



UNIVERSIDAD CENTRAL "MARTA ABREU" DE LAS VILLAS
VERITATE SOLA NOBIS IMPONETUR VIRILIS TOGA. 1948

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Department of English Language

MAJOR PAPER

*"COMMUNICATIVE TASKS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPEAKING
SKILLS IN THE TRAINING OF BACHELORS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH A MAJOR
IN FRENCH"*

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MICHEL MARTÍN CINTRA

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MSc. BERTHA G. SALVADOR JIMÉNEZ

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Departamento de Lengua Inglesa

TRABAJO DE DIPLOMA

*"TAREAS COMUNICATIVAS PARA CONTRIBUIR AL DESARROLLO DE LA
EXPRESIÓN ORAL EN IDIOMA INGLÉS EN LA FORMACIÓN DE LICENCIADOS EN
LENGUA INGLESA CON SEGUNDA LENGUA EXTRANJERA: FRANCÉS"*

Autores: DANIA YUDITH SUÁREZ ABREU
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We certify that the present Major Paper was carried out at the Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas in order to finish the curricula for the training of Bachelors in English Language with a Major in French. We give our approval for it to be partially or totally used by the institution for educational purposes. This Major Paper can be neither published nor discussed in any forum without the approval of the University.

Dania Yudith Suárez Abreu

Michel Martín Cintra

Signature of the Author

Signature of the Author

The signatures from above certify that the present Major Paper has all the necessary requisites and has been carried out under the agreements of the institution authorities.

Authors

Head of the Department

Powerful Thought

***“Guide your success into channels
where others can share in the benefits
of your accomplishments”***

R.J. Allen

Dedication

*To my loved mum,
whose greatest dream becomes true with this work
and
To my grandpa Elio,
I hope this be the rose I never put in your grave.*

Yudith

Specially dedicated to my real, everlasting, and holy mother Isidra Torres Hurtado whose light was set on me one day after my birth.

Mamá, since you moved away I have been always wishing to reach your height. I have cried and smiled thinking of you. Now we are here MAMA. Yours is the result, the strength always came from you, and my desire of success was provoked by your spirit on me. There in the most outstanding place of heaven...rejoice

Mamá...I start walking:

Thanks Mamá for coming back from abroad. I'm living thanks to that. Thanks for teaching me how to hold the spoon. I eat the food and grew. Thanks for teaching me how to approach girls. I've got the world's best one.

Thanks for teaching me to read books. Here I'm Thanks fro your presence in my life. It's my most outstanding personal event.

Finally thanks for the emptiness you left on me. That makes me look forward to find you.

Your Michel

Acknowledgments

*To my grandpa Elio, Mipa, wherever you are, I want you to know
that I never forget you,
To my mom, for making me your light in all moments,
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To my dad, for his example,
To my second mother, Virgen, for all what you taught me,
To my grandma, for being the sweetest woman in the earth,
To my aunt Zoily and my uncle Ale, for your tenderness,
To my little brother, Luisi, my dream became true when you were born,
To Maykel, for your guidance and for the years together, I hope one day
you know how much I love you and how much I will,
To Cano, Ariel, Michel and Ramón, I have no words for you, just that
you are Special,
To Elisa, you are wonderful, an angel,*

To Bertica and Mayra, for your extraordinary help, thanks forever,

To my teachers, specially to Teresa and Denis, for being friends too,

To all my friends, thanks for letting me know that you are always by

my side, no matter what,

To all my relatives, you are the reason I live for,

To all those persons for whom I have a special site in my heart,

LOVE YOU ALL

Yudith

To Peque, the essence of my existence: versus amor nullum novit habere modum.

To Tatico, the most outstanding person around me and the greatest creation of God: Everything from you comes to make my life meaningful.

To Aunt Rosa, gifted woman: you know you mean more than angel, more than mother...I love you. Thanks for your presence in my life. When you are far lots of things lose sense.

To my mother Gricel. Life is hard but love is stronger mom. God bless you.

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To Bertica, such an academic omen, such a great woman, what a perfect mother.

To my teachers who first taught me the language of Shakespeare and my teachers at the University. Specially to all of you.

To my furious angel Dania: The long way starts now. Let's fight to be good ones mon petite. I hold you tight.

To the almighty King of kings and Lord of lords Jesus Christ: Yours is the glory Dad.

Michel

Abstract

In this Major Paper it is analyzed the importance of learning foreign languages, specifically English. Several definitions of speaking are quoted, as well as some definitions of communicative tasks are presented. The research is divided into three chapters that are devoted to the analysis of the current situation of the development of speaking skills in the first year of the training of Bachelors in English with a major in French, at Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas; a characterization of the sample is given, and at the end, it is presented a proposal of communicative tasks to help teachers and students in the teaching and learning process. The exercises were compiled, adapted and created.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1.....	9
1.1 The development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French: a brief history.....	9
1.2 The communicative development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French	12
1.3 Main types of communicative tasks to develop speaking.....	17
1.3.1 <i>Different definitions of task</i>	17
1.3.2 <i>Characteristics of a task and principles for task-based language teaching (TBLT)</i>	21
1.3.3 <i>Task typologies</i>	26
CHAPTER 2.....	35
2.1 <i>Sample, instruments, and criteria</i>	35
2.2 <i>Analysis of the results of the diagnosis: strengths and weaknesses</i>	39
2.3 <i>Main regularities</i>	45
CHAPTER 3.....	47
3.1 <i>Characteristics of the proposal</i>	47
3.2 <i>Tasks</i>	51
3.3 <i>Evaluation of the proposal by specialists</i>	56
CONCLUSIONS.....	58
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	61
APPENDIXES	

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CONCLUSIONS.....	58
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	61
APPENDIXES	

INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that more than 5 000 different languages are spoken in the world, from the Mandarin Chinese spoken by more than 800 million people in East Asia until some languages that are used in the isolated valleys of New Guinea by some few hundreds of individuals. But the role of the first universal language really corresponds to English, which constitutes the mother language of some 400 millions of people from a dozen countries. This means that today the number of people able to express themselves in the language raised by Shakespeare is about 1,500 millions in the world, what represents approximately a quarter of the earth population. English has an official or semiofficial position in near 70 countries, and serves as a common language in several countries where many languages are used, like in India, where more than 700 languages are spoken (Rodríguez Díaz, O. 2004).

Furthermore, English is the most taught language in the world. As it is the second common language in 89 countries and is considered as a strong instrument to face new technologies, the extensive English language training of huge populations has been an official linguistic policy in different nations. Indeed, English prevails in means of transport and communication. More than 80 percent of the information stored in more than a hundred million computers in the whole world is in English. This language is the oral vehicle used by five of the biggest radio broadcasting agencies (CBS, NBC, ABC, BBC, and CBC) that reach a 300 million people potential public, and is broadly used in international airlines by pilots and flight controllers (Rodríguez Díaz, O. 2004).

As learning a foreign language develops the tool for dealing with various types of survival challenges, technical skills, and interpersonal exchanges across and among cultures; it has been widely recognized that learning foreign languages brings

opportunities, enhances employment potential, helps in personal development, builds friendships, breaks down cultural barriers, and improves understanding among people. The American National Standards for Foreign Language Learning stated that: “To study another language and culture gives one the powerful key to successful communication: knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom”.

In short, there are cultural and personal reasons for learning a foreign language. A new language opens up a whole new culture. A foreign language gives us access to another culture, and our lives take on a new dimension. In that sense, the great German poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1827) said: “Whoever is not acquainted with foreign language knows nothing of his own.” Thus, by learning a new language, one gains new horizons, but at the same time reinforces his/her own identity, and therefore his/her self-confidence. Thus, it is stated that a foreign language can contribute to a stronger personality and that it seems knowing foreign languages is even an essential quality of a lover. In Shakespeare’s great comedy **Twelfth Night** we hear a gentleman being praised: “He plays the viol-de-gamboys, speaks 3 or 4 languages and hath all the gifts of nature”.

Therefore, learning a foreign language is not a matter of reading some grammar rules and memorizing some vocabulary words-- although those are important activities not to be ignored. Learning a language is learning a skill, not a body of information. That is, one must not only understand the ideas and concepts, have information at hand, but also make our body accustomed to using that information when speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

An understanding of non-verbal gestures, cultural symbols and rituals, global trends, regional varieties of language, and local traditions and contexts, enhances the four essential basic skills for oral and written communication. For foreign language (FL)

students to contribute to society they must learn the academic, technical and workplace uses of languages and how those realms of knowledge relate to other fields of study.

Students learn to communicate for a complete range of purposes including personal, school-based, community, vocational, recreational, and professional.

Speaking is, however, a skill that deserves attention every bit as much as literary skills, in both first and second languages (Bygate, 1987). As this author quite rightly mentions, “Our learners often need to be able to speak with confidence in order to carry out many of their most basic transactions” (ibid.). It is the skill by which they are most frequently judged, and through which they make or lose friends. It is the vehicle *per excellence* of social solidarity, of social ranking, of professional advancement, and of business. It is also a medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning. Therefore, the teaching of speaking merits more thought.

The authors of this paper consider speaking very important in the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language because in many cases, as Nunan (1991) wrote, “success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the (target) language”. Thus, if students do not learn how to speak or do not get any opportunity to speak in the language classroom, they may soon get demotivated and lose interest in learning since many of them equate being able to speak a language as knowing the language and, therefore, view the language as learning how to speak the language. On the other side, if the right activities are taught in the right way, speaking in class can be a lot of fun, raising general learner motivation and making the English language classroom a fun and dynamic place to be.

Speaking is, indeed, fundamental to human communication. If we just think of all the different conversations we have in a day and compare that with how much written communication we need in a day, what do we do more in our daily lives is speaking.

But as it was seen in the exploratory phase of this research, speaking proved to be the most affected skill in the teaching and learning process of English to future Bachelors in English Language with a major in French at UCLV. On the one hand, while observing the students' behavior in some speaking lessons, the authors found that in some cases learners did not talk or say anything during such lessons; even when they were working in pairs or groups, they just ended up chatting in Spanish. On the other hand, in a survey applied to a sample of language teachers and students from Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas, they agreed that speaking is the most difficult skill to be either taught or learned. They also recognized that motivation, interest, and creativity generally characterize the students so that they actively participate in the process; and that teachers are well prepared and quite interested in creating opportunities for having their students learn. However, they both accepted that some students' pronunciation is faulty, vocabulary somewhat poor and inadequate, and learners frequently need for clarification and explanation to understand oral presentations.

When asked about the main reasons of the previous weaknesses, they remarked the lack of materials and teaching aids, not enough availability of exercises to work with individual differences, and little opportunities for communicating with natives.

Consequently, the previously described situation led to the following **scientific problem**:

- What could be done to contribute to the development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French?

Thus, the **scientific object** of this research is the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language from a communicative perspective in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French, being the **field of action** the teaching and learning process of speaking skills from a communicative perspective in the discipline English Language.

The general **aim** of the present research work is:

- To propose a set of communicative tasks to contribute to the development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French at UCLV.

In order to meet the previous aim, **the scientific questions** stated below were answered throughout this investigation:

- What are the theoretical bases that support the teaching and learning process of speaking skills from a communicative perspective in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French at UCLV?
- What is the current state of the development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French at UCLV?
- How are the didactic materials conceived for the treatment of this skill in the discipline English Language?
- What tasks could be implemented in order to improve the teaching and learning process of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French?
- What do specialists think about the proposal?

In order to answer the above questions, the following **scientific tasks** were accomplished:

1. Setting the theoretical bases that support the teaching and learning process of speaking skills from a communicative perspective in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French at UCLV.
2. Diagnosing the current state of the development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French at UCLV.
3. Assessing the conception of the didactic materials for the treatment of this skill in the discipline English Language.
4. Designing tasks that could be implemented in order to improve the teaching and learning process of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French at UCLV.
5. Validating the proposal.

Methods

For the accomplishment of the previously mentioned tasks, different **methods** were used:

- Theoretical methods

- Analytical and synthetical method
- Inductive and deductive method

These methods were used for establishing the research process foundations.

- Historical and logical method

This method allowed analyzing both the evolution and the present situation regarding the teaching and learning of speaking.

- Empirical methods
 - Documentary analysis: in order to determine the optimum situation according to the existing official documents for the training of Bachelors in English language with a major in French.
 - Surveys: they supplemented other data obtained through observation.
 - Interviews: as a research instrument, they were used to find out people's opinion about some specific issues.
 - Observation: direct observation allowed to evaluate the way both teachers and students behaved in the classroom.
 - Diagnostic test: to determine the students' level in using the spoken language.
- Statistical and mathematical methods
 - Microsoft Excel: to process data obtained from surveys and interviews.

The **sample** chosen for the present investigation consisted of all the first-year students (23) of academic year 2004-2005, out of a population of 104 enrolled in the specialty. Also five (5) teachers of the Discipline English Language, belonging to the Department of English Language, Faculty of Humanities, were included in the study. Some criteria were taken into consideration for selecting the sample:

- First-year students were selected because this level is crucial for the development of speaking since the very beginning of the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French.
- The teachers of the Discipline English Language were selected because it is their main task to train future Bachelors in English Language with a major in French in the four skills (speaking, writing, reading and listening) in their three first years of studies. The bases of English are set through this Discipline, and it allows students to acquire new knowledge from the rest of the subjects in the studies.
- Both teachers and students agreed to cooperate with the investigation.

Expected results

This research work will provide teachers of English with a booklet containing useful communicative tasks that will help them improve the teaching and learning process of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French.

This dissertation is structured into three chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the theoretical bases of the development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French: history and rationale. Chapter 2 consists of the characterization of the sample, main methods and instruments used, and the analysis of the results obtained from the diagnosis. Chapter 3 is the new proposal of communicative tasks, and also its evaluation according to the criteria of some specialists. Finally, conclusions, recommendations, bibliography and appendixes are included.

Chapter 1

The development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French: history and rationale.

1.1 The development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French: a brief history

The study of English Language as a specialty in Cuban Higher Education had its origin in the old Faculty of Philology of Universidad de La Habana, in “Juan M. Dihigo” Institute of Modern Languages in 1947. By that time, as Dr. Alfredo Camacho (2002) pointed out, the teaching of foreign languages, particularly the teaching of English as the most widely diffused, was a privilege of the high class.

On November 30th 1952, the opening of the inaugural course of Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas, and within it, the Faculty of Humanities, took place. This faculty was integrated by two specialties and a department: Philology and English Language, and by the Department for the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The Faculty was pioneer in the educational-production plans and it joined the scientific net of the center with folkloric, linguistic, and literary investigations; community culture, and regional studies (Intranet of the Faculty of Humanities).

The victory of the Cuban Revolution marked the beginning of a process of total transformation of the nation, the structure of the country, and the environment of the international relationships. From then on, Cuba, in its international projection, has been the headquarters for several international events where personalities of different fields

of knowledge have met and at the same time, Cuba has been represented abroad in a considerable number of international forums (Rodríguez, M. 2004).

In 1970, the Faculty of Modern Languages at Universidad de La Habana, where students began to study with previously acquired knowledge, habits, and abilities, registered students coming from the general system of education with little or no training in the foreign language. Therefore, changes in the curricula and syllabuses were introduced so that specializations in Linguistics and Translation and Interpretation arose. Hence, this Faculty of Modern Languages became what it is known today as the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Universidad de La Habana (Intranet de La UH).

By 1977, the Pedagogical University separated from Universidad Central and some significant qualitative changes have taken place from then on.

In the Cuban educational policy the teaching of foreign languages has always been a priority. Its general objectives are based on the aims of education stated in the Thesis and Resolution on Educational Policy of the Communist Party of Cuba in 1975. Thus, English has been compulsory in all university curricula.

Due to the educational, economic, and social advances in our country in the closing years of the 20th. century, it was considered necessary and suitable the opening of the specialty of Bachelor in English Language in Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas, Universidad de Oriente, and Universidad de Holguín. This new specialty offered its first course in Villa Clara in 1989 and in the following academic year (1990-1991) in Universidad de Matanzas, but having Universidad de La Habana as the leading institution (Rodríguez, M. 2004).

Nowadays, the economic, scientific, and technological development of our country, together with the improvement of scientific investigations, the collaboration agreements

with other countries, the growing relationships with other nations, and the internationalism of our country have demanded the need of training an increasing number of translators and interpreters, particularly in the English Language.

The current Cuban University is responsible for the training of the personnel professionally prepared to fulfill the social responsibility that corresponds to each of them. This means that students and university professionals should not only be competent in their specialties but also at communicating in English and at getting to the growing flow of information that circulates all over the world.

Paramount importance has also been given to the training of graduates in foreign languages, who will generally act as translators and interpreters in different companies and organisms inside and outside the national territory and make possible communication among people from different countries (Rodríguez, M. 2004).

A curriculum has, then, been implemented so as to widen the scope of the training of Bachelors. In 1998, a new specialty emerged: Bachelors in English Language with a major in French. Such curriculum comprises several disciplines which have been submitted to a continuous process of improvement.

Undoubtedly, the English Language discipline is one of the most important in the curricula and has also gone through a process of modifications throughout the years regarding its conceptions, contents and time available. The discipline has been designed in such a way that the students develop, in a harmonic and integral way, the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) intensively in an initial stage in the preparatory year. It allows them both use the English language from the first academic year and to develop the professional skills they need during their university studies and in their future working life.

1.2 The communicative development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French

As it was previously stated, English Language as a discipline has been designed in such a way that the students develop the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). However, the development of speaking is crucial to their profession since they will have to work as both interpreters and teachers. To do so they need to have a high proficiency level in the foreign language.

The following anecdote highlights the importance of developing strong speaking skills for English language learners. Speaking is one of the most frequently used skill in a typical day and it occupies about 25 percent of our working hours.

Three people were on a train in England, approaching what appears to be Wemberly station. One of the passengers said:

- *Is this Wemberly?*
- *No, replied the second passenger. It is Thursday.*
- *The third passenger said: I' m thirsty too. Let's have a drink!*

Speak comes from the Greek word *spharageisthai*, Old English *sprecan*, Middle English *speken*. It means to utter words or articulate sounds with the ordinary voice (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary).

As a linguistic skill, speaking consists of two parts:

- Linguistic competence, which includes the ability to produce appropriate grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.
- Sociolinguistic competence, which includes knowing when and in which manner to produce the language depending on the situation (Kathleen Olson, 2000).

As every skill, its acquisition depends on the knowledge, skills, and habits that the speaker should have, as well as on a certain anatomic and physiological norm of the different organs involved in the speaking production.

W.F. Mackey (1965) summarized oral expression (speaking) as follows:

“Oral expression involves not only [...] the use of the right sounds in the right pattern of rhythm and intonation, but also the choice of words and inflections in the right order to convey the right meaning”.

It should be noticed how much importance Mackey gives to going things “right” in order to be any good at speaking: choosing the right forms, putting them in the right order, sounding like a native speaker, even producing the right meanings.

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Language functions (or patterns) that tend to recur in certain discourse situations (e.g., declining an invitation or requesting time off from work), can be identified and charted (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (‘linguistic competence’), but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways to produce language (‘sociolinguistic competence’). Finally, speech has its own skills, structures, and conventions different from written language (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Carter & McCarthy, 1995; Cohen, 1996). A good speaker synthesizes this array of skills and knowledge to succeed in a given speech act.

A speaker's skills and speech habits have an impact on the success of any exchange (Van Duzer, 1997). Speakers must be able to anticipate and then produce the expected patterns of specific discourse situations. They must also manage discrete elements such as turn-taking, rephrasing, providing feedback, or redirecting (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Speaking is meant to include understanding responses to what is spoken (Daniel Eisenberg, 1986).

It is also necessary to highlight that speaking has its own peculiarities:

- It is based on sound, voice, gestures, and mimicry.
- While speaking the oral channel is used and the process of expressing ideas, even in prepared talks, is generally spontaneous.
- Comprehension is achieved by means of the socio-cultural context.
- The grammatical structure of the utterance is peculiar.
- Unfinished phrases and digressions are frequent (Menéndez, M. 2002).

The spontaneous, interactive nature of speaking makes different demands on participants. Below is a description of some of these demands or sub-skills as presented by the Business English Certificates (BEC) Vantage Speaking test:

• **Coherence in Real Time**

Individuals are expected to produce-usually with no time for planning or rehearsal-utterances that have logical flow.

• **Relevant responses**

In addition to this, as most talk is constructed between two or more participants, it is necessary to pay attention to what others say in order to give a response that makes sense in relation to what was said before.

• **Decisions Based on Purpose- Functions**

We walk for a reason, for example, to persuade, to inform, to invite. Certain phrases are commonly used to carry out these actions and are sometimes referred to as functions.

For example, “I really think you should...” to persuade; “Would you like to...” to invite. Proficient speakers of English use these ready-made phrases to act as short cuts in carrying out everyday tasks efficiently.

- **Appropriacy**

The purpose of our talk will inform the many choices we have to make moment by moment, for example, our choice of words (grammar and vocabulary), our intonation, the length of our turn. Appropriacy is another demand: the words and syntax we use need to be appropriate for the purpose of our talk. For example, ‘Please remove yourself’ will not work as a polite request in a crowded lift.

- **Turn-taking, ‘Ums’ and ‘Errs’ and Pauses**

Participants in a conversation or discussion need to listen carefully to hear potential gaps to take the next turn. Missing these opportunities may give rise to interruptions or lapses in the conversation-both undesirable. ‘Ums’ and ‘errs’ often act as device to hold the floor while we summon up the ideas or words to take our turn and are therefore a natural feature of speaking. However, too many ‘ums’ and ‘errs’ and over-long pauses may be tiresome on the listener and may result in the hesitant speakers losing their turn to someone else present or simply in the conversation being abandoned.

- **Extent or Relevant Length**

The acceptable and appropriate length of a turn often depends on the purpose or task at hand or on the context. For example, giving one-word answers to questions about our personal circumstances is acceptable in a market research interview, but would seem to be rude in a job interview. The purpose will define the relevance of the content and length of a turn.

- **Responding and Initiating**

Most conversations require both participants to take an active role in terms of initiating and introducing new ideas as well as responding. Skill and knowledge are required to both, identify the appropriate place to do so and to know words and phrases that signal a change in the direction of the conversation. Without this ability, the talk will sound one-sided or will actually fall in its purpose.

- **Repair and repetition**

While talking, it is normal for participants to check that what is being said is being understood in the way it was meant. This gives rise to features such as 'repair' or put more simply: correction. 'Repair' (of oneself or the person we are speaking to) often results in repetition of part of an utterance, or individual words, in order to correct oneself or to seek clarification and/or correction from the person we are speaking to. Repair is necessary for keeping the discussion or conversation on track.

- **Range of Words and Grammar**

We need to know a range of words and grammar from which to choose the most appropriate for the different tasks we need to carry out.

- **Accuracy in Using words and Pronunciation**

In general, we need to be able to use words and grammar accurately and for our pronunciation to be sufficiently clear to be understood. Interesting, however, decisions being made while we talk often means that mistakes are frequently made even by the most articulate and proficient of speakers. The speed of speech also means that these often go unnoticed.

According to Celce-Murcia (1996), speaking implies the development of different language components which vary from learner to learner:

- Pronunciation
- Speech flow
- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Organization
- Listening Comprehension
- Question-handing

1.3 Main types of communicative tasks to develop speaking

1.3.1 Different definitions of task

A task is a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus, examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel reservation, finding a street destination, and helping someone across a road. In other words, by "task" is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between. "Tasks" are the things people will tell you they do if you ask them and they are not applied linguists (Long, 1985).

Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985, p. 289) consider a task (in language teaching) an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e., as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, and listening to an instruction and performing a command, may be referred to as tasks.

Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make teaching more communicative ... since it provides a purpose for classroom activity which goes beyond practice of language for its own sake.

A task is considered by Breen (1987) as a springboard for learning work. In a broad sense, it is a structured plan for the provision of opportunities for the refinement of knowledge and capabilities entailed in a new language and its use during communication. Such a work plan will have its own particular objective, appropriate

content which is to be worked upon, and a working procedure. A simple and brief exercise is a task, and so also are more complex and comprehensive work plans which require spontaneous communication of meaning or the solving of problems in learning and communicating. Any language test can be included within this spectrum of tasks. All material designed for language teaching - through their particular organization of content and the working procedures they assume or propose for the learning of content - can be seen as compendia of tasks.

Task is an activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process (Prabhu, 1987).

According to Wright (1987), a task is meant to be instructional questions which ask, demand or even invite learners (or teachers) to perform operations in input data. The data itself may be provided by teaching material or teachers or learners. This limited set of tasks shall be termed instructional tasks.

Another concept of task is the one stated by Candlin (1987), who considers task as a set of differentiated, sequenceable problem-posing activities involving learners and teachers in some joint selection from a range of varied cognitive and communicative procedures applied to existing and new knowledge in the collaborative exploration and pursuance of foreseen or emergent goals within a social milieu.

A task is essentially goal-oriented: it requires the group, or pair, to achieve an objective that is usually expressed by an observable result, such as brief notes or lists, a rearrangement of jumbled items, a drawing, and a spoken summary. This result should be attainable only by interaction among participants: so within the definition of the task you often find instructions [to learners] such as "reach a consensus," or "find out everyone's opinion" (Ur, 1987).

For Carroll (1993) a task is any activity in which a person engages, given an appropriate setting, in order to achieve a specific class of objectives.

Skehan (1996) defines task as an activity in which: meaning is primary; there is some sort of relationship to the real world; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome.

A task is (1) a classroom activity or exercise that has (a) an objective attainable only by the interaction among participants, (b) a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and (c) a focus on meaning exchange; (2) a language learning endeavor that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and/or produce the target language as they perform some set of work plans (Lee, 2000).

Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2001) also define tasks, but from different perspectives:

- A task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective. (All purpose definition)
- A task is an activity, susceptible to brief or extended pedagogic intervention, which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective. (Pragmatic/pedagogic definition)
- A task is an activity, influenced by learner choice, and susceptible to learner reinterpretation, which requires learner to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective. (Learners and learning definition)
- A task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective, and which is chosen so that it is most likely to provide information for learners which will help them evaluate their own learning (Testing and assessment definition).

According to David Nunan, when tasks are transformed from the real world to the classroom they become pedagogical in nature. Here is a definition of a **pedagogical task**:

... an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response), (Richards, Platt, and Weber, 1986: 289).

In this definition, the authors adopt a pedagogical perspective. Tasks are defined in terms of what the learners will do in class rather than in the world outside the classroom. They also emphasize the importance of having a non-language outcome.

A **pedagogical task** has also been defined as:

...any structured language learning endeavor which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. 'Task' is therefore assumed to refer to a range of work plans which have the overall purposes of facilitating language learning – from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making (Breen, 1987: 23).

Finally, in a recent book that looks at '**task**' more from a language acquisition perspective than a pedagogical one (although it does also deal with aspects of pedagogy), Ellis (2003: 16) defines task in the following way:

A **task** is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate prepositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can

engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes.

David Nunan's definition is that *a task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form*. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end.

While these definitions vary somewhat, they all emphasize the fact that tasks involve communicative language use in which the user's attention is focused on meaning rather than grammatical form. Nunan's definition refers to the deployment of grammatical knowledge to express meaning, highlighting the fact that meaning and form are highly interrelated, and that grammar exists to enable the language user to express different communicative meanings.

1.3.2 Characteristics of a task and principles for task-based language teaching (TBLT).

Skehan (1998), drawing on a number of other writers, puts forward **five key characteristics of a task**:

- Meaning is primary.
- Learners are not given other people's meaning to regurgitate.
- There is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities.
- Task completion has some priority.
- The assessment of the task is in terms of outcome.

David Nunan established the following seven principles for task-based language teaching:

Principle 1: Scaffolding

- Lessons and materials should provide supporting frameworks within which the learning takes place. At the beginning of the learning process, learners should not be expected to produce language that has not been introduced either explicitly or implicitly.

A basic role for an educator is to provide a supporting framework within which the learning can take place. This is particularly important in the case of analytical approaches such as TBLT in which the learners will encounter holistic ‘chunks’ of language that will often be beyond their current processing capacity. The ‘art’ of TBLT is knowing when to remove the scaffolding. If the scaffolding is removed prematurely, the learning process will ‘collapse’. If it is maintained too long, the learners will not develop the independence required for autonomous language use.

Principle 2: Task dependency

- Within a lesson, one task should grow out of, and build upon the ones that have gone before.

Within the task-dependency framework, a number of other principles are in operation. One of these is the receptive-to-productive principle. Here, at the beginning of the instructional cycle, learners spend a greater proportion of time engaged in receptive (listening and reading) tasks than in productive (speaking and writing) tasks. Later in the cycle, the proportion changes, and learners spend more time in productive work. The reproductive-to-creative language principle is also used in developing chains of tasks. This principle is summarized separately below.

Principle 3: Recycling

- Recycling language maximizes opportunities for learning and activates the ‘organic’ learning principle.

An analytical approach to pedagogy is based on the assumption that learning is not an all-or-nothing process, that mastery learning is a misconception, and that learning is piecemeal and inherently unstable. If it is accepted that learners will not achieve one hundred per cent mastery the first time they encounter a particular linguistic item, then it follows that they need to be reintroduced to these items over a period of time. This recycling allows learners to encounter target language items in a range of different environments, both linguistic and experiential. In this way they will see how a particular item functions in conjunction with other closely related items in the linguistic 'jigsaw puzzle'. They will also see how it functions in relation to different content areas. For example, they will come to see how 'expressing likes and dislikes' and 'Yes/no questions with do/does' function in a range of content areas, from the world of entertainment to the world of food.

Principle 4: Active learning

- Learners learn best by actively using the language they are learning.

A key principle behind the concept of experiential learning is that learners learn best through doing – through actively constructing their own knowledge rather than having it transmitted to them by the teacher. When applied to language teaching, this suggests that most lesson time should be devoted to opportunities for learners to use the language. These opportunities could be many and varied, from practicing memorized dialogues to completing a table or chart based on some listening input. The key point, however, is that it is the learner, not the teacher, who is doing the work. This is not to suggest that there is no place at all for teacher input, explanation and so on, but that such teacher focused work should not dominate class time.

Principle 5: Integration

- Learners should be taught in ways that make clear the relationships between linguistic form, communicative function, and semantic meaning.

Until fairly recently, most approaches to language teaching were based on a synthetic approach in which the linguistic elements – the grammatical, lexical and phonological

components were taught separately. This approach was challenged in the 1980s by proponents of early versions of communicative language teaching who argued that a focus on form was unnecessary, and that all learners needed in order to acquire a language were opportunities to communicate in the language. This led to a split between proponents of form-based instruction and proponents of meaning-based instruction, proponents of meaning-based instruction arguing that, while a mastery of grammar is fundamental to effective communication, an explicit focus on form is unnecessary for language acquisition. More recently, applied linguistics working within the framework of systemic-functional linguistics have argued that the challenge for pedagogy is to 'reintegrate' formal and functional aspects of language, and that what is needed is a pedagogy that makes explicit to learners the systematic relationships between form, function and meaning.

Principle 6: Reproduction to creation

- Learners should be encouraged to move from reproductive to creative language use. In reproductive tasks, learners reproduce language models provided by the teacher, the textbook or the tape. These tasks are designed to give learners mastery of form, meaning and function, and are intended to provide a basis for creative tasks. In creative tasks, learners are recombining familiar elements in novel ways. This principle can be deployed, not only with students who are at intermediate levels and above, but also with beginners if the instructional process is carefully sequenced.

Principle 7: Reflection

- Learners should be given opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and how well they are doing.

Becoming a reflective learner is part of the learner training where the focus shifts from language content to learning processes. Strictly speaking, learning-how-to-learn does not have a more privileged place or particular approach to pedagogy than any other. However, the learning strategies movement has a particular affinity with task-based language teaching. TBLT introduces learners to a broad array of pedagogical

undertakings, each of which is underpinned by at least one strategy. Research suggests that learners who are aware of the strategies driving their learning will be better learners. Additionally, for learners who have done most of their learning in 'traditional' classrooms, TBLT can be mystifying and even alienating, leading them to ask 'Why are we doing this?' Adding a reflective element to teaching can help learners see the rationale for the new approach.

Undoubtedly, any communicative task should be based on the **principles of communicative language teaching (CLT)**, which have been defined and redefined by several authors (Keith Morrow, Nail Naiman, Alfredo Camacho Delgado, among others).

Dr. Camacho Delgado (2002) proposed the following:

- The English class should be active and centered on students' educative needs, interests, and experiences.
- The materials, tasks, activities, and resources should be chosen on the basis of educative and linguistic criteria and should provide for learning and acquisition.
- Practice should be carried out through meaningful tasks, which engage students in thinking and acting.
- Practice should provide for strategy development.
- The students should be engaged in monitoring, self-correction and self-evaluation tasks; they must as well be asked to question and reflect on what they have learned and how they have learned it.
- Opportunities should be given to learn content from other areas of the curriculum through the medium of English.
- Practice should engage students in cross cultural comparison.
- The lessons should foster an atmosphere of co-operation and open communication among students and teachers.

1.3.3 Task typologies

There are as many different task typologies as there are people who have written on task-based language teaching. Following, several different types will be described and illustrated.

One of the earliest curricular applications of TBLT to appear in the literature was the Bangalore Project. In this project, three principal activity types are used: information gap, reasoning gap, and opinion gap.

Information-gap activity, which involves a transfer of given information from one person to another – or from one form to another, or from one place to another – generally calling for the decoding or encoding of information from or into language. One example is pair work in which each member of the pair has a part of the total information (for example an incomplete picture) and attempts to convey it verbally to the other. Another example is completing a tabular representation with information available in a given piece of text. The activity often involves selection of relevant information as well, and learners may have to meet criteria of completeness and correctness in making the transfer.

Reasoning-gap activity, which involves deriving some new information from given information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, or a perception of relationships or patterns. One example is working out a teacher's timetable on the basis of given class timetables. Another is deciding what course of action is best (for example cheapest or quickest) for a given purpose and within given constraints. The activity necessarily involves comprehending and conveying information, as an information-gap activity, but the information to be conveyed is not identical with that initially comprehended. There is a piece of reasoning which connects the two.

Opinion-gap activity, which involves identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation. One example is story completion; another is taking part in the discussion of a social issue. The activity may involve using factual information and formulating arguments to justify one's opinion, but there is no objective procedure for demonstrating outcomes as right or wrong, and no reason to expect the same outcome from different individuals or on different occasions (Prabhu, 1987: 46-7)

Another typology that appeared at about the same time was that proposed by Pattison who sets out seven task and activity types.

Questions and answers, these activities are based on the notion of creating an information gap by letting learners make a personal and secret choice from a list of language items which all fit into a given frame (e.g. the location of a person or object). The aim is for learners to discover their classmates' secret choice. These activities can be used to practice almost any structure, function or notion.

Dialogues and role-plays, these can be wholly scripted or wholly improvised, however, 'If learners are given some choice of what to say, and if there is a clear aim to be achieved by what they say in their role-plays, they may participate more willingly and learn more thoroughly than when they are told to simply repeat a given dialogue in pairs'.

Matching activities, the task for the learner is to recognize matching items, or to complete pairs or sets. 'Bingo', 'Happy families' and 'Split dialogues' (where learners match given phrases) are examples of matching activities.

Communication strategies, these are activities designed to encourage learners to practice communication strategies such as paraphrasing, borrowing or inventing words, using gesture, asking for feedback, simplifying.

Pictures and picture stories, many communication activities can be stimulated through the use of pictures (e.g. spots the difference, memory test, sequencing pictures to tell a story).

Puzzles and problems, once again, there are many different types of puzzles and problems. These require learners to 'make guesses, draw on their general knowledge and personal experience, use their imagination and test their powers of logical reasoning'.

Discussions and decisions, these require the learner to collect and share information to reach a decision (e.g. to decide which items from a list are essential to have on a desert island).

More recently, Richards (2001: 162) has proposed the following typology of pedagogical tasks:

Jigsaw tasks, these involve learners in combining different pieces of information to form a whole (e.g. three individuals or groups may have three different parts of a story and have to piece the story together).

Information-gap tasks, one student or group of students has one set of information and another student or group has a complementary set of information. They must negotiate and find out what the other party's information is in order to complete an activity.

Problem solving tasks, students are given a problem and a set of information. They must arrive at a solution to the problem. There is generally a single resolution of the outcome.

Decision-making tasks, students are given a problem for which there is a number of possible outcomes and they must choose one through negotiation and discussion.

Opinion exchange tasks, learners engage in discussion and exchange of ideas. They do not need to reach agreement.

All of these typologies are based on an analysis of communicative language use. An alternative method of classifying tasks is to group them according to the strategies underpinning them. The following scheme proposes five different strategy types: cognitive, interpersonal, linguistic, affective, and creative (Nunan, 1999).

Cognitive, which can be divided into:

- ❖ Classifying: putting things that are similar together in groups. Example: study a list of names and classify them into male and female.
- ❖ Predicting: predicting what is to come in the learning process. Example: look at unit title and objectives and predict what will be learned.
- ❖ Inducing: looking for patterns and regularities. Example: study a conversation and discover the rule for forming the simple past tense.
- ❖ Taking Notes: writing down the important information in a text in your own words.
- ❖ Concept mapping: showing the main ideas in a text in the form of a map.
- ❖ Inferencing: using what you know to learn something new.
- ❖ Discriminating: distinguishing between the main ideas and supporting information.
- ❖ Diagramming: using information from a text to label a diagram.

Interpersonal, which can be divided into:

- ❖ Co-operating: sharing ideas and learning with other students. Example: work in small groups to read a text and complete a table.
- ❖ Role playing: pretending to be somebody else and using the language for the situation you are in. Example: you are a reporter, use the information from the reading to interview the writer.

Linguistic, which can be divided into:

- ❖ Conversational Patterns: using expressions to start conversations and keep them going. Example: match formulaic expressions to situations.

- ❖ Practicing: doing controlled exercises to improve knowledge and skills. Example: listen to a conversation, and practice it with a partner.
- ❖ Using context: using the surrounding context to guess the meaning of an unknown word, phrases, and concept
- ❖ Summarizing: picking out and presenting the major points in a text in summary form.
- ❖ Selective listening: listening for key information without trying to understand every word. Example: listen to a conversation and identify the number of speakers.
- ❖ Skimming: reading quickly to get a general idea of a text. Example: decide if a text is a newspaper article, a letter or an advertisement.

Affective, which can be divided into:

- ❖ Personalizing: learners share their own opinions, feelings and ideas about a subject. Example: read a letter from a friend in need and give advice.
- ❖ Self-evaluating: thinking about how well you did on a learning task, and rating yourself on a scale.
- ❖ Reflecting: thinking about ways you learn best.

Creative, which can be divided into:

- ❖ Brainstorming: thinking of as many new words and ideas as one can. Example: work in a group and think of as many occupations as you can.

Teachers should also consider that there are some types of activities they can use for impromptu speaking and other for prepared speaking. For example, among those activities designed for impromptu speaking the most common are:

- calendar activities
- daily greetings
- show and tell

- people search
- game shows
- telephone conversations
- card games
- reporting from surveys
- requesting information
- giving directions

And among those activities suitable for prepared speaking, the most common are:

- debates
- interviews
- role-plays
- skits
- plays
- speeches
- cooking demonstrations
- weather forecasts
- newscasts
- game shows/dating games
- lip sync
- mimi-lessons
- radio shows
- talk shows
- hosting a travel show

When preparing **speaking lessons**, teachers can follow the usual pattern of preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and extension. The teacher can use the “preparation” step to establish a context for the speaking task (where, when, why, and with whom it will occur) and to initiate awareness of the speaking skill to be targeted

(asking for clarification, stressing key words, using reduced forms of words). In “presentation”, the teacher can provide learners with a preproduction model that furthers learner comprehension and helps them become more attentive observers of language use. “Practice” involves learners in reproducing the targeted structure, usually in a controlled or highly supported manner. “Evaluation” involves directing attention to the skill being examined and asking learners to monitor and assess their own progress. Finally, “extension” consists of activities that ask learners to use the strategy or skill in a different context or authentic communicative situation, or to integrate use of the new skill or strategy with previously acquired ones (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997; Carter & McCarthy, 1995).

When presenting tasks, teachers should tell learners about the language function to be produced in the task and the real context(s) in which it usually occurs. They should provide opportunities for interactive practice and build upon previous instructions as necessary (Burns & Joyce, 1997). Teachers should also be careful not to overload a speaking lesson with other new material such as numerous vocabulary or grammatical structures. This can distract learners from the primary speaking goals of the lesson.

There is a basic distinction between real-world or target tasks and pedagogical tasks. Target tasks, as the name implies, refer to uses of language in the world beyond the classroom. Pedagogical tasks are those that occur in the classroom.

Taking into account the National Clearinghouse for English as a Second Language (ESL) Literacy Education, Washington DC, MaryAnn Cunningham Florez proposes the following example of a speaking lesson (1999):

Example of a speaking lesson: choosing appropriate topics for small talk

1. “Preparation”. Show the learners a picture of two people conversing in a familiar casual setting. (The setting will be determined by a prior needs assessment). Ask

them to brainstorm what the people might be discussing (i.e., what topics, vocabulary, typical phrases).

2. "Presentation". Present several video clips of small talk in casual situations. Have learners complete a worksheet in which they describe or list the topics discussed, the context in which the speech is occurring, and any phrases that seem to typify small talk. Follow up with a discussion of the kinds of topics that are appropriate for small talk, the factors in the specific situations that affect topic selection (e.g., relationships of participants, physical setting), and typical phrases used in small talk.
3. "Practice". Give learners specific information about the participants and the setting of a scenario where small talk will take often used speaking activities in language classrooms; a teacher can select activities from a variety of tasks. Brown (1994) lists six possible task categories:

- "Imitative"-Drills in which the learner simply repeats a phrase or structure (e.g., "Excuse me" or "Can you help me") for clarity and accuracy;
- "Intensive"-Drills or repetition focusing on specific phonological or grammatical points, such as minimal pairs or repetition of a series of imperative sentences;
- "Responsive"-Short replies to teacher or learner questions or comments, such as series of answers to yes/no questions;
- "Transactional"-Dialogues conducted for the purpose of information exchange, such as information- gathering interviews, role plays or debates;
- "Interpersonal"-Dialogues to establish or maintain social relationships, such as personal interviews or casual conversation role plays, end
- "Extensive"- Extended monologues such as short speeches, oral reports, or oral summaries.

As it has been stated throughout this chapter, in the Cuban educational policy the teaching of foreign languages has been a priority, and English has been compulsory in all university curricula. The English Language discipline has been designed in such a

way that the students develop, in a harmonic and integral way, the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). However, the development of speaking is considered to be crucial, and makes different demands on participants.

In the teaching and learning process of speaking skills, the use of a variety of different kinds of tasks is said to make teaching more communicative, since it provides a purpose for classroom activity which goes beyond practice of language for its own sake. Taking into account the key characteristics of a task and the principles of communicative language teaching, one can make the class a dynamic and interesting place to be.

Chapter 2

Current state of the development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French

2.1 Sample, instruments, and criteria

As it was stated in the introduction to this dissertation 23 first-year students were taken as a sample as well as five teachers of the Discipline English Language, belonging to the Department of English Language, Faculty of Humanities

Students were given a questionnaire (**Appendix I**) and a diagnostic test (**Appendix II**) to know their opinions and beliefs about the development of speaking skills and their level of proficiency in such a skill, respectively.

In the questionnaire, students were asked about priorities of difficulties concerning the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), the main strengths and weaknesses regarding the teaching of speaking, as well as about the causes of the weaknesses. Thus an additional question was included about the degree of difficulties in the mastering of the different components of speaking.

The diagnostic test consisted of an oral presentation about previously assigned and discussed topics and the debate that took place after each presentation. Students were given some topics about daily life and some others that were interesting to them. They prepared themselves and got ready to speak about the theme and also to ask questions to their classmates about their opinions on the topic. In that way a free chat was

established in order to observe and record all the students to have the possibility to carefully analyze the activity afterwards.

In order to diagnose the proficiency level, the authors adapted the Speaking Performance Scale provided by Celce-Murcia and others in the book “Teaching pronunciation: A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages” published by Cambridge University Press in 1996.

So, seven components of speaking were carefully analyzed: pronunciation, speech flow, grammar, vocabulary, organization, listening-comprehension, and question-handling. These components were rated in scale from 4 to 0 according to the following criteria:

Pronunciation

- 4) Rarely mispronounces.
- 3) Accent may be foreign: never interferes; rarely disturbs Native Speakers (NS).
- 2) Often faulty but intelligible with effort.
- 1) Errors frequent; only intelligible to NS used to dealing with Non-native Speakers (NNS)
- 0) Unintelligible.

Speech Flow

- 4) High degree of fluency; effortless; smooth.
- 3) Speaks with facility; rarely has to grope; uses paraphrase and circumlocution easily.
- 2) Speaks with confidence but not facility; hesitant; some paraphrasing; choppy.
- 1) Slow strained except for routine expressions.
- 0) So halting that conversation is impossible.

Grammar

- 4) Only occasional errors; no pattern; uses high level discourse structures.
- 3) Full range of basic structures; uses complex structures; some errors patterns but meaning conveyed accurately.

2) Meaning expressed accurately in simple sentences; complex grammar avoided or misused.

1) Errors frequent; intelligible only to NS used to dealing with NNS.

0) Nonexistent.

Vocabulary

4) Extensive, appropriate; precise to specific task; includes vocabulary explanations to avoid taking over the heads of students.

3) Adequate to cover specific task; occasional error with noncritical vocabulary.

2) Sufficient to speak simply with some circumlocution about the specific task.

1) Lacking in vocabulary necessary to perform the specific task.

0) Inadequate even for simple speech.

Organization

4) Complete, clear, well-developed. Logical explanations and discourse clearly marked; sufficient redundancy.

3) Clear explanation with sufficient detail; some digressions but not overly redundant.

2) Simple, clear explanations; transitions may be awkward; some lack of supporting examples; may lack necessary redundancy.

1) Overall structure of explanations unclear; difficult to follow sequence and development of ideas.

0) Impossible to follow explanations.

Listening Comprehension

4) Appears to understand administrator and undergraduate completely.

3) Adequate to follow most speech; occasional need for clarification or repetition.

2) Okay in face-to-face communication of well-known subject matter; frequent need for clarification and explanation.

1) Some misunderstandings despite clarification and repetition.

0) Inadequate even for simple face-to face situations.

Question-handling

- 4) Clear, not usually confused by questions; can clarify misunderstandings; no long delay in responding.
- 3) Responds clearly; may hesitate while responding; may be confused by unclearly stated questions.
- 2) Has difficulty responding; unable to clarify unclearly stated questions.
- 1) Often confused by questions; may answer illogically.
- 0) May ignore questions; no strategies to clarify misunderstandings.

Teachers were interviewed (**Appendix III**) and also given a questionnaire (**Appendix IV**). The first was conducted in the exploratory phase of this research to verify the need of researching on the selected problem; therefore, it aimed at knowing the order of importance they gave to the four skills and the most affected one in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French and it was recorded so as to be carefully analyzed by the authors. The second was devoted to know teachers' opinions and beliefs about the development of speaking skills.

The interview consisted of three general questions about the current situation of the four skills: the order of importance they gave to each skill, the most affected one in that moment, and the main causes of the weaknesses it presented. Meanwhile, the questionnaire given to teachers was composed of questions aimed to find out priorities of difficulties concerning the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), the main strengths and weaknesses regarding the teaching and learning process of speaking, as well as about the causes of the weaknesses, and the degree of difficulties in the students' mastering of the different components of speaking.

Besides, the teaching and learning process of speaking was observed (**Appendix V**) and the syllabus of the discipline English Language and textbooks used in the teaching of English to first year students were also analyzed.

The observation was centered on the students' performance in class, the way the teacher met students' progress through the activities, the kind of activities the teacher planned for students and the way the teacher attended the students' special needs.

Documents such as the syllabus and textbooks were analyzed in order to know the demands expected from future Bachelors in English Language with a major in French, the objectives, the role of speaking in the curricula and in the syllabus as well as the structure of the syllabus, and the main communicative functions and types of activities included in textbooks. The analysis of the syllabus and textbooks was made based on variables and descriptors. The authors took into consideration the objectives, contents, methods, aids, and evaluation system.

2.2 Analysis of the results of the diagnosis: strengths and weaknesses

During the observation of the lessons, it was noticed that the majority of the students were sure about what to say, but they did not manage to produce the language or did it faulty and always avoiding complex grammar and vocabulary. Students behaved properly in class and they were paying attention, but it could be observed that most of the students were not really motivated and the answers given to the teacher were not so accurate. Some of the students were really afraid of speaking aloud in class and some others did not speak during the whole lesson. At the end of the class two students were asked why they were in silence during the whole activity and the replied was that they did not want to speak that day.

To corroborate the results, an interview was subsequently applied to five teachers from the Department of English Language from Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas.

Three out of five teachers stated that speaking was the most important skill because one do more speaking in a single day that any other skill, and that it was essential for human communication, one teacher selected listening because, according to his opinion, it is by listening that one learns how to speak, and one teacher believed that writing was the most important skill. As a result of the interview, it was also known that speaking was the most affected skill at the moment at Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas due to many reasons, among which the most remarkable are:

- Teachers lack of materials to teach speaking.
- Teachers also lack of teaching aids such as realia, tape recorders, videos, and recordings.
- Teachers lack of time to create activities as they have to teach more than one subject.

The results of the questionnaires given to teachers brought about that students were motivated for their studies; they participated in classes, did their assignments, and were ready to learn. It could also be noticed that students had a poor pronunciation, their vocabulary was not rich enough, they had short listening discrimination, and above all they lacked of accuracy and fluency and were afraid to speak.

The causes of these weaknesses stated by teachers were the lack of methods and the lack of conditions such as a lab to teach listening; two teachers stated that one aspect that influenced negatively in students was the psychological pressure while speaking and one teacher considered that students were not doing their best to develop their speaking skills.

All teachers agreed that the main strength of the staff at the department of the English Language was the years of experience, the high quality and the availability of the whole staff. They also pointed out that there was a few use of teaching aids and that there was

a need in the department to have courses where teachers could become updated with the new methodology. In all questionnaires it was stated that the lack of materials and resources to teach was negatively influencing the teaching and learning process.

All the teachers said that the program was good in the sense that it had many hours devoted to English, but it did not include methodological courses and exchange of ideas about the new methodology.

Materials were also included in the questionnaire and they resulted to have a good language pattern and a textbook as a guide, but it was not updated and materials in general were pretty reduced. Four teachers stated there was no reproduction or creation of new materials at Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas and that the ones at the department were old and deteriorated.

The total of teachers said that the Evaluation was demanding, and that it guided and controlled the teaching and learning process.

In the third question, teachers were asked to refer to the language components they thought to be the most difficult for their students when expressing their ideas orally. Most of the teachers stated discourse (connecting ideas) as the most difficult component to be taught, followed by pronunciation and style (sociolinguistics).

The questionnaires given to future Bachelors in English Language with a major in French brought about interesting results. The questionnaire was given to 23 students, what represents the total of students from first year class. Sixteen students outlined speaking as the most difficult skill to be learned. They stated they were motivated for their studies; they considered themselves creative and intelligent, and expressed they had imagination to work in lessons and liked languages. All these aspects were stated as strengths. The most relevant criteria about the weaknesses were the lack of fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Twenty students stated that the lack of materials was

affecting the teaching and learning process because the ones they had were old and not enough. Nineteen also pointed out grammar as one of the weaknesses they had at the moment. The main causes of the weaknesses were the lack of materials and teaching aids, the lack of practice with native to develop fluency, pronunciation, and grammar and the lack of a lab to teach listening.

The total of students said that teachers were really concerned about their learning, that they prepared themselves for lessons, and had a good level of creativity. Students believed that lessons were not motivating, the materials were not updated and teachers changed frequently. The main cause of the weaknesses was the lack of materials and teaching aids.

Concerning the syllabus, all students agreed that it was good, creative and systematical in the prep-year. Twenty three students stated that after this prep-year they lost language and did not feel they learned more English, 19 considered that their expectations were not fulfilled, there was no exchange with natives, the frequency hours of English were reduced, and they did not have enough bibliography. In the point of view of students, the main causes of the weaknesses were the lack of materials, books, bibliography, and methods to teach.

Eighteen students expressed that the materials used in the teaching and learning process were old and reduced for them to learn. The language pattern was good, but not updated. Seventeen students believed this was due to the lack of resources. All of them wrote that the evaluation met their requirements as first year students, it was demanding, controlling and good in all senses, and they felt comfortable with it.

The third question given to the students was about the language components they considered to be the most difficult, as well as the most affected one. In this question, 11 students considered Style to be the most affected component, 4 students selected

vocabulary, other 4 selected grammar, 3 selected discourse, and 1 student marked pronunciation as the most difficult and affected component.

The diagnostic test was applied to the students included in the sample. After analyzing it, the following result was obtained:

The Diagnostic test included seven language components that were rated in a scale from 0 to 4. The first language component analyzed was pronunciation. In this aspect, 10 out of the total of the students were placed in rate 3, what represents 43.5 %, that is the majority, and means that their accents may be foreign, never interferes in the communication, and do not disturbs Native Speakers (NS).

The speech flow was also analyzed. In this particular case, 15 out of the total was placed in rate 2, what represents 65.2 %, that is the majority and means that students speak with confidence but not facility, they hesitate, some paraphrasing is usual, and sometimes the speech is choppy.

After that, grammar was analyzed; 15 out the total of the students were placed in rate 2. It represents 65.2 % and means that when students speak they express their meaning accurately in simple sentences, but avoid complex grammar and, when used, it is not done properly.

The next component analyzed was vocabulary. In this component 9 students were placed in rate 3 and 9 students in rate 4. Nine students represent 39.1 % of the total. If added, the result is 18 students that represent 78.2 % of the sample. In the case of rate 3, it means that students have a full range of basic structures; sometimes they use complex structures, there are some errors, but meaning is conveyed accurately. In the case of rate 4, students have only occasional errors, there is no pattern, and they use high level discourse structures.

The fifth component analyzed was organization. Thirteen students were placed in rate 2, what represents 56.5% of the sample and means that they produce simple and clear explanations, transitions may be awkward, there is some lack of supporting examples, and may lack necessary redundancy.

Listening comprehension was also one of the components analyzed. Here it was found that 12 students were placed in rate 2. This represents 52.2 % and it means that students do it well in face-to-face communication of well known subjects, but they need frequent clarification and explanation.

Finally, question-handing was analyzed; 13 students were placed in rate 2, representing 56.5 %. This shows they have difficulties responding and are unable to clarify unclearly stated questions. The whole analysis of the results was represented in a graph (**Appendix VI**).

As there are difficulties in the development of speaking skills, and teachers and students stated that they lacked of materials and exercises, a detailed analysis of the syllabus and textbooks was carried out.

In the syllabus, paramount importance is given to the discipline English Language, and the main objectives of speaking within the discipline state that students must:

- express ideas, opinions, points of view, and evaluations about magazines articles, interviews, movies, documentaries, etc by means of dialogues and monologues, either independently or guided by the teacher.
- prepare, carry out and participate in debates, round tables, and symposiums in the English Language.

- do oral presentations about previously assigned topics, or chosen by themselves that promote interaction and the active participation of the whole class.
- defend and refute opinions and points of view.
- express generalizations, conclusions and formulate hypothesis in English in a coherent, precise and convincing way.
- use actively and creatively the vocabulary related with the topic.
- use grammatical structures in the right way according to the intermediate and advance level.
- describe facts and situations.

Textbooks were also analyzed, and it was found that they are organized in such a way that students can practice communicative functions that meet the objectives proposed by the syllabus; for example, giving opinions, describing something or someone, etc, but exercises in each unit are not enough.

2.3 Main regularities

After analyzing the results of the diagnosis obtained from the observation, the interviews applied to teachers and students, the questionnaires filled in by both, and the pedagogical test to which students were submitted, the following regularities can be stated:

- In speaking lessons, students soon got demotivated, and they did not talk or say anything during such lessons or just ending up by chatting in Spanish.
- Students lacked of textbooks to study in classroom and out of class too.
- Materials for the teaching of English are not updated.
- The evaluation is demanding, controlling, and it guides the process.

- Students are motivated for their studies, they are eager of learning.
- The teaching and learning process of speaking is affected due to the lack of materials and resources.
- It is necessary to do something to contribute to the development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French.

Chapter 3

Communicative tasks to develop speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French

3.1 Characteristics of the proposal

Even though teachers are continually searching for ways to enhance the teaching of foreign languages, classroom experience seems to demonstrate systematically that some activities designed to allow learners to understand, practice, and use what has been taught, appear to be highly useful and also suit the communicative approach so widely adopted in the teaching of languages at present. This is why some communicative tasks to contribute to the development of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French are proposed in this present investigation.

The communicative tasks proposed have been compiled, adapted, and created on the bases of the rationale explained in Chapter 1, and taking into account the results of the diagnosis, and the needs of elaborating complementary materials to improve the English syllabus.

As it was concluded from the results of the diagnosis, first years students of Bachelor in English Language with a major in French do not have enough textbooks and bibliography to practice the language, and English teachers do not have enough exercises in the teaching materials to prepare their classes, that is why students soon get demotivated and present difficulties when speaking. For example, they are sure about what to say, but they do not manage to produce the language or do it faulty and

always avoiding complex grammar and vocabulary. Students behave properly in class and they pay attention, but most of the students are not really motivated and the answers given to the teacher are not so accurate. Some of them are really afraid of speaking aloud in class and some others do not speak during the whole lesson.

The proposal consists of 20 communicative tasks that fulfill the following requirements:

- They were chosen on the basis of educative and linguistic criteria.
- They are centered on students' educative needs, interests, and experiences.
- They are meaningful, and engage students in thinking and acting.
- They make students develop strategies.
- They engage students in monitoring, self-correction and self-evaluation.
- They give students opportunities to learn content from other areas of the curriculum through English.
- They foster an atmosphere of co-operation and open communication among students and teachers in classes.
- Their level of difficulty does not exceed the possibilities of the students, nor they are so simple that do not demand a minimum effort level.

Each task is structured as follows:

- Type of activity:
- Communicative function:
- Unit (s):
- Grammar:
- Level:
- Organization:
- Preparation:
- Time:
- Procedure:

As it was stated in Chapter 1, there are many different task typologies. Task types include: questions and answers, dialogues and role-plays, matching activities, communication strategies, pictures and picture stories, puzzles and problems, discussions and decisions, jigsaws, information-gap, problem solving, decision-making and opinion exchange tasks, among others. All of them can be classified as communicative tasks. Following, it is stated the importance of each type of activity, and the reasons for being included in this proposal:

Stories: the aim of these activities is to get the students to produce longer connected texts. Story-telling activates more than a limited number of patterns and structures.

Interviews: interviews are useful in the foreign language classroom not only because they force students to listen carefully, but also because they are so versatile in their subject matter. If everyone interviews his neighbor, all students are practicing the foreign language at the same time.

Guessing games: they are true communicative situations, as the person guessing has a real urge to find out something. They are generally liked by students of all ages because they combine language practice with fun and excitement.

Jigsaws: in jigsaw tasks each participant is equally important, because each holds part of the solution. This is why jigsaw tasks are said to improve cooperation and mutual acceptance within the group. Participants have to do a lot of talking before they are able to fit the pieces together in the right way. It is obvious that this entails a large amount of practice in the foreign language. "What are the differences" is a modified form of jigsaw tasks that practices two very different areas of skill in the foreign language. Firstly, the students have to understand the bits of information they are given (i.e. listening and/or reading comprehension) and describe them to the rest of the group. This makes them realize how important pronunciation and intonation are in making yourself understood.

Secondly, the students have to organize the process of finding the solution; a lot of interactional language is needed here. In some jigsaw tasks the participants have to give exact descriptions of scenes, objects or pictures, so these exercises can be valuable for revising prepositions and adjective.

Ranking exercises: in ranking exercises, common sense and general knowledge of the world are of great importance. They practice interactive language, for instance agreeing, comparing, contradicting, disagreeing, and giving reasons. Students may experience a difference of opinion and may be stimulated to discuss these differences.

Role plays: they are very useful because students act as if they were in real life; students produce the language easily, and enjoy the activity.

The communicative functions were determined taking into account textbooks and the syllabus for the discipline English Language. **(Appendix VII)**

Each task was designed making reference to the unit or units where it could be inserted into the program, taking into account that, according to the diagnosis of each student, tasks can be flexible.

Grammar was determined according to the communicative functions, and the level of tasks was established to enable teachers to motivate the differences among students.

The organization of tasks means the way in which classroom interactions are organized in order to favor cooperative learning styles. Other items are preparation, time and procedure. These have been included to guide teachers from the methodological point of view.

3.2 Tasks

The task types included in the proposal were: stories, interviews, guessing games, jigsaws, ranking exercises and role plays. Following, it is going to be presented one exercise for each typology. The whole set of exercises is compiled in the booklet.

Task # 1

Type of activity: Story

Communicative function: Talk about a decision/ Talk about social rules/ Tell a story

Units: 1-2-5-11 (Speactrum5) 11 (Spectrum 6) **but can it be adapted to all units.**

Grammar: Past Perfect/ must and must not/ What a ...!

Level: Intermediate/ Advanced

Organization: Individual

Preparation: Slips of paper with both, a sentence and a topic written on them.

Time: 5-15 minutes

Procedure: A student chooses a slip of paper and has to talk for one minute about the topic, beginning with the sentence on the piece of paper.

Example:

- When I finished High School I wanted to be...(likes and dislikes)
- I'd always wanted to major in...(professions)
- When you meet someone, you must/must not...(social behavior)

Task# 2

Type of Activity: Interview

Communicative function: Talk about likes and dislikes/give opinions/talk about one's personal life.

Units: 3 (Sp. 5) 10 (Sp. 6)

Grammar: WH words/ either ... or; neither ... nor

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Pairs

Preparation: None

Time: 10-30 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: each student writes down five to ten questions that he would like to be asked.

The general context of these questions can be restricted to areas such as personal likes and dislikes, opinions, information about one's personal life, etc.

Step II: the students choose partners, exchange questions sheets and interview one another using these questions.

Step III: it might be quite interesting to find out in a discussion with the whole class what kinds of questions were asked and why they were chosen.

Variations: Instead of fully written-up questions each student specifies three to five topics he/she would like to be asked about. e.g. challenges, professions, risks...

Task # 4

Type of Activity: Guessing game

Communicative function: Tell a story/ tell about a past experience/ recall the past/ describe the past/ speculate about possibilities

Units: 1-4-5-11 (Sp. 5) 11 (Sp. 6)

Grammar: Yes/no questions, simple past tense.

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Groups of four to six students each.

Preparation: None

Time: 15-20 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: The class is divided into groups. One member of each group leaves the room.

Step II: The remaining group members decide on how the person who is outside spent the previous day. They draw up an exact time schedule from 8 am to 8 pm, and

describe where the person was, what he did, who he talked to. So as not to make the guessing too difficult, the “victim’s” they should not be divided into more than six two-hour periods.

Step III: The people who wait outside during Step II are called in and return to their groups. There they try to find out, by asking only yes /no questions-how the group thinks they spent the previous day.

Step IV (Optional): When each “victim” has guessed his fictitious day, the group tries to find out what he really did.

Task # 8

Type of Activity: Jigsaw

Communicative function: Describe something, give locations.

Units: 5-7-11 (Sp.6)

Grammar: Dimensions and weight, order of adjectives, short answers with modal auxiliaries

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Pairs

Preparation: A copy of picture A for half the students, a copy each of picture B for the other half.

Time: 5-10 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Each student works with a partner. One student receives a copy of the original picture, the other a copy of the picture with minor alterations. By describing their pictures to one another and asking questions, they have to determine how many and what differences are between them. They are not allowed to show their pictures to their partners.

Step II: When they think they have found all the differences, they compare pictures.

Task # 11

Type of Activity: Ranking exercise

Communicative function: Disagreeing with someone/ agreeing with someone

Units: 1 (Sp.6)

Grammar: Comparatives/ simple past/ past time

Level: Intermediate and above

Organization: Small groups

Preparation: Make photocopies of the task sheet below

Time: 25-30 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Introduce the topic and give out a task sheet to each student.

Step II: Divide the students into small groups after they have had the chance to complete the task individually.

Step III: Chair a feedback session to see what generalizations emerge. Remain as neutral as possible throughout.

Step IV: If there are students that do not have the experience of living in a place out of home, you can ask them to imagine how it would be.

Task Sheet: Here are some difficulties people encounter when living in a place out of home. Indicate how important each of them has been or would be for you.

TASK SHEET

ASPECTS OF LIFE	Of very great importance	Of great importance	Of some importance	Of no importance
1. Differences in the weather.				
2. Being away from the family.				
3. Differences in the food.				
4. Differences in the way people behave.				
5. Transportation problems				
6. Getting used to new ways of learning.				
7. Adjusting to new ways of doing things, e.g. shopping, traveling.				
8. Difficulties in communicating one's own ideas.				
9. Different living conditions.				
10. Different social customs.				
11. Getting used to examinations.				
12. Meeting new people from your hometown.				
13 Knowing what to do in everyday situations.				
14. Other (please specify).				

Task # 16

Type of Activity: Role play

Communicative function: Describing events

Units: 5 (Sp. 6) **but it can be adapted to all units**

Grammar: Order of adjectives

Level: intermediate/advanced

Organization: Pairs

Preparation: If you don't have access to a video / TV you can do a 'low-tech' version of this activity by cutting pictures out of a magazine. Be sure to cut out enough for half the class to each have a picture and have a few extras to spare.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Put the students into pairs, one policeman and one witness, and have the witness from each pair come to the front of the class.

Step II: Give each one a picture of a person to look at. Tell them that the person in the picture is a criminal. They shouldn't let anyone else see the picture.

Step III: Once they've had a couple of minutes to look at the picture, take all the pictures back and then send the witnesses back to their seats.

Their partner, the policemen, then has to ask questions and make notes so that they build up some idea of what the person in the picture looks like.

Step IV: Once they have their description, put all the pictures on the floor at the front of the class and get the policemen to come to the front of the class and see if they can find the picture that the witness described.

You should make sure that the witnesses remain silent until all the policemen have 'arrested' the picture of their choice.

You can then try this again reversing the roles this time. This gives the students a chance to learn from any mistakes they may have made the first time round.

You can make the activity more difficult by selecting pictures of people who look more similar (same age / sex etc.) or easier by having a greater range of people.

3.3 Evaluation of the proposal by specialists

The proposal of exercises was evaluated by six specialists that were selected based on the following principles:

- 1- The specialists' academic degree must be of assistant professor or up.

- 2- The specialists must have a teaching career in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) of 10 years of experience or over. (**Appendix VIII**)

The authors submitted their proposal to specialists that meet the indicators set for the selection.

The specialists were asked to carefully analyze the activities proposed and make a critical evaluation as to their validity to fulfill the aims set by the authors of the research. (**Appendix IX**)

The specialists' criteria were that the proposal fulfilled the principles of communicative language teaching, that it met the objectives of the level, was logical and adequate.

They expressed it will help teachers to improve the teaching and learning process of speaking in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French.

Most of the suggestions made by the specialists were taken into consideration and incorporated into the final copy of the paper. With the intention of being faithful to the sources, the authors respected the format of the activities, keeping them as they stand in the original source.

CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this dissertation, after analyzing the current state of the development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French, and proposing a set of communicative tasks to contribute to the development of the development of speaking, the following conclusions can be stated:

- Teaching foreign languages is a process characterized by an atmosphere of co-operation and open communication among students and teachers; the English class should be active and centered on students' educative needs, interests, and experiences; the materials, tasks, activities, and resources should be chosen on the basis of educative and linguistic criteria and should provide for learning and acquisition; practice should be carried out through meaningful tasks, which engage students in thinking and acting; practice should provide for strategy development; the students should be engaged in monitoring, self-correction and self-evaluation tasks, and they must as well be asked to question and reflect on what they have learned and how they have learned it; opportunities should be given to learn content from other areas of the curriculum through the medium of English, and practice should engage students in cross cultural comparison.
- During the exploratory phase of this research, there were found some weaknesses in the development of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French. For example, while observing the students' behavior in some speaking lessons, the authors found that in some cases learners did not talk or say anything during such lessons and that when they were working in pairs or groups they just ended up chatting in Spanish. On the other hand, in a survey applied to a sample of both language teachers and

students from Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas, they agreed in the fact that speaking is the most difficult skill to be either taught or learned. They also recognized that motivation, interest, and creativity generally characterize the students so that they actively participate in the process; and that teachers are well prepared and quite interested in creating opportunities for having their students learn. However, they both accepted that some students' pronunciation is faulty, vocabulary somewhat poor and inadequate, and that learners frequently need for clarification and explanation to understand oral presentations.

- When teachers and students were asked about the main reasons of the previous weaknesses, they remarked the lack of materials and teaching aids, not enough availability of exercises to work with individual differences, and little opportunities for communicating with natives.
- Base on the findings of this dissertation, a set of communicative tasks was designed to enhance the teaching and learning process of speaking skills in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French. Tasks were designed based on different criteria and task typologies to make them suitable according to the students' level resulting from the diagnostic test.
- The proposal was submitted to the criteria of specialists from Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas and also from the Pedagogical University "Félix Varela", from Villa Clara. They considered that the proposal fulfills the principles of communicative language teaching, that it meets the objectives of the level, it is logical and adequate. They added it will help teachers to improve the teaching and learning process of speaking in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French at UCLV.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the teaching of speaking to contribute significantly to the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French as future specialists of the language, the following points should be taken into account:

- To keep this major paper as reference or bibliography to be used in the teaching and learning process of speaking skills in the first year of the discipline English Language.
- To use the tasks proposed as a complementary material to prepare the lessons.
- To try them to increase motivation in speaking lessons.
- To create a small database or booklet with vocabulary related to the topics discussed in the tasks proposed.
- To take this as a basis and do further research on this line of investigation in order to contribute to the better training of bachelors in English Language with a major in French.
- To improve the present teaching speaking materials for the betterment of students speaking performance.

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Task # 1

Type of activity: Story

Communicative function: Talk about a decision/ Talk about social rules/ Tell a story

Units: 1-2-5-11 (Speactrum5) 11 (Spectrum 6) **but can it be adapted to all units.**

(See Appendix I)

Grammar: Past Perfect/ must and must not/ What a ...!

Level: Intermediate/ Advanced

Organization: Individual

Preparation: Slips of paper with both, a sentence and a topic written on them.

Time: 5-15 minutes

Procedure: A student chooses a slip of paper and has to talk for one minute about the topic, beginning with the sentence on the piece of paper.

Example:

- When I finished High School I wanted to be...(likes and dislikes)
- I'd always wanted to major in...(professions)
- When you meet someone, you must/must not...(social behavior)

Task# 2

Type of Activity: Interview

Communicative function: Talk about likes and dislikes/give opinions/talk about one's personal life.

Units: 3 (Sp. 5) 10 (Sp. 6)

Grammar: WH words/ either ... or; neither ... nor

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Pairs

Preparation: None

Time: 10-30 minutes

Procedure:

Step 1: each student writes down five to ten questions that he would like to be asked.

The general context of these questions can be restricted to areas such as personal likes and dislikes, opinions, information about one's personal life, etc.

Step II: the students choose partners, exchange questions sheets and interview one another using these questions.

Step III: it might be quite interesting to find out in a discussion with the whole class what kinds of questions were asked and why they were chosen.

Variations: Instead of fully written-up questions each student specifies three to five topics he/she would like to be asked about. e.g. challenges, professions, risks...

Task # 3

Type of Activity: Interview

Communicative function: Describe yourself / someone else

Units: 2 (Sp. 6) **but it can be adapted to all units.**

Grammar: Verbs followed by direct objects + noun, adjectives or verb complements

Level: Intermediate/Advanced

Organization: Groups or Pairs

Preparation: Handouts

Time: 15-25 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Each group is given a handout of the answers and tries to work out the appropriate questions.

Step II: Solutions are read out.

Interview

Here are ten answers given in an interview. Think of questions that fit these answers and decide what the person who was interviewed is like.

- 1- Yes, I did.
- 2- It's actually real.
- 3- I can do either, but I prefer the first.
- 4- I can not answer that question.
- 5- Spiders and scorpions.
- 6- Santa Clara, Camaguey, and Cienfuegos.
- 7- As often as possible, but I'm not very good at it yet. I need to find someone to practice with.
- 8- I do not care which.
- 9- Never.
- 10- That was the nicest thing that ever happened to me.

Interview Topics

- Pets
- Risking activities
- Technological inventions
- Sports
- Space stations
- Discrimination
- Flea Market
- Ancient wonders
- Music
- The art of prediction
- Clothes
- Plans and Ambitions
- Old and new things

Task # 4

Type of Activity: Guessing game

Communicative function: Tell a story/ tell about a past experience/ recall the past/ describe the past/ speculate about possibilities

Units: 1-4-5-11 (Sp. 5) 11 (Sp. 6)

Grammar: Yes/no questions, simple past tense.

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Groups of four to six students each.

Preparation: None

Time: 15-20 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: The class is divided into groups. One member of each group leaves the room.

Step II: The remaining group members decide on how the person who is outside spent the previous day. They draw up an exact time schedule from 8 am to 8 pm, and describe where the person was, what he did, who he talked to. So as not to make the guessing too difficult, the "victim's" they should not be divided into more than six two-hour periods.

Step III: The people who wait outside during Step II are called in and return to their groups. There they try to find out, by asking only yes /no questions-how the group thinks they spent the previous day.

Step IV (Optional): When each "victim" has guessed his fictitious day, the group tries to find out what he really did.

Task # 5

Type of Activity: Guessing game

Communicative function: Asking questions/giving reasons/ debate an issue/ talk about hopes and wishes/ describe someone else/ talk about likes and dislikes/ talk about preferences/ give opinions

Units: 1-2-10-12 (Sp. 6)

Grammar: hope vs. wish

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Groups of six to seven students each.

Preparation: None

Time: 10-15 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: The students are divided into two groups. One member of each group leaves the room. In their absence, the groups decide on a set of five to eight questions they want to ask to students. These can either be personal (e.g. what do you feel about pets?) or factual questions. In the case of factual questions the students asking them must know the answers either.

Step II: The students who went outside now return to the groups. They have to answer all questions, except one truthfully, in one case they may lie. The rest of the group has to decide which answer was a lie. They have to give reasons to justify their opinions. The students tell them if they were right.

Task # 6

Type of Activity: Guessing game

Communicative function: Give a definition/ ask for and give an explanation/ explain something

Units: 6 (Sp. 5) 4 (Sp.6)

Grammar: WH questions

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Class or teams

Preparation: At least one dictionary English-English

Time: 10-20 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: One student is asked to leave the room. The remaining students choose a word, whose meaning they do not know, from dictionary. The word is written on the blackboard. Each of the students now thinks of a definition for the word, only one student memorizing the dictionary definition.

Step II: The student is called back. Having been shown the word he asks individual students for their definition. He can also ask additional questions about the (fictious) meaning of the word. When he has listened to all (or some) of the definitions he says which one he thinks is the correct one.

Variations: Several unknown words are chosen and their correct definitions presented in random order. Words and definitions have to be matched.

Remarks: Students can be made aware of derivations of certain words from other languages they know or from other words they have learned.

Task # 7

Type of Activity: Guessing game

Communicative function: Give an opinion/ support an opinion/ Give reasons

Units: 3-6 (Sp.5), **but it can be adapted to all units**

Grammar: The definite article *the*; conjunctions *so, because, since, even, though, although, and though*

Level: Advanced

Organization: Teams, individuals

Preparation: Cards with sentences (as many as there are students), topic cards.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Procedure:

Step 1: Two teams are formed. Two students, one from each team, come and sit at the front of the class. Each student chooses a sentence card. They do not show their sentences to each other or to their team. The teacher chooses a topic card and announces its topic. The two students start off a conversation with each other on this topic. They have to guide the conversation in such a way that they can use the sentence on their card in a suitable context without anybody noticing it. Both teams listen attentively and try to guess the hidden sentence of the student from the other team. If they think they hear it, they shout "STOP" and repeat the sentence. If they are correct, they score a point. Each team is allowed to shout "STOP" twice during each round. The conversation continues until three or five are up. For the next round two new students from each team comes to the front.

Scoring can be organized as follows:

Guessing hidden sentence correctly – 1 point

Use of hidden sentence by student without detection – 1 point

Failure to use the sentence – minus 1 point

This means that each team can gain a maximum of 2 points in each round

Suggestions for sentences (See Appendix II):

- I really think it is old fashion to get married.
- I've never been to Tokyo.
- My mother used to bake a cake every Sunday.

Suggestions for topics (See Appendix II):

- Pollution
- Family life
- Watching TV
- Traveling
- Fashion

Task # 8

Type of Activity: Jigsaw

Communicative function: Describe something, give locations.

Units: 5-7-11 (Sp.6)

Grammar: Dimensions and weight, order of adjectives, short answers with modal auxiliaries

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Pairs

Preparation: A copy of picture A for half the students, a copy each of picture B for the other half.

Time: 5-10 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Each student works with a partner. One student receives a copy of the original picture, the other a copy of the picture with minor alterations. By describing their pictures to one another and asking questions, they have to determine how many and what differences are between them. They are not allowed to show their pictures to their partners.

Step II: When they think they have found all the differences, they compare pictures.

Task # 9

Type of Activity: Jigsaw

Communicative function: Imagine the future/ talk about the future/ making suggestions, asking for and giving information, agreeing and disagreeing, expressing likes and dislikes.

Units: 5 (Sp. 5) 2-10 (Sp.6)

Grammar: The future with *will* vs. the future continuous with *will*

Level: Intermediate/advanced

Organization: Groups of six to 8 students.

Preparation: Each group receives several copies of the map and a set of information cards (**see Appendix III**)

Time: 30-45 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Each group collect all the information.

Step II: The groups now have to work out a timetable and itinerary for a weekend trip into the area shown by the map. Decide where you would like to go, where you would like to stay, and what you would like to do and see.

Step III: Each group presents its plan for the weekend trip.

Task # 10

Type of Activity: Ranking exercise

Communicative function: Describing personal qualities, stating preferences, asking for and giving reasons, contradicting.

Units: 2-3-5-6-7-8-9-10-12 (Sp.6)

Grammar: Dimensions, *either...or*, *neither...nor*, comparative, superlative, adjectives

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Individuals (Step I), groups of three to four students (Step II), whole class (Step III).

Preparation: None

Time: 10-20 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: The teacher presents the group with the following list, either writing it on the blackboard or the overhead projector, or distributing it as a handout.

- Reliability
- Being a good listener
- Strength
- Honesty
- Intelligence
- Generosity
- Caution

Each student should think about how important he/she considers each quality. He then arranges the list in order of importance, starting with the most important quality.

Step II: Students sit together in small groups and talk about their ranking of qualities. A group consensus should be aimed at.

Step III: The whole class aims to find a ranking order for the qualities which everyone agrees to.

Variations: The same procedure can be followed for different lists, which have been adapted to the group interests and the age of the students.

Suggestions:

- Reasons for wanting/keeping a pet (job)
- Reasons for watching TV
- Qualities of good parents/friends/politicians/doctors
-

Task # 11

Type of Activity: Ranking exercise

Communicative function: Disagreeing with someone/ agreeing with someone

Units: 1 (Sp.6)

Grammar: Comparatives/ simple past/ past time

Level: Intermediate and above

Organization: Small groups

Preparation: Make photocopies of the task sheet below

Time: 25-30 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Introduce the topic and give out a task sheet to each student.

Step II: Divide the students into small groups after they have had the chance to complete the task individually.

Step III: Chair a feedback session to see what generalizations emerge. Remain as neutral as possible throughout.

Step IV: If there are students that do not have the experience of living in a place out of home, you can ask them to imagine how it would be.

Task Sheet: Here are some difficulties people encounter when living in a place out of home. Indicate how important each of them has been or would be for you.

TASK SHEET

ASPECTS OF LIFE	Of very great importance	Of great importance	Of some importance	Of no importance
1. Differences in the weather.				
2. Being away from the family.				
3. Differences in the food.				
4. Differences in the way people behave.				
5. Transportation problems				
6. Getting used to new ways of learning.				
7. Adjusting to new ways of doing things, e.g. shopping, traveling.				
8. Difficulties in communicating one's own ideas.				
9. Different living conditions.				
10. Different social customs.				
11. Getting used to examinations.				
12. Meeting new people from your hometown.				
13 Knowing what to do in everyday situations.				
14. Other (please specify).				

Task # 12

Type of Activity: Guessing game.

Communicative function: Talking about personal information, asking questions about someone else

Units: 2-3-8 (Sp.6)

Grammar: WH questions

Level: Intermediate and above

Organization: Individuals

Preparation: Have available enough small pieces of paper for the whole class.

Time: 15-20 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Give each of your students a piece of paper and ask them to write four facts about themselves. These can be anything they choose, e.g. *I was born in June, I have a dog*, etc. as long as the statement is true.

Step II: Tell the students to fold their pieces of paper and pass them anonymously to the front of the class.

Step III: Collect them together and then redistribute them so that each student has personal information about another student.

Step IV: Once the students have had a chance to look at the personal information, tell them that they will have to find out whose information they have by turning the statements into questions, and then asking other students those questions. You can exercise control over the activity in a variety of ways:

- by deciding on the form of the question which is allowable, such as *Who was born in June?*;
- by deciding whether to nominate students to speak or to allow them free choice;
- by deciding whether or not to allow students to move about.

Step V: Once have decided on the rules for the activity you can set in motion. The activity ends when everyday has found out whose personal information they have.

Task # 13

Type of Activity: Role play

Communicative function: Debate an issue/ support an argument/ convince someone/ complain to someone

Units: 1-3-10 (Sp.6)

Grammar: Infinitives with subjects vs. gerunds with subjects

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Pairs

Preparation: Put the following list of inventions in random order on a handout. Do not include the dates.

Gunpowder	1000
Atomic Bomb	1945
Wheel	3000 BC
Screw	200 BC
Paper	105
Printing	1440
Microscope	1608
Telephone	1876
Motor car	1885
Aeroplane	1903

Time: 30-35 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Ask the students to work in pairs to decide on the approximate date for each of the inventions. When they have done this, ask them to put the inventions in the order of their appearance, with the earliest invention first. Allow them to check the answers with you.

Step II: Now ask each pair to choose from the list three inventions that have had the most positive effect on civilization, as well as the three that had the most negative effect. They should discuss their choice with another pair and agree on a joint list.

Step III: Finally chair a feedback session in which each group presents its list. See if the class can come to a consensus.

Task # 14

Type of Activity: Role play

Communicative function: Expressing likes and dislikes/ disagreeing with someone

Units: 10 (Sp. 6)

Grammar: Infinitives with subjects vs. gerunds with subjects

Level: Intermediate and above.

Organization: Individuals

Preparation: Prepare a Task Sheet along the following lines and make photocopies.

Time: 25-30 minutes.

Procedure:

Step I: Warm your students up for the task by getting them to list the activities they prefer the most while having free time. They will check that they know the name of the free activities in English.

Step II: Give each student a sheet of paper and explain that they have a maximum of 15 minutes to go round the class. When they have finished, run a feedback session for the whole class and ask questions such as:

- Who likes / dislikes the same activities?
- What are the most common reasons for liking / disliking particular activities?

Step III: Get the students to expand and comment on the reason given.

Task Sheet

Look at this list of activities we mostly do in our free time.

Go to the camping.

Read.

Practice sports.

Visit friends.

Listen to music.

Watch TV programs / shows.

Go to the movie.

Write poems.

Work in the garden.

Play music.

Study.

Work individual for five minutes. Choose one of the activities you particularly enjoy and list three reasons for liking it. Choose one of the activities you particularly dislike and list three reasons for disliking it.

Now go round the class and find out if anyone likes or dislikes the same activities as you. Find out the reason people gave for liking or disliking a subject and make a list under the headings below:

Reasons for liking an activity

Reasons for disliking an activity

Task # 15

Type of Activity: Story

Communicative function: Tell a story/ retell a story/ inform someone/ talk about interests

Units: 3-4-11 (Sp.6)

Grammar: Simple present/ past time

Level: Intermediate-advanced

Organization: Individuals, pairs

Preparation: Cut up cards of different objects, activities, animals, etc. selected randomly and place the cards scattered on the floor in the middle of the classroom.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Tell the students to pick up a card from the floor which they think makes them remember one of the following:

- (a) a memorable event in their lives
- (b) a positive or negative past or recent experience or
- (c) a story about a friend/family member/acquaintance/etc that they would like to share with others.

Step II: Tell the students that they must find another in the class and tell them what the picture makes them remember and listen to the other person's story too.

Each student must tell their story for about one to two minutes only.

Step III: Students then must exchange pictures and find another student to talk to. Emphasize that they must ask the name of the person they were talking to before they move on to talk to another one.

Step IV: Students must then talk to another student and tell him/her the story of the person they last talked to.

Step V: Round the activity off by asking individual students to report to the class the interesting things they've learned about other people in class.

Task # 16

Type of Activity: Role play

Communicative function: Describing events

Units: 5 (Sp. 6) **but it can be adapted to all units**

Grammar: Order of adjectives

Level: intermediate/advanced

Organization: Pairs

Preparation: If you don't have access to a video / TV you can do a 'low-tech' version of this activity by cutting pictures out of a magazine. Be sure to cut out enough for half the class to each have a picture and have a few extras to spare.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Procedure:

Step I: Put the students into pairs, one policeman and one witness, and have the witness from each pair come to the front of the class.

Step II: Give each one a picture of a person to look at. Tell them that the person in the picture is a criminal. They shouldn't let anyone else see the picture.

Step III: Once they've had a couple of minutes to look at the picture, take all the pictures back and then send the witnesses back to their seats.

Their partner, the policemen, then has to ask questions and make notes so that they build up some idea of what the person in the picture looks like.

Step IV: Once they have their description, put all the pictures on the floor at the front of the class and get the policemen to come to the front of the class and see if they can find the picture that the witness described.

You should make sure that the witnesses remain silent until all the policemen have 'arrested' the picture of their choice.

You can then try this again reversing the roles this time. This gives the students a chance to learn from any mistakes they may have made the first time round.

You can make the activity more difficult by selecting pictures of people who look more similar (same age / sex etc.) or easier by having a greater range of people.

Task #17

Type of Activity: Role play

Communicative function: Debate an issue/ make predictions/ respond tactfully

Units: 1-9-12 (Sp. 6)

Grammar: Past continuous

Level: intermediate / advanced

Organization: Groups

Preparation: Write on board: Mrs. Kathleen McDonald was found dead in her house on Tuesday at eight in the morning, you have to find who killed her and why. Then explain to students they are going to prepare a play and perform it (split them in 2 or 3 groups) while one group performs the other watches them). The audience has to guess who the murderer is. (Here, there are 2 options, depending on the level, although it works well with pre-intermediate students too)

Time: 20-25 minutes.

Procedure:

Step I: Give students enough time to prepare this and help them at this stage, if necessary, especially using the past continuous e.g. - what were you doing yesterday at 7 o'clock etc. (don't give them any help during the performance)

Option (a) Tell the students they are free to invent a story why she is dead, and how, they can choose their own personalities and alibis, and decide who will be the inspector as he or she has to prepare a few questions to ask the suspects. They work in groups and they decide who the murderer is amongst themselves. If you have a class of say, 15 or 20, divide them in three groups so that they don't know what the other group is planning. This is important when they are going to perform, as the other group who's watching them has to guess who the murderer is just before the end. They can also ask additional questions and clarification to the performers.

(b) Or you can give them a few suggestions saying she was very rich, or famous, or whatever comes to your mind. Write on board a few relatives or friends e.g. her niece, her brother-in-law, her sister, husband, neighbor etc. Write on board some useful questions e.g. "what were you doing at.... where were you staying? etc. They prepare the play, but still let them decide who's who.

Step II: When they are ready, the students perform while the other group or groups watch and listen carefully to decide who the murderer is.

Step III: Just before the end of the play the performing group stops and ask their audience who they think the murderer is, inviting them to ask any additional questions or for clarification. (At the end I always start clapping for the others to do the same and thank them for their performance)

Step IV: If the audience guesses right, give them points or a round of applause.

Step V: Change performers and repeat from Step I

Remarks: Of course, teachers can use their own imagination or better still get the learners to invent the characters and alibis.

It will be viable to for feedback, up to now they have always really enjoyed it. I'm always amazed at their imagination; I think the best one was when one group had decided it was suicide!

Task # 18

Type of Activity: Role play

Communicative function: Inform someone/ talk about interests

Units: 4-8 (Sp. 6)

Grammar: Superlative

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Individuals/Pairs

Preparation: Prepare individual questions on slips of paper. The questions should all use the superlative form. For example:

What's the most interesting province you have been to?

What subjects are/were you worst at school?

What is the tallest building you have been in?

Who is the strangest person you have met?

What is the greatest problem in the world today?

You can design the questions so that they suit your class well.

Time: 10- 15 minutes.

Remarks: It is a highly personalized activity, asking the students to talk about their own experiences and opinions. This activity is considered to be suitable because although the students ask the same questions to each partner, they of course hear differing answers because the questions are so personalized. The variety in the question topics also generates interest. Every time you go to a new partner, you have no idea what you are going to be asked. So, all the teacher needs to do is think of enough questions for the students!

Procedure:

Step I: Give each student two or three questions

Step II: Put the students in pairs. They interview each other - encourage them to talk extensively in response to the questions.

Step III: After ten or fifteen minutes (depending upon the amount of conversation), call out "STOP"

Step IV: Now, swap the partners round

The students interview their new partner.

After a while, stop and swap

Depending on the size and energy of the class, keep stopping and swapping.

Once you think you have stopped and swapped enough, ask the students to return to their original seats.

To round off, they should tell their neighbor about some of the answers they received.

Task # 19

Type of Activity: Role play

Communicative function: giving criteria / agreeing and disagreeing with someone/ support an argument

Units: 1-6 (Sp. 6)

Grammar: Hope vs. wish

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Groups

Preparation: Select a controversial topic to start

Time: 20-25 minutes.

Remarks: This activity is considered actually dynamic because it involves all the students and they can't afford to sleep on the back seats because they know they will wreck the lesson if they do!

Procedure:

Step I: Divide your students into two groups; those who agree with the statement and those who disagree. They now prepare their arguments.

Step II: Once you have done this, arrange your chairs so that there are two hot seats facing each other and then place chairs behind each of the two hot seats.

The idea is that two students start the topic of conversation, trying to defend their group's point of view.

Step III: Once started, you then tap any two students on their shoulders during the conversation (Always one who is in a hot seat and one who isn't) Once they have been tapped on the shoulder they **MUST** stop the conversation and two new students must resume it exactly where the other two left it, even if this is in mid sentence (they change places with the person in the hot seat). They must make it coherent and follow the

previous opinions and statements! They must continue the sentence of the previous speaker exactly where the previous student in the hot seat left it!

Task # 20

Type of Activity: Role play

Communicative function: Agreeing and disagreeing with someone/ state an argument/ give reasons

Units: 1-3-6 (Sp. 6)

Grammar: Simple present

Level: Intermediate

Organization: Individuals

Preparation: Prepare statements

Time: 10-15 minutes.

Procedure:

Step I: Choose a controversial statement. For example:

Women are the best drivers

Mobile phones should be banned from public spaces

Homework should be optional

Burgers are better than pizzas

Step II: Either dictate or write the statement on the board. Students decide if they accept, reject or modify this statement, according to their personal opinion.

Step III: When they have made their decision, you would then say 'OK go round the room and try to find somebody who has the opposite opinion to you or go round the room and find someone who has a similar opinion. Alternatively, they could mingle in the class to find the range of opinions, like a small survey – how many students accepted, rejected, or modified the statement.

Remarks: To round off the activity, finish with a short whole class feedback stage.

APPENDIX I

Spectrum 5

Unit 3.

Topic I: **Pets**

Sentences: *I make my dog...*

In my opinion, pets are...

Topic II: **Speaking in public**

S: *I hate making speeches. It makes me...*

Topic III: **Children**

Sentence: *I think children need responsibility.*

Unit 4

Topic I: **A former life in time**

Sentences: *When I was growing up, I used to...*

When I first went to a zoo...

Topic II: **Your students days**

S: *The first time I went to school...*

In the classroom, I used to...

Topic III: **Learning foreign languages**

Sentences: *I am interested in ...*

I dream about...

Unit 5

Topic I: **Activity or sport involving risk or danger**

Sentences: *Once I climbed...*

Diving must have been exciting for...

Unit 7

Topic I: **Technological inventions**

Sentences: *VCDs have great advantages, for example...*

Telephones are really useful because...

Unit 8

Topic I: **Sports**

Sentences: *A lot of people think scuba diving is exciting.*

Some women say there is a little excitement in soccer.

Motorcycle racing is more dangerous than tennis.

Unit 10

Topic I: **Future life**

Sentences: *If I won a billion dollars, I would...*

When I finish here, I will...

Spectrum 6

Unit 1

Topic I: **Space station**

Sentences: *I am against investing Money in space race.*

I agree with space programs.

Unit 2

Topic I: **Describing someone**

Sentences: *I am a reliable person. I consider myself...*

My worst enemy is...

Unit 4

Topic I: **Give instructions**

Sentences: *My favorite dessert is.... To make it, first you...*

Unit 6

Topic I: **Birth rank**

Sentences: *First born children are...*

Topic II: **Parents**

Sentences: *My parents were strict. They believed children needed...*

My parents believed children should develop independence. Therefore...

Unit 7

Topic I: **Music (videos)**

Sentences: *Music videos are popular because...*

My favorite music video is...

The type of music I like the best is...

APPENDIX II

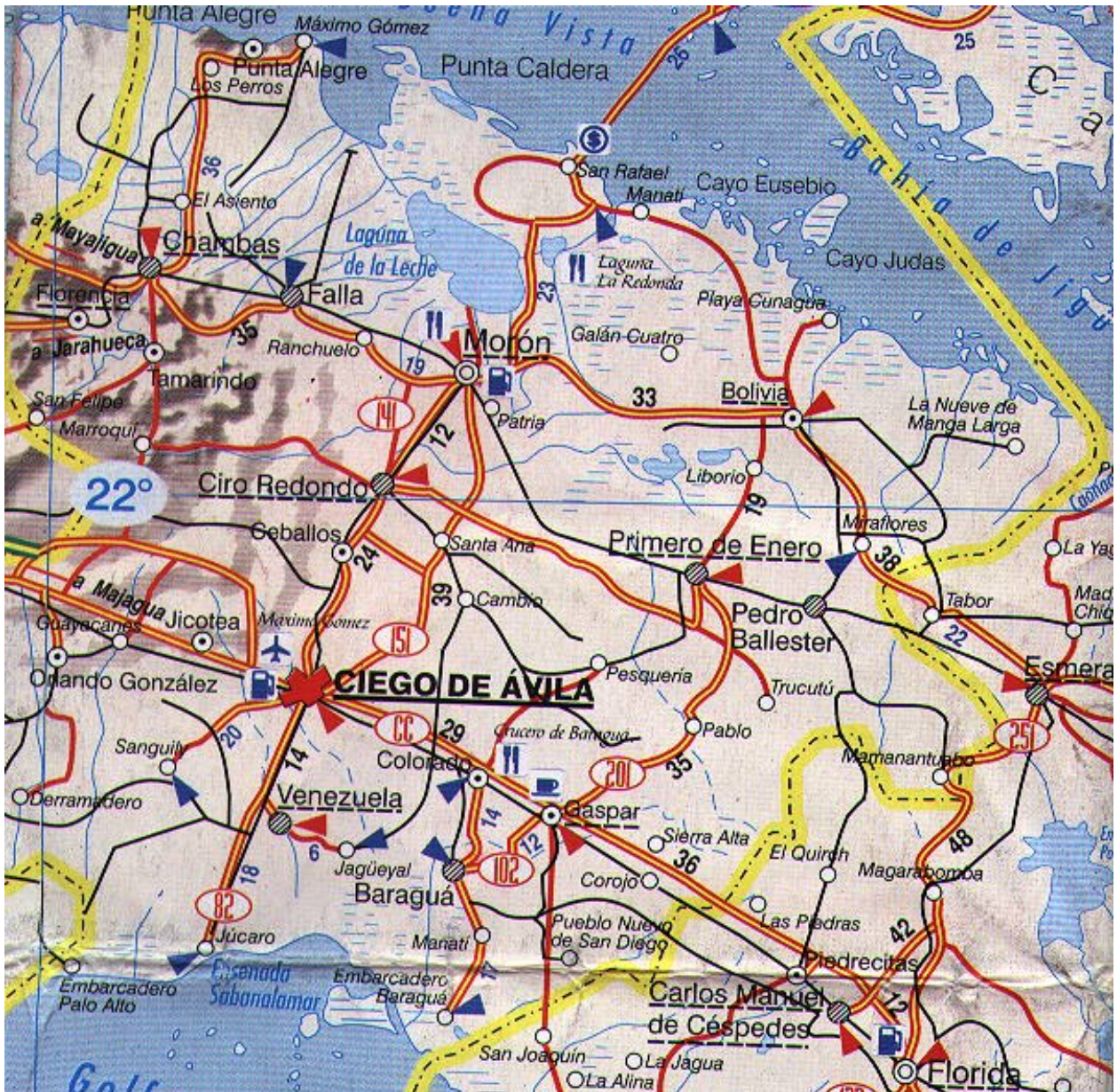
Suggestions for sentences

- *I wish I'd learned to play a musical instrument when I was young.*
- *I strongly disagree with that.*
- *I don't get along with my older sister.*
- *The more you get, the more you want.*
- *I'm not at all that crazy about it.*
- *What I really like is folk dancing.*
- *Speaking in public makes me nervous.*
- *What a strange experience that most have bee!*

Suggestions for topics

- *Pets*
- *Risking activities*
- *Technological inventions*
- *Sports*
- *Space station*
- *Discrimination*
- *Flea market*
- *Ancient wonders*
- *Music*
- *The Art of Prediction*

APPENDIX III



Ciego de Avila

- You can travel by bus, train or car.
- You can go to “La Redonda” lake or to “The Milk” lake.
- You can visit either Moron (the city of the ruster) or Ciego de Avila city.
- You can stay at: Santiago Havana Hotel (2 stars), Ciego de Avila Hotel (2 stars, swimming pool) or Moron Hotel (3 stars, swimming pool)



Santa Clara

- You can travel by bus, car or horse carriage.
- You can go to “La Caridad “ theater or to the “Cubanacan” cinema.
- You can visit either the “Tren Blindado” monument or the Memorial to Che Guevara.
- You can stay at: Santa Clara Libre Hotel (3 stars), or Los Caneyes Hotel (3 stars, swimming pool).



Cayo Coco and Cayo Guillermo

- You can travel by bus, car or boat.
- You can go to “Flamingo” beach or to “Pilar” beach (considered as the most beautiful in the region).
- You can visit either the “Wild Boar” cave (natural cave, a disco at night), the Site “La Güira” (a kind of zoo) or the natural park “El Bagá”.
- You can stay at: Tryp Cayo Coco Hotel (5 stars), El Senador Hotel (4 stars) or Villa Cojímar (3 stars). All with swimming pools.

APPENDIX I

Estimado Estudiante,

La presente encuesta se realiza con vistas a obtener información para nuestro trabajo de diploma, y con el objetivo de perfeccionar el proceso de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje de la habilidad de Expresión Oral en nuestra carrera. Para ello solicitamos su cooperación pues nos resulta valiosa e indispensable. De antemano, **Muchas Gracias**.

Año que cursa _____.

- 1- Ordene las siguientes habilidades según el orden de dificultad que para usted presentan, donde el No. 1 sería otorgado a la más difícil:

____ Audición
____ Expresión Oral
____ Lectura
____ Escritura

- 2- Con relación al proceso de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje de la habilidad de Expresión Oral, ¿cuáles son las principales fortalezas y debilidades que presentan y cuáles son las causas de las debilidades?:

	Fortalezas	Debilidades	Causas de las debilidades
Los Alumnos			
Los profesores			

	Fortalezas	Debilidades	Causas de las debilidades
El programa			
Los materiales			
La evaluación			

3. En su caso personal, ¿qué componentes del idioma le resultan más difíciles para expresarse oralmente? Ordénelos según el orden de dificultad que para usted presentan, donde el No. 1 sería otorgado al más difícil.

- _____ Pronunciación
- _____ Vocabulario
- _____ Gramática
- _____ Estilo (seleccionar las formas apropiadas según la situación)
- _____ Discurso (enlazar ideas)
- _____ Otros. ¿Cuáles?

4-¿Qué le ayudaría a resolver los problemas que usted presenta en la Expresión?

APPENDIX II

Diagnostic test

The diagnostic test consisted on an oral presentation about previously assigned and discussed topics and the debate that took place after each presentation.

APPENDIX III

Interview to the teachers

The interview applied to the teachers of English from the Faculty consisted of the following questions:

- In which order of importance would you place the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)? Why?
- In your opinion, which is the most affected one in the training of Bachelor in English Language with a major in French at UCLV?
- Which are the main causes of the weaknesses?

APPENDIX IV

Estimado Profesor,

La presente encuesta se realiza con vistas a obtener información para nuestro trabajo de diploma, y con el objetivo de profundizar en el proceso de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje de la habilidad de Expresión Oral en la carrera de Lengua Inglesa con 2da. Lengua Extranjera: Francés, en la UCLV. Para ello solicitamos su cooperación pues nos resulta valiosa e indispensable. De antemano, **Muchas Gracias**.

Años de experiencia _____.

Año académico al que le imparte clases _____.

Habilidades impartidas _____.

- 3- Ordene las siguientes habilidades según el orden de dificultad que para usted presentan, donde el No. 1 sería otorgado a la más difícil:

___ Audición
___ Expresión Oral
___ Lectura
___ Escritura

- 4- Con relación al proceso de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje de la habilidad de Expresión Oral, ¿cuáles son las principales fortalezas y debilidades que presentan, y cuáles son las causas de las debilidades?:

	Fortalezas	Debilidades	Causas de las debilidades
Los Alumnos			
Los profesores			

	Fortalezas	Debilidades	Causas de las debilidades
El programa			
Los materiales			
La evaluación			

3. ¿Qué componentes del idioma resultan más difíciles para sus estudiantes a la hora de expresarse oralmente? Ordénelos según el orden de dificultad que para usted presentan, donde el No. 1 sería otorgado al más difícil.

_____ Pronunciación

_____ Vocabulario

_____ Gramática

_____ Estilo (seleccionar las formas apropiadas según la situación)

_____ Discurso (enlazar ideas)

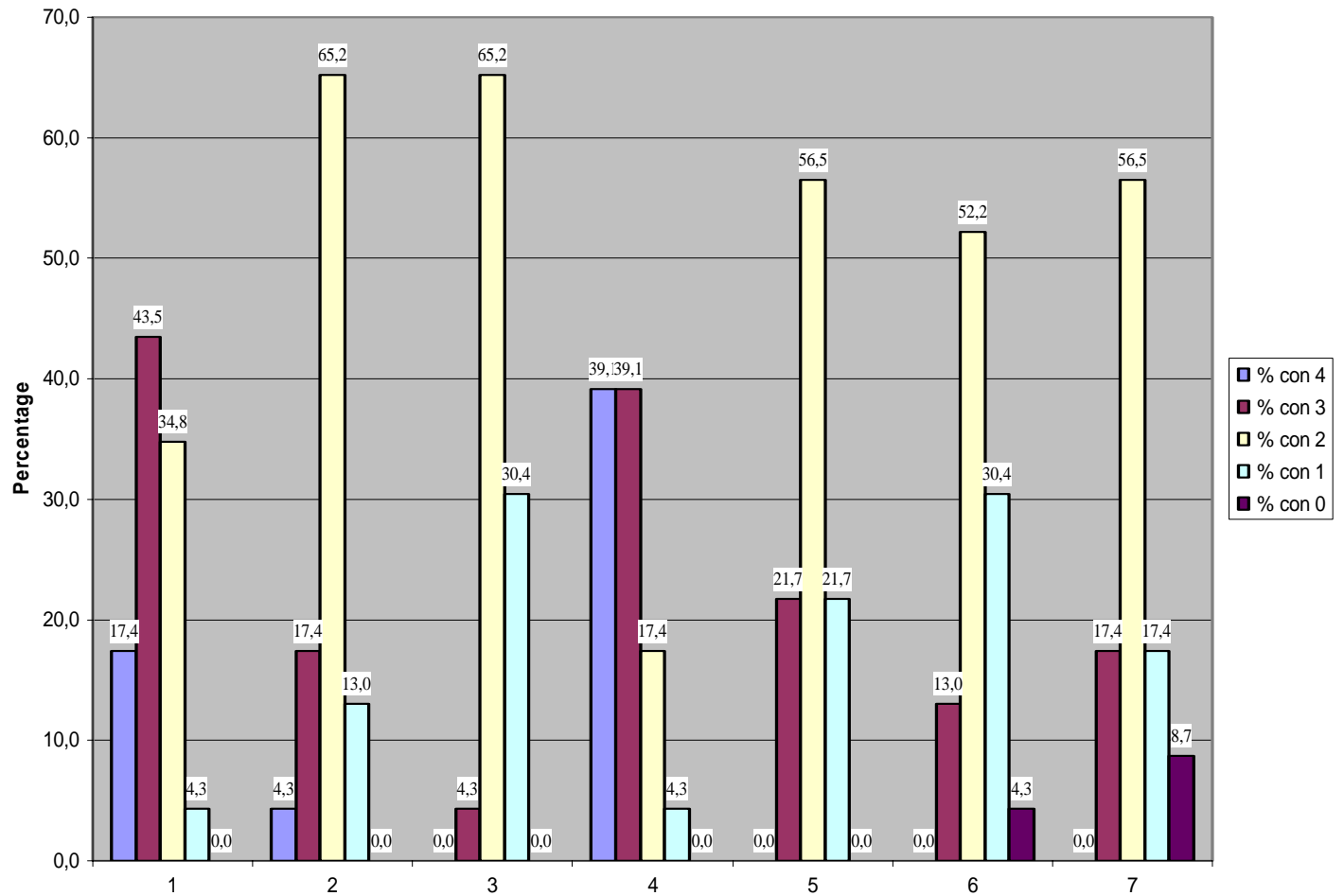
APPENDIX V

The observation Guide:

1. How is the students' performance in class?
2. How the teacher meets the students' progress through the activities?
3. What kind of activities the teacher planned for the students?
4. How the teacher attends the students' special needs.

APPENDIX VI

First Year Students' Speaking Performance



1. Pronunciation
2. Speech flow
3. Grammar
4. Vocabulary
5. Organization
6. Listening- comprehension
7. Question-handling

APPENDIX VII

SPECTRUM 5

Unit	Themes	Communicative functions	Grammar
1	Decisions/ Stories/ Reactions/ Past experience	Talk about a decision/ Tell a story/ Emphasize something/ Give a reaction/ Tell about a past experience	The past perfect/ <i>So</i> and <i>such</i> with result clauses/ <i>Too</i> and <i>not</i> ... <i>enough</i> with infinitives
2	Advice/ Customs/ Social rules	Ask for and give advice/ Talk about customs/ Talk about social rules	Gerunds vs. <i>it</i> as subject/ <i>Must</i> and <i>mustn't</i> for obligation and prohibition vs. logical conclusion
3	Opinions	Persuade someone/ Give an opinion/ Support an opinion	Have, make, let and help/ The definite article <i>the</i>
4	Recollections/ Descriptions	Recall the past/ Describe the past/ Talk about how you've changed	The past habitual/ Some verbs and expressions followed by prepositions
5	Reactions/ Stories	React to an event or a story/ Tell a story	<i>How...!</i> Vs. <i>What a</i> ...! / The simple past vs. the past perfect vs. the past continuous/ Sense verbs with base and progressive forms of verbs
6	Explanation/Reasons/ Hopes and wishes	Ask for and give an explanation/ Give reasons/ Talk about hopes and wishes	Conjunctions <i>so</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>since</i> , <i>even</i> <i>though</i> , <i>although</i> , and <i>though</i> / <i>Hope</i> vs. <i>wish</i> in present and future time

Unit	Themes	Communicative functions	Grammar
7	Complaints/ Problems	Make a complaint/ Make a forceful complaint/ State a problem	The passive with present perfect verbs/ Sense verbs with <i>like</i> , <i>as if</i> , and <i>as though</i>
8	Comparisons/ Opinions	Make comparisons/ Compare opinions	Quantifiers/ Comparisons with quantifiers/ Quantifiers with <i>of</i>
9	Complaints/ Advice	Make a complaint/ Offer to do something/ Give advice	The passive with modal auxiliaries in present or future time/ The causative <i>get</i> in active and passive sentences
10	Possibilities/ Regret	Imagine the future/ Talk about the future/ Discuss the possibilities/ Express regret	The future with <i>will</i> vs. the future continuous with <i>will</i> Contrary- to- fact conditional sentences
11	Alternatives/ Uncertainty/ Jokes/ Stories	Describe an embarrassing experience/ Suggest an alternative/ Express uncertainty/ Tell a joke/ Tell a story	<i>Because</i> , <i>because of</i> , <i>in case</i> , <i>in case of</i> , and <i>instead of</i> <i>Whether</i> vs. <i>if</i>
12	Possibilities/ Judgments	Report an event/ Report a conversation/ Talk about possibilities/ Make a judgment	Direct speech vs. reported speech/ The passive with modal auxiliaries in past time

SPECTRUM 6

Unit	Themes	Communicative functions	Grammar
1	Arguments/ Regrets/ Hopes and wishes	Debate an issue/ Support an argument/ Express regret/ Talk about hopes and wishes	Conjunctions/ <i>Hope</i> vs. <i>wish</i> in past time
2	Descriptions/ Recommendations	Describe yourself/ Describe someone else/ Make a recommendation	Verbs followed by direct objects + noun, adjective, or verb complements/ Questions words with <i>-ever</i>
3	Shopping/ Workplace situations	Convince someone/ Inform someone/ Make a purchase	Some verbs and expressions that require the subjunctive/ Two-word verbs
4	Instructions/ Explanations/ Hobbies	Give instructions/ Explain something/ Talk about interests	Using time markers to put events in order/ General statements with <i>before</i> , <i>after</i> , and <i>when</i> Specific statements with <i>before</i> , <i>after</i> , <i>when</i> , and <i>while</i>
5	Descriptions/ Sizes/ Comparisons/ Problems	Describe something/ Talk about dimensions/ Make comparisons/ Describe a household problem	<i>Dimensions and weight/ Order of adjectives</i>
6	Reasons/ Consequences/ Proposals	Give reasons/ Talk about consequences/ Make a proposal/ Talk about people	Connectors (Conjunctions)

Unit	Themes	Communicative functions	Grammar
7	Identifications/ Descriptions/ Recollections	Identify someone/ Describe something/ Recall something/ Describe an activity	Relative clauses with pronouns as subjects: Reduced restrictive clauses/ Placement of adverbs
8	Judgments/ Advice	Convince someone/ Inform someone/ Make judgments/ Give advice/ Ask someone to do something	Subjunctive clauses vs. infinitives clauses/ Double comparatives
9	Plans/ Predictions/ Explanations	Talk about plans/ Give reasons/ Make predictions/ Imagine something/ Give explanations	The future perfect and the future perfect continuous/ Mixed contrary-to-fact conditional sentences: Present and past
10	Feelings/ Complaints/ Likes and dislikes/ Work	Talk about feelings/ Complain about something/ Talk about likes and dislikes/ Complain to someone/ Give an evaluation	Infinitives with subjects vs. gerunds with subjects/ <i>Either...or, neither...nor, and not only...but (also)</i>
11	Possibilities/ Descriptions/ Reactions	Speculate about possibilities/ Give a description/Tell a story/ React to a story	<i>Short answers with modal auxiliaries/ Nonrestrictive vs. restrictive relative clauses</i>
12	Preferences/ Opinions/ Reactions	Talk about preferences/ Respond tactfully/ Give opinions/ Give reactions	Special word order for emphasis/ Connectors <i>in spite of</i> and <i>despite</i> ; <i>yet</i> , <i>nevertheless</i> , <i>whereas</i> and <i>while</i> ; <i>however</i> and <i>on the other hand</i>

APPENDIX VIII

BRIEF CURRICULUM OF THE SPECIALISTS

Full Name	Years of Experience	Academic Degree	Current Job
1-Alicia Moya Torres	15	Assistant	Professor
2- Caridad Abreu López	25	Assistant	Professor
3- Dianaleis Maza Amores	11	Instructor	Professor
4-Emilio García-Merás García	30	Assiatant	Professor
5- Osvaldo Betancourt R.	25	Assistant	Professor
6- Pedro Alipio Sánchez F.	25	Assistant	Professor

APPENDIX IX

REQUEST FOR SPECIALISTS' EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSAL

This proposal of communicative tasks to contribute to the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French is the result of a will to offer a solution to the need for complementary materials for this level, in the framework of the changes that occur in the Cuban University Education. Taking into account your experience and your high instructional level, we would like to submit our proposal to your evaluation. Thanks in advance, and we would like you to know that your criteria will be really valuable for our research.

Thank you so much.

Full name:

Years of experience:

Scientific Degree:

Academic Degree:

Job:

Communicative tasks to contribute to the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French

1. What is your opinion about our proposal? Put an X according to your criterion.

a) It fulfills the principles of communicative language teaching _____

b) It meets the objectives of the level _____

c) It is adequate _____

d) It is logical _____

e) Any other criteria: _____?

2. Do you think our proposal will help teachers of the first year to improve the teaching-learning process of speaking in the training of Bachelors in English Language with a major in French?

3. Do you have any suggestion that can help us to make it better? Which