in many textbooks in favor of an emphasis on accuracy of form; but it is no good knowing how to perceive or construct a new tense of a verb if you do not know exactly what difference it makes to meaning when it is used. It is very often the meanings of the structures which create the difficulties for foreign learners mentioned above.

For some authors, the place of grammar in the teaching of foreign languages is polemic. Most people agree that knowledge of a language means, among other things, knowing its grammar; but this knowledge may be intuitive (as it is in our native language), and it is not necessarily true that grammatical structures need to be taught as such, or that formal rules need to be learned. (Or maybe it is.) The

authoress considers that grammar should be taught, but not through explaining too many rules to the students, but through meaningful practice which lead them to make an acceptable use of the language. Moreover, she would like to add that to make the students construct grammatical sentences does not enable them to produce real-life discourse. Hence the importance of meaningful practice while teaching grammatical structures, one of the components of the oral expression.

Penny Ur asserted that it is difficult to present and explain a foreign-language grammatical structure to a class of learners. The problem is first to understand yourself what is involved in 'knowing' the structure (its written and spoken forms, its nuances of meaning), and in particular what is likely to cause difficulties to the learners; and second, how to present examples and formulate explanations that will clearly convey the necessary information. This is a place where clear thinking and speaking are of paramount importance: although you may elicit suggestions from the learners and encourage their participation in the presentation, it is essential for you to know how to present the structure's form and meaning yourself in a way that is clear, simple, accurate and helpful. There is often a conflict between 'simple' and 'accurate'; if you give a completely accurate account of a structure, it may be far from simple; if you simplify, you may not be accurate. One of the problems of grammar presentations, Ur adds, is to find the appropriate balance between the two.

The analysis made about the linguistic aspect of the language as one important element of the oral expression (and of communication in general) constitutes the problem diagnosed by the authoress of this diploma paper, which results come right afterwards.

Analysis of the results of the diagnosis

With the objective of knowing the real situation that exists in relation to the development of the oral expression in the students, there was applied a set of instruments. When diagnosing the problem, the following results came out.

Inquiry to students

The inquiry to students showed that English is highly accepted by most of them (66.6%. See Annex 4). They like it and this is supposed to favor the teaching of English.

Comentario [YAH2]:

Comentario [YAH3]: Theoretical basis

In relation to the types of activities done in class, it can be said that there isn't a balance between oral and written activities, in relation to the objective of the grade in which the development of oral abilities is primary aim. There are more written activities than oral, according to the students. (See Annex 4)

Within the oral activities, a significant representation of students (46.6 %) considers that the repetition of dialogues is the one they develop the most in class. Repetition is very important for it contributes to the development of good pronunciation and intonation patterns; however, this should be followed by dramatizations or role plays or other activities in which the students apply the language in real-life situations and in a freer way. In this way, the development of their oral expression could be attained at a higher level.

Pronunciation is the aspect of the language that the students consider the most important in order to speak English correctly (46, 6%). The authoress infers that this situation is, mainly, because of sounds in the English phonological system that do not exist in Spanish. They disregard the other aspects that are comprised in the linguistic level, mainly that of the structures to be used in order to make an appropriate use of the language while speaking. For them grammar is the least important (12%).

When inquired about the aspect of the language they found more difficult at the time to speak English, their answers were similar to the former questions. Fifteen of them (52, 3 %) gave this rank to pronunciation, whereas grammar takes again the last position (8, 9%).

These results indicate that the students are not aware of the fact that to speak the English language correctly they need something more than good pronunciation; they also need to make use of vocabulary and grammatical structures. The authoress would like to add that the correct use of structures will allow them to transmit messages more accurately.

Interview to teacher

The teacher that was interviewed expressed that the oral activities students do are: repetition of sounds, sentences and dialogues, role-plays, dramatization of dialogues and monologues (with the teacher's help). The lessons are focused on the development of the oral expression, taking into account mainly the phonetic

aspect. The authoress thinks that the development of the oral expression cannot be limited to the phonetic aspect only.

The teacher expressed that the students do not communicate very well among them. She stated that the students know the communicative functions but they have a poor vocabulary and they make mistakes in the use of the verbal tenses.

As it can be observed, she makes reference to mistakes in the verbal tense only, in the case of the grammatical aspect. The English grammar has features completely different from that of the mother tongue that makes it difficult for the learners. This means that it must be given some treatment so that the students can learn how to use it properly.

Speaking requires knowledge of the language system skills in the mastery of language (linguistic skills) and skills in its functioning as speech (communicative skills). Thus, in learning a language as communication, the learner must assimilate its components -pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar- and use them in speech.

Learning to speak, then, requires much practice in the functions and forms of the language, that is, its structure. The aim of the teacher is to develop the linguistic and communicative skills integratively and progressively until free and spontaneous speech is attained. These results led the authoress to state that the work with the grammatical aspect at this grade is weak, and this hinders the appropriate development of the students' oral expression in general.

Observation of Lessons

To continue diagnosing the problem of this research paper, there were observed 20 lessons in six groups at "Camilo Cienfuegos" Military School. Eight lessons (40%) were about presentation of the new content that is micro situation and initial texts. The other twenty four (60%) were drilling lessons (dramatization and transposition).

The following information was obtained:

- The work with the oral activities is aimed at reinforcing pronunciation mainly, disregarding not only the grammatical level, but the lexical one as well.
- It is difficult for the students to communicate because they are not able to structure sentences correctly; this affects communication.
- The communicative functions are practiced in class; however, the students

are not able to use them in real life situations.

Most of the oral activities developed in class are:

- Sentence/dialogue repetition
- Dramatizations
- Reading aloud

In spite of these oral activities developed in class, the students' oral expression is very limited. These activities are developed mechanically, so real communication is not attained. They are focused on pronunciation mainly, and few on grammatical structures that, since they are drilled mechanically, they students are not aware of the function they play in context. The authoress considers that at this level the students can be taught some of the basic rules to be followed to structure sentences correctly. This can help them to realize how the language operates and, thus, will contribute to acquire better notion of the language. Of course, this does not mean at all to teach them grammar lessons.

- The grammatical structures are drilled in written form only. This does not contribute to a complete development of oral skills. Grammar should be drilled mainly orally, while working on the communicative functions or other oral exercises that contribute to the development of the oral expression.
- English is spoken, most of the time, by the teacher, whereas the students use Spanish. Most of them can not say a sentence in the target language. In this way, no one can expect the students to learn how to speak it, if they are not use it in class.
- There is a lack of variety of activities aimed at developing the students' oral expression.

The interpretation of these results made the authoress support that it is necessary to pay close attention to the teaching of oral expression at the Military School "Camilo Cienfuegos". Keeping this in mind and with the aim of improving the development of oral expression of the students, the following set of activities was elaborated.

Proposal of exercises:

This proposal is based on the results from the instruments applied, the analysis of the exercises suggested by the basic documents, and from the experience acquired during the teaching internship period. The set of exercises constitute a new way to help the English class in 11th grade be more active and, at the same time, reinforce the oral expression in the students, through which the learners have the opportunity to use the language orally. Some of these exercises give the opportunity to deal with some moral values. Some of them can be developed in different units taking into account the structures and the vocabulary of each one. They are flexible to be transformed, so the teachers can make the modifications they consider necessary according the needs and capacity of the students. Some of these activities were crated by the authoress; some others were just adapted from traditional ones.

Exercise 1

Title: "Circle conversation"

Unit 8: Lost and found.

Objective: To reinforce the use of *be* through making simple sentences orally.

Skill: Speaking

Content: Past tense of verb *to be*.

Teaching Means: Word cards, dice.

Control: Oral. The teacher will give feedback to the students after the development of the activity.

Time: 20 min

Procedure:

1. Ask the students to form a group of three or four members and sit in a circle.
2. Students take turns rolling the dice. The student who rolls the lowest number starts. According to the number rolled on the dice, he/she picks up some word cards from a pile of cards which are placed face down.

He/she has to make a sentence with those words. Any necessary words can be added to make it a more complete and interesting sentence.

3. If the student can make a grammatically correct sentence, she/he gets a point for each card used. Other students listen to the sentence and check

the grammar to decide if it is a correct sentence. If the student doesn't use some of the cards s/he picked up, they can be used in the next turn.

4. Students practice making sentences and asking or talking in turns.
5. If a student can create another sentence or two to go along with his/her original sentence, she/he can get more points according to the number of the sentences created (1 point per extra sentence).

Words on the cards: lost, found, grenade, rifle, gun, weapon, under, behind, in, on.

Remarks: This activity helps the students develop their awareness about sentence structure and vocabulary.

Exercise 2:

Title: "Explanations"

Unit 8: Lost and found

Objective: To reinforce the past of *be* through making sentences using the technical vocabulary.

Skill: Speaking

Content: Past of Be

Teaching means: cards

Control: Oral. The teacher will give feedback to the students after the development of the activity.

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure:

- Group the students in pairs.
- Give them a card with a problem situation and give them some minutes to think about the possible explanations.
- Discuss some possible explanations.
- Afterwards, discuss the situation with the rest of the class and ask them to give more possible explanations.

E.g.: T: You were in a military maneuver when your AKM rifle did not shoot. Why do

you think this happened?

S1: The charger was empty.

S2: The sure-fire was on.

Problem situations:

- The grenade did not detonate.
- Soldiers shoot to a cow last night.
- The projectile did not hit the objective.
- Sergeant Jay is now in the Military Court.

Remarks: Through this activity, the students have to say what might have happened, and for doing so they need to understand the situation. Here, they are reinforcing not only their oral expression, but also their listening and communicative skills.

Exercise 3:

Title: "Tell me why"

Unit 9: A Honeymoon in Villa Turquino

Objective: To reinforce the use of the Present Continuous Tense through asking and answering questions.

Skill: Speaking

Content: Present Continuous Tense

Teaching means: Cards

Control: Oral. The teacher will give feedback to the students after the development of the activity.

Time: 15 minutes

Procedures:

- Group the students into small teams.
- Give each team cards with sentences expressing deductions.
- Ask students to give you evidence to support each sentence.

- Ask them to share their answer with the rest of the class and discuss it.

E.g.:

T: They must be in the sport time.

S: -*They are wearing white pullover, shorts, and tennis shoes.*

Deduction sentences:

- They must work at the Frontier Brigade.
- He must be in Angola.
- She must be the new Major.

Remarks: At this stage of the syllabus, the students have studied the use of *must* to express logical deduction. In the activity they are asked to express the ideas that led to that logical deduction by using the present continuous.

Exercise 4:

Title: "Describe what you see"

Unit 9: A Honeymoon in Villa Turquino

Objective: To fix the structure of the Present Continuous Tense by describing pictures.

Skill: Speaking and listening

Content: Present Continuous Tense

Teaching means: Pictures

Control: Oral. The teacher will give feedback to the students after the development of the activity.

Time: 15 minutes

Procedures:

- Prepare some pictures about war, combats, or something similar.
- Group the students in pairs.
- Give each pair a picture and give some minutes to see as much details as they can.

- After this, ask the students to exchange the pictures.
- The new pair with a picture has to make questions to the one that had it before about what they saw in it, using the present continuous tense and giving full sentences.

E.g. Questions from pair 2 to pair 1:

- Who are they?
- What are they wearing?
- What are they doing?
- Who is talking on the phone?



Remarks: This activity was created by the authoress. Through it, the students can develop their communicative skills. The two oral abilities are involved.

Exercise 5:

Title: “What I heard”

Unit 11: Anything *else*?

Objective: To reinforce the use of *there is/there are* through making sentences orally about the objects that exist in the classroom.

Skill: Speaking and Listening

Content: *There is* and *there are*

Teaching means: cards

Control: It can be done as a competition in which the winner will be the team that finishes first and does better. The evaluation can be quantitative or qualitative.

Time: 15/20 minutes

Procedure:

- Prepare a set of cards with the names of military objects that are used in a combat (guns, weapons, pieces of uniform, kinds of projectiles)
- Divide the class into groups of 4/5 students. Give each team a set of cards.
- Have one first student pick up a card and say a sentence containing that word, using the structure object of study. The second student should take

another card, turn to a third student and say student 1's sentence and his/her own sentence, and so on, adding the new sentence to the previous ones.

Card 1: AKM

Student 1 to student 2: There is an AKM

Card 2: two grenades

Student 2 to student 3: There is an AKM. There are two grenades.

In this exercise the students not only practice the new structure, but the specialized vocabulary, too.

Remarks: The teacher can make the activity communicative by encouraging the students to ask, "*What is there?*", and another student answers, "*There is an AKM.*"

Exercise 6

Title: "Buying and selling".

Unit 11: Anything else?

Objective: to apply the new communicative function using the structure that indicates existence.

Skill: speaking

Content: *There is/ There are*

Control: Oral. The teacher will give feedback to the students after the development of the activity.

Time: 30 minutes

Procedures:

- The teacher will explain the students that they will use the conversation given as a model to act out a similar situation in which they will pretend they are selling and buying things from a supermarket. The language to be used must be about meat, fruits, and vegetables.
- Group the students in pairs.
- Ask them to "make" their own stores. They must write a list of the things they "sell". It should be at least five items.

- Ask them to write a list of some things they need from the other stores.
- One of them will go shopping and the other will stay to sell in the store.
- Order them to have conversations similar to the one that was presented at the beginning in each of the store they made in the classroom.

Conversation: Student A: I'd like those heads of garlic and five pounds of potatoes, please.

Clerk: Anything else?

Student B: Oh, let me think... Do you have any squash?

Clerk: What kind? There are some nice and fresh pumpkins. And there is a little round squash over there, too.

Student C: The pumpkins look good. How much are they?

Clerk: They are 35 cents a pound.

Remarks: This is a version of an activity the students are used to developing in class. However, it has a new situation they have not practiced before. The practice of the model conversation is optional, since the communicative function and the language have already been practiced in class.

Exercise 7

Title: "Make your own story"

Unit 12: At the Officers' Club

Objective: To fix the Simple Past Tense through making simple sentences.

Skill: speaking, listening, writing, reading

Content: Simple past tense

Teaching means: pictures

Control: Oral. The teacher will give feedback to the students after the development of the activity.

Time: 20/30 minutes

Procedures:

- Form groups of five and give each group a name. Number students from 1-5.

Student # 5 will be the recorder/reporter.

- Teacher tells all the #1 students to come up to the front of the class and look at one picture. The students look carefully in order to remember as many details as possible.
- One student then describes to the other group members what s/he has seen (what is happening in the picture).
- The same procedure is then repeated with students # 2, 3, and 4.
- At the end each group decides on the order of their pictures, and creates a short story to go with them.
- If they are also writing the story, Student #5 writes down the story as the group dictates.
- Each group tells or reads out its story to the rest of the class.

Remarks: This activity favors the integration of all the linguistics skills. The work in team permits its members to trust each other to attain the final goal. It is a good option for fostering moral values, because the students need to see the necessity of working together to get the work done.

Exercise 8

Title: "Past mistakes"

Unit 12: At the Officers' Club

Objective: To fix the Simple Past Tense by making simple sentences.

Skill: Speaking

Content: Simple past tense

Teaching means: cards

Control: Oral. The teacher will give feedback to the students after the development of the activity.

Time: 20 minutes

Procedures:

- Group the students in pairs.

- Give each pair a card with a sentence that describes a bad situation
- Have them agree on a sequence of five mistakes that led up to the situation and write them down.
- Have them exchange the list with another pair.
- Have them read their sequence and discuss what the person should or shouldn't have done at each stage.
- Write a note of advice and give it to the pair.

Example of sentences:

1. The chief of the platoon lost his holidays.
 - He slept during his guard duty.
 - He had too many reports.
 - He misbehaved last week.
2. The military court was a complete disaster.
3. They escaped as soon as they could.
4. The chief of the company become the sergeant of the company.
5. They were analyzed as soon as possible.
6. He had to take time off work due to the exhaustive race they had.
7. Melendez is penalized now.

Remarks: The development of this activity settles the basis for speaking, having as point of departure what the students write.

Valuation of the proposal of activities

During the school year 2013-2014, it was applied a set of activities to improve the oral expression of the students from 11th grade at Camilo Cienfuegos Military School. After this it was necessary to apply some instruments to see if the activities suggested in this diploma paper were effective or not.

Results of inquiry to the students

The inquiry was an important and useful instrument applied for verifying the usefulness of the proposal. It gave information about personal opinions the students

had in relation to the topic of investigation, and since they did not have to write their names, it did not represent a problem to answer honestly as much as possible.

The inquiry showed that a remarkable percent (82.8%) of the students liked the exercises they developed. This shows that they accepted the activities and were motivated during the class and the development of the exercises. According to them (80 %), the proposal allowed them to feel at ease while developing most of the activities.

In relation to the ability that was reinforced the most through the proposal, they identified speaking (74, 6%). However, they did not realize that listening was at par with speaking. It means that for the success of each of the activities for oral expression, good listening was required. In some cases, the students were asked to write but using it as a channel for speaking. They also considered (85.07%) that the exercises really helped them improve their oral expression.

The set of activities was, as said by the students, motivating (82.08%) interesting (74.62%), easy (59.70%), exciting (44.77%), well-structured (29.85%)., and challenging (14.92%).

Taking into account the students' opinion, the set of activities was useful and effective. It fulfilled its aim, that of contributing to the improvement of speaking in them. It is important to say that these activities are suitable for being applied in order to reinforce the development of the oral expression in 11th grade.

Results of interview to the teacher

During the interview, the teacher expressed that the activities were really effective for most of the students. She also said that even though the exercises were aimed at developing the work with the four abilities, the main objective was to develop the oral expression. The students' communication improved and also their use of the language. Furthermore, the students' progress was noticeable in most of them. Finally, the teacher characterized the activities as: easy, because they were not complex and the students could do them without too many difficulties; motivating, because they drew the students' interest while accomplishing the aim, especially because they were like games and that was what they liked the most; well-structured, because they were according to the students' level and were made taking into account the objective, content, main ability, time, way of control, and all

the students could participate and be evaluated; and challenging, because they set new goals to the students and made them to do their best while dealing with type of activities they had not dealt with before.

According to these results, the students' progress was very outstanding. However, it is the authoress's opinion that there really was a progress but very discrete.

Results of the observation of classes

To finish applying the instruments the authoress observed 20 lessons in 3 groups at Camilo Cienfuegos Military School. The following information was obtained:

During the development of the activities the students seemed to be comfortable and confident. They made an acceptable use of the language; they made a better use of some grammatical structures like the past of verb be and how to express existence in their colloquial speech. Most of them expressed themselves acceptably and even they understood more what the teacher and they partners said. They didn't commit as many mistakes as before and they improved their communication (among the students and between teacher and student). All the students made sentences grammatically correct. At the end of the class, the contents were reinforced, that is why the objectives of the exercises were fulfilled and the objective of the class too. During the teaching period there were some exercises that were really easy to the students, like in the case of exercises 1, 3 and 5; but there were also some that presented some difficulties to them like exercise 8, because of some specific vocabulary they didn't know, but they were not serious difficulties.

The instruments applied helped the authoress in the valuation of the proposal of activities. As far as it can be seen, the activities made a modest contribution to the reinforcement of the oral expression in the students from the school object of investigation, as well as of the other linguistic skills.

With the objective of the grammatical level in mind, the students were able to put into practice their notion about the language. Needless to say that the other components of the linguistic level were also reinforced, that is, those of the phonological and lexical systems (pronunciation and vocabulary, respectively).

Conclusions

After all the analysis made about the results obtained, it can be concluded saying that:

1. The oral expression is one of the aspects in the teaching of a foreign language to be developed in most school courses at all levels. The skill is either developed independently as a primary goal to be attained at the very end of learning and/or as a means for other skills.
2. Vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are parts of the oral expression, but through this research paper special attention was given to grammar as one of the elements required while looking for accuracy in the process of communication.
3. The diagnoses applied revealed insufficiencies in relation to the development of the oral expression in the students from the military school from Guantanamo.
4. The proposal of activities responds to the necessities of favoring the improvement of the oral expression in the eleventh graders, and it was made under the basis of the insufficiencies detected.
5. The exercises proposed helped to improve, a little bit, the students' oral expression, and within it, the reinforcement of some grammatical structures.

Recommendations:

- To continue deepening in the study about these skills because of the paramount importance it has for communication.
- To put into practice the activities suggested in this Diploma Paper as a consultant material to overcome the difficulties detected at "Camilo Cienfuegos" Military School

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Inquiry (to the students)

Objective: to know the real situation about the work with the oral expression in eleventh grade at "Camilo Cienfuegos" Military School.

We are carrying out an investigation about the development of the oral expression through the English lessons. For that reason, we need your cooperation by answering, as honestly as possible, the following questions. You should not write your name, just answer the questions.

1. Do you like the English language?

☐ a lot ☐ a little ☐ I don't like it

2. What kind of exercises is more frequent in class?

☐ oral ☐ written ☐ combination of both

3. Select the oral activities you do the most in the English classes.

☐ Dramatizations ☐ Question-answer exercise
☐ Repetition of dialogues ☐ Others. Which?
☐ Reading aloud

4. Which of the following aspects of the language do you consider more important in order to speak English correctly?

☐ Pronunciation ☐ Vocabulary
☐ Grammar

5. Which of them is the most difficult for you when trying to use the English language?

☐ Pronunciation ☐ Vocabulary
☐ Grammar

Annex 2: Interview (to the teacher)

1. What kinds of exercises do you develop during the English lessons?
2. Which of them are for developing the oral expression in the students?
3. In which of the linguistic abilities do you focus your attention during your lesson: listening, reading, speaking, or writing? Why?

4. Does communication occur well in classroom when using the English language? Explain.
5. In which aspects do the students have more difficulties: in the phonological, the grammatical, or the lexical? Why do you think it is so?

Annex 3: Classes observation guide

Objective: To verify the way the oral expression is developed through the English lessons.

1. Kinds of exercises that are developed during the English lessons: oral, written, or both.
 2. Number of exercises developed for developing the oral expression.
 3. In what other linguistic abilities professor focus their attention in class.
 4. How communication does occur in class while using the English language?
 5. Aspects of the oral expression that offers more difficulties to the students.
- Most common mistakes

Annex 4: Inquiry to students

Question # 1

Do you like English?	N° of Ss	%
a) Yes, I like it a lot.	44	65,6
b) Yes, I like it a little.	13	19.4
c) No, I don't like it.	10	14,9

Question # 2

Form of the activities done more frequently in class.	N° of Ss	%
a) Oral	17	25,3
b) Written	31	46.3
c) Combination of both	17	25.4

Question # 3

Activities done in class.	N° of Ss	%
a) Dramatization	17	25.4
b) Repetition of dialogues	28	41.8
c) Reading texts aloud	18	26.9
d) Question/Answer exercise	4	6
e) Others	-	-

Question # 4

Level of language considered most important.	N° of Ss	%
a) Pronunciation	31	46.3
b) Grammar	8	12
c) Vocabulary	28	41.7

Question # 5

Level of language considered most difficult	N° of Ss	%
a) Pronunciation	35	52.3
b) Grammar	6	8.9
c) Vocabulary	26	38.8

Annex 5: pictures for developing exercise# 4



Annex 6: pictures for developing some exercise# 7



Annex 7: Inquiry (to the students)

Objective: to verify if the exercises proposed were useful and effective for the students.

We are carrying out an investigation to help you to improve your oral expression while talking in English. That's why we need you to answer some questions as honest as possible. You do not have to write your name you just have to answer.

1- Did you like the oral exercises you do in class?

___ a lot ___ a little ___ I don't like

2- Did you feel comfortable while doing the exercises in class?

☐ yes ☐ a little ☐ no

3- What ability do you think you improved the most?

☐ reading ☐ speaking ☐ listening ☐ writing

4- Do you consider you improved your oral expression?

☐ yes ☐ a little ☐ no

5- Tick the adjectives you consider that describe the exercises you did in class as part of the propos?

☐ interesting ☐ challenging ☐ easy ☐ well-structured

☐ boring ☐ motivating ☐ difficult ☐ demanding

Thank you.

Annex 8: Interview to the teachers

1. Do you consider the exercises done helped to develop the students' oral expression? Say why.
2. What linguistic ability do you consider was the most treated in the exercises? Give reasons.
3. Did communication occur well during the realization of those exercises? Explain
4. Did they really help the students to improve the grammatical aspect during their communication while using the English language? Give your opinion.
5. If you had to characterize the exercises the students did, how will you do it? Please use as many adjectives as you can and say why.

Annex 9: Classes' observation guide

Objective: To verify the effectiveness of the proposed activities during the English lessons

- The atmosphere in the class during the realization of the exercises

- Use of the language by the students mainly
- The students oral expression while using the English language to communicate in class
- Communication during the teaching learning process between student-student and teacher-student
- Fulfilment of the objectives

Annex 10: Inquiry (to the students)

Question # 1

Did you like the oral exercises you do in class?	N° of Ss	%
a) a lot.	55	82.08
b) a little.	8	11.94
c) I don't like it.	4	5.97

Question # 2

Did you feel comfortable while doing them in class?	N° of Ss	%
a) yes	54	80.59
b) a little	9	13.43
c) no	4	5.97

Question # 3

What ability do you think you improved the most?	N° of Ss	%
a) reading	5	7.46
b) speaking	50	74.62

c) listening	5	7.46
d) writing	7	10.44

Question # 4

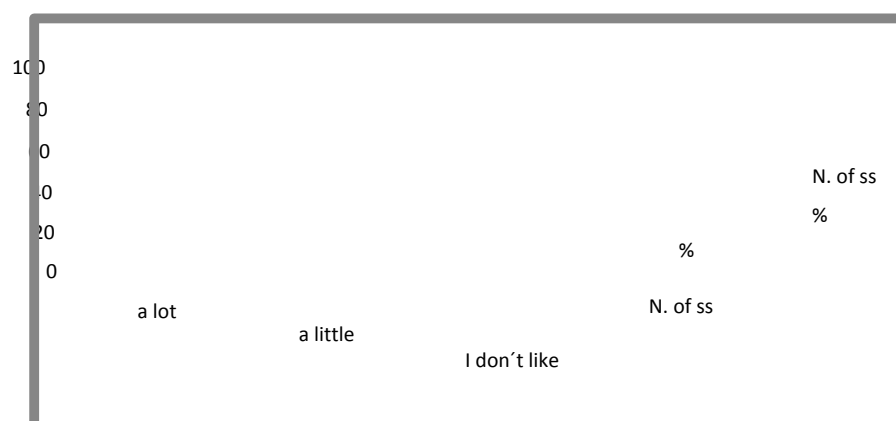
Do you consider you improved your oral expression?	N° of Ss	%
a) yes	54	80.59
b) a little	7	10.44
c) no	3	4.47

Question # 5

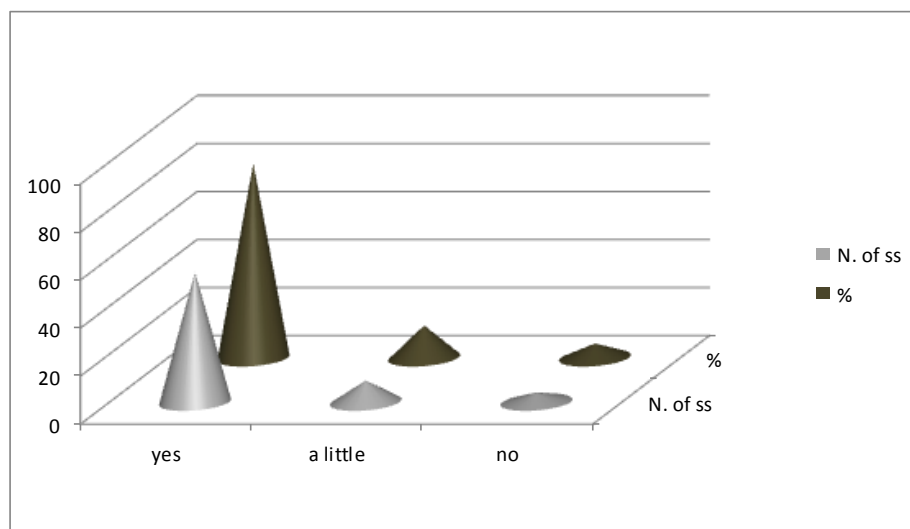
Tick the adjectives you consider that describe The exercises you did in class?	N° of Ss	%
Interesting	50	74.62
Boring	7	10.44
Demanding	5	7.46
Challenging	10	14.92
Motivating	55	82.08
Easy	40	59.70
Difficult	3	4.47
Well-structured	20	29.85
Demanding	5	7.46

Annex 12: Graphics of inquiry the students

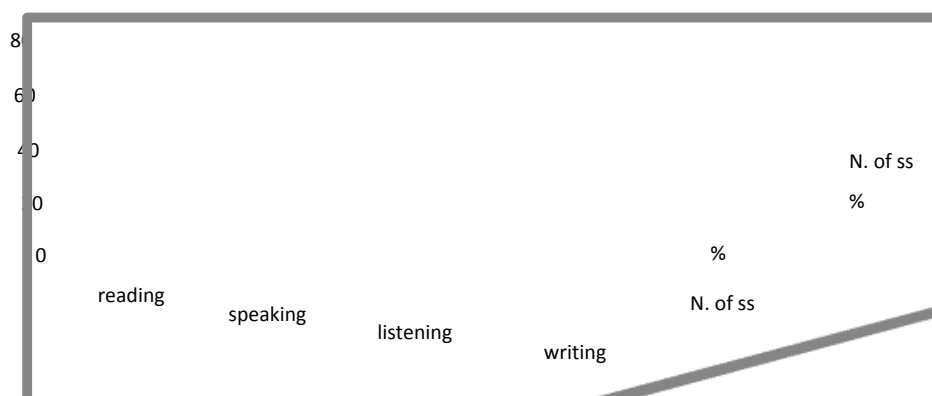
1- Did you like the exercises you do in class?



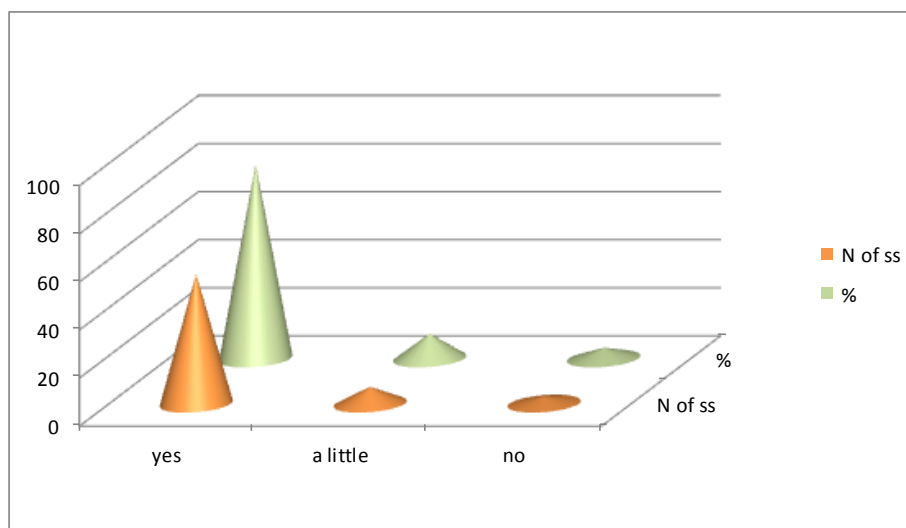
2- Did you feel comfortable while doing the exercises in class?



3- What ability do you think you improved the most?



4- Do you consider you improved your oral expression?



5- Tick the adjectives you consider described the exercices you did in class.

