



**USAGE OF INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING**

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Abstract

The present research aims to describe the impact of the usage of integrated technology tools in the improvement of English learning in reading and speaking skills, in ninth-grade students. This study was conducted at Isaías Gamboa Institution and Alfonso López Pumarejo Institution in their branches La Inmaculada and Farallones respectively. It was conducted by collecting and analyzing data from reading and speaking tests before the implementation of some strategies using technological tools to improve reading and speaking skills. During the execution of such a didactic sequence, the students conducted a post-test of oral expression and reading comprehension to measure the scope of those instruments. Finally, an online questionnaire was applied to know the students' perception of the implementation of those teaching strategies. According to the findings, all of those techniques and resources helped the learners to enhance their motivation and improve their English-speaking skills, including vocabulary and pronunciation. This study pretends to give some proposals for strengthening the reading and oral skills not only in ninth grade but also in all levels of high school.

Key words: reading, speaking, learning, technology, tools.

Introduction

English as a subject at some institutions like the Isaias Gamboa, branch La Inmaculada, and Alfonso López Pumarejo, branch Farallones need to update their learning and teaching methodology, in order to change the negative students' attitude towards the subject. Since a huge number of students feel that it is not functional nor logical to learn a language that they do not use at home nor in their environment. The socioeconomic situation forces them to think that they will never go abroad, and they will never use it. Those situations have produced a low academic response and a skeptical attitude against the subject.

The use of different kinds of apps to play games online or mixing music, would be the door that we, as researchers want to open, to take advantage of integrating technological tools in the classroom and thus demonstrate to students that most of them already know and use English on platforms and websites, enhancing the students' reading and speaking skills.

It is the right moment to implement ICT applications in the seek of a change in the students' reading and speaking competence. Thus, the research question: How to improve reading and speaking skills in English Language Learning through technological tools at the I.E. Isaias Gamboa, branch La Inmaculada, and I.E. Alfonso López Pumarejo, branch Farallones. Public Schools, in 9th grade students?

Justification

This research tried to improve reading and speaking through the use of integrated technology applications into the classroom. Revitalize the teaching help students and teachers to be alive in this new global world. Changed the students and teacher's mindset about the learning-teaching process, looking at technology applications in a friendly way, there's nothing to fear.

Corresponding to the direct observation of the context, the political influence and the socio-economic conditions made the students at schools impacted in this research, take a negative position against the learning of a second language. The idea that Colombians can only celebrate economical relationships with the countries that are next to us because they are Spanish speakers, have permitted them to sabotage their own progress in the learning of the second language. (Personal communication with members of the educational community, 2018)

According to the interaction between Professor Tim Marr and colleagues (personal communication, July 2020), there has to be a change in the way students learnt because they ignore that English is the new lingua franca. It is necessary to improve the reading and speaking skills in order to access to new first-hand global information through the target language and open their mindset related to economics, technology, education, jobs, opportunities, and fun, etc. It is important to connect this new generation of students to the new reality. Everyone must be prepared to compete with the rest of the world. These connect the students with the other realities outside the country. Sharing with different cultural backgrounds and languages without leaving the country and families.

Based on the classroom experiences in reading activities, and the low results in previous years Pruebas del Saber, and Educar para Avanzar tests, it is realized that the students do not have a good reading comprehension level. In the case of speaking, in spite of there is not a national test to measure this skill, teachers could evidence students' stress out to speak in the target language. Due to technological devices as: mobiles and tablets are considered distracting, we as teachers decided to use them as relevant appliances to improve reading and speaking skills.

By the other hand, teachers are important elements in the students' skills development because they are supposed to guide the learners, and that is why, we decided taking into the use of ICTs suggested by professors from the master, for making our classes more interactive, applying some platforms and websites. Teachers are responsible to teach this technological generation how useful ICT applications properly. It is important to identify and apply the correct

Integrated Technology Applications to teach and learn not only a new language but also any subject, through them, they can achieve crosswork in their classes without a lot of effort.

This study strives to facilitate the learners' reading comprehension and speaking through technological tools that encourage the students' motivation to use the target language, using them not only to play games but also for an academic purpose. The use of the integrated technology applications pretends to transform classrooms into language laboratories where students can practice in and outside the classroom what is learnt, sharing with their peers and students from other sites or schools.

Finally, the results of this work must be shared with teachers of other areas of study, implementing these tools inside the classes facilitates the crosswork, connecting students and teachers with the new demands of jobs and learning-teaching processes, and providing the new skills everybody needs to be globalized.

Research Question

How to improve reading and speaking skills in English Language Learning through technological tools at the I.E. Isaias Gamboa, branch La Inmaculada, and I.E. Alfonso López Pumarejo, branch Farallones, Public Schools, in 9th grade students?

Research objective

To improve the reading and speaking skills through the use of integrated technology applications in English language learning.

Specific learning objectives

1. Improving the reading comprehension through CommonLit Platform.
2. Facilitating students' oral production through platforms such as VoiceThread, Vocaroo and Gather Town.

Theoretical Framework

The use of technological tools in the improvement of reading and speaking skills in English language learning.

In order to improve the reading and speaking skills. The following items will be developed:

- Technology in the classroom that includes technological tools and technology-based applications.
- Teaching and Learning including Teachers and Students' Role, language learning skills improvement, speaking skill, reading skill and teachers competence in ICT. For that reason, the previous knowledge in the use of websites, webpages, and virtual programs like music mixer between others, serves as a pretext to implement technological tools.

Technology in the classroom

Some researchers express that the use of technology to create a learning atmosphere centered around the learner, also permits the use of the language to become active with meaningful tasks where the learners are responsible for their learning, in other words autonomous.

Technology is the practical use of knowledge particularly in a specific area, it is a way of doing a task especially using technical processes, methods, or knowledge (Ahmadi, 2018, p.3), this includes not only the usage of computers, but also structured relations with other humans, machines, and the environment. "Developing learner's knowledge and skills pertinent to computer technology provides equity of opportunity, regardless of learner's background. Meaningful development of technology-based knowledge is significant to all learners in order to maximize their learning" (Ahmadi, 2018, p.3).

From the benefits obtained, the use of technology in education is believed to increase the results and motivate the students themselves. Improving learning outcomes directly is an indicator of effectiveness and efficiency in implementing learning. So, the development of learning by utilizing this technological development is very important and must be used by the teacher or educator as well as possible. (Ketut, et al., 2019). The use of technology can create a learning atmosphere centered around the learner rather than the teacher, the language of the class becomes an active place full of meaningful tasks where the learners are responsible for their learning. The independent use of technologies gives learners self-direction. (Ahmadi, 2018)

Furthermore, With the use of videos, animations and automated tutors, students can learn at their own pace. They are not to be constrained to the space of the classroom or time in a lecture (Adom, & Vasudeva, 2019).

The negative effects also exist. If the display of the contents of the learning is not well designed or just like a learning textbook, it cannot increase the motivation of students because they will quickly get bored. In addition, teachers who do not understand the application of technology will not be able to design learning through this technology, because of the limited knowledge about the technology possessed by these educators.

Digital games offer learners a lot of benefits, but too many games, especially violent games, can be problematic. On the one hand, teachers argue that technology can be distracting and perhaps can make cheating easier in the classroom (Adom, & Vasudeva, 2019). Educators have to think if students with physical or learning disabilities will be able to use the technology? We, as teachers, should consider how the proposed technology can be assessed and evaluated.

Teachers use technology to perform familiar activities more effectively and how these activities can be reshaped. The use of technology can improve the educational environment, it supports classroom teaching by creating opportunities for learners to complete assignments on the computer rather than the traditional way (paper and pencil) (Ahmadi, 2018).

According to Altun (2015), teachers and learners use technology for developing the skills such as listening, and reading; furthermore, watching target language elements on technological tools enable students to improve their second language proficiency. Today's technology is breaking down all borders and bounds faster than physical terms. With the advent of screen casting and crowdsourced video uploading sites such as YouTube, teachers and students can connect with each other, breaking geographic, political, and rational boundaries (Keskin, 2017).

The use of technology increases learners' motivation, social interactions, learning and engagement makes learning interesting, enjoyable, and interactive and helps to learn more. (Baytak, et al., 2011). Digital technologies are transforming all sectors of society, including education. Technology has the potential to make the learning process more transparent, more personal and motivating. It connects teachers and learners to each other and beyond the classroom walls to the world around us. Technology can make learning accessible and help transform the way we acquire knowledge and skills in the twenty-first century.

Digital technologies are not a magic wand that makes learning happen without effort from teachers and students. It is necessary to understand how and when to put it to the best use in the classroom and make sure the classroom is a place of discovery, passion, and joy. Just as technology helps to connect people, it helps each individual learning paths and to be master of her and his own learning. (Van Assche, et al., 2015)

The technology integration supports classroom teaching through creating opportunities for learners to complete assignments on the computer rather than the traditional way, in that sense the use of technological devices is more interesting for students at the moment to make some activities.

Technology tools

As it can be observed, with the recent developments in mobile technology, teachers and educators cannot help preventing mobile devices from classrooms. Mobile devices such as iPads, tablets, cellular phones, smartphones, mp3 players, digital cameras, and e-readers are becoming very popular. Achievements in technology totally changed the attitude positively to education with the use of google translator, online dictionaries and other instruments.

Technological devices are more interesting for the students to make some useful activities. For example, making online activities with smart boards is very enjoyable for the learners. Integrating technology into language teaching and learning will bring about the undivided motivation that will lead to achievement, tablets, smartphones, computers, laptops etc. We use it with media, shopping, education, and communication tools. Similarly, it has made great contributions to the language learning process. (Altun, 2015)

The usage of multimedia text in the classroom assists learners in becoming familiar with vocabulary and language structures. It also makes use of print texts, films, and the internet to enhance learner's linguistic knowledge, gives learners the chance to collect information and offers them different materials for the analysis and interpretation of both language and contexts (Ahmadi, 2018).

However, letting students work with laptops and tablets may inadvertently result in students drifting off into instant messaging and social networking sites (Kemp, et al., 2014). Access to technology tools may provide a chance for students to get involved in plagiarizing assignments. The usage of multimedia texts in the classroom assists students in becoming

familiar to practice the language skills, especially reading and speaking. The combination of it and teaching methodology is very important to attract learners' attention towards.

Technology-based applications

There is a lot of research evidence that the use of the internet increases learners' motivation. Learners can learn meaningfully when technology is used in the process of learning through using computers and the internet. The true combination of multimedia and teaching methodology is very important to attract learners' attention towards English Language Learning, it assists learners in developing their higher order thinking skills. For example, WhatsApp applications improve in learners' writing, reading and speaking skills, even vocabulary, and word choice. (Ahmadi, 2018)

Internet-based applications make ELT classes more convenient, exciting, and fluid; technology integration supports both the teacher's pedagogical practices and the student's learning improvement. English language learning becomes exciting and motivating as technology offers various engaging instructional materials, teachers can adapt and use. There is no doubt that technology integration in ELT classrooms has now become a new, upward trend in language education. (Ulla, et al., 2020)

The impact of technology on language teaching has also brought the use of different Internet-based applications ("apps") in ELT. Various social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, and other Internet-based applications are now utilized in ELT classrooms as they are assumed to offer a new platform for language teaching and learning (Ulla, et al., 2020). Using Internet-based applications for language teaching and learning can be a great help for teachers and providing EFL students the opportunity to be exposed to different authentic activities where the target language is used at their own pace and in their own time, giving them a safe space where they can practice using the language with classmates and friends. Using the Internet as a teaching and learning tool offers a flexibility that can be extremely effective.

Maddux, C. & Johnson, D., (2006) states that there are some types of apps: Type I refers to the teaching applications that technologically mimic the procedures previously used by teachers; Type II refers to teaching applications that involve innovative thinking in the use of technology in learning.

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) refers to the use of mobile devices in language learning. Devices such as smartphones, iPads, tablets, and notebooks can be used by the students to access different applications to facilitate and enhance their language learning. MALL's integration into ELT ranges from improving vocabulary to teaching grammar, writing, and speaking. The use of Mobile apps as a new learning approach is effective and efficient for students to improve their English proficiency (Ulla, et al., 2020)

The use of technology tools allows the learners' autonomy, creating a dynamic environment centered on the students. They feel more confident and independent, we want to confirm that these postulates are correct, and the implementation of technology as a strategy to help our students to advance in their learning process, is appropriate. It is clear that it has its advantages and disadvantages, and one of them has to do with the teacher training in this area, and her or his role in the classroom, the role of the students, etc., in other words the teaching and learning process.

As teachers, it is our commitment to be updated in the new methodologies, approaches, etc., that permits students access to these new forms of learning and at the same time be part of world changes. That is the reason why we consider technological integration in the classroom as a strategy to fulfill this purpose.

Teaching and Learning

This section portrays the interaction between technology teachers and learners. The use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) acts as a catalyst in motivating teachers and learners to work in new ways. Learners become more autonomous, teachers feel that they should urge and support their learners to act and think independently. The application of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) changes learners' learning attitudes and enhances their self-confidence (Gilakjani, 2017)

Technology provides interaction between teachers and learners, provides comprehensible input and output, helps to develop thinking skills, makes learning and teaching become more student-centered, promotes learners' autonomy, and helps them feel more confident, and increases learners' motivation to effectively learn a foreign language (Ahmadi, 2018).

There are many advantages that ICT can bring to teaching and learning in schools. For example, various learning styles and abilities can be facilitated with the help of ICT. Learning

can become more effective as it involves more senses in a multimedia context. According to Mai (2020), there is also evidence to suggest that ICT increases the level of engagement with students, creating a positive impact on all student groups and it can provide a broader international context for approaching problems as well as being more sensitive to response to local needs. Moreover, ICT can empower teachers and students to build rich multisensory and interactive environments; allowing students to be more creative and imaginative, enhances students' thinking and enables them to think out of the box and make the best use of their learning process. Learners use ICT tools to find, explore, analyze, exchange and present information creatively. Also, learners can employ it to access ideas and experiences from a wide range of people, communities, and cultures providing opportunities to interact with others. (Mai, 2020)

Teacher's and Students' Role

Learners play an active role, which can help them to retain more information, follow-up discussions involve more information where learners can become more independent. Learners can process new learner-based educational material and their language learning skills can increase (Ahmadi, 2018)

Teachers should be facilitators and guide their learners' learning, as facilitators, teachers must know more than they would as directive givers of information. S/he is an instructor in the classroom who must be aware of a variety of materials available for improving students' language skill, not just one or two texts. S/he must be available to coordinate the discussions that students engage in while sending relevant feedback to students.

Some researchers express that teachers need to know how to teach learners to use all this material effectively by using multimedia programs offer sound and vision, showing how native speakers interact; electronic dictionaries and encyclopedias are available for instant reference; online newspapers provide up-to-date information on current affairs in the countries of the target language; (official) websites offer background information on policy, tourism, political views. Progress, s/he also monitors and assesses the learning progress of students while helping them in addressing their technological setbacks and/or limitations.

Gilakjani (2012), in his study wrote that teachers have to be flexible, responding to the needs that students have, not just what has been set up ahead of time based on a curriculum

developer's idea of who will be in the classroom, these roles are crucial because of the learner-centered approaches that are mainly utilized in technology-driven instruction.

As for the student's role, it concerns learners' active role, which can help them to retain more information, and pursue discussions involving more information where learners can become more independent. On the other hand, teachers should be facilitators and guide their learners' learning through using the computer and other devices as tools to create student projects, research information, etc. Hereby, teachers can monitor and even increase the progress of student's communication.

Language learning skills improvement

Integrating technology into the EFL classroom may help address limitations by providing EFL learners ample opportunities to be exposed to the target language in a more authentic and contextualized way and, at the same time, technology affords them opportunities to use the target language for real life purposes. "Additionally, it is argued that technology enhanced language learning (hereafter 'TELL') enables EFL learners to have access to authentic and abundant EFL materials on the net, and most importantly, to 'meet' native English speakers from different parts of the globe" (Alberth, 2013, p. 2).

Teachers can engage students in the task through utilizing the computer and other devices as tools to create student projects, research information, etc. Hereby, teachers can monitor and even increase the progress of student's communication. Hence, computers, tablets, smart phones etc., must be used as language learning devices, and the center of attention of the lesson. Learners learn more effectively when they use technology tools because the Internet provides a favorable learning environment for learners' learning and facilitates a new platform for learners who have convenient access to learning lessons.

One example of recent development in education is gamification – learning made possible through computer-based games (Adom, & Vasudeva, 2019). Students are awarded and rewarded through levels of promotion for progressing through these computer-based games and demonstrating mastery in a subject. Different games or different levels in a game are designed to meet various learning objectives.

Technology provides a platform through which programs can ask for a student's input, statistically analyze student inputs, and help clarify misconceptions or wrong ideas that students

might sustain about a subject. For example, peer-instruction is a process by which teachers present a quick but challenging question to students and collect student answers as a poll, has proven to be a useful learning method (Adom, & Vasudeva, 2019)

As we mentioned before, students learn more effectively when they use technology tools, because the Internet provides a favorable learning environment for learners' learning. Using ICT and integrating it into the learning process can ensure effective learning.

Speaking skill

It is said that Speaking is maybe the most relevant skill for effective communication in a foreign language, and also for many students, is the most difficult ability to be developed. Speaking included all other skills of knowing a language. It is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts" (Bahadorfar, & Omidvar, 2014, p.9).

According to Peña & Onatarn, (2009, p.12). "Speaking is something students do when they drill particular language patterns, but the oral skill is much more than this. It involves speaking and listening as a two-way process where responding is expected". Nowadays, technology plays an important role in teaching speaking in English as a foreign language. It provides students the possibility to engage independently, provide opportunities for self-paced interactions, privacy, and a safe environment where mistakes are observed and feedback is given as claimed for some researchers. Through the Internet, we can collect data from various sources for any instruction. Especially for learning a foreign language. People can find a lot of learning materials on the internet, for instance, video games, voice recordings and websites, even apps such as: zoom, google meet, Microsoft Teams among others, where students can connect with friends, classmates, teachers, and native speakers. In this way, students get exposed to a great amount of target language and this helps them develop mainly listening and speaking skills.

Podcasts for example, are other resources to listen and practice speaking, the audios can be downloaded, which help the learner to use them in many places since their own devices help them get familiar with the target language. In addition, teachers can use them as material in class for discussing a topic. As researchers realized, students use i-pods, smartphones, and other gadgets to hear their favorite music files and practice their English pronunciation by listening

and repeating. A lot of studies evidence that through songs, videos, movies, podcasting and so on, allow students to use their tech-based entertainment systems for educational purposes.

Recording programs such as: VozMe, Vocaroo, Text-to-Speech (TTS), VoiceThread program, are the most powerful tools to develop the oral performance because learners have the opportunity to listen their own voices and their peers' increasing the motivation to speak in English, promoting autonomous learning and supporting self -assessment due to students can check their own oral process and performance. "In particular, having easy access to recording tools can support the unlimited communicative practice that assists language learners in building knowledge for communicative competence" (Kim, 2014, p. 20).

Peña and Onatarn, (2009). Suggest that learners must develop skills and strategies for using the language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations. To reach that purpose, learners have to be taught to speak in English. The challenge for teachers then is to avoid learning practices that become frustrating or overloading. So, teachers have the responsibility to prepare the students as much as possible to be able to speak in English in real contexts. But also generating a confident environment for students can reach that goal.

Reading skill

It is well known that reading is a very important skill; it is an intellectual process that includes the understanding of culture and community of language reading. It is needed to master a language. Reading is the access to the written language (Anandhi, 2020). Technology platforms offer a series of strategies to enhance reading skill, creating a dynamic and enjoyable environment for students to read, using symbols, books, images and almost all kinds of reading inputs.

In their study, Ghaouar & El Aggoune, (2021, p. 3), share the following characteristics to reading:

Reading is a constantly developing skill. Being better at reading depends on practicing. Reading integrates visual and non-visual information. During the act of reading, the visual information found on the page combines with the non-visual information contained in your head to create meaning. In that way, what is in your head is just as important as what is on the page in the process of creating meaning (reading). Reading is the act of linking one idea to another.

Putting ideas together to create a sensible whole is the essential part of reading. They will develop a sense for the structure of the language and grammar and increase their vocabulary.

Platforms offer advantages for students to acquire vocabulary, improve the grammar competence, read speed and reading comprehension, they are attractive, efficient, and beneficial (Auyila, et al, 2021). Anandhi's study (2020), says that interactive activities for reading help the students to enhance the skill rather effortlessly, and painlessly. The implementation of web activities for reading gives new opportunities for readers to strengthen their abilities in reading.

According to Kasapoglu-Aykol (2010), students and teachers must be open-minded about the use of technology and try to benefit from it. Using educational technology tools both students and teachers will be more successful, efficient, and practical in their lives. Applications like Quizziz, helps students to check their knowledge and progress in learning, they can discuss, ask questions, give directions, express opinions, convey information; because the learning process in this application is student centered, that permits students would be more involved and active in learning in class. The main features of Quizziz are Time feedback, review sections, repeat tests, and follow new quizzes. No matter the time or the place, practicing reading skills can be done (PradnyaDewi, & Kristiani, 2021).

As Quizzes, CommonLit is a digital tool to improve literacy skills, it doesn't matter the level the reader has at the moment to come in, he/she makes progress fast. Teachers can track students' progress in literacy skills, and this tool can help teachers with personalized instructions and address the unique needs of individual students (Tunga, 2020).

The implementation of digital activities using platforms could be made in playful methods that interest the students, and step by step their level of reading levels may be raised. The use of applications like Quizziz and platforms like CommonLit to help the students to enhance the reading skills, make the learning and teaching process joyful and practical for both students and teachers. The success of this implementation depends on the teacher's technology skill mastering, which needs to be developed through training, demanding the commitment of the institutions to permit it, giving them the time to be trained.

Teacher's competence in ICT

Using ICT and integrating it into the learning process can ensure effective learning. For effective integration of ICT in teaching and learning, teachers are required to know how learning

occurs, Roschelle, et al. (2000), it has been found that technology improves the teaching and learning processes when students learn via active engagement and reciprocity actions based on real-life situations. It is very important for teachers to have a full knowledge of technologies in teaching language skills, although learners have been born into a technologically rich world, they may not be skillful users of technology (Mai, 2020). The proper combination of multimedia and teaching methodology is appropriate to attract EFL students' attention during English Language Learning. Teacher competencies are at the heart of effective education systems, but the teacher education does not adequately cover innovation and change, and technology - supported pedagogical practices.

“It is important to keep in mind that a poorly developed and/or executed use of multimedia can do more harm than good, the use of superfluous sounds or images presented for entertainment value induce disorientation and cognitive overload that could interfere with learning rather than enhance learning” (Gilakjani, 2012, p.58).

Teachers must understand that technology must be put before the needs of learners, or the reality of the classroom. In several studies, it has been found that technology improves the teaching and learning processes when students learn via active engagement and reciprocity actions based on real-life situations. For effective integration of ICT in teaching and learning, teachers are required to know how learning occurs and to have enough knowledge of technologies in teaching language skills.

Research Methodology

This section is aimed at describing the methodology used in this study. Regarding the paradigm, the present research is considered qualitative research according to Silverman (2018), qualitative research is defined as the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data-people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior. Constructivists believe that there is no single reality or truth, and therefore reality needs to be interpreted. For that reason, they are most likely to use qualitative methods to get those multiple realities Patton (2015). Also, this project presents some characteristics of constructivism due to this research is considered method Action Research because it is appropriate in any context when specific knowledge is

required for a specific problem in a specific situation, or when new approach is to be grafted on to an existing system (Bell, 2005).

Action research is the combination and interaction of two modes of activity – action and research. The action is located within the ongoing social processes of par societal contexts, whether they be classrooms, schools, or whole organizations, and typically involves developments and interventions into those processes to bring about improvement and change (Burns, 2009).

The present research was about the usage of integrated technology applications in English language teaching in two public schools. Researchers decided to make a Qualitative Approach to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data in the single study which aimed not only to identify the learning English weaknesses that surround the ninth graders but also, the researchers-teachers wanted to provide a solution to those difficulties. This method provided advantages of collecting qualitative data with help of qualitative data to best understand the research. It goes from the general results to the particular, permitting to take a look at the participants' point of view. (Creswell, 2012).

Context

The Institutions where this study was applied were: I.E. Isaias Gamboa, site La Inmaculada which is located in the Commune 1. According to the socio-economic stratification, 1st and 2nd classes are located here (Cali Mayor's Office). It is the Institution's mission to form leaders with principles and values that transform their conditions of life. The school vision is to be recognized as a sociocultural space that dynamizes the pedagogical process, the life projects, and the environment protection.

Alfonso López Pumarejo school, located in Commune 7 de Santiago de Cali. This educational institution is a space of formation to a community to promote the human values of knowledge (science and technology), and the proper values of interculturality in a democratic, participative, and inclusive environment that stimulate the leadership that responds to necessities and expectations of its integrators.

Its vision is an official entity, inclusive and of attention to the healthy coexistence that promotes the integral formation in the pre-school, basic primary, secondary and secondary

technical levels, with orientation for the work and human development in the commercial and industrial modalities.

Participants

The participants were 55 students in total (from both institutions) who were in ninth grade. Those students were children of construction employees, independent workers, maids or unemployed parents, according to the school characterization. At La Inmaculada site, the group was formed by 30 students, 5 males and 25 females, from this group, only one girl was out of the study because of a medical condition that took her out of contact of anyone, 6 students (2 boys and 4 girls) were declared deserters, they didn't continue their studies, for different reasons). A total of 23 students participated in the study, 3 boys and 20 girls, whose parents agreed with the participation of their children in this study and signed the ethical consideration for their participation in it.

This was a group with strengths and weaknesses in their English academic process, but there was a girl whose attitude towards the subject was always negative, and that motivated this intervention; their cognitive development was normal, some of them more active than the others, none of them with particular learning needs, they showed themselves curious, motivated and privileged to participate in this kind of activity.

During the investigation, the teacher-researchers wanted to measure how the ICT applications improve some abilities in the English language teaching and learning. The action was located within the ongoing social processes of particular societal contexts, whether they be classrooms, schools, or whole organizations, and typically involves developments and interventions into those processes to bring about improvement and change. It was going to be applied in a 9th grade group at La Inmaculada High School (Isaias Gamboa branch) and Farallones (Alfonso López P. site) According to Burns (2009), action research is the combination and interaction of two modes of activity – action and research. Researchers implemented a set of activities during the pandemic time when students started to go to classes in alternance.

In the Inmaculada site for example, one of the researchers took advantage of the time to make up for the days of the strike, to work with the selected group, since she could not see them during the week because she was assigned to another site on the days the group went to school, then she could work with it regularly, when the government decided to normalize the school

attendance. In Alfonso López school, most precisely at Farallones branch, there were 32 students in ninth 1 there were 17 girls and 15 boys whose attendance was virtual. Most of the students attended classes regularly. In the beginning the encounter was synchronous and was conducted by the platform from G suite of google called: “Google meet” where the researcher can dictate the classes to the whole group (2 hours per week), then the researcher divided the group in two bubbles (groups) and worked with each one weekly when the face-to-face classes were mandatory. That phenomenon was called alternance and one half of students attended class each fifteen days.

Action-Research stages

Based on (Cresswell, 2012, p.8-12), the process of research consists of six steps:

Step 1. Identifying a research problem that needs to be resolved, in this part researchers chose what to investigate taking into account the main necessities of their students.

Step 2. Reviewing the literature during this step, researchers look for any type of information related to the topic selected for investigation and then summarize the literature in a written report.

Step 3. Specifying a purpose for research considering the difficulties of the learners, presented, the final outcome of the project was always to put into practice what the researchers learn, in order for students to have a better performance.

Step 4. Collecting data. After the first step, the researcher needs to gather information. This process can be as simple as talking with other teachers or conducting surveys to better understand the context in which the research is taking place. Nevertheless, this study gathered few information because the classes were in alternation by the COVID 19.

Step 5. Analyzing and interpreting the data was done during and after the data collection, journal, surveys, and recordings. It involved drawing conclusions about it; representing it in tables, figures, and pictures to summarize it; and explaining the conclusions in words to provide answers about the research questions.

Step 6. Reporting and evaluating research, involved deciding on audiences, structuring the report in a format acceptable to them, and then writing the report in a manner that was sensitive to all readers and Evaluating research involves assessing the quality of a study using standards advanced by individuals in education.

Pedagogical intervention (Action Research)

The pedagogical proposal used in this research was aimed at strengthening reading comprehension and oral production in students with a level A1 (CEFR) through the use of two digital tools called CommonLit and Vocaroo. In this regard, a series of pedagogical interventions were implemented in the second semester of 2021. Such interventions were divided into six classes of two hours per week; divided into two reading lessons and two speaking ones, where an oral and a written pretest were implemented.

Reading Pretest

Figure 1 represents the sample score of 10 of the 15 students who participated in the diagnosis reading test.

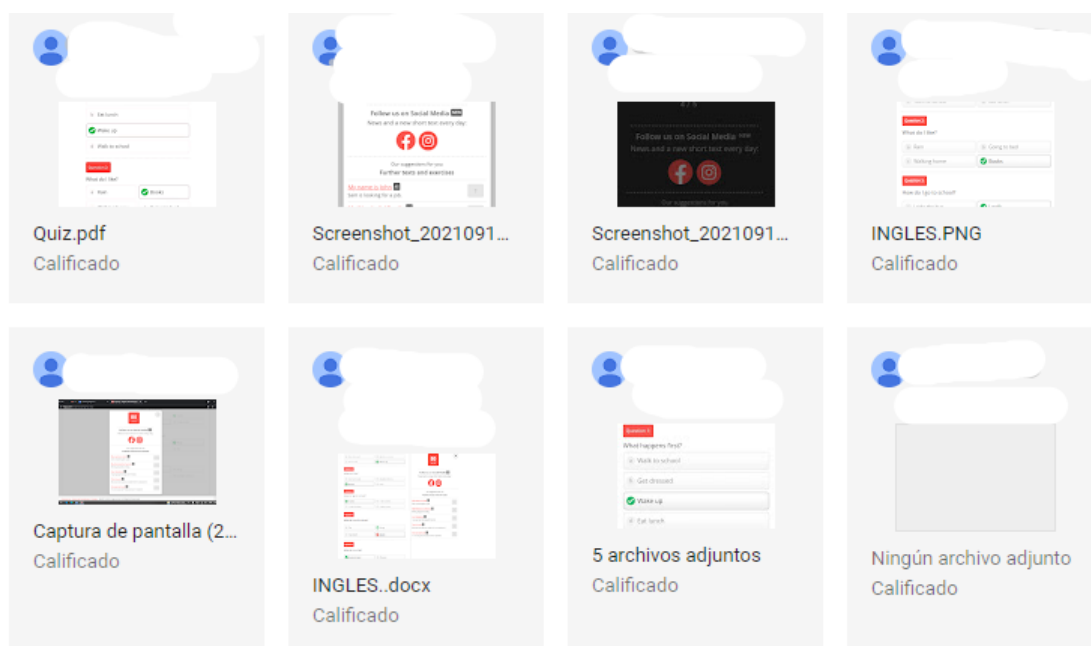


Figure 1 - Reading Pretest

Source: Erika Escobar's Google classroom (2021)

For reading diagnosis students applied a basic choice pretest(level A1), about daily routines to check the reading comprehension of the students it was presented on paper. However, Some students did it by Classroom platform because of the alternation situation. The first intervention on the reading comprehension was applied on CommonLit platform, a free online reading passages and literacy resources American platform, which offers all the reading

comprehension strategies, the readings vary and go from classic to original ones. At the beginning of the process, since one of the researchers' emails was not accepted by CommonLit, the teacher-researchers decided to join the two school participants in one group to do the reading activities. In CommonLit, to initiate the process you must sign up, using an institutional email account, that they ask for, once they recognize the account, you can create a course and then send to the students the code of your course, and after that the link of the selected reading, the students can use metacognitive strategies like highlight the reading, take notes if it is necessary, each reading has a read aloud tool and a set of questions that evaluate the students in the reading process page by page, according to the American Common Core Standards.

Figure 2. Shows CommonLit platform, a reading comprehension tool, specialized on reading passages and literacy resources.

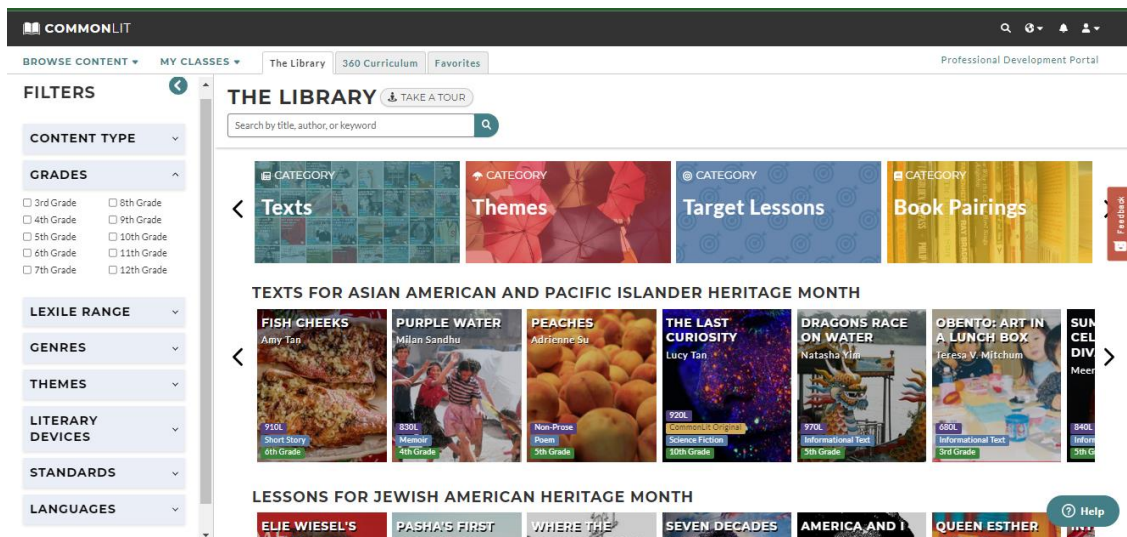


Figure 2 - CommonLit platform

The readings selected for the participants corresponded to 6th grade American students, according to the Common Core State Standards, for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Sciences and Technical Subjects, corresponding to Colombian 9th grade based on the Estándares Básicos de Competencia en Lengua Extranjera.

Figure 3, represents the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Sciences and Technical Subjects corresponding to 6th grade, that are those that CommonLit uses to evaluate the reading proficiency.

Sixth Grade English Language Arts Standards: Reading (Literature)	
CCSS Grade-Level Standards	Common Core Essential Elements
Key Ideas and Details	
RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	EE.RL.6.1 Determine what a text says explicitly as well as what simple inferences must be drawn.
RL.6.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.	EE.RL.6.2 Identify details in a text that are related to the theme or central idea.
RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.	EE.RL.6.3 Can identify how a character responds to a challenge in a story.
Craft and Structure	
RL.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.	EE.RL.6.4 Determine how word choice changes the meaning in a text.
RL.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.	EE.RL.6.5 Determine the structure of a text (e.g., story, poem, or drama).
RL.6.6 Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.	EE.RL.6.6 Identify words or phrases in the text that describe or show what the narrator or speaker is thinking or feeling.

Figure 3 a.

Sixth Grade English Language Arts Standards: Reading (Informational Text)	
CCSS Grade-Level Standards	Common Core Essential Elements
Key Ideas and Details	
RI.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	EE.RI.6.1 Analyze a text to determine what it says explicitly as well as what inferences should be drawn.
RI.6.2 Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.	EE.RI.6.2 Determine the main idea of a passage and details or facts related to it.
RI.6.3 Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).	EE.RI.6.3 Identify a detail that elaborates upon individuals, events, or ideas introduced in a text.
Craft and Structure	
RI.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.	EE.RI.6.4 Determine how word choice changes the meaning of a text.
RI.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.	EE.RI.6.5 Determine how the title fits the structure of the text.
RI.6.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.	EE.RI.6.6 Identify words or phrases in the text that describe or show the author's point of view.

Figure 3b.

Figure 3 a and b - Standards for teaching English

Figures 3a and 3b” Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. Source: Common Core State Standards Initiative. Preparing America’s Students for College & Career (2010, p. 36 to 40)

Figure 4, corresponds to the Colombian English Standards for Reading Skill, corresponding to 9th grade, that are aligned with the American ones in 6th grade.



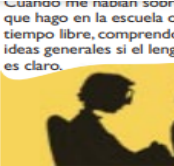

GRADOS 8 a 9 Básica Secundaria Pre intermedio I (B I.1)		Además de lo que logré en el nivel anterior, en este nivel	Leo y comprendo textos narrativos y descriptivos o narraciones y descripciones de diferentes fuentes sobre temas que me son familiares, y comprendo textos argumentativos cortos y sencillos.	Cuando me hablan sobre lo que hago en la escuela o en mi tiempo libre, comprendo las ideas generales si el lenguaje es claro.	Participo en conversaciones en las que expreso opiniones e intercambio información sobre temas personales o de mi vida diaria.
					
		Escucha	Lectura		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sigo las instrucciones dadas en clase para realizar actividades académicas. 2 Entiendo lo que me dicen el profesor y mis compañeros en interacciones cotidianas dentro del aula, sin necesidad de repetición. 2, 3 Identifico ideas generales y específicas en textos orales, si tengo conocimiento del tema y del vocabulario utilizado. 1, 2 Reconozco los elementos de enlace de un texto oral para identificar su secuencia. 2 Muestro una actitud respetuosa y tolerante al escuchar a otros. 3 Identifico diferentes roles de los hablantes que participan en conversaciones de temas relacionados con mis intereses. 2, 3 Utilizo mi conocimiento general del mundo para comprender lo que escucho. 3 Infiero información específica a partir de un texto oral. 2, 3 Identifico la información clave en conversaciones breves tomadas de la vida real, si están acompañadas por imágenes. 2 Reconozco el propósito de diferentes tipos de textos que presentan mis compañeros en clase. 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifico iniciación, nudo y desenlace en una narración. 2 Reconozco el propósito de una descripción en textos narrativos de mediana extensión. 2 Identifico puntos a favor y en contra en un texto argumentativo sobre temas con los que estoy familiarizado. 1, 2 Comprendo relaciones de adición, contraste, orden temporal y espacial y causa-efecto entre enunciados sencillos. 1, 2 Identifico la recurrencia de ideas en un mismo texto. 1, 2 Identifico relaciones de significado expresadas en textos sobre temas que me son familiares. 1, 2 Represento, en forma gráfica, la información que encuentro en textos que comparan y contrastan objetos, animales y personas. 1, 2 Valoro la lectura como una actividad importante para todas las áreas de mi vida. 2 Comprendo la información implícita en textos relacionados con temas de mi interés. 2 Diferencio la estructura organizativa de textos descriptivos, narrativos y argumentativos. 2 Identifico elementos culturales presentes en textos sencillos. 3 				

Figure 4 - Estándares Básicos de Competencia en Lengua Extranjera

Source: Revolución Educativa Colombia Aprende y Ministerio de Educación, República de Colombia. (2006, 24)

According to the previous analysis (from standards) the researchers decided to implement activities corresponding to the A1 level CEFR. The process to develop this pedagogical intervention consisted of previous knowledge, that consisted in a Harry Potter trivia before the reading, thinking the participants knew it, but most of them did not, however, they participated on it. As warm up, the researchers prepared an encounter on the Google Meet platform, to talk and present words like: Fair, Fear, Loneliness, to introduce the reading, not all the participants

could be present because of the power outages in the zone, then as a sequence of activities the participants enrolled in the CommonLit course and began to read, and to answer each page questions the platform offers, at the end, as close up the participants shared the discussion questions about the reading via WhatsApp, using the Vocaroo web page.

Figure 5 illustrates “Vocaroo”, the voice recording tool that was used to be friendly and easy to use for the participants in this study, one of its best qualities is the easy way it has to share the information recorded.

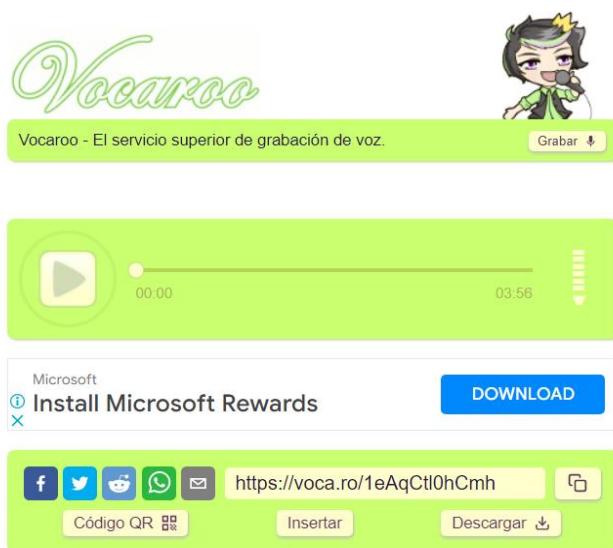


Figure 5- Vocaroo voice recording web page

For the oral pretest, the researchers used VoiceThread as a tool to register the student's answers to specific questions and past the oral skills. However, after applying the pretest, the VoiceThread platform, asked for payment, so it was necessary to be changed for Vocaroo, which is a free and friendly online tool, that is easy to use and share by different applications, among these WhatsApp, where the participants shared their voice registers with the researchers, some participants sound fluent and confident, but others do not, in spite of that, they can work at their own pace, they felt afraid of speaking, some of them preferred to answer the discussion questions written, in Spanish or no answer at all.

Figure 6 shows the VoiceThread platform, where the participants did their speaking pretest. It is an excellent tool with multiple options to use as video and voice recording, writing a text or making a call.

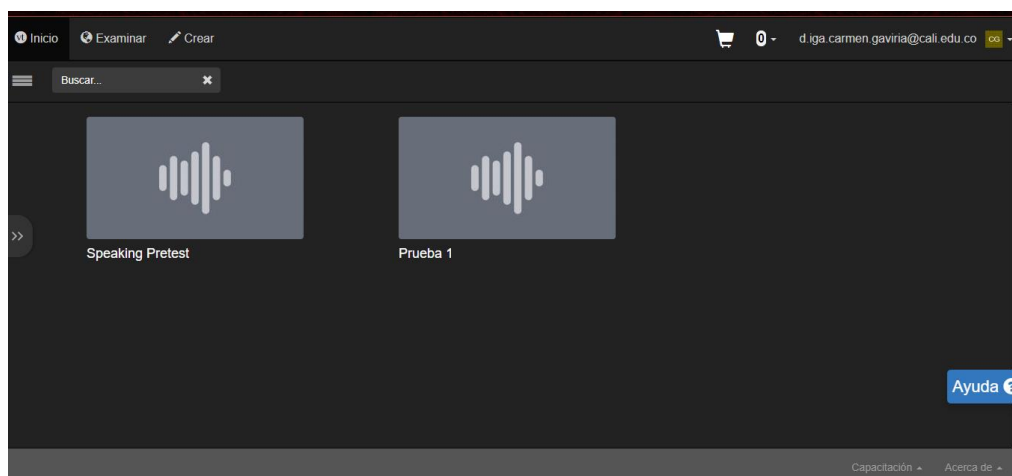


Figure 6 - VoiceThread Speaking Pretest

The first consideration done by researchers in order to permit a conversational environment for the participants of both schools, was to use the GatherTown platform which offers different and creative environments to encourage conversations between the students, knowing that, the researchers wanted to use that platform because one of the scenarios that the platform offered was a party then, researchers thought participants would feel motivated and comfortable to speak, but unfortunately, it was impossible to use Gather Town since this technological tool only works in a computer, and most of the participants only had access to a mobile phone. After that, the researchers tried platforms like Zoom, but because of the lack of a strong internet connection in the public schools it was difficult to do it.

In another moment the teachers-researchers tried to have another conversational encounter between the two groups of students (both sites), the researchers used Google Meet to have the opportunity to chat in an informal way and the students could freely talk among them, but again was impossible due to internet failures and power outages in Terrón Colorado. It was a frustrating experience for the researchers. That was the reason why the researchers' decision was to migrate to Vocaroo platform, losing the possibility to have the two school groups together in a virtual environment. However, the researchers wanted to introduce new technological alternatives that provide the learner the confidence and privacy to register their voices and that platform was perfect for that purpose.

The analysis of the recordings had been done using a qualitative method since oral production not only refers to grammatically correct utterances, but it also involves other factors

that are not measurable, such as motivation, compromise and interaction and collaboration among students.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection allows the students to express their personal experience of the problems, frustrations, and joys of returning to study (Bell, 2005). For this study the data were collected using some instruments to measure students' speaking performance and reading comprehension used in this study were a virtual platform called CommonLit for reading and Vocaroo, a web page for speaking. These instruments were applied during the second semester of 2021, in the alternate period, according to the health situation because of the pandemic other instruments used to collect data in this study were: recordings, surveys, and journals.

Surveys: the aim of those were to obtain answers to the same questions from a few individuals to enable the researcher not only to describe but also to compare, to relate one characteristic to another and to demonstrate that certain features exist in certain categories. (Bell, 2005). First of all, researchers made a first survey to know a little about the context of students. Time after, they made a second one to evaluate platforms used in this study. The result of the last survey gave us the already known information about the technological tools that many researchers had expressed. Technology is a great learning motivator. The participants during the study said that the use of technological tools was good, because they feel free to express their opinions, confident and can learn easier, and learning becomes more meaningful for them.

Consequently, an **Informative diary or journal** was carried out, this instrument refers to notes taken by researchers during the study process. Which can provide valuable information about work patterns and activities, provided diary keepers are clear about what they are being asked to do, and why. (Bell, 2005), in this case, the notes were taken during the observation of the classes and after each encounter with students. In order to register observations and concrete information about students' behaviors and perceptions about tools used during class time. And the researchers also took notes about response to the activities done.

Recordings. Research records are types of records or materials that document a research activity. Patton (2015, p. 380) states: "a good hammer is essential to fine carpentry, a good tape recorder is indispensable to fine fieldwork". For the purpose of this research, some activities were recorded using two different tools VOICETHREAD and VOCAROO. Transcribed

(Appendix 2) with the intention of motivating students to communicate orally in English . Vocaroo gave them the freedom to hear their voices in a different way, listening to themselves made them reflect on how much they had learned, and the most important thing that they could express themselves in this new form of speaking. Some of them due to his/her timid behavior decided to write their answers or say nothing to the suggested questions. However, their opinions were favorable to the use of this technological tool during the pedagogical intervention.

As for platforms, the use of a reading tool as CommonLit made them confident, less stressed and gave them the awareness that understanding what they were reading, and doing the activity more significantly for them, they really enjoy the experience of reading that way. The improvement was evident in the second reading, they went from 39.2% in the development of the reading comprehension activities the platform used in the first reading to 60.3% in the second reading.

The teacher-researchers' role in this study enhance the understanding of the ICT in the classroom, how helpful it was, and how it helped the students to release of the tedious notebooks and blackboards, it is not a secret that it is necessary that teachers master the technological instruments that are going to be used into the classroom, once it is understood, the results will be great, and the teacher becomes a real tutor, guiding the students in their learning process.

The student's role was significant, because they were the protagonists, they disposed themselves to participate, decided that the researchers guided them into the use of the technological tools to read that for them was a boring activity to do and to speak that produces terror between them, they took the necessary time to be familiar with the technological tools presented, for example in the case of CommonLit, they took their time to read and answer the platform has to evaluate their reading process, in the other hand the speaking process was adapted to their personal necessity, some of them first of all prepare their answers to record their voices, others simply do it, but in general they were independent, confident and autonomous in the process.

The technology's role was an excellent way to permit the students took part actively in their enhance of their reading and speaking skill, they few times came to the teacher-researchers for help, their preferred asked their peers to solve any doubt or misunderstood in the use of the tools, both CommonLit for reading and Vocaroo for speaking were friendly with them, in the use of the tool, the record and the sharing information with their researchers.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using a diagnostic test at the beginning, for both skills (speaking and reading), to know the participants' level of language learning, and data collection. Second, the information collected was analyzed, then interpreted. After that, researchers evaluated the results and finally, this report was done. The activities developed were the following ones:

Two tests, one at the beginning a diagnosis test (Appendix 1), one for reading comprehension and one for speaking. During the process, the researchers wrote a journal with the observations of the learners' process. At the end, researchers made informal interviews to students, the first interview for characterization of the participants, the second one, to be informed about the students' perception, their feelings about the new strategy, and for evaluating the implementation of the ICT applications.

Findings and Results

This section of the project is aimed at showing the analysis done to the collected data. The analysis includes a brief definition of the emerging themes, the exemplification and interpretation of the data. Likewise, this section includes the conclusions we reached from the analysis.

Responding to the research question, the researchers found that the use of technological tools improve reading comprehension more than speech. In the case of this study, having a platform that applies diverse strategies to develop reading comprehension and critical thinking, as CommonLit favored short-term progress in reading skills.

In the case of the speaking skill, although the tools (VoiceThread and Vocaroo) offered privacy and ease of use, they did not allow significant progress in their development. Due to the lack of more activities that promote oral interaction, since the health situation (Pandemic) prevented the researchers from having the same group of students in each class, it did not produce the expected results, which leads researchers to do further studies in this regard, testing new tools.

It should be noted that before this study, the participants had a skeptical attitude against English, thanks to the use of the technological tool mentioned before, this attitude changed from negative to positive, as the following excerpts can show:

Student 1. "Well in my case it is super because I feel freer to express my opinion"

Student 2. "I feel more confident using these tools"

Student 3. "Using technological tools is very productive for learning"

Student 4. "It really affects in a positive way I have learned more this year"

Student 5. "Me siento bien porque aprendimos más rápido"

Student 6. "Very good. it's easy. practical and i don't have to leave my house.

Besides native people from USA can't rate me in different app"

Student 7. "i feel that I can express myself more easily. i feel that I learn that another language is something that every person needs"

Student 8. "i feel good, since I know that with apps I can learn and improve my English, either pronunciation and the meaning of unknown words"

As shown in the following figure 7, there are three principal roles in this study, the technological one which centers the study on the learners, it became their motivator and facilitates the learning process, the students' role who are the center of the learning process, they became autonomous, self-confidence and awareness on their knowledge and finally the teachers' role who is truly a tutor, a guide in the students' learning process.

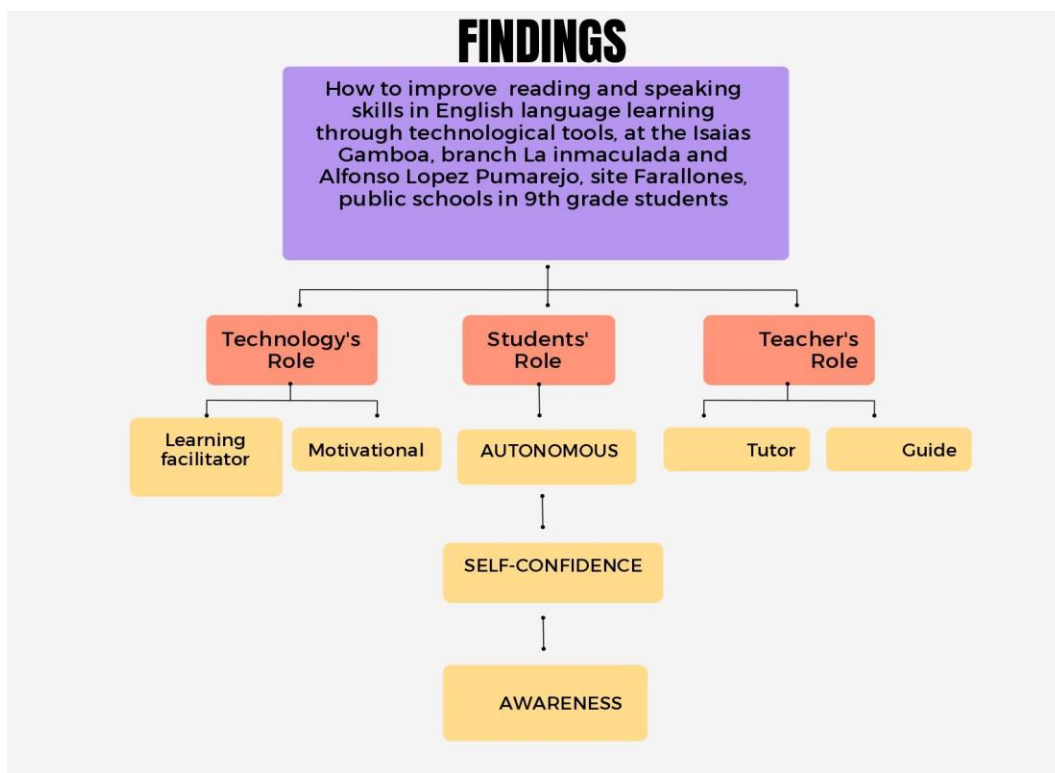


Figure 7 - Findings. Role triangulation according to the study data analysis

Source: Erika Escobar and Carmen Gaviria (2021)

In order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed in our pedagogical intervention three main categories emerged:

First, the role of technology plays an important role in language learning of language not only by facilitating the improvement of skills such as reading and speaking but also, by motivating students to be autonomous in their learning process and at their own pace.

Through platforms such as Vocaroo and CommonLit, Students become aware of the use of the language, with the accomplishment of the different tasks proposed by the teacher.

Second, the teacher's role, who must be prepared to guide the training of their students, through the design and implementation of effective strategies that promote the reading

comprehension and speaking production, And also the teacher should help students with the use of different technological devices , websites etc. to facilitate the learning and finally, the educators should integrate research into their practices as an effective teaching tool.

Third, the role of students as autonomous learners and builders of their own knowledge depends a lot on how motivating the topic is and how meaningful are the activities that the teacher proposes. It means that the teacher has to search topics for students' interests and be prepared to guide the training of their students in technology, through the design and implementation of effective strategies that promote the reading comprehension and speaking production. Where students who were more familiarized with the technological tools helped each other become monitors of their peers.

Diagnosis test

This implementation was conducted twice online and using paper. For the speaking part, the researchers used VoiceThread, as it was mentioned before. 70% of the students showed self-confidence in their responses, the other 30% were vague on their answers or said nothing. This means that the oral skill has been the least worked by the teachers and the skill that provokes more fear among the participant students.

With respect to the reading test, that was carried out on paper, the researchers selected the reading not very extensive with simple vocabulary and the participants had multiple choice answers, resulting in 100% of the students achieving high marks. This indicates that if students are confronted with enough scaffolding-to-understand texts, they will have no difficulty approaching them.

Reading Intervention

The following analysis could be established through the use of the platform called CommonLit which allowed the educators to determine the reading performance of the students, according to the American standards established by the platform, showing the results obtained in each item. The course was called Reader's boom corresponding to the participants (9th grade).

For the reading skills intervention, the platform chosen was CommonLit, as previously stated, because it allowed group and individual monitoring of progress in reading

comprehension, according to the American standards established for 6th grade and which corresponded to the Colombian standards for 9th grade.

With the first reading selected, “The Worst Birthday” from Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, the researchers realized that the participants were below the standard students of 6th grade, taking into account that 50% of the answers corresponded only to the multiple choice questions, and less than the 2% of the answers corresponded to the written questions, these correspond to reading standards for literature according to the American standards, which evaluate the following standards: Key ideas and details, structure, integration of knowledge and ideas, range of reading and level of text complexity. As is shown in Figure 8, the performance of students in the Harry Potter reading was low, which evidenced that the analysis of a text is the ability less developed among the learners, and the vocabulary and structure are the most developed skills in the learning process.

RESULTADOS DE EVALUACIÓN

Esconder nombres: ?

DESCARGAR A CSV

Primer nombre	Apellido	Detalles y Acciones	Calificación	P 1 Parte A RL.6.2	P 2 Parte B RL.6.1	P 3 Parte A RL.6.4	P 4 Parte B RL.6.1	P 5 Parte A RL.6.3	P 6 Parte B RL.6.1	P 7 Por escrit o RL.6.3	P 8 Por escrit o RL.6.6
		ER A DAR ACCESO TO		A	B	B	D	D	B, E	respuesta ?	respuesta ?
		Promedio:	39%	47%	36%	57%	33%	57%	33%	1.83	0.73

Figure 8 - “The Worst Birthday” from Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.

Source: CommonLit (2021)

As shown in the image above, the average number of multiple-choice responses, which assessed the standards of Key ideas and details, integration of knowledge and ideas, the range obtained of correct answers was 46.43% of the 100% expected, while the questions that required a written answer only reached 1.83%, which corresponds to the standard of range of reading and level of text complexity, data obtained directly from CommonLit.

Analyzing the results, the researchers noticed that the participants could give evidence about the topic covered in the reading, the vocabulary used and the characters that were part of the story, but when they had to give their point of view, it was difficult for them to respond adequately. It should be clear that the discussion questions offered by CommonLit were also used for the oral intervention, taking into account the topics of the discussion questions (fear, loneliness, fair).

For the second reading and with knowledge and appropriation of the platform, the participants did a reading about Malala, “Malala Yousafzai: A Normal Yet Powerful Girl”, in which they were evaluated from the Reading Standards for Informational Text, that are: Key ideas and details, structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas. According to these, the percentage obtained in the multiple-choice question was 53.13%, and in those in which they had to write, they obtained 2.96% in their answers. As can be seen in Figure 9, the performance of the students in the Malala reading.

RESULTADOS DE EVALUACIÓN							DESCARGAR A CSV	
Primer nombre	Apellido	Detalles y Acciones	Calificación	P 1 Por escrit o RI.6.3	P 2 Por escrit o RI.6.2	P 3 Parte A RI.6.4	P 4 Parte B RI.6.1	P 5 RI.6.5
		ER A DAR ACCESO TO		respuesta	respuesta	A	C	D
		Promedio:	60%	2.96	2.83	78%	17%	57%

Figure 9 - “Malala Yousafzai: A Normal Yet Powerful Girl”.

Source: CommonLit (2021)

As can be seen in the previous figure, the participants obtained the lowest score when students had to show evidence of the central ideas of the topic and the interaction between them in a written way, while the handle and comprehension of the vocabulary and the structure with which the text were written which were evaluated using multiple choice questions.

According to the previous graphs and information, the result of activities in the first reading, "The Worst Birthday" from Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, the participants got 39.2% in their performance, which means that of the scope of the American standards, the participant students were under the level of 6th grade students in reading standards for informational text (RI) and in reading for literature (RL), corresponding to evidence, vocabulary, point of view, central ideas, theme and summary, interaction of ideas and characters development and finally structure, according to the platform evaluation that goes from 0% to 100%, and in the second reading activity, “Malala Yousafzai: A Normal Yet Powerful Girl” they got a 60.3%, of 100 (maximum score) under the same standards applied in the first reading that are determined by CommonLit.

Aligning with the Colombian standards, the participants can identify the beginning, middle and end of a narrative, according to BLR (Basic Learning Rights) they identify the type, purpose, and parts of a short written or oral text and share ideas from the text with classmates.

However, regarding the Colombian Standards for ninth grade, they could not understand the implicit information in texts related to topics of their interest.

Students' performance, as shown in Figure 10, evidences in alignment with other courses, how is the response of the students to the activities proposed by the platform in the reading skill.

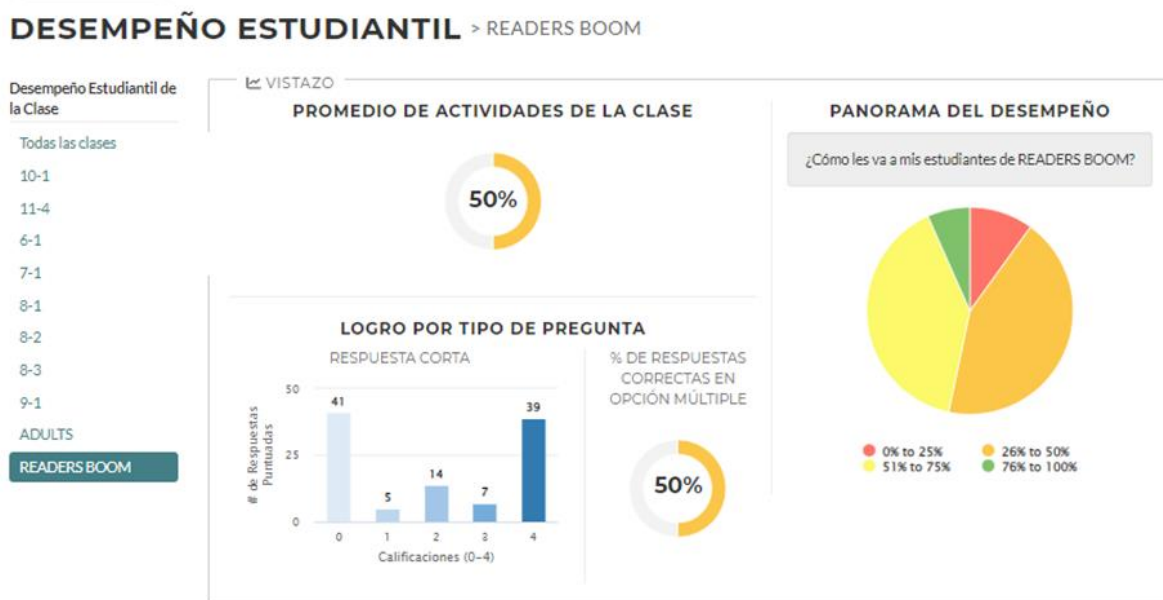


Figure 10 - Students' performance

Source: CommonLit (2021)

Speaking intervention

For the speaking skill intervention, the researchers used the Harry Potter reading discussion questions. This allowed participants to have context and background information to prepare their responses. The aspects taken into account for the evaluation were the following: Vocabulary, fluency, and structure, as the rubric shows (Appendix 3). Regarding qualitative data, it was organized and described in detail to identify the effectiveness of the two platforms in the speaking development of students.

As previously mentioned by the researchers, the speaking ability did not show major variation among participants, from the speaking diagnosis. In spite of knowing the questions in advance and preparing them, some students opted to answer in Spanish, and the researchers assumed this fact as a sign of the insecurity and fear that speaking in a second language produces in them. As It is evidenced in the following excerpts:

Student 1. “Hello my name is...., I did that...the doors are...se me olvidó la otra. parte que seguía. En fin, yo pienso que en realidad... o sea ellos tienen miedo de que la gente piense mal o los ataque por usar magia. ¿Pues a decir verdad? Si a veces me da miedo ser yo misma. Pero ¿por qué me da miedo? es que yo siento que hay personas que son muy raras. Muy raras en el sentido de que...es que son como tan juzgativas si me entiendes? entonces si me da pena ser yo misma, pero con las personas que ya tengo confianza me siento más cómoda y pienso que puedo ser yo. En mi caso prácticamente...mi mamá siempre es como así... ella a veces uno hace las cosas y ella dice que uno no las hizo y pues así. y.... la verdad yo me estreso muy fácil (risas) y si yo me estreso mucho”

Student 2. “Hello teacher Carmen.Q#1 Do you fear of magic? Madden turn daughter of Harry. First, the fear is a feeling then we cannot control. We made decisions. And asked incorrectly. Q#2 Yes, I ever had to hide something from myself. Second week. Yes, she did not want. What believe you? As in question. Then kill you. There. Note, it's not far because he knew the Gallun do it. He just wanted to win last alone. Miss loneliness. Someone needs a reference means. To wink. I solinet.”

The use of vocabulary in some of the utterances was directly translated by students maybe using translator, for that reason, researchers considered that transcriptions utterances were erratic (difficult to understand), i.e., in the speech students omitted pronouns, some verbs did not use of the third person, as well as the order when using adjectives. There was intelligibility in their messages besides the mistakes made as they were already mentioned. The researchers, training students in vocabulary and speaking strategies before confronting the students to this part of the intervention, presented the vocabulary through the conversations in synchronic meetings with the participants. Regarding fluency, the use of pauses and hesitations were frequent.

Students' perceptions

The participants' attitudes toward oral proficiency development for this learning method were also investigated using three questionnaires (Appendixes 3 and 4) conducted during some weeks, the first one named diagnosis test, the participants were asked to speak when responding to the first questionnaire which was uploaded onto the instructor's VoiceThread account. In week 8, the second questionnaire was known as speaking intervention; the participants onto the

researchers' WhatsApp shared it. And the last one was applied to know the perceptions from the students about the platforms used. The last questionnaire documented the participants' feelings about using some English-speaking platforms such as VoiceThread and Vocaroo. Based on the information obtained from the answers on the Google questionnaire, the students' perceptions and attitudes towards platforms were positive.

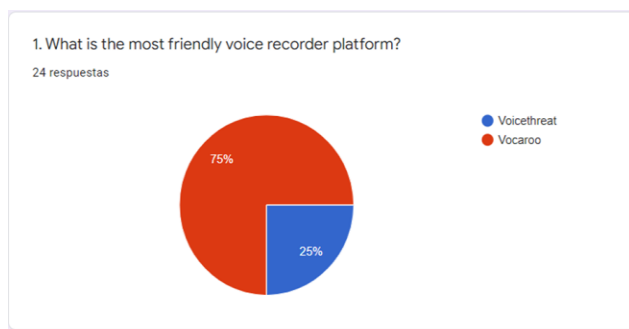


Figure 11 - Students' voice recorder tools perception - La inmaculada site

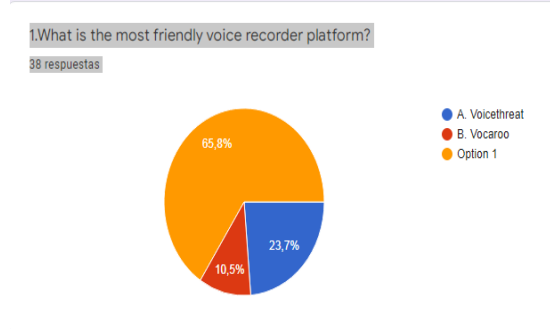


Figure 12 - Students' voice recorder tools perception - Farallones site

According to the graphs, it is observed that in the Inmaculada site, 75% of the students preferred Vocaroo while 68% percent of students of Farallones site could not manage any of VoiceThread and Vocaroo platforms, in Farallones branch, the 23% percent manifested that the use of VoiceThread was easier than the use of Vocaroo, in the case of Farallones branch, and the 25% in La Inmaculada agreed with this opinion. What can be seen in the forward figure, even when the Farallones survey was not well elaborated which researchers interpreted that the students' preference was in favor of VoiceThread

All the data collected helped this research to determine the relevant aspects in students reading comprehension and oral production in English. As well as the previous instruments, all the information was transcribed, coded, and analyzed (Appendix 3 and 4).

Student's perception about CommonLit. Source: Google forms, said that:

Student 1. "I really like the way he makes things funnier and doesn't stress me as much"

Student 2. "Me parece una plataforma chévere porque tenemos comprensión de lectura"

Student 3. “It is very cool because it helps to learn”

The main findings from this research indicated that technological tools used in classes are as important as the use of the target language to encourage students to express their ideas; resources such as WhatsApp, and platforms like Vocaroo and VoiceThread, should be accompanied by meaningful activities that serve as scaffolding to promote reading and speaking skills-in order to-improve students’ confidence to express themselves as it was manifested by learners the use of reading platforms helped them to understand more and made them aware of their reading process And also, it contributed to the students being more autonomous. As for the teachers' role, as guide and facilitator, it was very important to achieve learner's autonomy and awareness, since they provide a lot of scaffolding through the design of different activities and also, the use of technological resources.

As a reflection, the researchers state that it is necessary to devote enough time to investigate and test different platforms and apps to allow students develop English skills, facilitating the autonomous learning and revitalizing the teaching process.

Conclusions

The present research paper set out to strengthen reading comprehension and oral production in students of English in ninth grade of the two public institutions. In order to achieve this goal, the following question was formulated: *How to improve reading and speaking skills in English Language Learning through technological tools at the I.E. Isaias Gamboa, branch La Inmaculada, and I.E. Alfonso López Pumarejo, branch Farallones, Public Schools, in 9th grade students?*

The main findings from this research indicated that, in the case of reading skill, the use of the technological tool-assisted students in reading comprehension. As for critical thinking, it will be necessary to expose students to more interaction with platforms that enhance the reading competence online as CommonLit. Regarding to speaking skill, researchers found that it is the most difficult skill for students of English in the participating institutions and besides those students used friendly voice recorders as VoiceThreat and Vocaroo to facilitate the oral production, they did not feel comfortable to speak due to their lack of confidence. Hence, in order to strength speaking abilities, it will be necessary the teacher designs meaningful activities guided step by step that provide students confidence and preparation to interact inside and outside of the classroom, with or without help of technological tools.

After analyzing the collected data by means of the instruments designed such as: survey, journals, interviews, and recordings, the participants let us know that the use of technology tools helped them to feel more confident and less stressed, in their learning process. Once they learnt how to use the technological tools, the skillful students helped those ones who found the tools more difficult to handle, in occasions with the comprehension of the texts and preparing each other with the speaking production.

This study also could serve to improve writing and listening skills which in this research could not be taken into account because of the short time it was conducted. Nevertheless, researchers strongly believe that it is necessary for the government to invest resources to ameliorate the conditions, especially technology (Internet connection, devices), in public schools to develop the 21st global skills implementing the tools used in this research and other they find to foster students to improve all the English skills and the subjects through cross-curricular work, in private and public schools in our country.

Appendixes

Appendix 1

Project Timetable

Research Activities	August	September	October	November
Socialize the project to the school				
Selection of IT Applications for ELT				
Diagnosis- first test applications				
Observation				
Language and Aptitude Assessment				
Gathering data				
Interpreting data				

Appendix 2 diagnosis tests - Reading test



My day (A1)

First, I wake up. Then, I get dressed. I walk to school. I do not ride a bike. I do not ride the bus. I like to go to school. It rains. I do not like rain. I eat lunch. I eat a sandwich and an apple.

I play outside. I like to play. I read a book. I like to read books. I walk home. I do not like walking home. My mother cooks soup for dinner. The soup is hot. Then, I go to bed. I do not like to go to bed.

Did you understand the text?

1) What happens first?

- a) Wake up
- b) Get dressed
- c) Eat lunch
- d) Walk to school

2) What do I like?

- a) Rain
- b) Going to bed
- c) Walking home
- d) Books

3) How do I go to school?

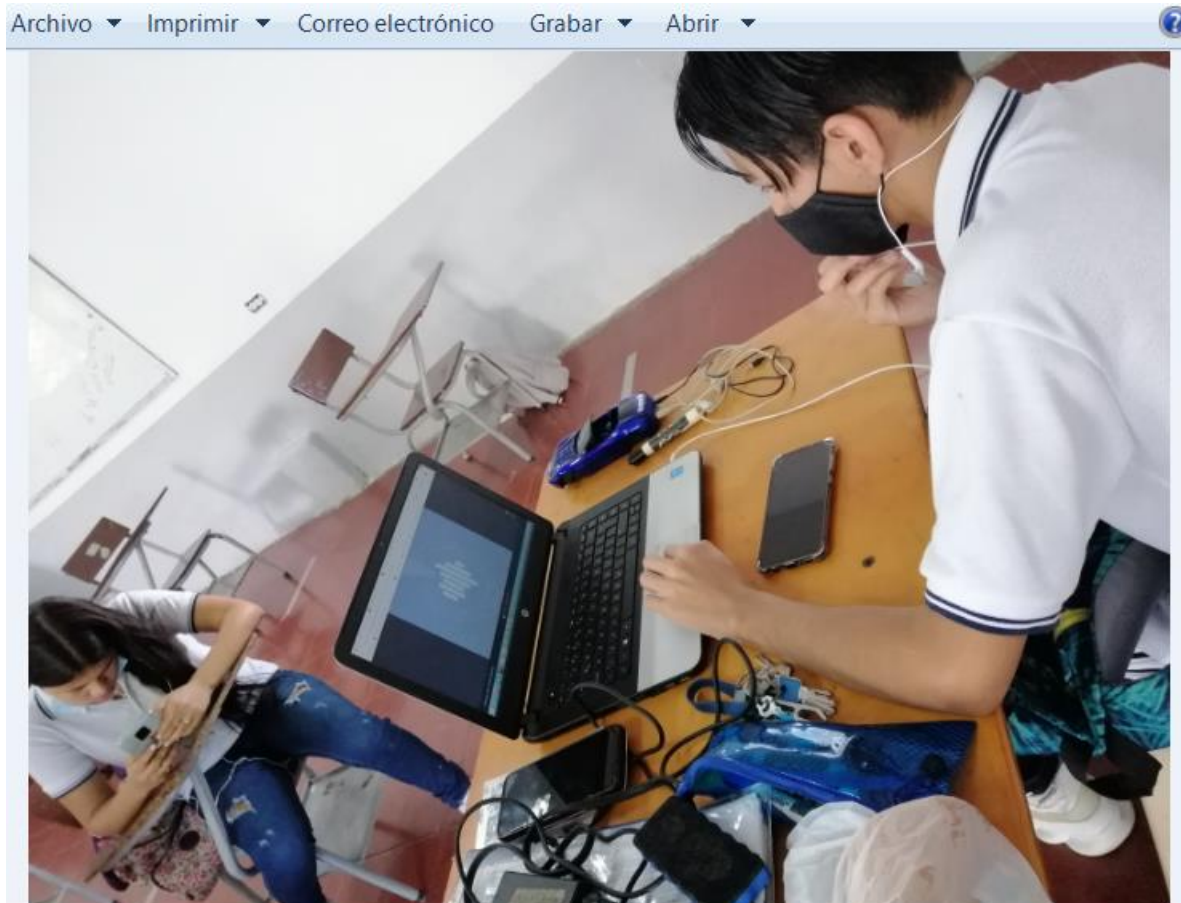
- a) I ride a bike.
- b) I ride the bus.
- c) I walk.
- d) I drive a car.

4) What do I eat for dinner?

- a) Soup
- b) Sandwich
- c) Apple
- d) Pie

5) What do I not like?

- a) Playing
- b) Soup
- c) Going to school
- d) Going to bed



Appendix 5 Evaluating Platforms

Evaluating Platforms

November 17th 2021

Full name *

Texto de respuesta corta

1. What is the most friendly voice recorder platform? *

Voicethreat

Vocaroo

2. what is your opinion about CommonLit? *

Texto de respuesta larga

3. Give a suggestion about the reading experience *

Texto de respuesta larga

4. Describe how do you feel using technology tools for learning English *

Texto de respuesta larga

5. How does my teaching affect your learning, positively? (Be specific) *

Texto de respuesta larga

How does mu teaching affect your learning, negatively? (Be specific) *

Texto de respuesta larga

Appendix 6

Lesson plan 1

LESSON PLAN FORM

Name: Erika Escobar – Carmen Gaviria		Institutions I.E. Alfonso López Pumarejo, site Farallones and I.E. Isaias Gamboa, site La Inmaculada	
Date: sep 22 nd /2021		Time: Morning – Afternoon	Length: 2 hours
Grade: 9 th	Age: 15	CEF level: A1	
Communicative purpose of the lesson: Competencia pragmática: valoro la lectura como una actividad importante para todas las áreas de mi vida. Competencia sociolingüística: identifico elementos culturales presentes en textos sencillos.			
What skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Students will practice reading skill by reading a Harry Potter Worst Birthday. ✓ Students will practice speaking skill by answering reading discussions questions about Harry Potter reading 			
Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leo y comprendo textos narrativos y descriptivos o narraciones y descripciones de diferentes fuentes sobre temas que me son familiares y comprendo textos argumentativos cortos y sencillos. • Expreso mi opinión sobre asuntos de interés general. 			
AIM To enhance the reading comprehension using a technological tool. To motivate students to speak using an online platform.			
Materials: Mobile phones, tablets, laptops, pcs, or any digital device			

Lesson plan 2

LESSON PLAN FORM

Name: Erika Escobar – Carmen Gaviria		Institutions I.E. Alfonso López Pumarejo, site Farallones and I.E. Isaias Gamboa, site La Inmaculada	
Date: oct 2 nd /2021		Time: Morning – Afternoon	Length: 2 hours
Grade: 9 th	Age: 15	CEF level: A1	
Communicative purpose of the lesson: Competencia pragmática: valoro la lectura como una actividad importante para todas las áreas de mi vida. Competencia sociolingüística: identifico elementos culturales presentes en textos sencillos.			
What skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Students will practice reading skill by reading a Harry Potter Worst Birthday. ✓ Students will practice speaking skill by answering reading discussions questions about Harry Potter reading 			
Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valoro la lectura como una actividad importante para todas las áreas de mi vida • Explico y justifico brevemente mis planes y acciones 			
AIM To make students aware of global social issues through reading			
Materials: Mobile phones, tablets, laptops, pcs, or any digital device			

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