



Implementation of Oral Production Activities through Remote Learning: A Case Study of EFL Students at Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica

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Abstract

During the school year 2020, as in many other educational settings, classes at Universidad Nacional (UNA), Costa Rica, had to be rapidly transformed and adapted so that the pedagogical mediation process could be changed from the traditional face-to-face or in-class sessions to remote learning. This process, certainly, posed varied challenges in terms of the mediation process and technology-related issues, which had to be addressed efficiently in order to guarantee access to education. In this regard, this article is based on the experience lived with two groups of students taking English as a Foreign



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Language (EFL) in the course of English II (during the II term of 2020), at Campus Omar Dengo, Heredia, which were taught through remote learning. For this qualitative research, data were collected by means of a closed and open-ended questionnaire in which information related to the oral-production activities implemented during classes was gathered. This instrumental case study concludes with three main statements about the implementation of oral-production tasks: a) planning, b) scaffolding, and c) feedback.

Keywords: activities, feedback, mediation, pedagogy, planning, remote-learning, scaffolding

Resumen

Durante el curso lectivo 2020, al igual que en otros contextos educativos, las lecciones en la Universidad Nacional (UNA), Costa Rica, tuvieron que ser transformadas y adaptadas rápidamente; de modo tal, que la mediación pedagógica pudiera ser cambiada del modelo tradicional presencial a la presencialidad remota. Este proceso, ciertamente, planteó desafíos en términos de la mediación pedagógica y de la utilización de medios tecnológicos, adaptaciones que tuvieron que ser atendidas eficientemente para así garantizar el acceso a la educación. En este sentido, este artículo se basa en la experiencia vivida con dos grupos de estudiantes, los cuales llevaron inglés como lengua extranjera en el curso de Inglés II (durante el II ciclo de 2020), en el Campus Omar Dengo, Heredia, impartido mediante la presencialidad remota. Para esta investigación cualitativa, la información fue recolectada mediante un cuestionario (preguntas tanto abiertas como cerradas) en el cual datos acerca de las actividades de producción oral implementadas fueron recopilados. Este estudio de caso instrumental concluye con el análisis y discusión de tres categorías relacionadas con la implementación de actividades de producción oral: a) planeamiento, b) andamiaje educativo, y c) retroalimentación.

Palabras clave: Actividades, andamiaje, mediación, pedagogía, planeamiento, presencialidad-remota, retroalimentación.



I. Introduction

In 2020, due to a health-related situation in Costa Rica, which was caused by the COVID-19 virus, the education system was forced to change radically from face-to-face lessons to the remote learning modality. This process required instructors to rapidly adapt to a totally new and unknown model in which several variables had to be taken into account in order to offer an effective and meaningful pedagogical mediation for the target population. As instructors of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), one of the major and most challenging concerns was to develop effective and significant oral-production activities given the modality in which this course was taught. New variables emerged in the pedagogical mediation as face-to-face classes were shifted to the remote learning modality; even though technology had always been an important component in which language lessons were developed and assisted by technological tools, through this new modality, students, as well as instructors, had to learn how to interact virtually, and indeed, professors had to learn how to develop appropriate oral-production activities despite the learners' technological abilities and background knowledge, conditions, and learning needs.

Based on this particular context and considering the pedagogical model of Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica (UNA, 2007), it is relevant to mention that learners as well as professors worked together by using a wide range of technological platforms and online didactic resources and materials to develop their lessons in a remote learning environment, in which students were encouraged to be active participants in the sessions. For this reason and considering the nature of the English II course, which is taught to students from majors other than English, the instructors provided learners with constant input and opportunities for them to produce orally in the target language as much as possible. Input, according to [Abukhattala \(2013\)](#), should be comprehensible so that learners are able to understand messages and, later on, use this information and knowledge to produce in the target language. For this purpose, it was key to provide sustained, relevant, and varied input in terms of grammatical structures and vocabulary throughout the use of distinct audios, passages, and/or videos which undoubtedly meant to familiarize learners with the language, so they used this knowledge to communicate orally in an accurate way. Instructors provided opportunities for oral production practices and constant professors' as well as peer-feedback was also part of the pedagogical mediation process.

Considering the importance of English as a foreign language for students in higher education in Costa Rica and the characteristics of the remote learning modality, this qualitative study describes and analyzes deeply the students' perceptions and their experiences during their learning process in terms of the oral skill and their development throughout the remote learning modality. Indeed, authors such as [Harmer \(2007a, 2007b\)](#) and [Thornbury \(2005\)](#) provide guidance to instructors on how to develop oral activities to help learners progress in this skill effectively and according to the expected level.

II. Theoretical Framework

2.1. How Should Oral-Production Activities Be Planned?

In general, promoting the speaking skill in an English class poses a huge challenge for most language instructors since it demands a well-designed planning process from the instructors' perspective, and that also entails the students' ages, individual background, previous knowledge of the language, and needs. When English is taught, the four macro linguistic skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, must be considered; learners should be immersed in an integrated process in which they receive "comprehensible input" ([Krashen, 2009, p. 72](#)) from the four linguistic abilities, and then, they turn this input into oral output; therefore, it is not possible to teach or learn one skill in isolation. Rather, it must be a holistic process. In this regard, [Harmer \(2007b\)](#) stated that "the ideal learning sequence, then, will offer both skill integration and also language study based around a topic or other thematic thread" (p. 268), which is one of the foundations for the development of the aforementioned English course and the research conducted.

For dealing with its complexity, Anuradha et al. (2014, as cited in [Hussain, 2018](#)) explained some principles to clarify the way teachers should deal with the oral skill. First, they stated the importance of speaking from the first day; for instance, if a student gives one-word answers to a question, bear it for the time being, students should speak actively with whatever English knowledge they have. Instructors have to propose structures, phrases, and words and encourage learners to use them in different situations; it is advisable to set a target structure or vocabulary and foster its implementation to widen the learners' language constructions. Additionally, it is significant to implement back-chaining



or tail-forwarding techniques to make long sentences and integrate the remaining macro and micro skills by polishing pronunciation, intonation, grammar, word use, and so on. Oral production must be a combination of controlled and non-controlled speaking activities; a class may start with a controlled activity, such as a back-chaining drill focused on a target structure and then jump into a non-controlled activity such as role-plays.

From the instructors' perspective, it is mandatory to be prepared in terms of didactic and/or lesson planning, activities, and tasks to assure a logical pedagogical sequence. In addition, during class, professors should let their students make mistakes at the primary stage; feedback should be given in an appropriate way, taking into consideration the learners' needs and preferences. From this viewpoint, planning unquestionably takes deep analysis and observation of the target population in order to make informed decisions about the language class. English instructors should make sure their lessons are carefully designed by taking into account their learners' age, background knowledge, interests, and language level; in this process, it is crucial to keep in mind the role planning plays in terms of sequence (before, during, and after class). It is undoubtedly evident when a lesson has been carefully designed since the activities are coherent, well-developed, and lead students to reach the goal and/or objective(s) of the lesson by doing smooth transitions from one activity to the next one. Indeed, [Harmer \(2007b\)](#) indicated that

The issue of how one activity leads into another is a matter of how different parts or stages of a lesson hang together. Students need to know, during a lesson, when one stage has finished and another is about to begin. This involves drawing their attention to what is going to happen next, or making it clear that something has finished by making summarizing comments. (p. 370)

Planning, in other words, comprises a proposal for action, whose primary goal is to work as the road map to guide students during the mediation process. Some instructors may even present or show their learners what their learning sequence over the lesson will be like, so they also have clear understanding of the "steps" to be taken in order to reach the goal and/or objective(s) of that particular class. When planning, these questions may help instructors guide themselves in the

process: a) what goal(s) do my students have to achieve? b) What specific objective(s) do they need to reach? c) What activities may assist my learners to accomplish the established goal(s) and specific objective(s)? d) What actions can be taken to scaffold the mediation process properly? e) What resources and materials are needed for developing each activity? If instructors design their lessons by reflecting upon the previous prompts and some others that may come up as they analyze their particular population, the English class will be an organized and well-planned environment where learners will feel confident on what the professor is doing.

As a matter of fact, this article focuses on the relevance of planning oral activities; for this purpose, professors have to make sure their students understand and feel ready for working on a given task. Indeed, throughout the courses of English II, which are offered to learners from majors other than English and which commonly have beginner students registered, these terms were crucial for designing each activity.

2.2. Why Is Scaffolding Relevant?

Promoting the speaking skill is undeniably not easy; in general, students show themselves anxious, nervous, and reluctant to participate in oral production activities since they do not feel “ready” or “competent” enough to deal with this linguistic ability in order to communicate accurately. Language instructors have to make sure they provide learners with adequate and sufficient input as well as opportunities for them to practice what they have learned. The classroom has to be a safe place or environment where learners feel comfortable and supported along the process; therefore, it is essential to make sure students are confident enough to participate and to make mistakes, if that is the case. [Krashen \(2009\)](#), in one of his five hypotheses for second language acquisition and learning, the Affective Filter, stressed the relevance of emotional factors when acquiring and/or learning a language. Research has proven there are affective variables that influence and have implications when learning a language. In fact, [Krashen \(2009\)](#) particularly referred to

Motivation: performers with high motivation generally do better in second language acquisition.

Self-confidence: performers with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition.



Anxiety: Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety. (p. 31)

From this perspective, EFL professors should make sure these affective variables do not heavily interfere with and influence their learners in class, especially when they are working on oral-production activities. So, what should be done about it? It is definitely vital to review the relationship between scaffolding as one of the principles that underlies effective language instruction and affective factors. Scaffolding certainly goes beyond providing “just-in-time support” (Gonulal & Loewen, 2018, p. 3); it is a technique that allows instructors to give learners that additional push they need to work at a certain level in the target language. Walqui (2006, as cited in Gonulal & Loewen, 2018, p. 3) stated that the “most salient instructional scaffolding techniques are modeling, bridging, contextualizing, schema building, re-presenting text, and developing metacognition”. For this study, students received scaffolding based on four particular types:

- a) Modeling: Distinct examples of the language were explained, and several instances were provided in oral form.
- b) Bridging: The learners’ previous knowledge was activated prior to any new information.
- c) Contextualizing: Language was definitely contextualized by using examples close to the learners’ everyday environment and reality.
- d) Developing metacognition: Students were encouraged to take control of their own learning process by developing self-awareness and autonomy.

As time went by in the course, professors tried to promote autonomy and extrinsic motivation through varied activities, in which learners felt free to communicate with their peers as well as with the whole class; this process was surely grounded on the scaffolding techniques implemented before, during, and after each oral-production activity. Oral tasks were diverse in terms of creativity, dynamism, engagement, and structure or organization, so they were tailored according to the students’ language level, previous knowledge, and needs. Also, through oral production activities, the affective factor of self-confidence had to

be targeted. This process was done by having learners work on those activities with which they felt comfortable and which they knew they had been previously successful in; in this way, they were totally focused on the language rather than on the steps to be followed for completing the activity. Finally, anxiety is an affective factor, which, unquestionably, has to be addressed in the language class. Professors may help their students reduce their anxiety levels by providing constant instructor and peer feedback orally so that learners receive input and develop their self-confidence as they work on each oral-production activity and move on in their language learning process.

2.3. How Should Feedback Be Provided?

Assessing the students' performance is a powerful component to guarantee accurate oral production; the term feedback goes beyond correcting the learners' mistakes or errors orally. In fact, Brookhart (2008) affirmed that

Feedback can be very powerful if done well. The power of formative feedback lies in its double-barreled approach, addressing both cognitive and motivational factors at the same time. Good feedback gives students information they need so they can understand where they are in their learning and what to do next - the cognitive factor. Once they feel they understand what to do and why, most students develop a feeling that they have control over their own learning - the motivational factor. (p. 2)

It is, indeed, a component that requires constant communication among the participants. Feedback has the power to clarify the students' speech and lead them to communicate successfully, but it could also have a negative impact on the learners if it is carried out inappropriately. How many times have you asked your learners how they would prefer to be corrected? Is the professor the only source of feedback? How is effective feedback delivered? More questions could arise with regards to this essential class matter. As language instructors, one of the major concerns is to always bear in mind how relevant feedback is within the oral production process but also to understand that there is no consistent model to be followed; oppositely, it varies from one educational context to another one. Brookhart (2008) proposed four particular feedback strategies: "timing,



amount, mode, and audience” (p. 5); from this perspective, professors should always ask themselves: when and how frequently should feedback be provided? (timing), how much information should be addressed and why? (amount), how should feedback be delivered? (mode), and finally, who is to be involved in this process? just the corresponding student? a specific group? the whole class?

For promoting and fostering the speaking skill, instructors should be aware of the different ways of providing feedback and find out the most appropriate for their learners. Feedback can, certainly, be delivered at different times; it could be given overtly and covertly and by different means. [Nikolic and Cabaj \(2000\)](#) suggested an inquiry for the most appropriate way to assure its effectiveness; in fact, for the participants of this study, feedback was constantly provided during the class period (timing). It usually referred to aspects of the language in terms of the speaking skill (amount), and it was delivered in oral form (mode). During this process, students received instructors’ as well as peer feedback, which helped them become aware of its importance in terms of their learning process.

2.4. How Should Oral Activities Be Developed through Remote Learning?

Addressing oral production throughout the remote learning modality requires instructors to identify, analyze, and select the main principles of digital competence and merge them to develop an appropriate mediation process. First and foremost, it is necessary to identify basic elements to ensure an adequate learning environment. According to [Morgan \(2020\)](#), there are three main principles to set up an appropriate learning environment, which must ensure “equity”, establish “communicating expectations”, and provide a “student-centered learning” environment (p. 136).

Ensuring equity means that the population should have access to reliable sources to get online taking into consideration the Internet connection and the devices they require. A good Internet connection, however, does not guarantee a significant learning process since not all students have the same devices and conditions at home. Communicating expectations refers to having clear communication among administrators, staff, or any other participants who take part into the learning process when implementing an online program. It is suggested

to provide a list of common questions, such as how to log in, how to solve technological questions, and to ensure an appropriate channel for fluent communication for all participants. Additionally, it is necessary to provide student-centered learning settings; this will allow students to change their roles from being passive agents to actively participate in class. During the English II course, learners were frequently encouraged to be active participants in each oral production activity; at the same time, they also progressed in terms of building up their self-confidence when speaking.

III. Methodology

3.1. Type of Study

This research was a qualitative study; Creswell (2003) defined “qualitative research as a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 21). In fact, this study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the applied oral production activities throughout the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. In addition, this was a case study carried out at Universidad Nacional, specifically at Omar Dengo Campus, which is located in Heredia, Costa Rica. According to Creswell (2012), “a case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e. g., activity, event, process or individuals) based on extensive data collection” (p. 465); more specifically, this was an instrumental case since it sought to address “a specific issue with a case (or cases) used to illustrate the issue” (Creswell, 2012, p. 465); that is, the students’ development in terms of the oral skill were the specific issues illustrated. In addition, this research took place during the second term of 2020, which comprises from July to November.

3.2. Context and Participants

This study took place at a public university in Costa Rica, Universidad Nacional, in a course that belongs to the *Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje (ELCL)* in Spanish), which is the school in charge of offering language courses to majors other than English. The students enrolled in the course of English II are expected to reach an A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL). The course aimed to have students learn the four linguistic skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing integrally,



which means developing these abilities through varied class activities. The sample consisted of twenty-seven participants from two different groups of English II; the courses were taught by two different instructors. These students took an English course through the remote learning modality, which, at the time, was a very new and non-traditional model implemented due to the national situation caused by the COVID-19 virus. These learners featured to be heterogeneous since they came from distinct majors and fields, such as Administration, Agronomy, Arts, Chemistry, Psychology, Sociology, and Teaching; 55.6% of the students were males and 44.4% females. Most learners were in the second year of their majors (44.4% of the sample), 25.9% were in their third year, and 18.5% were in their first year. The courses were taught through the remote learning modality supported by a wide variety of technological platforms and resources, such as the Institutional Virtual Classroom (official platform hosted on Moodle), Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom.

3.3. Instruments

For this instrumental case study, a questionnaire was administered to gather information related to the different oral-production activities implemented during the lessons. This instrument was generated through a Google Forms' document, and it included closed as well as open-ended questions, which aimed to collect data based on the students' perceptions of the activities in terms of their effectiveness and usefulness for their oral performance. Indeed, the questions generated provided learners with the opportunity of expressing their ideas upon their experience taking an English course through the remote learning modality and in which they were expected to communicate in varied daily as well as academic situations at the level of A2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

3.4. Categories of Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed throughout a triangulation process in which three categories of analysis were the foundation for this study: a) planning: design, sequence, and development (explanation and instruction-giving) of the oral activities implemented; b) scaffolding: how students compensate their shortcomings based on the input received, so they progress in their language learning process; and c) feedback: how instructor and peer feedback promoted oral production.

3.5. Implementation of the Oral-Production Activities

This study took place in two English courses of the second level, which had to be adapted to the remote learning modality; for this purpose, the oral-production activities were implemented by following [Thornbury's \(2005\)](#) model of “awareness activities” (p. 41). First, the students’ attention was directed to explanations and instructions and varied instances of the language. This was done by using creative, engaging, and eye-catching didactic resources and materials. Then, they were asked to use the insights they gained in distinct rehearsing and oral-production activities, which were developed with their peers (pairs or small teams). Finally, the learners’ understanding of the language was assessed, while they performed orally in the speaking task(s). Over this process, learners received professor and peer feedback, so they were able to process those insights and eventually, improve along the sequence carried out for the mediation process. Professors made sure they raised their learners’ awareness in terms of a specific grammar structure, tense, and/or vocabulary; then, learners received constant input based on that, and finally, they had multiple opportunities for rehearsing and practicing what they had learned in order to be able to produce accurately in the target language.

IV. Results and Discussion

The following results comprise the students’ impressions and perceptions about the planning design, sequence, and development, the implementation of the oral activities, the scaffolding process, and finally the feedback provided during the cycle. In fact, the results obtained from the gathered data show that the majority of the learners, exactly 81.5%, considered it necessary and significant to receive detailed explanations, several examples, and clear instructions previous to the development of any oral-production activities.

In terms of the first category of analysis, planning, most of the population highlighted the need for clear explanations, examples, and instructions. In fact, a clear objective was always stated; hence, both professors and students knew the target of the class. Instructors can easily break geographical distances in their classes if the pedagogical mediation fits the learners’ context and needs. The instructor should always look for meaningfulness, asking for facts that were happening at that moment, samples that could hook the reality with the language.



In order to support the effectiveness of those remote-learning strategies, 63% of the participants valued having explicit explanations based on grammatical structures and vocabulary.

A wide range of oral activities were implemented through the remote learning modality. Students also mentioned the oral-production activities they believe most effective for their language learning process, which are oral descriptions, debates, dramatizations and role-plays, oral games, oral presentations, small-group and team-activities, reading out-loud, recordings, songs, and short clips and videos. In this regard, [Harmer \(2007a\)](#) asserted that

Good speaking activities can and should be extremely engaging for the students. If they are all participating fully - and if the teacher has set up the activity properly and can then give sympathetic and useful feedback - they will get tremendous satisfaction from it. (p. 123)

In order to address those interactive and oral-production activities, three main technological tools were used: the Virtual Classroom as the formal institutional means and the video conferencing platforms Zoom and Microsoft Teams. These platforms allowed the development of synchronous lessons to perform online debates, develop role plays, share audio or files, work simultaneously, start discussions, among others. Additionally, synchronous classes were supported by other resources, such as Kahoot (a real time online game) to review vocabulary or grammar, websites to fill in the blanks while listening to songs, or engaging online games (for instance, hangman, crosswords, Pelmanism, etc.) to introduce vocabulary or review a grammar topic. Indeed, all of them demanded constant monitoring and guidance from the instructors.

In terms of the second category of analysis, scaffolding, students showed themselves motivated whenever they worked on the oral-production activities mentioned before, and professors constantly tried to implement speaking tasks by following a logical sequence, which was carefully designed during the planning process. Essentially, language instructors moved from controlled to non-controlled activities to promote the use the target language in contextualized and diverse situations. Learners were provided with the needed linguistic input, so

they were able to participate actively and collaboratively in each of the implemented controlled activities.

It is relevant to mention that learners were constantly encouraged to participate during the lessons; indeed, 63% indicated that practicing orally what they learned during the first stages and activities of the class previous to any oral-production task was essential. They stated that this process helped them feel “confident” and “more ready” before producing in the target language. Learners were always given the opportunity to practice before any oral-production activities, so they were encouraged to use the insights they gained during the presentation stage of each lesson. Harmer (2007a) stated that “it is important to give students pre-discussion rehearsal time” (p. 128), a principle that was always taken into account throughout the development of the oral activities.

By taking advantage of the remote learning modality and the variety of online and free-access platforms and online resources, the instructors put into practice different strategies to motivate and stimulate learners in terms of their oral production. The use of breakout rooms in Zoom and Channels in Microsoft Teams seemed to be appropriate settings for practicing orally before performing a conversation or giving a presentation; students could work cooperatively along with their peers, clarify questions, and rehearse their speech. Professors constantly visited the rooms and channels to monitor their learners’ performance, and this seemed a very beneficial space to use the target language in contextualized settings and while working with their peers.

Finally, the third crucial category and component was feedback. The students pointed out that the feedback received from their professor was positive and useful in the process of internalizing how to use the language accurately; 77.8% valued the instructor’s feedback, while 33.3% highly benefited from peer feedback. Providing feedback through the remote learning modality was challenging, considering the external factors that may have affected the quality of speech. Despite this fact, the instructors adopted certain strategies to provide it in an implicit way. According to Salih and Yalcin (2018), implicit feedback “occurs when the source (most often the teacher) does not provide an apparent indication that the learner has made a mistake” (p. 3), the instructor drew the learners’ attention to figure out the mistakes and corrected them right after they finish their performances. Zoom and Microsoft Teams allow the host of the meeting to share a “whiteboard;” mistakes were written



as the way they were uttered, and students corrected them in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Indeed, this strategy was performed repeatedly to reach accuracy in the speech.

The results obtained from the data gathered show that the majority of the students, exactly 81.5%, considered it necessary and significant to receive explanations, varied examples, and clear instructions before the development of the oral activities. Actually, that specific information was always taken into account and developed during the first stages of the pedagogical mediation of the course; therefore, what [Harmer \(2007a\)](#) recommended as being useful for learners when working with the speaking skill was adopted in particular:

Something we should always remember is that people need time to assemble their thoughts before any discussion. After all, it is challenging to have to give immediate and articulate opinions in our own language, let alone in a language we are struggling to learn. (p. 128)

Most of the population highlighted the explanations, examples, and clear instructions as one of the strengths during the remote learning process. Working through the remote learning modality demands accuracy and clearness since the very beginning of the class; that is why a clear objective was always stated so that professors as well as learners knew the target to follow. The grammar explanations were given in a presentation by sharing the professors' screen; this process was supported by the students' examples that were given at the moment of the class.

Learners were always given the opportunity to practice before any oral production activities, so they were encouraged to use the insights they gained during the presentation stage of each lesson. Additionally, 63% of the students valued having explicit explanations based on grammatical structures and vocabulary so that they were able to have varied instances related to these micro-skills in diverse contexts. Among the participants of this study, 63% also indicated that practicing orally what they learned during the first stages and activities of the class previous to any oral production task was essential; learners pointed out that this process helped them feel “confident” and “more ready” when producing in the target language. Finally, in terms of feedback, learners pointed out that the feedback received from their professor was positive

and useful in the process of internalizing how to use the language accurately; 77.8% valued the instructor's feedback, while 33.3% highly benefited from peer feedback.

In the case of the English II course, students truly seemed to enjoy the oral production activities implemented, and instructors always tried to develop a logical sequence by the time they planned their lessons. Basically, they shifted from controlled to non-controlled activities (back and forth) to encourage learners to use the language they learned in contextualized and varied scenarios and situations. For controlled activities, students were given the necessary linguistic components to be able to take part actively and work collaboratively. In regard to the platforms and technological resources and materials implemented, instructors use varied and level-appropriate tools for learners to work orally effectively, scaffold their lessons, and provide functional feedback.

It is crucial to set a clear objective and both actors, professors and students, should be aware of the objective to follow per lesson; it could be a grammatical structure or vocabulary words that will let the learners do something with the target language orally. It is advisable to elicit questions to enhance oral production and realize about the prior knowledge the students have in terms of that subject matter. For oral production activities, video conferencing tools offer the opportunity to break the learners into small rooms or channels randomly for them not to feel exposed when producing in English; the role of the instructor is vital since he/she will assume the role of monitoring constantly and checking the students' performance.

V. Conclusions

Based on the data and results obtained and analyzed, it can be concluded that the pedagogical mediation developed through the remote learning modality was effective since most students were active participants during the implementation of the oral production activities, which can be regarded as functional and useful for their language learning process. In addition, learners certainly valued clear and well-detailed explanations, examples, and instructions previous to any oral production activity, a process related to the role of planning. In this regard, [Harmer \(2007a\)](#) indicated that "the ideal compromise, then, is to plan a lesson that has an internal coherence but which nevertheless allows students to do different things as it progresses" (p. 158), which is the case of the English II courses in which oral production activities were



carefully planned, designed, and developed to help students become competent in this skill as they worked over the class.

Also, students stated the importance of receiving explanations and examples based on the grammar and vocabulary to be used before any speaking activities. Learners considered this crucial so that they feel more “confident” and “ready” before using any structure, tense, and specific vocabulary on a given oral task. This process was supported through the implementation of the scaffolding techniques modeling, bridging, contextualizing, and developing metacognition, which were helpful for addressing the learners’ confidence in terms of oral production. In fact, [Amerian and Mehri \(2014\)](#) explained that

The help/scaffolding is to continuously move the learner toward next steps of development; therefore, this continuous, dynamic, and gradual move toward higher levels of mental functioning requires another jointed mind to move the learner to higher levels for independent functioning of the task in hand. (p. 757)

Besides that, learners believe that having the opportunity of practicing and rehearsing their conversations, dialogues, role-plays, etc. is completely necessary before any oral activities; this is what [Thornbury \(2005\)](#) referred to as “awareness activities” (p. 41), in which students are aimed to become conscious of what they are doing or performing in a given oral task; for this purpose, three processes are involved: “attention” (engagement, interest, and involvement), “noticing” (processing and registering information), and “understanding” (recognition and applicability). As this practice was constantly developed in class, learners pointed out that they were able to receive teacher and peer feedback while rehearsing, which was helpful for their language learning process.

Finally, the research participants considered instructor and peer feedback as a necessary and helpful resource for them to go over their doubts, mistakes, and questions and improve along the process; in fact, when providing feedback orally, [Harmer \(2007a\)](#) affirmed that it is essential to explain to students what the purpose of providing feedback is and the reason why so that learners see the objective of it and its relevance. During this study, learners seemed to benefit highly from oral feedback since they were able to target areas of improvement and progress in terms of their oral production.

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