UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LAS AMÉRICAS

VICERRECTORIA ACADÉMICA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ENHANCING AUTONOMOUS LEARNINGAS A METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ORAL SKILLS IN STUDENTS AT FUNDATEC

Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English with Concentration in Teaching

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JULIO, 2018

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Dedication

This thesis project is wholeheartedly dedicated to my unborn baby who has been my source of inspiration and gave me strength when I thought of giving up. To my relatives, mentor, reviewer, friends, and classmates who shared their words of advice and encouragement to finish this project.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this major undertaking had not been possible without the participants' commitment and the support of many individuals, some of whom I would like to acknowledge for their contributions, which I sincerely appreciate:

My mentor Catalina Guerrero Troyo, for her endless support and kind and understanding spirit during this process. Thank you. My reviewer Omar Quesada, for his dedication in proofreading my thesis project and for his advice. Thank you. Tania Molina, Academic Coordinator at FUNDATEC, for allowing me to carry out my thesis project at this renowned institution. Thank you. Diego Bolaños, English teacher at FUNDATEC, who had the kind disposition to let me observe his students and apply the instruments of my thesis project. Thank you.

To all my relatives, friends and many more, who in one way or another gave me their support in all kinds of ways. Thank you.

Abstract

The present study investigated the effects of applying metacognitive strategies in autonomous learning at FUNDATEC during the third bimester of 2018 to 20 students. The collected data were analyzed before and after the study in the forms of observations, interviews, and informative questions using evaluation, monitoring, and planning as metacognitive strategies and applying a pre-test, a self-evaluation rubric, a student-organizer tool, and a post-test as instruments.

The results showed that metacognitive strategies had a significantly positive effect on the English learning process. As expected, the experimental class performed better in their oral skills, and their ability in self-monitoring, evaluation, and organization was enhanced. Following autonomous learning theory, it was concluded that metacognitive strategies should be integrated in any student's English learning process. Also, the student-researcher concluded that metacognitive strategies can be used to develop not only oral skills but also reading, listening, and grammar skills.

Resumen

El presente estudio investigó los efectos de la aplicación de estrategias metacognitivas en el aprendizaje autónomo en FUNDATEC durante el tercer trimestre de 2018 y fue aplicado a 20 estudiantes / participantes. Los datos recopilados se analizaron antes y después del estudio en forma de observaciones, entrevistas y preguntas informativas, usando evaluación, monitoreo y planificación como estrategias metacognitivas, así como la aplicación de una evaluación previa, una rúbrica de autoevaluación, la herramienta de organización del estudiante y una prueba posterior, como instrumentos.

Los resultados mostraron que la estrategia metacognitiva tuvo un efecto positivo significativo en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés. Como se esperaba, la clase tuvo un mejor rendimiento en sus habilidades orales y su capacidad de autocontrol, evaluación y organización se habían elevado. Una de las conclusiones más significativas obtenidas, fue que las estrategias metacognitivas deberían integrarse en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés basado en el aprendizaje autónomo. También, la investigación concluyó que las estrategias metacognitivas se pueden usar para desarrollar no solo habilidades orales, sino también habilidades de lectura, escucha y gramática.

Chapter I

Introductory Framework

Enhancing communication skills in English is critical, not only because it leads to better job positions, but also because English is the official language in many countries. As many younger people choose to work and study at the same time and in order to successfully juggle study and work, being an autonomous learner is essential. Autonomous learners are highly motivated and have the ability to organize and manage their time. In line with this idea, it is important to change the way that students learn on their own as they spend more time working than dedicating full-time learning a language.

According to Littlewood (1996), autonomous learners are "those who master an independent ability to make and accomplish the choices that govern their learning." In addition, Benson (2001) mentions that being an autonomous learner is "an attribute of learner" and has very little to do with the learning situation, which is what makes the process of fostering autonomy a "developing process" within the learner. (p. 110)

Some researchers have shown that one of the keys to enhance autonomous learners is through metacognitive strategies. Goodyear in particular concerns himself with the question of how we should approach the design of learning, so he argued that the autonomous learner needs to be metacognitive aware (2001). Also, Flavell (1976) stated that “metacognition refers to one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes or anything related to them, e.g. the learner-related properties of information or data. For example, I am engaging in metacognition if I notice that I am having more trouble learning A than B; if it strikes me that I should double

check C before accepting it as fact."Besides, Pintrich, Wolters and Baxter (2000) point out three main components of metacognition; metacognitive knowledge, which consists of cognitive learning strategies such as the building of links to prior knowledge, or memory strategies such as note taking. Also, metacognitive monitoring, self-regulation and control, which consist of metacognitive control strategies that apply monitoring of learning activities, the evaluation of learning outcomes and the adaptation. For example, time management and management of the learning environment.

This paper is mainly concerned with how to enhance English autonomous learning as a metacognitive strategy to improve oral skills in students at FUNDATEC.

1.1 Problem Statement

Approximately there are only 280 thousand bilingual adults in Costa Rica that speak English and almost 2.2 million that speak only Spanish, according to Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC) (2008), and they point out that these adults' standard of oral English is not satisfactory. The following factors are considered the cause of this situation: lack of confidence and the fact that they work and study at the same time. For example, students at FUNDATEC are not fully dedicated to learning a language, and they receive only four training hours per week which are not enough for them to practice the oral skills.

This research seeks to enhance autonomous learning at FUNDTEC using metacognitive strategies to improve English oral skills, such as evaluation, monitoring, and planning as metacognitive strategies. Furthermore, the reinforcement of this method will have benefits in improving oral skill performance, learning new strategies to facilitate content assimilation, and increasing self-confidence and effectiveness in terms of time spent and expected results (self-

management). This teaching approach is expected to offer more exposure time and opportunities to optimize the class time.

The present research will try to respond the following question: What are the effects of applying metacognitive strategies in autonomous learning at FUNDATEC during the third bimester of 2018?

Objectives of the Investigation

As many of the students at FUNDATEC are not dedicated full-time to learning a language, and they attend classes only four hours per week, the purpose is to apply metacognitive strategies in order to meet the students' expectations. They would like to be able to communicate their ideas in English correctly, taking advantage of the little time that they have.

General Objective

Analyze the effect of autonomous learning as a metacognitive strategy to improve oral skills in students at FUNDATEC during the third bimester of 2018.

Specific Objectives

- Identify the most suitable metacognitive strategies in order to perform oral skills
- Apply metacognitive strategies in order to improve autonomous learning
- Evaluate the effects of such strategies in their oral performance after the implementation of the communicative tasks

1.2 Justification of the Study

The English language has become a necessity for many people, as using it leads to better job positions, successful careers, and a personal sense of accomplishment. Costa Rica has plenty of places that teach English as a second language. However, at the end of the course, students do not achieve the results that they had expected. For instance, students at FUNDATEC consider that attending classes four hours per week is not enough for improving oral skills and answering all students' questions since they need to cover many grammar topics during the class. For this reason, this research project will focus on students that are not dedicated full-time to learning a language. Metacognitive strategies will be applied to enhance autonomous learning to improve oral skills.

It requires students to take responsibility for their own learning, be more self-directed, and make decisions about what they will focus on. According to Brown, (1997) metacognitive strategies help us to become more efficient and powerful in our learning. It is a type of reasoning that makes us evaluate our thinking and use of strategies when we need help understanding. Students need to focus their attention on recognizing the thought processes they experience while learning.

Enhancing autonomous learning as a metacognitive strategy should prove useful for 18 students at FUNDATEC, for them to feel more motivated and autonomous, and lead them to better, more effective results in order to achieve their particular goal: improve their English oral skills.

In order to improve the English oral skills of these students at FUNDATEC, students are to take responsibility for their own learning and be sure of how much time they will spend on

learning both inside and outside the classroom. However, many students have trouble remaining focused on their learning because of their daily routine.

The purpose of being an autonomous learner is to become more independent of their teacher. For instance, assigned tasks are resolved mostly by the students themselves, making students act confidently and pro-socially when the actual problem arises. It is notable that there is a relationship between metacognitive strategies and learner autonomy as metacognition is a type of reasoning on which students need to focus their attention and recognize what thought processes they experience while learning,

1.3 Antecedents

Several studies have attested to apply metacognitive strategies as a method to accomplish improved English skills. The following studies show positive results during the application of these strategies. Pierre (2009) mentioned that metacognition enables students to be more active in their learning, encouraging them to have successful learning experiences. In order to do this, they must know how they learn and be aware of the steps that are followed and the means that are used to acquire knowledge, solve problems, and perform tasks.

However, the researchers in memory pointed out that taking charge of one's own learning usually demands commitment matching the association between metacognitive and autonomous learners. For example, Henri Holec was the first in defining the concept of "learner autonomy" in 1981. […] According to Holec,"it is the ability to take charge of one's own learning, this ability is not inborn but must be acquired either by natural." […] Also, Holec mentioned that autonomous learning looks like a double process: "On the one hand, it entails learning the foreign language; on the other, learning how to learn." (p.1239)

One study conducted by Hacettepe and Gazi universities in China with a total of 213 ELT learners has shown a significant difference between learners who experience English learning in St2 (paying attention) and those who learn in St12 (self-evaluating) and reading autonomy. Arif (2012) used a questionnaire as a data collection instrument based on the relationship between 12 metacognitive reading strategies,"St1: Overview and linking with already known material", "St2: Paying attention", "St3: Directed attention", "St4: Selective attention", "St5: Advanced organizing", "St6: Setting goals and objectives", "St7: Identifying the purpose of a language task", "St8: Planning for a language task", "St9: Seeking practice opportunities", St10: Self-management", "St11: Self-monitoring", and "St12: Self-evaluating", and reading autonomy has been found to be 0,659, which means that there is a strong relationship between them at the level of 99 % (p.1). In other words, metacognitive strategies had a positive impact on those students.

One investigation at Philippines Sabang School, grade 6th with pupils in an elementary school during 2016-2017 was focused on the development of science learning. According to Zozobrado (2016), they applied metacognitive strategies to achieve the necessary skills in learning for the completion of a certain undertaking. As a result, in applying the high-level cognitive skills associated with metacognitive, strategic thinking helped students to learn about what things can be useful to remember. Besides, students become increasingly autonomous in their learning as they become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. (p.21)

Another survey conducted in a university in a north western city in China showed the results of the relationship among autonomous learning, metacognitive strategy training, and English achievement in a web-based environment. Based on Yang Cao (2012), this study involves a survey of three classes of non-English major students from different academic departments. The results of the collected data in interview and questionnaires had a significant

positive effect in English learning. As expected, the experimental class had better performance than the controlled class in the learning outcome, and their ability in self-monitoring and evaluation was developed. The study was based on one group as the control group (Gc, 56 students), another as the experimental group (Ge, 60 students), and the group (G3, 25 persons). The learning schedule for every week followed two hours of intensive reading, listening and speaking class, which is taught in a digital language lab applying a multimedia approach as a strategy and doing online autonomous learning work for the different skills. The experiment was applied for 16 weeks. (p.67)

There was another study at the International Islamic University of Malaysia. It attempted to investigate the relationship between ESL students' metacognitive strategies in vocabulary learning and their vocabulary breadth. The results revealed that there was no significant relationship between students' vocabulary breadth and their use of metacognitive strategies in vocabulary learning. The participants were 113 (38 males and 75 females) students who were studying intensive English in the intermediate (N=56) and upper intermediate (N=57) levels of a four-level intensive English programmer. They applied a questionnaire as a research method to test for metacognitive strategies, which was adapted from [4] and [5]'s Vocabulary Levels Test. It incorporated metacognitive strategies of planning (1-10 items), monitoring (11-20 items) and evaluating (21-28 items). The questionnaire employs a five-scale Likert-type rating: 1=never or almost never true of me; 2=usually not true of me; 3=somewhat true of me; 4=usually true of me;5=always or almost always true of me. (2013, pag. 121)

One research used in Costa Rica described metacognitive strategies applied in writing and reading comprehension at Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica. It was focused on graduate students in the development of the thesis. According to Rafael María Baralt (2012) the study was

based on cognitive psychology and constructivist theories of Piaget since the subject interacts with the object of knowledge. The questionnaire applied on 27 students in total was a Likert-type scale. The results led to the conclusion that this group of students has strengths in the discipline of metacognitive development by facilitating the scientific knowledge of a constructivist process.

Another research applied in Costa Rica pointed out that metacognitive strategies helped students to become autonomous and responsible for their own learning. It was conducted by (Cascante, 2009; Castro et al, 2012) in the English Phonetics course at Universidad Internacional de las Américas. This investigation highlighted the advantages of implementing metacognitive strategies that students will acquire during the process (as cited by Brown, 2007):

- Become more strategic
- Show faster progress in learning
- Develop confidence in their learning abilities
- Request assistance from peers or the teacher if they need it without hesitation
- Provide accurate reasons for why they are successful learners
- Become highly critical of their own failures during an activity
- Perceive themselves as continual learners, capable of facing different situations.

The University of Costa Rica also applied metacognitive strategies to develop proficiency in the reading process in L2 contexts of the course LM-1030 Reading Strategies I by focusing on teaching students from other majors at the University of Costa Rica the most important strategies to read in English fluently, both short and long texts, for the purpose of growing professionally. Moreira, (2016) mentioned that in order to get results, they started by making students aware of

the meta cognitive strategies such as predicting, using prior knowledge, guessing the meaning of words, using cognates, and other processes that they applied in their mother tongue.

1.4 Scope

For this research, the researcher will use metacognitive strategies by providing effective interventions at FUNDATEC such as checking or evaluation, monitoring, and planning as metacognitive strategies. However, the researcher is planning to observe the students before applying any strategy in order to get familiar with the level of commitment that each student has during the observation and be able to evaluate their perspectives on the language.

On the other hand, during the implementation of the strategies, the researcher expects to analyze the following aspects:

- Identify the metacognitive strategy that will help the students to improve oral skills
- Establish the association between metacognitive and autonomous learners
- And observe the teachers' actual teaching practices regarding metacognitive strategies.

Also the researcher expects to benefit the teacher and students directly getting significant positive effect in the below areas;

- Self-monitoring and self-evaluating will help students to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses in improving their English oral skills.
- Self-directedness will help them become strategic, motivated, and independent learners while learning.

- Self-management will help students to know how much time they will spend on learning both inside and outside the classroom. They are to self-regulate their own learning.

Getting the above areas reinforced will help students to identify how to learn on their own. The researcher will use activities that have students reflect on what they know, care about, and are able to do. Not only to develop an awareness of themselves, but also give learner-centered to the teacher. Such as, valuable information that will help the teacher to recognize how to help students to achieve the particular goal; in this case improving their English oral skills.

It is important to mention that the researcher will also apply metacognitive strategies to enhance learner autonomy, through which the teacher will not be the focal center; he/she will provide the students only what they required. For example, the teacher will give them a plan of action that provides students with an easy-to-follow procedure for solving a particular task or activity. This is the case because another important aspect of this research project is to tap into each student's confidence by providing positive feedback and motivation, so they feel more comfortable during the learning process, which should help them to improve their oral performance. According to Sheerin (1997) and Little (1991), the endeavor of learning a foreign/second language requires well developed metacognition by which people are aware of their knowledge and can control and regulate that knowledge in order to achieve a particular goal in the classroom.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

This chapter will explore the benefits of metacognitive strategies and of developing autonomy in learners. Based on an empirical study (Qingdao University of Science & Technology, China, 2012), the combination of both should encourage teachers and students to change their methodology in order for students to improve their speaking performance, learn new strategies, and increase their self-confidence and self-management by getting more exposure and increasing the time and opportunities to optimize the class time.

2.1 Metacognition

The word "metacognition" is regularly used in different areas of education. Metacognition has been defined as *thinking about thinking*. Flavell (1976), who first used the term, refers to it as the knowledge and processes involved in the monitoring or control of cognition. Taylor (2002) defines metacognition as "an appreciation of what one already knows, together with a correct apprehension of the learning task and what knowledge and skills it requires." This definition was originally written by Shawn Taylor in the book *Better Learning through Better Thinking.*

In simpler terms, metacognition is being aware of what you know and not know, understanding what you will need to know for a certain task, having the ability to evaluate the learning outcomes and the adaptation to use your current skills to learn what you not know. In line with this idea, many publications have been released; for example, Mark Quirk, the recipient of the 2006 Society of Teachers of Family Medicine's Excellence in Education award, explores metacognition in his book for medical educators—from medical school faculty to residents. He

(2006) mentioned that "this book will help you teach your students and interns how to extrapolate lessons from experience and integrate learning and practice." Quirk also stated that metacognition will help them think more clearly about what they read, hear, and learn on a day-to-day basis getting them informed and humanistic doctors.

Modern research in metacognition gives more context about this ability. In his book *Metacognition*, Larson (2009) mentions that "Metacognition is often simply defined as "thinking about thinking." Nevertheless, this definition is not that simple for him as he has acknowledged that, in psychological literature, the term metacognition refers to two parallel roots, one in the emerging cognitive psychology of the 1960s (e.g. Hart, 1965) and the other in the post-Piagetian developmental psychology of the 1970s (e.g. Flavell, 1979).

Also, Boekaerts (1997, as cited by Larson) argues that metacognitive knowledge allows students to better comprehend, monitor or assess conceptual and procedural knowledge related to a domain by reflecting the ability to use metacognitive knowledge strategically to achieve cognitive goals, especially in cases where someone has to overcome cognitive obstacles (2009, p. 224). According to the self-regulated learning approach, Schunk & Zimmerman (2006) observe that, in order to perfom an effective self-regulation, positive beliefs about one's own abilities are also needed. Larson (2009) also mentions that it is important to study metacognitive activities in order to determine how students can be taught to better apply their cognitive resources through metacognitive control by emphasizing the role of executive processes in the overseeing and regulation of cognitive processes.

Teachers can help students learn metacognitive skills by creating supportive learning environments thus effecting the benefits of students learning more and performing better. Hacker

& Bol (2004, p. 120) says that students benefit from metacognition through self-scaffolding and management of cognitive and emotional experiences. They see mistakes as opportunities for students to become more motivated. Hacker "believes that greater effort eventually yields understanding and problem-solving success (mastery orientation); she neither focuses on specific, static outcomes (performance orientation) nor attributes outcomes to innate talent or external forces. On the other hand, Hart (1965, 1967) was focused on memory “feelings of knowing.” He maintained that "what was important to discover was whether they were valid predictors of behavior," so he created the RJR procedure, in which a “yes” indicated that the students had a feeling of knowing and a “no” that they did not. For example, if a participant did not recall what the capital of the Bahamas is, he would be asked to make a feeling-of-knowing judgment (J). Predicting the answer would be recognized in a multiple-choice format. Hart (1965) applied a second experiment in which a six-point scale was used for the feeling of knowing (1 to 3) and the feeling of not knowing (4 to 6). Finally, the participant was given a recognition test (R) to determine whether the feeling-of-knowing statements did indeed predict the likelihood of correct recognition for general knowledge materials, an observation replicated many times.

The RJR technique mostly lay dormant until the 1980s when it was revised by Thomas Nelson, who was also interested in metacognition but chose to explore Flavell’s research from 1979 on the improvement in children’s memory abilities as a function of greater conscious understanding of the rules that govern memory and cognition. Unfortunately, not yet fully armed with the ideas of monitoring by Nelson and Narens, (1980), Flavell did not show any strong correlations between metacognitive thinking and improvements in memory. Indeed, many

colleagues from his camp abandoned the theory of mind. Nonetheless, Flavell's approach has had a strong influence on the development of metamemory in recent years.

Later, Nelson and Narens (1990) brought metacognition into a modern theory of monitoring and control. This theory was able to organize and integrate almost all of the extent research on metacognition and concluded that the individual is allowed to observe, reflect on, or experience his or her own cognitive processes. Monitoring informs the person of the state of their cognition relative to their current goal controlling the conscious and non-conscious decisions based on the output of our monitoring processes.

2.1.1 Components of metacognition

Metacognition denotes in-depth thinking in which cognitive processes involved in learning are actively controlled. This means that self-regulation is a result of self-awareness. If learners are aware of how dedicated they are to reaching their goals, they can regulate their dedication, disposition, and attention. The theory and application of metacognition evolved into two basic components: (1) metacognitive knowledge and (2) metacognitive regulation.

2.1.2 Metacognitive knowledge

It refers to cognitive processes that apply to themselves in which a full analysis of human reasoning and behavior requires an understanding of both cognitive and metacognitive activities. As noted by Nelson (1993), when people attempt to assess their knowledge of themselves, this perspective stands in sharp contrast with the idea that we are in complete control of our behavior and cognitive activity. It also stresses the fact that what we know about others and ourselves is the result of a complex construction process that people go through in monitoring their knowledge. Koriat & Goldsmith (1996) and Nelson & Narens (1994) mention that most

cognitive processes are normally accompanied by metacognitive operations that supervise and control various aspects of these processes. For example, "the stronger my feeling of knowing about an elusive name after performing a planned action (e.g. locking the door), we may wonder whether we have done so, and if we are not sure, we may go back to double-check" (Nelson & Narens, 1994).

Another example is when someone memorizes a new text. They normally monitor their comprehension of the material and future expectation, succeed in retrieving the acquired information, and generally assess the likelihood that it is the correct information. Metacognitive knowledge is therefore classified according to whether it focuses on the learning task or the process of learning. Wenden (1998, p: 520) offers another explanation of the importance of metacognitive knowledge in learning by pointing out that metacognitive knowledge characterizes the approach of expert learners to learning to enhance learning, improving the rate of progress in learning as well as the quality and speed of learners` cognitive engagement. Wenden (1998, p: 516) classified metacognition knowledge into three components:

- Knowledge of person variables

This refers primarily to how people learn and process information. It also refers to one`s awareness of particular thinking and learning processes. Wenden (1998) notes that personal knowledge is part of the adequate ways to speed up learning activities. Flavell (1979) had already proposed two dimensions of personal knowledge: intra-individual differences and inter-individual differences (knowledge of personal styles, abilities, and so forth) and universal of cognition (knowledge of human attributes influencing learning).

- Knowledge of task variables

Basically this includes knowledge about the nature of the task and the ability to monitor their knowledge.

- Knowledge of strategy variables

This mostly refers to knowledge about both cognitive and metacognitive strategies, as well as conditional knowledge about when and where it is appropriate to use such strategies.

2.1.3 Metacognitive regulation

Metacognitive regulation is the regulation of cognition and learning experiences through a set of activities that help people control their learning. According to Zimmerman (2001), "self-regulation refers to self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals." Furthermore, self-regulation involves personal, behavioral, and environmental processes. Flavell (1979) offered a model of metacognition with four components.

- Metacognitive experience

This component involves the use of metacognitive strategies or metacognitive regulation (Brown, 1987). Metacognitive strategies are sequential processes that one uses to control cognitive activities and to ensure that a cognitive goal has been met. These processes help to regulate and oversee learning and consist of planning and monitoring cognitive activities, as well as checking the outcomes of those activities.

- Metacognitive goals or tasks

This refers to instances in which a task is clear. In other words, the students are aware of their own thought processes, adjustments to their own practice or performance behaviors, and assessment of their own performance outcomes.

- Metacognitive actions or strategies

It refers to the utilization of specific techniques that may assist in understanding.

- Metamemory

It is referred to the self-awareness of memory as an important implication for how people learn and use memories. When studying, for example, students make judgments of whether they have successfully learned the assigned material and use these decisions, known as "judgments of learning," to allocate study time. Metamemory even helps students form a general understanding of the idea. Nelson and Narens (1994) and Ridley (1992) remark that metamemory includes:

(a) Awareness of different memory strategies

(b) Knowledge of which strategy to use for a particular memory task

(c) Knowledge of how to use a given memory strategy most effectively

2.1.4 Metacognitive skills and strategies

Metacognitive strategies have gradually aroused researchers' attention since metacognitive skills help students to focus on how to solve problems and perform tasks. These strategies appear to be highly interdependent (by means of thorough orientation of a task) to keep track of the progress being made and the evaluation or monitoring activities, which are necessary for detecting mistakes. Finally, elaboration activities like drawing conclusions, recapitulating, and generating explanations are more helpful. A student who possesses metacognitive skills is

more likely to learn effectively than those who lack these skills. Through certain metacognitive strategies, we can develop these skills among students. Once again, Flavell (1979) had stated that metacognitive skills concern the procedural knowledge that pertains to the actual regulation of, and control over one's, cognitive processes and learning activities. In line with this idea, Kluwe (1987) pointed out that metacognitive skills are important organizers of all of the tasks that we perform. They enable planning, setting goals, initiating work, sustaining future-oriented problem solving activities, monitoring and managing progress on tasks to detect and correct errors, and keeping track of the effect of one's behavior towards others.

2.1.5 Metacognitive skills or strategies

2.1.5.1 Planning

This teaching approach is expected to offer more exposure time and opportunities to optimize the class time. It should help students to know how much time they will spend on learning both inside and outside the classroom as they are to self-regulate their own learning.

Planning strategy will develop skills such as:

- Progress organizers
- Self-management

For example, a weekly planner should help students to manage their time. The idea is to develop a new learning process as students make connections between their prior knowledge and the new information that they are learning. The advance organizer allows them to effectively organize and understand what they have been taught. It will make note-taking much more effective and will benefit them with these tasks:

- Estimate the time required to complete the task

- Plan study time into their schedule and set priorities
- Make a checklist of what needs to happen when
- Organize materials
- Take the necessary steps to learn by using strategies like outlining, mnemonic techniques, diagramming and so faster.

2.1.5.2 Monitoring

According to Nielsen (1997), "self-regulation refers to learners being active participants in their own learning process." Learners' use of learning strategies involves making choices between different strategies depending on the task, characteristics of the individual, and dimensions in the learning situation. For example, Nielsen observed one student who played an organ, and found that the student's success depended on applying metacognitive skills, such as the following: (1) the student recognized technical problems when they occurred, (2) the student self-evaluated throughout his practice sessions, and (3) when a problem occurred, the student applied a strategy to correct it. The organ student applied conditional, metacognitive knowledge by deciding when, where, and how to apply strategies. Also, Nielsen viewed the type of learning that takes place during individual practice sessions as strategic processing applied to problem-solving, necessary for making progress. The organ student's self-evaluations relied partly on criteria that he had defined in accordance with his anticipated final performance (the outcome) and also on criteria based on attainable levels of performance in progressive phases of practice indicating that the student was self-aware regarding personal strengths and weaknesses as measured against the anticipated final performance outcome. He was able to apply problem-solving strategies in practice sessions to reach his final performance goal. In other words, monitoring involved the following skills:

- Self-monitoring
- Regulating
- Self-evaluation

Developing this “inner language” is thought to be a prerequisite for metacognition, and it begins in most children around age five. According to Carol Benton (2014), the type of thinking that might be affirmatively labeled metacognition does not fully develop, however, until approximately age eleven. This is the age at which children are generally capable of formal thought. Also, Benton stresses that metacognition, as self-regulation, is exercised when learners are challenged to monitor their own learning and solve their own problems. Therefore, to the extent that children are developmentally ready to apply strategies for working out challenges or difficulties, they are ready to use metacognition for self-regulating.

Developing skills such as self-monitoring, regulating, and self-evaluation benefits students with the following tasks:

- Reflect on the learning process, keeping track of what works and what does not
- Monitor their own learning
- Provide their own feedback
- Keep concentration and motivation high

2.1.6 Importance of metacognitive strategies

As students become more skilled at using metacognitive strategies, they gain confidence and become more independent as learners. The task of educators is to acknowledge, cultivate, exploit and enhance the metacognitive capabilities of all learners: "Metacognition is our understanding and control of our cognition" (Schunk and Nelson, 2003).

2.2 Autonomous learners

The purpose is making learners more independent of the teacher and creating an atmosphere in which natural social tensions are resolved mostly by the students themselves, so students can act confidently and pro-socially when the actual problem arises.

Learner autonomy in language education is interpreted in various ways, and various terms such as "learner independence," "self-direction," "self-organization," and "self-study" are used. This is because students are expected to assume responsibility for their own learning, which is different from the traditional model teaching to prompt learning. The learners must acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes through the interaction between themselves and the information presented to them or the environment. Holec (1981) describes autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's learning" (cited in Thanasoulas, 2000). The term autonomy in language learning is a desirable goal for philosophical, pedagogical, and practical reasons. According to Brindley (1990), autonomy is defined as the degree of responsibility that students take for their own learning.

On the other hand, Benson (1997) addresses three different ways of talking about learner autonomy in language education:

- A "technical" perspective, emphasizing skills or process such as the "metacognitive," "cognitive," "social" and other strategies identified by Oxford (1990);
- A "psychological" perspective, emphasizing broader attitudes and cognitive abilities (self-motivation);

- A "political" perspective, emphasizing empowerment or emancipation of learners by giving them control over their learning. In regards to this point, Omaggio (1978) states that autonomous learners:
    1. Have insights into their learning styles and strategies;
    2. Take an active approach to the learning task at hand;
    3. Are willing to take risks;
    4. Are good guessers;
    5. Develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply; and
    6. Have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language.

The Autonomous Learner Model was developed by Dr. George Betts and Ms. Jolene Kercher (2013), who explained that learning is a constructive process in which the teacher guides the student through ongoing communication. The knowledge and potential of the student are improved in order to set them free and allow them to learn on their own. In many ways, autonomous learning takes the teacher out of the picture and lets a student create and follow their own learning path. It is more about a learner's ability to take charge of their own learning to empower students. In fact, Betts and Kercher developed this model with the input of students to learn away from the teacher as a "dispenser of knowledge". Also, Voller (1997) investigated the teachers' role in the development of autonomous language learning. Voller found the teacher roleplays as a facilitator, counselor, and resource:

- Facilitator: the teacher as an assistant in order to support the learner only when required.
- Counselor: the teacher as a mentor, available to help the learner on request.

- ❖ Resource: the teacher as a source of material-oriented direction to help point the learner to the right sources of knowledge.

Betts and Kercher called this model ALM, through which students are to develop responsibility, positive self-esteem, decision-making and problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, critical and creative thinking skills, and a passion for areas of learning that interest them. The first component of ALM is "orientation". This encourages the students to reflect on what intelligence is. Then, students enter the "individual development" stage of the model. During this stage, students gain the tools that they need to be independent learners. Teachers facilitate the acquisition of skills needed to obtain knowledge through research and technology to accomplish their goals.

2.2.1 The classroom teacher and learner autonomy

Students in classrooms with autonomy-supportive teachers displayed more intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, and self-esteem than did the students in the classrooms with controlling teachers. Ryan and Grolnick (1986) claim that students who are highly motivated and autonomous in school may elicit more autonomy support from their teachers, whereas students who are more distracted and less motivated may elicit more controlling behaviors from the teachers. According to Ryan and Grolnick (1986), in order to cultivate this teaching model, teachers should:

- ➢ Cultivate distance: The instructor's role is that of a facilitator, as opposed to a tutor.
- ➢ Establish independence: Learners must not rely on the teacher as the source of course knowledge and instead seek it out themselves.
- ➢ Design and plan: The student has to construct their own learning strategy.

- Take ownership: The learners need to make decisions about and take accountability for what they learn.
- Become self-aware: Learners must develop a sense of their own learning styles, approaches, and preferences.
- Document progress: As we establish learner autonomy, learners need to continually document their own assessments of how they have been progressing.

2.2.2 Learners' autonomy

An autonomous learner is one who has undertaken the responsibility for his own learning. Dickson (1992) defines "learners' autonomy" as "taking responsibility for one's own learning as meaning that the learner is involved in making the necessary decisions about his learning." Eventually, this leads to students developing their own skills for setting objectives, planning their self-study, and even self-assessment. However, Dickson postulates that the learners' autonomy is a goal of education rather than a procedure or a method acknowledging that autonomy should be developed in stages, starting from fostering awareness of the learning goals and the content of the materials that learners are using, and developing into a 'transcendence' as learners go beyond the classroom to make links between the content of the classroom learning and the world beyond.

2.2.3 Strategies of learners' autonomy

Learning strategies are important tools for controlling and optimising the acquisition of new knowledge, for example, a foreign language. Regular strategy training helps learners to become more independent. Teaching learning strategies is one way of encouraging student independence. Research shows that the use of learning strategies can have a significant influence on the students' learning efficiency and output. However, it is essential that learners not only

have access to a wide repertoire of learning strategies but also apply them proficiently and in the appropriate situation.

According to Hedge (2000), autonomous learners share the following traits:

I. Self-direction

Self-directed learning is a form of study in which learners have the primary responsibility for planning, carrying out and evaluating their own learning experiences. In fact, some educators have put forth a similar definition of being self-directed, such as Brookfield (1985), who stated that in self-directed learning (SDL) students manage and assess their own learning activities, which can be pursued at any time, in any place. M. Knowles (1975) also explained that SDL describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. On the other hand, Candy (1991) casted new perspective that students need help or follow steps to assume SDL: "SDL is specific to a given body of knowledge and can be developed only after the learners have a mental map of the subject matter." In his book, he offered four main ideas about how adult education practitioners can help learners become more self-directed:

- Personal autonomy
- Self-management
- Learner control
- Learning opportunities in the ‘natural social setting’ (autodidaxy)

Since SDL is about the learner's exercising control over all educational decisions, one fully developed form of SDL can be when students critically examine and reflect about their

definitions of what they think it is important for them to learn, and the extent to which these definitions might be serving others' interests. Candy (1991) also mentioned that teachers should know how to foster SDL because inappropriate use of self-direction only belittles the educator and confuses the learner. Self-directed entails trusting people/learners to make decisions. Brockett & Hiemstra (1991) proposed an interesting model for SLD called the Personal Responsibility Orientation (PRO) model, which focuses on students who assume ownership for their own thoughts and actions. Only by accepting responsibility for one's own learning is it possible to take a proactive approach to the learning process. The role for educators of autonomous learners is to help them become increasingly able to assume personal responsibility for their own learning.

Another learning model of self-directedness was proposed by Grow (1991, 1994). It is known as Staged Self-Directed Learning (SSDL), which outlines how teachers can promote self-directed learning in their students. For example, a teacher may give a general learning goal, such as to learn about a geographical area. Students would then work with the teacher to decide the scope of the project, length of time, and the end result that would demonstrate their learning. By allowing students to choose different learning objectives and outcomes, students can choose based on their personal interests and strengths. According to Candy (1991), in order to cultivate a self-learning ability, students can the following:

- To set up an independent learning view: The initiative is the basic quality of self-study. Students must learn by themselves. If they lack learning consciousness of their own, self-study also cannot be sustained.
- To draw up a self-study plan: Without the learning plan, study is vulnerable to the interference of external factors and easy to be affected, and there is no plan to lack of

motivation for learning. Therefore, a clear learning objective and scientific study plan must be made according to their ability level. If they study on time every day, a self-study habit should be formed.

- To ensure self-study time: Students should make full use of spare time. The preview can be arranged before class. If students find some problems puzzled in self-study, they can listen to the teacher in class with a destination or address initiative questions. Thereby the class efficiency could be greatly improved.

II. Creative thinking

Creative thinking should be infiltrated into every aspect of teaching. Teachers should impart creative thinking methods to students during the period of knowledge teaching. When a teacher imparts students the basic knowledge, concept, and law, he should consciously analyze how the problems were proposed, analyzed and solved by predecessors. He should let the students experience the hardships of exploration and grasp the thinking and new ideas to create new concepts and new things. The teachers should address good questions and consciously inspire students to think independently by asking, for instance, thought-provoking, open-ended questions. This would be an easy way to encourage creative thinking in everyday learning.

Another way to approach creativity as a skill is to think of all the separate skills and thought patterns that contribute to a more creative life. According to Miriam Clifford (2000), divergent thinking can help foster creativity in children. Studied and researched by psychologists for decades, divergent thinking has been proven to boost positivity, unbiased thinking and greater openness to experience. When people are more open to new and unfamiliar experiences, research shows that they are also more likely to think creatively.

III. Self-organization

Self-organization is defined as an internal variation process, which is usually called "fluctuations" or "noise." According to Heinz von Foerster (1996), the processes produce a selective retained ordered configuration that has been called "order from noise." On the other hand, dynamical system theory shows another point of view on self-organization, which points out that learners construct their own knowledge from their experiences and modify them by their thoughts, ideas, and understandings as a result of the experiences that occur within a socio-cultural context. Haken and Kelso (1995) established two different forms of self-organization: self-organization and self-steering. The latter is presumed to occur in a biological and psychological context: “The major conceptual problem is to avoid that self-steering turns into the invocation of an unexplained intentional force that falls victim to many of the problems related to regular representation-based cognitive science "(Keijzer, 2001).

IV. Self-evaluation

Specific rubrics are recommended to apply self-evaluation since they are designed to help students in their self-reflection process. Each skill in the rubric should have questions to help understand what the skill means to be beginning, developing, and succeeding in each skill in order to identify progress or skills in which the student should work. It is recommended to make the self-evaluation one day per week, and it should contain the following pieces of information: (Idea taken from Physics 98: Introduction to Modeling, fall 2012 Self-Evaluation Rubric;

- The name of the class or topic you are evaluating
- The skill(s) you are evaluating

- Whether you think you are beginning, developing, or succeeding in each skill. This should be accompanied by evidence to support your decision (for example, an anecdote) and in what way you want to improve in each skill, together with how you will do that.

This will require the student to identify the change that they want to make, come up with a plan to implement that change, be consistent in their implementation, and frequently reassess how their change is working.

Below are some examples taken from Physics 98: Introduction to Modeling, Fall 2012 Self-Evaluation Rubric:

Table 1 Self-evaluation Rubric. Taken from: Bender, 2012

Primary Skills

Skill	Questions to ask yourself	Beginning	Developing	Succeeding
Persistence	• What do you do when you're frustrated? • Do you independently pursue understanding?	I tend to try one or two things. I give up more easily than I should.	I try to stick with things, but I sometimes feel unsuccessful. Sometimes I seek new approaches to help.	I look for new ways to think about the problem. I find a way to persist when appropriate.
Organization	• Do you keep accurate, thorough, and consistent records of work? • Do you submit materials in a timely manner? • Do you refer to your records to support conclusions?	There are significant gaps in my records, and/or I consistently forget to complete assignments on time.	I don't complete all assignments on time or I have no record of some of my work/activities. When I neglect to do something, I forget about it because it's too late.	I am timely and thorough with work and record-keeping. When I've neglected something, I correct my oversight quickly. My records are a valuable resource.
Connections	• Do you try to make connections with new people who might be able to help you in the future? • Do you make use of your connections when you need help?	I tend to go it alone.	I sometimes get help from other people, but only when I really need it. My network of supporters could be better developed.	I have a strong network of people who I go to regularly for help and support.
Self-compassion	• When you're having difficulty with something, how do you feel about yourself? • Do you make productive use of failure?	I have trouble with feeling like a failure, and these feelings often make me feel like giving up. I'm my own worst critic.	I am sometimes overly critical of myself. I tend to ignore feelings of failure rather than using them to improve.	I acknowledge my difficulty, but I don't let it define how I feel about myself. I act kindly towards myself and view failure as an opportunity for self-improvement.

Table 2 Self-evaluation Rubric. Taken from: Bender, 2012

Advanced Skills

Skill	Questions to ask yourself	Beginning	Developing	Succeeding
Courage	• How do you react to uncertainty? • What do you do when you feel overwhelmed? • Do you take intellectual risks?	I don't like to try things unless I'm reasonably certain what the outcome will be.	I take some risks, but I sometimes miss out on some good opportunities.	I make a decision to trust that I'll learn something from each experience, even if I'm unsure at times.
Mental Resourcefulness	• Where do you turn for new ideas? • Do you look for connections between ideas? • Do you apply past experiences to new situations?	When something feels unfamiliar, I often assume it's not useful.	There have been times when I disregarded new ideas before considering them fully. I don't often see connections between what I'm doing and what I've done.	I always try to consider things, even if they seem odd or surprising at first. I often relate new ideas to old ones.
Communication	• Can you clearly convey an idea to someone else using pictures, speech, or demonstrations? • Do you give examples that support your ideas? • Do you seek consistency in ideas?	It seems like others don't understand what I'm trying to say/convey most of the time. Once I try to communicate something, I move on to the next thing.	I can usually convey my ideas, but often others don't seem to understand what I'm trying to communicate. When the message doesn't get across, I might try one other way of communicating.	Communication is strength of mine. When I'm feeling misunderstood, I search for new ways to convey my point. I look back through my conclusions to make sure they're clear and consistent.
Diligent Skepticism	• How do you evaluate the quality of procedures? • Do you scrutinize sources of information and search for ways to test ideas? • Can you identify problems with procedure that lead to erroneous or incomplete conclusions?	Much of what I believe came from someone else directly. When someone sounds convincing, I trust that they are right.	I should ask more questions about information that I receive, and steps that I'm taking. Sometimes I discover that I've been lead down a path that I could have avoided with more thought, testing, and questioning.	I ask plenty of questions (to myself and others) and head off problems before they start.
Collaboration	• Are you respectful, supportive, and critical of peers? • Do you share your ideas with others? • Do you consider strategies employed by your peers for study, organization, and investigation?	Sometimes I either: don't participate; dominate the work, so that others might not feel like they have a role; or, distract others.	I'm great as either a leader or participant, but not both. I could be more mindful of the needs of others with whom I work. I try to learn from what others are doing.	I am an asset to any team. I know how to lead when appropriate, and how to support others when they take the lead. I think pretty much everyone has something to offer me.
Reflection	• Do you consider past experiences when making choices? • Do you reference prior work? • Are your reflections thoughtful and substantive?	Once I complete something, I usually just move on to the next thing, without thinking about how it went.	I don't always reflect after each science experience. I don't review my notes during and after a topic of study. I'm not great about considering how things went.	I squeeze every bit of learning from everything that I do by evaluating what happened. My notes are excellent, and I use them often to check on my ideas.

On the other hand, Charlotte Danielson, an international education consultant and presenter based in Princeton, N.J., advocates the view that all self-evaluation should have teacher feedback (2008) in order to obtain a second opinion. Besides, the teacher is the one who is observing the progress of the students and has the skills to know how to evaluate the student, so the teacher will be able to provide a positive feedback to him/her. The problem is that most teachers have difficulty finding time to give all students the feedback that they need when they need it. Fortunately, students themselves can be excellent sources of feedback. Under the right conditions, student self-assessment can provide accurate, useful information to promote learning. Below is an example in which teacher's feedback is included:

Table 3 Example of feedback provided by the teacher. Taken from: Wylie & Lyon, 2016

Descriptive Teacher Feedback (from Wylie & Lyon, 2016: p. 56)

Students should be provided with evidence-based feedback that is linked to the intended instructional outcomes and criteria for success. This dimension focuses on the teacher's role to provide individualized feedback to students. Research suggests that student learning improves when students are provided with descriptive feedback that is connected to clear targets and that provides guidance on how to improve work. The rubrics include three dimensions that address distinct aspects of feedback: this dimension is specific to more formal feedback that tends to be given to individual students on a specific piece of work, either in written form or orally (e.g., during student/teacher conferences) by the teacher. Feedback does not have to be always about work products – feedback can also be provided on student thinking represented orally as it is emerging. For this dimension, the focus is on the teacher as the provider of feedback (student-to-student feedback is in the Peer Assessment dimension) but in order for the higher levels of the rubric to apply there must be evidence that the students attend to the feedback by revising work.

1 Beginning	2 Developing	3 Progressing	4 Extending
The teacher provides evaluative feedback on a specific piece of work (e.g., a score, grade, or other summative feedback). *OR* Feedback seems disconnected to the intended learning goals. ☐	The teacher provides descriptive feedback on a specific piece of work that supports the learning goals and/or reflects the criteria for success. ☐	The teacher provides descriptive feedback on a specific piece of work that supports the learning goals and/or reflects the criteria for success. ☐	The teacher provides descriptive feedback on a specific piece of work that supports the learning goals and/or reflects the criteria for success. ☐
Corrective feedback does all the thinking for the students; subsequent student actions consist solely of following directions. ☐	Corrective feedback sometimes does all the thinking for the students; other times it appropriately scaffolds the next steps that students are to take. ☐	Corrective feedback appropriately scaffolds the next steps students are to take, pointing out one or more areas to work on, followed by a suggestion, reminder, or question to elicit further learning from the students. ☐	Corrective feedback appropriately scaffolds the next steps students are to take, pointing out one or more areas to work on, followed by a suggestion, reminder, or question to elicit further learning from the students. ☐
The teacher does not have a systematic approach for providing feedback to most or all students. ☐	It is unclear whether the teacher has a systematic approach for providing feedback to most or all students. ☐	It is unclear whether the teacher has a systematic approach for providing feedback to most or all students. ☐	It is clear that the teacher has a systematic approach for providing feedback to most or all students. ☐
There is no opportunity for students to review the feedback, ask questions in order to internalize the feedback, or apply the feedback to their work in meaningful ways. ☐	There is little or no opportunity for students to review the feedback, ask questions in order to internalize the feedback, or apply the feedback to their work in meaningful ways. ☐	Students are provided with limited structures and supports (e.g., limited time is provided or students are confused about the process) to review the feedback, ask questions in order to internalize the feedback, or apply the feedback to their work in meaningful ways. ☐	Students are provided with ample structures and supports (e.g., time, feedback structures, etc.) to review the feedback, ask questions in order to internalize the feedback, or apply the feedback to their work in meaningful ways. ☐

Some benefits to the teacher who applies self-evaluation rubrics are:

- It is a way for teachers to monitor the progress of their students in general education classes, whom they may not see on a regular basis and/or on projects and other experiences.
- It can provide information about a student's strengths, interests, preferences, and needs.
- It accesses information about the student from activities and projects from classes that may be related to postsecondary goals.
- It facilitates communication between the special education and general education teacher.

Following are some benefits to the student who applies self-evaluation rubrics:

- It actively involves the student in the assessment process.
- It encourages self-determination and self-advocacy skills.
- It increases responsibility for the student's own learning.
- It increases critical thinking skills.
- It allows students to monitor and reflect on their progress.
- It helps students see how their involvement in the class/project/activity connects to future post-school goals.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

This chapter is focused on the methodology, scope, and type of investigation that will be applied throughout the research process. It is important to take into account that the steps of the action plan can be adopted during the investigation in solving the research problem. This chapter will also include the instruments that are going to be used in order to get the students expectations which is improving Oral Skills in Students at FUNDATEC.

3.1 Research Approach

A qualitative approach is a general way of analyzing about conducting qualitative research. It describes, either explicitly or implicitly the stages of the research project and the data analysis method, which can be one of these four: ethnography, phenomenology, field research, and grounded theory. M.K (2006)

The present study will include a qualitative approach using the phenomenology method in order to provide a better understanding of the categories in this investigation. This approach will also allow the student-researcher to collect data through instruments by observing the behavior of the students during this process. In addition, a pre-test will be applied to check the students' current performance. More precisely, a re-call exercise will be applied which results will be useful to identify the students' English proficiency level. Following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the researchers can determine how many students are closer to achieving the goal.

Moreover, it is important to mention that applying a qualitative approach should create a natural environment for the observer and the students to voice their opinions and explore the situation at hand. According to FoodRisc (2016), not only will the teacher be able to recognize how to help students, the student will also be able to achieve the particular goal. In line with this idea, qualitative research can also help to understand why certain things happen. Based on Mozyrko (2015), quantitative data will provide the "what and why" needed to make an informed decision. For example, while the student-researcher is interviewing a student to gather qualitative data, the rest of the group can fill out a survey that would provide more details to uncover said "what and why."

3.2 Research Method

As mentioned above, phenomenology is the method that will be followed in this research project. According to M.K (2006), this method is sometimes considered a philosophical perspective, as well as an approach to qualitative methodology, emphasizing a focus on people's subjective experiences and interpretations of the world. This means that phenomenology seeks to understand how the world appears to others.

The researchers applied metacognitive strategies to improve the oral skills of 20 students at FUNDATEC. It focused on experiences and events as they were taking place; in other words, the results were obtained by observing activities in real time. For example, Easterby-Smith, M, Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P. (2008) explained phenomenological researchers view participants as "co-researchers" and, in many cases, review their assessment of an experience with the participants as this is an essential step in the analysis of meaning. Following this idea, an interview was conducted after each activity by running a self-report (written or oral) in order to have the students observe their own behavior. In short, the students will be able to recognize the

way in which they are learning and improving their skills to facilitate the identification of improved areas in the analysis review.

3.3 Information Sources

Data collection will be done through both secondary and primary sources. Primary data sources include key informants for each case study. In addition, a case study which explored the impact of metacognitive reading strategies on the ability of five college students in developmental courses to self-regulate while reading by Susan Nash-Ditzel (2008) Instruction in reading strategies derived from past research on metacognition was scaffolded. Based on Pearson and Gallagher's (1983). In addition, the study conducted by Cerón Sánchez (29 may. 2015) contributed greatly to improve the development of the four skills of the English language, especially speaking which is the center of attention of this study.

Furthermore, to study the effect of applying metacognitive strategies in autonomous learning to improve the oral skills of the students at FUNDATEC, the following sources were used to collect the data:

- *Book of Meta-Cognition*: A Recent Review of Research, Theory and Perspectives by Shaughnessy, Michael F.; Veenman, Marcel V. J.and Nova Science Publishers, Inc. 2008
- *Book of Thinking about Thinking*: Metacognition for Music Learning by Benton, Carol R&L Education 2014
- *Book of Intuition and Metacognition in Medical Education*: Keys to Developing Expertise Quirk, Mark Springer Publishing Company 2006.

- *Book of Managing Challenging Behaviors in Schools*: Research-based Strategies that Work by Holly Mariah Menzies,Allison L. Bruhn The secondary data sources are the students at FUNDATEC whose reports will be collected during this research, along with the valuable insights from the research-specific activities.

3.4 Analysis Categories

This research will apply some informative questions to determine the students' knowledge on metacognitive strategies. Similarly, to explore the students´ metacognitive strategies, researchers used Oxford's 1990 Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) for speakers of other languages learning English, which is a language learning strategy instrument. A re-call exercise will also be applied to determine the students' English speaking proficiency level.

Another important category is observation. This study will include three observations of the participants before applying the metacognitive strategies. The purpose of this is to get familiar with the particular goal of each student and obtain more information about their behavior, commitment to the learning process, and perspectives that students have towards the language.

After getting the results of the above categories, each student will be required to have an organizer or agenda. This way, each of them will make their own self-evaluation report, which will be completed after each activity, to facilitate the collecting of results from the student's self-perceived deficiencies in oral skills.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The first instrument that will be used is the pre-test in which a re-call exercise will be applied to determine the level of English of each student. This included strategies such as monitoring and evaluating. The second instrument or category is the oral interview, which consists of some informative questions to determine how much students use the target language out of the class. Each question will also help the student-researcher to observe the English level of each student such as A1 to C2, using a Cambridge rubric based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR - Council of Europe).

The self-evaluation report as a category will show the student's expectations. However, each report will be produced based on the students' needs. To have an idea of what the self-evaluation report will be like, it will have its own rubric or checklist showing divisions, each with its corresponding assigned work. The students will evaluate themselves by answering on a five-point scale: excellent, very good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or failing. Also, it will have a blank space for the teacher to write notes or recommendations related to each component. On the other hand, the student organizer will have different time tables for the students to do each homework assignment accordingly. These organizers will be checked once the results of the questionnaires and interviews are obtained.

Below is an example of a self-evaluation report;

	Communication, comprehensibility	**Vocabulary**	**Structure**	**Content**	**Level**
Excellent	Very effectively communicated, appropriate	Broad vocabulary; extensive and effective use of studied words	No significant errors, control of grammatical structures studied	Appropriate to task, many supporting details; exceeds all requirements	Exceeds all level expectations; creates with language

Very good	Effectively communicated, appropriate	Generally accurate with some errors; adequate use of studied words	Generally accurate; few significant errors in areas studied	Sufficient for task, adequate supporting details; meets all requirements	Meets all level expectations completely
Satisfactory	Some ideas clear, some difficulties	Errors in vocabulary interfere with communication	Several significant errors in areas studied	Limited, somewhat incomplete; meets most requirements	Meets most level expectations
Unsatisfactory	Unclear, significant difficulties	Inadequate, repetitive or incorrect vocabulary	Constant patterns of error in areas studied	Lacking, incomplete; meets few requirements	Minimally meets some level expectations; overly simple

Taken from Jeanne Mullaney. Community College of Rhode Island

T-8 Charlotte Gifford, Greenfield Community College

3.6 Data Collection Process and Analysis

In order to perform the data analysis, a report will be presented to evaluate activities in real time. Once the results of the questionnaires and the interviews are obtained, a list will be created specifying the possible candidates likely to succeed during this study. The data analysis results will focus on the following aspects: Oral and writing communication

- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Self-regulation
- Adaptability
- Resilience
- Vision for the future

Metacognitive skills will help students solve problems and better perform their tasks. They are also more likely to learn effectively than those who lack these skills. Because of students at FUNDATEC both work and study, the below metacognitive strategies will be applied

in class activities to successfully juggle study and work. By the end of this research, all 18 students' expectations are to be met.

- Planning as a metacognitive strategy

This strategy will develop skills such us: Advance organizers and Self-management by creating a student-organizer as agenda that will help students to manage their time. Also, the organizer will have the topics that will be covered in the next class since the teacher will provide them within a framework, through which the day's lesson can be understood. Students know what to expect or what to look for when they encounter new information. At this stage in the learning process, students make connections between their prior knowledge and the new information that they are learning. The advanced organizer allows them to effectively organize and understand what they have learned. It should make note-taking much more effective. It is important to point out that the student's organizer will have all the tasks that are going to be applied in this research, so that the students are able to organize their time by establishing the priorities.

- Monitoring as a metacognitive strategy

This strategy will develop such skills as self-monitoring and self-regulating.

In order to improve oral English skills, the students are to develop the above skills by adding self-monitoring exercises to their schedules. It must be a line in their student-organizer.

In line with this idea, the students will have the ability to think about why something (a strategy?) is not working and then take actions to help them solve that problem, so they have to think about thinking. For example, if a student says a sentence with a grammar mistake or

pronounces a word incorrectly, they will be asked to notice and recognize the mistake by themselves as they produce it, so they go back and produce it again until they make sense of it. However, other students do not automatically use such strategies. They do not consciously or spontaneously monitor their own cognitive processes. For this reason, self-observing and audio recording will be some of the assignments that the students will have during this research.

According to Fish and Mendola (1986), the teacher should firstly identify the target behavior by making a list of all possible target behaviors in order to collect and summarize data on these behaviors. Then the student needs to determine if the target behavior did or did not occur. He or she can either record the number of occurrences of a target behavior to be decreased or to be increased (e.g., time on task). After that, the student and teacher together determine an acceptable number of occurrences and reinforcement for obtaining the agreed upon number. Later, the student will be able to do a self-evaluation of the audio recording based on the criteria established by the student and the teacher (e.g., reading a paragraph with his/her best pronunciation.)

Because communication is not just about speaking but also listening, the students will develop listening skills as well by reading a written piece aloud, or they can use audiobooks. They can listen to or read along with audiobooks to hear how the speaker pronounces and enunciates different words or phrases. This activity can be applied during the student's break (e.g., on their way home.) Reading regularly is considered to be the best practice that can enhance basic oral communication skills, so the students will try to read as much as they can. They can read newspapers, magazines, novels, fiction, and the like. It will help them to improve vocabulary skills.

The students will also be asked to watch movies and news in the target language in order to help them enhance their communication skills. Good quality movies can help in improving accent and sentence construction. The teacher will reinforce these practices by conducing team-building activities and having the class discuss or share their opinions, take turns, and work together towards a common goal. During these activities, the teacher will record the students' grammar mistakes. As a result, the student will be able to evaluate their mistakes to avoid them in the next time. Checking or evaluation as a metacognitive strategy

This strategy will enhance their self-evaluation abilities. In order to apply this strategy, the teacher should take special notice of (and record) the information which is particularly important to them. Based on Fish and Mendola (1986), self-evaluation is similar to self-monitoring in that both strategies require students to record their performance within specified intervals. Following this idea, the students will have their own self-evaluation report which will help them to identify areas of good practice (??) and areas for improvement. Also, they will perceive the experience in class by determining how effectively they are learning, so the quality deficiencies in oral skills will be easily detected. It is also important to mention that the teacher should provide the criteria by which the students will be evaluated just so they are on the same page, and said criteria may include comprehensibility, vocabulary, and content structure, although they will vary based on the activity applied.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

Since students at FUNDATEC are not fully dedicated to learning and they require foreign language proficiency, metacognitive strategies were applied such as evaluation, monitoring, and planning. The students who participated in this research project were fully committed to taking responsibility for their own learning in order to get a successful result. It should be taken into account that they receive only four training hours per week, which is not enough for them to practice the oral skills.

In this analysis, we observed that many students were not aware of metacognitive strategies, so we tried to develop them in the students in order to enhance autonomous learning using metacognitive strategies. With this in mind, specific activities were organized for them to work in groups, and assistance and instructions were provided to them before they talked, so they could know what to discuss in their groups, analyze how to talk, recall some useful language with the same semantic meaning, and facilitate their oral production within the established timeframe. Metacognitive knowledge can be accumulated by developing experience.

The participants in this study were 20 students (5 males and 15 females), all part of the second of an intensive, four-level English program at FUNDATEC. Generally speaking, the students were at the intermediate level of English: intermediate (N=17) and lower intermediate (N=3). Metacognitive Strategies were applied under the supervision of their teacher Diego Bolaños.

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The analysis and interpretation of the results have been carried out in four phases. The first part was based on the results of the pre-test. The students were given some general instructions to do a re-call exercise in order to verify the level of English of each student. This included strategies such as monitoring and evaluating. The second phase was focused on the results of the self-evaluation rubric, which was based on a five-point scale: excellent, very good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or failing. Also, the teacher gave them recommendations associated with each component.

The third phase was based on the results of the student organizer/agenda. The students were given a time table that showed scheduled homework, tests, topics, and activities to be covered during the course. The purpose was to obtain better results in the exercise by making the students aware of what they needed to do and what would be covered in the following classes. Doing so significantly helped them to improve in the language and proved to be advantageous for the next class. Finally, the fourth phase was based on the results of the post-test. It consisted of an oral interview to verify the progress of the English speaking skills of each student.

4.1.1 Observation

This involved a total of four 120-minute sessions, and the results were based on a qualitative interpretation in which observation was the most valuable instrument. Instruments and results are going to be shown in charts for a better understanding of the information obtained

from the students' oral performance. The charts will reflect the achievement that participants obtained through the application of the instruments to assess their oral performance.

4.1.1.1 Observation of the class

There were 20 students in class for the June 15th 2018 observation, led by teacher Diego Bolaños, who happens to have studied English in the United States and who has taught at FUNDATED since 2017.The teacher started by checking attendance and then checking the homework orally. Many of the students showed good fluency while reading the answers. However, some of the students neither spoke nor read well. The teacher provided a great deal of oral practice for these students to participate more and gain confidence. Besides, some students appeared to be very organized and used appropriate vocabulary and grammar structures based on their proficiency level. The teacher used a task-based approach, which focused on using the target language while making students more independent of the teacher. According to teacher Diego, this method forces students to communicate the message as best as they can.

There is a positive environment in the classroom, which allows for students to work very amicably. The students were also constantly asking the teacher questions, which he politely answered at all times. In fact, he took the time to go to the board many times to explain the same topic in different ways until he made sure that the students were clear about it. Upon first glance, it is evident that there is a friendly relationship between teacher and students. Three hours later, the students took their break time, which they spent in the classroom speaking with the teacher about some questions that they had regarding grammar. At the end, the teacher wraps up the class by reinforcing topics with which students may be having difficulty.

It is important to point out that teachers at this institute do not create the lesson plan as they have to follow the FUNDATEC-approved program. The teacher uses a book as guide to specify the lesson that they should be working on, together with the accompanying activies. However, sometimes teachers bring different activities that are not in the book since they are free to adjust the lesson plans if necessary as long as they follow the book. FUNDATEC offers an English program based on the book American English Files by Oxford University Press.

Below are the results based on the class-observation checklist:

Area	**Rubric**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1. Classroom Management	a. Teacher seems to understand and put in practice all the components needed for effective classroom management. (Assigns enough work to the students, the level of difficulty of the tasks assigned is appropriate, demonstrates consistency in dealing with students' misbehavior, enforces rules, etc.)	X		
	b. Class rules are established and are clear to all students.	X		
	c. Teacher establishes routines, assigns appropriate time for classroom tasks and manages materials and time effectively.			X
	d. Teacher interactions are caring and respectful at all times.	X		
2. Planning for Instruction	a. Teacher follows the institution's planning format appropriately.	X		
	b. Teacher writes an effective lesson plan.			X
			X	

	c. Teacher plans meaningful activities that are appropriate to the linguistic objectives.			
	d. Teacher incorporates the use of the available technologies (when existing) and he-she is able to impact student learning through their use.	X		
	a. Teacher implements lesson plans and demonstrates mastery of content.			X
	b. Teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies and groupings appropriate to goals and objectives. Students are engaged in productive activities and tasks.	X		
	c. Teacher asks questions to students that require the use of higher level thinking skills and uses sufficient waiting time.			X
	d. Teacher makes accommodations, adaptations and extension activities for students with special needs.		X	
	a. Teacher uses a variety of student assessment that is appropriate to content and institutional needs.	X		
	b. Teacher clearly explained and communicated assessment criteria to students.		X	
	c. Teacher provides effective and clear feedback to students.	X		
	d. Teacher uses any kind of self-assessment techniques to evaluate and improve instruction.			X
	a. Teacher practices effective human relations and communication skills with colleagues, parents and students.	X		
	b. Teacher demonstrates professional behaviour: Punctuality, hygiene, positive attitude, acceptance of positive criticism and implementation of recommendations.	X		
	c. Teacher shows sensitivity toward individual students' needs.	X		

	d. Teacher spoken and written language is clear and accurate. Displays good listening skills.	X		
	e. Teacher models respect for diversity within the school community.	X		

Checklist adapted by Katherine Matarrita (2018). Taken from Didactics Class

Based on the class observation, it is clear that there is not enough time to clarify all students' questions. The purpose of this study was to apply metacognitive strategies in order to meet the students' expectations. They wanted to be able to communicate their ideas in English correctly, taking advantage of the little time that they had. Also, after the observation, students were interviewed orally to determine their existing learning style and attitude. It was important in terms of the metacognitive strategies that were going to be applied in the class.

The questions asked are as follows:

1. What do you feel and think about your English learning?
2. Are you active in learning English out of the class?
3. Do you plan your English learning activities in your free time?
4. Do you reflect on and evaluate your English learning?
5. How do you motivate yourself to study English hard?
6. What are your most important English learning strategies?

7. What are your expectations in English learning?

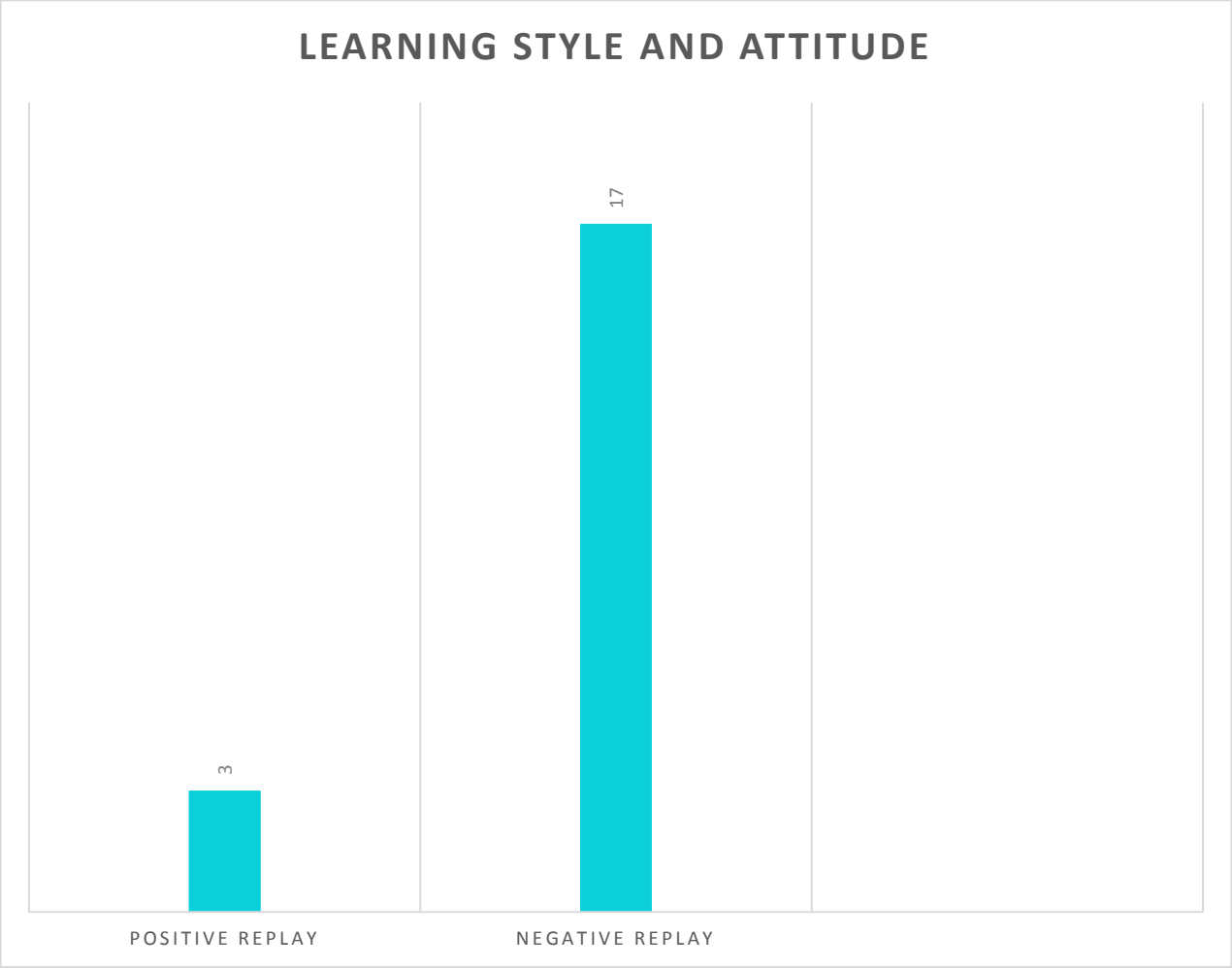


Figure 1 Students learning style and attitude. Source: Researcher's own creation.

The survey on equality perception produced a result of 20 students, of which 17 responded negatively, while only 3 of them gave a positive reply. In other words, most of the students stated that they were inactive in their English learning activities out of the class, mainly focusing on their jobs. Also, many students were not satisfied with their English language competence especially with their speaking skills, and all of the students were looking forward to a better mode of learning the English language.

4.1.2 Pre-test

In order to verify the English level of each student, a re-call exercise was applied as a pre-test on June 15th, 2018. There were 20 students in the class on the day that the test was given. For this exercise, the students watched a video about "Fashion and Shopping", a topic that they had reviewed earlier in the course. The video was downloaded from the American English File website, only available for authorized teachers. It is part of Chapter IV.

It is important to mention that, before the pre-test, the teacher wanted to reinforce the vocabulary and verbs covered in the previous class, so he made groups of four in which each group was given a set of cards with regular past verbs and a small board that had the ending sound of the verbs' pronunciation. The students had to shuffle their cards, pick one, and turn it over. They had to pronounce it using the correct pronunciation (/t/ /d/ /Id/) and put the card back in its corresponding place. This activity took around 15 minutes.

Eventually, this was a strategy to let them practice before the application of the pre-test in order to make them feel confident to do the pre-test. After the teacher reviewed this vocabulary with the students, the student researcher explained the instructions of the pre-test, which happened to make some of the students nervous; however, they were informed that it was just practice to start working on their oral skills, and they liked it.

Then the students watched a video about "Fashion and Shopping." After watching it, the students were allowed to write down a few keywords or main ideas of what they had just watched. Then, they proceeded to read what they wrote for 10 minutes in order to help them to remember what they were going to recall about the video. As long as they were making an effort

to do the recall portion, then they were benefiting from the exercise. After that, each student said what the video was about. Each student took about 7 minutes.

During the re-call exercise, the researcher observed the students' pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, knowledge, body language, and fluency. The researcher also noticed something interesting: There were two types of students in the class, the ones who were monitoring themselves, noticing and recognizing mistakes as they made them, and the other ones who had very good fluency when speaking but were not able to recognize their own mistakes. Another important observation was that many of the students needed improvement in their English pronunciation. Some of them had difficulty understanding, spoke softly, and pronounced their sentences unclearly. Others had outstanding pronunciation, which did not hinder communication, and struggled with very particular sounds only.

At the end of the class, students were given a timetable that showed scheduled homework, tests, topics, and activities to be covered during the course in order to make them aware of what had to be done and what was expected of them for the next class and help them to be ready throughout the learning process.

The scoring was done using specific proficiency levels, which were taken from Avant APT Proficiency Levels & Rubric/Scoring Guide (2018). For more details, the reader is asked to see the Appendixes section.

Based on Figure 2, from the 20 students, 10 of them have an intermediate level of English proficiency with some evident accuracy and possible errors that do not affect the overall meaning. However, after a bit of practice, they did not need to physically take notes and just do the recall portion in their head, and they communicated the message as best as they could.

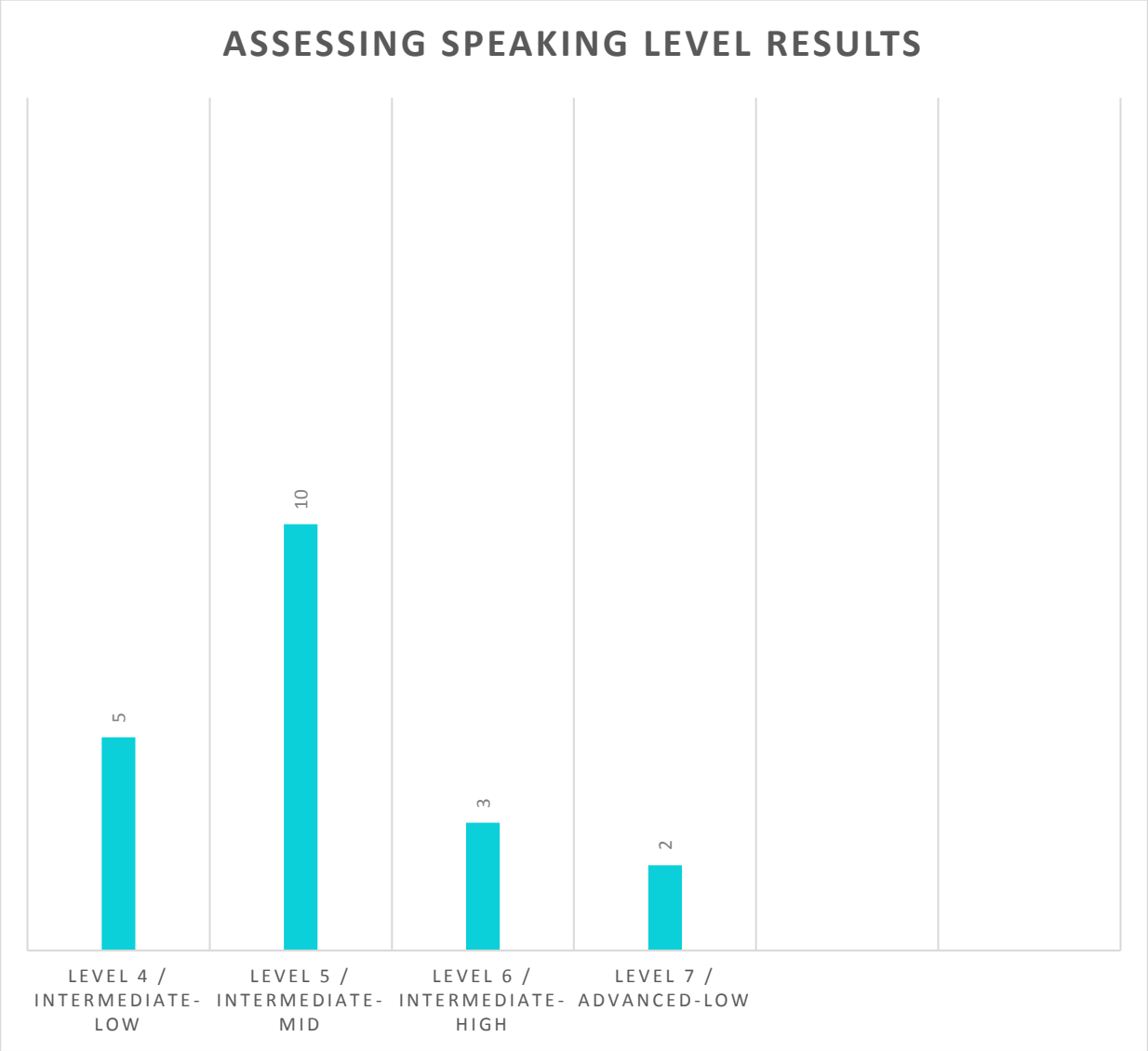


Figure 2 Pre-test Speaking Level results

The following figure shows how students performed in pronunciation. In general many of them made a great deal of mistakes. Only 3 of the participants did an excellent good job; this means there was a student who had full awareness of his/her mistakes and corrected them immediately. On the other hand, there were 13 students who needed improvement when speaking in the target language.

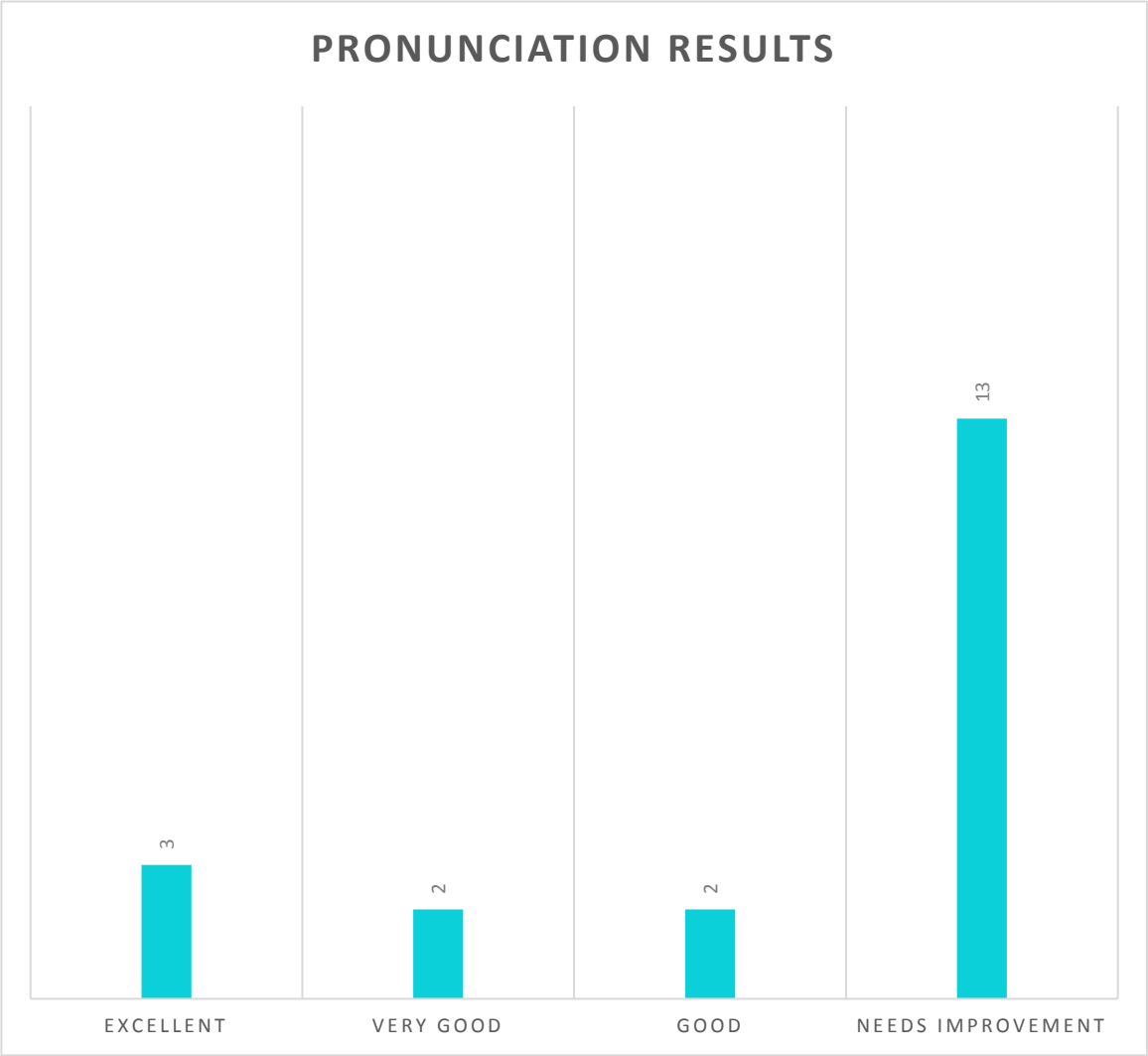


Figure 3 Students´ pronunciation results

Regarding grammar, the following figure shows how 18 students had an outstanding grammar structure. Only 2 of them had difficulty understanding and had a hard time communicating their ideas and responses because of their grammar mistakes.

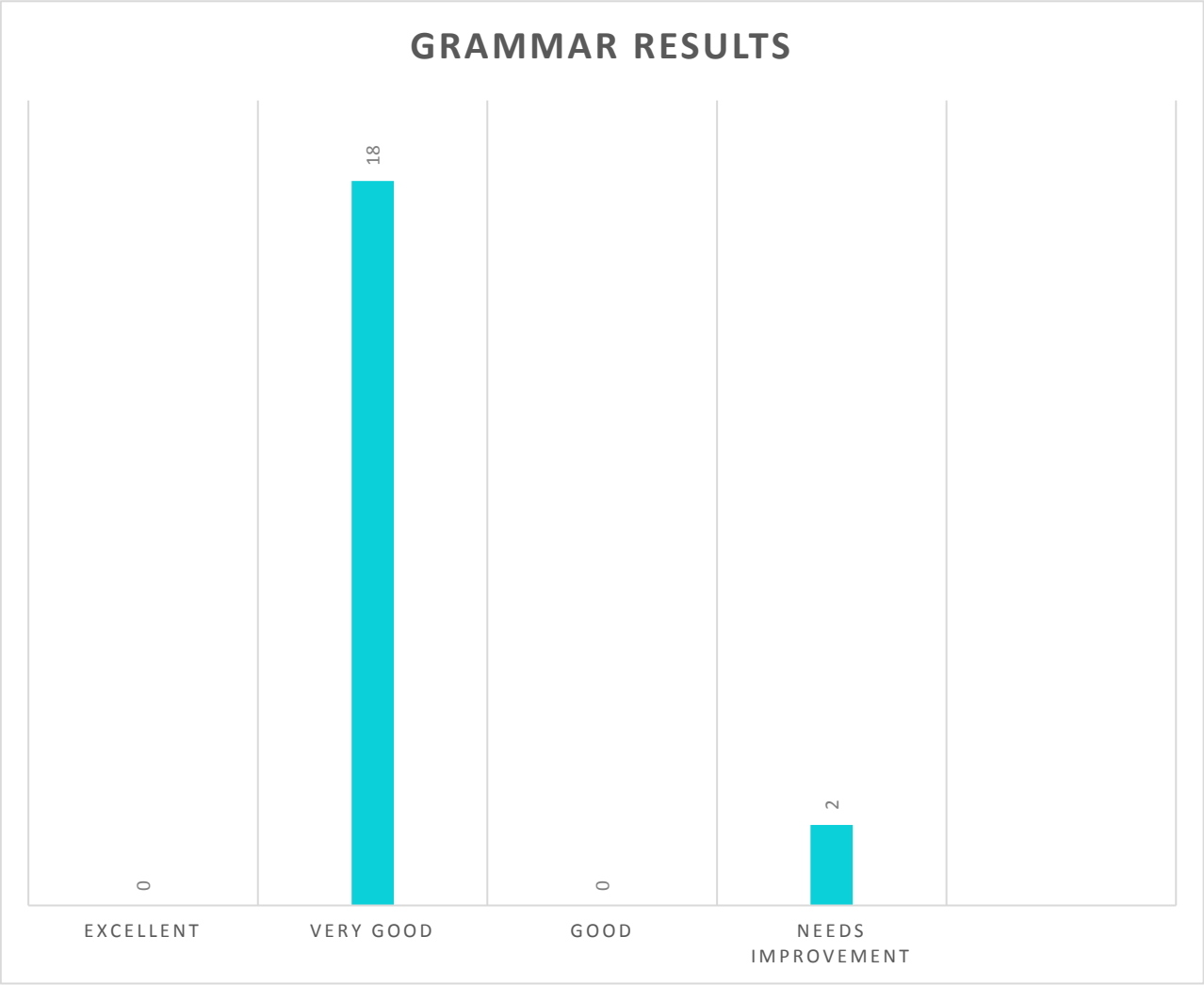


Figure 4 Student's grammar results

Regarding vocabulary, most students did an excellent job. They looked very confident about expressing their ideas. They utilized the words learned in class, in an accurate manner, as well as expressions appropriate to the context. According to the teacher, he would apply one quiz per week containing questions related to the vocabulary only, thus forcing the students to study

the vocabulary. He also did activities during the class to reinforce the vocabulary and its pronunciation.

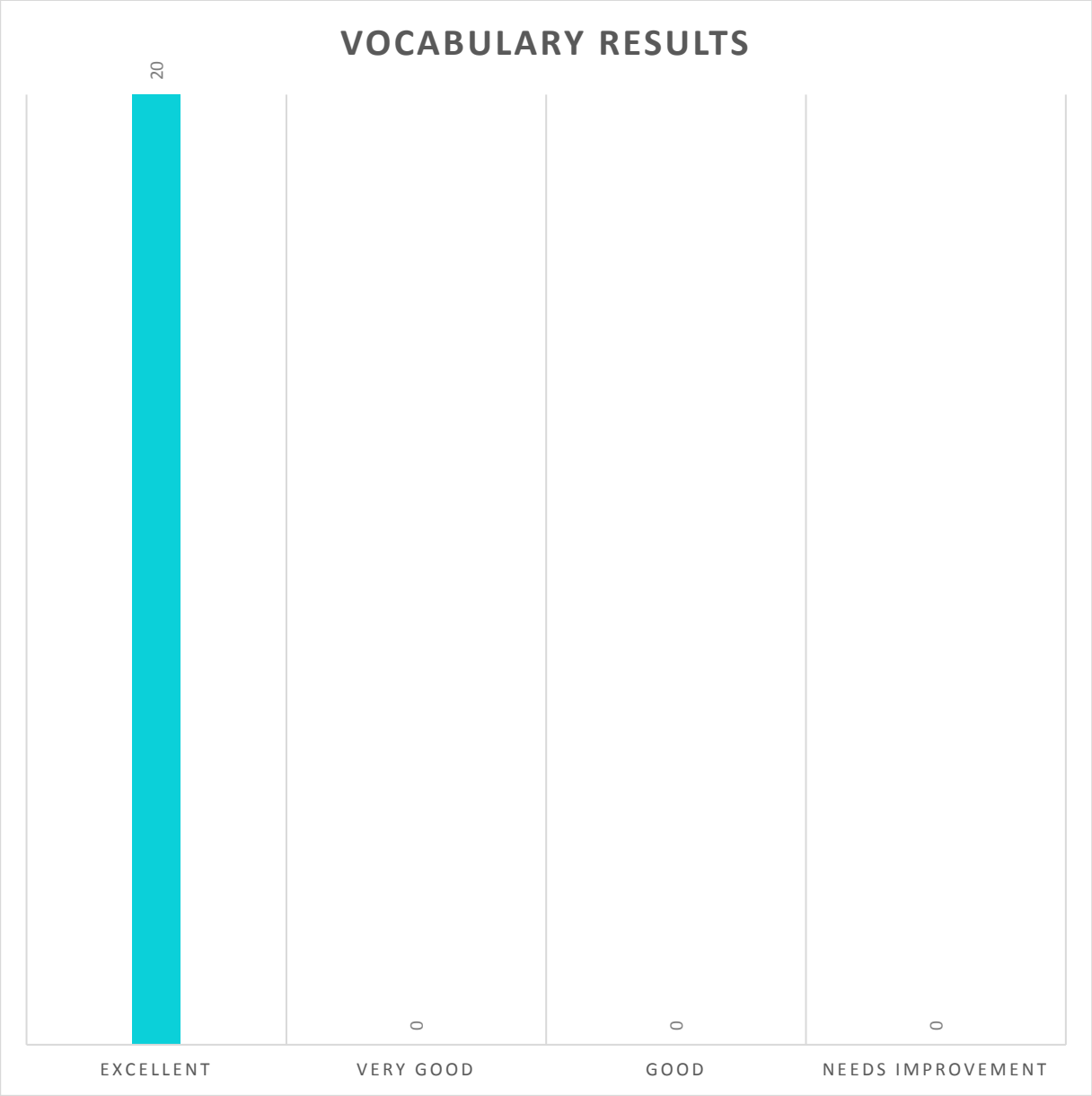


Figure 5 Students' vocabulary results

Regarding fluency, 3 of them had very slow speech, stumbling upon words and feeling nervous and uncertain of the response, except for short or memorized expressions. However, 15 of the students did an excellent job: Their speech was effortless and smooth, with a rate similar to that of a native speaker knowledgeable about the topic at hand. In other words, they paid

attention to the video. However, the researcher noticed that 5 of the students did not show their ideas using their body language. See the below figure for more details.

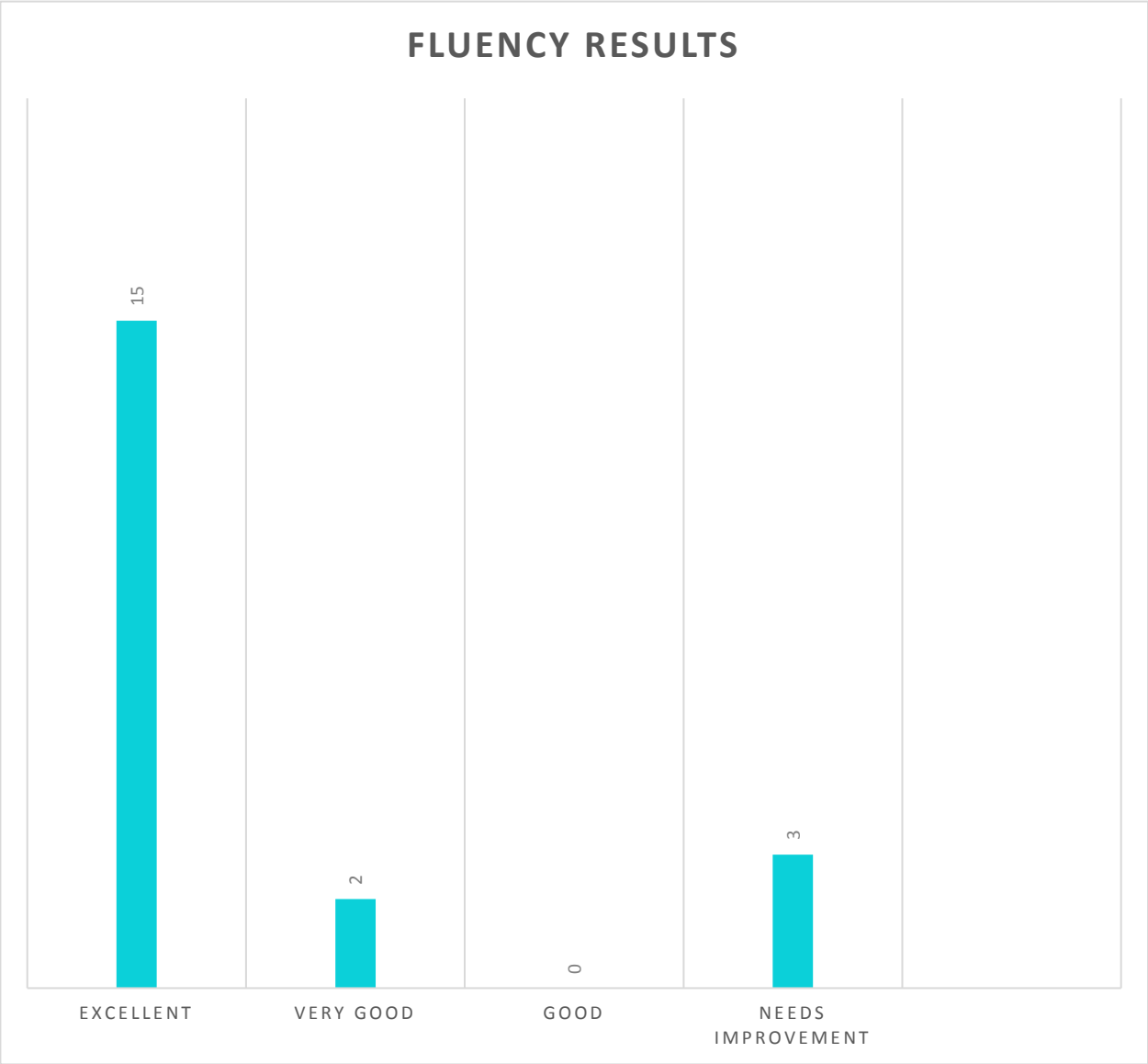


Figure 6 Students' fluency results

4.1.3 The self-evaluation

There were 20 students in the class on the application day scheduled for June 23rd, 2018. Self-evaluation rubrics were given at the beginning of the assignment, which consisted of preparing a presentation about a seasonal fashion collection using vocabulary already covered in previous classes. The participants were divided into 2 groups. The first group was given the rubric along with the assignment brief. The rubric was used only after students had done their oral presentation. They had 40 minutes in total distributed in 20 minutes for making the presentation and 20 minutes for presenting it in from of the class.

After each oral presentation, the students had 15 minutes to do the self-evaluation rubric by answering based on a five-point scale: excellent, very good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or failing. Later, the researcher did an oral interview to know the students' reactions and experiences when using rubrics. It was found that students in both groups would like to use the rubric again in the future. Also, students gave positive responses when rubrics were given at the beginning of the assignment.

The following figure shows the students' perceptions towards the use of the rubric in which the three items that students agreed with the most were the second, third and fourth question. More specifically, the majority of students claimed that they would like to know the criteria of the rubric before the day of the presentation. This may be because they can be even more prepared for the oral presentation. In addition, the majority of participants agreed that the rubric helped them to know the course expectations and self-assess their presentation skills. Furthermore, some of them showed that they would like to be involved in the process of creating the rubric used in the classrooms. The last question received the most disagreement from the participants, the one on whether they wanted their teacher to show them their weaknesses so they

did not have the use the rubric. In other words, students had an overall positive perception towards the use of rubrics in their classroom.

Other benefits that students claimed to have received from the implementation of the self-evaluation were that they believed that they had learned much more when they used this kind of rubrics because it helped them to enhance their learning.

The rubric used for the pre-test was taken from Rubric: Grading Criteria for English Speaking (2017). For more details, the reader is asked to see the Appendixes section.

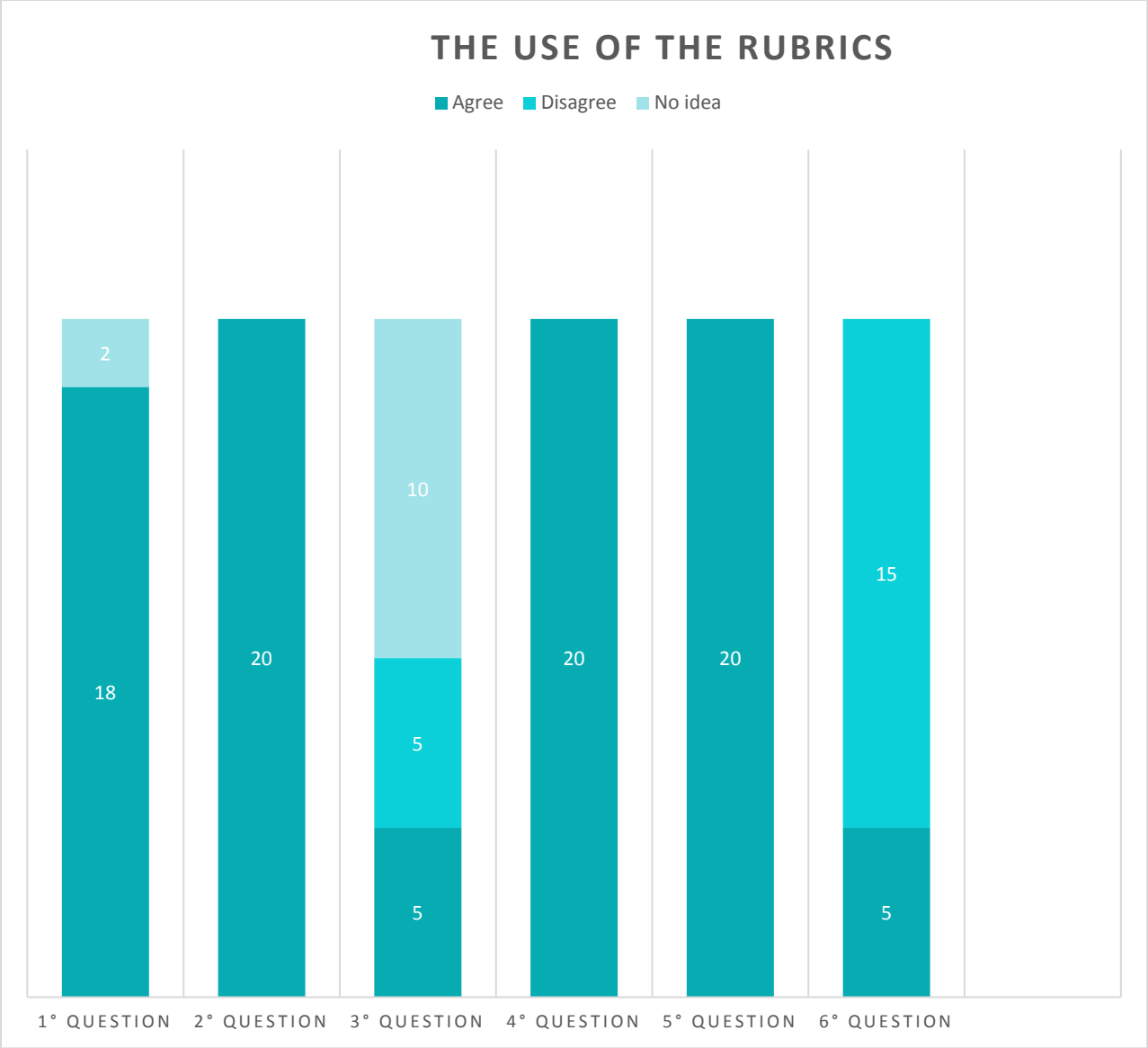


Figure 7 the Students' perceptions towards the use of rubric

Below are the statements related to the above figure:

1. I would like to know the criteria of the rubric before the presentation day.
2. It enables me to know the course expectations and self-assess my skills and presentation performance.
3. I would like to discuss with my friends and my teacher how to create the rubric.

4. I feel that it is easy for me to use the rubric.
5. Teacher must review the rubric with students before the assignment.
6. I just want my teacher to show me my weaknesses, so I don't want to use the rubric.

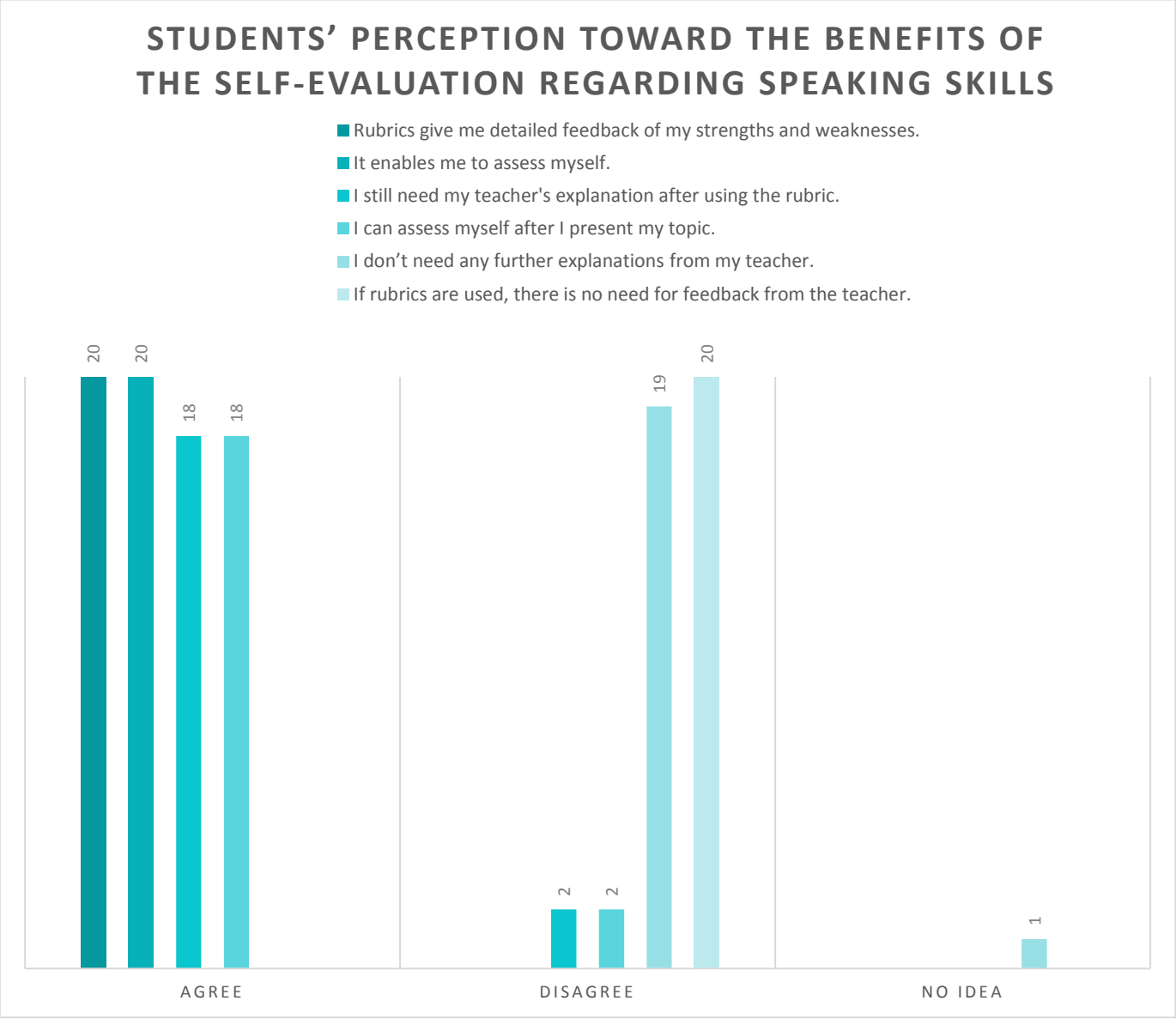


Figure 8 Students' perception toward the benefits of the self-evaluation regarding speaking skills

Based on the above figure, the last two questions show the disagreement from the participants. In other words, students did not think that rubrics can completely replace the role of teacher feedback. In general, the results showed that the students are well-aware of the benefits that a rubric brings them in the process of evaluating their oral skills. However, they do not deny the roles of the teacher in helping them to improve their oral performance via his or her feedback and explanations.

The following figure reveals the students' perception towards the difficulties of their Speaking Self-Assessment.

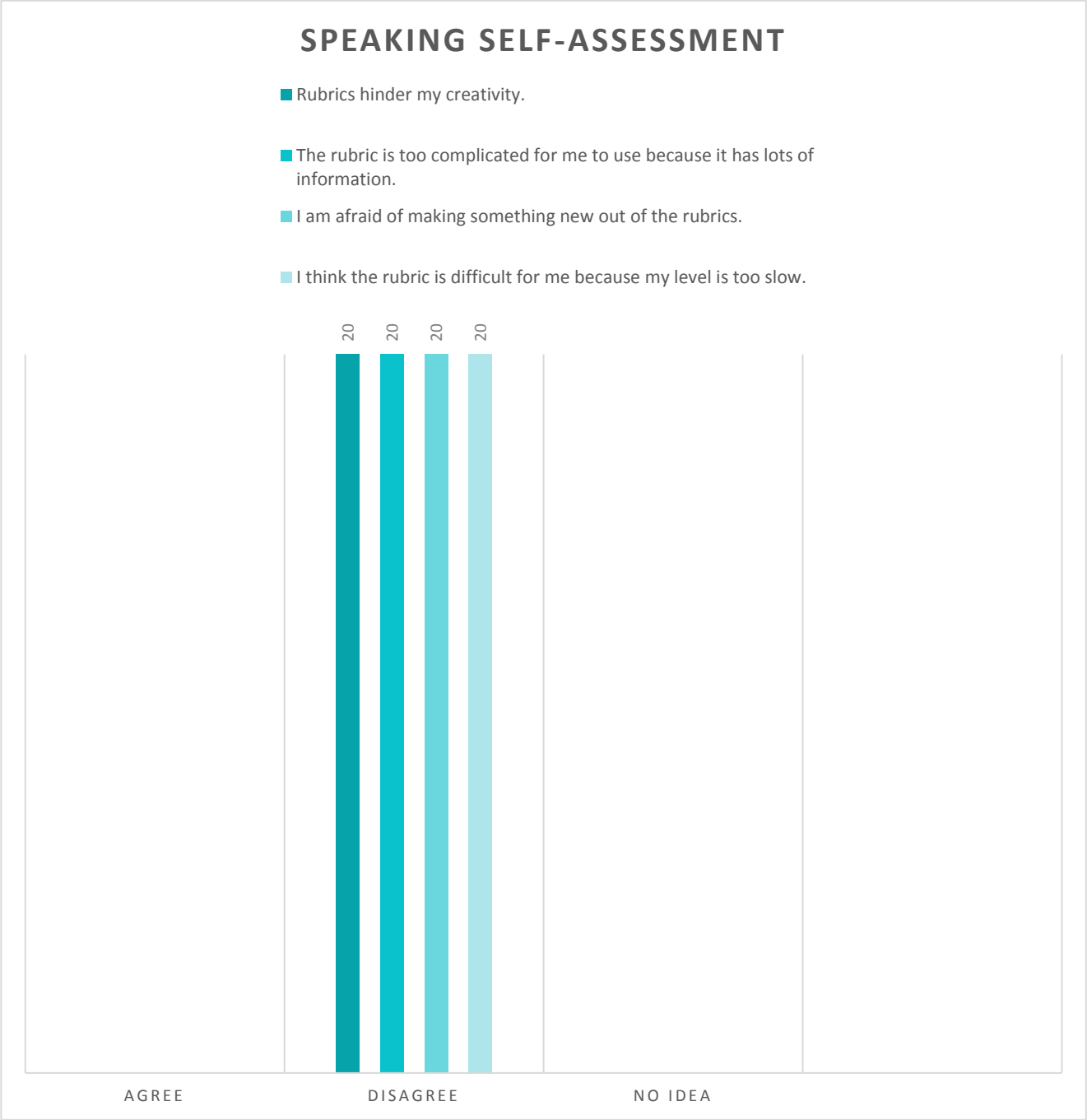


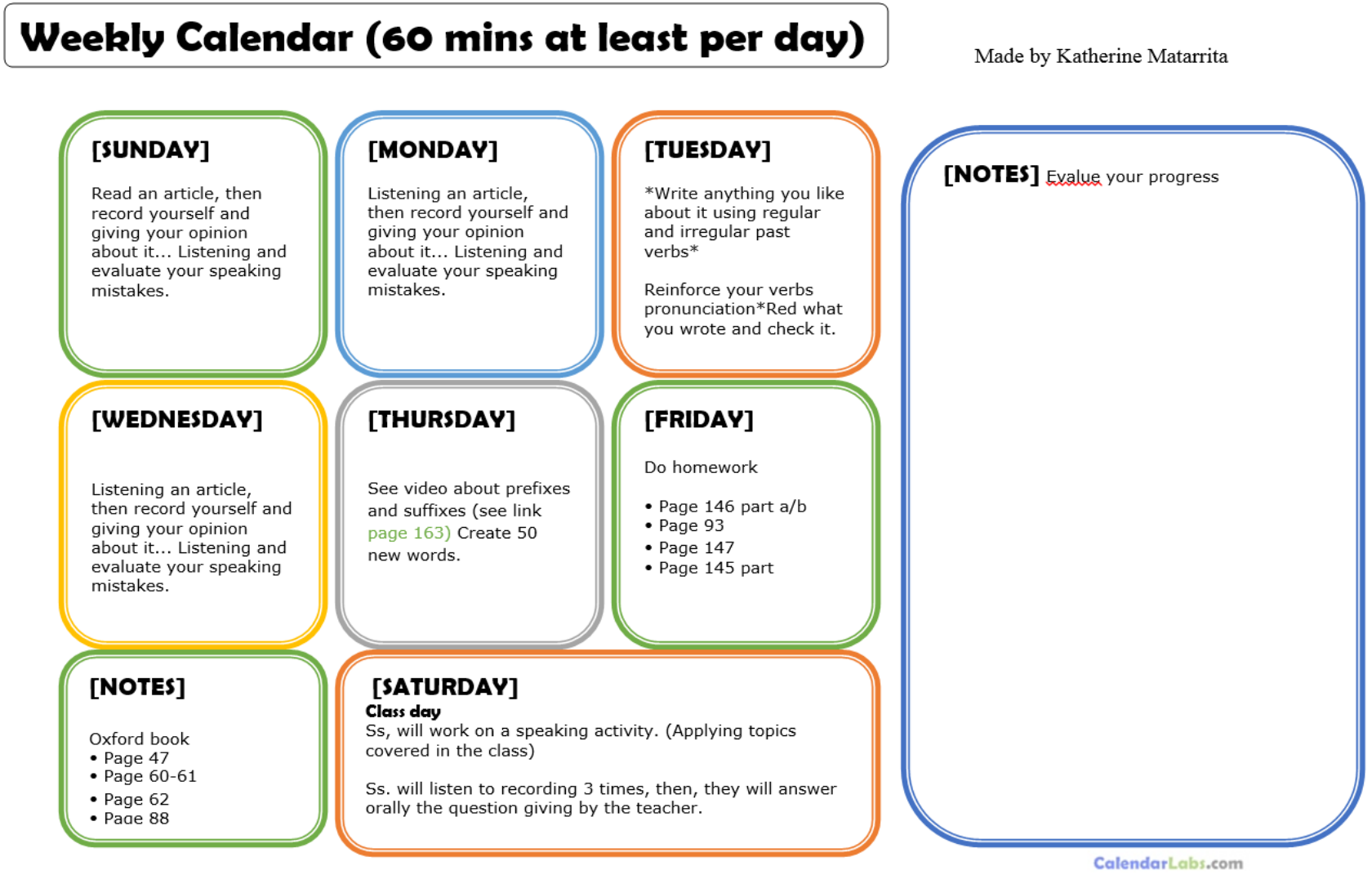
Figure 9 Students' perception towards the difficulties of their Speaking Self-Assessment

From Figure 9, it is noticed that the student's considered a self-evaluation a useful instructional and assessment tool. It may be concluded that students positively perceive its benefits. However, this could be considered a double-edged sword for the student because it is necessary to know whether they are using the self-evaluation tool correctly. For this reason, the teacher and the researcher preferred to check each student's self-evaluation tool in order to give them additional feedback if required. After the students received the feedback from the teacher, an interesting observation was that students regarded themselves as being more proficient in their spoken English abilities than they had been assessed by their teacher. Therefore, future student researchers are advised to give participants some basic guidance as to how to use the self-evaluation tool as objectively and honestly as possible. Otherwise, they may end up rating themselves higher than they should as was perceived by the student researcher.

4.1.4 Student Organizer

In order to improve the learning of English out of class, the students were asked to make a weekly plan (called "student organizer") to keep a log of their learning progress. The plan prompted the students to complete different listening, speaking, reading, and grammar activities. The main purpose of the organizer was to guide the students' everyday learning activities by using English at least half an hour per day. For example, they had listening and speaking activities that would take 30 to 50 minutes to complete. On another day, they had to read a 500-to-700-word article on a topic of their choice and then record themselves giving their opinion about the passage that they had read.

Following is the weekly plan that was provided to the students.


Weekly Calendar (60 mins at least per day)
Made by Katherine Matarrita
[SUNDAY]
Read an article, then record yourself and giving your opinion about it... Listening and evaluate your speaking mistakes.
[MONDAY]
Listening an article, then record yourself and giving your opinion about it... Listening and evaluate your speaking mistakes.
[TUESDAY]
Write anything you like about it using regular and irregular past verbs
Reinforce your verbs pronunciation*Red what you wrote and check it.
[NOTES] Evalue your progress
[WEDNESDAY]
Listening an article, then record yourself and giving your opinion about it... Listening and evaluate your speaking mistakes.
[THURSDAY]
See video about prefixes and suffixes (see link page 163) Create 50 new words.
[FRIDAY]
Do homework
• Page 146 part a/b
• Page 93
• Page 147
• Page 145 part
[NOTES]
Oxford book
• Page 47
• Page 60-61
• Page 62
• Page 88
[SATURDAY]
Class day
Ss, will work on a speaking activity. (Applying topics covered in the class)
Ss. will listen to recording 3 times, then, they will answer orally the question giving by the teacher.
CalendarLabs.com

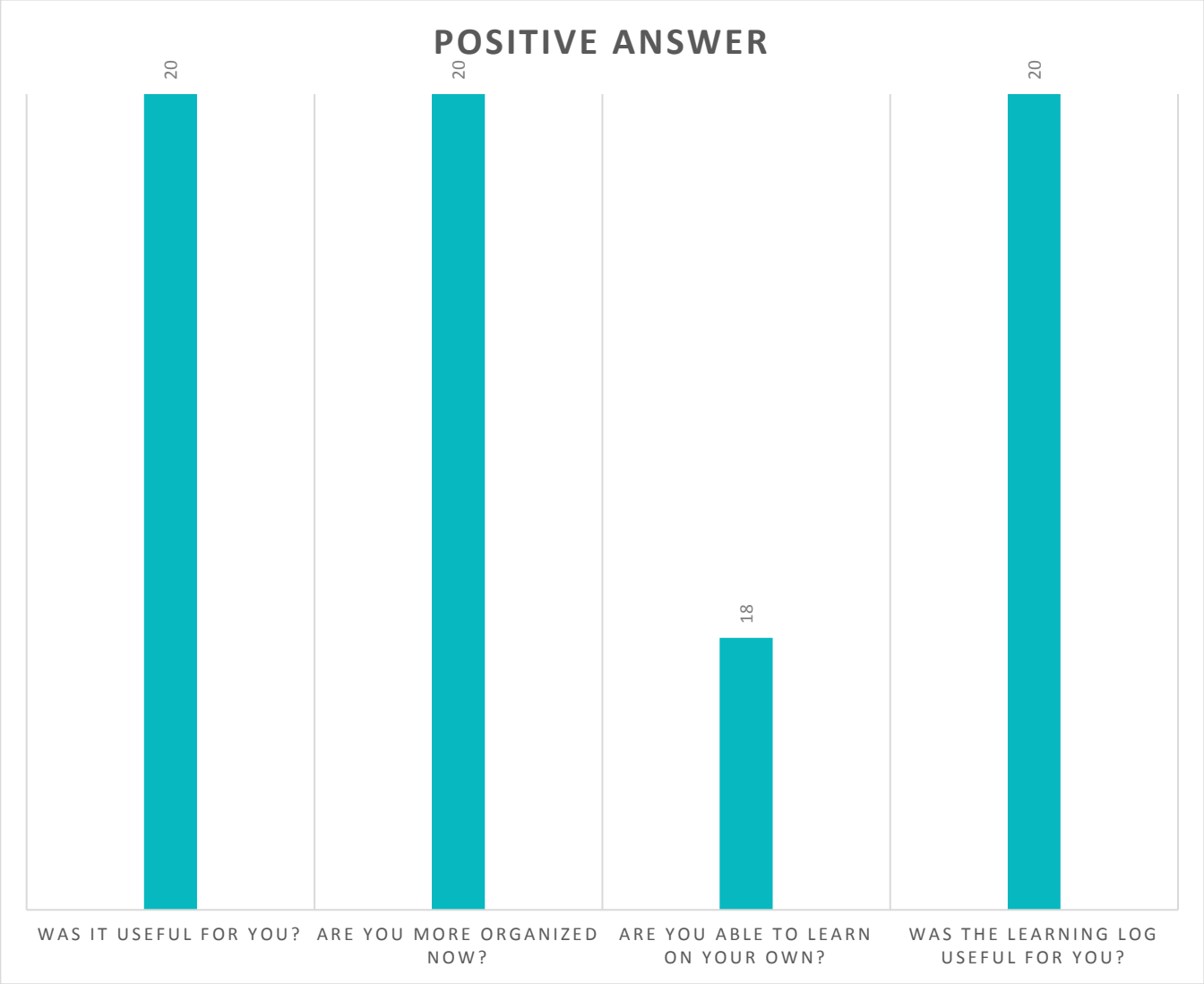


Figure 10 Students' perception towards the student- organizer. Researcher's own creation

The above figure shows how the learning log helped the students learn to reflect on her/his study over the week prior, which is an important aspect in autonomous English learning. Also, we can notice how useful it was for the students to have an organizer. Besides, the students were given a time table that showed scheduled homework, tests, topics, and activities to be covered during the course. This made it easier for them to study on their own.

4.1.5 Post-test

At the end of the study, an oral post-test was applied to determine the progress of each student, due to which the researcher decided to ask oral questions using the same rubric used in the pre-test.

The researcher made a circle for this activity and had the students sit on the floor in order to make them feel comfortable instead of pressured because of the evaluation. Then the researcher talked about the whole research project experience with them to break the ice and elicit them to talk. After that, the researcher would throw a stress ball at each of the participants at different times to ask them the test questions.

These questions were:

1. Did you find a difference in your learning style?
2. Are you learning more now?
3. Are you trying to find some new methods and effective ways of learning English?
4. Are you trying to learn English by all means in your spare time?
5. Do you know a lot about independent learning?
6. In your opinion, do metacognitive strategies help you to improve your speaking skills?

Based on Figure 7 below, it was found that the majority of the students experienced positive changes in the new style of learning English. Specifically, 94% of the students improved their speaking skills using metacognitive strategies. We also noticed that they gained more vocabulary and confidence to express their ideas. Some of the students mentioned that they believed that their listening and reading competence were greatly improved during the process, as well.

According to the teacher, metacognitive strategies benefited the students in this research project since they improved with regard to other students, who had been taught in the traditional way. Besides, metacognitive strategies fostered the students' attitudes towards and competence in English, thus opening more opportunities for them. It is important to mention that some feedback was given to students at the end of this activity.

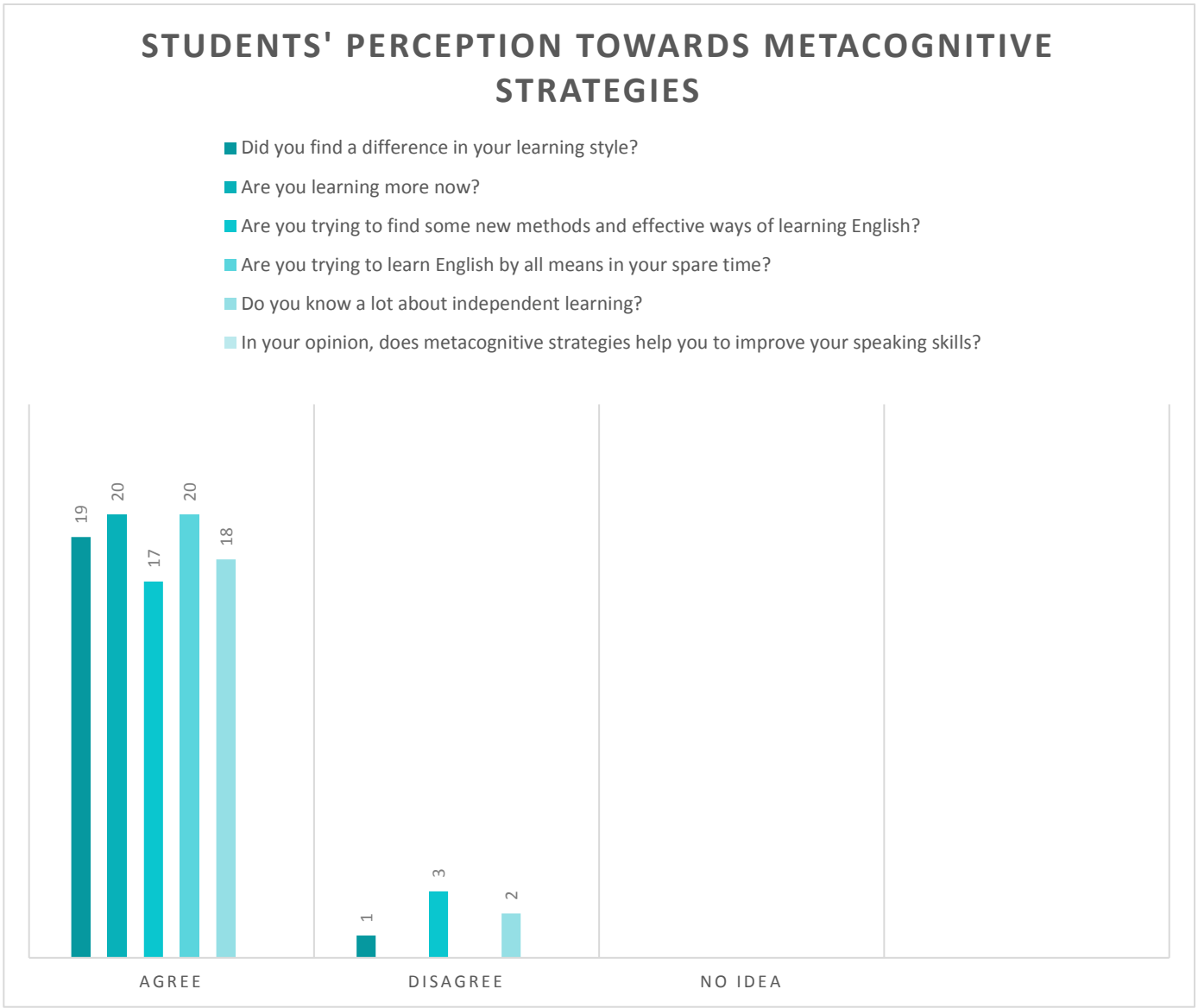


Figure 11 Students' perception towards metacognitive strategies. Researcher's own creation

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter consists of providing final statements on the investigation and the results obtained from the application of the student-researcher-prepared instruments. The study was conducted to find out the effect of autonomous learning as a metacognitive strategy to improve oral skills of students at FUNDATEC.

Furthermore, the research question has been answered by stating how oral tasks were used to assess oral performance. Besides, these conclusions will show that the instruments used during this study can be considered a useful instructional and assessment tool. In general terms, it was concluded that students positively perceive the benefits of this study, as seen by their own evaluation. Moreover, the results also reveal the specific objectives stated at the beginning of the investigation to confirm whether they were reached or not.

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Identify the most suitable metacognitive strategies in order to perform oral skills

In order to apply the right metacognitive strategies, observations were made by the researcher to check how much the students knew about the target language, their behavior towards the learning process, and the interaction with the teacher to obtain an idea of how to start developing appropriate tasks for the participants. After the observation and having paid attention to all of the important aspects, the student-researcher decided to apply a pre-test based on a subjective category since it permits the students to organize and present an original answer.

The pre-test instrument was developed to verify the English level of each student to be sure that the right instruments and metacognitive strategies were going to be applied in order to cover the students' needs. The pre-test allowed the student-researcher to assess the students' oral performance before applying whatever tasks. This way, the student-researcher could identify major oral problems that the students struggled with the most. That is the reason why a subjective activity was developed by choosing a re-call exercise in which each student was required to talk and provide an opinion.

Besides, the student-researcher asked some informative questions about the students' own experiences, such as whether or not they considered themselves to be active English learners outside of the class, as well as what methods they used to learn English by themselves. This helped the student-researcher to know how much the students use the target language outside of the class. Based on the results from the pre-test and the response of the informative questions, the student-researcher had an idea of what tasks and strategies would be used during the study, such as evaluation, monitoring, and planning as a metacognitive strategy using the student-organizer and the self-evaluation as the main instruments.

These instruments and strategies were chosen because they were the ones that best aligned with the students' needs, in order to enhance not only their oral performance but their autonomous learning abilities. According to Veenman (1997), learners with good metacognitive skills are able to monitor and direct their own learning processes. It is also important to mention that these instruments and strategies allowed for the inclusion of grammar, reading, listening, and speaking tasks. In the student-researcher's opinion, grammar, listening and reading are the foundation of one's speaking skills. Also, the rubrics were created to check the students' performance. In that way, they could practice and improve by

themselves, as well. During the observation, the researcher-teacher also found that many students were not aware of metacognitive strategies. It seemed that they either did not know about it or did not apply it in their class. However, the student-researcher did not want to go into greater detail in order to not hinder their study.

5.1.2 Apply metacognitive strategies in order to improve autonomous learning

As a technique to improve autonomous learning, this study used metacognitive strategies, such as evaluation and planning starting from the notion that metacognitive knowledge is the foundation for independent language learning. A student-organizer and a self-evaluation rubric were used as instruments in order to increase the students' accountability for their own learning and guide them as to how long they were to spend learning both inside and outside the classroom. For this reason, the assigned tasks were thought out to be easy to resolve by the students to boost their confidence not to depend on their teacher and focus their attention on realizing their experience while learning.

After giving the strategies and practicing in advance, it was also notable through the observation instruments that there was an improvement in the students' oral performance, thus making them aware of the use of their learning experience to overcome weaknesses and enhance their strength in second language learning activities. However, they still need assistance with pronunciation, but in general terms, students significantly improved their oral performance after having applied the research instruments. For example, with the post-test, it was noticed that the student-organizer tool was key for the students to improve oral skills because the majority of them were responsible and committed to this project. Most did comply with the activities in the student-organizer tool and used the target language out of the class.

As a conclusion, they gained confidence and became more independent learners, realizing that they can pursue their intellectual needs and discover a world of information at their fingertips. However, based on the student-researcher's report, there were 5 students who were not as committed to the project as were their classmates, so they remained at the same level of English. It is important to mention that the student-organizer tool helped the students to improve in vocabulary, grammar, listening, and reading according to the activities therein.

5.1.3 Evaluate the effects of such strategies in their oral performance after the implementation of the communicative tasks

After the tasks were applied, and a comparison made with the pre-test and the post-test, it is remarkable to see how the students improved their oral performance. Concluding that "monitoring" was the key metacognitive strategy to boost the students' confidence when speaking in English. Also notable was how they improved their self-management skills by knowing how long they were to spend learning both inside and outside the classroom. In other words, they learned how to regulate their own learning.

The student student-organizer, for example, had a positive impact on the students' oral performance as observed during the tasks because they had an idea of the next topic and demonstrated their knowledge of the content, vocabulary and grammar structure by bringing to class only reasonable doubts of the topic. In fact, one of the most liked tasks was "recording themselves" because it motivates the students to do it better and better by improving their grammar and pronunciation in future recordings. This exercise helped to notice the speaking progress of each student as the teacher and the student-researcher listened and provided oral feedback on each recording. That is the reason why it was easy to determine who was following the student-organizer and who was not.

Another task that caused a positive impact on the participants was the listening part because they were allowed to listen to topics of their own interest. This proved advantageous not only by expanding and using appropriate vocabulary but also by making them think in the target language. The teacher and the student-researcher were able to see the progress in this area by asking students for their comments about the passage that they had listened to. It was thereby easy to determine who was listening to the article and who was not.

The self-evaluation helped students to recognize their strengths and weaknesses during the application of each task giving the advantage to become strategic, motivated, and independent learners while learning. However, it is important to take into consideration that this will not replace teacher feedback. This is the reason that each student double-checked the self-evaluation rubric with the teacher since this could be considered a double-edged sword for the student as it is necessary to know whether they are using the self-evaluation tool correctly.

5.2 Recommendations

Having completed this research project, the researchers noticed the importance of having had an introductory class explaining the topic of the study before starting applying the instruments since many of the participants were not aware of metacognitive strategies. For sure, this may have prevented many delays during the tasks application since some of the students requested a reason why they were doing that kind of additional activities. Consequently, future teacher-researchers interested in similar topics are advised to take at least 30 minutes to explain the research process before rolling it out.

Another important aspect is to reinforce the student's pronunciation. By the end of the study, many participants would still struggle with some words and collocations. For future

research projects, it is recommended to give students more practice for them to work on their pronunciation. For example, the teacher can dedicate 30 minutes of the class pronouncing words with similar vowel sounds and let them read those words and then the teacher-researcher can verify the sounds that students struggle with the most to incorporate more practice on those sounds.

Based on the results of the observation, the study recommends the following:

- Teachers should teach metacognitive strategies as part of the class to make students responsible for their own learning, so they become more aware of their own techniques, strategies, motivation, strengths, and weaknesses. Work towards this goal is likely to be teacher directed initially, and it proceeds as a co-operative enterprise between teacher and learners involving the learners progressively in taking on more responsibility for their own learning. In other words, make metacognitive strategies part of the learning process.
- Make the discussion of metacognitive knowledge part of the everyday classroom helping the students to talk about their own cognition and learning. For example, future researchers can give participants some basic guidance as to how to use the self-evaluation tool as objectively and honestly as possible. During the study, an interesting observation was that students regarded themselves as being more proficient in their spoken English, which contradicted the point of view that their teacher had in this regard.
- Suggest a handout for students incorporating concrete actions to enable them to develop their autonomy when learning a foreign language and motivating them to study inside and outside the classroom.

These three recommendations should help learners to be more confident and have the ability to organize and manage their time taking commitment and responsibility for their own learning. This study also provided teacher educators with skills that enhance learning and increase the likelihood that they will impart similar skills to their students.

On the other hand, the student-researcher has concluded that metacognitive strategies can be used to develop not only oral skills but also reading, listening and grammars skills. Having students plan, monitor, and self-regulate strategies can help them to enhance these four skills.

In this study, participants seemingly adopted the metacognitive strategies. They also appeared more aware of their metacognition following exposure to this study. For example, during the activities, it was noteworthy how other English skills were improved. Ultimately, an individual's adoption of the metacognitive strategies proposed in the study, coupled with their increased awareness of their metacognition, can enhance their own learning. Learner commitment was also important for most participants to acquire metacognitive strategies successfully since they were adults who neither knew about metacognitive strategies nor had developed them in their childhood.

If future research is conducted, applying these instruments and strategies to improve another skill may prove useful. Only a change in content would be required. For example, the student-organizer can be focused on reading or writing tasks, instead, as one of the advantages of the instruments applied is that they are modifiable.

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Appendixes

Proficiency Levels & Rubric/Scoring Guide, 2018 (Related to figure 2)

- LEVEL 1 /Novice-Low: Produces words in target language with no connection. Does not have enough vocabulary or the ability necessary to formulate even simple phrases to address the prompt. Limited language control. Inability to create more than individual words. L1 (first language) influence may be strong. Errors are expected at this level, but the student must be able to produce at least two comprehensible words.
- LEVEL 2 /Novice-Mid: Language production is beyond individual words but clearly shows the lack of ability to construct more than phrases. May include one simple sentence, but incapable of showing more. May make frequent errors, but usually comprehensible to a sympathetic reader/listener. L1 (first language) influence may be present.
- LEVEL 3/ Novice-High: Short, common expressions or memorized statements that may be combined together. Able to create at least 2 different simple sentences. Good accuracy for high frequency expressions. Usually comprehensible to a sympathetic reader/listener. Grammatical (syntax, spelling, conjugation) errors are expected at this level but sentences must make sense to be acceptable.
- LEVEL 4 / Intermediate-Low: Variety of sentences that utilize different verbs to create independent thoughts, mostly composed of a recombination of learned simple sentences with added detail in the form or prepositional phrases and verbal phrases. Good accuracy with formulaic sentences with some added detail. Errors may occur as student attempts higher level skills. Good Language Control is expected with the majority of the response.

- LEVEL 5 /Intermediate-Mid: Logical organization of ideas and flow of sentences or statements. Contains at least 2 unique and non-formulaic sentences intermixed with a variety of sentences creating ‘groupings of sentences showing connectedness. Good accuracy evident with possible errors that don’t affect the overall meaning. Delivery may be somewhat choppy. May have repetitive use of concrete vocabulary with occasional use of expanding terms. Accuracy for complex sentences is emerging.
- LEVEL 6 / Intermediate-High: Able to demonstrate an Intermediate-High control of the language. Complexity is evident. Transition words and connectors are used correctly and efficiently a majority of the time to create a flow within the response. Groups of sentences focus on different aspects of the prompt and include transition words or phrases to introduce next concept. Does not have advanced vocabulary or language to move into the Advanced level. Response is well written and constructed. Intermediate-High sentence structures can be found throughout response. Demonstrates beginning ability to create a coherent response with increased use of complexity as well as transition words and phrases. No evidence of advanced vocabulary
- LEVEL 7 /Advanced-Low: A paragraph response with advanced language with complexity, syntactical and grammatical control transitional words and phrases found within the text creating a natural flow. Demonstrates a connection of thoughts that create a coherent and extended discourse. Language is error-free a majority of the time with familiar topics. If errors exist, they are patterned and do not hinder overall meaning. Delivery is mostly fluent with only occasional hesitancy. Some abstract and precise use of vocabulary and terms with familiar topics is evident.

- LEVEL 8 / Advanced-Mid: Variety of cohesive devices and organizational patterns are evident throughout response. Vocabulary is clear, specific and natural. Language is smooth and native-like in delivery and without noticeable errors. Language is presented with limited errors, if any. Ability to create complex language using precise and extensive vocabulary. Control of the abstract as well as ease of use in idiomatic phrases and concepts. Clear sequential ordering evident (if required) and accurately follows target language conventions.
- LEVEL 9 /Advanced-High: Able to use a variety of complex sentence structures to write related to common events, activities, and topics that are appropriate for the writer's age and with which the writer might be expected to be familiar. Advanced-level writing is well organized, with a beginning, middle, and end, and often covers multiple time frames with a good degree of accuracy. Common errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar may still occur.
- LEVEL 10 /Superior: Able to express and support an opinion on a variety of abstract topics. Able to use precise vocabulary to explain complex issues and to argue effectively for their point of view. Writing is carefully organized. Arguments are well thought out and thoroughly developed. Occasional, minimal errors may occur, but do not distort the meaning of ideas expressed in text.

(The rubric metrics for the pre-test (taken from Rubric: Grading Criteria for English Speaking, 2017)

- Grammar
    - Needs Improvement: Student was difficult to understand and had a hard time communicating their ideas and responses because of grammar mistakes.

  - Satisfactory: Student was able to express their ideas and responses adequately but often displayed inconsistencies with their sentence structure and tenses.
  - Good: Student was able to express their ideas and responses fairly well but makes mistakes with their tenses, however is able to correct themselves.
  - Excellent: Student was able to express their ideas and responses with ease in proper sentence structure and tenses.
- Pronunciation
  - Needs Improvement: Student was difficult to understand, quiet in speaking, unclear in pronunciation.
  - Satisfactory: Student was slightly unclear with pronunciation at times, but generally is fair.
  - Good: Pronunciation was good and did not interfere with communication.
  - Excellent: Pronunciation was very clear and easy to understand.
- Vocabulary
  - Needs Improvement: Student had inadequate vocabulary words to express his/her ideas properly, which hindered the students in responding.
  - Satisfactory: Student was able to use broad vocabulary words but was lacking, making him/her repetitive and cannot expand on his/her ideas.
  - Good: Student utilized the words learned in class, in an accurate manner for the situation given.
  - Excellent: Rich, precise and impressive usage of vocabulary words learned in and beyond of class.
- Comprehension

  - Needs Improvement: Student had difficulty understanding the questions and topics that were being discussed.
  - Satisfactory: Student fairly grasped some of the questions and topics that were being discussed.
  - Good: Student was able to comprehend and respond to most of the questions and topics that were being discussed.
  - Excellent: Student was able to comprehend and respond to all of the questions and the topics that were being discussed with ease.
- Background Knowledge
  - Needs Improvement: Student was lacking in background knowledge which hindered his/her responses to the questions regarding class materials.
  - Satisfactory: Student showed decent background knowledge of class material, making his/her responses incomplete.
  - Good: Student displayed well knowledge of class information and topics.
  - Excellent: Student presented excellent background knowledge from class topics and was able to add more information in their response.
- Fluency
  - Needs Improvement: Speech is very slow, stumbling, nervous, and uncertain with response, except for short or memorized expressions. Difficult for a listener to understand
  - Satisfactory: Speech is slow and often hesitant and irregular. Sentences may be left uncompleted, but the student is able to continue.

- Good: Speech is mostly smooth but with some hesitation and unevenness caused primarily by rephrasing and groping for words.
- Excellent: Speech is effortless and smooth with speed that comes close to that of a native speaker.

Annexes