

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions

Since the main objective of this research study was to analyze what the design and implementation of workshops, based on rural students' needs, reveal about their speaking skill development, we can state that students really started to develop such skill when they found a connection with the material. Likewise, the betterment was due to the contextualization of the content and opportunities to talk about personal interests. This contextualization was framed under the purpose of including students' voices in the workshops as a way to respect and honor students' experiences and cultural background to stimulate their ability to learn from and relate respectfully with their partners, in a context where different cultural backgrounds are brought together. This allowed prejudice reduction, knowledge construction, content integration, and relationship-making in order to interact and grow collaboratively in the learning process. Hence, when students had background information to make connections with the target topic, it facilitated oral expression.

Using contextualized material allowed students to start developing the speaking skill; nonetheless, students expressed that through the implementation of the workshops they also overcome personal weaknesses which prevented them from starting to communicate in the target language. Then, students could manage some factors affecting second language learning such as their anxiety levels when speaking, their tenseness, self-consciousness, inhibition, among others. Consequently, two essential components fostered students to move on the path of progressing in language learning: the fact of gaining confidence and negotiating meaning to express perceptions, likes, experiences,

feelings, and opinions. When students could share experiences and likes with their peers, the level of anxiety decreased and language learning occurred. Furthermore, students began to feel comfortable and learning English became an enjoyable task.

Including content students already knew does not mean that they were not immersed in activities that demanded language progress. The purpose of previous knowledge was to set up bases to start expressing general ideas and deducting language content from the context as the topic was recognized. Prior knowledge also allowed sharing common perceptions and newness among students as well as a means for setting interactions. Thus, the English class could be an environment of interaction where communication was the main goal to be attained.

Having in mind students' interests was a huge strategy that promoted participation because students felt they were the center of the learning process. In this sense, students found highly important to share personal issues with their classmates. In general, the purpose in implementing contextualized workshops favored students' opportunity to be heard, express likes, be self-confident when developing any task regarding language learning, honor their culture and experiences, and move beyond their current English language level.

Additionally, the role of the workshops was to guide students to develop a series of activities that required students to explore previous experiences and state points of view. In this way, the skill of speaking started to arouse in students' language learning process. Likewise, the workshops promoted students' commitment, contextualized teaching and learning, confidence regarding oral expression, advancement in terms of communicative competence, and undoubtedly, enhancement of the skill of speaking.

Finally, contextualized material designed by teachers really includes students' needs and preferences since the material development begins with students in mind; it means that a culturally responsive perspective is followed. The teacher is the person who has more opportunities to

get to know students' realities. Hence, making an effort to address in the most effective way the language learning needs is one of the tasks teachers have in today's world.

