CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
2.1 BACKGROUND.

Although a specific investigation concerning the creation of a manual to be used in Computer Labs has not yet been found, there are some very valuable websites and CD-ROMs that have been created because of the importance that many institutions give to the use of technology in the teaching–learning process.

For instance, some publishing companies have developed CD-ROMs, along with their teacher’s guide containing photocopiable material for the students, to improve the four skills of students’ of English as a Foreign language (EFL).¹

On the other hand, there are also some universities which have created websites for their students to practice the language. UFG is not an exception of this. The university is an active member of the EBSCO HOST², where students can look for information on the web, searching specifically about the subjects there are taking. The university has also created the Online Library, which is also very useful, but it still contains broad material, causing teachers and students to become exhausted of doing extra research.

2.2 THEORETICAL BASES

The computer is a recent invention that has not completed a hundred years of existence since its first generation. However it is a technological invention that has come to revolutionize the globalize world.

At the moment its evolution is continuous because there are companies in the technological area that take charge in presenting new proposals frequently. There are

² www.ufg.edu.sv
many benefits that humanity obtains with the use of the computers.

People can explore the web to search for any type of information, to communicate to any part of the world, to be informed and to learn new languages, just to mention a few aspects. Thus, the human being saves time and money on the search of knowledge, since the development of the Commercial Internet in 1991. There is no doubt that all the areas of knowledge can be searched on the Internet.

“In the current society of the information, the continuous and quick technological advances produce a great impact in the entire world, particularly in the superior education (higher education or senior school); and at this level, the country has not been exempt of the possible advantages and disadvantages.

The challenge that university professors now have, mainly those from UFG, is guiding their students about what information to select, to process and to adapt to their investigations or assignments, with the goal of helping the student not to lose valuable time in the selection and interpretation of the information they need; and therefore, not be affected by, what has called the "syndrome of the informative fatigue". This syndrome is caused by the excess of existent information, without knowing which to select, to read, to analyze and to study attentively.

Teachers will now have to guide the students in the appropriate selection of data, information and knowledge, due to the overabundance of available information to avoid an uncontrolled and irrational consumerism.” (Special Supplement of La Prensa Gráfica dedicated especially to UFG. December 9 2001).

How can all these technological advances be useful to teach listening and speaking skills effectively? This question will be analyzed throughout the theoretical framework.
2.2.1 First Language Acquisition (L1)

“First language acquisition is remarkable for the speed with which it takes place. By the time a child enters elementary school, he or she is an extremely sophisticated language-user, operating a communicative system which no other creature, or computer, comes close to matching. The speed of acquisition and the fact that it generally occurs, without overt instruction, for all children, regardless of great differences in a range of social and cultural factors, have led to the belief that there is some ‘innate’ predisposition in the human infant to acquire language. We can think of this as the ‘language-faculty’ of the human with which each newborn child is endowed. By itself, however, this faculty is not enough.”\(^3\)

For children to acquire any language as their Mother Tongue, they need to be exposed to it during the first two or three years of life, with interaction with other users of the same speech in order to develop the faculty of understanding and using it. Cultural transmission is important to be considered since “the language a child learns is not genetically inherited, but is acquired in a particular language-using environment”.\(^4\)

In L1, there is no formal instruction, but according to George Yule\(^5\) the oral communication is not acquired in a “parrot-fashion” way. Children do not only repeat what they hear, but they experiment with the words and phrases to see if their outcome is correct or not.

When children are corrected, this happens in a non-threatening way since it is done at home in a natural and comfortable environment.

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\(^4\) ibidem page 176

\(^5\) ibidem page181
2.2.2 Second Language Acquisition (L2)

“While it is true that many young children whose parents speak different languages can acquire a second language in circumstances similar to those of first language acquisition, the vast majority of people are not exposed to a second language until much later.”

“Some obvious reasons for the problems experienced in L2 acquisition are related to the fact that most people attempt to learn another language during their teenage or adult years, in a few hours each week of school time (rather than via the constant interaction experienced by a child), with a lot of other occupations (the child has little else to do), and with an already known language available for most of their daily communicative requirements.”

Other commonly suggested reasons include the belief that adults cannot pronounce some sounds of the L2 since they have been using only their native language for years making it difficult to produce sounds that do not exist in their native language. However, according to George Yule there is no physical evidence to support this theory.

Children do not have the mental barriers that teenagers and adults have. This makes it easier for children to experiment with the language to see if their outcome is correct or not since there is no unwillingness or embarrassments in using the language. On the other hand, grown ups are afraid of making mistakes because they can feel ashamed if being corrected. This is also known as the “affective filter”. “The term affective filter is often used to describe a kind of barrier to acquisition that results from negative feelings or experiences. Basically, if you are stressed, uncomfortable, self-conscious or unmotivated, you are unlikely to learn anything.” When children are corrected, this happens in a non-threatening way, in contrast to what can happen

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6 ibidem page 190
7 ibidem page 191
8 ibidem page 191
9 ibidem page 192
in a classroom, where shy students can refrain from participating in class because of their classmates’ mockery. This has caused many changes in the approaches in which L2 is taught. “For example, one radical feature, of most communicative approaches is the toleration of ‘errors’ produced by learners. Traditionally, ‘errors’ were regarded negatively and had to be eradicated. The more recent acceptance of such errors in learners’ language is based on a fundamental shift in perspective from the more traditional view of how second languages are acquired.”10 The tendency nowadays is to let students talk, even when they make errors. Error correction should be done in a natural way, like what happens in L1 acquisition. Students are not interrupted, but asked to repeat, or asked to clarify what they have said, when they have finished talking. In many cases, students will be able to correct the errors by themselves or with peer correction.

“The term “acquisition”, when used of language, refers to the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situations. The term “learning”, however, applies to a conscious process of accumulation knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of a language.” 11 For example, the Grammatical Rules of any language, including L1, are learned not acquired, since they are taught at school. This is why, to native speakers, a sentence would “sound” correct, but they cannot explain the Grammatical Rules involved, unless they have studied the language and have learned those rules previously.

To be successful in learning a second language, the person needs to be motivated. Motivation is considered to be a cause of success as well as a result. “A language-learning situation that encourages success and accomplishment must consequently be more helpful than one that dwells on errors and correction. Indeed, the learner who is willing to guess, risks making mistakes and tries to communicate in the L2 will tend, given the opportunity, to be more successful.”12

10 ibidem page 194
11 ibidem 191
12 ibidem page 195
2.2.3 The Teaching-Learning Process

Learning is a process carried out by a person who learns when interacting with new information and relating it with previous experiences, making good use of the capability to know and to restructure mental schemes. Knowledge is learned in different ways by each person due to the experiences and the capacities each individual displays.

The objective of the Teaching-Learning Process is the formation of the student. This implies that there is an individual that knows, the one who can teach, and another that does not know, the one who can learn.

The learning does not end in the mental process. It also includes the acquisition of skills, habits and abilities, as well as attitudes and appreciations that accompany the process. This happens in the three ways: personal, formal education and social learning.

The personal includes the language, the reflection and the thought that make the individual different from others. The formal education process is related to the contents scheduled in the syllabus. The social learning is related to the set of rules, values and relationships among the individuals of a group. These three ways of learning happen together in daily life.

The learning that can enrich the person is the one which combines new information with the previous knowledge of the individual. After this condition is fulfilled, the learner understands what is being studied, realizes its importance and then acquires a significant learning. This significant learning is obtained by means of activities that the student can make and which are related to the learners own experiences.

For the learning process to be effective, active participation from the learner is required. The student is the one in charge of associating the new information with the
previous knowledge. The students need to be motivated in order to have significant learning. It is the teachers’ concern to help the students develop the motivation needed.

There are two kinds of motivations: Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is when someone is motivated by internal factors. Intrinsic motivation drives someone to do things just for the fun of it, or because the individual believe it is the good or the right thing to do. For example, people select their hobbies because they are intrinsically motivated. People show a great passion for collecting certain objects or building model ships or airplanes.

Extrinsic motivation is when someone is motivated by external factors. Extrinsic motivation drives the person to perform the actions to obtain tangible rewards, rather than for the fun of it. For example, managers of supermarkets use discounts, airlines use air miles, teachers use encouraging words or prices, and educational institutions use scholarships.

Since both types of motivation are important in the Teaching-Learning process, teachers need to pay special attention in motivating their learners so they have significant learning.

When something is taught, it is for obtaining learning objectives. These objectives can be structural or functional depending on the purpose of the course. Structural objectives focus on the grammatical aspects being studied while functional objectives concentrate on the use of the language in a meaningful way.

The Teaching-Learning is affected by the social and cultural background of both, the teachers and the learners. This is known as the context.

The following diagram shows the relationship among the different elements that involved in the Teaching-Learning Process.
2.2.4 Importance of the English Language

Nowadays, English has become a language that everyone is in the need of learning because it is spoken around the world.

English is taught as a subject in almost every primary school worldwide. In some countries, higher educational institutions where international students are enrolled, the classes are taught mainly in English, even when the country where that institution is located has a different official language. In other institutions where there are no international students the English Language is included as one of the subjects.

In addition, English is a source of historical heritage. Knowing English can help people develop culturally and materially as to compete in the business world. The English language has been considered the key to open doors into the world.

If someone learns the English language very well, this person can find a job easily, since speaking the language is one of the top requirements for those looking for a “good job”.
In addition, English is the major tool used to communicate among celebrities or important politician leaders worldwide. Furthermore, in the modern world every business uses English as a way to communicate, not because it is an easy language, but because it is used for international affairs, such as science events, business, aviation, entertainment and diplomacy.

The power of this language shows in the written media. Magazines, newspapers, pamphlets and other forms of written communication are typed in English.

For these reasons, English has been considered the universal language, giving it the importance it has nowadays.

2.2.5 Language Learning Styles

According to theoreticians of the language, there are several different ways of learning. These different way are called “learning styles”, and can be classified in three main types.

1) **Visual Learners**: These learners acquire new information through seeing, so they tend to sit at the front of the classroom to avoid visual distractions. They think in pictures and images, hence they prefer to take notes during long lectures. Teachers can help this kind of students by using body language and facial expressions. They will also help the pupil when using diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs.

2) **Auditory Learners**: This kind of learner understands in a better way when listening. The teacher can help them through verbal lectures, discussions, asking them to listen to what their classmates have to say and providing audio material for the class. Auditory learners understand meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, and speed. Written information may
have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder to record the classes.

3) **Tactile or Kinesthetic Learners:** People who learn this way acquire knowledge better through a hands-on approach. This means exploring the physical world around them. Teachers can help them by assigning projects, asking them to work with a different partner and changing activities periodically. This is important because kinesthetic learners find it difficult to sit still for long periods.

### 2.2.6 The four language skills

Learning a new language means developing skills that allow someone to understand what other people say in another language and to communicate what you want to convey. Therefore, the four skills are essential when someone learns a second language.  

If a person is only good at reading and writing, it cannot be said that this person is proficient in the language. The same situation happens when a person has only developed the speaking and listening skills.

**Listening** is the ability to understand spoken language. **Speaking** is the ability to produce oral language accurately and creatively. Speaking involves pronunciation, fluency and coherence. **Reading** is the ability to understand written material, and **Writing** is the ability to use the language in a written form. It involves spelling, grammar and coherence.

Even though, the four skills are important, the researchers will take into account only two of them for the investigation that is **Listening and Speaking**.

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13 [http://www.sil.org/glearning/developing.htm](http://www.sil.org/glearning/developing.htm) (visited on October 2007)
2.2.6.1 The listening skill

Listening is the language skill which learners usually find the most difficult. This often is because they feel under unnecessary pressure to understand every word. Listening comprehension is the receptive skill in the oral mode. When people speak of listening what, they really mean is listening and understanding what we hear.

Listening is an art, that when done well, delivers tremendous benefits. The goal of listening well is to achieve a two-way trustful communication. A trusty non threatening communication not only fosters understanding, affirmation, validation and appreciation, but it also creates an atmosphere of trust, honor and respect. People definitely feel good when others listen and pay attention to what they are saying and respond accordingly.

Listening is an active process that has three basic steps.

1) **Hearing.** Hearing just means listening enough to catch what the speaker is saying. For example, when you are listening to the news and the reported says there has been an automobile accident on Los Heroes Boulevard, you have heard what has been said if you can repeat the fact.

2) **Understanding.** The next part of listening happens when you take what you have heard and understand it in your own way. For example, in the case of the news, you could create a mental image of the crash.

3) **Judging.** After you are sure you understand what the speaker has said, you start reasoning what the consequences might be. You can decide not to take Los Heroes Boulevard because you consider that there could be a traffic jam due to the accident.

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14 [http://www.sil.org/LinguaLinks/languagelearning/OtherResources/GudInsFrALnggAndCltrLmngPrgrm/ListeningComprehensionSkill.htm](http://www.sil.org/LinguaLinks/languagelearning/OtherResources/GudInsFrALnggAndCltrLmngPrgrm/ListeningComprehensionSkill.htm) (visited on October, 2007)

Some tips to become a good listener are the following:\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{itemize}
\item Give your full attention on the person who is speaking. Focus your sight on the person and avoid distracting yourself.
\item Do not focus only your sight but also your mind. It can be easy to let your mind wander if you think you know what the person is going to say next.
\item Do not interrupt the person you are speaking to. Doing so can give the impression that you are not listening, even if you really are.
\item Concentrate your attention on the main ideas. The main ideas are the most important points the speaker wants to get across.
\item Ask questions. If you are not sure you understand what the speaker has said, just ask for clarification.
\item Use facial expressions to give feedback. For example, nodding, smiling, frowning, laughing, or being silent are good ways to show that you are really listening.
\item Avoid emotional involvement. When you are too emotionally involved in listening, you tend to hear what you want to hear--not what is actually being said. Try to remain objective and open-minded.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{itemize}

There are mainly two situations in which people use the listening skill. These two situations are:

\textbf{a) Interactive Listening.} This kind of listening involves understanding and participating in what is being listened, which can be personal conversations, phone conversations or forums. This kind of listening has the advantage that people can ask for clarification, repetition or slower speech if needed.

\textbf{b) Non-Interactive Listening.} This kind of listening includes everything people listen that does not require any response from the listener. Some examples are, listening to

\textsuperscript{16} http://www.infoplease.com/homework/listeningskills1.html (visited on October, 2007)
\textsuperscript{17} http://www.d.umn.edu/kmc/student/loon/acad-strat/ss_listening.html (visited on October, 2007)
music, watching movies.

What about teaching listening skills? “Teaching listening skills is one of the most difficult tasks for any EFL teacher. This is because successful listening skills are acquired over time and with lots of practice”.

“One of the largest inhibitors for students is often mental block. While listening, a student suddenly decides that he or she doesn't understand what is being said. At this point, many students just tune out or get caught up in an internal dialogue trying to translate a specific word. Some students convince themselves that they are not able to understand spoken English well and create problems for themselves.” 18 Besides mental block, there are other barriers that affect pupils’ listening processes negatively. For instance, the noise in the surroundings, the native language interference, idiomatic expressions and the different accents can also cause problems to anyone learning a new language.

To avoid students’ frustration, many teachers comfort them by explaining that it is not necessary to understand every single word. It is enough with understanding the main idea and being able to explain it in their own words. At lower levels, students might even answer the listening comprehension questions in their native language, but this shows they understood the message and yet they are not able to produce in the second language.

It is important that teachers encourage students to listen to information in English as often as possible. This helps students get used to the foreign language in the oral mode. Having as frequent input as possible helps students when later trying to express their own ideas about what they have learned. Even at the beginning when students might understand very little, teachers should encourage them to continue listening to English because the results will soon appear if students are patient

18 BEARE, KENNETH. The Challenge of Teaching Listening Skills. available at http://esl.about.com/cs/teachinglistening/a/a_tlisten.htm (visited on October, 2007)
2.2.6.1.1 Methodology and techniques for teaching listening skills

According to Lin Lougheed\textsuperscript{19} there are some specific guidelines in methodology that teachers should follow in order to help students develop their listening skills. What follows is a summary of her suggestions.

To have significant and interesting listening exercises for students, they need to reflect everyday language. They should also include speakers from different ages and show different accents. The exercises should also include extended talks, recorded messages, radio advertisements and public announcements among others.

The objective of the exercises should be to expose students to a variety of language accents of native and foreign speakers for them to be able to understand English in any situation.

The context must be relevant to encourage students to bring their real life experiences into the classroom. “They need to learn that to understand spoken English they have to know more than just words and grammar. They have to listen to stress, intonation patterns and make assumptions about the context. It is relevant for students to be actively involved in their learning process; this is why the exercises must have a clear context. This can be done by providing a variety of activities for the students like “discuss pictures, identify vocabulary, complete charts, sequence information and perform similar tasks.”\textsuperscript{20}

It is also important to take into consideration that students learning and listening processes are different. Students’ native language can create an obstacle since they


\textsuperscript{20} Ibidem
tend to translate what they hear into their own language.

Lin Lougheed\textsuperscript{21} also gives some suggestions for those who teach their students how to develop their listening skills. Since students are not expected to understand everything during the first time the recording is played, the first listening is usually for students to obtain a general idea. Listening to the recording two, three or more times will help them notice the details and internalize the patterns, intonation and meaning of the conversation.

Some exercises should help students distinguish between different grammar structures used by the speakers. Also, a variety of activities should be included to satisfy the need of those students who learn differently from others. For example: acting out role plays, describing pictures, interviewing others and working in pairs or groups. The idea is for students to use the vocabulary in a meaningful way for their lives.

If the listening activities are done with a small class, students can be asked to work in groups of three or four to do the pre-listening activities and verify answers. If there is no time to verify all of the students' answers, they can be given the responsibility to measure their own listening development.

On the other hand, if the listening activities are done with a large group of students, it is advisable for teachers to walk among them, if the physical space permits to do so, since doing this can help students concentrate in the task. Although some students can get nervous when the teacher is near, a trustful and confident environment can be created to reduce the stress that can be caused from being heard by others.

At low levels, students should be given the freedom to verify their answers in their native language and to ask for new vocabulary to their classmates or teacher. Making

them conscientious that the speaking activities will also help them develop their listening skills is also important. To make the class more interesting, the more proficient students can be asked to help the teacher with dictation or presentation of the dialogues.

### 2.2.6.1.2 Activities to improve listening

There are many kinds of activities that can be done to improve listening. It is important to expose language students to these various kinds of listening because by doing so they can get familiarized with different vocabulary, speed, accents, pronunciation and even grammar structures in different contexts.22

#### Activities with English Songs

The lyrics to any song you would like to listen to with your students in class can be easily found in the Internet.

**First Activity: Write a summary.** Ask students to write a summary of the song in English. Tell them to focus their attention on listening for main ideas and not to worry about details. After students have written the main ideas, have them compare their notes with the lyrics.

**Second Activity: Sing Along.** Play the song for students to listen carefully for the pronunciation. Students can then sing all together or individually like a karaoke.

**Third Activity: Do a cloze exercise.** Depending on the vocabulary or grammar structure being taught, you can select some words to be removed from the lyrics. Students then will have to listen to complete the lyrics.

**Fourth Activity: Dictate the lyrics.** Play the recording pausing after each sentence. Encourage students to write the exact words that are sung. If students

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22 [http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/elsc/material/Listening/kListening.htm](http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/elsc/material/Listening/kListening.htm) (visited on October, 2007)
feel they do not understand every word, motivate them to write the words they understand.

**Activities with TV and Radio News Reports**

TV news Reports can be either recorded from TV or downloaded from the internet. You can write a set of questions to listen for main ideas and listen for details. Students can then practice speaking by comparing their answers.

As a pre-listening activity you can elicit what students already know about the news they are about to listen to, or give them an excerpt of the news. These extra activities can help the students understand the listening better.

**Activities with Movies and TV Shows**

Nowadays, there are many movies available in English, in DVD format. In DVD format it is possible to select the subtitles in English or play the movie with no subtitles at all depending on the level of the students.

It is a good idea to use those movies that are based on novels that are included in the study program.

*First Activity: Read Film Reviews.* Give students a film review from a magazine or newspaper and ask to read it and talk about it in pairs.

*Second Activity: Answer comprehension questions.* Before watching the movie, give students the comprehension questions they will have to answer after watching and ask them to read those questions to make sure what they have to focus their attention on.

*Third Activity: Pause the image.* In a selected part of the movie, pause the image and ask students to predict what they think it is going to happen next.
2.2.6.2 The speaking skill

First of all, it is important to take into account that the level of language input (listening) must be higher than the level of language production expected of the pupils. Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode. It, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words.23

The Speaking Skill is different from the other skills because it is the only one which a student cannot practice individually. This is why teachers need to encourage students to use their time wisely and participate as much as they can during the speaking activities carried out in class.24

There are three kinds of speaking situations in which we find ourselves:

a) Interactive Speaking: This includes face-to-face conversations and telephone calls, in which people are alternately listening and speaking, and in which they have a chance to ask for clarification, repetition, or slower speech from the conversation partner.

Example 1: In the classroom, students can be asked to work in pairs to interview each other using a set of questions they have prepared before hand.

Example 2: In the Audio-linguistic Language Lab, using the appropriate software, the teacher can assign pairs and ask students to discuss a certain topic as if it were a telephone conversation.

b) Partially Interactive Speaking: This comprises giving a speech to a live audience.

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23 http://www.sil.org/LinguaLinks/languagelarning/OtherResources/GudInsFrALnggAndCltrLmngPrgrm/SpeakingSkill.htm
audience, where the standard situation is that the audience does not interrupt the speech.

Example 1: Students are asked to work in small groups to present a certain topic as a short speech. The audience will be given time to ask questions at the end of the group’s presentation.

Example 2: Role plays. Students are given a specific situation and they make up a dialogue and perform it in front of the class.

c) Non-interactive Speaking: Some few speaking situations may be totally non-interactive, such as when recording a speech for a radio broadcast.25

Example 1: Students are asked to prepare a longer speech about a certain topic. After the presentation, the audience is not allowed to ask any questions.

Example 2: If the appropriate equipment is available for the students to use, they can be asked to record on DVD format a news broadcast, recipe, documentary or any similar activity which will later be presented to the class.

2.2.6.2.1 Micro-skills involved in Speaking

Pronunciation: pronounce the distinctive sounds of a language clearly enough so that people can distinguish them. This includes making tonal distinctions.

Stress, Rhythmic and Intonation Patterns: These have to be used appropriately so that people can understand what is said.

Correct Forms of Words: This covers changes in the tense, case, or gender.

Correct Word Order: This means putting the words in the correct order in the sentence so that what is said can be understood.

Appropriate Vocabulary: This involves using adequate lexicon according to what is being discussed.

2.2.6.2.2 How to Evaluate Speaking Skills

There are two methods used to evaluate speaking skills, the observational and the structural approach.  

In the observational approach, the students’ speaking abilities are observed and evaluated without any interruption from the teacher. This approach has the advantage that students do not perceive that they are being evaluated and therefore speak in a more confident way.

In the structured approach, the students are asked to perform a specific speaking activity. For example, role plays, speeches, presentations, interviews, making predictions, among others. The students’ performance on the task is then evaluated. In regardless to the activity that has been assigned, students should feel that they are communicating meaningful content to a real audience. The speaking assignments should include topics that students already manage and topics in which they have to do some research to be able to develop them.

To assess students’ speaking performance, many teachers use a rating chart which includes the aspects to be evaluated. This chart helps the teacher to give an effective and more specific grade. Having a copy of the rating chart also helps the students to

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26 http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-923/speaking.htm (visited on October, 2007)
realize in what areas they need to improve, and to have confidence that the grade they get is the one they deserve. (See annex I for an example.)

### 2.2.6.2.3 Activities to improve speaking

Improving speaking skills begins with stimulating students’ motivation.\(^{27}\) It is difficult for teachers when learners are not willing to give their best during speaking practice and they end up only reading from their notes. Improving speaking skills takes a lot of classroom practice, and motivation to speak. Sometimes it is necessary to add creative elements wherever possible depending on the skills of pupils and how open they are to creative thinking activities.

Although improving the speaking skills of students may be difficult, it is really worth the effort. If teachers are really interested in forming efficient professionals in the English Language Major, they should take into consideration the importance of helping the students develop their speaking skill since this is the skill they will be using the most in their working lives.

*Use picture prompts.* The teacher can brainstorm with the class a variety of sentences, key words, and phrases about a particular subject or context before the presentation of the class.

*Follow-up with a memory game.* Students work in pairs writing down a of words they remember about a particular topic.

*True and false sentences.* Students present some statements that are true and some that are false. Then they ask their classmates to decide which statements are true or false.

\(^{27}\) [http://newteachersupport.suite101.com/article.cfm/improve_speaking_skills](http://newteachersupport.suite101.com/article.cfm/improve_speaking_skills)
**Tips to improve Speaking Skills**

- Set a time limit for every speaking activity.
- Keep the activity interesting but simple.
- Ensure that the instructions are clearly stated, and understood.
- Do not include too many speaking activities in one same class period.
- Make sure to have a balance between the speaking and listening activities.
- After asking the students to work in pairs or groups, conduct a feedback session with all the class.

**2.2.7 The use of technology in the teaching-learning process**

The use of technology in the classroom can really help the learning process. However, teachers have to be careful to use it wisely and meaningfully. Using technology does not only mean having up-to-date equipment and material, but it means using it in an appropriate way to practice the language so that students can get real life practice.

Before deciding what equipment of material to purchase, it is important to consider the students’ needs and the university’s objectives. To get the most out of technology in the teaching-learning process, the university should clearly identify the learning goals to be achieved through the use of technology. This should facilitate the university’s aim of forming high standard professionals. The activities in the Computer Lab must promote student’s long term abilities instead of only practicing the basic skills.

Teachers, as well as students, need to know how to use the equipment provided by the university in order not to lose valuable class time. On the other hand, the equipment has to be kept in good operable conditions. Technical support ought to be available just in case there is a need.
There are several things that the teacher can do to promote the use of technology in the classroom. For instance, the teacher can:

- Participate actively in professional development activities to increase technology use. When the school organizes special workshops or trainings on the use of technology, teachers should make their best effort in attending.
- Develop an individual professional development plan to provide the acquisition of technology skills and integration of technology into classroom activities. Since a lot of people are self-taught, they can look for the information they want to learn to implement it in their own classes by surfing the Internet or reading computing books.
- Develop strategies for using technology to improve student achievement. There are many activities that students can be asked to perform using technology, like investigating in the Internet, using online dictionaries, completing online exercises, sending the homework via e-mail etc.
- Assign class activities in which students use technology to research for the information by visiting web sites of newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias, and any other useful resources.
- The projects need to have authentic uses of technology for real-life context.
- Encourage students to work in groups helping each other to promote cooperative learning.
- Ask students to use e-mail to hand in their homework assignments.
- If a student needs further practice, extra activities can be assigned by e-mail.
- Instead of using that many photocopying material, the information can be sent to students in Word or PDF formats by e-mail or through the class web page, if there is one available.
- Require students to subscribe to an Internet mailing list of a websites for learners of English.
• When making their presentation, ask the students to use different technology, like Powerpoint presentations, the overhead projector or videos related to their topic.28

2.2.8 Types of Language Learning Centers
Since technology advances very quickly in the modern world, there are several different types of language learning centers. Some of them are very modern, while some others have fallen into disuse. In this research project, the most common one will be mentioned.

2.2.8.1 Language Laboratories
The Language Laboratories allow teachers to use two types of audiovisual teaching materials at the same time, to monitor learning, to communicate with individual students and allow them to communicate with each other, to correct pronunciation, and also to record lesson material.

In this kind of laboratories, lessons are conducted using a wide variety of source materials, such as CD-ROMs by means of computers, and lesson materials off the Internet. For viewing materials, there are monitors on the desks and a large screen for viewing the overhead projector. All equipment is operated from a control panel on the teacher's desk.

2.2.8.2 Audiovisual Laboratories
The Audiovisual Laboratories have the necessary equipment to use cassettes and CDs for listening comprehension practice of the language. They also have equipment for viewing videos in VHS and DVD formats. These videos are displayed on a large screen by means of a video projector.

28 http://www.virtualsalt.com/techuse.htm
In addition, the furniture in this sort of laboratory consists of tables and chairs that can be rearranged in different positions order to fit a variety of purposes.

In this kind of laboratory, the facilitator has complete control of the equipment through a control panel on the teacher’s desk.

### 2.2.8.3 Audio linguistic Language Laboratory

The characteristic of this laboratory is that it emphasizes the listening practice through the use of audio material. The room is equipped with cassette decks only.

At UFG there used to be an audio linguistic language laboratory, but it has fallen into disuse because it is considered out of date and the university has invested a lot in more modern equipment which is now available at EBLE building.

### 2.2.8.4 Multimedia Laboratories

In this type of laboratories, there are individual booths equipped with a computer. The material is transmitted directly from the teacher’s station to the students’ computers. The facilitators can use the internet, DVDs or a variety of computer software when conducting a class in these laboratories.

### 2.2.8.5 Audiovisual Private Study Room

The objective of this study room is to facilitate the study of the English language through a wide range of materials. The room is equipped with VHS, DVD and CD players, as well as cassette decks. The students can borrow the material available in the room, or can bring their own material to practice.
2.2.9 **Technological Resources**

As technology advances, different kinds of resources have been used in the teaching learning process of the English language. In the past, the most common resources were cassettes, VHS videos, overhead projectors and the radio among others. Nowadays, more modern resources are available, for example, UBS memories, DVDs, the computer, the internet and the websites, which make the teaching learning process easier in some way.

However, the use of a manual containing a collection of different websites, podcasts (audio files) and slideshows with a variety of exercises can also make the teachers’ job easier.

2.2.9.1 **The computer**

The computer is a very useful device for executing programs, manipulating data according to a list of instructions and performing other different tasks. Furthermore, most people all over the world are using it in several circumstances of their lives. Nowadays, any kind of company is using the computer, including educational institutions. English classes have been improved with this kind of resources which means that teachers have been born to the new world of technology.

In today’s modern world, more and more teachers are trying to integrate the use of computers into the process of teaching English as a Foreign Language.

When using computers, it is necessary to remind students that it is not a computer course, but an English course with the use of technology integrated to it, and that computers must be used properly for this purpose.

To help those students who have problems using computers, those with advanced computers skills can be asked to assist them. It is important to make sure that the instructions are stated clearly, so that students know exactly what they are to do.
Many course books include a CR-ROM for students to practice the language structures individually at their own pace. However, this is not completely useful for the teachers. The time in the class should be used for interacting not for practicing individually. This is why many teachers decide to create their own activities to be done in the computers.

2.2.9.2 The Internet

Internet is a mean of communication for searching information of any type. It provides several advantages of searching that is why people use it in their daily life. For instance, in the educational area, the Internet has a lot to offer to teachers; they use it as a tool for their own development and as a resource for classroom teaching. They can find authentic sources and materials, websites for preparing lesson plans, ideas and worksheets and websites where their students can share ideas and thoughts with other teachers around the world.

To search for information in the internet, there are search directories and search engines available. A search directory or web directory\(^{29}\) is good for looking at general topic areas and their contents have been sorted by real people. The topics can be searched the same way as searching for information in a library by clicking through the different sections and sub-sections. Yahoo is a search directory. It contains different section, for example sports, music and entertainment.

Search engines\(^{30}\) list content which has been gathered automatically from the Internet. There is much more information to choose from because it has not been selected by people but by the computer itself. It is therefore very important to be careful in the choice of the key words to perform a search. Google is a search engine. When using search engines it is important to narrow down the search in order not to get thousands of links that are irrelevant for your investigation and will only make you


lose time. For instance, select the key words and terms carefully using only relevant expressions. If students need further practice on the simple past tense, the key words to be typed can be “simple past exercises”.

### 2.2.9.3 The Websites

A Website is a related collection of World Wide Web (WWW) files that includes a beginning file called a home page. From the home page, all the other pages on a website can be accessed.

A Website³¹ is a space on the Internet where anyone can publish an electronic brochure or information to show the world about the activity of a certain company or person. Each screen containing information inside a website is called page. The pages of a website may include text, graphic images and even photographs and videos.

A website can have connections to other websites with related topics. These connections are called links. Whenever there is a link, all that is required by the user is to double click on it and a new window will open automatically.

### 2.2.9.4 Manual

The creation of a manual to be used during the laboratory sessions at UFG is the proposal of the researchers of this investigation. Therefore, it is important to explain in what it will consist.

The manual will contain twelve units, corresponding to the twelve units of the textbook being used at the moment of the elaboration of this manual. Each one of the unit will provide vocabulary, pronunciation and listening practice regarding the functional aspects of each unit. Each unit will also contain online exercises to have

³¹ [http://www.fredmoor.com/design/what.htm](http://www.fredmoor.com/design/what.htm)
further practice.

Each unit of the manual will be created using Microsoft PowerPoint, and the listening exercises will be created using a program called Hot Potatoes, which is a program specially for teacher to create quizzed, cloze exercises and other forms of test for their students.

The researchers will verify that the manual works in the computers at the lab, and will also check that the volume of the files is set to an appropriate level to be heard on the headphones.

Regarding the speaking practice, the teacher can decide to conduct them in the lab, by connecting the students’ stations through specific software or performing these oral activities during the next class back in the classroom.

2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

ACQUISITION: The cognitive process of acquiring skill or knowledge. An ability that has been acquired by training.

AFFECTIVE FILTER: Kind of barrier to acquisition that results from negative feelings or experiences.

AUDIOLINGUISTIC LANGUAGE LAB: A laboratory which focuses in the practice of the listening skills by using cassettes decks.

COMPUTER LAB: A workplace for the conduct of audio linguistic practice of a language, using technology to help develop language skills.
**CULTURAL FACTOR:** Characteristics of the cultural costumes and believes that surround a person.

**CULTURAL TRANSMISSION:** Process of acquiring a language, not genetically inherited, but in a particular language-using environment.

**DAILY COMMUNICATIVE REQUIREMENTS:** Those skills that people use to communicate their desires and intentions.

**DIDACTICAL SUPPORT:** any kind of material that can be used to help the teaching-learning process.

**FIRST LANGUAGE:** The language a human being learns from birth. It is also called mother tongue, native language, or L1.

**FREELANCE TEACHERS:** Teacher who are paid per class hours and do not have a full-time contract.

**INTERPRETATION:** Oral translation of information like speeches, presentations or conversations.

**KINESTHETIC:** Sense of movement or the action of touching or doing something with the hands.

**LANGUAGE-FACULTY:** predisposition in the human infant to acquire language.

**LEARNING:** It is the conscious process of accumulation knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of a language. This happens with both the first and the second language at school, where people learn the rules of the language.

**MANUAL:** A handbook containing guidelines and suggested exercises. In this case
the word manual refers to extra exercises that correspond to those in the students' book with the objective of helping the teacher reducing the preparation time for the lab sessions.

**ONLINE LIBRARY:** Library on the web that contains collections of materials and books which are stored and available for immediate use.

**ORGANIZED PROGRAM:** It is a method stating the aims and principles of an integrated course of academic studies.

**OUT-OF-DATE:** Something that is antique or no longer fashionable.

**SECOND LANGUAGE (L2):** Any language learned after the first language or mother tongue (L1).

**SENIOR SCHOOL:** Final year at a school or university.

**SOCIAL FACTORS:** characteristics of the social environment in which a person grows.

**SYLLABUS:** An integrated course of academic studies document with an outline and summary of topics to be covered in a course. A syllabus usually contains specific information about the course, such an outline of what will be covered in the course; a schedule of test dates and the due dates for assignments; the grading policy for the course; specific classroom rules; among others.